

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME UNDER THE 'INVESTMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOBS' GOAL

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1. STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Within the context of efforts made at EU level to sustain the recovery process from the international economic crisis, Malta must take stock of its needs and challenges and identify actions that will contribute towards Malta's economic development and achieve a sustainable future. This will also contribute towards a sustainable recovery enabling Europe to make a full return to an earlier growth path and raise its potential to go beyond.[1]

The main challenges that Malta faces with regard to its ability to foster a high employment economy that delivers economic, social and territorial cohesion are generally in line with those faced at a European level, ranging from demographic and employment challenges, low success rates in education at the different strands of the education cycle, and inequalities within the labour market, and beyond, which hinder a number of individuals from leading a dignified life.

a. Ageing Demographics

As in other EU Member States, although to a different degree, Malta is facing an ageing population leading towards a higher dependency ratio and a smaller productive workforce. The forecast is that Malta is expected to face significant increases between 2013 and 2035 in the older population segment of 65-plus of 16.2% to 24.8% and an increase from 6.8% to 13.7% for the 75-plus.[2] Malta's ageing demographics will have a direct impact on the socio-economic growth of the country. These areas include employment, health, social inclusion, poverty, employment, lifelong learning, and productivity, amongst others.

In this regard, Malta will seek to increase its working population, particularly by focusing on the activity rates of different target groups of the population (particularly women) and on increasing healthy life years. The aim is to increase productivity levels as well as

contribute towards decreasing dependency ratios through the achievement of a larger and healthier workforce.

This approach is in line with the Council Recommendation for Malta,[3] whereby Malta has been urged to undertake measures aimed at increasing the statutory retirement age. Taking into account this Country Specific Recommendation (CSR), Government launched a policy document entitled A National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing[4] in November 2013 which primarily seeks to increase active participation in the labour market, participation in society and independent living of the older population.

b. Employment challenges

A particular success achieved by Malta is that whilst many Member States saw their economies contract resulting in increases in unemployment levels, Malta – together with Austria, Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg - registered an increase in total employment over the 2008 rate. During this period, employment in Malta increased in 2013 by 6.2 percentage points over 2007 figures and has led Malta to meet the EU 2020 National Reform Programme target of 62.9% in 2012.[5] Further progress was also registered in 2013 with an employment rate reaching 64.8%.[6]

Whilst taking note of Malta's comparative resilience during the economic crisis and the performance in terms of employment levels, further investment is required to ensure sustainable economic growth which supports job creation and encourages labour demand.[7]

The challenges in this sphere mainly evolve around low activity rates, particularly amongst women and older workers, and increasing unemployment rates amongst youth. Compared to EU levels, Malta is still facing lower employment rates. In depth data analysis shows that the low employment rates are attributed to the low female participation rates given that the employment rate of males (74.1% in 2013) supersedes that of the EU (70.1% in 2013).[8] Whilst cognisant of the leap achieved to date – with the female employment rate increasing from 37.4% to 47% between 2007 and 2013[9] (with the main increase achieved in the 25-54 age cohort[10]), further efforts are required to increase local employment levels.

Analysing the female employment rate by age bracket shows that the rate as at 2013 was higher than the EU-27 for the 15-24 and 25-29 age brackets. This implies that at a young age women actively participate in the labour market at the rates of 44.3% and 77.6% respectively when compared to the EU-27 rates of 31.4% and 65.7%.[11] The employment rate starts regressing from the age of 30 onwards where a rate of 65.3% was registered when compared to the EU-27 rate of 69.8%.[12] Comparing the female employment rate at the EU-27 level and the female employment rate for Malta, shows that whilst the female employment rate at an EU level keeps increasing over the age brackets until the 45-49 cohort, in Malta this rate starts decreasing earlier on within the

30-34 age category. Analysing the employment rate together with the level of birth rates in Malta, it is worth noting that the highest number of births occur within this age bracket. This issue is further compounded when one takes into account the fact that, after the early child rearing years, the female employment rate does not then eventually catch up again with the EU-27 rate but continues to regress over time to reach 61.7%, 54.8%, 48.1% and 38.4% for the 35-39, 40-44, 45-49 and 50-54 cohorts respectively in 2013.[13] Notwithstanding, in recent years the female employment rate has increased across all age cohorts, with the main increases being registered for the 35-39 and 40-44 categories.

The low participation of women in the labour market has also been identified as one of the Council Recommendations for Malta which needs to be addressed.[14] Within this context, Government has embarked on a new initiative through national funds for the provision of free childcare services to working parents with the aim to increase the working hours of parents, especially mothers and single parents, whilst also ensuring the provision of a high quality service. In addition, Government will also seek to address this CSR through additional interventions within this OP.

With reforms in the statutory pension, the participation of older workers beyond 61 years of age has also increased. In fact, Malta registered an increase in the activity rates of older workers (55-64 age cohort) from 30.6% (2007) to 38.4% (2013).[15] Furthermore, during this period a positive trend was also recorded in the employment rate of the elderly – wherein the 55-64 cohort registered a constant increase since 2007 to reach 36.2% in 2013, with the 60-64 years age cohort registering an increase of 7.7%.[16] Notwithstanding, the employment rate of older workers, is still below the EU-27 rate of 50.3% (55-64 age cohort in 2013), which is partly attributed to lower retirement ages in Malta together with the limited participation of females within this age cohort in the labour market.[17]

Youth Employment also transpires as one of the main challenges that Malta needs to address in terms of employment related challenges. In fact, in 2013 Government adopted a National Youth Employment Strategy with the objective to strengthen the measures targeting youth[18] to address the increasing trend in youth unemployment. In addition, with the aim to adopt a macro approach towards the future success of youth, in 2014 Government launched a draft National Youth Policy Framework (2015-2020) which covers a myriad of policy initiatives targeting youth. The plan is to have this policy framework split into two inter-related strategies, one focusing on youth work and services for young people; and the other focusing on cross sectoral support for young people, including education and training; and employment and entrepreneurship.[19] Although operating below its economic capacity, over the years Malta has managed to contain its general unemployment levels, with a rate hovering around 6.4%.[20] however youth unemployment levels are approximately double the general unemployment rate which in 2013 stood at 12.7%.[21] Within the youth bracket, in 2013 the male unemployment rate stood at 15.1% and that for females stood at 10.4%.[22]

In this regard, Malta recognises the need to address the specific challenges in terms of the employment participation rates for different target groups (especially in terms of the

elderly, women and youth) and adopt varying approaches to ensure their sustainable integration.

c. Social Cohesion

Inequalities in disposable incomes are evident and are also increasing in Malta. In fact, throughout the years Malta has experienced an increase in the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion to reach an amount of approximately 99,020 persons in 2013 (24.0% of the total population)[23] which is depriving people from their fundamental right to live a dignified life. Although Malta's figures are still lower than the EU-27, the figures have increased at a faster rate than that registered at a European level.[24] Within Malta and Gozo, the levels of poverty do not vary significantly between the districts and pockets of poverty are found across different areas.[25]

Education is a fundamental pillar that contributes towards improved standard of living. In fact, a main determinant leading to severe material deprivation or at-risk-of-poverty rate is the level of education acquired. Persons attaining low levels of education experience a higher at-risk-of-poverty rate. Over the 2007-2013 period, the rate of youth (18-24 years old) at-risk-of-poverty attaining an education level of ISCED Level 0-2 has more than doubled[26] implying that there is a real need to address this challenge. The correlation between education and poverty is also evident for children and the level of education of their parents - in this regard, the higher the level of education of the parents, the less is the likelihood that the child will face poverty and social exclusion problems. This trend is also reflected in the case of registered unemployed whereby the majority of persons have low levels of education and also face a higher risk of in-work poverty.

In line with the analysis carried out in section 3.1.5 of the Partnership Agreement, the target groups that raise particular concerns when it comes to poverty and social exclusion related matters in Malta are children, youth, the elderly, women, persons with disability, the working poor and the unemployed. This calls for Government to identify targeted approaches taking into account the different requirements of the individual groups with a view to meet the several needs of individuals and support the sustainable integration to quality employment.[27] In particular, focus needs to be directed to improve access to education and skills to improve attainment levels for people to move out of poverty.

d. Health inequalities

Based on the demographic trends that Malta is facing,[28] the health sector has a crucial role to play in ensuring the provision of adequate health services with a view of ascertaining a healthy workforce which will in turn contribute towards longer participation rates within the labour market. In addition, the health services also face high

levels of non communicable diseases (NCD) which represent the biggest cause of mortality rates across the world, consequently having a considerable economic and social impact.[29]

Unhealthy diets, coupled with physical inactivity, tobacco use and alcohol abuse are the main determinants linked to NCD. In Malta, this represents a major challenge since society is facing an increasing prevalence of obesity across all age groups, with Maltese children and adults being amongst the most overweight both within Europe as well as globally.[30] In fact, according to the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey carried out amongst school children about 26% of girls and 35% of boys are obese or overweight.[31] In this regard, education is considered an important tool to reduce health inequalities since there is a correlation between the body mass index and the level of education, with the body mass index registering a decrease with increasing education levels.[32] Within this context, Government has launched ‘A National Health Systems Strategy 2014-2020’ with the aim to ensure universal access to high quality health services and to act as a horizontal overarching strategy to ensure consistency and a coherent response and action to the challenges that are being encountered in a holistic fashion.[33] Thus, investment will be directed towards appropriate measures to enable people to lead a healthy life (including by engaging in sports activities) and live their life to the maximum potential, whilst also actively contributing to the economy.

e. Education and training challenges

Since 2007 Malta has registered some progress in reducing the early school leaving rate and increasing participation rates in further and higher education. However, especially in terms of early school leaving, the progress achieved to date still lags behind the European targets. In fact, the ESL rate for Malta still stood at 20.8% in 2013 which is high when compared to the 12.0% for the EU-27.[34] Within this context and in line with Malta’s Country Specific Recommendation which urges Malta to take further measures to reduce early school leaving, Government prepared a strategic plan for the prevention of ESL in Malta to address this issue holistically. Furthermore, Government has also set an ambitious ESL target of reaching an ESL rate of 10% by 2020. Cognisant of the recommendation within the CSR to reduce ESL, in 2014 Government established an ESL Unit in line with the recommendation within the ESL strategic plan which recommends the constitution of an ESL unit responsible for ensuring an integrated systematic, sustained, cohesive and co-ordinated approach to address the challenge of ESL.[35]

With the aim to improve the labour market relevance of the education and training system, which also feeds into the third CSR[36], Malta is currently also going through an education reform focusing on smoothening the transition from primary to secondary education, ensuring a more successful secondary cycle of education as well as contributing positively towards the structural changes that the Maltese economy is facing through revised courses, curricula and research. Within this context, attention will be also directed towards determining skill gaps in order to reduce labour market mismatches,

coupled with a skills and mobility action plan to support the promotion of occupational mobility and flexibility.[37]

In terms of participation rates in education and training, although Malta has registered progress in terms of the participation rate of 17 year olds[38] in further and higher education which has increased steadily up till 2012 (reaching 83%), the participation rate dropped to 72% in 2013. With regards to the participation rate of 19 year olds, despite a constant decrease registered after reaching the highest rate of 61% in 2009, the same rate of 61% was then reached again in 2013.[39] A critical concern that Malta is facing is linked to the limited progress that Malta has achieved in terms of the percentage of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education with a rate that stood at 26% in 2013, when compared to the EU-27 rate of 37%.[40] Compounded with these issues lies the need to increase further the percentage of graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology which in 2011 was low standing at 13.1% when compared to the EU-27 rate of 22.6%. In 2012, visible progress was achieved with a rate of 19.1% when compared to the EU-27 rate of 22.8%, which marked an increase of 6 percentage points over the previous year.[41]

On the other hand, considerable progress was registered since 2007 in the field of lifelong learning (LLL) whereby an increasing trend has been registered. The profile of adults participating in LLL in Malta is above the EU average in the case of persons who hold upper secondary level of education or higher. However, adult participation is lower than the European average in the case of persons who hold a secondary level of education or lower.[42] Inactive persons also registered a low rate of 3.6% (2013) as compared to the EU-27 rate of 7.8% (2013).[43] This poses a challenge to ensure that LLL is embarked upon by persons who have lower levels of education or who are not engaged in an economic activity. An important positive observation is that up to 2011[44] the unemployed represented the cohort with a higher LLL participation rate of 10.6% (2011) as opposed to 9.1% (2011) for the EU-27.[45]

Malta still faces significant challenges in the area of illiteracy whereby the conclusions reached in the report of the High Level Group on Literacy issued in 2012 show that Malta had a 36% illiteracy rate, placing it in the 25th position out of the EU-27.[46] Within this context and taking into account the recommendation in the CSR to finalise and implement a national literacy study, Government adopted a document entitled a National Literacy Strategy for All to promote and enhance lifelong and life wide, high quality literacy practices which aims to improve literacy outcomes, resulting in inclusive practices, higher educational qualifications, and better job prospects.[47]

f. Institutional Capacity Building

Better regulation and simplification remain the main challenges for the public administration with 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.

The setting up of a Better Regulation Unit in 2007, together with the appointment of the Commissioner of Laws and the Commissioner for Simplification and Reduction of Bureaucracy, is a step in the right direction towards the achievement of this objective. In fact, progress has already been registered on this front with the Better Regulation Unit reporting[48] that administrative burdens were reduced by 15.6%, exceeding the set target of 15%. Moreover, through the introduction of an enhanced e-government platform, investment in e-forms is being carried out, in an effort to bring public services closer to the citizen and businesses, whilst guaranteeing an improved service delivery.

Moreover, Government recognises that there are particular challenges within the public administration which are hindering further development towards a business friendly approach. In fact, bureaucracy and lengthy public procurement processes present challenges, which in turn are leading to inefficiencies in the administration. For this reason, investment was made in the area of public procurement through the implementation of the e-Procurement System in 2012, facilitating access to public tender documents and simplifying submission of bids. This was also complemented through the introduction of the Common Assessment Framework[49], a quality assurance system which offers departments the necessary tools to improve the quality of their services through a framework of on-going assessment. Notwithstanding the progress achieved to date, Government recognises that further efforts need to be undertaken to improve the efficiency of the administration including further improving the efficiency of public procurement.

A major challenge in the sphere of the public administration is the need to focus on the improvement of the overall efficiency of the judicial system which has also been highlighted as a CSR for Malta. Government is placing considerable efforts and resources to achieve the desired results and in fact has already embarked on a Judicial Reform. In this context, in 2013 Government set up the Commission for the Holistic Reform of the Justice System. The Justice Reform will involve,[50] amongst other measures, the investment in ICT technology, capacity building (including the new jurist system and more support staff), the training of the judiciary, court personnel and other personnel employed in key stakeholder organisations as well as the upgrading of existing infrastructure. Government aims to support interventions in this area, with a view to primarily providing the necessary skills, training and capacity as well as ensuring a better and timelier service delivery.

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 is key for the development of a workforce with the right aptitude and skills to steer changes and achieve a renewed vision for the public administration. Direct attention towards the provision of training and up-skilling of the human capital element is imperative. This is considered critical for an effective public administration to truly deliver an effective high quality service.

g. Contribution towards the Europe 2020 Strategy

The Europe 2020 Strategy seeks to address fundamental structural weaknesses in Europe's economy in the wake of the financial crisis and in so doing, sustain the model of the European social market economy. The principles and measures underlined in the Europe 2020 Strategy ultimately serve to contribute towards the creation of an environment which is conducive to economic growth and job creation. The three main priorities of smart growth, sustainable growth and inclusive growth urge Member States to work together to help Europe succeed whilst taking into account the different needs, starting points and national specificities of MS so as to promote growth for all.[51]

The identification of the needs and challenges that Malta must address has been translated into strategic priorities aiming to effectively ameliorate its socio-economic development and competitiveness, whilst contributing towards the delivery of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart sustainable and inclusive growth. This Operational Programme identifies priorities which will be addressed by the European Social Fund. These priorities are based on national strategies whilst also taking into account the experiences gained and lessons learnt in implementing EU funded programmes under the previous programming periods.

The Partnership Agreement of Malta presents the overarching strategy which will contribute towards the Europe 2020 Strategy through the ESI Funds. In this regard, the Partnership Agreement has identified three funding priorities which are considered as the main overarching objectives for the 2014-2020 programming period, namely:

- **Funding Priority 1:** Fostering competitiveness through innovation and the creation of a business-friendly environment;
- **Funding Priority 2:** Sustaining an environmentally-friendly and resource-efficient economy; and
- **Funding Priority 3:** Creating opportunities through investment in human capital and improving health and well-being.

This programme will directly contribute towards the achievement of Funding Priority 3 which strategically targets policy areas aimed to meet the Europe 2020 and national objectives relating to employment, education, social inclusion together with health. Funding Priority 3 will also be supported through the ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF.

The primary objective of the ESF Operational Programme for Malta is that of achieving inclusive growth by fostering an economy which is conducive to economic, social and territorial cohesion in line with the third priority of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The Programme aims to increase the employment levels of the different target groups across Malta's socio economic fabric. Within the OP, 5 Priority Axes have been identified upon which resources will be focused in order to meet Malta's employment, social inclusion, education and capacity building challenges. The 5 Priority Axes have been based on the ESF's scope of support as outlined in the ESF Regulation (EU No. 1304/2013).[52] These are:

- **Priority Axis 1: Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital;**
- **Priority Axis 2: Towards a more inclusive society;**
- **Priority Axis 3: Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning;**
- **Priority Axis 4: Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity; and**
- **Priority Axis 5: Technical Assistance.**

Each Priority Axis is directly linked to a Thematic Objective as outlined in Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation (Regulation 1303/2013). In this regard, each Thematic Objective is supported by a selected number of investment priorities which will help Malta channel its ESF financial resources in critical investment areas which will render the maximum outputs, impacts and results in the ESF related sectors. The investment priorities identified will primarily consolidate and build upon interventions carried out under the outgoing programming period with the aim of ensuring continuity. To support the implementation of the strategy, specific objectives have been identified for each investment priority to steer investment towards the needs and challenges that contribute towards the overall development of the economy as well as contribute towards the Europe 2020 targets.

The Priority Axes together with the supporting investment priorities are explained in detail in the Priority Axes Section of this Operational Programme, however an explanation is provided below as to how each Priority Axis will contribute towards the Europe 2020 priorities and targets.

i. Priority Axis 1: Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital

The Employment Priority Axis of the ESF Operational Programme was developed in response to the employment challenges that the EU and Malta are facing. It is supported by 2 investment priorities dealing with access to employment for job seekers and inactive people; and the sustainable integration of young people in employment. The objectives set for the different IPs and the supporting planned actions are directed to support the priorities for smart and inclusive growth as part of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The main objective of this axis is to support the Smart Growth Priority as well as to contribute to the Youth on the Move Flagship Initiative. This will be achieved through measures supporting youth employability (including a youth guarantee programme at a national level and EURES-related activities), promoting entrepreneurship[54] and the implementation of job exposure schemes so as to enhance the employability of the Maltese labour force.

Furthermore, the Employment Priority Axis will contribute directly towards the Inclusive Growth Europe 2020 Priority, and will feed into the Flagship Initiative of *An Agenda for*

New Skills and Jobs. Measures foreseen under this Axis will aim to make use of the human capital resources available, taking into account the changing demographic challenges and increased competitiveness. In this context, through this OP, Malta will support measures reconciling work and family life, increased gender equality as well as supporting the shift from the unemployed to the employed segment. Such an approach will provide the Maltese labour force with enhanced opportunities to access the labour market including upgrading of skills through further training and education; bridging the gap between the supply and demand in the labour market; and introducing active labour market initiatives that enhance the employability of the labour force. Through these types of measures, policy action would be directed to promote the employability of the Maltese labour force; thereby increasing the employment rate and hence reducing the rate of at-poverty risk which is strongly correlated to unemployment.

Over the past decade, Malta has managed to meet its 2020 employment target established within the NRP of 62.9% in 2012. Through this Priority Axis, Malta aims to build on the positive employment results achieved with the aim to continue progressing and contributing more effectively to the Europe 2020 employment target of 75% of the population aged 20-64. Within this context, Malta has set a new employment target of 70% to be achieved by 2020.

ii. Priority Axis 2: Towards a more inclusive society

The Europe 2020 Strategy recognises the need to make significant attempts to address the issue of poverty and social exclusion and also address health inequalities. These priorities are mirrored in the second Priority Axis of the ESF OP for Malta. Priority Axis 2 is supported by 2 main investment priorities namely: active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability; and enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest. The investment priorities are supported by specific objectives aimed at contributing towards the Inclusive Growth Priority of the Europe 2020 Strategy, especially by supporting the *European Platform against Poverty* Flagship Initiative, mainly within the parameters of the EC's Social Investment Package as a policy response for this Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative.

The objectives and the planned actions under Priority Axis 2 are geared towards enabling people, experiencing poverty and social exclusion, to live in dignity and take an active part in society. It will support measures addressing the specific circumstances of groups at particular risk at different junctures of their life through education, training and support measures, bottom up approaches revolving around the concept of Family Resource Centres, targeted approaches towards children, measures supporting social enterprise, anti-discrimination measures as well as capacity building related actions to improve service delivery. Additionally, this Priority Axis will focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, including through engagement in sports activities resulting in a healthy society that remains active in the labour market. The focus will be directed towards reducing health and social inequalities arising from a person's health condition and

his/her ability to participate actively in the economy hence affecting his/her social well-being.

Through the planned actions envisaged under this Priority Axis, Government aims to effectively contribute towards the Europe 2020 target of fighting poverty, with a national target set in Malta's NRP of lifting around 6,560 from the risk of poverty and social exclusion by 2020. Additionally, this Priority Axis will also contribute towards the Europe 2020 targets of employment and education. This OP will finance measures targeting people facing various complexities with the aim to empower them and help them become active contributors to the economy through employment, hence improving their life prospects. In terms of education, particularly lifelong learning, focus will be directed towards those persons who need it most to improve their life chances away from state dependency. ESL targets will also be addressed including through the concept of the Family Resource Centre which aims at strengthening the family, as a tool to improve opportunities for its members to include a targeted approach towards children directed towards breaking the intergenerational cycles of poverty.

iii. Priority Axis 3: Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning

Education is an essential driver for growth as outlined in the Europe 2020 Strategy. In fact, education is deemed as a key instrument for addressing unemployment (particularly among young people) and challenges emanating from globalisation and the knowledge economy. In this regard, Malta recognises the need to sustain investment in knowledge, skills and competences of citizens throughout their life and across all sectors of education and training.

Investment in this Priority Axis will contribute both towards the policy responses of Smart Growth and Inclusive Growth Priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Smart Growth focuses on the need to strengthen knowledge and innovation for future growth which requires, *inter alia*, improvement in the quality of education and strengthening of research performance.[55] This Priority Axis will directly contribute towards improving the educational experience and its relevance to the labour market with the aim to limit the number of young people that leave education too early. In this context, Malta has set itself a new ambitious target for Early School Leavers of 10% by 2020 which will contribute towards the same target set at a European level. Through action directed towards strengthening the compulsory education cycle, investment will also contribute towards the Flagship Initiative of *Innovation Union*, which calls on Member States to ensure a sufficient supply of science, maths and engineering graduates and to focus school curricula on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

In terms of strengthening the research performance, through this Programme, Malta will invest in post-doctoral research and fellowship programmes to increase the human capital

supply that can effectively contribute towards R&I investment - thereby, contributing towards the EU Headline Target of increasing R&I investment.

Investment undertaken within this Priority Axis will seek to empower the future workforce by adapting to new conditions, reduce unemployment and raise productivity through an improved educational experience. In addition, further and higher education measures together with lifelong learning, will seek to consolidate investment in the skills of the current workforce. This approach is expected to contribute towards the Inclusive Growth Priority including through the Flag Ship Initiative of *An Agenda for new skills and jobs* and towards the Europe 2020 employment target.

Besides contributing directly towards the reduction of ESL, this Priority Axis will also contribute towards increasing the number of 30-34 year olds completing tertiary education or equivalent, for which Malta has set a national target of 33% by 2020 (from the 2012 rate of 22%) in the NRP. In addition, it is worth noting that given the direct correlation between education and poverty the envisaged investment in education will also support the Europe 2020 target of reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or exclusion.

iv. Priority Axis 4: Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity

Addressing the evolving needs of a modern economy is critical in order to ensure economic development and social cohesion. In this regard, investment in institutional capacity is key since the administration provides the institutional backbone for the effective functioning of the Maltese economy and society. In this regard, interventions under this Priority Axis will continue to be directed towards the strengthening of the role of the public administration both as a service provider as well as a regulator.

This Axis is expected to contribute towards the Sustainable Growth Europe 2020 Priority, primarily through the Flagship Initiative of *An Industrial policy for the globalisation era*, where it foresees support towards reducing administrative burden on companies and improving the quality of businesses making them more competitive. In fact, the ESF Programme envisages the financing of measures focusing on the reduction of the administrative burden in line with the spirit of better regulation, including the reform within the judiciary sector with the aim to facilitate the interface between Government, enterprises and citizens.

Measures foreseen through this Priority Axis will also support the Inclusive Growth Priority of the Europe 2020 strategy. Investment in the administration is expected to provide robust policy framework and will also contribute towards the effective and efficient implementation of policy. Furthermore, Government will also seek to invest in the capacity of all stakeholders delivering ESF related policies with a view to contribute towards the necessary socio-economic development of the country.

[1] Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020 – A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth,(European Commission, 2010) COM (2010)2020 p. 7.

[2] National Strategic Reference for Active Ageing: Malta 2014-2020 (Parliamentary Secretary for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing, nd); available from: <https://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Pages/The%20Minister%20Press%20Releases/National-Strategic-Policy-for-Active-Ageing.aspx> [Accessed on 2 December 2013].

[3] Council Recommendation on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Malta and delivering a Council opinion on the Stability of Malta Programme of Malta, 2014 (The Council of the European Union), 2014/C 247/16.

[4] National Strategic Reference for Active Ageing: Malta 2014-2020 (Parliamentary Secretary for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing, nd); available from: <https://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Pages/The%20Minister%20Press%20Releases/National-Strategic-Policy-for-Active-Ageing.aspx> [Accessed on 2 December 2013].

[5] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality. [Accessed on 15 September 2014].

[6] Ibid.

[7] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Towards a job-rich recovery (European Commission, 2012) COM(2012) 173 final; available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0173:FIN:EN:PDF> [Accessed on 7 February 2014].

[8] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality – annual averages [Accessed on 15 September 2014].

[9] Such increase was reflected in the three different strands of employment (full-time, full-time with reduced hours and part-time).

[10] National Statistics Office, March 2014: Annual Labour Force Survey Datasets.

[11] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality [Accessed on 14 September 2014].

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Council Recommendation on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Malta and delivering a Council opinion on the Stability of Malta Programme of Malta, 2014 (The Council of the European Union), 2014/C 247/16.

[15] Eurostat Online Database: Population, activity and inactivity - annual averages [Accessed on 14 September 2014].

[16] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality [Accessed on 14 September 2014].

[17] Eurostat Online Database: Employment (main characteristics and rates) - annual averages [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[18] National Youth Employment Strategy 2015 (Ministry of Education and Employment, nd).

[19] A shared vision for the future of young people: A Draft National Youth Policy Framework 2015-2020 – Discussion Document, (The Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, 2014).

[20] National Statistics Office, March 2014: Annual Labour Force Survey Datasets.

[21] Eurostat Online Database: Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and country of birth [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[22] Ibid.

[23] Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) Survey, 2013: National Statistics Office. [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[24] Eurostat Database: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by age and sex [Accessed on 21 April 2014].

[25] SABS (Sistema għall-Amministrazzjoni tal-Benefiċċji Soċjali) Database 2011.

[26] Eurostat Online Database: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by education level (population aged 18 and over) [Accessed on 15 October 2014].

[27] Commission Recommendation on the active inclusion of people from the labour market (European Commission, 2008) 2008/867/EC.

[28] Refer to Section 1.1.1(a).

[29] A Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non Communicable Disease in Malta (Ministry for Health and the Elderly, 2010)

[30] WHO, 2010 in A Healthy Weight for Life: A National Strategy for Malta, 2012-2020 (Superintendence of Public Health; Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care, 2012).

[31] A National Health Systems Strategy 2014-2020, (Ministry for Health, 2014).

[32] European Health Interview Survey, 2008 in A Healthy Weight for Life: A National Strategy for Malta, 2012-2020 (Superintendence of Public Health; Ministry for Health, the Elderly and Community Care, 2012).

[33] A National Health Systems Strategy 2014-2020 (Ministry for Health, 2014).

[34] Eurostat Online Database: Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[35] A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta 2014 (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).

[36] CSR 3: focuses on the continuation of policy efforts to address the labour-market relevance of education and training by stepping up efforts on the reform of the apprenticeship system. The CSR also refers to the improvement of basic skills attainment and reduction of early school leaving in particular by finalising and implementing a national literacy strategy. Also, this CSR urges the participation of women in the labour market, in particular those wishing to re-enter the labour market through the promotion of flexible working arrangements.

[37] Interventions relevant to Malta's blue economy and green employment may also be considered for support by ESF, as applicable.

[38] At 17 years old, students would most often be participating in further education – both of general and vocational nature.

[39] Further and Higher Education Statistics 2013 – Malta (National Commission for Further and Higher Education, 2014).

[40] Eurostat Online Database: Population with tertiary education attainment by sex and age [Accessed on 30 September 2014].

[41] Eurostat Online Database: Mathematics, science and technology enrolments and graduates [Accessed on 21 April 2014].

[42] Eurostat Online Database: Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex, age and educational attainment level [Accessed on 11th September 2014].

[43] Eurostat Online Database: Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex, age and labour status [Accessed on 11 September 2014].

[44] The 2012 and 2013 figures for Malta stand at 9.0% and 7.3% respectively but both figures are underrepresented due to the small sample size.

[45] Eurostat Online Database: Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex, age and labour status [Accessed on 21 April 2014].

[46] EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy - Final Report September 2012, (European Commission, 2012) Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf [Accessed on 17 September 2013] p. 36.

[47] A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014 – 2019 (Ministry for Employment and Education, 2014).

[48] Better Regulation Unit: 15.6% Reduction in Administrative Burden Registered – News posted on 17th December 2012. Available online on: http://www.bru.gov.mt/15-6-reduction-in-administrative-burden-registered_news-posted-on-17th-december-2012/ [Accessed on 6 October 2014].

[49] Common Assessment Framework Malta: For a Quality Public Administration. Available online on: <http://www.cafmalta.gov.mt/?lang=en> [Accessed on 6 October 2014].

[50] Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Better Governance, (Office of the Prime Minister, 2014).

[51] Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020 – A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, (European Commission, 2010) COM (2010)2020 p. 8.

[52] Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

[53] Based on the needs of the industry the ESF can also contribute towards this objective.

[54] Including family businesses.

[55] Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020 – A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, (European Commission, 2010) COM (2010)2020 p. 8.

1.1.2 A justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities having regard to the partnership agreement, based on an identification of regional and, where appropriate, national needs including the need to address the challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and the relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the Country specific recommendations (CSR), namely urging Malta to improve labour market participation of women; to continue the promotion of flexible working arrangements; • to increase the statutory retirement age and by consecutively linking it to changes in life expectancy; • Contributes towards Government’s target of increasing the employment

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>rate to 70%;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the EU 2020 employment headline target of 75%; • Need to improve the employment and mobility prospects of jobseekers, the unemployed and the inactive.
<p>08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility</p>	<p>8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the CSR which focuses on underlining the importance of increasing the labour market relevance of education and training by stepping up efforts on the reform of the apprenticeship system; • Contributes towards Government's target of increasing the employment rate to 70%; • Contributes towards the EU 2020 employment headline target of 75%; • Need to contribute towards addressing the increasing youth NEET rates.
<p>09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination</p>	<p>9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the CSRs which urges for the acceleration in the increase in the statutory retirement age and by consecutively linking it to changes in life expectancy; • Contributes towards the national 2020 NRP target of lifting around 6,560 people out of risk of poverty and social exclusion; • Need to support the active inclusion of vulnerable groups; • Need to address labour market imbalances, especially those which are gender based related.

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the CSR highlighting the importance of pursuing healthcare reforms; • Need to address the increase in mortality rates due to circulatory diseases mainly resulting from chronic conditions relating to obesity and unhealthy lifestyles which is impacting on the quality of life of the individual and the contribution towards economic development.
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the CSR focusing on the continuation of policy efforts to reduce early school leaving, and the need to increase the labour market relevance of education and training to further improve basic skills attainment; • Contributes towards the national target to reduce the early school leaving rate to 10% by 2020; • Contributes towards the EU 2020 Early School Leaving target of 10%; • Need to enhance the education experience; • Need to invest in potential low education achievers since these persons are at a higher at-risk-of poverty than persons furthering their education beyond compulsory schooling; • Need to address the significant challenges in the area of illiteracy.
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the NRP target of having at least 33% of the 30-34 year olds completing tertiary or equivalent education;

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the EU 2020 target of at least 40% of 30-34 year old completing tertiary or equivalent education; • Need to enhance the quality of tertiary education; • Need to focus on addressing the challenge in relation to the participation rate of 19 year olds in tertiary education.
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the CSR urging Malta to increase the labour market relevance of education and training to further improve skills attainment; • Need to invest in the upgrading of skills and to increase participation in lifelong learning at all levels to ensure a skilled and flexible labour force; • Need to increase uptake in post-doctoral studies.
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the continuation of policy efforts to reduce early school leaving, and to increase the labour market relevance of education and training to further improve skills attainment, including the reforms in the apprenticeship system, in line with the CSRs. • Contributes towards the EU 2020 Early School Leaving target of 10%; • Contributes towards Malta's national target to reduce the early school leaving rate to 10% by 2020; • Contributes towards Malta's NRP target of having at least 33% of the 30-34 year olds completing tertiary or

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>equivalent education;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the EU 2020 target of at least 40% of 30-34 year old completing tertiary or equivalent education; • Need to enhance the quality of VET education; • Address the need to increase the participation rate of 19 year olds in VET which is still a challenge; • Attract more students to study in areas relevant to the local industry.
<p>11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration</p>	<p>11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes towards the CSR, urging Malta to increase the efficiency and reduce the length of the public procurement procedures and to increase the efficiency of the judicial system; • Need to strengthen efficiency within the Public Administration with a view to ensuring simplified and improved service delivery.
<p>11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration</p>	<p>11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase the technical capacity for stakeholders delivering education (including lifelong learning and training), employment and social policies in the design and implementation of legislation as well as policies.

