

CITIZEN SUMMARY

Fund: European Social Fund (ESF)

Programming period: 2014-2020

Budget available (Malta): €132 Million (10% for Gozo)

Reporting Year: 2019

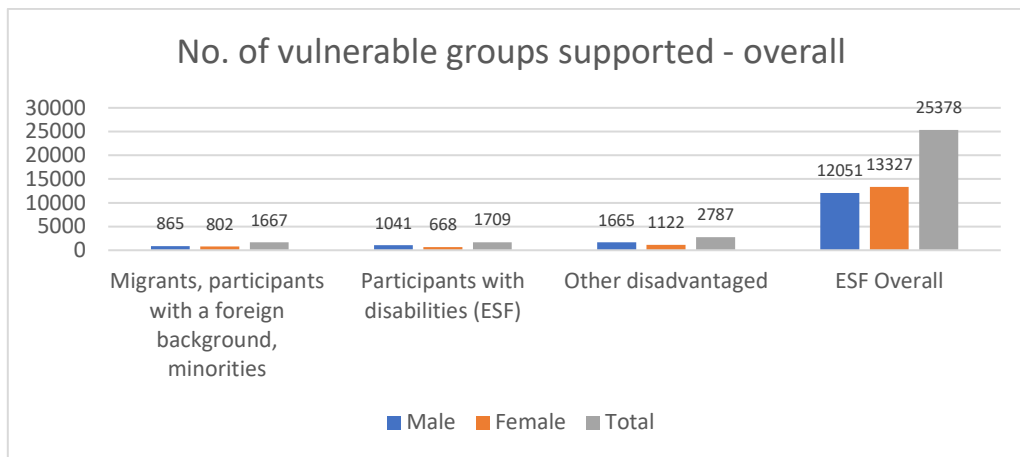
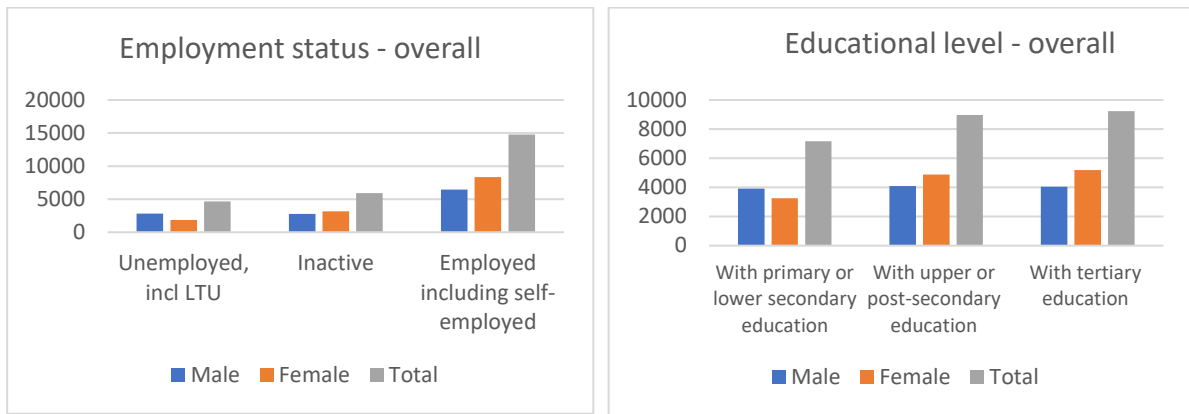
The European Social Fund, ESF, finances projects that aim at improving peoples' lives through programmes intended to teach people new skills or strengthen existing ones and to supporting them in finding better jobs.



ESF Malta provides funding in four main areas that aim to support people in increasing their employability; supporting inclusion, particularly for those at a higher risk of exclusion; improving educational attainment; and improving the delivery of the public service while supporting social partners to engage in dialogue with government.

What projects were in implementation throughout 2019?

As at the end of 2019, **thirty eight** projects were being implemented including **two** aid schemes and **one** financial instrument. The list of projects can be found on www.eufunds.gov.mt. By end 2019, **over 25,000 persons** were benefitting/benefitted through different opportunities provided by ESF projects implemented across Malta and Gozo. The following charts give a quick overview on the demographics and status of the persons supported:



The ESF supports activities in **4 main areas** as follows, providing key highlights on progress achieved in the respective areas.

