

*COMBINED STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL
PROGRAMME REPORT
FM14-21*

Malta

2021

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Year 2021 started with positive feedback received in January 2021, following the submission of the mid-term review document namely confirming the extensions granted to all four projects. Project PDP2 which had already been extended till June 2021 in agreement with the FMO, was further extended till end of December 2021, whilst the rest of the projects were extended by one year. Following this, and even since the COVID-19 pandemic persisted in 2021, the Project Promoter for PDP2 requested an additional extension of six months, with the NFP as PO approving this extension.

A very important factor in 2021, was the change in one of the special conditions highlighted in the Programme Agreement. Due to COVID-19, the PPs requested approval from the NFP as PO, to shift the amounts related to travel in the projects and make use of them in other activities. Unfortunately, the activities were all being considered as hard interventions by the FMO since, apart from infrastructure, the NFP as PO had to consider all equipment including furniture as a hard measure too. This raised some concern since the special condition '*The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures, that no more than 50% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme is allocated to hard measures (infrastructure)*'. was not going to be respected. The NFP as PO thus carried out a thorough exercise in which the percentages of hard versus soft measures, were calculated for all the PDPs. It was evidently clear that, following the requests by the Project Promoters, the clause of no more than 50% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme being allocated to hard measures, was not going to be adhered to. To this end, as part of the Mid-Term review, the NFP as PO decided to put forward a request to raise the 50% capping. Both the FMO and the Donors understood the NFP's concern and agreed that considering the budgets allocated to PDP1 and PDP4, which are two projects that are mostly hard, it made sense to raise this percentage. The new approved percentage was increased to 70%. Following this change, the NFP as PO received various requests for shifts in budgets, all of which were reported in an Addendum.

In year 2021 there were four Audits carried out on the EEA and Norway Grants in Malta. These Audits included the Systems Audit and Audit on Operators led by the Internal Audit and Investigations Department in Malta as well as an Audit on the Management and Control Systems carried out by KPMG in the Netherlands on behalf of the FMO and the Donors, amongst others.

With regards to the visibility of the Grants, the Communications Team took advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic by increasing their online bi-monthly communications meetings with all the POs. A monthly online catch-up meeting with the NFP as PO was also planned throughout 2021. The NFP as PO followed the recommendations put forward by the Communications Team at the FMO and despite the limited resources, still shared the material sent by the same team on the EU Funds Malta Facebook page.

The project implementations are now in full swing. PDP1 finished all the structural works and the majority of the hard measures of the project in 2021. In fact, 81% of the total project cost is already absorbed. The Ministry for Health is now focusing on the soft measures namely the training of the psychologists, the mentoring for the Sensory Integration Therapy, and other additional items that were requested in the letters sent to the NFP as PO and were recorded in an Addendum. Even though the Centre is not yet launched officially, the services are already being offered to the children needing the Sensory Integration Therapy.

PDP2 is the first project that will be complete by June 2022. Even though the project expenditure paid until end of December 2021 is still low (48%), some outcomes were already reached. The opportunity grants are giving a chance to vulnerable youths who have a career in their mind but do not know how to pursue it, to start living their aspirations. The Project Promoter made contact with these youths by means of an online platform during the COVID-19 pandemic in order not to halt any interested youth from approaching the Foundation for Social Welfare Services for help. As a result, in November 2021 the Foundation for Social Welfare Services organized an event promoting the successful stories of these youths and the youths themselves were present and spoke about their experiences.

PDP3 is the project that was impacted the most by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact only 30% of the project expenditure was utilized. Since travel was strongly discouraged by the Health Authorities, the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, who is the Donor Project Partner and has the largest portion of costs in this project, could not travel. By agreement, both the Local Government Division and the Donor Project Partner, decided to suspend the activities until travel restrictions are lifted.

PDP4 has the longest project implementation since the project deadline was extended until the end of December 2023. This project is divided in two parts, with one part focusing on the structural works whilst the other part focuses on the digitization of the artefacts at the Malta Maritime Museum. So far only 39% of the project expenditure was spent. The costs are still low since for the structural works, the payment terms in the tender stipulate that the amount of the pre-financing works amounting to €380,000 need to be certified works on site. Until end of 2021 Heritage Malta were still deducting the amounts in the invoices up to the capping of the pre-financing amount. This said, the works at the Museum site are progressing well. Also, many artefacts were digitized. In fact, the targeted number of digitized artefacts in this project is already achieved. By the end of the project, Heritage Malta will be forking out €1,131,250 from national funds to cover the additional costs of the remaining structural works of the Maritime Museum.

Finally, for the Small Grant Scheme, one project under Call 1, namely the Tarxien Local Council, successfully completed the project implementation whilst the other three projects pertaining to Ta' Xbiex, Floriana and Santa Venera Local Councils, are still being implemented. In the meantime, a second call was issued to which 11 project applications were submitted, and six were awarded the grants.

During 2021, one project pertaining to the University of Malta was approved for funding under the Fund for Bilateral Relations. The JCBF perforce met online in November 2021, as travel restrictions were once again imposed in the 2nd quarter of the year due to COVID-19. The NFP presented a project proposal pertaining to the Malta Trust Foundation which was approved for funding in January 2022.

The NFP is hoping for a better year and is looking forward to more positive achievements of the Grants with the completion of three out of four projects. The present situation is indicating the return of travel and this augurs well in achieving more results especially in the Fund for Bilateral Relations. The return to normal travel, will surely start attracting the tourists to our Island and will especially help Heritage Malta reach their desired project targets.

B. PERFORMANCE

MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

1. Programme context

The year under review, 2021, proved to be another challenging year for all aspects of social and economic activities worldwide, and Malta was not an exception. Everyone had hoped that by the beginning of 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic would be over and forgotten after spending a whole year (2020) experiencing one lockdown after another and a multitude of health restrictions changing from one week to another. However, the pandemic and its ensuing variants continued to rampage the society's hopes of recuperating its normality in economic businesses, education, health and any other civic activity.

In this scenario, the projects and Small Grant Scheme, which were granted funding under the EEA and Norway Financial Mechanisms 2014-2021, had to perforce still struggle throughout this year in order to achieve the expected results within the timeframe agreed by the Programme, when the pandemic and its impacts were still unknown. All the projects to be implemented respond to Programme Area 10, emphasising *Local Development and Poverty Reduction*. With the primary goal of contributing to further social and economic cohesion, these EEA and Norway grants are being invested in a number of key strategic issues targeting the most vulnerable, within both Maltese and migrant communities, notably those considered statistically as being at risk of poverty or social exclusion and hence providing them with aids to improve their education and quality of life.

The level of poverty has developed and therefore it is an ongoing challenge that constantly needs to be addressed by society. This brings several disagreements when defining and measuring the concept. Persons are considered to be at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion if they are in at least one of the following states: at-risk-of-poverty, severely materially and socially deprived, or living in households with very low work intensity¹

As per statistics issued by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate in Malta was estimated at 19.9% of the population in 2020. This equals to 100,712 people². The at-risk-of-poverty threshold is set at 60 per cent of the national equivalised income: in 2020 it stood at €9,744. Throughout the year, 16.9 per cent of the population living in private households were estimated to be at-risk-of poverty. A quarter of these were aged 65 and over³.

According to a Eurostat study published in October 2021, during 2020, 22.6% of Maltese minors were found to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Across Europe, 1 in 4 (24.2%) of children in this age group were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, meaning that Maltese children were found to be 1.6% less at risk than the average across the EU⁴

On a positive note, in a statement issued by the Maltese Social Justice Minister Michael Falzon in September 2021, it was pointed out that in 2013, the rate of those at risk of poverty or social exclusion stood at 24.6%. In seven (7) years, the rate had fallen by almost a quarter from that before the change of government and 2020 registered the lowest rate ever recorded since the collection of data started. The Minister said the figures confirm the importance of the current government's intervention through the social security system and reiterated that the increases in pensions and social benefits led to a record investment of more than €1 billion and without this the people at risk of poverty would have doubled⁵

In July 2021, the Central Bank of Malta published the third issue of its Quarterly Review for 2021, which analysed economic and financial developments in Malta and abroad during the first quarter of 2021. The information presented coincided with the rise of active COVID-19 cases and the re-introduction of containment measures in March. This included the shutdown of most shops and catering establishments, as well as school closures. In the first quarter of 2021, economic activity continued to show signs of improvement despite being subjected to renewed pandemic-related measures, while real GDP fell by 1.8% in annual terms. Sector data show that the contraction in activity was primarily driven by the services sector, reflecting the fact that tourism-related activities remained relatively depressed, as well as the shutdown of non-essential services⁶

2. Programme results

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

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

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

Results for Output 1.2 – Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) Clinic set up and operational:

The year 2021 marked the culmination of this target since, infrastructurally, the SIT Centre was considered as complete and fully functional, except for some finishing touches.

Intervention programmes started to be offered on a daily basis throughout the whole week, between Monday and Friday, as from May 2021. Since May 2021, **64 children have finalized the individual programmes, 4 have**

¹ https://www.eapn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/eapn-poverty_watch_report_MALTA_2021-5335.pdf

² <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2021-12-02/local-news/Over-100-000-people-were-at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion-in-2020-6736238787>

³ <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/one-out-of-four-at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion.918778>

⁴ <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2021-10-28/local-news/Last-year-22-6-of-Maltese-minors-were-at-risk-of-poverty-or-social-exclusion-Eurostat-6736237874>

⁵ <https://newsbook.com.mt/en/over-85000-at-risk-of-poverty-in-malta/>

⁶ <https://www.centralbankmalta.org/en/news/88/2021/9954>

attended group therapy intervention and 86 children are currently having ongoing intervention - a total of 154 children.

Results for Output 1.3 – PKU Screening Service Developed:

The three (3) targets of this output namely (1) the setting up of PKU screening for all newborns; (2) setting up of confirmatory testing for screen positive samples now that, most importantly, the PKU screening service has been fully added to the existing congenital hypothyroidism screening as part of the blood spot testing and (3) the training of scientists (1 female and 1 male) in PKU screening, have all been reached, except for the training in PKU screening of a number of 'clinicians'. The three (3) main targets of this output have all been reached, except for the training in PKU screening of a number of 'clinicians'.

Results for Output 1.4 – Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAT) testing:

As already reported for 2020, a fully automated Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) system has been set up, screening **100% of blood donors**.

Concurrently, a total of 9 professionals (5 females and 4 males) have been trained on the operation of the system.

The NFP has already discussed some issues with FMO related to a couple of indicators which might not be reached by the end of the respective project but hopefully by the end of the Programme. PDP1 has to register 800 children, having passed through the services at the SIT centre by end of 2022. Delays in opening the Centre were inevitable due to Covid-19. The services have started but there is still the risk that some parents might be hesitant to take their children to the Centre, coupled with COVID restrictions on the number of children, who can be served at the same time. This also links to it the other indicator namely the level of satisfaction (by parents) with Sensory Integration (SI) Services since the survey cannot be presented to a small number of parents. The services only started in May 2021 and to date, the number of children who received the services is still quite low. The Ministry for Health through the NFP will contact the Results and Evaluation Unit within FMO for more guidance on how to best present this survey.