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

The analysis and development needs identified earlier on in this Chapter brought about the need to invest ESF resources in specific areas which could contribute towards Malta's fight towards unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Malta has identified four priority axes which aim to maximise the full potential of EU financing to reach the targets set at a national level whilst also contributing towards Europe 2020 targets. The priority axes reflect the thematic objectives identified within the ESF Regulation and are supported by ten investment priorities. Whilst the justification for the selection of the thematic objectives and investment priorities is presented under Table 1, this section presents the justification for the financial allocation to each thematic objective and investment priority.

In line with the ESF Regulation, Malta has dedicated 70% of its ESF resources towards 5 investment priorities distributed across three thematic objectives namely: employment, social inclusion and education. This approach was undertaken given that ESF related CSRs, Europe 2020 targets and national challenges revolve around these themes. A justification for the financial allocation for each Thematic Objective and Investment Priority is provided hereunder.

1.2.1 Thematic Objective 8: Employment

Malta has dedicated approximately 20% of its ESF allocation towards the employment objective, given that Government believes that further investment is required in this field with a view to address the shortfall in the employment rate when compared to the EU average. Despite progress registered, employment shortfalls still persist and need to be addressed to enhance Malta's competitiveness. Investment foreseen is expected to contribute towards Malta's national 2020 target of increasing the employment rate to 70% and ultimately contribute to the EU 2020 target of having 75% in employment.

Furthermore, constraints faced by youths especially in terms of youth unemployment and increasing NEET rates also need to be addressed. In this regard, circa 25% of the ESF allocation dedicated to this objective has been specifically ring-fenced for the youth investment priority. This approach is expected to guarantee sufficient resources towards this target group in order to ensure that young people are equipped with the necessary employability and adaptability skills to thrive in the labour market. Increasing youth employment levels will also directly contribute towards increasing the overall employment rate.

1.2.2 Thematic Objective 9: Social inclusion

In a bid to reach its national target of lifting around 6,560 people out of risk of poverty and social exclusion, Government has allocated approximately 30% of the ESF resources

to Thematic objective 9, which goes well beyond the 20% threshold established in Article 4(2) of the ESF Regulation. This commitment also stems from Government's strong stance on combating poverty and social exclusion which is clearly reflected in the Green Paper on Poverty. Interventions in this regard, will also complement interventions under the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

Furthermore, through this TO, Malta will also promote healthy lifestyles and ensure that persons receive the best possible health care services. The objective is to minimise the impact of health related matters on people's working lives and opportunities leading towards a better standard of living. In this context, Malta has decided to ring-fence circa 15% of the budget under this TO to the investment priority of *Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest*.

1.2.3 Thematic Objective 10: Education

Given the challenges Malta faces in terms of early school leaving (ESL) rates, participation rates in tertiary levels of education and the need to increase the labour market relevance of education and training to address skills gaps as specified in Malta's Country Specific Recommendations; Malta has allocated its biggest share of its ESF allocation to Thematic Objective 10 amounting to more than a third of the ESF Resources. Government is aware that its ability to secure economic and social development is dependent on the quality of its human resources. Thus, this TO aims to improve the quality of education at all levels, reduce illiteracy, increase participation rates in education and ultimately help the country in becoming a centre of excellence in education and research.

Malta has allocated a third of the budget under Thematic Objective 10 towards the fight against ESL with the aim to contribute towards the achievement of the national ESL target which feeds in the Europe 2020 strategy aiming at reducing ESL to less than 10%. Circa 20% of the TO 10 budget has been ring-fenced for the tertiary education strand with the aim of increasing the participation rate in tertiary education together with the enhancement of the tertiary education experience.

The budget allocated to Life Long Learning (LLL) (circa 30% of the TO budget) covers a myriad of activities ranging from education and training support to individuals, to the private sector as well as human capital research and innovation investment. The remaining budget under TO 10 (circa 15%) is dedicated to vocational education training (VET) related human capital investment with the aim to help increasing the participation rate in further and higher education as well as to ascertain the relevance of VET programmes in the labour market of today.

1.2.4 Thematic Objective 11 – Institutional Capacity

Malta has allocated around 8% of its ESF allocation to Thematic Objective 11. The resources allocated under this TO will contribute towards CSR 5 which focuses on the

improvement of the overall efficiency of the judicial system. In addition, resources will also be directed towards the strengthening of the public administration in general, with a view to improve service delivery. This TO will also support the capacity building of all stakeholders delivering ESF related policies.

1.2.5 Technical Assistance

In line with Article 119(5) of the Common Provisions Regulation, Malta has allocated 6% of its ESF allocation to Technical Assistance. Based on past experience, the implementation and monitoring of ESF interventions is more resource intensive and thus Malta has allocated the maximum amount of technical assistance possible with a view to enhance the monitoring and evaluation function. This approach will ensure an efficient and effective implementation system which will aid the country to better absorb the ESI funds and maximise their potential.

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
PA 1	ESF	20,800,000.00	19.64%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Improve the employment levels and labour mobility through incentives for employers and support measures for jobseekers/workers ▼ SO 2 - Enhancing the employability of older workers in the labour market ▼ SO 3 - Improving the labour market participation of women through financial support for the care of dependents in order to facilitate retention and return of women into the labour market as well as campaigns ▼ SO 4 - Increase the prevalence of self-employment and entrepreneurship as an alternative form of employment through financial incentives and other non-financial support ▼ 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Smoothing the transition of youth from education to employment. 	[R 1, R 2, R 3, R 4, R 5, R 6, R 7]
PA 2	ESF	32,000,000.00	30.22%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Enhancing active inclusion by creating opportunities for all ▼ 9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Enhancing the health and care service delivery through training for the health and care professionals/workers as well as measures intended to reduce health inequalities through actions to promote healthier lifestyles, and health and safety at work. 	[R 10, R 11, R 12, R 7, R 8, R 9]
PA 3	ESF	37,939,848.00	35.83%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Reducing early school leaving (ESL) through monitoring and preventive measures as well as the enhancement of the education experience including the provision of electronic tablets and related e-content. This investment priority will also aim to improve literacy outcomes and invest in capacity building of education systems and structures as well as provide training to parents. ▼ 10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Facilitating access to tertiary education through grants and other forms of assistance and actions to improve the quality of tertiary education programmes with the aim of increasing participation and attainment levels at the tertiary level. ▼ 10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce through increased participation in Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Post Doctoral Studies ▼ 10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from 	[R 13, R 14, R 15, R 16, R 7, R 9]

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
				education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Strengthening vocational education and training systems with the aim of increasing participation in further and higher education and addressing the dropout rate from VET institutions, whilst reducing labour market mismatches 	
PA 4	ESF	8,800,000.00	8.31%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 11 - Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ 11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Strengthening the role and capacity of the public administration, with a view to improve the efficiency of public service delivery through improved leadership and better utilization of public resources as well as simplification and better regulation. ▼ SO 2 - Improve the efficiency of the judicial system ▼ 11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ SO 1 - Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders involved in the delivery of education (including lifelong learning and training), employment and social policies. 	[R 17, R 18, R 19, R 9]
PA 5	ESF	6,353,600.00	6.00%	SO 1 - Investing in the implementation of the Operational Programme with a view to optimise the programme's delivery in line with regulatory requirements and procedures.	[]

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	PA 1
Title of the priority axis	Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to operations aimed at reconstruction in response to major or regional natural disasters
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to SME (Article 39)

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	Transition	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	8i
Title of the investment priority	Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific	SO 1
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objective	
Title of the specific objective	Improve the employment levels and labour mobility through incentives for employers and support measures for jobseekers/workers
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Malta's employment levels have increased steadily over the years even though the economy was operating below its full potential. In fact, Malta's employment rates have experienced an increasing trend between 2007 and 2013 (from 58.6% to 64.8%)[1] which rate is converging closer to that of the EU. The EU employment rate has, on the other hand, experienced a slower downward trend from 69.9% in 2007 to 68.5% in 2013.[2]</p> <p>Progress in Malta has also been achieved in terms of unemployment levels, which in general registered decreasing rates since 2010, from 6.9% to reach 6.4% in 2013. This compares well with the EU rate of 10.8% which rate has been increasing since 2009.[3] Notwithstanding, Government recognises that further efforts are needed for Malta to enhance its competitiveness whilst also ensuring that everyone is granted the opportunity to participate and remain active in the labour market.</p> <p>Of particular concern is the low employment rate of persons attaining low levels of education. In 2013, the employment rate for those attaining ISCED levels 5 and 8 stood at 86.6% while for those attaining ISCED levels 0-2 the rate increases to 48.8%.[4] Low employment rates should also be addressed since there is a strong correlation between the level of education and employment prospects and the disadvantages that these individuals find themselves in. This is even more pronounced for persons with disability, whereby the employment rate sits very low at only 4.5%.[5]</p> <p>Achieving steady increases in the employment rate, not only calls for the measures to enhance the employment prospects for the disadvantaged (including persons with disability) but also for measures to address the need to enhance the mobility of workers and job seekers. This is important since the duration of workers in the labour market is expected to increase and therefore there is the need to improve possibilities for alternative employment opportunities that meet individual needs which should assist in prolonging their working lives.</p>

Expected Results

Enhanced employment opportunities for job seekers/workers with a view to improve employment prospects.

[1] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality (%) [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[2] Ibid.

[3] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and highest level of education attained, % [Accessed on 24 November 2014].

[4] Ibid.

[5] The National Employment Policy, (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).

ID of the specific objective	SO 2
Title of the specific objective	Enhancing the employability of older workers in the labour market
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Like most other EU countries, Malta is no exception to ageing population trends. The European Commission envisages that between 2010-2060 Maltese life expectancy at birth will increase from 77.6 to 84.9 years for males and 82.3 to 88.9 years for females.[1] This demographic change which Malta is facing requires a structural paradigm shift which views older persons as active participants in an age-integrated society, both as active contributors as well as beneficiaries.</p> <p>An upward trend has been recorded in the employment rate of the elderly for the 55-64 cohort with a constant increase since 2007 to reach 36.2% in 2013.[2] However, this employment rate is considerably lower than the EU average of 50.3% (2013 figures) which can be partly attributed to lower retirement ages in Malta together with limited participation of females within that age cohort in the labour market.</p> <p>A main concern that Malta is facing is that low employment rates for older workers implies the possibility of social and material deprivation in later life, since there exists a strong relationship between a history of unemployment and poverty, social exclusion and poorer health in retirement[3]. In this context, the challenge ahead lies in empowering older workers to actively participate in the labour market for their own benefit as well as that of the economy.</p> <p>Expected Results</p>

	<p>Increased participation of older workers in the labour market.</p> <hr/> <p>[1] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing: Malta 2014-2020, Parliamentary Secretariat for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing (nd).</p> <p>[2] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality (%) [Accessed on 13 November 2014].</p> <p>[3] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing: Malta 2014-2020, Parliamentary Secretariat for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing (nd).</p>
ID of the specific objective	SO 3
Title of the specific objective	Improving the labour market participation of women through financial support for the care of dependents in order to facilitate retention and return of women into the labour market as well as campaigns
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Over the years, the female employment levels in Malta increased from 37.4% to 46.8% between 2007 and 2012,[1] which has also contributed towards increasing total employment growth trends. However, despite these results, the overall female employment level in 2013 still remains low (47.0%) when compared to male employment figures (74.1%) and female employment figures at European level (58.9%).[2] This is especially the case since from the age of 30 onwards the female employment rate sets off on a downward trend which does not then eventually catch up again in later years. In 2013, the female employment rate reached 61.7% and 54.8% for the 35-39 and 40-44 age cohorts and further decreased to 48.1% and 38.4% for the, 45-49 and 50-54 age</p>

	<p>categories.[3]</p> <p>Government recognises that for Malta to enhance its competitiveness it must focus on increasing its labour force. Through this specific objective it will seek to invest in measures which grant women the opportunity to participate and remain active in the labour market across the working age brackets.</p> <p>Expected Results</p> <p>Increase the participation of women in the labour market by reducing existing barriers.</p> <hr/> <p>[1] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing: Malta 2014-2020, Parliamentary Secretariat for Rights of Persons with Disability and Active Ageing (nd).</p> <p>[2] Eurostat Online Database: Employment rates by sex, age and nationality (%) [Accessed on 14 September 2014].</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p>
ID of the specific	SO 4

objective	
Title of the specific objective	Increase the prevalence of self-employment and entrepreneurship as an alternative form of employment through financial incentives and other non-financial support
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Entrepreneurship can actively contribute towards increasing employment rates. Notwithstanding this, Malta's profile for 2012 shows that the rates for entrepreneurship (14%) and self-employment (17%) remained below the EU average (15% and 23% respectively).[1] Furthermore, the SBA fact sheet also reveals that the same situation exists with respect to the general attitude towards entrepreneurship, whereby the preference for self-employment (34%) and the perceived feasibility of becoming self-employed (20%) are all below the EU average (37% and 30% respectively).</p> <p>Over recent years, the traditional attitude towards entrepreneurship seems to be changing, with the most striking example being the entrepreneurship rate, which increased from 6% to 17% between 2009 and 2012. On the other hand, a negative indicator identified within the SBA relates to the share of adults indicating that school education had an impact on developing an entrepreneurial attitude. This indicator dropped from 59% in 2009 to only 48% in 2012 while the EU average remained almost unchanged at around 50%.[2] Within this context, it is clear that further investment is required with a view to reinforce entrepreneurship and self-employment which in turn contributes towards labour market development.</p> <p>Expected Results</p> <p>Steering individuals to consider business ownership as an alternative form of occupation.</p>

[1] Enterprise and Industry - 2013 SBA Factsheet Malta, (European Commission, nd). Available from http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/performance-review/files/countries-sheets/2013/malta_en.pdf [Accessed on 10 October 2014].

[2] Ibid.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 1	Participants in employment upon leaving	Transition	%				71.00	Ratio (%)	2013			75.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 2	Increase in the number of participants and employers using PES and EURES services	Transition	Number				1,600.00	Number	2013			1,700.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 3	Older workers in employment upon leaving	Transition	%				86.00	Ratio (%)	2013			86.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 4	Women in employment upon leaving	Transition	%				100.00	Ratio (%)	2014			75.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 5	Participants successfully developing a business plan and create an enterprise	Transition	%				29.00	Ratio (%)	2013			35.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>The objective of Government is to invest in employment measures aimed at enhancing accessibility to employment for all with a view to reduce inactivity and prevent inflows into unemployment. Labour market mobility as well as addressing the notion of making work pay is also considered important to improve employment prospects. Government also seeks to create an environment which is conducive to self-employment. This approach will contribute towards the creation of new businesses, whilst also supporting existing ones. Moreover, creating employment opportunities for different target groups at different levels and categories of employment is pivotal in achieving enhanced competitiveness. In this regard, actions under this Thematic Objective will be complemented through ERDF.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p>	

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>Target groups: Job seekers/workers and inactive people, including older workers and women</p> <p>Beneficiaries: Public Administration, Social Partners, Voluntary Organisations, and Employers</p> <p>Territories: Malta and Gozo</p> <p>Interventions under this investment priority will target job seekers/workers and the inactive. These include amongst others: inactive persons, the unemployed, persons facing labour market challenges, persons aiming at improving their employment prospects, persons who are away from the labour market and persons who are more difficult to employ. Through this investment priority, specific attention will also be directed towards older workers and women with the increase labour market participation rates for these target groups.</p> <p>The Beneficiaries envisaged under this investment priority include the public administration, social partners, voluntary organisations, and employers who can contribute towards achieving an inclusive labour market. Employers are also seen as a necessary partner in the sustainable integration process to provide the target groups with the necessary labour market exposures.</p>	

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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Types of Interventions

This investment priority (IP) will tap into different employment measures to ensure that every individual is endowed with the possibility to carry out a job that meets his or her aspirations. Measures under this investment priority will support individuals seeking integration and retention into the labour market with the aim of helping them succeed in their endeavour through incentives for employment creation (including for women and older workers), work exposure measures and support for labour market mobility. Investment will also be directed towards actions contributing towards facilitating the commitment of parents for employment integration and retention, through financial assistance as well as support towards family friendly measures. Provision of financial incentives and support, including mentoring, will also be invested upon through this IP to facilitate self-employment and entrepreneurship.

List of Potential Interventions

a. Actions supporting the specific objectives of improving employment levels and support for labour mobility

Incentives for employment creation

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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Incentives for employment creation primarily focus on facilitating access to labour market participation of individuals facing difficulties (including persons with disability) with the aim to provide each individual with the opportunity to realise his/her potential. In this context, the scope of the support is to provide financial assistance to employers for engaging disadvantaged persons so as to improve the employability and productivity levels of these individuals who are often faced with low employment levels. These measures will directly contribute towards the integration, retention and progression of disadvantaged groups in the labour market as well as aid in preventing inflows into long term unemployment.

Work Exposure measures

Through this investment priority, the OP will also support access to employment as well as continuous labour market participation for job seekers and workers through work exposure measures. The aim of these actions is to support the target group to acquire the relevant labour market skills and competencies through direct labour market exposure which enables them to find and retain a job as well as improve employment prospects.[1] This will be implemented through the provision of relevant subsidies both to specific target groups as well as employers, as appropriate. In this context, the participation of private employers is of utmost importance for Malta to be able to deliver on its commitments.

Strengthening Public Employment Services and support measures for job mobility

Strengthening of the administrative capacity of the Public Employment Services (PES) with the aim to reinforce its role in the provision of employment advisory and placement services for job seekers, design and quality assurance of training programmes and the provision of employers related services. As indicated in the National Employment Policy, the focus of support will be directed towards investment that improves upon the systems and processes currently adopted in order to meet the labour market requirements that are constantly evolving as well as to meet the

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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requirements of PES clients (employers, employees and job seekers).[2]

In addition, through this investment priority Government aims to promote and facilitate labour mobility across the EU Member States. The free movement of persons and labour is one of the pillars on which European integration is founded and which has provided the citizens of Europe with the possibility of securing a future for themselves and their families in another country if they choose to. Individuals need not feel as though they are limited to finding employment in their home country, but should be given the possibility to explore opportunities at a European level. In this context, this investment priority will support EURES related activities, which include services to EU Nationals and their dependents living in Malta, employers and job seekers in relation to recruitment and related information, as well as advice and guidance services with the aim of enhancing the transnational geographical mobility of workers.

Government aims to invest in interventions directed towards career review and identification of mobility prospects for certain categories of workers in order to facilitate employment participation in the following years. This is of particular importance for categories of workers engaging themselves in strenuous and high risk jobs since the endurance in jobs of such nature is usually lower, especially with age. Therefore the provision of support at particular junctures of these worker's lives is important so as to be able to eventually shift to less strenuous and lower risk jobs with minimal disruptions in the person's working life.

b. Actions supporting the specific objectives of improving employment levels of older workers

Enhanced incentives for older workers

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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Government aims to support older workers who wish to enter and re-enter the labour market as well as those wishing to remain actively employed. The plan of action is to provide enhanced incentives for older workers both through incentives for employment creation as well as work exposure measures with the aim to increase their work life duration. Specific support towards older female workers aimed at increasing their participation in the labour market is also envisaged. This calls for a deeper understanding of the perceptions and aptitudes of this cohort with the aim to devise appropriate measures to bring them closer to the labour market.

c. Actions supporting the specific objectives of improving the labour market participation of women

Financial support for the care of dependents for retention and return in employment

Over recent years, the rate of women graduating from University has by far exceeded that of males. However this trend is reversed in terms of employment figures. Within this context, it is evident that there is a need to address the loss or under utilisation of human capital which is an important resource to the economy given Malta's heavy dependence on its human resources complement to generate economic activity. Government intends to address this challenge by strengthening its support for family friendly measures to ensure that parents,[3] particularly women, are in a better position to balance their family responsibilities whilst at the same time remaining or returning to employment. In this context, Government aims to invest in the provision of financial support to workers for the delivery of care services for dependents in order to facilitate return to the labour market as well as employment retention.

In this context, childcare is considered as an essential tool in achieving work-life balance and therefore financial assistance contributing towards this

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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objective is considered important towards increasing female participation in the labour market.

Attention will also be directed towards achieving work-life balance for working age carers who often have to assume the role of informal carer of their frail relatives. As a result, these workers often lose out on opportunities in the labour market due to employment policies and working conditions which do not consider their need to find a balance between their working lives and the caring responsibilities that they have. This often results in these workers having to exit the labour market. In this respect, Government will support the provision of financial support to workers in relation to day care services for the elderly.[4]

Promoting family friendly measures

The success of family friendly measures is dependent upon those using the services and upon the support of the management hierarchy within an organisation. In this regard, investment will be directed both towards the service users and management to ensure that there is an increase in the use of family friendly measures which are of benefit for the work-life balance of workers with dependents.

In this context, Government aims to pursue with ongoing campaigns on the benefits of care for dependents especially since this can have a direct impact on the family’s decision making process on employment integration and retention. Investment will also focus on promoting the reconciliation of work-family life to help working age carers to stay active in the labour market.

In addition, given the key role that management has in the success of family friendly measures, attention will also be directed towards management to enable them in building the working environment that is needed to support family friendly measures. Specific attention will be directed towards the adoption of different forms of working arrangements, including the use of technology tools and/or applications. This will aim to contribute towards increasing female participation as well as towards the sharing of family responsibilities.

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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d. Actions supporting the specific objective of increasing the prevalence of self-employment and entrepreneurship as an alternative form of employment through financial incentives and other non-financial support

Provision of financial incentives and support, including mentoring

Studies have shown that in the area of entrepreneurship Malta experiences a lack of a genuine start-up culture and is in fact trailing behind the EU average on this front.[5] Government believes that in order to encourage individuals to consider business ownership and self-employment as an alternative form of occupation, there must be some form of incentives in the different economic sectors so that these individuals may succeed in their business creation mission. Within this context, Government aims to take the necessary measures to promote an environment in which business ownership and self-employment are considered as an alternative form of employment through the provision of financial incentives and support, including mentoring. Self-employment and entrepreneurship are considered essential since these allow for economic diversification and improvement of the standard of living. These actions will be complemented through ERDF.

[1] The range of initiatives to be supported covers all sectors across the Maltese economic fabric, including the blue and the green economy.

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>[2] The National Employment Policy, (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).</p> <p>[3] The term parent refers also to guardians. This is applicable throughout the OP.</p> <p>[4] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020 (National Commission for Active Ageing, nd).</p> <p>[5] Enterprise and Industry - 2013 SBA Factsheet Malta, (European Commission, nd) Available from http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/performance-review/files/countries-sheets/2013/malta_en.pdf [Accessed on 10 October 2014].</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p> <p>The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:</p> <p>Open call for applications</p>	

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Separate calls will be issued for the participation of local councils and NGOs in order to ensure a more level playing field in the selection process.

Aid schemes

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
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No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.

Flexibility Facility

In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
The possible use of financial instruments is subject to the outcome of an ex-ante assessment for financial instruments which will be carried out in line with Article 37 of Regulation 1303/13.	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO07	above 54 years of age	Number	ESF	Transition			100.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 1	Persons supported	Number	ESF	Transition			2,900.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 2	Capacity building measures for PES and EURES support services	Number	ESF	Transition			2.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 3	Persons supported through family friendly measures including through financial support	Number	ESF	Transition			100.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 4	Persons participating in entrepreneurship related measures	Number	ESF	Transition			180.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	8ii
Title of the investment priority	Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Smoothing the transition of youth from education to employment.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Youth unemployment rates have been increasing across Europe; although Malta has fared better than other European countries, this target group is facing considerable challenges in achieving sustainable labour market integration. In fact, 2013 unemployment figures show that Malta has a considerable high level of youth unemployment (12.7%) when compared to the general unemployment rate (6.4%).[1] The unemployment rate for youth males remained relatively stable between 2007 (15%) and 2013 (15.1%) whereas that for youth females increased significantly till 2012 (14.7%) and decreased again in 2013 (10.4%).[2] Employment and Training Corporation data also indicates that the majority of registered unemployed persons have a low level of education.[3]</p> <p>In addition, Malta is also experiencing increasing rates for youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Particularly challenging are youth with low levels of education since they are more pronounced to become unemployed or fall within the NEET category, which can eventually lead to risk of poverty.</p> <p>In order to address youth challenges holistically, Government has launched its Draft Youth Policy Framework in 2014 with a view to direct investment towards addressing the myriad of issues faced by this target group focusing mainly on achieving a smooth transition from education to employment. In terms of employment, the Draft National Youth Policy Framework[4] focuses on providing the learning tools which will equip young people with the necessary employability skills whilst also ensuring the sustainability of young people's entry into the labour market and their future employment, occupational or</p>

professional prospects.

Expected Result

Reducing youth unemployment levels and NEET rates by facilitating access to further learning and sustainable employment.

[1] Eurostat Online Database: Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and country of birth [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[2] Ibid.

[3] Partnership Agreement of Malta 2014-2020.

[4] Draft National Youth Policy Framework (2015-2020) – A shared vision for the future of young people, (Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport, 2014).

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 6	Participants below 25 who are in education/training years gaining a qualification/certification or are in employment, including self employment, upon leaving	Transition	%				83.00	Ratio (%)	2013			70.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 7	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2014			87.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<p>The integration of youth within the labour market poses a significant challenge both at a national and European level. Malta believes that it is important to address this challenge not only for this target group to flourish in the labour market but also to contribute towards overall economic development given that youth represent the country's future backbone.</p> <p>Within this context, this investment priority will support the sustainable integration of youth in the labour market with a view to enable youth to play an active role both economically and socially. This priority will mainly address actions that combat disadvantages that youth may face at the start of their potential careers. Government believes that such disadvantages can have long term consequences for the person's development and social welfare, which can eventually have a direct effect on the country's future employment performance.</p>	
Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted	

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
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Target Group: Youth, youth workers and other persons working with young people

Beneficiaries: Public Administration, Social Partners, Voluntary Organisations and Employers

Territories: Malta and Gozo

Given that the primary focus of this investment priority is to support youth in their integration process towards sustainable employment, the funding will predominantly be directed towards this target group. To complement this, action will also be directed towards youth workers and other persons working with this target group, for example parents/guardians, to contribute towards a more successful labour market integration and/or retention process.

The Beneficiaries envisaged under this investment priority will cover the public administration, social partners and voluntary organisations working in the field aiming to implement measures contributing towards the sustainable integration of youth in the labour market. Furthermore, given their key role within the labour market, employers will also be considered as partners in the sustainable youth integration process in view of their potential to provide the target group with the necessary labour market exposures.

Types of interventions

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
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In the 2014-2020 programming period, Government aims to address the increasing youth unemployment and NEET rates by supporting the provision of learning tools and support measures which will ensure that young people are equipped with the necessary employability skills which sustain their labour market integration. Government will direct resources through this investment priority to support youth in finding and retaining a job which enables them to achieve a better standard of living and fulfil their aspirations. This approach will also contribute towards assisting youth in their transition to adulthood. The successful transition to adulthood provides individuals with a sense of independence and self-reliance which in turn boosts their confidence. In this context, by investing through appropriate measures, Government aims to ensure that young people are equipped with the necessary resources and skills to thrive.

List of potential interventions

Youth Guarantees

Government is committed to support through this investment priority the European Youth Guarantee at a national level where measures will focus on offering youth guarantees for education, training and jobs. The main aim is to address youth unemployment particularly by focusing on reducing the number of youths who are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET's). Within this context, the objective is to increase the number of youth furthering their studies beyond compulsory education whilst also increasing their skills through relevant training programmes. Such investment will provide incentives for education and continuous learning with the aim to improve youth skills as well as the country's competence base. The role of the employers is also considered pivotal for the successful implementation of related and supporting measures. Interventions undertaken under this investment priority will be complemented with actions supporting close co-operation between the different stakeholders involved with the aim of optimising the benefits of youth guarantees.

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
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Youth Employability

Besides the direct employability measures linked with the youth guarantee, Government intends to pursue other interventions that support the sustainable labour market integration of young people. Investment in this area will therefore address temporary, precarious and informal work arrangements to ensure that young people are not left behind. In addition, investment will be targeted towards enabling youth to access and progress within the labour market. Within this context, skills development programmes, including basic employment skills, and competence recognition associated with labour market demands is considered an asset that deserves additional investment. The aim is of supporting actions which empower and support its young citizens towards realising their life projects underpinned by the principles of solidarity and inclusion as outlined in the National Youth Employment Strategy.

The implementation of job exposure schemes (including apprenticeship, traineeship and entrepreneurship schemes) facilitating the transition to employment are also being considered since such schemes provide a skilled labour force that is relevant to labour market demand. The role of employers is considered fundamental for the success of such schemes. Similar schemes linked with compulsory education and specific vocational education courses will also be covered under Priority Axis 3.

Up-skilling of youth workers and others working with this target group (including parents/guardians) is also essential since these represent the cohort of people that have better access to youth and can have an impact or influence on individual life choices. It is also essential to focus on initiatives that ensure that the right employment related information is provided to youth through the most effective means for it to achieve the most desirable impacts.

Strengthening the link between education and the labour market is also considered crucial in order to obtain a smoother transition from schooling to employment. In this regard, actions supported under this investment priority will be complemented by actions under Thematic Objective 10, which

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
include measures combating early school leaving and increased participation in further and higher education.	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p> <p>The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:</p> <p>Open call for applications</p> <p>The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.</p> <p>The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:</p>	

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
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- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Separate calls will be issued for the participation of local councils and NGOs in order to ensure a more level playing field in the selection process.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.	
Flexibility Facility	
In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
The possible use of financial instruments is subject to the outcome of an ex-ante assessment for financial instruments which will be carried out in line with Article 37 of Regulation 1303/13.	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (ESF), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO06	below 25 years of age	Number	ESF	Transition	0.00	0.00	2,700.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 5	Persons participating in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Number	ESF	Transition			25.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital
<p>a. Social Innovation</p> <p>Article 9 of the ESF Regulation (1304/2013) calls the ESF to promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope in particular with the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovation solutions, including at the local or regional level, in order to address social needs in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular, social partners[1]. Social innovation is a tool which is capable to integrate various stakeholders to address social needs and societal challenges.[2]</p> <p>In line with this Article, social innovation will be integrated as a horizontal principle across all the Priority Axes of the ESF Operational Programme. The aim is to try to identify new solutions for pressing social needs by inventing and developing solutions to challenges in a creative and positive way[3].</p> <p>Government believes that all forms of social innovation should be supported to ensure that social demands affecting vulnerable groups in society that are not traditionally addressed by the markets or existing institutions are addressed. This also calls for investment in changes in relations between institutions and stakeholders.[4] In this regard, Malta believes that the fields for social innovation will be streamed across all the ESF Priority Axes and Investment Priorities identified under the ESF Operational Programme with the aim to underpin reforms through social innovative solutions in</p>	

Priority axis	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital
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the different strands that are supported through the ESF. Specific selection criterion will be identified within the selection process to ensure that projects supporting social innovation will be given prominence. At the application stage, projects contributing towards the principle of social innovation will be required to justify the social innovation element within the project; how this idea can be considered as a new solution to solve persisting social needs; and how this will contribute towards the specific objective under which it is submitted.

As a minimum, for a social innovation project to qualify for additional points within the selection process, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- It must contribute towards the specific objectives of the investment priority under which the project is submitted;
- Incorporates the development and implementation of innovative solutions addressing social needs;
- Is implemented in partnership with at least another interested stakeholder.

b. Transnational Co-operation

In line with Article 10 of the ESF regulation, Malta will support transnational co-operation with the aim of promoting mutual learning, thereby increasing the effectiveness of policies supported by the ESF. In principle, in line with Article 10 (3) of the ESF Regulation, Malta will consider selecting themes for transnational co-operation from a list of common themes proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the ESF Committee once these are adopted. However, the Authorities also believe that transnational co-operation should be open under all the investment priorities selected under the ESF to ensure that the advantages of mutual learning are benefited from across the different ESF strands identified under the OP.

In this context, project promoters pursuing transnational projects must either select a theme for transnational co-operation as adopted by the ESF committee or propose other theme/s which also contribute towards the objectives of the programme and towards the objectives of the investment priority under which they are submitted.

Similar to the 2007-2013 experience, only transnationality that adds value to the principle of social innovation described above will benefit from additional points in the selection process. As a minimum requirement, transnational co-operation shall involve partners from at least two Member States.

c. Thematic objectives set out in Articles 9(1) to (7) CPR

Priority Axis 1 will contribute towards Thematic Objectives (TO) 1 and 3. This is mainly outlined through the promotion of entrepreneurship where interventions are envisaged to steer individuals to consider business ownership and self-employment (including in innovative businesses) as an alternative form of occupation. These measures will complement the investment undertaken within the ERDF/CF OP towards, whereby it will be creating the necessary infrastructure as well as generating investments in new technologies and systems, and potentially new industries.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

Priority axis	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital
<p>[2] Guide to Social Innovation (European Commission, 2013) Regional and Urban Policy, p.5 available from http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/47822/Guide%20to%20Social%20Innovation.pdf [Accessed on 28 February 2014]</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p> <p>[4] Ibid.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
FI 1	F	Financial Indicator	Euro	ESF	Transition			7,819,554.30			26,000,000.00	Monitoring	Amount to be certified by 2018 taking into account the de-committment values for 2018. Figures were based on past experience during the 2007-2013 programming period.
O 1	O	Persons supported	Number	ESF	Transition			250			2,900.00	Monitoring	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital
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Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	102. Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	16,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	103. Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee	4,800,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	20,800,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	06. ESF transnational cooperation	20,000.00
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	20,780,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	20,800,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	02. Social innovation	500,000.00
ESF	Transition	03. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	2,500,000.00
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	17,800,000.00

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital

The planned use of technical assistance is explained in detail under Section 2.B of this programme.

