

CITIZEN SUMMARY

Fund: European Social Fund (ESF)

Programming period: 2014 – 2020

Budget available (Malta): c.€ 279.5Million (10% for Gozo)

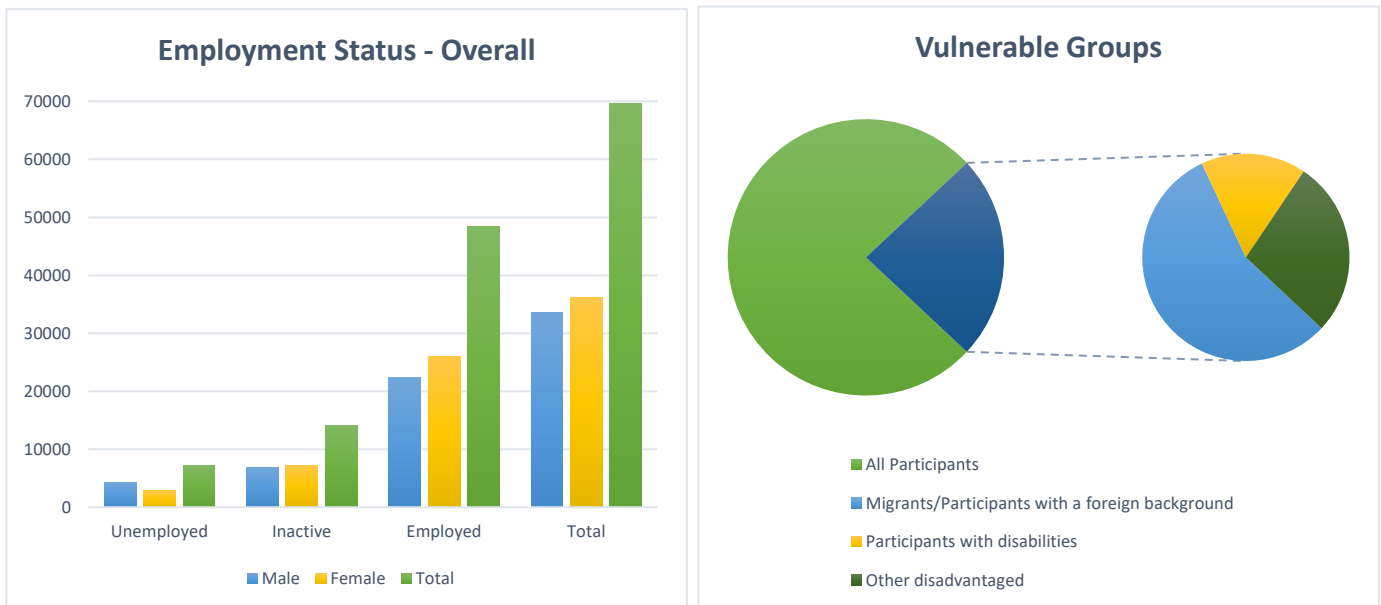
Reporting Year: 2022

The European Social Fund (ESF) provides funding for both public and private projects with the goal of improving people's lives through training and the development of new skills, as well as strengthening existing skills. It supports individuals in finding better employment opportunities and invests in building institutional and administrative capacity. Moreover, the ESF programme in Malta through the additional resources allocated as part of the Covid-19 response supported the financing of the Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) in specific periods.

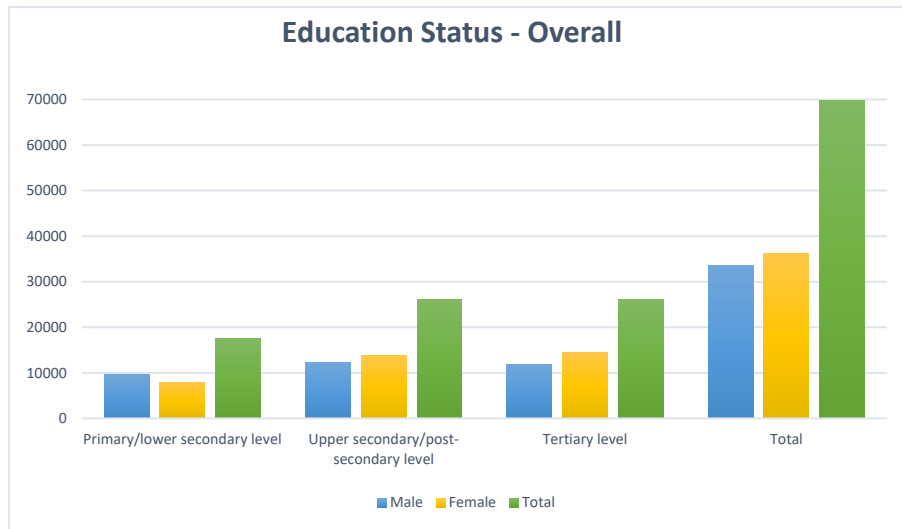
What Results were achieved as at the end of 2022?