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

PDP 2 – Opportunity Knocks (OK)

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:

Till the end of 2021, through this first pillar of the project, **2129** youths were reached through such prevention campaigns.

Results for Output 2.2 - A residential safe house for young people (under 18 years of age) set up:

A total of **22** youths are residing in a safe house and benefitting from the OK project.

Results for Output 2.3 - Integrated services for children and youths at risk provided:

INTEGRATED SERVICES, THROUGH ITS MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS OF PROFESSIONALS, WAS OFFERED TO A TOTAL OF 456 YOUTHS.

In parallel, 12 training modules were offered to the professionals in various subjects (*such as youth mental health first aid, Management of Actual or Potential Aggression, suicidal and non-suicidal self-injuries risk assessment, emotional intelligence, positive parenting for parents of teenagers, and influencing behaviour*).

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

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

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:

PDP3 achieved most of the expected results as per Programme Agreement within the first year of implementation 2019, with over 10130 public administration officers, hailing from 66 regional/local Councils, obtaining training in principles of good governance, transparency and accountability.

Results for Output 3.2 – Pilot Initiatives under the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) implemented:

The approved budget for the SGS is of circa €1,200,000 and each pilot initiative will have a minimum grant of €25,000 and a maximum grant of €100,000. Two (2) public calls were issued between 2019 and 2021 and 10 projects in all, from 9 different Local Councils (since Tarxien LC has 2 projects, one under each call), were awarded grants, namely:-

SGS Call 1: 4 Projects were awarded to the following LCs: Tarxien, Floriana, Ta' Xbiex and Santa Venera.

SGS Call 2: 6 Projects were awarded to the following LCs: Birgu, Isla, Marsa, Paola, Sliema and Tarxien.

Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced

PDP 4 – The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through Cultural Heritage
Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced

Results for Output 4.1 – Malta Maritime Museum restored and upgraded: still work-in-progress and contract for works should be concluded by June 2022.

The agreed milestones for the Structural Works (CT3029/2019) had been accomplished till the end of December, noting that the masonry restoration works are even ahead of schedule. This occurred in compensation for the fact that the Steel Works are slightly back on schedule due to procurement issues concerning an increase in prices as result of post COVID-19 pandemic.

Results for Output 4.2 – Innovative presentation of the Malta Maritime Museum's collection supported: 3600 artefacts, exceeding the target milestone by 1000 units, have been digitised while the compilation of Dockyard Workers interviews have also been completed. The Digitisation team has all been recruited and the Digitisation Equipment, including the Collections Management System (CMS), has been procured.

Heritage Malta might have difficulty in reaching the indicator **Annual number of visitors to the Malta Maritime Museum**. The structural works are still ongoing and therefore the Museum is still close to the public. Besides the ongoing works, if the Covid-19 pandemic continues devolving, tourism will continue to be affected at large. Malta has suffered greatly from the lack of tourists visiting our island and the future is still very uncertain.

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

PDP 3 -Following the visit to Norway in 2018 to draft the Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Government Division in Malta and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) the latter determined its responsibilities throughout the implementation phases of the project which focuses on advice of good governance and accountability, training provision to elected representatives on their expected functions within a regional and local council, from a financial, administrative, leadership and ethical points of view. KS also provide advise to members of the Project's Stakeholders Committee (PSC) on the various training initiatives envisaged to be delivered as part of the project. In 2021 due to Covid-19 and the restrictions on travel, the activities planned by KS were all postponed to 2022. 4 – 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 could continue once the COVID-19 situation improves allowing travel between both sides.~~

Pre-defined project(s)

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

Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) Clinic set up: This target had always been the primary objective of this PDP, though all merits should undoubtedly also be given to the other two main targets reached through the implementation of this project. The year 2021 marked the culmination of this target since, infrastructurally, the SIT Centre was considered as complete and fully functional, except for some finishing touches (eg blinds for blocking out the sun's rays).

Intervention programmes started to be offered on a daily basis throughout the whole week, between Monday and Friday, as from May 2021. An SOS feeding clinic was also set up on site to provide feeding assessment and intervention for the same client population. The school psychologists will be providing assessment and intervention to children requiring their services within the same premises. Concurrently, the administration offices set up for the purpose of screening children, from the tender age of 18 months, for autism is also housed within this Centre. This ensures early detection and referral, as well as continuity of service for both children and their parents/guardians.

The most important output for this outcome is unquestionably the "*Number of Children and Adolescents receiving SIT*". Since May 2021, **64 children have finalized the individual programmes, 4 have attended group therapy intervention and 86 children are currently having ongoing intervention.** This is a total of **154 children** within a 7-month period (till the end of 2021). The target value of 200 children per year should be reached by the end of May 2022.

The Centre is proving to be a successful collaborative partnership between the two largest Ministries on the island, namely the Ministry for Health and the Ministry for Education. The Centre is a living proof of the society's firm belief that investing in health, social care and education in early childhood and working with families, who require support to improve their parenting skills, has proven to be the most effective way to improve development and reduce inequality. Evidence shows that high-quality early years investments and services can compensate for the effects of social disadvantage on early child development and promotes the full developmental potential of all children. Such efforts must be continued throughout childhood and adolescence⁷

Some delays were experienced in officially launching the Centre, due to COVID-19 conditions and an unexpected change in the Minister for Education, but it is hopefully envisaged that the Centre will be officially launched by both Ministers in early 2022.

PKU Screening Service: The three (3) targets of this output namely (1) the setting up of PKU screening for all newborns; (2) setting up of confirmatory testing for screen positive samples now that, most importantly, the PKU screening service has been fully added to the existing congenital hypothyroidism screening as part of the blood spot testing and (3) the training of scientists (1 female and 1 male) in PKU screening, have all been reached, except for the training in PKU screening of a number of 'clinicians'.

At application stage, the latter target group was thought to be mostly paediatricians and/or other medical professionals working in the area of children's health. At the time, no one had envisaged the disruption in our health systems with the onset of COVID-19 pandemic. Still to date, these medical professionals are struggling with day-to-day problems related to this pandemic, notably to make sure that our little ones do not suffer any future repercussions from contracting this disease. This remained their main focus for the year under review and the project leader found it very difficult to find any 'clinicians', who were interested or ready to take up training in PKU screening and its aftermath.

Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAT) testing: As already reported for 2020, a fully automated Nucleic Acid Testing (NAT) system has been set up, ensuring that **100% of blood donors**, especially those coming from endemic countries, **are being screened for the West Nile Virus**, most commonly spread through

⁷ <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/child-and-adolescent-health/children-and-adolescents-in-the-who-european-region>

persons bitten by an infected mosquito and is endemo-epidemic in Europe. The elderly and immunocompromised persons are at higher risk of developing West Nile neuro-invasive disease. No specific prophylaxis or treatment exist against the disease in humans⁸

Concurrently, a total of 9 professionals (5 females and 4 males) have been trained on the operation of the system.

PDP 2 – Opportunity Knocks (OK)

Opportunity Knocks (OK) pack developed for children and youth at risk: This target had already been reached by end 2020, when it was reported that 1,457 OK packs were developed and distributed. Till the end of 2021, through this first pillar of the project, 2129 youths were reached through such prevention campaigns held in different settings such as schools, scout groups, youth groups and football centres, amongst others.

A total of **22** youths are residing in a **residential safe house for young people (under 18 years of age)** and benefitting from OK project.

Integrated services for children and youths at risk provided:

In the last quarter of 2020, a consultation process was launched in Malta with regards to the “National Youth Policy – Towards 2030 – Reaching Out to, Working with and Supporting Young People”. This policy, building on the success of the past five years, shall focus on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for all young persons aged between 13 and 30, for the period 2021 to 2031. It is embedded in related national policies as well as in European and International Youth Policies. It will complement national policies in related fields such as education, employment, justice and health, that all impact on the lives of young people. Central to its vision, it aims to support and encourage young people, both as individuals and citizens, to be empowered to participate in projects and cross-sectoral initiatives with the voluntary, state and private sectors⁹.

In line with this future vision, PDP 2 – OK continued to offer integrated services through its multi-disciplinary teams of professionals to a total of 456 youths, of whom 154 benefitted from an Opportunity and 55 others benefitted from therapeutic workshops (Drama Therapy and Equine Therapy). The Opportunities include courses in ECDL, English and Maltese tuition, security courses, manual and automatic driving lessons, basic nails, basic hairdressing, basic barbering, basic make-up course, advanced beauty courses, advanced barbering, advanced hairdressing, MCAST part time courses, basic English lessons for foreigners and basic English in Gozo.

In parallel, **12** training modules were offered to the professionals in various subjects (*such as youth mental health first aid, Management of Actual or Potential Aggression, suicidal and non-suicidal self-injuries risk assessment, emotional intelligence, positive parenting for parents of teenagers, and influencing behaviour*).

In the meantime, the Foundation for Social Welfare Services – the Project Promoter (PP) also focused upon augmenting its collaboration with other stakeholders involved in the field of children and youth. Various meetings (total of **110** formal meetings) were held with the Department of Education, Department of Health and other similar entities in order to promote the project and its objectives, whilst building bridges for further collaboration. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between the PP and the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) to facilitate educational opportunities, targeting shared cohort.

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

Public Administration staff in targeted localities trained in good governance principles:

The integrated approach adopted by this PDP aims towards creating an environment conducive to economic development, whilst sustaining an improved urban environment which is safe, liveable and environmentally friendly. From a bilateral relations point of view, the collaboration between the Local Government Division and

⁸ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/west-nile-virus-infection>

⁹

https://meae.gov.mt/en/Public_Consultations/MEDE/Pages/Consultations/NationalYouthPolicyTowards2030Reachingouttoworkingwithandsupportingyoungpeople.aspx

the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) will foster sharing of knowledge on good governance within this pre-defined project and support in the implementation of the small grant scheme.

It is to be noted that PDP3 achieved most of the expected results as per Programme Agreement within the first year of implementation 2019, with over 130 public administration officers, hailing from 66 regional/local Councils, obtaining training in principles of good governance, transparency and accountability. It is now envisaged that, given the release of most or all of COVID-19 restrictions, some of these officers will also be given the opportunity to attend internships, both locally and in Norway.

Furthermore, on the 29 January 2021, the “Partnership Agreement for Partnership Projects between the Local Government Division (LGD) and the Local Councils’ Association of Malta (LCA)” was officially signed under the patronage of the Minister for National Heritage, Arts and Local Government and the Parliamentary Secretary for EU Funds. Through this Partnership Agreement, €47,000 (PDP3 - Norwegian Grants 2014-2021) will be allocated to the LCA to offer an academic experience in terms of specific training on matters dealing with good governance, transparency and accountability, to the elected members of Local Councils. Good governance is one of the 10 pillars of the Local Government Policy Reform. Through this training, Local Councils will be able to provide a better, holistic, more transparent and efficient service to the citizens within their respective communities.