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	PA 2
Title of the priority axis	Towards a more inclusive society

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to operations aimed at reconstruction in response to major or regional natural disasters
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to SME (Article 39)

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	Transition	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	9i
Title of the investment priority	Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Enhancing active inclusion by creating opportunities for all

Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support

Development Needs

Active inclusion and combating poverty continues to feature on top of Government's agenda. In 2013, it was estimated that 24% of Malta's population was at risk of poverty and 9.5% were severely deprived.[1] Studies reveal that the main target groups which raise concerns when it comes to poverty and social exclusion related matters include children, youths, the elderly, women, persons with disability, the working poor and the unemployed amongst others. Employment is a main determinant of poverty related risks, whereby 2013 Eurostat figures indicate that severe material deprivation (at 33.1%) is predominately found in the unemployed category.[2] Compounded with this is the problem that unemployment is most striking for those attaining low levels of education. The challenge ahead is to empower the most vulnerable so as to increase their skills and competences to become economically independent. Therefore, Government foresees the need for tailor made education, training and support services to support vulnerable groups including children and their parents.

Ensuring equal opportunities for all is still considered as a challenge for different vulnerable groups. Discrimination issues vary on the nature of the target group. Older workers can face age discrimination which is a key barrier to their entry or re-entry in the labour market as well as career progression.[3] Persons with disability face similar challenges and despite the number of initiatives targeted at persons with disability, Malta's current employment rate for people with disability is low at only 4.5%.[4]

Women also face constraints concerning equal opportunities in the labour market where imbalances are an enduring reality in terms of employment levels, decision-making positions[5] and pay.[6] This calls for action on addressing barriers for vulnerable groups to achieve more in terms of quantum as well as the quality leap required to achieve a balanced labour market.

Alleviating the needs of persons facing disadvantages calls for investment in the up-skilling and re-skilling of persons working with vulnerable groups since they have a pivotal role in their lives. Therefore, Government understands that persons working with vulnerable people are continuously challenged to have up dated knowledge, skills and abilities appropriate to provide the necessary assistance and guidance to support these individuals to lift themselves from the negative situations that they find themselves in.

Expected Results

Provide vulnerable individuals with improved life chances opportunities for integration within society and in the labour market as well as strengthened capacity building of support systems and structures to facilitate the integration of vulnerable groups.

[1] Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) Survey, 2013 (National Statistics Office, 2014) [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[2] Eurostat Online Database: Severe material deprivation rate by most frequent activity status [Accessed on 11 November 2014].

[3] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020 (National Commission for Active Ageing, nd).

[4] The National Employment Policy, (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).

[5] Tackling the Gender Pay Gap in the European Union (European Commission, 2013); available from: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/business-finance/executives-non-executives/index_en.htm [Accessed on 4 December 2013].

	[6] Ibid.
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Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 10	Persons equipped with skills to empower them to move towards de-institutionalisation	Transition	%				50.00	Ratio (%)	2012			50.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 11	Improved and introduced support programmes targeting vulnerable groups	Transition	Number				4.00	Number	2013			6.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 7	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Transition	%				93.00	Ratio (%)	2013			85.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 8	Participants in employment/further study 6 months after leaving	Transition	%				41.00	Ratio (%)	2012			45.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 9	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				45.00	Ratio (%)	2013			50.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p>This investment priority will seek to support measures which will enable each individual to realise his/her potential and enable persons facing difficulties arising from vulnerable situations to go beyond what life circumstances have offered them and make a success of their future. Within this context, Government aims to invest in actions directed towards addressing individuals in vulnerable situations at different levels and areas of society through the adoption of appropriate approaches with the aim of creating equal opportunities for all.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p>	
<p>Target groups: the poor, persons at risk of poverty, persons facing social exclusion, the materially deprived, persons facing discrimination, employers,</p>	

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p>employees, stakeholders working with vulnerable groups, general public.</p> <p>Beneficiaries: Public Administration, Local Government, Social Partners, Voluntary Organisations.</p> <p>Territories: Malta and Gozo</p> <p>This investment priority will target the poor, the materially deprived, persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion as well as those who might suffer from any form of discrimination. These include children, youth, elderly, women, persons with disability, the working poor and the unemployed amongst others. In addition, employees of the relevant stakeholders will also be targeted to achieve a robust support structure.</p> <p>The promotion of equal opportunities is also an integral part of this investment priority, which calls for actions targeting both men and women in order to achieve a labour market in which gender equality is the norm. The general public will also be targeted to address gender role perceptions which, though slowly changing, are still based on the perception of gender inequality.[1]</p> <p>Beneficiaries will include the public administration and voluntary organisations working in the field that can contribute towards combating poverty and discrimination as well as contribute towards addressing gender imbalances in the labour market.</p> <p>Types of Interventions</p>	

Investment priority

9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability

The actions that will be undertaken under this investment priority will cover different measures to ensure that everyone is provided with the opportunity to sustainably integrate into the labour market. Interventions will target persons experiencing diverse difficulties arising from their vulnerable situations at different stages of their lives, including through specific actions which help these individuals become socially and economically independent. Achieving a better understanding of how different social and demographic conditions can affect economic inclusivity is an important dynamic that needs to be understood, together with providing appropriate empowerment, information, training and education programmes to ensure that a holistic approach is adopted.

Specific attention will also be directed towards actions that can directly and/or indirectly contribute towards creating and promoting equal labour market opportunities as well as equal pay across gender. In this regard, investment will be directed towards actions that facilitate the participation of women in decision making positions and the role of men in gender equality. Targeted sensitisation measures to further combat gender role perceptions are also considered.

Another important aspect is the need to train and up-skill professionals interacting with persons facing social exclusion. This approach will enable professionals to better respond to the individual needs. This will be complemented with the provision of information to both the general public as well as professionals with a view to understand and better approach the different needs of people facing social exclusion.

List of Potential Interventions*Education, training and support measures*

Government believes that it has a social responsibility to empower its citizens to seize opportunities that will improve their life chances and help them achieve a better quality of life. In this regard, Government will support actions aimed to ensure that persons who are facing special needs and social

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
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exclusion are empowered, through appropriate skills and knowledge, to help them combat vulnerability traps. Emphasis will therefore be placed on the elimination of barriers to training, education and other support measures which socially excluded persons and vulnerable groups might face. The provision of specific services will also be supported, to ensure that whilst people are given the necessary assistance to overcome barriers; people are also provided with the right services with the aim to smoothen the transition towards sustainable labour market integration. Specific attention will be paid to the development of teaching tools, personalised action plans, and tailor made programmes specifically designed to enable active participation and improve employability. Research measures identifying means to improve the life chances of different categories of vulnerable persons are also essential. Government also intends to set up a centre of excellence in education with a view to address challenges in the area of educational attainment, illiteracy (including digital illiteracy) and teaching for diverse abilities, amongst others.

This investment priority will fund the implementation of diverse measures taking into account the myriad of needs that different individuals face through appropriate and specific interventions, so as to ensure that the different needs of these individuals are responded to appropriately. Such measures will be aimed at addressing the issues that put people more at risk of poverty by giving them the necessary training support and guidance on life-skills in order to be able to be self-sufficient in their everyday lives.

Improving the life chances for disadvantaged children and young persons

One of the objectives of Government is to tackle social exclusion and poverty through a holistic approach by tackling the problem from its roots as far as possible. In this regard, it is the intention of Government to invest in children, including for example young people who have been dependent on residential services, with a view to eventually enabling them to become positive citizens through active participation within the labour market. Government believes that efforts directed towards increased labour market participation would render the desired outputs if Government also focuses on limiting, as much as possible, the impact of negative social inheritance in children. In addition, Government also recognises that some children and young persons have more complex situations than others and therefore require focused support so as to overcome barriers and lead a fruitful life. Within this context, measures offering therapeutic services and assistance will be further invested upon, so as to target young persons, caring professionals and also their families. Such investment will aid in interrupting the negative life-cycle these children and young people very often find themselves in, so as to enable them to go beyond what life circumstances have offered them and provide them with real life chances that will help

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them make a success of their future.

Family Resource Centres

Government aims to establish Social Development Centres (SDCs) within the different districts located across Malta to promote socio-economic development of the territory by fostering the social cohesion of the area and the quality of life and social justice for those living in the territory. Within the Social Development Centres, Government will also set up Family Resource Centres (FRCs) which will act as catalysts for sustainable and healthy community development through a collaborative, participatory, holistic and empowering approach which covers initiatives at different levels. The aim is to emphasise the need to strengthen the family, in its functional role as a social unit, so as to improve social cohesion and quality of life.

The FRCs will adopt a bottom up approach and will offer holistic and integrated assistance (including profiling, self-assessment and individual action plans) to the individuals and families in the area based on the collaboration of all relevant stakeholders that will be involved in tackling the individual problems. Within this context, stimulating partnerships together with sharing of information, research, knowledge and expertise between the different stakeholders is of utmost importance.

In particular, focus will also be directed towards stimulating the development of parenting skills and competencies so as to foster the stability of the families. In this regard, active and positive parenthood will be promoted and vulnerable families will be assisted so that they will also have the opportunity to maintain and sustain good quality living and self-sufficiency. Families will be assisted through a multi-disciplinary approach and interventions will predominantly include integration into labour market of unemployed, and support those who are already employed to retain their work.

Through the FRC concept, Government aims to provide professional information, advice, assistance, support and education especially to individuals coming from disadvantaged groups whilst also developing a concept of lifelong learning. By strengthening parents and families as well as

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empowering the different target groups to prevent dependency and promote/facilitate independent living as much as possible, Government believes that such a holistic approach will provide a preventive approach to mitigate the rise in poverty levels.

Measures supporting social enterprises

With the aim to promote the development of social and professional competencies necessary for a process of integration and inclusion of individuals and families of vulnerable groups, this investment priority will target funds towards the creation of social enterprises. Individuals will be supported through measures helping them identify their own potential and support them in the development of their talents in order to attain different sources of income. Actions will cover training, mentoring, coaching and other learning schemes addressing the upgrade of the skills, knowledge and competencies of the persons concerned to ensure their social and labour market integration. Social enterprises are considered as an important tool through which new income streams for the individuals and the community may be provided.

Equal opportunities and anti-discrimination measures

Government will direct investment towards the fight against discrimination in line with the EU's philosophy of promoting diversity and creating an environment which safeguards each individual's dignity. In this respect, studies will be carried out to better understand the implications and consequences of discrimination. It is equally essential for people in general to understand the concept of discrimination and how this can affect people. Another important aspect is the need to empower individuals with different needs to respect themselves through an understanding of the culture of rights that surrounds them so as to be able to militate for their rights.

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Measures will also be directed towards schools to provide awareness training in particular to school administrators, educators, parents and support staff. In addition, interventions in schools (including early years) will be implemented with the objective to raise awareness against discrimination. Other measures will include reviews of school syllabi and textbooks together with the provision of appropriate toolkits for teachers to use as guidance on how to promote an inclusive and tolerant society whilst also addressing discrimination matters.

Attention will also be directed towards addressing equal opportunities through a gender perspective. In this regard, sensitisation measures to combat gender role perceptions are also considered to address the challenge that the Maltese economy still faces in reconciling increased female participation in the labour market with women's role in the family formation. With men occupying most of the top positions in the labour market, Government believes that without their active involvement in the creation of a society which promotes equal rights, it is not possible for Malta to achieve its gender equality objectives. This investment priority will also support relevant policy action to address the 'sticky floor' phenomenon to help increase the number of women in managerial grades and decision making positions.[3]

Strengthening present structures and systems with a view to provide more harmonised and effective services for persons with disability is considered important. Such initiatives will include the enhancement of befriending schemes, family support, community awareness initiatives, transition development programmes and social development programmes. To maximise the abilities of persons with disability measures will be directed towards enhancing their employability skills which consecutively will lead to a more engaged and positive society. Government will also focus on young persons with disability through interventions aimed at the development of community-based and individualised day services. In this way, young persons with disability will have the opportunity to enhance their employability skills and lifelong learning opportunities leading to engagement in employment as well as to active participation within the community.

Like most other EU Countries, Malta's transformation into an ageing society cannot be ignored. Older workers tend to experience several barriers when it comes to re-enter the paid labour market and retain labour market participation. The Active Ageing Policy shows that one of the main obstacles older workers face is ageism and age discrimination[4] mainly since employers tend to favour younger workers and in view of this, older workers are constantly at a disadvantage. In this regard, measures aimed at combating ageism and age discrimination will also be supported.

Employers must also be made aware of the different types of discrimination which can occur at the workplace or in the recruitment process. This calls

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for Interventions (including training as well as information sessions) targeted towards employers so that they too can help fight discrimination and promote an equal and inclusive society. On the other hand, it is also pertinent to provide employees with the necessary information to know and understand their rights.

Up skilling and re-skilling of persons working with vulnerable groups as well as parents

Discrimination and maltreatment of vulnerable groups can have negative effects and repercussions both on the persons suffering the abuse as well as on society in general. It is therefore important that these individuals receive the necessary assistance and guidance. Government understands that persons who work with vulnerable groups (including educational psychologists, counsellors, social and youth workers, etc) need proper training, skills and competencies to be able to give the proper assistance and advice. In this respect, training and development programmes will be supported.

Taking into account the important role of social work interventions in assisting vulnerable groups, measures with a view to ensure effective social work interventions will be provided. Through continuous professional development programmes social workers will maintain, improve and broaden their skills, knowledge and expertise, as well as develop the required qualities for professional practice. Through such training, social workers would feel more empowered and capable of dealing with complex situations and thus will be helping their service users with the best practice methods to ensure a better quality of life. Other professional and ancillary support services will also be supported with the aim to provide a holistic service to the target group. Special attention will also be directed towards the investment in the capacity building of institutions to facilitate the de-institutionalisation of persons in residential care.

Parents also play an important role in helping to create an environment which is conducive to accept and view persons who are different in an inclusive manner. Parents/guardians have strong influences on their children and it is important that they understand their role, also as ‘educators’, through adequate information and training. These measures will complement actions undertaken in tandem with the authorities, and will contribute towards the creation of a more inclusive and tolerant society.

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<p>In addition, Government recognises that efforts made to promote the social inclusion of persons who find themselves at risk of poverty are reinforced with the active participation and work of voluntary organisations and social partners. Voluntary organisations are very active in the area of active inclusion where their role is considered to be very important within the economy since VOs work at grass root level and can act as a channel for socially excluded persons to enter the labour market. In this regard, Government is willing to support voluntary organisations in their endeavour to reach out to vulnerable groups.</p> <hr/> <p>[1] Unlocking the Female Potential – Research Report (National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, 2012)</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p> <p>[4] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020 (National Commission for Active Ageing, nd)</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p>	

The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:

Open call for applications

The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

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Separate calls will be issued for the participation of local councils and NGOs in order to ensure a more level playing field in the selection process.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Flexibility Facility	
<p>In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p>The possible use financial instruments is subject to the outcome of an ex-ante assessment for financial instruments which will be carried out in line with Article 37 of Regulation 1303/13.</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability					
ID	Indicator	Measurement	Fund	Category of region (where	Target value (2023)	Source of	Frequency of

		unit		relevant)	M	W	T	data	reporting
O 6	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number	ESF	Transition			8,500.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 7	Persons supported towards the de-institutionalisation through the provision of skills and support services	Number	ESF	Transition			30.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 8	Research activities and campaigns focusing on vulnerable groups so as to improve service delivery	Number	ESF	Transition			6.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 9	Persons participating in up-skilling and re-training including partners	Number	ESF	Transition			1,200.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	9iv
Title of the investment priority	Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Enhancing the health and care service delivery through training for the health and care professionals/workers as well as measures intended to reduce health inequalities through actions to promote healthier lifestyles, and health and safety at work.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Maintaining a healthy population is considered essential for the attainment of a productive workforce and for the country's economic development. Besides facing an ageing population like the rest of the EU, there are higher mortality rates resulting from circulatory diseases when compared to the EU 15.[1] These are the leading causes of death, accounting for 47% of all deaths in 2012.[2] Despite health gains, many risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases in Malta are on the rise; with two of the main chronic conditions relate to obesity, and unhealthy lifestyles.[3]</p> <p>Obesity is becoming a public health enemy and the need to maintain a healthy weight across the Maltese population is proving to be a challenge.[4] Statistics reveal an increase in obesity across all age groups, with Maltese children and adults being amongst the heaviest in the world.[5] This is even more accentuated in deprived areas. Obesity imposes an economic burden on society through increased medical costs incurred to treat diseases associated with it,[6] lost productivity due to absenteeism and premature death.[7]</p>

Health challenges are also representing themselves in health inequalities, whereby the Ministry for Health has determined that health inequalities are largely determined by differences in the educational level of the population, which is also intimately linked to age differences. In fact, the higher a person's socio-economic status, usually determined by income or education level, the healthier he/she is likely to be.[8]

Adopting healthy and safe working conditions also proves a significant challenge as work has become more intensive, and serving as a key source of stress, as well as health risks. In fact, although since 2008 injuries at the place of work have decreased, there were still 3,119 injuries in 2013.[9] Work-related stress is also a concern for workers and employers. In this regard, 62% of Maltese workers believe that cases of work related stress are very common at their place of work, when compared to the rate of 51% of all European workers.[10]

In order to provide the best possible health and care service delivery, Government believes in the need to address the continuous challenge to have workers equipped with the necessary skills and competencies so as to ensure that service delivery is improved.

Expected Results

Provide individuals with knowledge and healthier lifestyle options, increase awareness of health and safety issues at the workplace and strengthen the capacity building of systems and structures within the health and care services.

[1] A National Health Systems Strategy for Malta (2014-2020) – Securing our health system for future generations (Ministry for Energy and Health, 2014)

[2] Malta in Figures (National Statistics Office, 2013).

[3] A National Health Systems Strategy for Malta (2014-2020) – Securing our health system for future generations (Ministry for Energy and Health, 2014)

[4] A Healthy Weight for Life: A National Strategy for Malta, 2012-2020 (Superintendence of Public Health, Ministry for Health and the Elderly and Community Care, 2012)

[5] Ibid.

[6] Estimated cost of 20 million Euros per year in state medical expenses alone.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Health Inequalities, (Equity Action, nd) available from; <http://www.equityaction-project.eu/about/health-inequalities/> [Accessed on 7 October 2014].

[9] Activity Report 2013 (Occupational Health and Safety Authority, 2014)

[10] Ibid.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 12	Increase in awareness in relation to healthier lifestyles and health and safety at work	Transition	%				19.00	Ratio (%)	2012			50.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 7	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2013			85.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest
<p>The aim of Government is to ensure a healthy society where everybody is given the opportunity to contribute to the socio-economic welfare of the country. In view of the demographic changes and the ageing population which Malta is facing, it is crucial to ensure that the members of its workforce are healthy and will thus continue to contribute towards the labour market through active employment for as long as possible. In this respect, Government will seek to focus on preventive measures to ensure that individuals are equipped with the necessary knowledge and information to make better life choices. In addition, Government will also target investment towards strengthening health and safety in working environments as well as establishing well-trained health and care service workers with the aim of guaranteeing the delivery of high-quality health and care services.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p> <p>Target groups: Schools, employers, employees, general public including older workers, persons at risk of poverty, persons who are socially excluded, the materially deprived, and health and care service workers.</p>	

Investment priority

9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest

Beneficiaries: Public Administration, Social Partners, and Voluntary Organisations.

Territories: Malta and Gozo

Interventions under this investment priority will target schools, employers, employees and the general public including older workers, those who are at risk of poverty, the socially excluded and the materially deprived. Health and care service workers will also be targeted under this investment priority through actions aiming at ameliorating service delivery. Beneficiaries will include public administration, social partners, and voluntary organisations.

Types of Interventions

The actions that will be undertaken under this investment priority will contribute towards creating a healthy population whilst also improving health and care service delivery. This will revolve around the provision of communication and information to the public in general, as well as specific target groups, to help in the process of making healthy life choices. In addition, achieving a healthy population will also be made possible through actions ensuring favourable working environments and the carrying out of appropriate studies aimed at establishing the trends and identify the needs of the population with a view to better address this challenge. Various training programmes provided to professionals as well as other health and care service providers as part of a holistic approach targeted at improving the quality of health and care services will also be implemented.

Investment priority

9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest

List of potential interventions*Actions to promote healthier lifestyles*

Core to Government's strategy is the prevention of diseases with the aim to improve the wellbeing of individuals as well as minimising the associated costs of health care whilst also maximising productivity. Leading a healthy lifestyle can have positive consequences on the prevention of diseases and significantly improves the quality of life.[1] Within this context, Government is committed towards a preventive health policy and its implementation.

Interventions will therefore focus on ensuring that the public is well informed on the health risks that are associated with unhealthy lifestyles, including lack of physical activity, wrong diets and bad habits such as smoking. With high obesity rates amongst children, Government intends to focus amongst others, on awareness raising campaigns within schools with the aim to address these issues as early as possible in children's lives. Parents will also be included in the equation due to the important role that these have on their children's life choices especially their dietary habits and aptitude towards physical activity. Information and communication to the general public through appropriate tools is also being considered, focusing especially on the importance of healthy eating, sports and physical activity. Complementary to the above, actions will also include the development of personalised services where necessary focusing on the management of overweight and obesity in adults, youth and children.

Special programmes on health education and promotion will be also developed so as to reach out to those individuals in deprived areas or pertaining to vulnerable groups, where a more tailored approach may be needed. Government believes that since the realities of these groups differ from the majority, a different approach would be needed from mainstream measures, also by implementing actions focusing on for example breaking the intergenerational incidence of overweight and obesity and instil a culture of physical activity and sports. In addition, in line with the active ageing strategy, specific attention will also be directed towards the elderly. Government recognises that the ability to retain elderly people active is closely related to their physical and mental condition. In this regard, attention will be directed towards reforms in the health sector which aim to respond to

Investment priority

9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest

the needs of an ageing society which support elderly persons to remain active players in the economy.

In addition, programmes will be developed and implemented to educate and inform high level policy makers in all Government departments and local government as well as civil society on the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Government recognises that positive results in this regard necessitate a cross-portfolio approach and cross-sector collaboration together with investment to change the current mentality to one that promotes a healthy weight for all including physical activity and sports.[2]

Training and awareness of Health and Safety at work

Changes in health statuses together with changes in working conditions and the intensification of work have led to increased work pressures. This has been serving as a key source of stress and health risk, especially for older workers,[3] which has contributed negatively towards the early exit of workers from the labour market. Particularly, changes in working conditions are posing health challenges, especially for older workers, which affect the productivity levels and thus, increase chances of absenteeism from work, the possibility of losing job as well as the motivation to leave the employment market as early as possible.[4] In this respect, it is Government's aim to ensure that the highest degree of health and safety is promoted across different stakeholders, including employers and health and safety practitioners, with the aim to foster the employability in particular of older and ageing workers, but as importantly other workers with the aim to mitigate against eventual early labour market departures and increase current and future productivity levels. This in turn is expected to have positive consequences on the economic and social wealth of the country whilst at the same time enhancing the individual's dignity and financial independence.

Up skilling, re-skilling, training and professional development of health and care professionals and workers

Investment priority

9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest

For Government to provide the best possible health and care services, it is important that the skills and competencies of professionals and health and care workers in the sector are continuously upgraded and improved to the highest possible standards. On this premise, Government is ready to provide support to those individuals who are willing to venture in the health and care sector as well as upgrade the skills of those already working within the sector. The objective is for the health and care sector to have a multi-skilled workforce that is multi-tasked to carry out community and primary care that supports the preventive and curative approach that Government envisages to adopt. The capacity building of other professionals and workers that can contribute towards the attainment of these goals will also be supported. Studies are also being envisaged so that the training and up-skilling provided within the health and care sector is founded on sound evidence and information which capture the realities on the ground.

Cognisant of an ageing population, more demands are being placed on health and care workers. Within this context, Government believes that it is important that the right care and support is provided to the elderly so that they can remain healthy and active; thus minimising their chances of becoming socially excluded. In this regard, specific attention will be directed towards the provision of training in the health and care sector as well as the possibility of enhancing community care services aimed at better addressing the needs of older people so as to achieve better interfacing between prevention, rehabilitation and improved quality of service.

[1] A Healthy Weight for Life: A National Strategy for Malta, 2012-2020 (Superintendence of Public Health, Ministry for Health and the Elderly and Community Care, 2012)

[2] Ibid.

Investment priority	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest
[3] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020 (National Commission for Active Ageing, nd).	
[4] Ibid.	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p> <p>The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:</p> <p>Open call for applications</p> <p>The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.</p> <p>The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will</p>	

Investment priority

9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest

be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the

Investment priority	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest
<p>implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.</p>	
<p>Flexibility Facility</p> <p>In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest
Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		9iv - Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high quality services, including health care and social services of general interest							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
O 10	Information activities relating to healthier lifestyles as well as health and safety at work	Number	ESF	Transition			3.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 5	Persons participating in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Number	ESF	Transition			300.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society
<p>a. Social Innovation</p> <p>Article 9 of the ESF Regulation (1304/2013) calls the ESF to promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope in particular with the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovation solutions, including at the local or regional level, in order to address social needs in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular, social partners[1]. Social innovation is a tool which is capable to integrate various stakeholders to address social needs and societal challenges.[2]</p> <p>In line with this Article, social innovation will be integrated as a horizontal principle across all the Priority Axes of the ESF Operational Programme. The aim is to try to identify new solutions for pressing social needs by inventing and developing solutions to challenges in a creative and positive way[3].</p> <p>Government believes that all forms of social innovation should be supported to ensure that social demands affecting vulnerable groups in society that are not traditionally addressed by the markets or existing institutions are addressed. This also calls for investment in changes in relations between institutions and stakeholders[4]. In this regard, Malta believes that the fields for social innovation will be streamed across all the ESF Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities identified under the ESF Operational Programme with the aim to underpin reforms through social innovative</p>	

solutions in the different strands that are supported through the ESF. Specific selection criterion will be identified within the selection process to ensure that projects supporting social innovation will be given prominence. At the application stage, projects contributing towards the principle of social innovation will be required to justify the social innovation element within the project; how this idea can be considered as a new solution to solve persisting social needs; and how this will contribute towards the specific objective under which it is submitted.

As a minimum, for a social innovation project to qualify for additional points within the selection process, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- It must contribute towards the specific objectives of the investment priority under which the project is submitted;
- Incorporates the development and implementation of innovative solutions addressing social needs;
- Is implemented in partnership with at least another interested stakeholder.

b. Transnational Co-operation

In line with Article 10 of the ESF regulation, Malta will support transnational co-operation with the aim of promoting mutual learning, thereby increasing the effectiveness of policies supported by the ESF. In principle, in line with Article 10 (3) of the ESF Regulation, Malta will consider selecting themes for transnational co-operation from a list of common themes proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the ESF Committee once these are adopted. However, the Authorities also believe that transnational co-operation should be open under all the investment priorities selected under the ESF to ensure that the advantages of mutual learning are benefited from across the different ESF strands identified under the OP.

In this context, project promoters pursuing transnational projects must either select a theme for transnational co-operation as adopted by the ESF committee or propose an/other theme/s which also contribute towards the objectives of the programme and towards the objectives of the investment priority under which they are submitted.

Similar to the 2007-2013 experience, only transnationality that adds value to the principle of social innovation described above will benefit from additional points in the selection process. As a minimum requirement, transnational co-operation shall involve partners from at least two Member States.

c. Thematic objectives set out in Articles 9(1) to (7) CPR

Priority Axis 2 contributes towards TO2 (ICT) and TO3 (Competitiveness of SMEs). Axis 2 complements and strengthens ICT related measure with the aim to support the most vulnerable with a view to provide them with one of the basic skills (ICT) which is key in today's society. Furthermore, this axis will also consider efforts to eliminate the digital divide to integrate vulnerable persons in the digital community.

The Social Inclusion Priority Axis primarily focuses on disadvantaged target groups with a view to contribute towards the integration of these groups within the labour market so that they can become economically independent. In this context, this axis will directly contribute towards Thematic Objective 3 by focusing on increasing the pool of employable human resources which is an important factor towards improving Malta's competitiveness.

Priority axis	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society
<p>[1] Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.</p> <p>[2] Guide to Social Innovation (European Commission, 2013) Regional and Urban Policy, p.5 available from http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/47822/Guide%20to%20Social%20Innovation.pdf [Accessed on 28 February 2014]</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p> <p>[4] Ibid.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
FI 1	F	Financial Indicator	Euro	ESF	Transition			10,868,152.59			40,000,000.00	Monitoring	Amount to be certified by 2018 taking into account the de-commitment values for 2018. Figures were based on past experience during the 2007-2013 programming period.
O 6	O	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number	ESF	Transition			1000			8,500.00	Monitoring	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

Not applicable

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	109. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	28,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	112. Enhancing access to affordable, sustainable and high-quality services, including health care and social services of general interest	4,000,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	32,000,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	06. ESF transnational cooperation	275,000.00
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	31,725,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	32,000,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	02. Social innovation	3,200,000.00
ESF	Transition	06. Non-discrimination	4,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	07. Gender equality	800,000.00
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	24,000,000.00

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society
The planned use of technical assistance is explained in detail under Section 2.B of this programme.	

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	PA 3
Title of the priority axis	Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to operations aimed at reconstruction in response to major or regional natural disasters
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to SME (Article 39)

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	Transition	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	10i
Title of the investment priority	Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific	Reducing early school leaving (ESL) through monitoring and preventive measures as well as the enhancement of the education experience including the provision of electronic

objective	tablets and related e-content. This investment priority will also aim to improve literacy outcomes and invest in capacity building of education systems and structures as well as provide training to parents.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Over the years, Malta has had a considerably high ESL rate and despite experiencing progress in reducing this rate, it is far above the EU-27 rate of 12.0% (2013).[1] In 2013, Malta’s ESL rate stood at 20.8%[2] which places Malta in the second highest ranking in the EU.[3] Furthermore, 2013 statistics reveal that only half of the students[4] finishing compulsory education managed to get a pass in Maths, Maltese, Physics and English and 23.9% of those sitting for a Secondary Education Certificate did not get a grade from 1 to 5 in any subject they sat for.[5]</p> <p>Malta also faces significant challenges in the area of illiteracy whereby the High Level Group on Literacy in 2012 reported that Malta had a 36% illiteracy rate, placing it in the 25th position out of the EU-27.[6] Furthermore, young people attaining low levels of education have a higher at-risk-of-poverty than those furthering their education beyond compulsory schooling. The low education achievers registered an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 29.1% whilst those attaining first and second stage of tertiary education registered a rate of 5.3% in 2013.[7] Over the years the correlation between the two figures is becoming wider, with that of the former increasing over the 2007-2013 reference period and that of the latter decreasing between 2007 and 2012 period.[8]</p> <p>In its drive to combat early school leaving, Government recognises the important role that educators and parents have towards children. This calls for specific intervention which focuses on strengthening the capacity of the education system and structures through the up-skilling and re-skilling of educators and other workers within the system as well as parents, so as to address the needs of the students to successfully pursue compulsory education.</p> <p>Government recognises that a student who has left school without a basic level of education is a person whose fulfillment is curtailed and whose future is prejudiced.[9] In this context, the challenge ahead lies in ensuring that individuals are actively engaged through the learning experiences provided within the compulsory school age in order to enhance their further education and training prospects.</p>

Expected Results

Improved education experience for students to acquire the necessary educational attainment levels and aptitude to be able to further their participation in education and training, as well as higher participation and attainment in science subjects and lower levels of illiteracy. In addition, this investment priority will achieve enhanced education systems and structures to address ESL related issues.

[1] Eurostat Online Database: Early leavers from education and training by sex and labour status [Accessed on 10 September 2014].

[2] Ibid.

[3] A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta, (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).

[4] For the purpose of this IP, the word students includes pupils.

[5] Ibid.

[6] EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy - Final Report September 2012, (European Commission, 2012) Available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf [Accessed on 17 September 2013] p. 36.

[7] Eurostat Online Database: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by education level (population aged 18 and over) [Accessed on 15 October 2014].

[8] Ibid.

[9] A Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta, (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 13	Teaching time using digital technologies	Transition	%				15.00	Ratio (%)	2014			50.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 14	Improved pupils/students performance upon receiving support	Transition	%				34.00	Ratio (%)	2016			40.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 7	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2013			87.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
<p>Through this investment priority, Government will aim to decrease the number of early school leavers, noting that this has a negative impact on Malta's abilities to further enhance its human capital and competitiveness on the world stage. It is the responsibility of Government to ensure that every child, no matter their background and abilities, is given the opportunity to realise his/her potential.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p> <p>Target groups: Children, young people; educators; professionals; youth workers administrators; parents/guardians.</p> <p>Beneficiaries: Public Administration, Voluntary Organisations</p>	

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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Territories: Malta and Gozo

Interventions under this priority will target children and young people, including those facing specific difficulties within the education process as well as the wider pupil population. Up skilling and re-skilling measures are also envisaged to target educators and professionals as well as other workers in the education system that contributes towards the enhancement of the education experience. Parents will also be targeted to curtail as much as possible the inheritance of negative life chances across generations.

The Beneficiaries under this investment priority include the different stakeholders responsible for education within the public administration as well as other voluntary organization working in the field.

Types of interventions

The actions that will be supported under this investment priority will support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta as well as related measures in other national policies. The measures envisaged are aimed to combat early school leaving in a holistic manner so as to ensure that each individual will be granted the opportunity to prosper both through the educational cycle but also eventually in the labour market. This investment priority will focus on implementing measures directed towards monitoring and preventing ESL (including through particular actions focusing on specific target groups); enhancing the educational experience (including through the provision of electronic tablets and e-content) and capacity building measures aimed at strengthening the structures to meet the challenges of ESL.

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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List of potential interventions

Measures to monitor and prevent early school leaving

The ESL Strategic Plan places considerable importance on the identification, monitoring and co-ordination measures necessary to tackle ESL as efficiently and as effectively as possible. Government has set up an Early School Leaving Monitoring Unit to tackle ESL related issues in a comprehensive manner. In this context, the plan is to direct resources towards measures identified in the ESL strategic plan including, amongst others, the understanding of this phenomenon through the conduction of studies and research activities together with the setting up of a statistical framework in order to tackle the issues and steer strategy and policy design appropriately.