EMPLOYABILITY

Providing individuals with new and improved skills, complemented with work exposure opportunities are the type of measures one can find implemented in this area.

€27.4M committed

2 projects and 1 aid scheme

Access to Employment (A2E) — This **aid scheme**, has helped 1,261 persons to date (50% women), is run by Jobsplus and aims to increase access to employment for those who may have difficulties finding work on their own, such as persons with disability and unemployed persons over 50. The budget of €12M, supports companies by covering up to between €85 and €125 per week of salary costs. 86% of participants who completed scheme including retention period were in employment after this period. 95% of these remained employed with the same Company with which they participated in the scheme.

Training for employment – This project provides training opportunities and grants to the working age population in order to improve employability by increasing their knowledge and hands on experience in a real working environment. The project is run by Jobsplus and has a budget of €9.6M. By 2019, 2,154 persons benefitted from this project. (of which 57% women, 62% below 25 years of age, and 2% above 54 years of age, 34% ISCED level 1 or 2 and 51% ISCED level 3 or 4). Moreover, the second research activity was completed as part of this project focusing on *Arduous Jobs*. The study was carried out in order to identify the occupations pertaining to the category of arduous jobs and at the same time identify segments of the market where these employees could be redeployed. The research provided three major areas on which policy makers

should focus on. These are providing 'Early-exit' opportunities, fostering lifelong learning and re-skilling and formal monitoring of workers' health.

Youth Guarantee 2.0 – This project aims to reduce the number of youths who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) by providing training and personalised assistance to those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed and of being socially excluded. It also includes SEC and MCAST prevention classes for those needing to re-sit exams. This is another project run by Jobsplus, with a budget of €5.9M and as of 2019 it assisted 3,382 persons under the age of 25 (49% women).

Eight of the projects implemented in this area provided opportunities to persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed individuals as well as those at risk of poverty to improve their employability prospects. Jobsplus, through the implementation of the Work Programme Initiative, continued to improve the chances of employment for the long-term unemployed by providing individual profiling, training and work placements. This project has helped 1,613 participants by 2019, 16% of which have entered employment and 59% obtained a qualification/certification. This project is now completed.

Particularly two of these projects, **VASTE** and **INK** initiatives, are supporting persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups by providing opportunities to maximise their abilities. This is being achieved through skills audit assessments, tailor-made training as well as work placements in the open labour market. On the other hand, **Knowledge, Training, Communications and Support Measures in Support of Vulnerable Groups** is an initiative which is creating equal opportunities for all through measures aimed at combatting poverty and promoting social inclusion. **Adding Value: Nurturing Learning Journeys at the MCAST Foundation College** is a €9M investment aimed at creating long-term structures, processes and resources through which vulnerable groups can be supported to gain employment.

The other projects tackle specific areas of vulnerability such as mental health, gambling and the inclusion of inmates amongst others. One of these is implemented by Richmond Foundation, i.e. **Mental Health first aid for youths**; project equipped trainers and developed a training programme (including training manuals, learning videos and a Mobile app) to reach different groups of professionals working with young people (e.g. teachers, youth workers and employers) providing them with the necessary knowledge to detect symptoms of mental illnesses and direct individuals to seek professional help. Up to end of project 835 persons (64% women) benefitted from this training; and a further 1,284 persons from own funds post project.

SOCIAL INCLUSION

€42.3M committed

11 projects incl. one led by an NGO

EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

€45.8M committed

7 projects

1 aid scheme

1 financial instrument

Investment in education and lifelong learning has been addressing various dimensions from early school leaving through digital technologies, to scholarships, new VET Masters programmes and training opportunities.

One Tablet per Child – The aim of this project is to improve the learning experience of students through the use of digital technologies. This is being done by providing year four students with a tablet each; moreover, project also includes training to educators to utilise tablets in the most effective way. With a budget of €12M, by 2019, over 12,000 students and 1,700 educators have already benefitted through this project. The 4th round of tablets distribution was carried out in 2019/2020 scholastic year, this time through national funds as part of

government's commitment to the programme. In 2019, the Maltese Digitised Reading Scheme was launched through which students were encouraged to read at their own pace and improve their literacy skills. Two hundred and sixty books (260) have been chosen and customised by the National Literacy Agency.