LCA Trainings held till end of December 2021 include the following:

The Local Government Division as the Small Grant Scheme Operator (SGSO) in partnership with the Local Councils Association of Malta (LCA), the National Association for Local Council and Regional Executive Secretaries (ANSEK) and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Councils (KS) is currently implementing a Small Grant Scheme entitled: “*Small Grant Scheme: Local Development and Poverty Reduction in Urban Communities*”.

Through the grants for this Scheme, it is aimed that the improvement of the quality of life and sustainable living standards of deprived communities in urban localities are further enhanced as a sustainable development strategy. Inequalities and socio-economic challenges encountered by these deprived urban localities are being addressed through a number of pilot initiatives aimed at the physical, economic and social regeneration of their communities. 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 towns and cities, thus addressing the social and educational needs of citizens, in line with the guiding principle of the Strategic Plan for the Environment and Development.

The approved budget for the scheme is of circa €1,200,000 and each pilot initiative has a minimum grant of €25,000 and a maximum grant of €100,000. All projects are of a duration of 12 months.

No finite results can be recorded as yet with regards to Outcome 1 of these Grant Schemes, namely “1,000 vulnerable individuals benefitting from services provided through the Small Grant Scheme” and Outcome 2: “+11% of residents ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with their local council’s performance in targeted localities”, since all SGS Local Council Projects are still ongoing and none have been finalized yet.

The target envisaged of having “6 pilot initiatives implemented by Urban Local Councils” has already been superseded through the two separate calls published under this scheme. The initiatives awarded funding through these calls were as follows:

SGS CALL 1: 4 Projects were awarded grants in February 2021 to the following LCs: Tarxien, Floriana, Ta’ Xbiex and Santa Venera, namely:-

1. **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 €81,898.64 (inclusive of VAT);
2. **Floriana (Furjana in Maltese) LC** – “*Senior Citizens Centre – the creation of a stimulating Social Environment*”, with a total project cost of €118,821.87 (grant allocation €100,000) inclusive of VAT;
3. **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 €112,690.00 (grant allocation €100,000), inclusive of VAT;

4. **Santa Venera LC** – “*Development of the Sta Venera Skills Centre*” – through the provision of a training programme to 30 low-skilled youths/early school leavers, focussing on the plumbing and electrical trades. The restoration of 2 rooms in the ex-Umberto Calosso Complex in the same locality shall be implemented, with the aim of creating a training centre for this purpose. Total Project Cost €121,946.42 (grant allocation €100,000) inclusive of VAT.

Total of Grants Awarded to Local Councils under SGS Call 1 amounted to €381,898.64 (In continuation with what was reported in CSAR2020, **Birgu LC and Pieta’ LC** initiatives were dropped by the respective LCs, after the evaluation process and before the signing of the grant agreements, for various reasons). The above 4 Local Councils have been implementing their SGS Projects during the course of the year under review.

SGS CALL 2: A 2nd Call for Proposals was published in 2021, due to the fact that the first SGS Call did not absorb all the available budget. A 3rd Project’s Stakeholders Committee (PSC) was held online via Microsoft Teams on the 29th January 2021, which discussed the launch of this 2nd Call for SGS Project Proposals, including the key documents such as the Application Form, the Guide for Applicants etc. A number of written procedures also took place between the PSC’s members in line with the Committee’s Rules and Procedures.

A 4th Project’s Stakeholders Committee (PSC) was held on 5th October 2021, in order to discuss the evaluation process of the SGS Call 2 applications held by the independent assessors. A number of written procedures again were carried out between the PSC’s members in line with the Committee’s Rules and Procedures.

Another six (6) Local Councils in all were awarded grants for projects, namely:- Birgu, Isla, Marsa, Paola, Sliema and Tarxien. Grant Agreements will be signed in February, 2022.

1. **Tarxien Local Council** – “*Empowering Community Socialization*”. The project’s objective is to regenerate Joanne Gardens, which is one of the few green ‘lungs’ in this urban town and, being so highly frequented, can become a hub for community building activities. Small scale interventions and some ancillary equipment shall be procured for the organization of community activities. Project Budget (incl. VAT): €96,861.54
2. **Paola Local Council** – “*Paola Urban Mobility and Accessibility (PUMA)*”. This project has been designed as an integral part of the regeneration and transit plan for the town core. It shall feature a free Dial-a-Service targeting those citizens, who are vulnerable and disadvantaged vis-à-vis their mobility and accessibility in and around the town as a result of impairments. Project Budget (incl. VAT): €96,760.00
3. **Marsa Local Council** – “*Promoting the Social Inclusion of Senior Citizens in Marsa*”. The aim of this project is to provide a safe and welcoming environment for those senior citizens, who very often find themselves alone in the community. This will be achieved through the setting up of a Day Centre for the elderly within the Marsa Local Council’s premises by enhancing part of the Local Council’s building through works comprising of plastering, installation of a kitchen and by purchasing furniture. The Day Centre will still have its own entrance. Project Budget (incl. VAT): €95,587.10
4. **Birgu Local Council** – “*Improving Accessibility to the Community*”. This project consists of interventions necessary to open the Active Ageing Day Centre and transforming it into a modern and comfortable venue. Interventions include installation of lift, construction of walkway (to ensure lift is accessible in all kinds of weather); purchasing of equipment and furnishings to supplement and add onto the existing facilities; engaging a professional carer and dissemination activities. Project Budget (incl. VAT): €113,398.00 (grant allocation €100,000)
5. **Sliema Local Council** – “*Creating a Management Framework for a lasting Urban Community Gardening*”. This project particularly targets the elderly in the locality, by addressing the lack of possibilities for the elderly and other vulnerable persons to perform outdoor activities in a collective and organized manner. Project Budget (incl. VAT): €113,300.65 (grant allocation €100,000)
6. **Isla Local Council** – “*Promoting Social Inclusion in Isla*”. The project aims to promote the reduction of poverty among specific target groups through training courses, providing life and employability skills. It shall aim to promote the social inclusion of the project target groups through the provision of services and recreational activities for different age groups, thus enabling socialisation between residents. Project Budget (incl. VAT): €52,320.60

Total of Grants Awarded to Local Councils under SGS Call 2: €444,667.70

Total of Grants Awarded to date (Call 1 and Call 2): €826,566.34

PDP 4 – The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through Cultural Heritage

Malta Maritime Museum restored and upgraded: While this project is divided into two (2) major activities, the civil works involved in the rehabilitation of the Malta Maritime Museum premises took the bulk of the awarded grant. This is understandable, noting the extensive structural works implemented, including reversal of changes made to the structure of the building during the British colonial period. Significant expansion of the Museum display area and the creation of new spaces for the reserve collection and the permanent exhibition can already be seen from this activity. Extensive works on the reserve collection stores section (ground floor) shall render the area more accessible to the general public. For safety and security reasons, the closure of the Museum was extended also into 2021, facilitating unhindered continuation of the works.

Throughout 2021, civil works proceeded with the bulk of the restoration and masonry construction virtually completed, except for the restored silo in Area A. The reconstruction of the dilapidated rear elevation to the building, forming areas D and F, was also concluded. Most of the re-roofing of the timber beam and stone slab areas has either been restored or completely redone. Steelwork is already ordered and currently being fabricated so that, following the installation on site, all civil works should be completed by June 2022.

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 is nearing completion with the first level of barrel vault in place and the upper level arches and supporting beams to the roof being reconstructed so the last barrel vault at second floor may be constructed and the area completed.
- Area B - the area of the main staircase - demolition work on the old staircase was completed and the reconstruction of the upper most level under the roof is nearing completion. The walls restoration is likewise nearing completion and the area is being prepared for the installation of the hanging steel staircase that is currently under production.
- Area C - ex-boiler room - The restoration treatment for the steel structure in the large silo is completed. The meticulous restoration of the concrete walls is nearing completion and the whole area is being prepared to receive the installation of the hanging steel structure, that is also currently under production.
- 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. Restoration works, which have been completed both internally and externally, have reinstated this derelict part of the building to its former splendour. The majestic masonry balcony is nearing completion and is the only item of work left to be finished.
- Area F - the large reserve collection area, which will serve as a boat restoration workshop, is virtually complete.

The completed roof was replaced and the space now has 2 interlinked levels i.e. a new intermediate one was created and completed. This includes the restoration of the interior walls. The rear elevation has also been reconstructed and complete.

By the end of 2021, the target value had already been exceeded and more than 3,600 artefacts had been digitised. These artifacts include; photos, documents, paintings, 3Dobjects such as navigational instruments, ship models and boat building tools. With regards to intangible cultural heritage, more than 100 oral interviews, relating to the Dockyard collection, had also been digitised.

By December 2021 Heritage Malta has recruited all the staff members outlined in the project brief including Project manager, Photographer, Videographer, Software executive, Research Historian and Collections Management Executive.

All procurement of hardware and software identified in the Project Grant Agreement was carried out during 2021. By the end of the same year, the tender for the CMS had also been adjudicated and a successful bidder was chosen. The installation of the CMS system was initiated and it is planned that the CMS will be fully functional by mid-2022.

During the summer of 2021, the Digitisation Unit hosted more than 30 university or post-secondary students as interns, working on various digitisation tasks including scanning, photography and gamification. The project was also presented to students during the University Freshers Week held in October, 2021.

3. Implementation

Financial status

a) commitments and disbursements made by the programme;

| Project Code | Project Title | Eligible Expenditure covered by the Grant | Total Project Cost | Disbursement by end of December 2020 | Cumulative Disbursement by end of December 2021 |
|---------------|---|---|----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| FBR | Fund for Bilateral Relations | €340,000 | €340,000 | €8,606.63 | €9,938.63 |
| PDP 1 | Reduction in Social Inequalities in Health and the Burden of Disease | €2,046,000 | €2,407,059 | €1,494,721.62 | €1,954,516.15 |
| PDP 2 | Opportunity Knocks (OK) | €800,000 | €941,176 | €191,570.46 | €448,743.44 |
| PDP 3 | Training of Local Council Staff in Principles of Good Governance, Transparency and Accountability | €170,000 | €200,000 | €27,787.89 | €60,773.97 |
| PDP 4 | The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through poverty reduction | €1,713,200 | €2,015,529 | €347,570.30 | €789,750.32 |
| SGS | Small Grant Scheme | €1,000,000 | €1,200,000 | Nil | €9,404.25 |
| SGS PO Costs | SGS PO Costs | €105,200 | €123,764.71 | €36,952.41 | €57,838.69 |
| PO Costs | Programme Operator Costs | €299,600 | €352,470.59 | €124,392.21 | €158,337.91 |
| TOTALS | | €6,474,000 | €7,579,999.30 | €2,231,601.52 | €3,489,303.35 |

b) problems related to absorption and/or disbursements, with suggested solutions.