Focus through this OP will also be directed towards the establishment of early detection measures in compulsory education so as to minimise and address disengagements from the education system as early as possible. Complementary to this, Government intends to identify measures that will remove systematic obstacles whilst also providing specific targeted interventions to individuals in need to be re-engaged in the process. In this context, Government aims to intervene at different levels such as for example through measures tackling absenteeism, improved student support services, specialised counselling services, one to one tuition, and the provision of alternate study / training programmes. Providing the necessary support to colleges, schools and educational institutions to assist them in determining the needs of children and young people at risk of disengaging or already disengaged from the education system and to help them develop preventive and intervention measures is also considered essential.[1]

Special attention will be paid to individuals facing particular difficulties, including persons with disability, gifted students[2] and other students with difficult backgrounds and the potential social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that these can face. In this regard, it is important that monitoring, prevention and intervention measures addressing these target groups are appropriately designed to ensure that they meet the needs of these students.

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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The provision of electronic tablets and e-content

Enhancing the education experience is an important objective that Government aims to achieve in order to reduce and prevent ESLs. The aim is to better engage students in the learning experience which is considered as an essential means for students to move along the educational ladder. In this context, Government intends to intervene through specific actions addressing all students with the aim to contribute towards this objective.

One approach that will be adopted towards enhancing the educational experience will involve the use of digital technologies and IT applications. The aim is to integrate digital technologies as part of the national curriculum, including through the provision of appropriate information technology equipment, including electronic tablets, and methods of learning together with relevant e-content both to individual students and schools with the aim of achieving a coherent and user friendly education system. Complementary teacher training in ICT will also be invested upon to ensure the successful implementation of these measures. These investments will provide students with personalised learning opportunities in a differentiated context contributing towards the attainment of self-directed life-long learners.

Actions in compulsory schooling to provide minimum relevant skills to further their studies or to provide a smooth transition to work

Government strongly believes that good quality education can provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge which enables them to progress through the educational ladder and successfully enter and prosper in the labour market. This necessitates an effective institutional rapport between education and industry in order to ensure that investments in education yield positive results in terms of labour market demands and economic growth. In this regard, the objective of Government is that compulsory schooling levels guarantee the minimum levels of skills required to ensure that students are equipped with the relevant skills, knowledge and competencies for a smooth transition from the educational sphere to the

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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labour market or further study. Such an approach will also contribute towards addressing skills mismatches and will complement actions under Priority Axis 1. In addition, at the secondary level, Government also aims to introduce alternative learning programmes for students who are at risk of educational failure with the aim to improve the quality of their learning experience so as they also achieve the minimum relevant skills that are required to further their studies or enter the labour market with no, or minimal, difficulties.

Science subjects popularization

Given the drive towards research and innovation, investment will also be targeted towards an education system which adequately shapes future human capital in R&I by addressing the existing shortfall of human capital in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as well as fostering an entrepreneurial culture from the earliest stages.[3] This approach calls for specific measures which include, inter alia, support towards embedding a culture which is supportive of science, research and innovation and the conduction of studies to understand these issues with the aim to develop appropriate strategies and policies.

Improving literacy

Government aims to steer ESF funds towards the fight against illiteracy since there is a high correlation between illiteracy and early school leaving mainly resulting from the fact that illiterate people find it difficult, if not impossible, to engage in the educational experience. Furthermore, improved literacy increases chances of achieving higher earnings and better education and employment prospects.

In this context, Government has launched a National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo (2014-2019) in May 2014. The aim is to promote

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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and enhance lifelong and life wide, high quality literacy practices which aim to improve literacy outcomes, resulting in inclusive practices, higher educational qualifications, and better job prospects. The Strategy focuses on an integrated approach towards literacy whereby literacy programmes form an integral part of, or complement, the education programmes in schools. Government will strengthen the literacy structures (including through the setting up of College Literacy Teams to reach out to all children in pre-school and compulsory education) as well as implementing a number of initiatives to fight this cause. These include measures attracting young people to reading habits, and activities for parents and guardians to make reading a national culture across all ages and levels of society. Emphasis will also be placed on aspects of intergenerational education as espoused by UNESCO given the strong relationship which exists between the levels of literacy of children and of those who care for them.[4]

Complementary to this framework, investment will be directed towards the promotion of early literacy including through the creation of reading community centres in order to contribute towards the creation of a nation-wide reading culture. The aim is to promote reading from early years and to engage parents/guardians/caregivers within this process. In addition, Government will support measures aimed at developing an integrated and graded reading programme for primary school students in both Maltese and English. Moreover, as a result of the present challenges in combating illiteracy, measures will also involve activities fostering positive attitudes towards reading and inspire others to read.

Enhanced education systems and structures to address ESL related issues

Combating early school leaving calls for specific intervention which focuses on strengthening the capacity of the education structures at all levels within the compulsory education cycle. The up skilling and re-skilling of different workers within the education sector is seen as an essential tool for Government to achieve its ESL targets. In this process educators have a key role to play given their direct day to day contact with students. In this regard, it is important for educators to be trained to meet students' aspirations in the teaching methodologies to ensure that students are continuously engaged in the education experience. Equally important is for educators to be able to identify and report any behaviour which might require action through different approaches with the aim to help the student and address their needs appropriately. Government recognises that teachers have a pivotal role to play and it is important that they are equipped with the necessary skills and competencies which help them understand and assist

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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students facing difficulties.

Continuous training and education programmes for educators and other workers within the education sector is necessary to ensure that they have the necessary understanding, skills and tools to contribute towards achieving the ESL targets as well as to successfully deliver the new curriculum framework which has a clear focus on improving the quality of education and raising student achievement levels. The new curriculum framework calls for readiness to depart from the traditional curriculum structures and practices that may restrict learning and therefore places considerable focus on education leaders to embrace these changes and bring them to the classroom level. This requires that different stakeholders, including the Faculty of Education within the University of Malta, ensure that adequate continuous professional development of all educators is pursued.[5]

The role of youth workers will also be given prominence, since youth workers very often have a direct contact with youth experiencing difficulties in engaging themselves in the education experience. In this regard, Government will strengthen the capacity of youth workers by investing further in their skills and competencies, including by investing in the tools and capabilities they need to strengthen the relationship between the college and school as well as parents and the local community. This will complement actions envisaged under Priority Axis 1.

Recognizing the important role of parents in ESL, appropriate communication, information and training will be provided to parents on educational and career paths in order for them to be able to support and guide their children in their educational journey. Parents will also be provided with training in parenting skills that would enable them to better support children whose educational attainment is low.

[1] This also includes possible investment in structures and systems to improve processes as well as decision making.

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
<p>[2] This refers to gifted students who become disengaged from the educational system due to an uninteresting and unchallenging environment.</p> <p>[3] National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020 (Malta Council for Science and Technology, 2013).</p> <p>[4] A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014 – 2019, (Ministry for Employment and Education, 2014).</p> <p>[5] A National Curriculum Framework for All – 2012 (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2012).</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p> <p>The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:</p> <p>Open call for applications</p> <p>The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These</p>	

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.

Flexibility Facility

In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
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Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		10i - Reducing and preventing early school leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
O 11	The provision of digital technologies to students	Number	ESF	Transition			12,000.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 12	Pupils/students supported through monitoring and preventive early school leaving measures	Number	ESF	Transition			200.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 5	Persons participating in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Number	ESF	Transition			4,500.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	10ii
Title of the investment priority	Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
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Title of the specific objective	Facilitating access to tertiary education through grants and other forms of assistance and actions to improve the quality of tertiary education programmes with the aim of increasing participation and attainment levels at the tertiary level.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>Tertiary education in Malta, which is offered predominantly by the University of Malta, is free for all students irrespective of their social background. The University already offers circa 700 diploma and degree programmes in a variety of disciplines both through full-time, part-time as well as on-line courses. This serves as a good opportunity to further attract students to pursue their studies further and achieve higher qualifications.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, Malta is still facing significant challenges in participation levels especially when taking into account the free provision of education. In fact, the rate of the population aged 30-34 years old having completed tertiary education, which rate stood at 26% in 2013, is still low when compared to the EU-27 rate of 37%. Moreover, the participation rate of 17 year olds in further and higher education stood at 72% in 2013 and that of 19 year olds stood at 61% in 2013.[1] These challenges are also compounded by the low rates of participation in post-graduate studies.</p> <p>Further analysis highlights that there is a strong correlation between the educational attainment achieved by the students and their parents' level of education.[2] The majority of students obtaining a tertiary education qualification come from families whose parents have a high level of education.[3] In turn, students, whose parents have only completed secondary education, are less likely to progress academically and take up tertiary education.[4] This therefore calls for more targeted efforts in order to raise the participation rate into tertiary education of individuals across the whole social spectrum.</p> <p>Compounded with the above is the challenge that Malta is facing with respect to the percentage of graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology. In 2012, this stood at 19.1% which is low when compared to the EU-27 rate of 22.8%. Government acknowledges that there is the need to attract more students in these and other areas which are relevant to the local industry and which are needed for further economic growth.[5]</p>

Expected Results

Increased number of participants pursuing and succeeding within the tertiary tier of education.

[1] Further and Higher Education Statistics 2013 – Malta:National Commission for Further and Higher Education, 2014.

[2] A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2014 – 2019, Ministry for Employment and Education, 2014.

[3] Eurostat News Release: Transmission of level of education between generations (Eurostat, December 2013). Press Release reference: 188/2013.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020. (National Commission for Higher Education, 2009).

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 7	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2013			87.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 9	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				82.00	Ratio (%)	2013			85.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
<p>Increased participation in good quality tertiary education has become an essential route for Malta to ensure that the labour market is supplied with the right individuals so as to ensure that it is in a better position to compete on an international arena. In addition, Government believes that further efforts are required to enhance the efficiency and labour market relevance of tertiary education as well as the development of an education quality culture[1] in order to aid Malta to become a centre of excellence in both education and research.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p> <p>Target groups: Individuals having an interest in pursuing their studies further, including disadvantaged groups; educators; professionals; administrators.</p>	

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
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Beneficiaries: Public Administration including higher education entities

Territories: Malta and Gozo

This investment priority will target individuals who have an interest in pursuing their studies further at tertiary (or equivalent) level. Individuals who are currently engaged in tertiary education can also be targeted through this investment priority. Up skilling and re-skilling measures are envisaged to target educators and professionals as well as other workers who contribute towards the enhancement of the education experience.

The main Beneficiary under this investment priority is the public administration, which brings together a number of entities (including tertiary education institutions and commissions as well as Government departments) that could contribute towards supporting Malta to achieve its ambitious tertiary education target of at least attaining 33% of 30-34 years old completing tertiary or equivalent education.

Types of Interventions

Interventions under this investment priority will aim to attract students and adults into tertiary education particularly in those areas which are relevant to the local economy, also through the possible use of financial instrument. In addition, investment will support the amelioration of the quality of services provided by tertiary education institutions so as to offer students an educational experience which inspires them and develops their capabilities to their highest potential. As a result, this will also promote Malta as a destination for further and higher education in the world in various

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
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fields of study and research.[2]

List of Potential Interventions

Increasing participation in tertiary education

For Malta to be able to compete and meet the challenges posed by the high-value added and knowledge-intensive markets of the global economy it requires the availability of a highly skilled and flexible workforce. This type of workforce, is only achievable if students pursue their studies at tertiary levels (or equivalent) acquiring, in the process the necessary knowledge and skills which will allow them to become an asset to the country. Thus, in order to encourage further uptake in tertiary education and beyond in different areas of study, Government aims to pursue further investment targeted towards scholarships and other forms of assistance for graduate and postgraduate studies (including at Masters levels and PhDs), also through the possible use of financial instrument. Concerted efforts will also be directed towards attracting more students into areas which lead to career opportunities that respond to future economic, cultural and social needs.[3] This can contribute towards increasing the availability as well as the employment of high-level graduates.

With the aim of securing a fair and equitable access to all those willing to pursue studies at a tertiary level, attention will also be directed towards persons that are already in employment and consider at a later stage in their life to participate in tertiary level education programmes.[4] In this regard, measures will be directed at offering more flexible learning arrangements such as for example through distance and/or on-line learning and the use of different outreach mechanisms so as to promote participation in tertiary education such as for example through the review of admission requirements of mature students. This approach will widen the opportunities for the adult population including disadvantaged groups to acquire new knowledge which can support them in moving forward in their career choices.

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
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Enhancing the quality of tertiary education through capacity building including measures to improve programme relevance

Increasing participation in tertiary education also calls upon investment in improving the quality of education at this level to ensure that this route is considered as a viable option, especially for those who do not consider tertiary education as an essential step within the educational ladder. Improving quality of education is also essential to ensure that those pursuing this path succeed both at the level of educational attainment as well as contribute effectively towards the economy.

In this context, investment will be targeted towards capacity building measures aiming to improve current programmes to ensure their labour market relevance as well as developing new ones that address new specialisations required by various industries.[5] Investment will also be targeting academics, together with the administration and other support structures, with the aim of supporting Government in its mission to increase the participation rates in tertiary education in critical areas for the current and future development needs of the country. In this regard, measures will also include exchange programmes for academic staff with a view to enhance their transnational knowledge and experiences.

In line with the Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020,[6] Government will also invest in its tertiary education framework to contribute towards meeting the challenge of developing a ‘quality culture’ within the educational systems. This calls for the introduction of the necessary systems and practices which will ensure that education institutions are on a continuum of improvement, also embracing innovative methods and approaches. In this regard, investment will be targeted towards making Malta a centre of excellence in education and research by assuring quality provision across tertiary education institutions and their programmes, including through quality assurance and evaluation related support.[7] In an increasingly dynamic and global environment, investment will also be directed towards longer term planning and strategy formulation for tertiary (or equivalent) education. Government recognises that decisions taken today will impact the future and that planned actions must be based on sound evidence and with clear foresight in order to yield the best possible results both for the country as well as the individual.

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
<hr/> <p>[1] Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020. (National Commission for Higher Education, 2009).]</p> <p>[2] Ibid.</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p> <p>[4] Ibid.</p> <p>[5] Ibid.</p> <p>[6] Ibid.</p> <p>[7] Ibid.</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
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Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
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The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.

The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:

Open call for applications

The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and • state of readiness for the commencement of the project. <p>Aid schemes</p> <p>No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.</p> <p>Financial Instruments</p> <p>The implementation of financial instrument will follow the parameters as established in Article 38 of the CPR.</p> <p>Small projects and projects of particular interest</p> <p>Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the</p>	

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
<p>implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.</p> <p>Flexibility Facility</p> <p>In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
<p>The possible use of financial instruments has been assessed through an ex-ante assessment, in line with Article 37 of Regulation 1303/13. The ex-ante concluded that - beyond the current scholarship schemes - in Malta, there is still a market gap in terms of financing, due to the fact that the current (and projected) supply of financing assistance for education is failing to satisfy the actual demand and the existent market instruments are failing to address the present needs.</p>	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
O 13	Persons participating in tertiary education	Number	ESF	Transition			700.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 14	Persons within tertiary education institutions participating in up-skilling and re-training measures	Number	ESF	Transition			50.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	10iii
Title of the investment priority	Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce through increased participation in Lifelong Learning (LLL) including Post Doctoral Studies
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>The Maltese economy is undergoing a rapid transformation, which has resulted in the need to invest in the adaptability and employability of the workforce. Through LLL, individuals will adapt and upgrade their skills so as to become or remain</p>

employable whilst enterprises will remain competitive and survive within an ever changing economic environment. In October 2014, the National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 was launched to ensure that adult education delivers economic development, social and civic participation, personal fulfilment and well-being.[1]

Whilst Malta performs above the EU 27 rate of participation in LLL for those acquiring upper secondary level or more, it fares below the EU average for those attaining pre-primary, primary and lower secondary level education.[2] This highlights the need to invest in the upgrading of skills, where as the economy continues to upscale to more value added manufacturing and services, low skilled workers are more at risk of losing their job and becoming socially excluded. Analysing participation in lifelong learning by certain categories it shows that women, older workers and the unemployed have low participation rates at 7.7%, 3.4% and 7.3%[3] respectively when compared to the 11.4%, 5.7% and 10.1% at an EU 27 level in 2013 with only minimal changes registered over the years. [4]

Analysing LLL statistics in relation to enterprises, one denotes that Malta has low rates when it comes to participation in LLL for the employed category as well as when it comes to specialization measures related to research and innovation. The participation of the employed in LLL is still low at 9.5% and in terms of research and innovation, Malta ranks among the moderate innovators within the EU Innovation Scoreboard 2013 due to shortfalls on the supply side in human capital and R&I Investment.[5] This calls for further effort to be instilled with the aim to foster economic competitiveness and support development.

Also, LLL targets depend on the continuous education and training system becoming more attractive and more relevant. Therefore, to enhance the LLL experience, Government aims to address the skill gaps of professionals and other workers within the LLL system so as to enhance the capacity building of LLL structures.

Expected Results

Increased participation in LLL with a view to upgrade competencies/qualifications/skills of the workforce to foster employability and adaptability as well as increasing competitiveness of enterprises, and the uptake of post-doctoral research studies.

[1] Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020: Draft for Public Consultation. (Ministry for Education and Employment, October 2014).

[2] Eurostat Online Database: Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and educational attainment level [Accessed on 28 April 2014]

[3] The 2013 figure for Malta is underrepresented due to the small sample size.

[4] Eurostat Online Database: Participation rate in education and training (last 4 weeks) by sex and educational attainment level [Accessed on 10 November 2014]

[5] National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020 (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014).

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 15	Second chance participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				73.00	Ratio (%)	2015			75.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 16	Annual average number of research hours as at 2020	Transition	Hours				10,320.00	Number	2014			17,200.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 9	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2013			87.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
<p>In an ever changing economic environment, it is of utmost importance for Government to ensure that its workforce is provided with the necessary means through which it can learn to adapt accordingly to the changes being imposed upon it. In this regard, Government will be providing labour market relevant education and training programmes with the aim of ensuring that adults are equipped with the necessary skills to maintain their employability and also providing for their mobility prospects. These programmes will also seek to address the complex challenge of skills mismatches as well as support enterprises to remain competitive through training. Up skilling and re-skilling measures are also envisaged to target workers within LLL structures to deliver services that meet the needs of the individuals and that of the economy.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p>	

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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Target groups: Employees, unemployed, inactive, youth, women, older workers, educators, researchers, professionals, administrators.

Beneficiaries: Public Administration, Local Government, Employers, Social Partners; Voluntary Organisations.

Territories: Malta and Gozo

The target groups that will be supported under this investment priority are those individuals who need more education, knowledge, skills and competencies to actively participate in the labour market as well as those persons seeking to remain labour market competitive or improve their employment prospects. In general, these include employed, unemployed and inactive persons. Educators, professionals and administrators are also an integral part of the target groups to be supported under this investment priority with the aim to improve the capacity of the individuals delivering these programmes and the structures that support them.

The beneficiaries envisaged include the public administration, which brings together a number of actors (including Departments, entities and schools) that could implement actions supporting Government's lifelong learning objectives. With the aim to strengthen the competitiveness of enterprises, employers are also envisaged as potential beneficiaries that could implement lifelong learning programmes for its employees. Local government, social partners and voluntary organisations contributing towards Malta's lifelong learning objectives can also be considered as possible Beneficiaries under this investment priority.

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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Types of interventions

Government aims to increase the participation in LLL to ensure that the country is equipped with a competitive and flexible workforce which will allow it to compete on the world stage. Interventions will therefore be directed towards different audiences who would like to pursue further with their studies whether through formal, non-formal or informal learning also through the possible access to financial instrument. . Envisaged interventions will be implemented at different levels within the education cycle and will range from opportunities tapping into second chance paths in education to post-doctoral research studies. This will be complemented with interventions supporting the LLL systems and structures.

List of Potential Interventions

Post-Doctoral Research and Fellowships

Through this investment priority, Malta aims to tap ESF resources to invest in human capital focusing on increasing the supply of human resources in research and innovation; this will be complemented by ERDF resources targeting R&I investment under Priority Axis 1.

Human capital investment will therefore be directed towards post-doctoral research and fellowships to support the drive towards increasing the number of post-doctoral graduates so as to create a stronger knowledge base in Malta. This investment will contribute towards Malta's economic, social, environmental and cultural development. Particular areas targeted amongst others include: natural, pure and applied sciences, engineering, ICT, medical, pharmaceutical, the social and behavioural sciences. In view of the recent shifts in employment levels in different sectors including in the art, entertainment and recreation activities, post-doctoral research and fellowships that have a social, anthropological, educational and cultural significance will also be supported. Support will also be provided to address the evolving development needs and challenges characterising Maltese society. Furthermore, Government will also support investment in post doctoral research and fellowships in areas which are of particular interest or

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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relevance to Malta such as energy and climate change, built environment, water and the blue economy amongst others. Attention will also be directed towards collaboration within the academic disciplines and between different disciplines as well as with the private sector in order to achieve the critical mass needed to be successful in the international arena.[1]

Investing in the private sector

Government recognises that continuous education and training is essential to guarantee the employability of workers and the survival of the firms. Investment in skills will lead to the accumulation of human capital which in return will boost workers' productivity. In view of this, Government will provide opportunities to employers to invest in their workforce with a view to be well equipped to meet the challenges brought about by market competition forces. This includes training measures focusing on important skills to help undertakings to effectively compete on the market and secure survival within the complex global economic scenario in which enterprises are operating. In addition, investing in undertakings and their employees through training opportunities is considered as an important measure to help them thrive and seize new opportunities. In this context, training is envisaged to support different undertakings operating within the various economic sectors, ranging from direct production to the market services sector.

Second Chance in alternative paths and learning

LLL is also considered as another channel through which the issue of Early School Leavers may be addressed as this offers “second chance” alternative paths in education and learning to those who have no qualifications. In this context, strengthening of basic skills, retraining related to up-skilling and re-skilling and also multi-skilling relating to different economic sectors will constitute key measures in support for this approach. Complementary to this Government also aims to introduce alternative learning programmes at post-secondary level for students who are at risk of

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educational failure with the aim to improve the quality of their learning experience. Given that some compensatory measures are already in place, Government believes that it is also important to undertake a process of review of current programmes and strengthen them and extend them where appropriate.

Training for life-long learning

Continuous education and training are enshrined within Government's objective of achieving a highly skilled and competitive workforce. Lifelong learning is seen as an opportunity for individuals to improve and upgrade their skills and move along the education ladder, their career path as well as provide for better mobility prospects across the labour market. In this regard, measures supporting lifelong learning will be implemented including through the possible use of financial instrument. Through these measures this investment priority will cover the delivery and implementation of training and education programmes which support the workforce to adapt and upgrade their skills to meet labour market challenges. Government will seek to address skills mismatches through the development and delivery of training and education programmes that fit within labour market demands.[2] This also encompasses the training interventions aimed at complementing projects supported under OPI, for example in relation to the ICT, environment and construction sectors. The assessment of current programmes and their revisiting where opportune will also be invested upon. This will be complemented by actions supporting the validation of acquired competences to motivate individuals as well as improve their aspirations to progress further both academically, vocationally or within the labour market.

Complementary action will also be directed towards the inactive and under-employed persons including women, so as to enable them to acquire the necessary skills and competencies that will help them integrate sustainably in the labour market. Lifelong learning in the community is also being envisaged as an approach to reach out to appropriate target groups with the aim to provide them with different learning pathways at the adequate level.

Education and training for older workers including older women will also be given prominence. As the Active Ageing Policy denotes, there is a

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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strong correlation between acquiring skills and qualifications with active participation in the labour market. In this regard, actions will be directed towards providing older people with opportunities to update and extend their skills and qualifications. New skills and expertise will also encourage older workers to continue working. Lifelong learning actions targeting older learners require an understanding of their needs, characteristics and goals in order to ensure the successful implementation of measures supporting the goals of active ageing.[3]

Capacity-building of LLL structures

Efforts will also be directed towards strengthening the lifelong learning structures through the provision of training and retraining measures to workers in the field as well as consolidating the current lifelong learning structure. These include the referencing of the courses offered for better mapping of the available resources and labour market demands; the development of professional and occupational standards; and the design and development of a skills bank. Government also intends to set up a centre of excellence in education with a view to address challenges in the area of educational attainment, illiteracy and teaching for diverse abilities, amongst others.

Government's objective is not merely to increase the number of persons participating in continuous education and training but to increase them in significant areas in line with labour market needs. This calls for interventions that strengthen the career guidance framework (including student support services) that brings together schools, higher education institutions, employers and other government and non government stakeholders, so that it is ensured that students always have access to the right educational path and career orientation in the areas most relevant to the labour market.

Other measures will also target the development of formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways together with the recognition of skills and competencies gained as a stimulus to engage ESLs to access formal learning and further non formal learning.[4]

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
<p>[1] National Research and Innovation Strategy 2020 (Ministry for Education and Employment,2014)</p> <p>[2] The range of initiatives to be supported covers all sectors across the Maltese economic fabric, including the blue and the green economy.</p> <p>[3] National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2014-2020 (National Commission for Active Ageing, nd)</p> <p>[4] Draft Early School Leaving Strategy for Malta (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education and Employment, 2012)</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p> <p>The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:</p> <p>Open call for applications</p> <p>The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These</p>	

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Separate calls will be issued for the participation of local councils and NGOs in order to ensure a more level playing field in the selection process.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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Financial Instruments

The implementation of financial instrument will follow the parameters as established in Article 38 of the CPR.

Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.

Flexibility Facility

In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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The possible use of financial instruments has been assessed through an ex-ante assessment, in line with Article 37 of Regulation 1303/13. The ex-ante concluded that - beyond the current scholarship schemes - in Malta, there is still a market gap in terms of financing, due to the fact that the current (and projected) supply of financing assistance for education is failing to satisfy the actual demand and the existent market instruments are failing to address the present needs.

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
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Not applicable

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
O 15	Persons participating in second chance education programmes	Number	ESF	Transition			50.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 16	Number of post-doctoral research and fellowships	Number	ESF	Transition			10.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 6	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number	ESF	Transition			6,000.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	10iv
Title of the investment priority	Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Strengthening vocational education and training systems with the aim of increasing participation in further and higher education and addressing the dropout rate from VET institutions, whilst reducing labour market mismatches
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>For Malta to be able to compete in knowledge intensive markets, a highly skilled and adaptable workforce is required. Throughout the years, Government invested considerably in vocational education and training (VET) as an alternative route to academic education which provides individuals with relevant labour market skills.</p> <p>Government understands that for some individuals vocational education represents the only viable path to achieve skills which can help them access and thrive in the labour market. In this regard, with the aim to build on the investments envisaged to combat early school leaving, Government will ensure that alternative paths of study are made available to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to identify the best learning channel that meets the career aspirations of the individuals concerned.</p> <p>In Malta the level of vocational education and training is still comparatively low and needs to be sustained further, including through specific attention on 19 year olds as well as the need to address the dropout rate from the learning pathway within VET institutions without the acquisition of formal qualifications.[1]</p> <p>It is necessary that vocational education and training provided is relevant for the labour market. In this context, Government</p>

recognizes that the VET systems and structures also need to be invested upon, including through improved capacity as well as the up-skilling and re-skilling of the people working in the system, so as to maximize the human capital potential of students pursuing VET studies.

Expected Results

Increased number of participants pursuing and succeeding in vocational education.

[1] National Youth Employment Strategy 2015, (Ministry of Education and Employment, nd).

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 7	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2013			87.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 9	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				87.00	Ratio (%)	2013			87.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
<p>Through this investment priority, Government will provide further VET opportunities as well as ameliorate vocational education and training (VET) systems so that these will provide students with the relevant skills and knowledge which will enable them to succeed in the labour market. This approach will also aim to ensure that the students embark on a smooth journey towards and into sustained employment.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target groups, beneficiaries and territories targeted</p>	

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
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Target groups: Youth, adults, educators, professionals, administrators.

Beneficiaries: Public Administration and employers[1]

Territories: Malta and Gozo

Interventions under this investment priority will target youth and adults. Capacity building measures within VET institutions are envisaged to target educators and professionals as well as other workers who contribute towards the enhancement of the education experience within the VET framework. The Beneficiaries envisaged include the public administration, which brings together a number of actors (including Government Departments and Vocational Education Institutions) supporting Government's vocational education vision.

Types of Interventions

This investment priority will focus on interventions aiming at increasing the participation rate in vocational education, as well as limit as much as possible the dropout rate from the VET education cycle through the provision of enhanced VET courses. Interventions will also cover measures aiming at bridging the gap between education and the labour market. This will be achieved by improving labour market relevance of VET systems both through improved pedagogical approaches as well as improved capacity of vocational education institutions. The aim is to ensure that those

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completing the programmes acquire the relevant skills and competencies that help individuals to meet their career aspirations.

List of potential interventions

Updating the study programmes aimed at providing relevant skills for industry

Having the right individuals for the jobs available in the market is a priority for Government. Therefore, Government is committed to invest in programmes which will provide individuals not only with the necessary knowledge but also with hands on experience and exposure which will endow them with the aptitude needed for their future careers. Together with facilitating the transition from education to work, these programmes will also aid workers in securing/sustaining their job. Employers also stand to gain; studies reveal that a high staff turnover at entry level is usually due to the fact that certain key skills acquired mostly through ‘on the job training’ are missing in employees.[2] In this context, VET institutions can also aid in enhancing these skills by fostering in learners/students through various methods which will allow them exposure to real life work situations.

Through vocational and training institutions, Government will offer a wide array of courses that are more suited to the local industrial needs. These courses will cover both full-time and part-time programmes catering for the ever changing economic environment which requires individuals to be flexible and constantly up to date. The programmes will offer the possibility of work placements for participants, including through apprenticeship programmes, where this provides them with the necessary exposure to the labour market which enables them to acquire the necessary skills of the trade as well as bring them closer to the reality of job attainment. In addition to this, focus will be directed towards creating workplace simulation concepts by providing participants with more realistic work-type scenarios in their chosen field. Complementary to the above, investment in VET part-time programmes to upgrade the skills of the current workforce is also considered critical.

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
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Professional Development of new curricular and capacity building measures

VET is considered as one of the essential pillars of the education and training process as it provides a different method of learning to the students. Consequently, Government is committed to strengthening the quality of VET systems with the aim of ensuring their labour market relevance whilst simultaneously providing the student with a fruitful experience. In this regard, the curricula will be updated accordingly based on thorough research, improved statistics and development of a foresight capacity to identify trends and anticipate change not only to meet today's labour market demands but also tomorrows. This calls for the revisiting of the current programmes, amend them where appropriate while at the same time develop new ones to reflect the needs of the industry. Deeper analysis of the high drop-out rates from vocational post secondary education will be given prominence. For improvements within the VET systems to occur, Government believes that an effective rapport should exist between the educational institutions and industry with the aim of ensuring an enhanced educational experience for the students on the one hand, as well as yielding positive results in terms of economic growth on the other. Other measures will also target the development of formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways together with the recognition of skills and competencies gained as a stimulus to engage ESLs to access formal learning and further non formal learning.[3]

Investing in VET trainers, educators and professionals is also considered pivotal to continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge to deliver VET programmes as well as adopting pedagogical tools that support students to better engage in the learning experience; thereby potentially minimising the drop-out effect. Interventions will also strengthen the administrative and support service structures of the institutions through capacity building measures, so that VET students will always have the necessary access to the right educational path and career orientation in the areas most relevant to the labour market.

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
<p>[1] These measures are planned for the public administration, any interventions for the benefit of employers will be designed and issued on an adhoc basis.</p> <p>[2] Malta Skills Audit Report 2011.</p> <p>[3] Draft Early School Leaving Strategy for Malta (Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education and Employment, 2012)</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
<p>The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.</p> <p>The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:</p> <p>Open call for applications</p> <p>The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These</p>	

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
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calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
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Small projects and projects of particular interest

Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.

Flexibility Facility

In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
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Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
The possible use of financial instruments is subject to the outcome of an ex-ante assessment for financial instruments which will be carried out in line with Article 37 of Regulation 1303/13.	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		10iv - Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
O5	Persons participating in up-skilling and re-training programmes	Number	ESF	Transition			400.00	Monitoring	1/year
O6	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number	ESF	Transition			1,400.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning
a. Social Innovation	

Article 9 of the ESF Regulation (1304/2013) calls the ESF to promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope in particular with the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovation solutions, including at the local or regional level, in order to address social needs in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular, social partners[1]. Social innovation is a tool which is capable to integrate various stakeholders to address social needs and societal challenges.[2]

In line with this Article, social innovation will be integrated as a horizontal principle across all the Priority Axes of the ESF Operational Programme. The aim is to try to identify new solutions for pressing social needs by inventing and developing solutions to challenges in a creative and positive way[3].

Government believes that all forms of social innovation should be supported to ensure that social demands affecting vulnerable groups in society that are not traditionally addressed by the markets or existing institutions are addressed. This also calls for investment in changes in relations between institutions and stakeholders[4]. In this regard, Malta believes that the fields for social innovation will be streamed across all the ESF Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities identified under the ESF Operational Programme with the aim to underpin reforms through social innovative solutions in the different strands that are supported through the ESF. Specific selection criterion will be identified within the selection process to ensure that projects supporting social innovation will be given prominence. At the application stage, projects contributing towards the principle of social innovation will be required to justify the social innovation element within the project; how this idea can be considered as a new solution to solve persisting social needs; and how this will contribute towards the specific objective under which it is submitted.

As a minimum, for a social innovation project to qualify for additional points within the selection process, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- It must contribute towards the specific objectives of the investment priority under which the project is submitted;
- Incorporates the development and implementation of innovative solutions addressing social needs;
- Is implemented in partnership with at least another interested stakeholder.

Priority axis	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning
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b. Transnational Co-operation

In line with Article 10 of the ESF regulation, Malta will support transnational co-operation with the aim of promoting mutual learning, thereby increasing the effectiveness of policies supported by the ESF. In principle, in line with Article 10 (3) of the ESF Regulation, Malta will consider selecting themes for transnational co-operation from a list of common themes proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the ESF Committee once these are adopted. However, the Authorities also believe that transnational co-operation should be open under all the investment priorities selected under the ESF to ensure that the advantages of mutual learning are benefited from across the different ESF strands identified under the OP.