Fifty-four projects were being implemented including three aid schemes and **one** financial instrument in 2022. The list of projects can be found on fondi.eu. As the current programming period ends in 2023, activities on the ground are nearing completion. By the end of 2022, a total of 21 projects and 1 aid scheme were completed. This includes 14 projects and the WSS which were completed in 2022.

Through ESF (excluding WSS) 69,700 participants in Malta benefited from ESF interventions that aim to support people in increasing their employability including with a focus on young people; improving the health sector and supporting inclusion particularly for those at a higher risk of exclusion; improving educational attainment; and optimise the delivery of the public service while supporting social partners to engage in social dialogue process.



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Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, 72,553 persons had their employment sustained through ESF support under the Wage Subsidy Scheme with 40% of the persons supported were women and 34% persons with foreign background.

What projects were in implementation throughout 2022?

EMPLOYABILITY

€32.2M
committed

2 projects
1 aid scheme

The **Training for Employment (TFE)** project continued being implemented aiming to increase employability through various means including by offering hands-on experience in a real working environment, as well as by providing up-skilling and re-skilling opportunities. The TFE project supported 7,185 participants (52% women), 49% were in employment within 6 months and 50% of the participants gained a formal qualification.

The **Youth Guarantee 2.0** programme through preventative actions such as the SEC classes assisted 3,520 students (52% women) in obtaining a SEC certificate by end 2022. The project also includes the NEETS (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) activation scheme, and will be supporting research on the current NEETS aged 15-29 to better map the target groups in a post-pandemic reality and to gauge the target groups skills-set (including digital skills and awareness of green transition).

The twelve **small projects** run by NGOs approved in 2021 reached 1,104 participants (41% women) by end 2022 of which 592 participants were migrants or persons with a foreign background, 75 were persons with disabilities and 208 were children.

The **INK project** continued providing training and coaching services to persons with disabilities reaching 220 individuals; it also provided training

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND HEALTH



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to 232 front liners, 525 employers, and 133 parents to help persons with disabilities become more independent.

The **Matthew** project developed and delivered a pilot after school intervention programme for literacy and numeracy skills for children in church schools, and another two projects worked with vulnerable youths in the process of de-institutionalisation by giving specialised training/mentoring by professionals, together with a number of activities aimed to facilitate social inclusion.

Regarding projects targeting the strengthening the capacity of systems and structure within the health and care services, the **Developing Allied Health Capacity to Sustain Health Care Needs** project successfully supported the education of 14 students (13 women) all of whom completed their studies by the end of 2022. This project played a crucial role in addressing the previous backlog of Genomic Care cases. Thanks to the addition of new coordinators, Malta was able to effectively manage these cases. Additionally, since 3 Orthoptists received their registration with the Council for Professions Complementary to Medicine (CPCM), a total of 3,100 Orthoptic cases have been attended to.

Moreover, the **Non-Technical Skills Training for Healthcare Personnel** project dealing with both the social dimension and the cognitive element reached 3,524 personnel (69% women) in the healthcare sector.

Out of 23 projects funded under this area, seven had their activities completed by end 2022.

€41.3M
committed

23 projects

EDUCATION

€39.5M
committed

5 projects
1 aid scheme
1 financial
instrument

The main contributing intervention in this area is the **Investing in Skills** aid scheme implemented as part of the programme's investment in lifelong learning with a view to support private enterprises in providing training opportunities to their employees. Through this scheme over 3,300 grants were supported, these resulted in over 29,600 participants trained (over 49% women). The grants were spread across over 950 unique beneficiaries who benefitted from the scheme, out of which 88% were SMEs.