The disbursement across the whole programme until the end of 2021 is almost 50% of the total budget allocated for all the budget headings enlisted above. On the other hand, it is to be noted that PDP 1 has the highest percentage rate of disbursement at 81% while PDP 3 has the lowest at 30%. This is to be interpreted in the context of the main activities of the projects. PDP 1 and PDP 4 could continue uninterruptedly with their civil works, notwithstanding the pandemic situation, while PDP 2 and PDP 3 had quite a setback since their activities were more of a human nature. Hoping for a more positive year, opportunities (PDP 2) and trainings and internships (PDP 3) will gain their expected impetus during 2022. It is to be noted however, that even though the disbursement is relatively low, the funds will nevertheless be absorbed until end of April 2024.

Referring to the special condition related to the 50% hard vs soft measures (refer to Annex 9), a long-debated issue became even more crucial to the continuation of the programme during 2021. The problem persisted since the term 'infrastructure' is nowhere clearly defined in the programme's Regulations and it had never before been interpreted as including 'equipment and related software'.

It so happened that, in a positive reply to an official request in budget shifts, the FMO remarked that it maintains its view "*that infrastructure / equipment and related software would constitute hard measures while training of staff would be considered soft measure*" (email dated 29.June.2021). In the same correspondence, and as the most reasonable way forward, FMO suggested increasing the percentage ceiling for hard measures for the programme, as had been agreed in principle by the Donors at the last Annual Meeting. The PO was asked to propose to FMO a new ceiling percentage for hard measures (according to the new interpretation), with a solid justification.

In line with this exercise, in July 2021, the PO submitted a proposal, increasing the ceiling for hard measures from 50% to 75%, as a middle-level solution, which could facilitate budgetary requirements, especially for the SGS projects, that had already been awarded funding. The FMO, based on their own financial workings, decided that an increase of the hard measures threshold from 50% to 70% would be sufficient. However, since the Financial Mechanism was already halfway through, the FMO was not in a position to issue a legally binding definition of "hard measures" for the Beneficiary States. It was finally stated that "*Hard measures may include tools, equipment, machinery, installed utilities etc., that are necessary for the realisation of the project*" (email dated 23.July 2021). This statement shall not be included in the Amendments to the PA, except the increase of the percentage to 70%. Though the Amendment to the PA was not signed till the end of the year, the FMO confirmed that this increase was accepted by the Programme Committee in August 2021.

As a result, PDP 1 managed to shift unabsorbed finances within the Structural Works component to other hard measures, mainly the NAT equipment, the furniture component as well as to soft measures namely Standardized Assessment Tools and Library and other Resources components. Unabsorbed funds from the IT systems budget were shifted to the SIT Training component for more advanced courses and to the Library Resources component.

In parallel, unused funds from the PKU component for training and travel will be utilized for further online training in SIT advanced practice and SOS feeding programmes (all soft measures). Some additional standardized assessment forms and scoring keys will also be procured. Meanwhile, the procurement for resources for the school psychologists is still ongoing.

As already stated, PDP 2 faced extensive challenges to implementation caused by Covid-19 and its repercussions. As from the project inception, difficulties in engaging the envisaged complement of human resources were encountered. This issue is not exclusive to this project but reflects a nationwide shortage of professionals working in such specific social field. Consequently, commitments and disbursements of the project were affected. To such aim, the PP concluded two addenda to the Project Contract, in which, amongst other requests, an extension to the project's final date of eligibility was granted until June 2022. These extensions may allow the Project Promoter to overcome the delays and carry out the proposed activities in an effective manner, whilst reaching the set targets.

The COVID-19 pandemic considerably impacted also PDP 3 as a whole. Physical meetings had to be replaced by online ones (which is not always the best solution) and certain initiatives were postponed in the hope that things would be returning to some form of normality sooner rather than later, only to revert to online sessions when one comes to realise that the problem will persist longer than hoped for. With regards to PDP 4, the pandemic also affected the estimated deliverables of some awarded Digitisation Contracts, which eventually took more time than expected.

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

- **Active Citizens Fund (ACF)**

Project Leader: SOS Malta; Total Budget: €700,000. In November 2021, SOS Malta selected 6 out of the 11 projects submitted for funding under the ACF following the second call for proposals issued in May 2021. The maximum funding amount offered per project was €25,000 (100%). The online platform that is at the core of the Pre-Determined Project (PDP) managed by SOS Malta is at an advanced stage of development. A number of experts have been brought on board and the series of five webinars on democracy and rule of law kicked off in January 2022. More information can be found on <https://activecitizensfund.mt/acf-fund>.

- **Unlocking Youth Potential Fund** (2 projects are being implemented by Malta):

1. Through the **Women4IT project**, Tech.mt is ensuring that the gender gap and the digital divide continue to be minimised across the local population and to boost the numbers of girls and young women into the digital agenda. Tech.mt worked on an intensive marketing campaign to attract these young women to register their interest in the different job profiles, that are being offered. Malta is offering 5 different training courses that were found to be the most in-demand across Maltese employers, mainly Customer Service Support Representative, Tester, Project Administrator, Junior Web Developer and Digital Media Specialist. Training commenced in October 2021, receiving over 80 applications. In the first intake, 45 students have started their journey and will be concluding their accredited course by end of February 2022. The first phase of the project will come to an end in March 2022 and students completing the course will be awarded with an accredited certificate at MQF 3. The project leaders applied for new EEA and Norwegian Funds as an extension to the current project, including new deliverables, which will take the project to a closure in January 2023.

2. **INTERCEPT – Motivating, mobilizing, supporting NEETs through a green career pathway**, Project Leader: Jobsplus, Malta, in collaboration with another 8 partners from 5 different countries. The project management documentation and pre-financing payment are being finalised. A Gantt Chart, mapping the activities, outputs and outcomes was drafted and shared with all partners. The first four work-packages are now on-going, and the activities are being followed by all partners. The creation of visual identity through the launch of a website and social media presence are in process. The initial analysis on NEETs needs, barriers and best practices, together with the survey on common practices required for Green Jobs are portraying interesting results. Such initial results are the basis on which the NEETs training is being developed.

- **Regional Cooperation Programme - SUPMed Project - Reducing the Consumption and Disposal of Single-use Plastics (SUP) in the Tourism Industry in Cyprus, Greece and Malta.**

Project officially started on 1 July 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.

In 2021, the following activities were carried out:

1. WP2 – Communication:- AIS attended the first and second online press release events held on 7 July and 26 October 2021 in Cyprus; AIS attended monthly communication meetings organized between SUPMED partners and uploaded various social media posts about the activities undertaken;
2. WP3 – Selection of pilot hotels and research:- Stakeholder consultations were carried out to select three pilot hotels in Malta to be engaged on the project (Hotel 1926, Mellieha Holiday Centre, Hilton Malta); Hired external experts to collect questionnaires from staff and clients of the pilot hotels, monitor SUP practices in the tourism industry and analyze the findings for the nation; Presented findings which were compared with the observations and results obtained from Cypriot and Greek tourism establishments;
3. WP4 – Development of a decisions-support tools:- Helped in the formulation of a decision-support tool (DST) that quantifies operational impacts of SUPs and proposes alternative products (scientific and technical review); Developed training material and delivered training to pilot hotels in making use of the DST.

Fund for Social Dialogue and Decent Work - 2 projects are being implemented by Maltese entities.

Fostering improved working relations for Micro and Small Businesses was implemented by the **Malta Chamber of SMEs**, with a total grant of €15,620. The two main activities were:-

- Training to SME Chamber staff on employment law, aimed at empowering staff to better advise employers on working conditions (completed in Q3,2020). The 12-hours training was sub-contracted to Fenech & Fenech for €2,596, 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. The CEO and 5 staff members of the Malta Chamber of SMEs were trained. Each participant received a certificate of participation.
- Final Conference, organised in Q4 2021, targeting employers on better working conditions, good knowledge and practices. Approximately 100 participants attended the conference with experienced panel experts giving professional tips on the selected themes. Costing €8,205, the suppliers were all chosen following open procedures.

Promoting Improved Social Dialogue in Malta (PRISM) being implemented by **Servizzi Ewropej f' Malta** with a total project budget of €12,093. The PRISM project included the following main activities:

- Activity 1: Procurement of consultant for the compilation of a report comprising of a comparative analysis of the Maltese and Norwegian systems of social dialogue and recommendations for improved social dialogue in Malta.
- Activity 2: Online Meeting with the following Norwegian social partners to discuss the Norwegian model of tripartite dialogue: - The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions - The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise - The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities The meeting was attended by 12 SEM staff and another 7 external participants.
- Activity 3: Communication activities including uploading information about the project on SEM's social media platforms, writing articles on newspapers and producing a short video to promote the project.
- Activity 4: Final Seminar implemented through a Business Breakfast to provide information about the project and the recommendations presented in the report for improved social dialogue in Malta.

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.

Progress by the Joint Committee on Bilateral Funds

Pre-Defined Initiatives

Throughout 2021, 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 in a hybrid format both online and in person, on 23 November 2021.

1. Clean Oceans

Environment and Resources Authority: In the first quarter of 2021, the NFP received a request from the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) regarding a potential project on **Abandoned Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear (ALDFG)**. ERA has started drafting such a proposal with a focus on the strategic priority 'Clean Oceans' which falls under priority sector c) Environment, energy, climate change and low carbon economy, but will continue working on the proposal in Q1 of 2022, in view of its other projects with tight deadlines. The project shall aim at reducing Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear, by engaging key stakeholders from both Donor and Beneficiary countries to aid in the exchange, sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology, experience and best practice between involved entities. ERA would thus require

assistance in sourcing Donor Project Partners particularly from Norway and Iceland. The Budget envisaged may be large, so it is likely that the balance of the Fund for Bilateral Relations (FBR), would be exhausted.

University of Malta: In February 2021, the NFP was approached by the University of Malta (UoM) to fund a project which aimed to develop and test a novel, distributed, modular sensing technology for detecting and monitoring characteristics of pollutants offshore, at the seafloor and in the sub-seafloor. The project had an excessive budget of €132K which translates to circa 40% of the total allocated budget under the Fund for Bilateral Relations. There was too much emphasis on the remuneration/salary of the Research Associate at €62K for 2 years, which translates to circa 47% of the project budget. After discussing further with UoM, the budget for the project was lowered to €70K, with €50K allocated to the Prototype development and testing, €15K for research visits and €5K for Publication costs which translates to only 29% on knowledge sharing. The NFP communicated with the UoM and informed them that the bilateral aspect had to be given more prominence. In this sense, the NFP is awaiting a more detailed concept note with more emphasis on knowledge sharing in Q1 of 2022.

University of Malta: The 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 (UoM), was presented and discussed during and after the 4th JCBF meeting held in November 2020. This initiative, '**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. A formal request for approval of the project, was sent to the Committee on 22 April 2021, after the NFP discussed the project further with the Project Promoter. The Bilateral Initiative which was approved by the JCBF on 14 May 2021, has a budget of €74,182 and an implementation period of 1 July 2021 to 31 December 2022.

2. Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence

Dar Hosea: In May 2021, the NFP was approached by 'Dar Hosea' which is a non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), which strives to provide a safe space for women who are exploited into prostitution. 'Dar Hosea' aims to provide hope and support to women in prostitution through counselling, social work intervention, inspiration, encouragement and empowerment. The aim of the project is to create a campaign which gives young women some resource into ways that they may protect themselves. This may be done through talks at centres that host vulnerable young women, social media campaigns, papers and events. 'Dar Hosea' informed the NFP that they will work on a proposal in Q1 2022.

Fondazzjoni Sebh: Psychological Support for Victims of Domestic Violence and Violence

against Women: Fondazzjoni Sebh (FS), a Maltese Voluntary Organisation which provides the services of a second stage shelter for victims of Domestic Violence (DV) and their children, together with The Women's Shelter in Reykjavik and the Icelandic Family Justice Centre, had been looking to embark on a Project aimed at assisting the survivors of Gender-Based Violence. The proposed activities of this initiative were (i) The provision of psychological and psychotherapeutic support to women who experienced violence against themselves, over and above the current services that are being offered by FS, (ii) The cooperation between FS and the Icelandic Donor Partners: the Family Justice Center and Women's Shelter Association, Kvænnaathvarf in Reykjavik, to ensure implementation and promotion of best practice within the context of DV and (iii) A conference with the aim of disseminating the outcomes and any relevant knowledge. In January 2021, the NFP sought the assistance of the Donors to find a suitable expert in the area of Community Psychology to provide effective staff training in Malta and Iceland on Trauma Informed Care and Cultural Sensitivity in the Context of Gender-Based Violence. Thanks to the intervention of the Icelandic Representative, this request was met. A meeting between FS and the Icelandic partners and the expert to discuss the project further, took place and the Project Management Team was awaiting the budget of the expert to finalise and submit the application. Sadly, the project had to be performed scrapped as the Project Partner from Landspítali cancelled on 30 July 2021 citing 'time restrictions' as the reason.

Listen to ME! Following the 4th JCBF meeting, the Donors and FMO advised that attention was to be given to the budget of the Bilateral Initiative 'Listen to ME!', with a view that the Fund for Bilateral Relations is maximised and initiatives prioritised accordingly. The NFP discussed the application with the Project Leader and received a revised proposal jointly submitted 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. The project had a revised budget of €138,000 and it was envisaged to be implemented over a period of one and a half years. This project aimed

(i) to deepen knowledge about gender-based violence and domestic violence among professionals, (ii) to raise awareness on violence prevention, victims' rights and support services and (iii) to promote a networking collaboration among stakeholders at a local and partner level by exchanging and sharing, and transfer of knowledge. It was envisaged that the initiative would 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 NFP was awaiting a final revised application before seeking JCBF approval, but due to the change of Ministry Portfolio with Equality moving to the Ministry for Equality, Research and Innovation (MFER) and the risk of State Aid, the Project Leader decided to withdraw the project.

3. Health

University of Malta: In February 2021, the University of Malta (UoM) approached the NFP with regards to two proposals: (i) Project 1: To design a course aimed for the integration of refugees in the healthcare profession and (ii) Project 2: To build a national archive on nurse education and history for the Mediterranean to be located in Malta and another one for the Nordic region in collaboration with Norway. By end of Q4 of 2021, the NFP was still awaiting the applications.

Ministry for Health (MFH): Following the 3rd JCBF meeting, the NFP officially presented the three Health Bilateral initiatives proposed by the Ministry for Health (MFH). The initiatives, which had to focus more on a bilateral partnership for both parties, related to: (i) Biosimilars, (ii) Transgender Health Services and (iii) Genetic Services. As time passed, MFH decided to retain the Genetics proposal 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: (i) 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, (ii) Exploration of the Icelandic Module as a potential solution for childhood obesity and (iii) Exploration of the Icelandic Neonatal Screening Programme for rare diseases with a view to expanding the Maltese Programme. The project expanded in scope beyond the role of the National University Hospital, so it was deemed necessary that the Ministry of Health (MoH) would be on board as a partner. The Directorate General for Quality and Prevention within MoH had requested a Concept Note for the three Initiatives for the above proposal, but due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this collaboration had to perforce stall. The NFP approached the Chief Medical Officer at MFH regarding the above proposals and is awaiting feedback.

The Malta Trust Foundation: Therapeutic Mental Health Programme for young people in Gozo – the SUNRISE PROJECT: This project will address the rise of mental health issues faced by youths living in Gozo. It is directed towards tackling mental health disorders away from a hospital setting to a more informal community setting and it will be implemented 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 Activities are: (i) Through collaborative efforts with the Donor partner, there would be 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 and (ii) Provision of services to the target group based on the results of the first Activity, which can include but not limited to holistic group sessions, horse/equine assisted therapy, educational experience abroad. The Donor Partners are (i) UiT-The Arctic University of Norway and (ii) Marborg, both in Tromsø, Norway while the Local Partners are (i) Mental Health Association, Gozo and (ii) the University of Malta, Faculty of Social Well-Being. The submitted application was discussed further with the Project Management Team and a revised application resubmitted to the JCBF on 15 November 2021. The project which will be implemented over a period of 12 months with a budget of €87,000, was approved by the JCBF in Q1 of 2022.

Bilateral Initiatives in preparation of the pre-defined projects

Heritage Malta: After Stavanger Museum informed Heritage Malta (HM) that there were issues of capacity, the NFP requested the Donors' intervention. With the support of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, particularly that of Ms Marianne Krey-Jacobsen and Mr Geir Atle Bringedal, the bilateral initiative in preparation of Heritage Malta's predefined project PDP4 'The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through cultural heritage', 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 on 9 March 2020. After a lull, HM re-established contact with Stavanger Museum through the Norwegian Foreign Ministry's support in March 2021, with a view to find common areas of interest and aspects between both Museums where they could cooperate and network online. In fact, online meetings between HM and Stavanger Museum Curator Ms Anne Tove Austbø have been ongoing. The bilateral visit is scheduled to take place at a later date once COVID restrictions are eased and, in this sense, discussions are underway to develop the Bilateral Application for such visit.

The main Challenges for Bilateral Initiatives:

During the 5th JCBF meeting held in November 2021, the NFP outlined the main challenges it was facing with regards to the Bilateral Initiatives. These are the following:

1. Difficulties in locating Donor Partners
2. Costs such as Staff, Project Management, Administrative and Indirect to be covered
3. Equipment costs are not covered
4. COVID-19 Pandemic: (a) Appoġġ Agency and Heritage Malta perforce cancelled their Bilateral visit in March 2020 and (b) Increase in workload as Pandemic becomes the main priority (sharp rise in Domestic Violence and eating disorder cases)

The future for Bilateral Initiatives:

The NFP also gave a brief outline on the status of funds for the FBR. With project applications in hand (including UoM and TMTF for a total of €179,621), the balance in the FBR is €160,379. It is likely that the remaining funds will be exhausted if ERA and Health submit proposals for Bilateral Initiatives. If the €340,000 allocated for the FBR is exhausted, the NFP recommended that any savings from the TA and PO Costs and the PDPs, are shifted to the FBR, with a view to cover more bilateral initiatives. The NFP feels that we can safely retain the current Strategic Priorities.

Management and control system

In October 2021 the NFP together with the country officer for Malta at the FMO, Ms Mualla Cirakli discussed the changes to the MOU in relation to the change in the Ministry from Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs to the Office of the Prime Minister. This change had to be reported in an Amendment to the MCS. To date the document was not yet updated to reflect the change in the MOU.

C. LEARNING

1. Monitoring

~~Year 2021 was a busy year for the NFP as PO since a number of audits were carried out. These audits included the Systems Audit by the Audit Authority in Malta with a submission of their report by the 15 of February 2021, an audit on the Computerised Accounting System (CARS) carried out by RSM Malta in February 2021, the audit of the Management and Control System in Malta in April 2021 planned by the FMO and carried out by KMPG Oy Ab and last but not least the MT Local Development rapid assessment of reporting systems and data quality held in June 2021 and carried out by Ecorys South East Europe.~~

In line with the Monitoring Plan presented in the Combined Strategic Annual Report for 2020, and Art 5.6.1 of the Regulations, the NFP as PO held bilateral meetings with the Project Promoters in February, May, August and November 2021. All sessions were held online via Teams except for the last bilateral meeting in November 2021 which was organised in person with all the Project Leaders, Administrators and Line Ministries concerned. During these bilateral meetings the NFP as PO together with all the project leaders discuss developments, issues and risks encountered in the implementation of the project. Meeting online facilitated the participation of multiple representatives of the stakeholders interested in the developments, issues and risks related to each project.

Besides the bilateral briefs, the PPs are also obliged to send Project Progress Reports on a six-monthly basis i.e. twice a year, as stipulated in our Manual of Procedures. These reports contain description of the implementation carried out during the first and second six months of the calendar year, depending for which period the report is being presented.

Other very effective monitoring instruments are the Forecast of Likely Payments and the Combined Strategic and Annual Report. The Forecast of likely payments enables the NFP to take stock of the expenditure that shall be claimed in the March and September IFRs of that particular year. The PPs are asked to assist the NFP in providing the best realistic amounts. The Combined Strategic Annual Report provides a holistic picture of the status of implementation of the whole Programme in Malta to which the PPs are also asked to contribute.

As part of the monitoring process vis-à-vis the Interim Financial Reports (IFRs) and the expenditure being claimed under each IFR, the NFP as PO conducts administrative desk-based checks to verify that all expenditure being claimed is compliant with all the National rules and procedures and in line with the Grant Agreements. The NFP as PO also visited the sites or offices for on-the-spot checks in order to check on the hard components procured under the EEA and Norway Grants.

These monitoring exercises are crucial in order to ensure that the PP is being compliant with the Regulations and internal procedures, while implementing the correct activities to ultimately reach the required results. The progress towards attaining results is discussed during each bilateral meeting and serves also to recognise any inherent risks, which might or might not be immediately possible to mitigate. Even though both sides are aware of them, efforts continue from both sides to mitigate them between one meeting and another. This continuous, yet varied monitoring routine, also facilitates learning for both sides, that is the PP and the NFP as PO. The latter receives first-hand insight on the peculiarities of each procurement procedure carried out by the respective PP, whether it be services or goods or works, and passes on these insights to the PP, who, in turn can utilise them for future transactions and avoid repetition of mistakes.

The programme's IT monitoring tool, CARS 1421, which is web-based and hence easily accessible to its users, offers the possibility for Project Promoters to upload all necessary documentation related to procurement and expenditure of the various budget headings. This facilitates the process of real time monitoring and verification of expenditures by the NFP as PO and the Financial Control Unit (FCU). The NFP as PO carries out 100% verification of all expenditure as per Regulations Art 5.6.2, followed by the FCU, which verifies expenditure based on a sample basis.

The monitoring plan for the next reporting period is provided as Annex 5 to this programme report.

2. Evaluation

The NFP shall be issuing a call for tenders in June 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, effectiveness and sustainability of the financial contribution*". The NFP will be happy to discuss the ToRS with the Results and Evaluation team at the FMO when the times comes. Results of this evaluation exercise will be presented in the Final Combined Strategic and Annual Report, on completion of the programme.