In this context, project promoters pursuing transnational projects must either select a theme for transnational co-operation as adopted by the ESF committee or propose an/other theme/s which also contribute towards the objectives of the programme and towards the objectives of the investment priority under which they are submitted.

Similar to the 2007-2013 experience, only transnationality that adds value to the principle of social innovation described above will benefit from additional points in the selection process. As a minimum requirement, transnational co-operation shall involve partners from at least two Member States.

Priority axis	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning
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c. Thematic objectives set out in Articles 9(1) to (7) CPR

Priority Axis 3 will directly contribute towards TO1 (RTDi), TO2 (ICT) and TO3 (SMEs). In the case of RTDi it will contribute through the delivery of post-graduate and post doctoral programmes. The aim is to increase the expertise in the field in order to maximise the results which the country aspires to achieve within its National R&I Strategy 2020. In addition, Priority Axis 3 will also invest in the education system with the aim to adequately shape future human capital in R&I.

Enhancing access to, and use and quality of ICT (TO 2) will also be supported most particularly through Priority Axis 3. Various measures focusing on investment in digital literacy and e-learning will be supported. These include measures aiming to integrate the use of different forms of digital technologies (together with the appropriate e-content) within the compulsory education cycle as an integral part of the learning process with a view to enhance the education experience. Through lifelong learning, attention will also be directed towards measures aiming at increasing computer skills and the number of ICT literate persons in Malta.

Priority Axis 3 also contributes directly towards TO 3(SMEs), through investment in education, training and lifelong learning programmes to ensure that the private sector is equipped with human resources having the relevant skills to be able to contribute towards economic growth. Direct interventions towards the training needs of enterprises are also envisaged. The fostering of an entrepreneurial culture from the earliest ages will also be supported under Priority Axis 3.

Although the ESF OP will not directly contribute towards Thematic Objective 4 and 6, it is envisaged that interventions under Priority Axis 3 will indirectly contribute towards a low carbon economy, the protection of the environment and the promotion of resource efficiency. Although it is most prominently the infrastructural interventions that will help to contribute towards safeguarding the environment, it is just as important to ensure that the people are educated accordingly to instil within them a culture which puts the environment at the forefront. Furthermore, training which contributes towards the development of the green economy can also positively contribute towards these objectives. In this regard, the programme will support initiatives in this area.

Priority axis	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning
<p>[1] Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.</p> <p>[2] Guide to Social Innovation (European Commission, 2013) Regional and Urban Policy, p.5 available from http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/47822/Guide%20to%20Social%20Innovation.pdf [Accessed on 28 February 2014]</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p> <p>[4] Ibid.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
FI 1	F	Financial Indicator	Euro	ESF	Transition			14,288,118.43			47,424,810.00	Monitoring	Amount to be certified by 2018 taking into account the de-commitment values for 2018. Figures were based on past experience during the 2007-2013 programming period.
O 13	O	Persons participating in tertiary education	Number	ESF	Transition			150			700.00	Monitoring	
O 6	O	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number	ESF	Transition			1600			7,400.00	Monitoring	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

Not applicable

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	115. Reducing and preventing early school-leaving and promoting equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education including formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways for reintegrating into education and training	12,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	116. Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups	7,539,848.00
ESF	Transition	117. Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	12,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	118. Improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems, facilitating the transition from education to work, and strengthening vocational education and training systems and their quality, including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the establishment and development of work-based learning systems, including dual learning systems and apprenticeship schemes	6,400,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	35,439,848.00
ESF	Transition	04. Support through financial instruments: loan or equivalent	2,500,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	06. ESF transnational cooperation	50,000.00
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	37,889,848.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	37,939,848.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	02. Social innovation	2,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	03. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs	5,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	04. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	5,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	05. Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies	8,400,000.00
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	17,539,848.00

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning
The planned use of technical assistance is explained in detail under Section 2.B of this programme.	

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	PA 4
Title of the priority axis	Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity

- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to operations aimed at reconstruction in response to major or regional natural disasters
- For the ERDF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to SME (Article 39)

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

Not applicable

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	Transition	Public	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	11i
Title of the investment priority	Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Strengthening the role and capacity of the public administration, with a view to improve the efficiency of public service delivery through improved leadership and better utilization of public resources as well as simplification and better regulation.

Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support

Development Needs

The efficiency of the public administration including the provision of a cost-effective public service presents an important objective for Government. In an ever changing economic environment, it is imperative that the public administration remains abreast of the developments both within local and international fora. Over recent years, changes were effected with a view to ensure that the public administration caters for the needs of an ever changing economic environment. Changes were undertaken both in terms of the regulatory framework such as the enactment of the Public Administration Act as well as from an operational perspective including the increased utilisation of ICT as a means to further improve service accessibility and the revision of the modus operandi of departments, amongst others. Notwithstanding, further efforts need to be undertaken, with a view to address administrative burden and further streamline procedures.

These changes have called for continuous investment in the human resource potential of the public administration particularly through up-skilling and re-skilling of employees. Within this context, Government set up the Centre for Development, Research and Training (CDRT) in 2007 with the aim to identify the development and training needs of public officers and address them through adequate training programmes. This has in turn contributed towards the implementation of the public administration reform aimed at strengthening leadership within the public service as well as improving service delivery.

Comparatively lengthy public procurement processes present challenges, which are leading to inefficiencies in the public administration. In this regard, Government has invested in an e-Procurement System with the aim to facilitate access to public procurement and streamlined the process. Furthermore, Government has also introduced the Common Assessment Framework[1], a quality assurance system which offers departments the necessary tools to improve the quality of their services through a framework of on-going assessment. However, further efforts are required to improve the efficiency of the administration.

Expected Results

	<p>Improving the overall performance of the public administration.</p> <hr/> <p>[1] Common Assessment Framework Malta: For a Quality Public Administration. Available online on: http://www.cafmalta.gov.mt/?lang=en [Accessed on 6 October 2014].</p>
ID of the specific objective	SO 2
Title of the specific objective	Improve the efficiency of the judicial system
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>An efficient national justice system has a direct positive impact on development performance. In fact, a well functioning justice system leads to the enhancement of levels of trust and stability and to the creation of an attractive business environment.[1] According to the EU Justice Scoreboard 2014, Malta has been identified as one of the countries having the lengthiest proceedings for civil, commercial and administrative cases to be resolved, having low clearance rates, and also as having the smallest number of judges participating in continuous training in EU law or in the law of another member state.[2] Within this context, steps are required to improve the current judicial system.</p> <p>Government therefore committed resources to achieve the desired results and has already embarked on a major Justice Reform. Through this reform, Government aims to improve the judicial system by means of reducing bureaucracy, mainly by cutting down on disposition time, and improving the clearance rates as well as enhancing institutional capacity of the judiciary. Moreover, as part of the Justice Reform various measures have been identified, including[3] infrastructural investments such as the upgrading of existing infrastructure and investment in ICT technology as well as capacity building[4] and training initiatives targeting court personnel and other personnel employed in relevant key stakeholder organizations. The continuous training of the judiciary is also seen as an important factor in the achievement of this objective. Within a changing milieu, reforms need to be progressive and continuous, coupled with investment in the public sector including its human resources. In this regard, Government's aim is to</p>

pursue its mission to provide an efficient and cost-effective service to its citizens as well as strengthening the quality of employment.

Expected Results

Increased competences of workers and professionals working within the judicial system to streamline processes.

[1] The 2014 EU Justice Scoreboard, available from:http://ec.europa.eu/justice/effective-justice/files/justice_scoreboard_2014_en.pdf [Accessed on 8 October 2014].

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Annex 25 for the document “Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Better Governance”, January 2014.

[4] Including the new jurist system and more support staff.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 17	Number of public bodies/departments with improved processes	Transition	Number				10.00	Number	2014			13.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 18	Participants gaining a qualification/certification in training related to the judicial reform	Transition	%				85.00	Ratio (%)	2013			85.00	Monitoring	1/year
R 9	Participants gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				90.00	Ratio (%)	2013			90.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
<p>The objective of Government is to have a public administration which provides an efficient and cost-effective service which continues to evolve and meet the current and future socio-economic demands of the country. In order to achieve this objective, further investment is necessary within the public administration with a view to strengthen human capital in order to develop a cadre of employees who are in a position to meet these challenges. Investment within this priority will seek to improve the efficiency of the service and achieve a more customer oriented approach towards service delivery thereby requiring investment targeting simplification of processes and procedures and the reduction of red tape. Investing in human capital within the administration will also seek to improve managerial and leadership skills, and meet up standard delivery services, including back office services. In addition, measures aimed at improving public procurement with a view to improve its efficiency will also be supported. Specific attention will also be directed towards the judicial reform with the aim to update the administration of justice to meet the current and future needs of the general public and enterprises.</p>	

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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Indicative Target Groups, Beneficiaries and Territories targeted

Target Groups: Public Administration, Local Government, the Judiciary

Beneficiaries: Public Administration; Local Government

Territories: Malta and Gozo

Interventions under this investment priority will target the whole public administration and Local Government both in terms of organisations as well as their employees. The main Beneficiary for this investment priority is the public administration in general, including its Ministries, Divisions, Departments, Public Sector Entities and Authorities that provide a public service, including back office operations since this function is considered as an important part of the chain within the service delivery process. Local Government will also be targeted with the aim to improve service delivery at the local level.

Types of interventions

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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Throughout the 2014-2020 programming period, Government will direct investment towards enhancing the public administration both as a service provider and as a regulator. Such investment will focus on both the enhancement of skills and competencies of staff as well as on the improvement of processes within entities and departments. Particular emphasis will be made to implement reforms such as the reform currently being undertaken within the judiciary sector. In addition, Government has also embarked on an ongoing simplification process with a view to reduce administrative burden thus ameliorating service delivery. Within this context, Government will seek to invest in its workforce with a view to ensure that it is equipped with the necessary skills and expertise to deliver its objectives. These interventions will be complemented with the necessary ICT infrastructure (including, where relevant, the National ICT Interoperability Framework) as well as e-government facilities (financed under Priority Axis 2 through OPI) which will contribute towards reducing administrative burden thus creating the necessary conditions to increase and strengthen the competitiveness of the Maltese economy.

Measures will also be undertaken in order to have a more socially inclusive public administration which also caters for vulnerable and disadvantaged employees.

List of potential interventions

a. Actions supporting the specific objective of strengthening the role and capacity of the public administration, with a view to improve the efficiency of public service delivery through improved leadership and better utilization of public resources as well as simplification and better regulation.

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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Reduction of administrative burdens and increase efficiency of operations including the area of public procurement

Improved service delivery and reducing red tape is a core Government objective which will contribute towards achieving an efficient and effective public administration. Administrative simplification features very strongly on the agenda of Government with the aim to provide a public service platform that meets the expectations of its citizens and business community. In this regard, it is the intention of Government to pursue ongoing administrative reforms with a view to contribute towards simplified administrative processes and work towards a seamless government approach so as to obtain increased customer satisfaction.

This approach requires targeted investment aimed at changing internal cultures and structures to support the introduction of innovative solutions for continuous improvement. The need for an integrated approach between Government departments and entities alike to work together through a co-ordinated and collaborative system that is focused on results and the provision of excellent service experience to its clients is of utmost importance. In this regard, the appointment of the Commissioner for Simplification and Reduction of Bureaucracy in 2013 demonstrates the emphasis that is being placed by Government on better regulation and better service provision. Within this context, initiatives aimed at reducing administrative burden as well as red tape for both citizens and the business community will be supported. Such initiatives include amongst others: studies, communication strategies and training programmes.

A key contributor towards the reduction of administrative burden is ICT, and its application through e-Government, which acts as an enabler. In fact, ICT is considered as an important tool that contributes towards the simplification of procedures as well as adopting a more customer oriented approach. The experience so far has been positive however this is an area which requires ongoing investment for training to keep up with the development needs in this area. In this regard, Government will ensure that ICT will continue to be leveraged through appropriate capacity building interventions to achieve simplification and reduction in administrative burden. Investment within this area will provide employees within the public administration with the necessary skills so as to reach the main aims of the National ICT Interoperability Framework (NIF). This will lead to better aligned departmental business processes, standardisation, discovery and reuse of ICT assets, as well as to an improved level of trust in the services provided by the public sector.[1] This initiative will be complemented through ERDF mainly through ICT infrastructure and enhanced e-services.

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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One of the areas where ICT has contributed towards efficiency is public procurement through e-procurement. Efficient public procurement processes are considered as a requirement to speed up the implementation of projects and improve the interface between the public and private sector. In this regard, further investment is required to address the challenges in this area. In this regard, this OP will support capacity building measures across the different departments within the public administration.

The reduction of administrative burden as well as simplification of processes will also contribute towards the sustainability of public finances. The continuous monitoring of public finances is key to the development and competitive standing of the country. In this regard, interventions aimed at addressing financial discipline through the enhancement of monitoring and implementation systems will also be supported

Strengthening Managerial and Administrative levels within the Public Administration including local councils

The efficient utilisation of the human resource complement is an important factor to ensure a well functioning public service. In an ever changing economic and social environment, Government firmly believes in the need to invest in public officers within the administration during the course of their career. This approach ensures that the workforce keeps abreast of new developments and is adequately trained to meet the challenges of the administration. Within this context, Government aims to enhance and expand its training programmes for its employees, including internships (both locally and abroad), and specialised academic and professional training programmes.

In addition, Government will also allocate resources to local councils with the aim to strengthen their institutional and administrative capacity. In this context, continuous training programmes addressed towards those providing a local service, including councillors, executives, and supporting staff will be considered.

In its bid for continuous evolution, Government will also direct its efforts towards further enhancing policy design and planning as well as project

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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management. Within this context, further investment is required towards the creation of strong leadership skills that are important to achieve a rapid policy response and to conduct the necessary policy planning. This objective requires considerable strengthening both from a project management perspective as well as from a human resource one.

Furthering the development of the public administration with a view to ensuring the required efficiency and effectiveness in participation within European and international fora will also be supported. The aim is to build and consolidate the structures of the public administration to formulate policies and to participate more effectively (also through language and communication proficiency) in international fora and institutions. The objective of the interventions to be supported will be to garner a more extensive level of expertise across Government building on the experience achieved to date. Opportunities for lifelong learning and gaining firsthand experience on specific thematic dossiers through the provision of internships within the public administrations in other Member States or EU institutions will also be pursued. Interventions in this area will contribute towards the ongoing Public Sector Reform in that it will address the development as well as the further enhancement of the skills required in the areas of policy development as well as decision making at an international level in particular within the European Union .

In addition to the above, Government aims to strengthen the quality of employment and well-being of persons employed within the public administration. Initiatives foreseen will also provide the necessary support structures to vulnerable employees and to the entities within which these employees are engaged. This approach will lead to a more cohesive, socially inclusive and productive public administration.

b. Actions supporting the specific objective of improving the efficiency of the judicial system

Investing in human capital and the strengthening of professional competencies within the judicial system

In line with the CSR to focus on the improvement of the overall efficiency of the judiciary system, Government has embarked on a reform with the aim to improve the efficiency of the judicial system, and to improve the administrative burden, by cutting down on disposition time and improving

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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clearance rates. In March 2013, a Commission was set up to prepare a report on the Justice Reform; the final report was presented in November 2013.

The Justice Reform[2] will involve upgrading of existing infrastructure and investment in ICT technology as well as investment in human capital including capacity building and training and professional knowledge sharing measures earmarked for the judiciary, court personnel and other personnel employed in relevant key stakeholder organisations. It is the intention of Government to support interventions within this investment priority, with a view to provide the necessary skills, training and capacity. Within this context, this priority will support measures aimed at reforming this sector with a view to improving the administration and delivery of justice.

In this context, further investment will be undertaken with a view to contribute towards an efficient and effective judicial system. Interventions will be directed at identifying the knowledge and skills gaps of the stakeholders within the justice sector. Such research will be conducted with a view to provide the necessary tools for the design and implementation of training programmes and knowledge sharing to the relevant stakeholders. Through different training programmes aimed at strengthening the competencies and updating the skills, the judiciary will be equipped to successfully implement the Justice Reform.[3]

In addition, training programmes will also be offered to the various stakeholders operating within the justice sector such as Ministry officials, court employees, etc. The training programmes' content will therefore be tailor-made with a view to specifically address the needs of each target group. Such initiatives will render stakeholders more competent to deliver the expected outcomes of the Justice Reform.

[1] National ICT Interoperability Framework, Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, n.d.

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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[2] See Annex 25 for the document “Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Better Governance”, January 2014.

[3] Such training programmes will also incorporate the concept of study visits to best practice countries in order to enable participants to obtain first-hand experience and learn from good practices.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.

The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:

Open call for applications

The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed project;
- capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and
- state of readiness for the commencement of the project.

Aid schemes

No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.

Small projects and projects of particular interest

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.

Flexibility Facility

In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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Not applicable

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
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Investment priority	11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		11i - Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
CO22	number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	Number	ESF	Transition	0.00	0.00	3.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 17	Persons participating in training related to the judicial reform	Number	ESF	Transition			500.00	Monitoring	1/year
O 6	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number	ESF	Transition			3,500.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	11ii
Title of the investment priority	Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	SO 1
Title of the specific objective	Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders involved in the delivery of education (including lifelong learning and training), employment and social policies.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<p>Development Needs</p> <p>The concept of public dialogue within the Maltese socio-economic fabric has undergone a major transformation in recent years. The setting up of the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) and the Malta European Union Steering Committee (MEUSAC) has contributed towards this change, as also the inclusion of public consultation as part of the process</p>

of drafting key policy documents. These initiatives have been critical in the broadening of public consultation in diverse segments of Maltese society.

Throughout the 2007-2013 programming period, measures have been implemented to establish appropriate structures for the relevant social and civil stakeholders with the aim of enhancing their contribution towards social dialogue both locally as well as within EU fora. In recent years, these stakeholders have come to work in a more cohesive manner thus shedding the fragmented approach which had prevailed in the past. This has enhanced participation by the relevant stakeholders in the formulation of policies and reforms making their contribution more meaningful and leading to a stronger economic and social debate.

Whilst several improvements were registered in recent years in terms of participation in social dialogue, Government plans to provide the necessary skills to stakeholders with a view to further enhance a system that is transparent, participatory and informed. Government believes that further investment is essential for social partners and civil society bodies to develop the necessary socio-economic technical expertise and capacity. Therefore, the envisaged investment will equip pertinent stakeholders to participate in the social dialogue process and to actively contribute towards the formulation of policies both at a national and at a European level. With this premise, throughout the 2014-2020 programming period, Government aims to channel assistance via a two pronged approach, firstly by providing assistance to further enhance the capacity of social partners and civil society organisations delivering education, lifelong learning, training, employment, and social policies; and secondly by investing in Government's own services, including local government, which can contribute towards improved policies in these areas.

Expected Results

Increased/improved participation from stakeholders



Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
R 19	Participants within stakeholder organisations delivering ESF related policies gaining a qualification/certification upon leaving	Transition	%				31.00	Ratio (%)	2014			40.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
<p>Government believes in the importance of having pertinent stakeholders involved in the delivery of education, employment, and social policies equipped with the necessary technical capacity to render the desired results. Building the capacity to ensure that these stakeholders have the necessary expertise and knowledge within these stakeholders will enable them to actively participate in the socio-economic dialogue leading to an enhanced and more effective policy-making process. In this regard, this priority will direct investment towards equipping stakeholders with the necessary technical capacity that would further enhance their participation in the development of Government policies within the ESF related areas.</p>	
<p>Indicative Target Groups, Beneficiaries and Territories Targeted</p> <p>Target Groups: Socio-economic partners and civil society organisations and their employees; employees within Public Administration Bodies involved in the delivery of education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies.</p> <p>Beneficiaries: Social partners and Civil Society Organisations; Public Administration Bodies involved in the delivery of education, lifelong learning,</p>	

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
<p>training and employment and social policies.</p> <p>Territories: Malta and Gozo</p> <p>The target groups will be the social and civil partners and the Government bodies relevant for this Investment Priority that operate in Malta and Gozo, together with their members and human resource complement. The Beneficiaries envisaged are organisations involved in the promotion of enhanced capacity building for stakeholders involved in the delivery of education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies.</p> <p>Types of Interventions</p> <p>This investment priority is targeted towards the enhancement of the institutional capacity of the three main socio-economic players with the aim to achieve a superior administration when it comes to delivering education (including training and lifelong learning), employment and social inclusion policies.</p> <p>List of potential interventions</p>	

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
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Training, research and support for networking

Interventions will focus on the provision of the necessary capacity building measures including training, research, studies, support for networking and communication initiatives which enhance the development of the human resource complement within stakeholder organisations. Improved technical capacity is expected to enable social and civil partners to reach out to their respective members more efficiently thus generating more interest and active participation on national issues. In this regard, interventions will provide stakeholders with the required information and knowledge they need in order to assist them in formulating an opinion on proposed reforms and policies in a timely manner.

Through this Investment Priority, Government aims to strengthen the key platform that is available for national consultation, mainly MCESD, which brings together a significant number of local stakeholders on a regular basis thus providing the widest consultation possible.

Government is responsible for policy formulation and implementation as well as ensuring adequate public consultation in these processes. Such approach contributes towards ensuring that policies are successfully implemented on the ground. For this purpose, Government will continue to invest in the bodies delivering ESF related policies to ensure that employment, education and social policy related targets set for Malta are achieved. In this regard, Government will seek to enhance the policy formulation and the implementation of ESF related policy structures (including local government), also within the wider context of collaborative partnership processes and multi-level governance.

To support the achievement of sustained growth and enhanced competitiveness Government will also seek to improve its own services with the aim of improving coordination and collaboration with the social and civil stakeholders so as to strengthen policy formulation nation-wide. Within this context, MEUSAC which manages consultation processes and provides support to civil society and ordinary citizens on EU related decision making processes will continue to be strengthened. This is considered as an essential step in order to enhance civil and social dialogue in Malta in terms of the ESF relevant policy areas (including education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies).

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
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The project selection process to be adopted for the 2014-2020 period will follow the process already established under the 2007-2013 period in order to build on the administrative set ups that are already in place and to capitalise on the experience that has been gained over the two previous programming periods.

The project selection process for the European Social Fund will be undertaken through the following procedures:

Open call for applications

The Managing Authority (MA) will launch calls for project proposals highlighting which priority axis is open and who is eligible to apply. These calls will be widely publicised in the media, on the website of the MA as well as other Government websites. Once a call is launched, application packs and guidance notes will be uploaded on the website of the MA and information sessions will be organised so as to provide interested applicants with the necessary details on the project application and selection process.

The criteria for selection of the projects will be proposed by the MA and approved by the Monitoring Committee (MC). Cross cutting criteria that will be considered, amongst others, when selecting projects include the:

- quality of the project proposal and its potential to contribute towards the achievement of the expected results as stated in the Operational Programme (OPII);
- overall costs of the proposed project, including the project's cost effectiveness and project sustainability;
- degree of additional leverage that the project will obtain through the deployment of EU funds;
- effective integration of the horizontal principles (particularly sustainable development and equal opportunities principles) in the proposed

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
<p>project;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capacity of the organisation to implement the proposed project; and • state of readiness for the commencement of the project. <p>Separate calls will be issued for the participation of local councils and NGOs in order to ensure a more level playing field in the selection process.</p> <p>Aid schemes</p> <p>No public calls will be issued for the management of aid schemes. Intermediate Bodies designated by the MA will be allocated a sum of money and will manage the schemes on behalf of the MA. Similar to the open call procedure, the selection criteria will be drawn up by the MA and approved by the MC.</p> <p>Small projects and projects of particular interest</p> <p>Funds may also be allocated directly to small projects or projects that contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the OP which arise during the implementation period but outside the period of an open call as recommended by the MA. The Beneficiary will be required to complete a project application form and sign a letter of grant with the MA. The Beneficiary will be expected to follow rules and procedures as directed by the MA. The decision of the Managing Authority to follow the said procedure in such cases shall be final. The size of each individual operation that can be selected under this procedure will not exceed €250,000 in total public eligible cost.</p>	

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
<p>Flexibility Facility</p> <p>In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance in a complementary manner and subject to the limit of 10% of European Funds for the Programme, actions falling within the scope of assistance from the ERDF, provided that they are considered necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it. The flexibility facility will not necessarily reach the full 10%. The use of the facility will be monitored through the Structural Funds Database.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
Not applicable	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels
Not applicable	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		11ii - Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
O 18	Participants within stakeholder organisations delivering ESF related policies	Number	ESF	Transition			500.00	Monitoring	1/year

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity
<p>a. Social Innovation</p> <p>Article 9 of the ESF Regulation (1304/2013) calls the ESF to promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope in particular with the aim of testing, evaluating and scaling up innovation solutions, including at the local or regional level, in order to address social needs in partnership with the relevant partners and, in particular, social partners[1]. Social innovation is a tool which is capable to integrate various stakeholders to address social needs and societal challenges.[2]</p> <p>In line with this Article, social innovation will be integrated as a horizontal principle across all the Priority Axes of the ESF Operational Programme. The aim is to try to identify new solutions for pressing social needs by inventing and developing solutions to challenges in a creative and positive way[3].</p> <p>Government believes that all forms of social innovation should be supported to ensure that social demands affecting vulnerable groups in society that are not traditionally addressed by the markets or existing institutions are addressed. This also calls for investment in changes in relations between institutions and stakeholders[4]. In this regard, Malta believes that the fields for social innovation will be streamed across all the ESF Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities identified under the ESF Operational Programme with the aim to underpin reforms through social innovative solutions in the different strands that are supported through the ESF. Specific selection criterion will be identified within the selection process to ensure that projects supporting social innovation will be given prominence. At the application stage, projects contributing towards the principle of</p>	

Priority axis	PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity
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social innovation will be required to justify the social innovation element within the project; how this idea can be considered as a new solution to solve persisting social needs; and how this will contribute towards the specific objective under which it is submitted.

As a minimum, for a social innovation project to qualify for additional points within the selection process, it must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- It must contribute towards the specific objectives of the investment priority under which the project is submitted;
- Incorporates the development and implementation of innovative solutions addressing social needs;
- Is implemented in partnership with at least another interested stakeholder.

b. Transnational Co-operation

In line with Article 10 of the ESF regulation, Malta will support transnational co-operation with the aim of promoting mutual learning, thereby increasing the effectiveness of policies supported by the ESF. In principle, in line with Article 10 (3) of the ESF Regulation, Malta will consider selecting themes for transnational co-operation from a list of common themes proposed by the Commission and endorsed by the ESF Committee once these are adopted. However, the Authorities also believe that transnational co-operation should be open under all the investment priorities selected under the ESF to ensure that the advantages of mutual learning are benefited from across the different ESF strands identified under the OP.

In this context, project promoters pursuing transnational projects must either select a theme for transnational co-operation as adopted by the ESF committee or propose an/other theme/s which also contribute towards the objectives of the programme and towards the objectives of the investment priority under which they are submitted.

Similar to the 2007-2013 experience, only transnationality that adds value to the principle of social innovation described above will benefit from additional points in the selection process. As a minimum requirement, transnational co-operation shall involve partners from at least two Member States.

c. Thematic objectives set out in Articles 9(1) to (7) CPR

Priority Axis 4 will also contribute towards the ICT Thematic Objective by investing in ESF measures which complement interventions financed through ERDF under OPI with the aim to contribute towards the reduction of administrative burden and simplification of procedures as well as adopting a more customer oriented approach. Priority Axis 4 will also indirectly contribute towards Thematic Objective 3 through measures addressing the reduction of administrative burden and improving the administration of justice with the aim to facilitate the Maltese socio-economic environment. These investments are intertwined with the concept of improving Malta's competitiveness by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Administration.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

Priority axis	PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity
<p>[2] Guide to Social Innovation (European Commission, 2013) Regional and Urban Policy, p.5 available from http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/10157/47822/Guide%20to%20Social%20Innovation.pdf [Accessed on 28 February 2014]</p> <p>[3] Ibid.</p> <p>[4] Ibid.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity											
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
CO22	O	number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	Number	ESF	Transition			1			3.00	Monitoring	Indicator selected represents majority of resources allocated to the Priority Axis.
FI 1	F	Financial Indicator	Euro	ESF	Transition			2,988,741.96			11,000,000.00	Monitoring	Amount to be certified by 2018 taking into account the de-commitment values for 2018. Figures were based on past experience during the 2007-2013 programming period.

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

Not applicable

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	119. Investment in institutional capacity and in the efficiency of public administrations and public services at the national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance	8,000,000.00
ESF	Transition	120. Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment and social policies, including through sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise for reform at the national, regional and local levels	800,000.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	8,800,000.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	06. ESF transnational cooperation	275,000.00
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	8,525,000.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	8,800,000.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	02. Social innovation	125,000.00
ESF	Transition	05. Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies	800,000.00

Priority axis		PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	Transition	08. Not applicable	7,875.00 0.00

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity
The planned use of technical assistance is explained in detail under Section 2.B of this programme.	

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	PA 5
Title of the priority axis	Technical Assistance

2.B.2 Justification for establishing a priority axis covering more than one category of region (where applicable)

No applicable

2.B.3 Fund and category of region

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ESF	Transition	Public

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
SO 1	Investing in the implementation of the Operational Programme with a view to optimise the programme's delivery in line with regulatory requirements and procedures.	Not applicable - Technical Assistance dedicated to this Programme does not exceed Euro 15 million.

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		SO 1 - Investing in the implementation of the Operational Programme with a view to optimise the programme's delivery in line with regulatory requirements and procedures.									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

2.B.6.1 A description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

Priority axis	PA 5 - Technical Assistance
<p>Based on the experience from the previous programming period and the ongoing assessment of the administrative capacity in relation to the implementation of the programmes, the amount of funding allocated for technical assistance will have to reflect the more specific needs of this Operational Programme to cater for the administrative costs required for the overall implementation of the ESF programme. At the level of the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Body, preliminary assessments have shown that as regards the financial management and control of the Operational Programme as well as the administrative and on-the-spot verifications of operations, the amount of funding allocated from TA for the carrying out of these tasks will have to ensure that the regulatory requirements are duly met. The fragmentation of the ESF projects and the laborious control mechanisms required for ESF kind of interventions will also have to be taken into account in this assessment.</p> <p>Through technical assistance, Government will seek to facilitate the implementation of the Operational Programme with a view to enhance programme delivery in line with the Regulatory Framework.</p> <p>Types of Interventions</p> <p>The actions under this Priority Axis will support programme implementation, in accordance with Article 59 of the Common Provisions Regulation</p>	

(EU) 1303/2013 with a view to effectively manage and control the programme.

Government is committed to reinforce and ensure adequate capacity within the entities involved in the management and control of the funds with the aim to ascertain efficiency and effectiveness in the overall implementation of the 2014-2020 Programme. Thus, this Priority Axis will support the increase in capacity in entities involved in the management and control of the Programme. This will be complemented with the necessary capacity building measures in the field including training (both locally and abroad) and networking including exchange of experiences (within the Member State as well as with other Member States). In addition, external expert assistance such as expertise in the implementation of simplified cost options, monitoring and evaluation, etc. will also be supported.

Technical Assistance is also expected to support any necessary studies, communication and evaluation plans, ICT related systems and equipment, which contribute towards an effective and simplified approach during the implementation of the programme contributing towards more efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the funds.

List of Potential Interventions

- Information and Publicity Measures

The main aim of information and publicity activities is to promote public awareness of the Operational Programme to potential beneficiaries as well as the general public. These activities are expected to increase overall transparency in the management, control and implementation of the Funds and also support absorption. In line with Article 115 (1) (a), Article 116 and Annex XII Article 4 of the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 1303/2013, Malta will be drafting the Communication Strategy for the ESI Funds 2014-2020. In this regard, technical assistance will support the drafting as well as the implementation of this strategy.

- Investing in the adequate implementation of the Programmes

The provision of highly trained human resources tasked with the implementation and monitoring of the Operational Programmes remains a priority during the 2014-2020 programming period. Government is in the process of concluding a detailed assessment of the capacity and expertise of the human resources involved in the implementation of the programmes. The objective of this exercise is to take into account the lessons learnt from the implementation of 2007-2013 programme as well as to identify the needs both in terms of human resources as well as expertise with a view to ensure the adequate implementation of the 2014-2020 programme.

Within this context, TA will finance expenditure related to the adequate management, implementation and control of the programme such as the recruitment of officers, investment in IT systems and studies including simplified cost options, monitoring and evaluation, amongst others.

- Capacity Building measures

The adequate implementation of the funds hinges on the skills and expertise of the persons working within the entities involved in the process. In this regard, TA will support the drafting and implementation of the Training Strategy for the entities involved in the management of EU Structural and Cohesion Funds. A training programme for all stakeholders and beneficiaries of EU funds will be developed based on the experience of the implementation and monitoring of the 2007-2013 programme. Training envisaged will include project management, cost benefit analysis, ICT training pertaining to the database managing the funds, evaluation, monitoring amongst others. Such an approach will consolidate the skills available amongst existing stakeholders as well as provide the necessary competences to new staff members within the relevant authorities and beneficiaries.

- Monitoring and Evaluation

During the 2014-2020 programming period, the Managing Authority will seek to invest in the development and implementation of the Evaluation Plan. Particular emphasis will also be given to the implementation of the Performance Framework with a view to ascertain that the necessary capacity and expertise is available both at the level of the MA/ IB.

- Closure of 2007-2013 programmes

Costs incurred after the final date of eligibility of the 2007-2013 Programmes relating to the closure of these Programmes may be co-financed by the TA budgets of the 2014-2020 Programmes.

- Programming Post 2020

Costs incurred in preparation for the post 2020 programming period may also be co-financed by the TA budgets of the 2014-2020 Programmes.