Another key project implemented under this area is the **Endeavour** Scholarships Scheme which has by end 2022 issued and awarded all Calls supporting over 1,100 students (51% women). Out of the students awarded a scholarship 81% concluded their studies.

During 2022, the **One Tablet Per Child** project continued offering catch-up classes with the aim to contribute towards the prevention of early-school leaving and to improve performance of students-at-risk, with over 1,046 students supported in 2022 alone. Moreover, a Working Group in collaboration with the 9 educators undergoing the Master's degree was set



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up with the aim of developing a strategic framework for an Home school Community Liaison programme (HSCL) feasible for the Maltese context.

As at end 2022, the **Further Studies Made Affordable (FSMA)** and FSMA+ Financial Instruments (FI) is supporting 429 students (38% women). The FI supports individuals in their studies at MQF levels 5-8 as well as other internationally recognized courses. This financial instrument is aimed to complement other existing schemes and grants supporting students in furthering their studies.

The Institute for Public Services through the project **Towards a More Professional Workforce in the Public Administration** received more applications for Academic Sponsorships in the first quarters of 2022. Seven sponsorships were awarded under specialised training for medical doctors to improve their skills abroad in the areas of Public Health, Infectious Diseases, Psychiatry, Neuropsychology, Diagnostic Paediatric Neuroradiology, and Gastroenterology. Additionally, two sponsorships were awarded in 2022 following the call for Allied Health Professionals issued in 2021, and both awardees specialised in Mental Health Rehabilitation.

Another project targeting the improvement of the overall performance of public administration service delivery is the project **Skills Development and Life-Long Learning for Technical, Operational, and Laboratory Staff** led by the University of Malta. The project has successfully concluded its training programmes in Technical Skills, Laboratory skills, and Health & Safety. A total of 325 participation instances were conducted, resulting in the training of 180 individuals (60 women) across 17 distinct training courses.

By end 2022, 6 projects implemented in this area concluded their activities. 3 of these were from the recently awarded projects led by Social Partners and carried out different studies aimed at strengthening the knowledge base for a stronger and more evidence-based social dialogue process. The subjects studied included: 'A Carrying Capacity Study of Tourism in the Maltese Islands', 'the Maltese Living Income', 'Enhancing Female participation in Social dialogue', 'Green House Gasses', 'Improving Technical Capacity of Social Partners, and Research and Development. Moreover, 3 other projects aimed at addressing institutional capacity, were concluded; these projects were led by the Planning Authority, Arts Council Malta and the National Audit Office.

STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY

€15.2M committed
19 projects



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SUSTAINING EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID PANDEMIC CRISIS

€149.6M committed
1 aid scheme

The Wage Subsidy Scheme implemented by Malta Enterprise was supported through ESF and REACT-EU resources in periods October 2020 to March 2021, as well as during January 2022 to May 2022. During 2022, government announced the closure of the scheme.

In 2022 verification checks continued to intensify as further data was received or clarified from a number of stakeholders, such as Jobsplus and the Commissioner for Revenue. These clarifications allowed the MA to obtain the needed assurance on further expenditure under review.

By end 2023, all projects and aid schemes are planned to be concluded. Moreover, various evaluation activities will be in implementation and nearing completion in the areas of Youth Guarantee 2.0 scheme, Thematic Evaluation 8 on Employment and Thematic Evaluation 10 on Education.

The launch of the new EU Funds portal fondi.eu is planned to take place in 2023. This website aims to consolidate information on all EU Funded Programmes, covering each Programme's objectives, activities, available funding opportunities and achievements among others, in one single e-space.

The MA will continue to monitor the achievement of indicators and linked verifications. Work on verification checks on procedures carried out and related payments will continue, in collaboration with the Certifying Authority, to ensure full absorption. Efforts to demonstrate the impact of EU support on the daily lives of citizens in Malta and Gozo will also continue.

LOOKING
FORWARD

For more information:

info.eufunds@gov.mt – subject: ESF Citizen Summary 2022

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