The Evaluation Plan shall be provided as Annex 6 to this programme report once the TORs are finalised.

3. Lessons learned

Year 2021 was as difficult in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic as the year before. Technology continued to be the best ally in the circumstances with meetings being held on Teams or Zoom for business continuity. Despite all the challenges, all the PPs did their utmost in reaching the outcomes, outputs and indicators listed in their projects. Having said this, the PPs still feel that the restrictions in travel, no physical contact and the delays in shipping could lead to challenges in reaching the targets. Unfortunately, not all the partners involved in the projects engaged in online delivery of their services. Some preferred to be physically in Malta to deliver their training. Case in point is the Donor Project Partner for PDP3. As a result of this, the Project Leader had to delay a substantial amount of the activities that are to be delivered by KS.

PDP1: Sensory Integration Therapy Centre: The delay in the delivery of the floor and wall matting for the clinics which were procured from the UK, resulted in a delay in the final set up of the service. Besides, the occupational therapists targeted to commence the services at the SIT centre were re-assigned to perform contact tracing duties for a period of over 6 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This delayed the commencement of services and continued to increase the waiting list. Consequently, parents complained of prolonged waiting time for services. Staff are doing their best to accommodate and provide programmes without having any negative impact on the quality of the service.

Psychological Services: Delays in the procurement of the psychologists' resources due to pressures on the MFH procurement department has delayed the commencement of the services on site. However, this should be over come within the first few months of 2022.

PDP2: - COVID-19 brought about many changes to the overall project implementation. Sessions with youths, meetings and therapy are now being provided partially remotely. Nonetheless, service is still being delivered in an effective and efficient manner. COVID-19 lockdown measures also affected youths engaging in an

opportunity. Since some educational institutions were forced to shut their business for a period of time, opportunities were put on hold and delayed accordingly. PP made sure that time lost because of measures imposed due to COVID-19 is regained. Youths were being continuously encouraged to succeed in their opportunity and eventually integrate in the labour market, even though sometimes proving difficult to keep in contact virtually with some youths.

PDP4: - Since the COVID-19 pandemic continued affecting the travel restriction even in 2021, this was once again an extensive challenge for the Maritime Museum since Heritage Malta depends highly on tourism. Nevertheless, HM focused on other activities in the project that could continue despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The NFP as PO performed on the spot checks both at the Maritime Museum and at HM's main office in Kalkara. Following these checks and the follow ups and recommendations put forward by the NFP as PO, HM staff working on the project took note of these recommendations in order not to repeat any mistakes again.

SGS Operator: A system audit and audit on operations was carried out on the Local Government Division during quarter 4 of 2021. The outcome of this audit was positive.

The NFP as PO had a very busy year vis-à-vis the audits in 2021 and this hindered other tasks that still had to be done. In view of this, and to strengthen the capacity in the short-term, the NFP decided to publish a request for technical and professional support services. The NFP as PO is constantly following up the observations listed in the audit reports with all the PPs involved so that they will not be repeated again and most importantly mitigated. As for the ex-post evaluation tender, the NFP shall plan well ahead and work on the tender document during 2022, in order to publish the tender at the earliest possible, thus mitigating any risks related to the submission and award and thus, allowing ample time for the contractor to work on appropriately collecting data and recording of results.

D. WORK PLAN

| Period | Activity | Responsibility |
|----------|--|--|
| January | Follow up on systems audit Audit on operations | NFP/PO NFP/PO |
| February | 2 February – EEA/NO Grants workshop for NFPs with Donors and FMO 17 February – Communications Catch up meeting 20 February – Forecast of likely payments 28 February – Deadline to submit CSAR (annual report) 2021 | NFP NFP/PO PO and CA NFP/PO |
| March | 15 March – submission of IFR Bilateral meetings | NFP/PO/CA |
| April | 26 April – Bi-monthly meeting – EEA and Norway | NFP/PO |

| Period | Activity | Responsibility |
|-----------|---|---|
| | <p>Grants Communications Workshop</p> <p>27 April – Launch of the SIT centre set for the Donors and the FMO attending the Annual Meeting to be present.</p> <p>27-28 April – Annual Meeting including site visits</p> <p>Launch of the 3rd Call of the SGS</p> | <p>Ministry for Health (PDP1)</p> <p>NFP/PO</p> <p>SGSO</p> |
| May | <p>Bilateral meetings</p> <p>11-12 May – NFP Results and Evaluation Network Workshop in Malta</p> | <p>NFP/PO</p> <p>NFP/PO</p> |
| June | <p>Issue of the Evaluation tender</p> <p>9-10 June: Communication Workshop in Athens, Greece</p> | <p>NFP/PO</p> <p>PO</p> |
| July | <p>20 July – Forecast of likely payments</p> <p>Bilateral meetings</p> | <p>PO and CA</p> <p>NFP/PO</p> |
| September | <p>15 September - submission of IFR</p> <p>20 September – Forecast of likely payments</p> <p>Bilateral meetings</p> | <p>NFP-CA</p> <p>PO and CA</p> <p>NFP/PO</p> |
| October | <p>Communications Workshop (tbc)</p> <p>NFP Heads Meeting (tbc)</p> | <p>FMO – PO</p> <p>FMO – PO</p> |
| November | <p>20 Nov – Forecast of likely payments</p> <p>JCBF Meeting</p> <p>Bilateral meetings</p> | <p>NFP/PO</p> <p>NFP</p> <p>NFP/PO</p> |
| December | Drafting of the CSAR 2022 | NFP/PO |

| Period | Activity | Responsibility |
|--------|----------|----------------|
| | | |

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
9. Agreement conditions

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 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of children and adolescents receiving Sensory Integration (SI) therapy in Malta | Cumulative number | 0 | 0 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 154 | 800 | Services commenced in May 2021. 154 children received therapy in 7 months. 800 children are targeted to receive therapy within 4 years |
| Level of satisfaction (by parents) with Sensory Integration (SI) services | Scale 1-5 | N/A | 1 (Strategic Report 2020) | - | - | 1 | 4.00 | There were no achievements reported in 2021. |
| Number of children and adolescents seeking Sensory Integration (SI) services abroad through the Malta Community Chest Fund or other NGO funding | Cumulative number | 7 | 7 (Strategic Report 2020) | - | - | 7 | 0 | - |
| Percentage of blood donations undergoing testing for West Nile Virus | Percentage | - | 100.00 % (Strategic Report 2020) | 50 | 50 | 100.00 % | 100.00 % | - |
| Percentage of neonates born in Malta screened for phenylketonuria (PKU) by 2021 | Percentage | - | 95.00 % (Strategic Report 2020) | 47.5 | 50 | 95.00 % | 95.00 % | - |
| 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 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
|--|---------------------|----------|---|---|-------------|-------|--|---------|
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of Occupational Therapists certified in SI | Cumulative number | 0 | 22 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 22 | 12, 2 of which shall be Norwegian OTs, who will not be gainfully employed in Malta | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 19 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Number of Physiotherapists trained in SI | Cumulative number | 0 | 2 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 2 | 2 | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Number of Speech Language Pathologists trained in SI | Cumulative number | 0 | 2 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 2 | 2 | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Output 1.2: Sensory Integration Clinic set up and operational | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |

| | | | reporting period | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------|---|---|-------------|-------|--------|---------|
| Number of Sensory Integration Clinics set up | Cumulative number | 0 | 1 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Output 1.3: PKU screening service developed | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| PKU screening service added to the existing congenital hypothyroidism screening as part of blood spot testing | Binary | No | Yes (IFR 2021) | Reported 'Yes' in 2021 | | | Yes | - |
| Number of Clinical Chemists trained in PKU screening | Cumulative number | 0 | 0 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 0 | 1 | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Number of Medical Lab Scientists trained in PKU screening | Cumulative number | 0 | 2 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 2 | 2 | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| Output 1.4: Nucleic Acid Amplification (NAT) testing developed | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| System and governance for NAT blood testing service in Malta set up | Binary | No | Yes (Strategic Report 2019) | Reported 'Yes' in 2019 | | | Yes | - |

| Number of NBTS staff trained in NAT testing | Cumulative number | 0 | 9 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 9 | 2 | - |
|--|---------------------|----------|---|---|-------------|-------|--------|---------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Outcome 2: Improved well-being of vulnerable children and youths | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Annual number of children and/or youth staying at the residential safe house | Annual number | 0 | 21 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 21 | 10 | - |
| Number of children and youths at risk accessing integrated services | Cumulative number | 0 | 325 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 459 | 500 | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 201 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 258 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Age</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Children and youth (0-17)</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 215 | - | - |
| <i>Young adults (18-29)</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 228 | - | - |
| <i>Adults (30-64)</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Elderly (65+)</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 16 | - | - |
| Number of youths (16 -25) in education, employment or training 12 months after having received services | Cumulative number | 0 | 0 (Strategic Report 2020) | - | - | 0 | 50 | - |
| Output 2.1: Opportunity Knocks (OK) pack developed for children and youth at risk | | | | | | | | |

| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
|---|---------------------|----------|---|---|-------------|-------|--------|--|
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of OK pack copies distributed | Cumulative number | 0 | 1457 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 2,139 | 2,000 | 2139 were distributed until end of year 2021 |
| Output 2.2: A residential safe house for young people (under 18 years of age) set up | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Capacity of the residential safe house of youths (in number of beds) | Cumulative number | 0 | 21 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 21 | 20 | - |
| Output 2.3: Integrated services for children and youths at risk provided | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Integrated services (employment facilitation; business start-up skills, confidence building) related to independent living provided | Binary | No | Yes (Strategic Report 2019) | Reported 'Yes' in 2019 | | | Yes | - |
| Outcome 3: Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of vulnerable individuals benefitting from services provided through the Small Grants Scheme | Cumulative number | 0 | 0 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 0 | 1,000 | - |

| <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 | - | - |
| Percentage of residents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their local council's performance in targeted localities | Percentage | 34.62 %, Baseline to be determined once localities are selected following call for project proposals | - | 0 | 0 | - | 38.43 % | - |
| 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 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of local councils covered by the training on good governance | Cumulative number | 0 | 66 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 66 | 20 | - |
| Number of public administration staff trained in good governance principles | Cumulative number | 0 | 89 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 101 | 20 | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 53 | - | - |

| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 48 | - | - |
|--|---------------------|----------|---|---|-------------|-------|---|---------|
| <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 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of pilot initiatives implemented under the Small Grants Scheme by urban local councils | Cumulative number | 0 | 5 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 5 | 6, 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 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. | |
|---|---------------------|-----------|---|---|-------------|-------|---|---------|
| Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of jobs created at the Malta Maritime Museum | Cumulative number | 0 | - | Reported 2023 and then annually | | | 4 | - |
| Annual number of unique digital visitors to the Malta Maritime Museum | Annual number | 16,000.00 | 19,051 (Strategic Report 2020) | - | - | 0 | 21,000.00 | - |
| Annual number of visitors to the Malta Maritime Museum | Annual number | 20,281.00 | 0 (Strategic Report 2020) | - | - | 0 | 25,351.00 | - |
| Average audience experience rating (on a scale of 1 to 5) | Scale 1-5 | 3.12 | 1 (Strategic Report 2020) | - | - | 3.12 | 4.12 | - |
| Output 4.1: Malta Maritime Museum restored and upgraded | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of Malta Maritime Museum assets digitised | Cumulative number | 0 | 3000 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 3,600 | 2,600 | - |
| Structural upgrade of the Malta Maritime Museum completed | Binary | No | No (IFR 2021) | - | - | No | Yes | - |