Priority axis	PA 5 - Technical Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common actions between OPI and OPII <p>In view of the fact that Malta has a centralised implementation system, there will be actions which are common to both OPI and OPII. These include, amongst others, actions related to the common IT database, publicity actions, evaluations, services of internal staff and external expertise. Costs related to actions common to both OPs, that is, having a component contributing to both Programmes such as the electronic monitoring system, common publicity actions, as well as the salaries of officers working on both programmes shall be apportioned between the two OPs on the basis of a flat rate ratio of 70:30 (OPI:OPII). The computation of the flat rate ratio of 70:30 takes into account the fact that the financial volume of the OPs alone would result in an unbalanced apportionment of costs towards OPI since the financial allocation of OPI is substantially higher than that of OPII. In addition, the fragmentation of the ESF projects and the laborious control mechanisms required for ESF kind of interventions have also been taken into account and have led to an increased ratio for OPII when establishing the flat rate ratio.</p>	

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Table 13: Output indicators (by priority axis) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis	PA 5 - Technical Assistance					
ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) (optional)			Source of data
			M	W	T	
TASO1	Number of persons trained	Number			250.00	Monitoring
TASO2	Number of evaluations carried out	Number			4.00	Monitoring
TASO3	Number of publicity measures undertaken	Number			25.00	Monitoring
TASO4	Number of studies/research activities carried out	Number			4.00	Monitoring

2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of the Union support

Tables 14-16: Categories of intervention

Table 14: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ESF	Transition	121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	5,273,488.00
ESF	Transition	122. Evaluation and studies	508,288.00
ESF	Transition	123. Information and communication	571,824.00

Table 15: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ESF	Transition	01. Non-repayable grant	6,353,600.00

Table 16: Dimension 3 – Territory type

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ESF	Transition	07. Not applicable	6,353,600.00

3. FINANCING PLAN

3.1 Financial appropriation from each fund and amounts for performance reserve

Table 17

Fund	Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
		Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve
ESF	Transition	13,388,655.00	854,595.00	13,656,700.00	871,704.00	13,930,073.00	889,154.00	14,208,861.00	906,948.00	14,493,219.00	925,099.00	14,783,258.00	943,612.00	15,079,076.00	962,494.00	99,539,842.00	6,353,606.00
Total		13,388,655.00	854,595.00	13,656,700.00	871,704.00	13,930,073.00	889,154.00	14,208,861.00	906,948.00	14,493,219.00	925,099.00	14,783,258.00	943,612.00	15,079,076.00	962,494.00	99,539,842.00	6,353,606.00

3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co-financing (€)

Table 18a: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2)	EIB contributions (g)	Main allocation		Performance reserve		Performance reserve amount as proportion of total Union support (l) = (j) / (a) * 100
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)				Union support (h) = (a) - (j)	National Counterpart (i) = (b) - (k)	Union support (j)	National Counterpart (k) = (b) * (i) / (a)	
PA 1	ESF	Transition	Public	20,800,000.00	5,200,000.00	5,200,000.00	0.00	26,000,000.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	19,420,784.00	4,855,196.00	1,379,216.00	344,804.00	6.63%
PA 2	ESF	Transition	Public	32,000,000.00	8,000,000.00	8,000,000.00	0.00	40,000,000.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	30,080,000.00	7,520,000.00	1,920,000.00	480,000.00	6.00%
PA 3	ESF	Transition	Public	37,939,848.00	9,484,962.00	9,484,962.00	0.00	47,424,810.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	35,413,458.00	8,853,364.00	2,526,390.00	631,598.00	6.66%
PA 4	ESF	Transition	Public	8,800,000.00	2,200,000.00	2,200,000.00	0.00	11,000,000.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	8,272,000.00	2,068,000.00	528,000.00	132,000.00	6.00%
PA 5	ESF	Transition	Public	6,353,600.00	1,588,400.00	1,588,400.00	0.00	7,942,000.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	6,353,600.00	1,588,400.00			
Total	ESF	Transition		105,893,448.00	26,473,362.00	26,473,362.00	0.00	132,366,810.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	99,539,842.00	24,884,960.00	6,353,606.00	1,588,402.00	6.00%
Grand total				105,893,448.00	26,473,362.00	26,473,362.00	0.00	132,366,810.00	80.00000000000000%	0.00	99,539,842.00	24,884,960.00	6,353,606.00	1,588,402.00	

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

Table 18b: Youth Employment Initiative - ESF and YEI specific allocations (where appropriate)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e) (2)
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)		
Total				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%

Ratio	%
Ratio of ESF for less developed regions	0.00%
Ratio of ESF for transition regions	0.00%
Ratio of ESF for more developed regions	0.00%

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

Table 18c: Breakdown of the financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	ESF	Transition	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	20,800,000.00	5,200,000.00	26,000,000.00
Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	32,000,000.00	8,000,000.00	40,000,000.00
Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	ESF	Transition	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	37,939,848.00	9,484,962.00	47,424,810.00
Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	ESF	Transition	Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and an efficient public administration	8,800,000.00	2,200,000.00	11,000,000.00
Total				99,539,848.00	24,884,962.00	124,424,810.00

Table 19: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the operational programme (%)
Total	0.00	0.00%

4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development taking into account the content and objectives of the operational programme having regard to the Partnership Agreement and showing how it the operational programme contributes to the accomplishment of the objectives of the operational programme and expected results
Malta's territorial profile is dictated by its size, open economy, high population density, lack of economies of scale, peripherality to mainland Europe, dependence on imports and export concentration. Malta's peripheral position conditions its development in terms of access to markets and innovation and also brings about permanent limitations on what can be achieved on the ground with regard to certain policy areas.

The specific characteristics of a Member State must be taken into account when designing development strategies and will also condition the type of strategy and development tools that will be required to address such specificities. This implies a mechanism which allows each territory to bring its own challenges, constraints or limitations as well as potentials to the forefront of any policy discussion. This process also has to remain flexible and dynamic so as to continue to be relevant to the territory in the longer term.

The territorial dimension should be integrated into existing impact assessment procedures without increasing the administrative burden, particularly in the case of a small island state as Malta. For a successful implementation of territorial strategies to take place key methods and tools, adapted to the needs of the territory, need to be employed in a holistic manner.

During this programming period, the application of the integrated approach to territorial development will continue to be necessary through a tailor made approach that is specific to the circumstances of Malta and reflects its territorial profile. The integrated approach will primarily be implemented through Operational Programme I (see relative section in OP I).

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and the principles for identifying the areas in where they will be implemented
n/a

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Where appropriate the indicative amount of ERDF support for integrated actions for sustainable urban development to be implemented in accordance with the provisions under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 and the indicative allocation of ESF support for integrated action.

In line with Article 98 (2) of the Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Government has decided to avail of the possibility to finance ESF complimentary actions subject to the limit of 10 per cent of European funds for Sustainable Urban Development through Operational Programme I.

Table 20: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF and ESF support

Fund	ERDF and ESF support (indicative) (€)	Proportion of fund's total allocation to programme
Total ESF	0.00	0.00%
TOTAL ERDF+ESF	0.00	0.00%

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis.

n/a

Table 21: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Fund	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€)
Total		0.00

4.4 The arrangements for interregional and transnational actions, within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State (where appropriate)

n/a

4.5 Contribution of the planned actions under the programme to macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State (where appropriate)

(Where the Member State and regions participate in macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies).

n/a

5. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

On a territory covering a total area of 316 km² and consisting of one geographical region at NUTS II level, split into two NUTS III regions which are then subdivided into six districts, Malta has around 94,000 people at risk of poverty or social exclusion (23.1%)[1] across the island.

According to statistics on income, social inclusion and living conditions in Malta, the main target groups which raise particular concerns when it comes to poverty and social exclusion include children, youths, elderly, women, persons with disabilities, the working poor and the unemployed.

1. Children and Youth

With an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 31% in 2012, children (0-17years) have the highest risk of being poor[2]. Whilst this rate for children whose parents have a first and second stage of tertiary education (ISCED levels 5 and 6) stood at 3.7% in 2012, the rate for those children whose parents have a pre-primary and lower secondary education (ISCED levels 0 and 2) was 48.3%.[3] This calls for concerted efforts to tackle children through an integrated approach which upholds the child's wellbeing throughout his/her life as this reinforces the social fabric which helps to combat inter-generational poverty and exclusion.

Youth (18-24) are also of a particular concern; over 2007-2012, the at-risk-of poverty rate for youths increased from 13.6% to 22.2%.[4] This increase also mirrors the unemployment trend for this group which at 2012 was 14.2%, and, despite being lower than the EU average, it is more than double the national general unemployment rate of 6.4%[5]. Moreover, the rate of youth at risk of poverty attaining an education level of ISCED level 0-2 has more than doubled from 2007-2012, implying that there is a real need to address this challenge.[6] Government is thus committed to ensure that this target group is provided with the necessary tools and support to be able to enter and integrate in the labour market and thus reduce the risk of falling into poverty.

b. Women

Analysing the at-risk-of-poverty rate by gender indicates that the rate for females is higher both on an EU-27 level and also in Malta. From 2007, the at-risk of poverty rate for females has increased to 24.3% in 2012 which is higher than that registered rate for males yet lower than the EU-27 average of 25.7%.[7] These issues are compounded with the high inactivity rate of women in Malta, which in 2012 stood at 52.2% when compared to the EU-27 rate of 34.4%[8]. Although the rate of female inactivity in Malta has been decreasing over the years, it still leaves a considerable pool of females not engaging themselves in an economic activity and therefore not getting a direct income as a result of such an economic activity. This calls for reinforced policies and measures to

integrate women in the labour market, including the childcare support, with dignity income levels to promote the respective social inclusion and prevent social exclusion.

c. The Elderly

In 2012, Eurostat figures show that the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate for elderly (65+) stood at 22.3%[9]. . Although this rate has decreased from 2007, it is still higher than the EU 27 average (19.2%)[10].

This is further aggravated by the fact that the employment rate of the elderly, despite registering good progress, still lacks behind the EU-27 rate, which calls for further action which instils an active participation in the labour market, yielding economic benefits.

d. Persons with Disabilities

Despite the fact that statistics relating to persons with disability are rather sparse, it is clear that the overall number of people with a disability is rising.[11] In 2011, 12,470 persons, or 3% of the total population in Malta, were registered with the National Commission for Persons with Disability (NCPD) as having a disability. In February 2013, 81.2% of men and 18.8% women having a disability registered in search of work. However, the number of registrants with disability showed a decline from 2003 till 2008, and from August 2012 to 2013, mostly due to the increase in employment of women with a disability.[12] Although this is a positive sign of increased inclusion in the labour market, Government is committed to improve educational, employment and independent living opportunities for people with a disability. Furthermore, a strategy targeting persons with disabilities is currently being drafted.

e. Unemployed People and the Working Poor

In Malta, unemployment is mainly a concern for those attaining low levels of education. In 2012, the unemployment rate for those attaining ISCED levels 5 and 6 stood at 2.2% whilst the rate increased to 9.3% for those attaining ISCED levels 0-2.[13] This highlights the need for interventions focusing on re-skilling and up-skilling of the workforce to address labour market challenges including providing job mobility opportunities and facilitating employment access for jobseekers and the inactive.

The relationship between the level of education and employment prospects have also a direct consequence on the at-risk-of-poverty rate since low wages have an impact on in-work poverty. Persons with low levels of education attainment face a considerable higher at-risk-of-poverty rate than those having higher levels of education. In 2012, the in-work-at-risk-of poverty rate stood at 8.9% for those attaining a low level of education, whilst those attaining ISCED level 5-6 registered a rate of only 0.0%.[14] This calls for action to improve educational attainment levels for people to move out from the risk of poverty.

[1] Figure provided by the National Statistics Office based on aggregate data provided from the Census of Population and Housing 2011, March 2014.

[2] Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) Survey, 2007 – 2012; extracted from Eurostat website on 22/05/2014.

[3] Ibid

[4] Ibid

[5] National Statistics Office, March 2014: Annual Labour Force Survey Datasets

[6] Eurostat Online Database: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion by education level (population aged 18 and over) [Accessed on 21 April 2014].

[7] Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) Survey, 2007 – 2012; extracted from Eurostat website on 22/05/2014.

[8] Labour Force Survey, Eurostat online database extracted 28/05/2014

[9] Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) Survey, 2007 – 2012; extracted from Eurostat website on 22/05/2014.

[10] http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_peps01&lang=en extracted on 27/05/2014

[11] Green Paper on Poverty, A Framework for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion

[12] Green Paper on Poverty, A Framework for Poverty Reduction and for Social Inclusion

[13] Eurostat online Database: Unemployment rates by sex, age and highest level of education attained (%) [Accessed on 28 February 2014].

[14] http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_iw04&lang=en, extracted on 27/05/2014

5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, and where relevant, the contribution to the integrated approach set out in the Partnership Agreement

The complexity and multidimensionality of the problems related with poverty and social exclusion identified in section 5.1 require holistic approaches in which the different dimensions and specificities of the problems can be tackled. Malta aims to address the needs of the different target groups through an outreach approach, presenting tailored solutions in which the target groups themselves have to play a key role. The outreach approach will be disseminated by the different districts in Malta. The aim of adopting this approach is to ensure that the needs of the different target groups are addressed.

On the basis of a pilot project, that will encompass regional networks in all areas corresponding to the LAUs and additionally in sub-areas with high concentration of problems, Government aims to widen this structure to provide a holistic approach which empowers the target groups, whilst building capacity for the community and civil society in order to improve their participation in the services delivery. This approach calls for collaboration and networking among different stakeholders that can guarantee the required outreach and range of necessary competences.

The aim is to establish Family Resource Centres within the different districts which will be supported through the creation of sub-networks, also in particular areas with high concentration of social and economic problems in order to offer individualized support to the target groups in need. These sub-areas will be identified/confirmed using a participative approach. The Family Resource Centres will work as “one stop shops” delivering *integration of information/screening systems* to reduce duplication, providing the basis for a holistic, personalised approach to service delivery; *integration of employment services with social assistance and health services and enabling services; and improving vertical and horizontal coordination*[1] in the Government to improve overall service delivery.

The main advantages of this type of bottom-up approach are that local actors have a better knowledge of local challenges that need to be addressed and the resource and opportunities available. This gives local actors a greater sense of ownership and commitment towards combating poverty and social exclusion in the area, including outreach towards those that are hard to reach. A key success factor is to invest in capacity and team building with the objective of developing trustful relationships among stakeholders and gain the support of local structures with the necessary experience and expertise. Moreover, it would also reduce administrative costs through synergies and better use of resources with limited overlaps, whilst also achieving social investment through more effective and efficient social services by promoting the proximity of the services to the people in need. The drive towards this approach meets directly the recommendation of the Commission in its “Social Investment Package”: “*The specific poverty-alleviating effects of various services should always be borne in mind when planning reforms of service-providing systems. Investing in **enabling services**, including through Structural funds, and ensuring their accessibility and affordability and at the same time ensuring efficacy, can improve quality of life for different categories of disadvantaged people*”. [2]

Government, recognises that needs vary from one individual to another and therefore it believes that despite the similarities of the issues at stake, each family situation requires targeted investment in order to promote a life cycle approach beginning with measures targeting children and covering the whole households with holistic approaches. Such approach shall also adopt a preventive methodology to mitigate the rise in poverty levels.

An anti-poverty strategy is being developed, on the basis of a very participative process, which encompasses the approach identified above in order to be able to respond effectively towards eradication of poverty and social exclusion in Malta.

The implementation of this strategy[3] will use funding under the European Social Fund complemented by further financing from the ERDF notably for investing in health, social and education infrastructure, as well as support for physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities and from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), namely to meet the needs of those most deprived. These investments will impact the social policy modernisation through shifting to community based care and integrated housing policies.

The planned actions to address the specific needs of different target groups as part of the integrated approach are portrayed in table 22. Whilst the interventions need to address the specific target groups, efforts will also be undertaken to ensure that the needs emanating from those geographical areas demonstrating specific disadvantages will also be addressed.

[1] COMMISSION SWD - Evidence on Demographic and Social Trends, Social Policies' Contribution to Inclusion, Employment and the Economy *Accompanying the document - COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS*

Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020

[2] Ibid.

[3] The strategy will address all target vulnerable groups including women, children, elderly, migrants, persons with disability, etc.

Table 22: Actions to address specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

Target group/geographical area	Main types of planned action as part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Investment priority
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence), Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	- Empower the different target groups to prevent the dependency and extend as much as possible the independent living.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence), Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	Stimulate parenting competencies development to foster the stability of the families.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence), Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	To develop capacity building for NGOs in order to build a network of quality service providers reaching the specific needs and locations.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence), Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	To provide the necessary quality services according to the specific needs of each individual and of the communities.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence), Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	To stimulate interaction of generations (children, youth and elderly) as a factor of stabilisation of the families.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence), Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	To support the individuals to create their own sources of income within the development of the communities	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Children, Youth (including young people in institutional care), Women (including victims of domestic violence),	Holistic and integrated assistance (profiling, self-assessment and individual action plans) to the	PA 2 - Towards a	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal

Target group/geographical area	Main types of planned action as part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Investment priority
Elderly (65+), Persons with disability (including persons with mental health difficulties), Long term unemployed, Working poor	families based on the collaboration of all relevant actors that shall be involved in tackling the individual problems.	more inclusive society			opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Other target groups	Other target groups as may be determined during the course of the programme.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability

6. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WHICH SUFFER FROM SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

Territorial challenges facing Gozo[1]

Gozo's insularity and peripherality is even more accentuated than that of Malta. Gozo's economy is heavily dependent on Malta for its economic development in various sectors such as the domestic and manufacturing industry, tourism – notably internal tourism, and agriculture. The fact that there is no permanent link results in Gozo suffering from double insularity problems. Important infrastructural limitations render Gozo a far less attractive destination for local and foreign direct investment.

The social and economic context of Gozo, whilst in many instances similar to Malta, has specific characteristics that need to be addressed through an integrated and tailor made approach. Gozo's share of Gross Value Added (GVA) dropped from 5.96% in 2000 to 5.54% in 2010. The decline occurred gradually over the years.

Given Gozo's geographical and topographical realities resulted in its economy sustaining a relatively higher share and dependence on agriculture and fishing when compared to Malta. In 2010, agriculture and fishing constituted 4.4% of the island's GVA. In fact, Gozo accounts for 23% of the total organic land in the Maltese Islands.

Gozo has the second lowest average household disposable income with an average household disposable of €20,414 in 2010. It is also pertinent to underline that in 2009, with an at-risk-of-poverty rate of 17%, Gozo stood as the second highest district when compared to the value for 2010, which was 14.7%, placing Gozo as the second lowest district.

The population in Gozo has remained relatively stable between 2007 and 2011. During this period, there was a marginal increase of 14 births while the average age increased from 39.5 years of age in 2005 to 41.6 years of age in 2011 (40.4 years of age in Malta in 2011).

There are a number of factors that are contributing towards the increasing trend in the elderly population in Gozo in relation to that of mainland Malta. Gozo's economy has not been able to exploit fully the opportunities arising from the fast-growing and high value added services when compared to mainland Malta in particular due to the constraints of double insularity. Despite the high levels of tertiary education attained by Gozitans, this has resulted in a significant migration of young persons to Malta to take up careers in for example knowledge based enterprises. The pressure of commuting daily between the two islands is also resulting in more Gozitans opting for permanent residence in Malta.

The impact on the elderly population of Gozo is further exacerbated by a higher rate of Gozitan migrants who return home to retire after a lifetime working overseas. Combined together these factors are leading towards an upward trend in the ageing population of

Gozo which is exceeding that of mainland Malta and which is putting additional pressure on the socio-economic development of Gozo.

A tailor made approach

In order to address the territorial challenges of Gozo, particularly its socio-economic specificities as well as the handicaps arising from the combined effects of its double insularity, its environmental fragility, its small population size as well as its inherent limited resources; a tailor made approach specific to the needs of Gozo is required to bolster the island's economic activity whilst protecting the inherent and distinctive natural features that distinguish the island.

In this regard, from a strategic perspective, Government intends to adopt a horizontal approach within sectoral strategies to factor in the needs of the Gozo with a view to adopt a holistic approach towards the needs of the territory.[2]

Under the 2014-2020 programming, Gozo's territorial challenges will be addressed through strategic investments targeting amongst others road and transport infrastructure (in line with the TEN-T guidelines and the priorities identified under the CEF facility) with a view to improving accessibility of the island, enhancing competitiveness and fostering an environment which is conducive to sustainable economic growth and job creation, and providing the necessary educational and training opportunities. Furthermore, these interventions are envisaged to contribute towards enhancing the competitive edge of the island through investment in the environment particularly in the natural and cultural heritage. Measures to foster training and skills development, including in the tourism sector such as coastal and maritime tourism (e.g. diving, adventure tourism) will also be pursued. The objective of these investments is to address Gozo's permanent natural handicaps in particular its double insularity, peripherality and economic dependence on mainland Malta.

[1] This section has been compiled on the basis of statistics sourced from the National Statistics Office.

[2] Refer to section 4 of this Programme

7. AUTHORITIES AND BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND AUDIT AND THE ROLE OF RELEVANT PARTNERS

7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 23: Relevant authorities and bodies

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Name of the person responsible for the authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division	Director General
Certifying authority	Strategy and Implementation Division, Ministry for European Affairs and Equality (MEAE)	Acting Head
Audit authority	Internal Audit and Investigation Department (IAID)	Director General
Body to which Commission will make payments	The Treasury	Director General (Treasury)

7.2 Involvement of relevant partners

7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

Coordinating Structures

The Authority responsible for coordinating the preparation of the Operational Programmes is the Office of the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for European Affairs & Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM)[1]. A Programming Team, set up within the Ministry and consisting of officials from the EU Funds Programming Unit as well as the EU Funds – Policy Coordination Directorate, was set up to coordinate the required preparations.

The institutional framework required to implement the partnership and multi-level governance principle in respect of the 2014-2020 period was set up in April 2012. The framework, steered by the Office of the Permanent Secretary, consisted of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Programming 2014-2020 (IMC) with representatives from line Ministries (covering all the ESI funds plus other government stakeholders) and supported by a number of Sectoral Sub-Committees (SSCs) that looked into different thematic objectives. The role of the Inter-Ministerial Committee was to provide strategic input and guidance into the programming process.

Seven (7) SSCs were set up in November 2012 with a view to giving input and support to the Inter-Ministerial Committee in its role of providing strategic input and guidance to the 2014-2020 programming process. Each committee tackled the main strategic areas set out in the thematic objectives listed under Article 9 of the Common Provisions Regulation and was chaired by the Permanent Secretary responsible for the respective policy area, and included a representative from relevant public sector organisations, the socio-economic partners, civil society groups and non-governmental organisations with an interest in the particular policy area.

Meetings of the SSCs were held on a regular basis. This approach was undertaken with a view to providing stakeholders with sufficient time for internal consultation and to provide consolidated feedback. This first phase of the consultation process was concluded in February 2013, following which each SSC put forward its recommendations that were also presented to the IMC. Between March – May 2013, the Programming Team undertook an extensive assessment of the inputs provided through the IMC and the SSCs.

The results of this assessment were finalised in June 2013 and presented to line Ministries. Following this inter-governmental consultation, the second phase of the consultation process was launched through a public consultation document on the Programming of EU Funds 2014-2020 in July 2013. The public consultation document set out the socio-economic analysis as well as the strategic direction covering also the funding priorities.

During October 2013 a Draft of the Partnership Agreement was finalised and submitted to the European Commission for informal feedback which was received by December 2013. The Final Partnership Agreement was submitted to the European Commission, through the SFC 2014-2020 system, in April 2014.

The work carried out for the drafting of the Partnership Agreement provided the basis for the work required for the drafting of the Operational Programmes (OP). For the OPs, an extensive intergovernmental consultation exercise (held in parallel with the drafting of the Partnership Agreement) was carried out by the Programming Team whereby the input of line Ministries was sought in order to identify the priorities.

Regular meetings were also held with the Managing and Certifying Authorities for those aspects relating to the programming process that fall within their remit including the management and control system as well as the monitoring functions in particular those relating to the performance framework. Consultations between the Programming Team and the external consultants responsible for drafting the Strategic Environmental Assessment Report and the Ex Ante Assessment of the Operational Programmes (OPs) were also ongoing during the first and second quarter of 2014 as the Draft OPs were being compiled.

A Draft of the Operational Programmes (OPs), covering the ERDF/CF under OP I and the ESF under OP II, was finalised in May 2014 and launched for public consultation (see sections below) in May/June 2014.

Partners involved in the Consultation Process

The key formal structures within which social dialogue and public consultations take place in Malta were used as the basis for selecting the stakeholders that would participate in the SSCs, notably the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) and the Malta EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC).

The Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) is composed of the main socio-economic partners in Malta representing the main employer bodies, the main trade unions and civil society as well as the Government. The Council is considered to be the official structure through which social dialogue takes place in Malta. It serves as a consultative and advisory body to Government on matters of economic and social policy. Similarly, though with a different mandate, the Malta EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC) facilitates discussion between Government and civil society on draft EU legislation and policies, as well as on the transposition of EU directives. MEUSAC is responsible for engaging civil society in the EU decision making process and for actively supporting NGOs and local councils in their participation in EU programmes and funding.

Stakeholder participation in the SSCs went beyond these two umbrella organisations in an effort to ensure as wide a consultation as possible. In some cases, due to the diversity of the stakeholders and the multifaceted nature of the thematic issues being discussed (e.g. in the case of climate change and the island region of Gozo); it was agreed that different sets of stakeholders would be invited according to the subject matter being discussed. Such an approach ensured that the key stakeholders present for each meeting were those with a direct interest in the subject matter.

Actions taken to facilitate a wide involvement and active participation by partners

The Draft Operational Programmes OPs were subject to a public consultation process which kicked off in May 2014. A first consultation session was held with MCESD on 19 May 2014, during which the Draft OPs were presented to the Council by the Office of the Permanent Secretary within the MEAIM. This was followed by a discussion which actively engaged all of the economic and social partners and who were able to put forward their views on the document. At the end of the session, members of the MCESD were presented with a hard copy of the public consultation document and invited to submit their formal feedback by 16 June 2014.

During May/June 2014, two public consultation sessions with the general public were held in Malta (29 May 2014) and in Gozo (2 June 2014). Both sessions were advertised in the general media and were very well-attended by the general public, civil society and the private sector (the latter covering a number of sectors to include: food, architecture, building industry, transport, home and design, consultancy and marketing, energy companies and consultancy, audiovisual and film production, local wine producers, printing and packaging, retailers, IT companies, tourism, pharmacies, cosmetics and health consultancy). Each session started with a presentation of the Draft OPs by the Office of the Permanent Secretary within MEAIM and was then followed by a 'Question & Answer' session, whereby the attending public was given the opportunity to put forward its views as to what should or could be included in the Programmes.

Hard copies of the Draft OPs were circulated to all participants attending these public consultation sessions. Furthermore, a dedicated web link providing background information on the programming process and a summary of the content of the Draft OPs was also set up[2]. The web link also provided readers with a link to the soft version of the Draft OPs. Participants in the consultation process, both at the level of the MCESD as

well as the general public, were encouraged to make written submissions through an email address info.eufunds@gov.mt by 16 June 2014.

Twenty-five (25) interventions were made during these three consultation sessions and thirty-eight (38) written submissions were submitted through web mail. During the consultation period, upon request from the partners, three presentations on the Draft OPs were also delivered to the Local Councils Association (5 June 2014), the General Retailers and Traders Union (12 June 2014) and the Department of Local Government (17 June 2014). In addition, on 10 June 2014, a radio interview concerning the future programming period (and covering the content of the Draft OPs) was also delivered by an official from the Programming Team on a national radio station. The interview was coordinated by MEUSAC.

The list of partners involved in the consultation process can be found at section 12.3.

Main added value of the partnership

The public consultation process was overall deemed as a success, in particular for the value-added that the involvement of the socio-economic partners and civil society brings to the programming process, particularly in identifying concerns and common lines of intervention (see section on ‘main results of the consultation with partners’ below). Past and current experience has shown that such involvement brings added value in terms of expertise and insight and, equally importantly, it creates collective commitment and broader ownership of the programming process and the programme itself.

Main results of the consultation with partners

The main points raised by the participating public and in the written submissions received as part of the consultation process on the Draft OPs covered the following areas:

- *urban regeneration*: especially the development of financial instruments in the sector and the need to rehabilitate key heritage sites in Valletta;
- *RTDI*: in particular the need for synergies with Horizon2020, to consolidate R&D activities within the University of Malta in line with the smart specialisation strategy and to ensure that investment in human capital is complemented by the creation of employment;
- *Environment*: broadly a more holistic and overarching approach to the sector was called for, suggestions for the protection of woodlands, natural parks, open spaces and marine protected areas were also put forward;
- *water*: especially the need to carry out a water demand assessment before embarking on investment in the supply and distribution of alternative water to consumers and to ensure that investment in rainwater reservoirs forms part of a holistic plan that addresses demand and alleviates flooding;
- *culture*: the main point that emerged related to the need to maximise the contribution of cultural & natural heritage to the quality of life of local communities, through improved access & experience, as well as through economic activities & tourism;

- *transport*: especially the enhancement of marine infrastructures, the need for increased modal shift and to explore alternatives – including air connections – to enhance the accessibility for Gozo;
- *training and employment*: in particular the importance of ensuring continuity of funding from the previous programming period to the new one, the need to ensure the employability of minority groups, the need to address illiteracy rates and to provide more schools, and the need to increase VET infrastructural investment and create a link between VET and research;
- *health*: the need for investment in the health sector was put forward;
- *tourism*: especially proposals for nature based and heritage trails, the growth of new niche markets, facilitate the continuity of traditional trade and maximising the inter-linkages with tourism and opportunities for growth in the aviation sector;
- *ICT*: proposals for mobile health, ICT careers and skills, e-Democracy and additional incentives for e-ID and trust were put forward;
- *Addressing the regional specificities of Gozo*: in particular calls to improve Gozo's ICT connectivity (by enhancing broadband), job creation and projects to make Gozo a distinct and unique tourism destination;
- *Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)*: especially the need to provide further assistance to NGOs and cooperatives to access EU funds for actions such as child minding and participation in international fora, the need to reduce the level of bureaucracy (this point was also made by private enterprise) and the need to continue to assist NGOs to raise the co-financing element;
- *Complementing EU funds with financial instruments*: several interventions supported the further uptake of financial instruments such as JEREMIE, JESSICA and EIB loans/technical assistance.

Involvement of partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Operational Programmes

Initiatives undertaken during the previous programming period to ensure the involvement of the relevant stakeholders in the various stages of the Structural Funds will continue under the future programmes in accordance with national practice. Such initiatives will cover the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Programmes.

The participation of the relevant stakeholders in the various stages of the Structural Funds will be assured through their participation in the Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme in accordance with the terms of reference of the Committee.

[1] Until March 2013, the Office of the Permanent Secretary responsible for coordinating the preparation of the Partnership Agreement was located within the Office of the Prime Minister. After the General Elections of March 2013 and a reshuffle of ministerial portfolios, this Office is now located within the Ministry for European Affairs & Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM).

[2] <http://eufunds.gov.mt/en/Information/Pages/Public-Consultation-EU-funds-for-Malta-2014-2020.aspx>

7.2.2 Global grants (for the ESF, where appropriate)

7.2.3 Allocation of an amount for capacity building (for the ESF, where appropriate)

8. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FUNDS, THE EAFRD, THE EMFF AND OTHER UNION AND NATIONAL FUNDING INSTRUMENTS, AND WITH THE EIB

The mechanisms to ensure coordination between the Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the European Investment Bank (EIB), taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework.

A coordinated and complementary approach in the programming and implementation process of the ESI funds is necessary with a view to maximising the benefits of the implementation of these funds as set out in the Common Strategic Framework.

Coordination Mechanisms

Coordination between European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds and other Union and National funding instruments will be assured through the coordination mechanisms set up under the 2007-2013 programmes in line with existing institutional frameworks. These coordination mechanisms will be maintained and, where necessary, optimised to facilitate synergies between the different programmes, but also with a view to avoiding duplication of effort.

Preparation of Programmes

At the programming level, coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and National funding instruments was ensured through the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Programming 2014-2020 (IMC)[1]. The framework, steered by the Office of the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for European Affairs and the Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto, consisted of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Programming 2014-2020 (IMC) with representatives from line Ministries (covering all of the ESI funds) and supported by a number of Sectoral Sub-Committees which tackled the main strategic areas set out in Article 9 of the CPR. Each Sectoral Sub-Committee was chaired by the Permanent Secretary responsible for the respective policy area, and included a representative from relevant public sector organisations, the socio-economic partners, civil society groups and non-governmental organisations with an interest in the particular policy area.

Management of Programmes

The programmes for the Structural and Cohesion Funds, the EMFF and the EAFRD[2] are coordinated and managed by the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division (for the Structural and Cohesion Funds) and the Funds and Programmes Division (for the EMFF and the EAFRD and the Territorial Cooperation Programmes), within the Ministry for European Affairs & Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto[3]. The centralised system which is in place for the implementation of the ESI Funds and other funding initiatives (including the Connecting Europe Facility[4]) ensures coordination at the national level of the different programmes and related initiatives. This approach also minimises the risk of duplication of efforts.

Coordination structures

For the 2014-2020 programming period, coordination between the ESI Funds and other Union and National funding instruments will be ensured through the framework of the Inter Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) already set up under the 2007-2013 period[5]. As necessary, the existing structures will be optimised to facilitate synergies between the different programmes and to take account of the different Union instruments that will be launched in the 2014-2020 period and also with a view to avoiding duplication of effort.

The aim of the IMCC is to maximise resources whilst reducing the risk of overlap and/or duplication of effort by providing direction on the demarcation between different funds and programmes, undertaking ad hoc consultation where potential overlaps are identified and exchanging information about any changes required to the individual programmes and that could have an impact, by way of overlap, on other programmes. The IMCC also provides a forum for the sharing of knowledge of any new funds.

The IMCC is expected to meet on a bi-annual basis. Members on the IMCC include representatives from the managing authorities, the intermediate bodies, national contact points for the European Territorial Cooperation programmes[6], responsible authorities for the migration and asylum programmes and national contact points for community programmes, such as LIFE+ and Horizon2020. Other *ad hoc* technical experts, to cover also the Common Agricultural Policy's 1st and 2nd pillar initiatives as relevant, may be asked to participate in meetings of the IMCC (or parts thereof) so as to give clarifications and presentations on particular issues which might be required. If the need arises, the IMCC may also appoint *ad hoc* subcommittees to deal with issues of a very specific

nature such as for example potential overlaps between LEADER type interventions and the ESF.

