

ESF Citizen Summary (reporting summary 2015)

In 2015 the new ESF Operational Programme (OPII) for 2014-2020 was launched in Malta following its approval by the European Commission in March. The objective of the new OP is to contribute to Malta's targets in line with Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in the area of employment, social inclusion, education and capacity building. With an allocation of over EUR 132 million (out of which EUR 105 million is the EU contribution), the OP will support a wide range of investments aimed at stimulating a higher level of participation in working life, including the participation of women, older workers and youth and at providing wider access to education and training to help workers to improve their knowledge and professional skills to meet the changing demands of the labour market. The OP has four priorities: investing in employability and adaptability; promoting an equal and inclusive labour market; improving education and skills; and strengthening institutional and administrative capacity.

Following the approval of OPII, 2015 saw a lot of ground work being carried out for the preparation and launch of two calls for proposals in the areas of Employment, Social Inclusion and Education. The first launched in May 2015 and the second launched in December 2015. Both calls were preceded by the pre-announcements in an effort of highlighting in advance the priorities for the forthcoming calls.

Several information sessions were held during the year which aimed at providing support on the eligible actions of the calls as well as technical support for the online submission. These were well attended, resulting in the submission of a good number of proposals by the assigned deadlines, 11th September 2015 for Call 1 and 15th April 2016 for Call 2. A novelty from the previous programming period is in fact represented on the development of an e-application form for the submission of proposals to be funded by ESF.

Additional activities carried out included the identification of the Intermediate Body responsible for two Aid Schemes as well as the setting up of the Monitoring Committee; the agreement on the selection and eligibility criteria for both the mainstream projects as well as for the Aid Schemes, the development of the Structural Fund Database 14-20; the preparation and approval of the Communication Strategy; the setting up of the Evaluation Steering Group and the drafting of the Evaluation Strategy; and a concerted effort by the PPCD in implementing simplified cost option (SCO) in Malta. The target for 2016 is to start the implementation and execution of the projects that will be selected under the first two calls in 2016. Further targets are the launch of additional calls under other axes and investment priorities mainly related to Employment and Capacity Building which are intended to cover all IPs. In Malta 2016 will also be the year when it will finalise the setting up of the management and control system and consequent designation of authorities, fulfil all the ex-ante conditionalities and ensure the testing of the full functionalities of the SFD 2014-2020 and provide for ongoing publicity of the Programme.