| Total area of visitor facilities, museum and exhibition space added to the Malta Maritime Museum (in m2) | Cumulative number | 1,086 | 1086 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 1,086 | 1,629 | - |
|---|---------------------|--|---|---|-------------|-------|--|---|
| Output 4.2: Innovative presentation of the Malta Maritime Museum's collection supported | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of events targeting audience development | Cumulative number | 0 | 0 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 1 | 6 | Organisation of week-long exhibition during Fresher's week at the University of Malta |
| Number of new temporary exhibitions displaying Malta Maritime Museum objects | Cumulative number | 0 | 0 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 0 | 3 | - |
| Bilateral Outcome: Enhanced collaboration between beneficiary and donor state entities involved in the programme | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Level of satisfaction with the partnership | 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> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

| Level of trust between cooperating entities in Beneficiary States and Donor States | 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> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Share of cooperating organisations that apply the knowledge acquired from bilateral partnership | 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> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Bilateral Output 1: Exchange of knowledge and experience between Maltese and Donor State entities facilitated | | | | | | | | |
| Indicator | Unit of measurement | Baseline | Achievements until end of previous reporting period | Achievements until end of December 2021 | | | Target | Comment |
| | | | | Numerator | Denominator | Value | | |
| Number of projects involving cooperation with a donor project partner | Cumulative number | 0 | 4 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 4 | 3 | - |
| <i>Financial Mechanism</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>EEA Grants</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| <i>Norway Grants</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Donor State</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Norway | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Iceland | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Liechtenstein | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Not specified | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - |
| Number of staff from Malta in exchanges | Cumulative number | 0 | 5 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 5 | 6 | - |
| <i>Financial Mechanism</i> | | | | | | | | |
| EEA Grants | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Norway Grants | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - |
| <i>Donor State</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Norway | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Iceland | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Liechtenstein | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Not specified | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Female | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Male | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Not specified | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - |
| <i>Type of exchange</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Online | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Physical | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Not specified | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | - | - |
| Number of staff from Donor States in exchanges | Cumulative number | 0 | 2 (IFR 2021) | - | - | 2 | 6 | - |
| <i>Financial Mechanism</i> | | | | | | | | |
| EEA Grants | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| Norway Grants | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - |
| <i>Donor State</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Norway | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Iceland | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| Liechtenstein | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| <i>Gender</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Female</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Male</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |
| <i>Type of exchange</i> | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Online</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Physical</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 0 | - | - |
| <i>Not specified</i> | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | - |

Annex 2: Communication summary

a. Visibility of the Grants and the donors

PDP2: On 17 November 2021, FSWS organised a conference entitled 'Showcasing the Success - Opportunity Knocks'. This conference served as a platform to present all the initiatives undertaken, targets set and reached, and successful stories registered to date. In fact, youth beneficiaries of the project, service providers, professionals and other stakeholders in the field were all invited to present their involvement in the project and share their knowledge and lessons learnt. Furthermore, this conference was meant to pave the way for future initiatives whilst also to mainstream such project.

PDP 4: On the 24 June 2021 Heritage Malta launched their project to the public. This launch was attended by the Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, Hon. Jose Herrera and the Parliamentary Secretary for European Funds, Hon. Stefan Zrinzo Azzopardi. This event had media coverage. The links to this event are the following:

<https://one.com.mt/heritage-malta-btaqsima-gdida-li-qed-taghmel-id-digitizzazzjoni-tal-wirt-storiku-taghna-1/>

<https://newsbook.com.mt/en/heritage-malta-set-up-new-unit-to-digitise-heritage-assets/>

In October 2021, the Digitisation Unit took part during the University freshers' week. A stand highlighting the work being done by the digitisation arm of the project was setup. A Virtual reality game utilising digitised asset by the digitisation unit was designed and launched and played by hundreds of students during this event. An internship drive was also launched inviting students to join as summer interns for 2022 with the digitisation Unit. EEA branded giveaways were distributed as a promotion from the stand.

b. Website and social media

PDP2 - Opportunity Knocks (OK) - The Project Promoter continuously uses Facebook and Instagram as these are two of the most accessible 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/opportunityknocksmalta>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/opportunityknocks_malta/

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>

PDP4 – The Malta Maritime Museum: local development through cultural heritage – This project is constantly being publicised through Facebook and Instagram. Links to these two Social Media platforms are the following:

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

<https://www.instagram.com/eamaltamaritimemuseum/>

The launch event on the 24 June 2021 was streamed live on Facebook and was also publicised on both HM's Facebook page and Minister Jose Herrera's Facebook page on the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=885476868714482>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=812240849677928>

c. Best practice examples

PDP1: The SIT centre has modelled the services on those provided by the first generation occupational therapists that have founded Ayres Sensory Integration Therapy. A mentoring programme has also been set up through the project funds to ensure that the therapists are guided in their day-to-day work by CLASI, the training company. Similarly, the educational psychologists were trained in the administration of ADOS (a standardized assessment) as well as training and mentoring on diagnosis and management, therapeutic interventions as well as working with parents of children within the autism spectrum.

PDP2: A particular youth was referred to the OK Project in Nov 2019. He was referred through the residence he was currently living in. He was 15 years old. Up till now, he had always lived in institutions and residences. He wanted to be part of this project to start focussing on his future. He wished to pursue his education and in fact, he started attending an MCAST course. Nonetheless, due to his mental health and social anxiety, he dropped out a month later. In Jan 2021, this youth was encouraged to start attending psychotherapy sessions which would help him to process past trauma, issues of attachment, and learn better ways to cope. The residential leaders of his residence had tried multiple times to help him engage in therapy before but he never accepted. This time he agreed to give it a try. Psychotherapy sessions were held in the same premises as the meetings with the OK worker, with who he already trusted and had a good relationship. He started attending sessions and with encouragement continued. In sessions, he had a space to reflect on his past and his future. He was also helped to think in the here and now and make a decision that will help him, both psychologically and educationally. In fact, in Oct 2021 he decided to enrol in the MCAST course again. Now believes more in himself and has new coping skills to be able to combat his anxiety. The youth is once again struggling with his mental health. He is struggling to engage and attend the course and sessions on his own. Nonetheless, with the help of the residence, he is continuing with the course and has started Work Exposure. The FSWS team engaged in this project will continue working with this youth and empowering him until he feels equipped with the skills he needs to lead an independent life.

There was also another youth who initially didn't know what he wanted to do. He communicated very little with the staff and didn't want to do any effort as he wasn't ready for change. He also had issues with managing his emotions and he was always at home. After several sessions as well as a pause he became motivated to continue school. He started using public transport and found a job. His communication with the staff has improved and he is also in a relationship.

PDP4: This project was selected by the Communications Team at the FMO as a best practice example for World Heritage Day. The team working on this project was interviewed by Mr Bernard O'Leary and their stories were shared on various social media. The links are included under the section *Multimedia*.

d. Multimedia

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:

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/>

The following links are related to the interview done by Mr Bernard O'Leary to PDP4 on the occasion of World Heritage Day.

<https://eeagrants.org/news/maltas-maritime-heritage-comes-alive-new-digital-collection>

<https://twitter.com/EEANorwayGrants/status/1383718183568220170>

<https://www.facebook.com/EEANorwayGrants/posts/10159412248887363>

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6789483978136027137>

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 |
|--|--|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Outcome 1: Improved access to and quality of health services in Malta | 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 % |
| | Total Outcome 1 | 1 | 2 | € 2,407,059 | 100.00 % |
| Outcome 2: Improved well-being of vulnerable children and youths | 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 % |
| | Total Outcome 2 | 1 | 1 | € 941,176 | 100.00 % |
| Outcome 3: Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities | Pre-defined | 1 | 1 | € 200,000 | 16.67 % |
| | Contracted through open calls | 0 | 0 | € 0 | 0.00 % |
| | Contracted through small grants scheme | 3 | 0 | € 225,170 | 18.76 % |
| | Total Outcome 3 | 4 | 1 | € 425,170 | 35.43 % |
| Outcome 4: Cultural Heritage Management enhanced | 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 % |
| | Total Outcome 4 | 1 | 0 | € 2,015,529 | 100.00 % |
| Programme | Total | 7 | 4 | € 5,788,934 | 88.20 % |

Annex 4: Risk management

MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

| Programmatic risks | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------|------------|-----------------|----------|
| Risk description | Risk related to | Likelihood | Consequence | Risk score | Response type | Validity |
| Inadequate programme/project strategy or processes of the whole programme | Both objectives | 1 | 2 | 1.41 | Avoid/Terminate | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | All four projects have now gained momentum. For three of them, namely PDP1, PDP2 and PDP3 year 2022 is their last year of implementation. Due to Covid-19 some outcomes might be reached after the project completion. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | The NFP as PO is constantly monitoring all projects so that all outcomes of the programme and operation will be fully addressed by the end of the Programmes i.e. 30 April 2024 | | | | |
| Inadequate programme/project strategy or processes of the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) | Reducing social and economic disparities | 1 | 2 | 1.41 | Transfer/Share | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | The PO SGS is currently planning on issuing the third call due to reported savings. In the meantime one project under Call 1 is complete whilst the other three are still being implemented after requesting an extension which was granted by the PO SGS. The project agreements under Call 2 were signed on 16 February 2022 with an | | | | |

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|--|--|--|---|------|----------|--|
| | | implementation target of 1 year. The NFP as PO and the country officer at the FMO continued attending every PSC meeting. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | The PO SGS is currently missing a staff complement who's last day of work was Friday 25 February. After discussions with the NFP as PO, a call is being drafted in order to replace the missing staff complement. Besides this, the PO SGS shall be issuing various other calls to cover the requirements of the Programme. | | | | |
| Technological issues related to CARSII | Both objectives | 1 | 1 | 1.00 | Mitigate | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | This process is now being repeated with the staff working on the projects under the SGS. Training is being delivered to each Local Council as soon as an invoice is in hand. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | The NFP as PO shall always remain available as part of the technical team should any difficulties or problems arise. | | | | |
| Obtaining permits | Reducing social and economic disparities | 1 | 1 | 1.00 | Accept | |
| | Description of planned response | 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! | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | The Programmes have now reached that stage where all permits that needed to be obtained are in hand. The only permits still to be obtained might be those projects under the SGS (if any). | | | | |