Mechanisms to assist beneficiaries use the funds in a complementary way

Advice to potential applicants and beneficiaries on the opportunities of support available through the different funds may be obtained from a common information help desk that is jointly serviced by the Planning and Priorities Coordination Division and the Funds and Programmes Division within the Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto and which covers all of the ESI funds.

The help desk, already functioning under the 2007-2013 programme, will be expanded to address all ESI funds with a view to offer prospective applicants, beneficiaries and the general public a direct line of communication (through email and other media) with the Managing Authority(s) on issues of general interest as well as more specific information on a one-to-one basis. The practice of issuing manuals and guidance documents targeting beneficiaries and horizontal stakeholders will also continue, as these prove to be useful tools in assisting beneficiaries in the use and management of the Funds. The help desk will also provide information concerning EU programmes (i.e. to include the centralised programmes) more generally.

Complimentarity of actions

Complimentarity between the ESI Funds and other EU and National funding instruments will be sought in various areas to ensure synergies and coordination between different actions. The areas of intervention where ESI Funds will be used in a complementary manner include: research, development and innovation (such as interventions in RTD infrastructure that will be complemented by training initiatives for example post-doctoral programmes), social inclusion (including investment in an integrated approach aimed at fostering economic growth and the creation of jobs), climate change (infrastructural initiatives for mitigation and adaptation will be complemented by research and training) and transport (measures to minimise the impact of transport on climate change, underpinned by the necessary infrastructures, will be introduced) amongst others.

ERDF

The implementation of this programme will be complemented with interventions undertaken through the ERDF with a view to generate economic growth through improved competitiveness and the creation of more and better jobs whilst contributing to the well-being of society. Employment interventions undertaken under this programme will be complemented with ERDF related investment aimed at enhancing competitiveness and the creation of new employment opportunities. Investment in human capital in research and innovation and in the ICT sector will be complemented through ERDF mainly through R&I and ICT infrastructure. Education and training measures to support increased knowledge and skills in the low carbon economy to foster the creation of green jobs will be complemented with ERDF related investment to sustain a more resource efficient economy. ESF soft interventions for targeted groups in society will complement ERDF related actions aimed towards achieving sustainable urban development, to holistically address the needs and challenges of families living in identified urban areas. Similarly, interventions to promote social cohesion and to reduce health inequalities will be complemented by ERDF investment in the health and social sector to ensure integrated interventions towards vulnerable target groups. Investment in education under this programme will also be complemented by measures under the ERDF operational programme to address the challenges posed by early school leavers and low participation in tertiary education.

EAFRD and EMFF

Interventions undertaken under the ESF will also seek to complement Malta's priorities in respect of the EAFRD and EMFF programmes for 2014-2020. Complementary actions are envisaged in the valorisation of human capital particularly to support research capacity for the development of research in various sectors such as water and waste management and related technologies. Complementarity is also envisaged in promoting training in sectors to sustain the rural and fisheries economy. In particular, the EAFRD will provide support in specialised ICT skills specifically earmarked for farmers, such as training programmes on the use and application of specialised software for herd management, milk recording, breeding and selection programmes, feed mix and rationalisation, nutrient management, crop planning, landscape management and agronomic practices amongst others. As for the EMFF, this will support inter-alia professional training, lifelong learning and new professional skills for fishers directly related to the profession of fishing, which will effectively contribute to support fishers in improving their efficiency, sustainability and competitiveness within the sector. Complementarity between ESF and EMFF/EAFRD will also apply to entrepreneurship.

ETC Programmes

Malta's priority areas for the ETC programmes for 2014-2020, will also seek to complement Malta's Funding Priorities identified within this Operational programme. Areas identified include research and innovation, enhancing competitiveness of SMEs, protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency, supporting the shift towards a low carbon economy, promoting climate change adaptation[7], risk prevention and management and the valorisation of human capital. Over and above these thematic areas, Malta may also propose a number of other thematic areas as relevant to the respective programmes. Opportunities to actively participate in sea basin cooperation type of actions will also be explored. As applicable, the TEN-T guidelines and the priorities identified under the CEF will be taken into consideration when implementing ETC programmes.

Other EU funding instruments

Government will seek to maximise the potential synergies with other EU Funded initiatives including Horizon2020, Erasmus+, Creative Europe as well as the new LIFE programme for the Environment and Climate Action, amongst others. In this regard, efforts will be undertaken to maximise synergies in a number of areas including: building research and innovation capacity as well as exploring complementarities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Close coordination will also be needed with the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), to ensure that projects financed under this facility will complement interventions envisaged for funding under the European Regional Development Fund/Cohesion Fund. Efforts will also be undertaken to ensure that measures implemented under the ESF will complement relevant interventions under the European Globalisation Fund, the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived in the promotion of employment/entrepreneurship, education and training and social inclusion.

Collaboration with the European Investment Bank (EIB)

During the 2007-2013 programming period, Malta participated in a number of European Investment Bank (EIB) initiatives, such as the Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises (JEREMIE). For the 2014-2020 programming period, Malta will seek to maximise the use of public funds to leverage private investment where possible. In this regard, Malta will continue to seek opportunities for the leverage of EIB funding through various financial and other instruments which will be available in the next programming period.

[1] Refer to Section 1.5.1, concerning the arrangements for the Partnership Principle.

[2] As of January 2014, the programme for the EAFRD is being managed and coordinated by the Funds and Programmes Division MEAIM.

[3] The intermediate bodies will be determined at the level of the Operational Programme.

[4] The coordination of CEF will be undertaken by the Ministry for the European Affairs and the Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto through the Planning & Priorities Coordination Division and the Funds and Programmes Division.

[5] During the 2007-2013 programming period two Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committees (IMCC) were set up to ensure coordination between the Structural and Cohesion Funds and other Union instruments.

[6] The National Coordinator for Interreg III Programmes (Italia-Malta, ARCHIMED, MEDOCC and South Zone Programmes) and the National Focal Point for the European Territorial Cooperation Programmes (ETC) 2007-2013 are located within the Funds and Programmes Division (Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto) with the exception of the ESPON programme which is managed and coordinated by the EU Funds – Policy Coordination Directorate (Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto).

[7] Malta strongly argued for the inclusion of Thematic Objective 5, which deals specifically with climate change, under the Med programme, however, this TO was not selected by the programme. This said, climate change initiatives may still be addressed under the Med Programme by means of two investment priorities, namely Investment Priority 4c: Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings and in the housing sector and Investment Priority 4e: Promoting low-carbon strategies for all types of territories in particular for urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable multi-modal urban mobility and mitigation relevant adaptation measures. Similar actions may also be carried out under the Interreg Europe Programme, specifically under Thematic Objective 6.

9. EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

9.1 Ex-ante conditionalities

Information on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (optional).

n/a

Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	Yes
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	Partially
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168 TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.	PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	Partially
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	Partially
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	Partially
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	Partially
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	Partially
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency including public administration.	PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	Yes
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning PA 4 - Building the	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
	Institutional Administrative Capacity PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity PA 5 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCPRD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity PA 5 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity PA 5 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
	capital PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	Partially

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: personalised services and active preventive labour market measures at an early stage, which are open to all jobseekers while focusing on people	Yes	http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8814 http://etc.gov.mt/Category/3/43/Persons_in_Disadvantaged_Situations.aspx http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/nd/nrp2012_malta_en.pdf http://mfin.gov.mt/en/home/popular_topics/Documents/National%20Reform%20Programme/2013/National%20Reform%20Programme%202013.pdf http://education.gov.mt/makingworkpay http://education.gov.mt/employment/Documents/EMPLOYMENT%20POLICY%20DOC%20sml.pdf	<p>The Employment and Training Cooperation (ETC) is a public Corporation set up by the ETC Act (Chapter 343) and is the National employment agency. ETC through active labour market measures intervenes early with job seekers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job seekers' Advisory Services • Employment support and advice for Persons with Disability • Various schemes targeting unemployed and long term unemployed persons such as Community Work Scheme, Bridging the Gap Scheme, Enhancing Employability through Training, Average Wage Training Allowance, Job Bridge Programme • Schemes to promote Entrepreneurship • Initiatives to encourage people to move from social assistance into employment – Make work pay initiative. <p>The National Employment Policy, launched in May 2014 also addresses this criterion through Section 4.5.5, Section 6.3.3 (From Passive to Possible Welfare), Section 9.6 (NEETs from Vulnerable Backgrounds) Point 7, Section 7.3.3 – Traineeships and Apprenticeships, and Chapter 11.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	at highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;			
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	2 - Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: comprehensive and transparent information on new job vacancies	Yes	https://secure.etc.gov.mt/Jobseeker/JobSearch/JobSearch.aspx http://etc.gov.mt/Category/3/16/Working%20in%20Europe.aspx Research to capture labour market trends and forecast skills and competences needed in the industry: http://etc.gov.mt/Category/5/22/Research-and-Reports.aspx http://education.gov.mt/employment/Documents/EMPLOYMENT%20POLICY%20DOC%20sml.pdf	<p>In 2012 and 2013, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) conducted research to capture labour market trends and forecast the skills and competences needed in the industry. ETC is discussing also the framework to be used for the development of future periodic forecasting surveys, together with a study on the existing skills available in the labour market. Even though, past studies are not published; however they are used as an evidence base to assist in the design of schemes. They are also used as a basis for discussion with stakeholders, with the aim of improving the services offered within an inter-agency approach.</p> <p>ETC also initiated collaboration with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) in the undertaking of forecasting exercises.</p> <p>Chapter 2, Section 5.1, 5.2 and 7.3.4 show analysis of</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	s and employment opportunities taking into account the changing needs of the labour market.			labour market trends.
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	3 - Employment services have set up formal or informal cooperation arrangements with relevant stakeholders.	Yes	Jobs+, MCAST, ETC Apprenticeship and traineeship schemes - Section 4.5.3 of National Employment Policy E-Skills Malta Foundation gathers representatives from Education, MITA, Malta Enterprise, Malta Communications Authority, Lotteries & Gaming Authority, ETC, Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry - Section 4.5.5 National Employment Policy http://education.gov.mt/employment/Documents/EMPLOYMENT%20POLICY%20DOC%20sml.pdf http://www.mcast.edu.mt/MainMenu/Full-TimeCourses/Apprenticeships.aspx	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employ	1 - A national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction, aiming at active inclusion, is in place that:	No		<p>A Framework for Poverty reduction and for Social inclusion, 2014-2024 (Annex 1) was launched in the form of a green paper for public consultation.</p> <p>The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2014-2024 is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
ment guidelines.				
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market	2 - provides a sufficient evidence base to develop policies for poverty reduction and monitor developments;	Yes	Analysis of existing strategies, structures and commitments can be found in Chapter 3 and in depth evidence of current socio-economic situation can be found in Chapter 4 of the Green paper. Refer to link: http://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Documents/Green%20Paper%20Faqr.pdf	<p>A Framework for Poverty reduction and for Social inclusion, 2014-2024 (Annex 1) was launched in the form of a green paper for public consultation.</p> <p>The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2014-2024 is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
in the light of the Employment guidelines.				
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from	3 - contains measures supporting the achievement of the national poverty and social exclusion target (as defined in the National Reform Programme), which includes	Yes	Sections 4.5 and 4.6 and Chapter 11 Policy Options and Alternatives of the Green Paper Refer to link: http://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Documents/Green%20Paper%200Faqr.pdf	<p>A Framework for Poverty reduction and for Social inclusion, 2014-2024 (Annex 1) was launched in the form of a green paper for public consultation.</p> <p>The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2014-2024 is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	the promotion of sustainable and quality employment opportunities for people at the highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;			
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation	4 - involves relevant stakeholders in combating	Yes	Section 1.4, Methodology and Consultation Process, Section 1.5 on page 18 of the Green Paper. http://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Documents/Green%20Paper%200Faqr.pdf	A Framework for Poverty reduction and for Social inclusion, 2014-2024 (Annex 1) was launched in the form of a green paper for public consultation. The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2014-2024 is being finalised.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	poverty;			Refer to corresponding action plan.
T.09.1 - The existence and	5 - depending on the	Yes	Section 11.3.3 Health point 2; Section 11.3.4 Employment point 1.2; Section 11.3.7 Social Welfare Services points 3,4 and 5; and Section 12.2 Harmonisation of policies: promotion of “personalised services that reach the	A Framework for Poverty reduction and for Social inclusion, 2014-2024 (Annex 1) was launched in the form of a green paper for public consultation.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	identified needs, includes measures for the shift from institutional to community based care;		community in a more effective manner” of the Green paper. Refer to link: http://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Documents/Green%20Paper%200Faqr.pdf	The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2014-2024 is being finalised. Refer to corresponding action plan.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employ	6 - Upon request and where justified, relevant stakeholders will be provided with support for submitting project applications and for implementing and managing the selected projects.	Yes	Funding Programmes pages 22 and 23 - Section 3.3 of the Green paper. Refer to link: http://mfss.gov.mt/en/MJDF/Press%20Releases/Documents/Green%20Paper%20Faqr.pdf	<p>A Framework for Poverty reduction and for Social inclusion, 2014-2024 (Annex 1) was launched in the form of a green paper for public consultation.</p> <p>The National Strategic Policy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion 2014-2024 is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
ment guidelines.				
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168 TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework for health is in place that contains:	Yes	National Health Systems Strategy for Malta 2014-2020 (NHSS – Annex 2) has been published and launched on 16/09/2014 https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/chief_medical_officer/overview.aspx	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168 TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.	2 - coordinated measures to improve access to health services;	Yes	National Health Systems Strategy for Malta 2014-2020 (NHSS) has been published and launched on 16/09/2014 https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/chief_medical_officer/overview.aspx Chapter 7: Overall Objective 1 Health and well-being throughout life Overall Objective 3 A joint effort to ensure continuity of care	
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national	3 - measures to stimulate efficiency	Yes	National Health Systems Strategy for Malta 2014-2020 (NHSS) has been published and launched on 16/09/2014 https://ehealth.gov.mt/HealthPortal/chief_medical_officer/overview.aspx Chapter 7: Overall Objective 2 Ensuring equity within a dynamic health system Overall Objective 4 Working towards a sustainable health system	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168 TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.	y in the health sector, through deployment of service delivery models and infrastructure;			
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for	4 - a monitoring and review system.	No		<p>A Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA) tool is being finalised to act as the monitoring framework for the NHSS. The indicators for monitoring the performance of the local public health system have been chosen and prioritised following extensive consultation with a number of stakeholders. The conceptual framework behind the HSPA has now been revisited and refocused following these consultations and the data collection for the compilation of a first assessment is already underway.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
health within the limits of Article 168 TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.				
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168	5 - A Member State or region has adopted a framework outlining available budgetary resources on an indicative basis and a	No		<p>The budgetary framework for the NHSS is being finalised. The drawing up of the budgetary framework could not start before the finalisation of the strategy following the extensive feedback received during the consultation phase.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.	cost-effective concentration of resources on prioritised needs for health care.			
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article	1 - A system for collecting and analysing data and information on ESL at relevant levels is in place that:	No		<p>A comprehensive data collection framework in line with strategic action 2.4 of the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
165 TFEU.				
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	2 - provides a sufficient evidence-base to develop targeted policies and monitors developments.	No		<p>Data pertinent to ESL is collected by different departments within the Ministry for Education and Employment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exit survey to collect data about students leaving courses at post secondary level (on an annual basis – Annex 3); • E1 Platform where every student's attendance and performance attending compulsory education are recorded (applicable to state schools only however there is the plan to extend to non state schools); • Tracer study for collecting data about students finishing compulsory education is prepared annually. Tracer Studies for the years 2011 and 2012 can be found in Annexes 4 and 5 respectively. <p>Hence, the need was felt to develop a comprehensive data collection framework in line with strategic action 2.4 of the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The	3 - A strategic policy framework on	Yes	ESL strategy available online at: http://education.gov.mt/ESL/Documents/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta.pdf	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	ESL is in place that:			
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school	4 - is based on evidence ;	Yes	ESL strategy available online at: http://education.gov.mt/ESL/Documents/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta.pdf Chapter 1 of the Strategic Plan for the prevention of Early School leaving in Malta provides the context of ESL in Malta Chapter 2 reflects the measures to meet the challenge of Early School Leaving through cross sectoral cooperation and monitoring.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	5 - covers relevant educational sectors including early childhood development, targets in particular vulnerable groups that are most at risk of ESL	Yes	ESL strategy available online at: http://education.gov.mt/ESL/Documents/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta.pdf The strategic plan is based on three pillars for action including prevention (Chapter 3), intervention (Chapter 4) and compensation (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 of the Strategic Plan provides a matrix identifying the strategic actions through key performance indicators that will be used to monitor the implementation of this strategy.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	including people from marginalised communities, and addresses prevention, intervention and compensation measures;			
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school	6 - involves all policy sectors and stakeholders that are relevant to addressing ESL.	Yes	Consultations were held with the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD). Conferences were organised and stakeholders were invited to deliver their views. Following a public consultation, the finalised strategic plan has been published during 2014. Strategic Actions 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 of ESL Strategy would bring together stakeholders from within and from outside the Ministry for Education and Employment, including employers, trade unions, civil society and NGOs.	ESL strategy available online at: http://education.gov.mt/ESL/Documents/School%20Leaving%20in%20Malta.pdf

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework for tertiary education is in place with the following elements:	Yes	The national strategic policy framework for tertiary education is the 'Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020' accessible at: http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf	This strategy which was published in 2009 is being reviewed to reflect developments in the local and international contexts. A working committee has been set up and is responsible for drafting the updated strategy which is being finalised.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
cy within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency	2 - where necessary, measures to increase participation and attainment that:	No		<p>The national strategic policy framework for tertiary education is the ‘Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020’ accessible at: http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf</p> <p>This strategy which was published in 2009 is being reviewed to reflect developments in the local and international contexts.</p> <p>A working committee has been set up and is responsible for drafting the updated strategy which is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within	3 - increase higher education participation among low income groups and other under-represented groups with special regard to disadvantaged people, including people	Yes	http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf .	Measures in pages 45-46 of the current 'Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020' aim to increase participation attainment: The following actions have been taken to this effect: A supplement to the Student Maintenance Grant is paid to students with financial difficulties. http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=9879 and http://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/168964/347.pdf Supplementary grants are also available to residents of Gozo following full-time undergraduate programmes in Malta: http://www.gozo.gov.mt/gozportal/ministry_for_gozo/departments/dcusts/subsidies.aspx Supplementary grants are also applicable for scholarship holders of Malta Government Scholarship schemes: See: http://education.gov.mt/en/education/myScholarship/Pages/default.aspx

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	from marginalised communities;			
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the	4 - reduce drop-out rates/improve completion rates;	Yes	http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf .	<p>Priorities 1 and 4 and recommended measures on pages 36-39 of the current strategy aim to increase participation and attainment levels.</p> <p>Various measures are in place to discourage drop-out from and encourage attainment in further and higher education:</p> <p>The Student Maintenance Grant is paid to students only if they make satisfactory progress in their studies. Funds have to be returned if students absent themselves; fail examinations; or discontinue their studies.</p> <p>See: http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=9879</p> <p>Similar regulations apply for the scholarships offered for undergraduate and postgraduate studies by the Government of Malta.</p> <p>See: http://education.gov.mt/en/education/myScholarship/Pages/default.aspx</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
limits of Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of	5 - encourage innovative content and programme design;	Yes	http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf	Objective 3 and Priority 6 of the current strategy aim to make Malta a centre of excellence in education and research. In 2012, three legal notices on licensing, accreditation and quality assurance were launched, see: http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/content/home-about-us-legislation/5668869/ These provide the regulatory framework of the National Council For Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) to carry out its mission to maintain, uphold, enhance and improve standards in further and higher education in Malta. These regulations endorse the 2012 European Regulations for Further and Higher Education, including the European Standards for Guidelines and Quality Assurance in the Higher Education Area and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET).

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of	6 - measures to increase employability and entrepreneurship that:	Yes	http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf	Priority 2 of the current strategy aims to increase enrolment of students in areas identified as priority areas for Malta's economic development.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of	7 - encourage the development of "transversal skills", including entrepreneurship in relevant higher education programmes;	Yes	http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf	Priority 2 of the current strategy aims to increase enrolment of students in areas identified as priority areas for Malta's economic development.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of	8 - reduce gender differences in terms of academic and vocational choices.	Yes	http://www.ncfhe.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/Further_and_Higher_Education_Strategy_2020.pdf	The aim of the current strategy is to achieve a general increase in participation and attainment in further and higher education.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Article 165 TFEU.				
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning is in place that contains measures:	No		<p>The (draft) National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 for Malta (Annex 6) has been developed on best practices on LL in other EU jurisdictions and current market research. It includes relevant links and references to the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET2020).</p> <p>The LL Strategy identifies a set of Basic Principles that cut across all components of the Lifelong Learning Strategy. It adopts a pyramid structure approach as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Vision provides the over-riding guideline for the lifelong learning strategy. 2) Five Strategic Objectives support the Vision. A number of strategic benchmarks serve as planned key performance indicators for the implementation of the LL Strategy. 3) Ten Strategies support at least one of the five Strategic Objectives. Each strategy identifies the current challenges and proposes a set of measures. 4) Forty Indicative Programmes (equivalent to detailed Measures) support at least one of the ten Strategies.
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning	2 - to support the developi	Yes	Strategies 2, 3, 5 and supporting Programmes 13 to 18 are measures to better connect and value learning. Strategy 1 and supporting Programmes 1, 3, 4 and 5 are measures to integrate different LL services. Strategy 1 and supporting	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
(LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	ing and linking services for LL, including their implementation and skills upgrading (i.e. validation, guidance, education and training) and providing for the involvement of, and partnership with relevant stakeholders ;		Programmes 1-6, 20, 22-25 and 29 are measures to support LL implementation and skills upgrading. Strategies 1, 4, 5 and 9 and Programmes 1, 2, 5-9, 11, 14-17, 19, 21 and 23 represent arrangements to promote partnership and the involvement of relevant stakeholders.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - for the provision of skills development for various target groups where these are identified as priorities in national or regional strategic policy frameworks (for example young people in vocational training, adults,	Yes	Strategies 6, 7 and 8 and supporting Programmes 5, 10, 11, 12, 20, 23, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38 and 39 are measures for the provision of skills development for target groups where these are identified as priorities (women, marginalised communities and older people).	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	parents returning to the labour market, low skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities);			
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national	4 - to widen access to LL including through efforts to	Yes	Strategies 6, 7 and 8 and supporting Programmes 10, 11, 23, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38 and 39 are measures to open up learning institutions to under-represented groups. Strategies 3 and 4 and Programmes 18, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28 are measures to effectively implement transparency tools.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	effectively implemented transparency tools (for example the European Qualifications Framework, National Qualifications Framework, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training			

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training);			
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of	5 - to improve the labour market relevance of education and training and to adapt it to the needs of identified target groups (for example young	Yes	Strategies 2 and 6 and Programmes 5-8, 13-17; Strategies 2 and 4 and Programmes 5-8 and 13; Strategies 1, 2, 3 and 6 and Programmes 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 18, 28 and 29; Strategy 2 and Programmes 5-8, 13-18; Strategy 4 and Programmes 1, 22, 26 and 27; Strategies 1 and 4 and Programmes 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 28, 29 and 32; Strategies 6-9 and Programmes 5, 13, 16, 17, 21, 23, 31 and 33; Strategies 6-8 and Programmes 5, 10, 16, 17, 21, 23, 31-34, 36-39	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. measures to ensure a close coordination between employment and education; 2. measures to support the monitoring of education and training outcomes; 3. measures to ensure a good transfer of information on labour market needs; 4. measures to support a demand oriented VET system; 5. measures to improve teachers' and trainers' competences are in place; 6. measures to analyse participation in education and training by socio-economic groups; 7. measures to tackle the under-representation;

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Article 165 TFEU.	people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low-skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities).			8. measures to assure that education and training provisions are adapted to the specific needs of these priority groups. The Lifelong Learning Strategy identifies women, migrants and disabled persons as priority target groups.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework is in place for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU which includes measures for the following:	No		<p>An overarching framework comprising VET provision in Malta and the quality and efficiency of VET systems is being finalised.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	2 - to improve the labour market relevance of VET systems in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders including through mechanisms for skills anticipation, adaptation of curricula and the strengthening of work-based	Yes	Malta Skills Audit report/VET provision Trend Report (Annex 7) - (page 6, Chapter 1, Chapter 4).	<p>The ETC conducts research to capture labour market trends and forecast the skills and competences needed in the industry. (Ref EAC 8.1).</p> <p>Apprenticeship Schemes: http://www.mcast.edu.mt/MainMenu/Full-TimeCourses/Apprenticeships.aspx</p> <p>MCAST is currently updating its VET curricula through ESF projects to strengthen work-based learning.</p> <p>Alternative Learning Programme to facilitate the transition from compulsory schooling to further education or employment.</p> <p>The Institute of Tourism Studies offers curriculum which is developed following continuous consultation with key stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry. In October 2013, the Institute also launched a new foundation course in tourism enterprise.</p> <p>Reference: http://its.edu.mt/EN.ITS_Prospectus.aspx</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	learning provision in its different forms;			
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET including through establishing a national approach for quality assurance for VET (for example in line with the European	No		<p>Malta National Qualifications Framework is based on European Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre is responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications, provides statements on the levels of the qualifications framework and statistics on further and higher education in Malta and VET.</p> <p>A manual for the conversion methodology (ECVET Conversion Manual) was published by NCFHE in 2013. http://www.ecvetmalta.org.mt/uploads/filebrowser/ECVET%20Conversion%20manual.pdf</p> <p>MCAST has adopted the indicators identified in the EQAVET Manual (Annex 8) – MCAST Online employer satisfaction survey (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/mcast_employer_survey), to obtain information from employers about MCAST graduates.</p> <p>The ITS curriculum have been translated into ECVET/ECTS systems, and utilizing learning outcome based approaches.</p> <p>Refer to corresponding action plan.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) and implementing the transparency and recognition tools, for example European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training .			

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	(ECVET).			
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency including public administration.	1 - A strategic policy framework for reinforcing a Member State's public authorities' administrative efficiency and their skills with the following elements are in place and in the process	Yes	Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Better Governance (Annex 9); Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Development of Quality Management Systems (Annex 10); Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Integrated actions for simplification and rationalisation of administrative processes (Annex 11) Human Resources and Skills Development Strategic Policy Framework – A Way Forward for 2014-2020 (Annex 12). The reinforcing of the judiciary sector is being addressed within the above-mentioned strategies.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	of being implemented:			
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency including public administration.	2 - an analysis and strategic planning of legal, organisational and/or procedural reform actions;	Yes	Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Better Governance (Annex 9) - Page 46. The judiciary sector is being referred to in pages 5 (Executive Summary), in Part II (Current State of Play, page 14), in Part II (Current State of Play, page 30) and in Part III (Strategy and Action Plan for Good Governance, page 38), measure 1.6 under Strategic Objective 1. An indicative budget allocation of €9 million is being earmarked, including a justice component share in the range of €1 million.	Page 46 shows the mapping between strategic initiatives and pertinent assessment criteria, whereby all needs are being addressed by one or more strategic initiatives. The judiciary sector is being referred to in pages 5 (Executive Summary) and: 1. In Part II (Current State of Play) of Annex 9 (page 14), there is a specific section on “the Judicial System and the Justice Sector”, including a bullet explaining what the justice reform will involve (last bullet on page 15); 2. In Part II (Current State of Play) of Annex 9 (page 30), there is a section on “Government Direction” in which the justice component is mentioned as one being included in the simplification exercise; 3. In Part III (Strategy and Action Plan for Good Governance) of Annex 9 (page 38), measure 1.6 under Strategic Objective 1 addresses the implementation of the reform in the justice sector to reduce court case duration and backlog of cases Indicative budget is to be sourced from both ESI and other funds.
T.11.1 - The existence	3 - the development of	Yes	Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Development of Quality Management Systems (Annex 10) Refer to Page 22, showing the mapping between strategic initiatives and pertinent assessment criteria, whereby all needs are being	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency including public administration.	quality management systems;		addressed by one or more strategic initiatives. The judiciary sector is being referred to in pages 4 (Executive Summary), 13 (Government Direction), 15 (SWOT), 16 and 24 (Measure 1.5 under Strategic Objective 1) of Annex 10.	
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative	4 - integrated actions for simplification and rationalisation of administrative procedures;	Yes	Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Integrated actions for simplification and rationalisation of administrative processes (Annex 11) Through a table being presented on Page 20 of Annex 11 showing the mapping between strategic initiatives and pertinent assessment criteria, all needs are being addressed by one or more strategic initiatives. The judiciary sector is being referred to in pages 11 (Government Direction) and 16 (Measure 1.1(h) under Strategic Objective 1) of Annex 11.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
efficiency including public administration.				
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency including public administration.	5 - the development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies covering the main gaps identified in this field;	Yes	Human Resources and Skills Development Strategic Policy Framework – A Way Forward for 2014-2020 (Annex 12)	
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic	6 - the development of skills at all levels	Yes	Human Resources and Skills Development Strategic Policy Framework – A Way Forward for 2014-2020 (Annex 12)	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency including public administration.	of the professional hierarchy within public authorities;			
T.11.1 - The existence of a strategic policy framework for reinforcing the Member State's administrative efficiency	7 - the development of procedures and tools for monitoring and evaluation.	Yes	Strategy and Action Plan 2014-2020: Better Governance (Annex 9) - Page 46. The judiciary sector is being referred to in pages 5 (Executive Summary), in Part II (Current State of Play, page 14), in Part II (Current State of Play, page 30) and in Part III (Strategy and Action Plan for Good Governance, page 38), measure 1.6 under Strategic Objective 1	Page 46 shows the mapping between strategic initiatives and pertinent assessment criteria, whereby all needs are being addressed by one or more strategic initiatives. The judiciary sector is being referred to in pages 5 (Executive Summary) and: 1. In Part II (Current State of Play) of Annex 9 (page 14), there is a specific section on “the Judicial System and the Justice Sector”, including a bullet explaining what the justice reform will involve (last bullet on page 15); 2. In Part II (Current State of Play) of Annex 9 (page 30), there is a section on “Government Direction” in which the justice component is mentioned as one being included in the simplification exercise;

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
including public administration.				3. In Part III (Strategy and Action Plan for Good Governance) of Annex 9 (page 38), measure 1.6 under Strategic Objective 1 addresses the implementation of the reform in the justice sector to reduce court case duration and backlog of cases
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all	Yes	The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is an independent, government funded body set up, by virtue of Chapter 456 of the Laws of Malta in January 2004. Refer to link: http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/womenrights/malta.women.03.pdf The NCPE works closely with the Managing Authority and attends information sessions held when a Call for Project Applications is launched. NCPE offers training to various groups in society.	The NCPE works to ensure that Maltese society is a society free from any form of discrimination based on: (i) sex/gender and family responsibilities, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin, and gender identity in employment; banks and financial institutions, as well as education; and (ii) racial/ethnic origin and gender in the provision of goods and services and their supply. Refer to link: http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Pages/NCPE_Home.aspx The NCPE provides advice on Equal Opportunities Legislation in Malta to applicants applying for EU funds as well as guidance on how best to integrate equal opportunities in projects. NCPE will continue to be a key stakeholder in the preparation and implementation of the programmes and Monitoring Committee. For Disability a separate body is responsible for these arrangements – National Commission For Persons with Disability (Please refer to General Ex-ante conditionality 3 on Disability)

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund related activities			
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation	2 - Arrangements for training of staff of the authorities	Yes	A Training Plan on anti-discrimination and equality mainstreaming has been drawn up by NCPE, which it will be implementing together with the relevant Authorities' staff. Training will be offered for all current officers and to all newly engaged officers responsible for ESI funding Programmes 2014-2020 across the Public Service.	Various types of training are provided to the authorities involved in ESI funds, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ad hoc training provided at the authority / entity's request •One-to-one meetings with applicants, beneficiaries or consultancy firms upon their request •Through the EU-funded project entitled Gender Mainstreaming – in Practice (GMIP), specific training was given on the horizontal policy of equal

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
entation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti discrimination law and policy.			<p>opportunities to government departments and public sector organizations which are potential beneficiaries of ESI funds.</p> <p>For Disability a separate body is responsible for these arrangements – National Commission for Persons with Disability (Please refer to General Ex-ante conditionality 3 on Disability)</p> <p>NCPE offers training to various groups in society including NGOs, civil society organisation and educational institutions..</p>
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the	Yes	<p>The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is an independent, government funded body set up by virtue of Chapter 456 the Laws of Malta in January 2004. http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/population/womenrights/malta.women.03.pdf NCPE developed publications and tools to further support applicants and beneficiaries. These tools are available on http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Pages/Our_Publications_and_Resources/Resources_and_Tools.aspx</p>	<p>The NCPE as the equality body provides the necessary arrangements throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes The NCPE works closely with the Managing Authority and attends information sessions held when a Call for Project Applications is launched. NCPE will continue to be a key stakeholder in the preparation and implementation of the programmes as well as being actively involved on the Monitoring Committee particularly in relation to gender equality.</p> <p>The NCPE provides advice and guidance to applicants and beneficiaries on the implications and application of gender equality in their projects.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	involve ment of bodies responsi ble for gender equality througho ut the preparati on and impleme ntation of program mes, includin g the provisio n of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund-related activities .			