Endeavour Scholarships Scheme – In 2019 issued its 5th call for scholarships, this time using simplification mechanisms adopted. This project is run by the Scholarships Unit within the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE). Till end 2019 has assisted 775 participants (48% women) in pursuing their education at Level 7 and 8 (MA and PhD).

Further Studies Made Affordable – In 2019, the **first ESF financial instrument** was set up, with an allocation of €2M from ESF. The financial instrument is set to support students who wish to pursue their studies and would not have the means on their own to do so. Under this instrument, eligible students will be entitled to receive financial support, in the form of repayable assistance, for activities related to tuition fees, accommodation costs, subsistence expenses and other expenses to further their studies in Malta and abroad. This instrument is expected to be complementary to the Endeavour scholarship scheme which is also funded from ESF. The financial instrument is being implemented in collaboration with the Malta Development Bank. Students do not need to make any upfront contribution, nor provide collateral. 56 students (18% women) are already benefitting.

Investing in Skills (IIS) – This **aid scheme** aims to assist employers in training their staff to increase productivity and enhance adaptability in the Maltese labour market. Launched in 2017 with a budget of €5M, up to end 2019 1,513 grants were signed amounting to circa €2.8M, with over 300 unique undertakings which benefitted, 86% of these being SMEs. 68% of courses attended were in (i) basic skills or (ii) management, administration, hr, finance or audit. Over 6,000 (47% women, and 14% vulnerable group) persons have benefited from this training opportunity some of which more than once.

Development of Training Programmes at MQF level 7 – By end 2019, all 8¹ MQF 7 (Masters level) VET courses were launched at MCAST. These programmes were designed specifically through this project. The aim being to further enhance the attractiveness of the vocational graduate programmes by giving the possibility to students to continue their vocational education journey at MQF Level 7. 155 persons (30% women) have entered these programmes.

This priority is intended the aim to deliver a cost-effective and quality service both internally within departments and entities as well as externally to the general public and enterprises. Government believes that the public administration needs to be in a position to address the changes and developments of a modern economy. In this regard, investment in human capital.

Towards a More Professional Workforce in the Public Administration is a €3.6M investment focusing on the training of public officers in various areas both through national and international events. The project is providing the opportunity to public officers to learn through academic sponsorships, seminars, conferences, training and placements, and put into practice the knowledge gained at their place of work. By end 2019, 1,235 public administration officers (59% women) have benefitted from academic scholarships (161); attended international events (283); participated in specialised training in the Medical field (3); and received training in basic accounts (788).

STRENGTHENING THE
INSTITUTIONAL
ADMINISTRATIVE
CAPACITY

€15.6M committed

15 projects

¹ April 2019, 6 Master Programmes were launched: Environmental Engineering, High Performance Building Water Resource Management, Product Design, Mechatronic and Exercise and Sports Science

Mystery Shopper, with a budget allocation of €2.7M, aims at improving the customer experience at the various service stations across the Public Service. Through detailed reporting, customer service deficiencies are being identified and subsequently addressed, resulting in a more efficient and professional service. With a total of 581 recommendations reported in 2019, emerging through a total of **28 Mystery Shopping exercises**, this project focused, amongst others, on Tax and Finance (setting up of one-stop-shop for tax-payer services); Education and Employment (harmonisation of the information across different education websites); Social Inclusion and Social Welfare (extension to opening hours at Housing Authority); and Ministry for Gozo (improvement of the service delivery of the Cittadella Visitors' Centre through a number of recommendations). Additionally, through the **Public Service Quality Award** which was introduced in 2019, departments/entities are being incentivised to improve their service in order to reach the required criteria for the achievement of the Award.

The SpatialTrain Scholarships Scheme aims to provide quality tertiary education in the field of geospatial technology (geomatics) to the public administration within government entities. It will provide the human capacity and expertise to upgrade the knowledge base in the use of geospatial technology as part of the development of the national spatial infrastructure within the public sector.

2020, will see further physical progress of ongoing projects across all of the ESF programme areas. The challenge now is in relation to the evaluation of the implementation and effective impact on the ground. The MA will continue in its work tied also to verification checks on procedures carried out and related payments, in collaboration with the Certifying Authority ahead of processing the related payment claims.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, a call for small projects specific for NGOs and social partners will be launched in 2020.

For more information:

Info.eufunds@gov.mt – subject ESF Citizen Summary 2019

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2020: LOOKING
FORWARD