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|--|--|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| | Planned future response | The NFP as PO shall provide guidance to the PO SGS should there be any delays in the SGS projects due to permits. | | | | |
| Lack of time for proper implementation | Both objectives | 2 | 3 | 2.45 | Mitigate | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | The NFP as PO is continuously providing assistance through monitoring of the projects. Unfortunately for PDP1 the COVID-19 situation did not help since the staff who was assigned to work in the SIT Centre had to assist with contact tracing. Nevertheless, the SIT centre is already offering its services to the children in need. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | As for PDP1 the plan is to launch the Centre once all staff including the psychologists are available. PDP1 plan to launch the Centre on the 27 April 2022 when the Donors and the FMO will be in Malta for the Annual Meeting. | | | | |
| Operational risks | | | | | | |
| Risk description | Risk related to | Likelihood | Consequence | Risk score | Response type | Validity |
| Possible delays in procurement | Reducing social and economic disparities | 1 | 1 | 1.00 | Mitigate | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | All projects have now covered a considerable number of activities. The Covid-19 pandemic is now being mitigated and the situation in Malta is much better. Besides the bilateral meetings, the NFP as PO monitors the | | | | |

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|---|--|--|---|------|----------|--|
| | | projects on a daily basis by assisting the project promoters by phone, by email or even through a Teams call/meeting. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | The NFP as PO will make sure that any possible delays especially under the SGS is mitigated. This will be done by supporting the PO SGS through calls and emails whenever the need arises. | | | | |
| Tender offers exceeding available budget | Reducing social and economic disparities | 1 | 1 | 1.00 | Mitigate | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | All four projects have asked for transfer of funds from one activity to another due to lack of budget under a particular activity and reported savings under another activity. AS for PDP4 the Government has dedicated a lot of national funds to cover costs that are not eligible under the project in particular the cost of the structural works. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | The NFP as PO shall be taking stock of the projects that shall be reporting savings by the deadline of the project implementation and ask the FMO for assistance in shifting these funds to other projects and/or programmes if possible. | | | | |
| Tender offers found technically non compliant during the evaluation process | Reducing social and economic disparities | 2 | 3 | 2.45 | Accept | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |

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|--|--|---|---|------|----------|--|
| | Description of actual response | The NFP as PO verifies all payments that shall be processed through the upcoming IFR. The PPs are provided with recommendations whenever there are issues with procurement not to repeat the same mistakes again. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | The spot checks as part of the verification processes shall continue until the end of the Programme with the NFP as PO covering 100% checks. | | | | |
| Eventuality of appeals lodged following publication of further results | Reducing social and economic disparities | 1 | 2 | 1.41 | Accept | |
| | Description of planned response | 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. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | Although this eventuality is now less frequent to happen, the NFP as PO assists the PPs by following any appeals with the departments concerned. | | | | |
| | Planned future response | Same as above. | | | | |
| Retain the right staff in adequate numbers | Both objectives | 3 | 3 | 3.00 | Mitigate | |
| | Description of planned response | The vacancy for a senior manager will open and be promoted on the government recruitment portal. | | | | |
| | Description of actual response | The position of the senior manager is still vacant. The Director Ms Carmen Dalli retired in November 2021 and Director Ms Abigail Camilleri replaced her. The staff is continuously feeling inundated with work. To mitigate this, a call for technical services to assist both the NFP and the NFP as PO was issued in January and by February a | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| | | company was awarded to start its services. This company is currently assisting the NFP as PO with verification checks as part of the IFR. | | |
| | Planned future response | The management aims at having the full staff complement but this depends on when another call for the position of a senior manager is issued. | | |
| Overall risk of the programme | | | | |
| | Likelihood | Consequence | Risk score | |
| OVERALL RISK OF THE PROGRAMME | 1 | 1 | 1.00 | |

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

In 2021, The team of the Bilateral Funds Unit under the Funds and Programmes Division (FPD), within the Office of the Prime Minister, was managed by the Director: Programmes and Projects, Ms Carmen Dalli. Ms Dalli retired from her position in November 2021. Ms Abigail Camilleri, Director Funds is now managing the Bilateral Funds Unit. In the absence of a Senior Manager all throughout 2021, this unit was supervised directly by Ms Dalli and Ms Camilleri respectively. The Director was supported by two desk officers, Ms. Alison Mifsud Gilson and Ms Angele Azzopardi. Ms Mifsud Gilson 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, 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 2021 was held online on 26 May, via TEAMS, due to a lockdown and travel restrictions imposed on Malta due to 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 draft minutes of the Annual Meeting 2021 were sent to the FMO on 21 February 2022.

Other meetings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during 2021, the NFP continued the monitoring of the programme, notwithstanding the restrictions imposed through social distancing and avoidance of group meetings. The bilateral meetings with project promoters continued uninterrupted through technological means. The same can be stated for the Annual Meeting held with the Donors in May 2021, and the Communications Workshops with FMO. The JCBF with the Committee members, as well as the bilateral monitoring meeting held in November 2021, were organised at a hotel in Malta. For the JCBF meeting, only the National focal Point and the representative from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Malta were physically present while the other Committee members and observers joined this meeting online via TEAMS. As for the bilateral monitoring meetings, all the project leaders attended this meeting physically and had the opportunity to meet the new Director Funds.

Promotion and information activities

The NFP took the opportunity to join a beach cleaning event in June 2021 with the Ministry for Environment, where it was possible to disseminate information about the grants through the distribution of promotional items during the same event.

No mass events could be held, and this hindered the NFP to organise any publicity events.

Budget overview

In accordance with Article 9.3 of the Regulations on the EEA and Norway Grants, the NFP annually submits two Technical Assistance Interim Financial Reports (IFRs), which are certified by the Certifying Authority in accordance with Article 5.4 of the Regulations and approved by the FMC. The two IFRs submitted this year in February and September reported nil certified expenditure.

The following table presents an overview of the expenditure financed through the Technical Assistance budget which were processed by the end of December 2021 and are still to be certified in the next IFR in March 2022.

| | Allo- cate d Tot al Bud get | Plann ed expen diture till end Dece mber 2021 | Actual expen diture till end Dece mber 2021 | Total Cumula tive Disburs ement till end Decem ber 2021 | Plann ed expen diture for year endin g Dece mber 2022 |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| T C T A L S | 340 ,00 0 | 43,28 7.37 | 16,85 6.64 | 150,05 6.64 | 50,59 3.00 |

| Description | Allocated Budget | Expenditure incurred (i.e. processed through the computerised accounting system) by end of December 2021 |
|--|---------------------|--|
| I. Additional management systems (article 8.11.2 (a)) | €200,000 | €132,250.28 |
| II. Monitoring Committee, annual and other meetings (article 8.11.2 (b)) | €39,000 | €5,409.88 |
| III. Meetings and Conferences to share experience (article 8.11.2 (c)) | €44,000 | €5,755.70 |

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| IV. Promotional and information activities (article 8.11.2 (d)) | €25,000 | €6,646.47 |
| V. Audits (article 8.11.2 (e)) | €10,000 | €0 |
| VII. Reviews and evaluations (article 8.11.2 (g)) | €20,000 | €0 |
| VIII. Implementation of the FM 2009-2014 (article 8.11.2 (g)) | €2,000 | €0 |
| TOTAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE | €340,000.00 | €150,062.33 |

Procurement

The above-mentioned activities involved two claims for reimbursement of the salaries of one programme manager, and the procurement of promotional and information activities that is the diaries for year 2021. The relative procurement procedures as stipulated in section 5.1.1 'Public Procurement' of the Manual of Procedures were strictly observed.

Staffing

| National Focal Point | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Name of staff | Official position | Main tasks | Level of effort (% of working time) | Funded through the Grants (Y/N) |
| Ing Anthony Camilleri | Director General (Funds and Programmes Division) | Head of NFP | 10% | N |
| Ms Carmen Dalli (until November 2021) | Director (Programmes and Projects) | NFP as PO - Monitoring the implementation of the management functions of PO | 40% | N |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Ms Abigail Camilleri (replaced Carmen Dalli) | Director (Funds) | NFP as PO - Monitoring the implementation of the management functions of PO | 20% | 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) |
| Certifying Authority | | | | |
| Name of staff | Official position | Main tasks | Level of effort (% of working time) | Funded through the Grants (Y/N) |
| 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 |
| Audit Authority | | | | |
| Name of staff | Official position | Main tasks | Level of effort (% of working time) | Funded through the Grants (Y/N) |
| Ms Simone Sapiano | IAID Senior Audit Manager | Sample auditing of verified payments | 5% | N |
| Irregularities Authority | | | | |
| Name of staff | Official position | Main tasks | Level of effort (% of working time) | Funded through the Grants (Y/N) |
| Mr Mark Said | Director (Financial Investigations) | Preparation and Submission of | 5% | N |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|
| | | irregularities reports | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|

Annex 9: Agreement conditions

MT-LOCALDEV Local Development and Poverty Reduction

| General | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Condition | Fulfilled status | | | | |
| 3. The National Focal Point shall ensure that the Programme Operator ensures, that no more than 50% of the total eligible expenditure of the programme is allocated to hard measures (infrastructure). | Is condition fulfilled? - N/A | | | | |
| | Comment | | | | |
| | This condition shall be amended from 50% to 70% as per approval by the Donors in August 2021. | | | | |
| | According to the estimates presented in the Application Forms submitted by the PPs, the financial situation at present is as follows: | | | | |
| | PDP ref no | Description of Hard Measure | Estimated amount according to AF | Total Eligible Budget | % of hard measures/ eligible expenditure |
| | PDP 1 | Structural and M&E works | €1,719,498 | €2,407,059 | 85%* |
| | PDP 2 | No hard measures | 0 | €941,176 | 0% |
| PDP 3 | No hard measures | 0 | €200,000 | 0% | |
| SGS1 | max eligible hard measures | €649,138** | €1,000,000 | 54.1% | |
| PDP 4 | Structural and M&E works | €1,095,529 | €2,015,529 | 74.4% | |

| | TOTALS | €3,315,027 | €6,563,764 | 64% |
|---|--|------------|------------|-----|
| | <p>* this percentage increased substantially after a decision was taken by FMO that all the equipment and the furniture are considered as hard measures.</p> <p>** this figure is based on the total amount of hard measures under Call 1 and Call 2. The amounts will change following the 3rd Call.</p> <p>All hard measures in the PDPs are now set and the NFP as PO will not allow more shifts from soft to hard in the projects.</p> | | | |
| 4. The National Focal Point shall ensure that refugees and migrants as important target groups shall be included in the programme as appropriate, especially in the small grant schemes under the Outcome "Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities". | <p>Is condition fulfilled? - N/A</p> <p>Comment</p> <p>The NFP has, from the very start of the programme, ensured that refugees and migrants are never excluded from any project activities as one of the important target groups, even in the small grant scheme under the outcome "<i>Improved quality of life of deprived communities in urban localities</i>". The NFP as PO is participating as observer in the Project Stakeholders Committee for projects' selection under the SGS and hence, is in a position to ensure that this target group is given its due importance in all the urban projects. As for the other PDPs, the NFP as PO monitors the requirement of this condition through the bilateral and ad hoc meetings held with PPs.</p> | | | |