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	2 - Arrange training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming.	Yes	According to the Training Plan, the NCPE will be delivering training to the relevant Authorities' staff focusing on EU gender equality at the start of Programming Period for all current officers and to all newly engaged officers responsible for ESI funding Programmes 2014-2020 across the Public Service. Furthermore, the NCPE offers training to various groups in society.	Requests for training are discussed with the interested organisation/group being in the private and public sector as well as NGO's, Civil Society Organisations and Educational Institutions to ensure that the training provided addresses their needs. Types of training provided include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ad hoc training provided at the authority / entity's request •One-to-one meetings with applicants, beneficiaries or consultancy firms upon their request •Through the EU-funded project entitled Gender Mainstreaming – in Practice (GMIP) , specific training was given on the horizontal policy of equal opportunities to government departments and public sector organisations, many of which are beneficiaries of EU funds. In view of this and in conjunction with the Office of the Prime Minister, a circular was issued: OPM Circular No. 15/2012 Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: http://msdc.gov.mt/en/NCPE/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Gender_Mainstreaming-in_Practise/circular.pdf

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative	Yes	Functions of the National Commission Persons with Disability (NCPD) are prescribed in Article 22 of the Equal Opportunities Act (http://www.knpd.org/legislation/ea.html). Activities of the NCPD can be referred at: http://www.knpd.org/Equal%20Opportunities%20Compliance%20Unit.pdf 'Access for All – Design Guidelines': http://www.knpd.org/legislation/accessforall.html	The Equal Opportunities Act is divided into various sections, with Section III stating that there can be no discrimination made against people on the basis of their disability. These sections are grouped under 5 main headings which are: Employment; Education; Access (physical); provision of goods, facilities or services; Accommodation (housing). Heading no. 6 under this same act provides information on exemptions. Additionally it safeguards persons with disability from discrimination in relation to insurance. The NCPD was appointed as the independent mechanism. The Focal Point for UNCRPD was appointed within the Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity. The NCPD provides assistance and guidance for applicants of EU funds on all disability related aspects of the implementation of the ESI Funds, including accessibility, equality of opportunities and non-discrimination issues raised in their projects.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
in line with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.			
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application	2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management	Yes	The National Commission Persons with Disability, NCPD (refer to link http://www.knpd.org/legislation/ea.html) will continue to deliver training to the relevant Authorities' staff focusing on Malta's obligations in relation to disabled people's rights and, specifically, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act (Cap. 413). The training is planned to continue taking place during 2014.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
<p>ion of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.</p>	<p>ment and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and national legislative</p>			

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	on, as appropriate.			
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field	3 - Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and implementation of the programmes.	Yes	A monitoring mechanism for the implementation of Article 9 of UNCRPD covering the whole cycle of ESI Funds has been set up between the NCPD and the MA. For infrastructural projects, the NCPD vets these projects for accessibility based on the ‘Access for All – Design Guidelines’ (refer to link: http://www.knpd.org/legislation/accessforall.html) at the permitting stage through the normal planning process; http://www.knpd.org/pubs/pdf/fs09%20Equal%20Opportunities%20Compliance%20Unit.pdf	<p>The monitoring mechanism involves three main tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beneficiaries are invited to consult the NCPD during the drafting of the project application to ensure that activities take into consideration the needs of disabled persons at the design stage of the project activities; 2. The MA will ask the beneficiaries to consult the NCPD formally once projects are approved so that an agreement is in place on how the needs of disabled persons are being taken into consideration within the project activities. It is to be noted that in Malta, the NCPD already provides assistance and guidance for applicants of EU funds on all disability related aspects of the implementation of the ESI Funds, including accessibility, equality of opportunities and non-discrimination issues raised in their projects. 3. At closure of project, the NCPD will evaluate how the commitments taken at selection stage were implemented during the implementation. <p>NCPD also established the Equal Opportunities Compliance Unit</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.				
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms.	Yes	The Department of Contracts (DOC) is the single centralised public procurement institution for most functions on the national level. www.contracts.gov.mt Public Procurement in Malta is regulated by: S.L.174.04, http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=9532&l=1 S.L.174.06, http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=9534&l=1 S.L. 174.08, http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=11764&l=1	The DOC is responsible for developing standard procedures and routines, for developing a procurement policy, for the preparation of guidelines and instructions, the national contribution to EU advisory committees, the Maltese Public Procurement Network participation (PPN), the preparation of an annual report to the government on the functioning of the public procurement system, the collection of statistical and other data, the permission of less competitive procedures, the use of exceptions, extensions, the use of the accelerated procedures, and advising the government on public procurement policy. In Malta any aggrieved bidder can lodge an appeal in front of the Public Contracts Review Board (PCRB). This board is independent and autonomous of any contracting authority. Furthermore bidders who are not satisfied with the decision of the PCRB have the benefit of a further appeal in front of the Court of Appeal of Malta in its superior Jurisdiction.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures.	Yes	The DOC's main function is its role as a Central Government Authority for all tenders with an estimated value exceeding €120,000. An exception to this is to be found in the case of Schedule 3 entities whereby authorities listed in schedule 3 of S.L. 174.04 (refer to link above) administer their own procurement in line with the procurement regulations. Tenders which have an estimated value less than €120,000 are administered by the Contracting Authority which carries the procurement in question.	The evaluation of each call for tenders is carried out by an ad hoc evaluation committee that is appointed to carry out such evaluations. In administering the tendering process and in particular the award of each call for tenders as well as the requests for clarification by the respective evaluation committees, the DOC is supported by the General Contracts Committee (GCC) which is regulated by regulation 11 of S.L.174.04 . A similar body exists for Departmental Tenders i.e. tenders which have an estimated value of less than €120,000. Both the GCC and the Departments Contract Committee (DCC) are created in terms of Regulation 9 of S.L.174.04. In Malta any aggrieved bidder can lodge an appeal in front of the PCRB. This board is independent and autonomous of any contracting authority. Furthermore bidders who are not satisfied with the decision of the PCRB have the benefit of a further appeal in front of the Court of Appeal of Malta in its superior Jurisdiction.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the	3 - Arrangements for training and dissemination	Yes	On a regular basis the DOC carries out training of Public Officers: http://cdrt.gov.mt/corporate_services http://cdrt.gov.mt/epp http://cdrt.gov.mt/igpp http://cdrt.gov.mt/pca http://cdrt.gov.mt/pprp Officers from the DOC are also regularly sent abroad to attend training sessions. Implementation of e-procurement system and website for dissemination of information on public procurement on www.contracts.gov.mt	This training, organised with the collaboration of Government's Training Agency, the CDRT (Centre for Development, Research and Training), usually covers local legislation. Furthermore officers from the Department of Contracts are also regularly sent abroad to attend training sessions. The DOC is proceeding with the implementation of

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	ation of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.			<p>the e-procurement strategy and has implemented a full blown e-procurement system aimed at increasing the efficiency and transparency of the procurement process in Malta as well as increasing the exposure to greater market of tenders published by the Department of Contracts.</p> <p>In coordination with the CDRT, the Department formally started to deliver hands-on training to Contracting Authorities and Economic Operators related to e-procurement.</p> <p>The DOC make use of its website in the dissemination of information relating to public procurement since under the heading “resources” the DOC uploads reference material and the circulars it publishes.</p>
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement	4 - Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public	Yes	The DOC is in the process of increasing staff complement in parallel with a restructuring of the department. The DOC has a pool of procurement managers including a number who shall also be deployed within ministries to assist and guide Contracting Authorities in relation to EU-funded procurement. is also implementing a training plan for a career in public procurement through on the job training, possibility of a Diploma in Procurement and Supply, training on the introduction of new directives.	<p>The Pre-Contracts section caters for all administrative procedures, from the publication of the tender notice to the signature of the contract.</p> <p>The Post-Contracts unit caters for any issues arising during the implementation of the contract, including litigation.</p> <p>The Secretariat to the General Contracts Committee is responsible for vetting the evaluation reports and requests for clarifications prior to their submission to the Committee.</p> <p>Officers are sent abroad to attend training sessions.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
law in the field of the ESI Funds.	procurement rules.			
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules.	Yes	<p>The State Aid Monitoring Board (SAMB) is the competent national authority responsible for all State aid issues in Malta. Art 57 and 58 of the Business Promotion Act</p> <p>http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8799&l=1 State aid rules of procedure</p> <p>http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=9792&l=1 SAMB is the national contact point on state aid issues involved in EU funded projects.</p>	<p>State Aid monitoring rules outline the procedures with regards to the notification obligations regarding new aid, the treatment of non-notified aid and suspension provisions as well as the recovery of unlawful aid in line with the directly applicable EU Council Regulation (EC) No 659/1999.</p> <p>The rules of procedure also establish the reporting obligations to SAMB by State aid grantors of aid granted, including de minimis measures and block exempted initiatives.</p> <p>The SAMB keeps regular contact with key State aid grantors and in the case of EU Funds with the respective managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies (IB). Moreover, meetings are held with prospective State aid grantors and other bodies to provide the necessary guidance on state aid matters. Assistance is also provided in the formulation by State aid grantors and IBs of scheme guidelines and manuals intended to provide potential applicants and beneficiaries with details on the implementation of such state aid measures.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	2 - Arrange arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	The staff working at the SAMB is supported to participate and attend specialised State aid courses organised by international institutions. Dissemination of knowledge and technical expertise on state aid issues is provided to Government Ministries and agencies involved in state aid, prospective beneficiaries, the Managing Authority, intermediate bodies, and other local entities responsible for auditing and certifying the implementation of funds.	<p>The SAMB also guides the State aid grantors so that the necessary checks are carried out to ensure that undertakings in difficulty are excluded from benefiting from aid measures.</p> <p>The SAMB participated in Multilateral Meetings and Advisory Committees on State aid that have been organised by the European Commission in the process of review of the State aid acquis as part of the State aid Modernisation initiative.</p> <p>Malta has confirmed its acceptance to the appropriate measures proposed by the European Commission under the newly adopted rules. The SAMB will assist all granting authorities to bring their existing State aid schemes in line with the newly adopted State aid rules.</p> <p>The SAMB gathers the necessary information on State aid measures. The transparency requirement of setting up a State aid website will be met by June 2016. Moreover, active steps are being taken to ensure compliance with ex post evaluation requirements, also through external expertise.</p>
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective	3 - Arrange arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for impleme	Yes	The Board ensures to maintain at all times the appropriate administrative capacity necessary to provide its function. Training and participation in international courses/conferences is supported. The SAMB actively participates in Multilateral Meetings and Advisory Committees on State Aid organised by European Commission. In order to substantiate its own resources, the Board is subscribed to specialised State aid Journals and has over the years gathered its own internal resources of publications.	<p>With regards the application of EU State aid rules, the SAMB actively participates in Multilateral Meetings and Advisory Committees on State aid that are organised by the European Commission in the process of review of State aid acquis.</p> <p>The SAMB also keeps regular contact with key State aid grantors. Meetings are held with existing and prospective State aid grantors to inform such grantors of the latest developments in the Acquis in this area,</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	notification and application of Union State aid rules.			including any change in EU regulations, the applicable reference and discount rate as revised periodically by the European Commission, and information about any landmark Commission decision or Court judgement. The Board also assists State aid grantors with the drafting of new State aid measures and carries out the necessary notifications with the European Commission for the approval of State aid schemes The SAMB also participates in other bilateral fora in Malta to disseminate general information concerning State aid issues.
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact	1 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: the	Yes	The NSO has the necessary structures in place to ensure the collection and aggregation of data in conformity with European legislation and requirements. http://www.nso.gov.mt/docs/MaltaStatisticsAuthorityAct.pdf Policies for sound statistical basis for evaluations http://www.nso.gov.mt/docs/Documentation_of_data_quality_and_methodology.pdf http://www.nso.gov.mt/docs/Rights_and_duties.pdf All information is backed up with appropriate metadata, quality reports, methodological notes and manuals.	With regards to ESF operations, the Managing Authority, through the Structural Funds Database, collects and stores micro data on individual participants per project. It captures the total people entering, total women entering, total people/women leaving complete and leaving not complete as well as total people and women carried over by year. Data on individual participants in relation to training attended, whether has been completed or not and whether the course had an examination is also collected and stored in the SFD. The collection and storage of micro data is in line with article 9 (c) and (e) of the Data Protection Act

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact	identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation.			

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
evaluation.				
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the program mes. The existence of a system of result indicators	2 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data.	Yes	All arrangements are in place for data to be accessed by the public through the official website: www.nso.gov.mt NSO has a transparent policy on dissemination which may be accessed through this link: http://www.nso.gov.mt/docs/DisseminationNSO.pdf NSO also has a confidentiality policy which is rigorously observed, especially when it comes to availability of aggregated data: http://www.nso.gov.mt/docs/Confidentiality_of_personal_and_commercial_data.pdf	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
<p>rs necessarily to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.</p>				
<p>G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary</p>	<p>3 - An effective system of result indicators including</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Result indicators have been selected to closely fit the actions of each priority. Targets for results indicators have been established on the basis of historical administrative data and national statistics, where available. Targets set for indicators are shown within the OP. Operations will be required to select indicators and set targets as part of the appraisal process.</p>	<p>The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will provide guidance to the beneficiaries. Indicators will be accompanied by detailed definitions and guidance on reporting requirements. Information provided by beneficiaries will be inputted through an information system. The M&E team will verify statistical validity of indicator data submitted by beneficiaries.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
<p>by to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to</p>	<p>g: the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme.</p>			<p>The SFD managed by the Managing Authority which collects and stores micro data on individual participants in relation to ESF operations provides a breakdown by target group including status in the labour market, age group, type of vulnerable group and education attainment level. This information is necessary for effective results indicators.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.				
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact	4 - An effective system of result indicators including: the establishment of targets for these indicators.	No	The baselines/targets in relation to four Result Indicators (listed in the pertinent Action Plan) will be established once the respective operations are approved and there is more visibility on the actions to be implemented. All other result indicators found in this Operational Programme have been selected to closely fit the actions of each priority whilst targets for results indicators have been established on the basis of historical administrative data and national statistics, where available.	<p>The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will provide guidance to the beneficiaries. Indicators will be accompanied by detailed definitions and guidance on reporting requirements. Information provided by beneficiaries will be inputted through an information system. The M&E team will verify statistical validity of indicator data submitted by beneficiaries.</p> <p>The SFD managed by the Managing Authority which collects and stores micro data on individual participants in relation to ESF operations provides a breakdown by target group including status in the labour market, age group, type of vulnerable group and education</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessarily to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact				

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
evaluation.				
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators	5 - An effective system of result indicators including: the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation	Yes	The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will verify statistical validity of indicator data submitted by beneficiaries. Result indicators have been selected to closely fit the actions of each priority. Targets for results indicators have been established on the basis of historical administrative data and national statistics, where available. Targets set for indicators are shown within the OP. Operations will be required to select indicators and set targets as a part of the appraisal process.	The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will provide guidance to the beneficiaries. Indicators will be accompanied by detailed definitions and guidance on reporting requirements. Information provided by beneficiaries will be inputted through an information system. The M&E team will verify statistical validity of indicator data submitted by beneficiaries. Result indicators have been selected to closely fit the actions of each priority. Targets for results indicators have been established on the basis of historical administrative data and national statistics, where available. Targets set for indicators are shown within the OP. Operations will be required to select indicators and set targets as part of the appraisal process.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
<p>rs necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.</p>	<p>ation, responsibility to policy, timely collection of data.</p>			
<p>G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary</p>	<p>6 - Procedures in place to ensure that all operations</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will provide guidance to the beneficiaries. Indicators will be accompanied by detailed definitions and guidance on reporting requirements. Operations will be required to select indicators and set targets as part of the appraisal process.</p>	<p>The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit will provide guidance to the beneficiaries. Indicators will be accompanied by detailed definitions and guidance on reporting requirements. Information provided by beneficiaries will be inputted through an information system. The M&E team will verify statistical validity of indicator data submitted by beneficiaries. Result</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
<p>y to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessarily to select actions, which most effectively contribute to</p>	<p>ns financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.</p>			<p>indicators have been selected to closely fit the actions of each priority. Targets for results indicators have been established on the basis of historical administrative data and national statistics, where available. Targets set for indicators are shown within the OP. Operations will be required to select indicators and set targets as part of the appraisal process.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.				

9.2 Description of actions to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities, responsible bodies and timetable

Table 25: Actions to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	4 - An effective system of result indicators including: the establishment of targets for these indicators.	The baselines/targets in relation to the following four (4) Result Indicators will be established once the respective operations are approved and there is more visibility on the actions to be implemented: 1. Result Indicator: “Persons equipped with skills to empower them to move towards deinstitutionalisation” of IP1 of PA2; 2. Result Indicator: “Increase in awareness	31-Dec-2015	Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM)

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
		<p>in relation to healthier lifestyle and health and safety at work” of IP2 of PA2;</p> <p>3. Result Indicator: “Improved pupils/student performance upon receiving support” of IP1 of PA3; and</p> <p>4. Result Indicator: “Second chance participants gaining a qualification/certification upon Leaving” of IP3 of PA3.</p>		

Table 26: Actions to fulfil applicable thematic ex-ante conditionalities

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - A national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction, aiming at active inclusion, is in place that:	<p>In order to fulfil this ex-ante conditionality, the following action plan is being followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Consultation on the green paper (completed) • Finalisation of the General Strategy framework and the respective operational procedures containing recommendations and policies, based on the feedback received during the public consultations on the green paper. (31/12/14) <p>Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.</p>	31-Dec-2014	Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168	4 - a monitoring and review system.	<p>A Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA) tool is being finalised as the monitoring framework for the NHSS.</p> <p>The indicators for monitoring the performance of the</p>	31-Dec-2014	Overall responsibility is vested on the Ministry for Energy and Health. Responsibility and

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.		<p>local public health system have been chosen and prioritised following extensive consultation with a number of stakeholders. The conceptual framework behind the HSPA has now been revisited and refocused following these consultations and the data collection for the compilation of a first assessment is already underway.</p> <p>Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.</p>		implementation will be carried out under the direction and stewardship of the Permanent Secretary responsible for Health within the Ministry for Energy and Health
T.09.3 - Health: The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for health within the limits of Article 168 TFEU ensuring economic sustainability.	5 - A Member State or region has adopted a framework outlining available budgetary resources on an indicative basis and a cost-effective concentration of resources on prioritised needs for health care.	<p>The budgetary framework for the NHSS is being finalised. The drawing up of this framework could not start before the finalisation of the strategy following the extensive feedback received during consultations. The interim actions can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up of Action Plan (Completed) • Development of Terms of Reference for an Economist/ Accountant to Assist with Drawing Up the Budgetary Framework (Completed) • Review Proposed Action Plan and present it for approval (completed) • Contract Out Budgetary Framework; (completed) • Present Budgetary Framework to Permanent Secretary and Parliamentary Secretary (Health) (31/12/14) • Present Action Plan and Budgetary Framework to Parliamentary Committee on Health (31/12/14) • Present to Cabinet (31/12/14) 	31-Dec-2014	Overall responsibility is vested on the Ministry for Energy and Health. Responsibility and implementation will be carried out under the direction and stewardship of the Permanent Secretary responsible for Health within the Ministry for Energy and Health

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
		Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.		
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	1 - A system for collecting and analysing data and information on ESL at relevant levels is in place that:	<p>This action plan is being followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings between ESL Unit and various departments within the Directorate for Educational services and Directorate for Quality and Standards on the exit survey, E1 platform, tracer study, audits in non state sector and data gathered in compulsory education (completed) • Stock taking exercise is brought to a close. The ESL Unit analyses the information gathered from the preparatory stock taking exercise and prepares for a meeting between all the stakeholders involved in the gathering of data in line with Strategic Action 2.3 of the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta. (Completed) • Setting up of working group to assess and give direction (Completed) • The system will be in place (31/12/14) <p>Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.</p>	31-Dec-2014	Early School Leaving Monitoring (ESL) Unit, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education and Employment
T.10.1 - Early school leaving: The existence of a strategic policy framework to reduce early school leaving (ESL) within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	2 - provides a sufficient evidence-base to develop targeted policies and monitors developments.	<p>This action plan is being followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings between ESL Unit and various departments within the Directorate for Educational services and Directorate for Quality and Standards on the exit survey, E1 platform, tracer study, audits in non state sector and data gathered in compulsory 	31-Dec-2014	Early School Leaving Monitoring (ESL) Unit, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Education and Employment

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
		<p>education (completed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock taking exercise is brought to a close. The ESL Unit analyses the information gathered from the preparatory stock taking exercise and prepares for a meeting between all the stakeholders involved in the gathering of data in line with Strategic Action 2.3 of the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta. (Completed) • Setting up of working group to assess and give direction (Completed) • The system will be in place (31/12/14) <p>Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.</p>		
<p>T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.</p>	<p>2 - where necessary, measures to increase participation and attainment that:</p>	<p>This action plan is being followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up FHE Policy Update Coordinating Team (completed) • Finalise assessment of progress achieved in relation to the targets set in the FHE Strategy 2020 (completed) • Draft report presented to the Team (completed) • Gathering/collation of quantitative/qualitative data on the present state of provision of state/non-state FHE to feed into updated policy (completed) • Organization of 1/2day conference to present data on provision, report on progress of achievement of targets and to launch consultation process on policy recommendations (completed) • Consolidation of outcome of conference in a draft policy document to be presented to the Team (completed) 	<p>31-Dec-2014</p>	<p>Working Committee within the National Commission for Further and Higher Education</p>

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of Final Policy Report on Higher Education – 2020 (31/12/14) <p>Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.</p>		
<p>T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.</p>	<p>1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning is in place that contains measures:</p>	<p>In order to fulfil this ex-ante conditionality, the following action plan is being followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The (draft) strategy was launched for public consultation in October 2014, with the involvement of MCESD. Meetings with individual stakeholders will be held accordingly (completed) • Minister and Cabinet endorsement will follow (31/12/14) <p>Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.</p>	<p>31-Dec-2014</p>	<p>Directorate for Life Long Learning within the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE)</p>
<p>T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.</p>	<p>1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework is in place for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU which includes measures for the following:</p>	<p>This action plan is being followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level consultation meeting with key stakeholders: MCAST, ETC, ITS, MEDE, DLLL, Director ESL and MCESD. Reps to discuss in depth the detail of the key recommendations drafted by NCFHE. Feedback to be noted and amendments made as necessary (completed) • A roundtable consultation to be held with members of stakeholders (both direct and indirect) to include the private sector, University representatives, Agenzija Zghazagh, to discuss in more depth the recommended actions put forward by the key 	<p>31-Dec-2014</p>	<p>National Commission for Further and Higher Education within the Ministry for Education and Employment</p>

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
		stakeholders (completed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCFHE to undertake an extensive exercise to be able to finalise both the text within the said policy as well as to pin down concrete action measures and targets (completed) • Conclude the policy (31/12/2014) Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.		
T.10.4 - The existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing the quality and efficiency of VET systems within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET including through establishing a national approach for quality assurance for VET (for example in line with the, European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training) and implementing the transparency and recognition tools, for example European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training. (ECVET).	This action plan is being followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level consultation meeting with key stakeholders: MCAST, ETC, ITS, MEDE, DLLL, Director ESL and MCESD. Reps to discuss in depth the detail of the key recommendations drafted by NCFHE. Feedback to be noted and amendments made as necessary (completed) • A roundtable consultation to be held with members of stakeholders (both direct and indirect) to include the private sector, University representatives, Agenzija Zghazagh, to discuss in more depth the recommended actions put forward by the key stakeholders (completed) • NCFHE to undertake an extensive exercise to be able to finalise both the text within the said policy as well as to pin down concrete action measures and targets (completed) • Conclude the policy (31/12/2014) Malta is committed not to start the implementation of underlying activities before the fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionality and the actual fulfilment of	31-Dec-2014	National Commission for Further and Higher Education within the Ministry for Education and Employment

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
		criteria will be positively reassessed by the Commission services.		

10. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce administrative burden.

The need to continue to streamline the processes involved in management and control systems of EU funds and the further reduction in administrative burden for beneficiaries is evident through the findings of assessments that have been carried out during the 2007-2013 period. To this effect, Malta is committed to implement further simplification measures that will reduce the administrative requirements and burden on the beneficiaries.

Actions planned include measures at application stage, project selection phase, procurement, horizontal simplification measures and measures in relation to the IT systems. Measures planned include:

Application stage:

- Provision of assistance to applicants in filling the relevant application particularly to NGOs, Local Councils, civil society etc. This is targeted to be available by Quarter 4 2014.

Project selection stage:

- Speeding up of the project selection through streamlined processes and greater involvement of experts. This is targeted to be available by Quarter 4 2014.

Procurement:

- Assess the possibility of increasing the threshold for Departmental Tenders. This is targeted to be available by Quarter 4 2014.
- Phased rolling-out of the E-procurement system[1] is ongoing.
- The introduction of Procurement managers in Line Ministries to speed up procurement processes by Quarter 1 2014.
- Provision of assistance to NGO and civil society for tender drafting by Quarter 1 2015.
- Development of procurement templates for NGO's and civil society by Quarter 1 2015.

Simplification measures

- The use of simplified costs has proven to be a positive experience under ESF. This will be further analysed and introduced where possible in other funds. Standard Cost Options utilised under the 2007-2013 period will continue to be utilised during the 2014-2020 period from the first call for project applications.

However, Malta will explore possibilities as to expand these standard cost options which are expected to be in place by no later than Quarter4 2016.

IT system

- Introduction of e-forms at application stage by Quarter 4 2014.
- Facilitate the implementation process through the enhancement of IT-enabled systems which is an ongoing process.

[1] E-procurement is already in place and will continue to be developed further over the next programming period. E-procurement is currently being financed through national funds.

11. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

11.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

Malta is committed towards achieving a sustainable and healthy environment which is considered fundamental in order to attract investment, create jobs and improve standards of living. This is also in line with the objectives of the National Sustainable Development Strategy 'A Sustainable Development Strategy for the Maltese islands 2007-2016'[1]. In this regard, sustainable development is considered as a cross cutting theme of this Operational Programme and will be inextricably linked with the OP's specific objectives.

The approach adopted under the 2007-2013 programme(s) whereby applicants are required to demonstrate that they have considered sustainable development issues[2] at all stages during the design of the project will be maintained. Sustainable development covers economic growth, social cohesion and the protection of the environment (including disaster resilience and risk prevention), which will be taken into account throughout the life of the supported activity. Applicants must also demonstrate how the project has been structured to ensure that sustainable development issues will be mainstreamed throughout the project's aims and operation.

Interventions in this Operational Programme will contribute towards the promotion of sustainable development. These include efforts to promote sustainable economic development through support to enterprises and stimulating investment in research and innovation as well as initiatives to promote the development of new market processes and niche markets. The promotion of sustainable development is also envisaged through interventions to improve the quality of life of citizens and to promote sustainable urban development, improved accessibility and social cohesion with the objective of fostering sustainable communities. Capacity building interventions to include education, training, knowledge and information are also envisaged to strengthen the knowledge and skills in the low carbon economy and to foster the creation of green jobs[3].

[1] http://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/64812/SD_Strategy_2006.pdf

[2] Applicants are encouraged to make specific reference to the Sustainable Development Act (available online at <https://secure2.gov.mt/tsdu/sdleg>). The aim of the Sustainable Development Act (CAP.521), amongst others, with a view to mainstream sustainable development across the workings of Government and to raise awareness on sustainable development issues and practices across society.

[3] The inclusion of green procurement in e-procurement systems will also be supported.

11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The promotion of equality between men and women, non-discrimination and accessibility (with reference to Art. 7 CPR)

Malta is committed to ensuring that the principles of equality, non-discrimination and accessibility as set out in Article 7 of the Common Provisions Regulation are taken into account and promoted in the implementation of this programme. In accordance with Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the relevant entities responsible for promoting equality, non-discrimination and accessibility were involved in the consultation process of the Operational Programme and will continue to be consulted during the preparation and implementation (including evaluation and monitoring) of the programme.

National arrangements for the promotion of equality, non-discrimination and accessibility

The Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties is responsible for social dialogue, civil liberties, equality and anti-discrimination policies and the integration of migrants[1], amongst others. The Ministry has embarked on a number of initiatives to further promote civil rights and equal opportunities. Particularly, the Ministry is undertaking an active role in the promotion of family-friendly measures within the public sector. In addition, complementary measures aimed at improving gender equality particularly in the labour market are also being implemented. Such measures include the directory for professional women which will enable the better identification of qualified women for decision-making positions, amongst others.

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)[2] and the National Commission for Persons with Disability (NCPD)[3] are strategic partners within the Ministry in the promotion of equality, non-discrimination and accessibility at the national and local level. The activities undertaken by both of these entities include awareness-raising campaigns, providing assistance and support, research, exchange of best practice and collaborations with local and international entities.

In terms of social inclusion, Government is committed to promote the wellbeing and enhance quality of life particularly for those experiencing poverty and social exclusion. In this regard, the Ministry launched a framework for poverty reduction and for social inclusion 2014-2024.

Approach to ensure the promotion of equality, non-discrimination and accessibility in the implementation of the programme:

Efforts and initiatives undertaken during the previous programming period to ensure the involvement of the relevant entities responsible for promoting equality, non-discrimination and accessibility in the various stages of implementation of this programme will continue under the future programme in accordance with national practice. Such initiatives will cover the preparation and implementation (including evaluation and monitoring) of the programme.

The participation of the relevant entities[1] responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination in the various stages of implementation of this programme will be assured through their participation in the Monitoring Committee of this Operational Programme in accordance with the terms of references of this committee. The promotion of equality, non-discrimination and accessibility will also be integrated at project level (see section 2.A.6.2).

In line with 2007-2013 practice, a help desk will be set up by the relevant entities, to assist project promoters in their effort to integrate the equality, non-discrimination and accessibility dimensions in their project ideas as well as to offer assistance in access to funding for target groups.

[1] Entities Include relevant Line Ministries, public entities and civil society.

11.3 Equality between men and women

Description of contribution of the operational programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at operational programme and operation level.

1. Equality between men and women

Malta is committed to ensuring that the principles of equality between men and women as set out in Article 7 of the Common Provisions Regulation are taken into account and promoted in the implementation of this programme. In accordance with Article 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation, the relevant entities responsible for promoting equality, were involved in the consultation process of the Operational Programme and will continue to be consulted during the preparation and implementation (including evaluation and monitoring) of the programme.

National arrangements for the promotion of equality between men and women

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is the national body responsible for the promotion of equality between men and women. The activities undertaken by this entity include awareness-raising campaigns, providing assistance and support, research, exchange of best practice and collaborations with local and international entities.

Approach to ensure the promotion of equality between men and women in the implementation of the programme:

Efforts and initiatives undertaken during the previous programming period to ensure the involvement of the relevant entities responsible for promoting equality between men and women in the various stages of implementation of this programme will continue under the future programme in accordance with national practice. Such initiatives will cover the preparation and implementation (including evaluation and monitoring) of the programme.

The participation of the relevant entities[1] responsible for promoting equality between men and women in the various stages of implementation of this programme will be assured through their participation in the Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme in accordance with the terms of references of this committee. The promotion of equality will also be integrated at project level (see section 2.A.6.2).

In line with 2007-2013 practice, a help desk will be set up by the relevant entity, to assist project promoters in their effort to integrate the equal opportunities dimension in their project ideas.

11.4 Public Procurement

In the implementation of ESI funds, national authorities will respect the provisions for public procurement in accordance with the relevant EU Directives and Treaty provisions.

[1] Entities Include relevant Line Ministries, public entities and civil society.

12. SEPARATE ELEMENTS

12.1 Major projects to be implemented during programming period

Table 27: List of major projects

Project	Planned notification/submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axes / Investment Priorities
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12.2 Performance framework of operational programme

Table 28: Performance framework by fund and category of region (summary table)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)		
					M	W	T	M	W	T
PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	ESF	Transition	Financial Indicator	Euro			7,819,554.30			26,000,000.00
PA 1 - Investing in the employability and adaptability of human capital	ESF	Transition	Persons supported	Number			250			2,900.00
PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	Financial Indicator	Euro			10,868,152.59			40,000,000.00
PA 2 - Towards a more inclusive society	ESF	Transition	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number			1000			8,500.00
PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	ESF	Transition	Financial Indicator	Euro			14,288,118.43			47,424,810.00
PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	ESF	Transition	Persons participating in tertiary education	Number			150			700.00
PA 3 - Investing in people through Education, Training and Life Long Learning	ESF	Transition	Persons participating in training/support measures	Number			1600			7,400.00
PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	ESF	Transition	number of projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	Number			1			3.00
PA 4 - Building the Institutional Administrative Capacity	ESF	Transition	Financial Indicator	Euro			2,988,741.96			11,000,000.00

12.3 Relevant partners involved in preparation of programme

A. Competent urban and other public authorities

- Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers
- Aġenzija Żghazagh
- Air Malta
- Armed Forces of Malta
- Building Industry Consultative Committee
- Building Regulations Office
- Certifying Authority (MFIN)
- Civil Aviation Directorate
- Civil Protection Department
- Commissioner for Children
- Commissioner for Mental Health and Older Persons
- Commissioner on Domestic Violence Council for the Teachers' Profession
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Culture
- Department of Industrial and Employment Relations
- Department of Local Government
- Department of Social Welfare Centre
- Employment and Training Corporation
- Enemalta Corporation
- European Direct Information Centre
- EU Paying Authority (MFIN)

- EU Secretariat (MEAIM)
- European Union Programmes Agency
- Fisheries Control Directorate
- Foundation for Educational Services
- Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility
- Freedom of Information Office
- Foundation for Social Welfare Services
- Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools
- Gozo Channel Company Ltd
- Grand Harbour Regeneration Corporation
- Guardian of Future Generations
- Health Department
- Heritage Malta
- Housing Authority
- International Maritime Law Institute
- Institute for Tourism, Travel and Culture
- Institute for Waste Management
- Kordin Grain Terminal
- Kunsill Malti għall-Ispport
- Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ilsien Malti
- Kunsill Studenti Universitarji
- Local Councils (Malta & Gozo)
 - Balzan Local Council
 - Birkirkara Local Council
 - Birżebbuġa Local Council
 - Fontana Local Council
 - Għajnsielem Local Council
 - Għarb Local Council
 - Għasri Local Council
 - Għaxaq Local Council
 - Gudja Local Council
 - Gżira Local Council
 - Kerċem Local Council
 - Marsaskala Local Council
 - Marsaxlokk Local Council
 - Mellieħa Local Council
 - Msida Local Council
 - Mqabba Local Council
 - Paola Local Council
 - Pembroke Local Council
 - Qala Local Council
 - Qormi Local Council
 - Qrendi Local Council
 - San Pawl il-Baħar Local Council
 - Santa Venera Local Council
 - Swieqi Local Council
 - Tarxien Local Council
 - Valletta Local Council
 - Xagħra Local Council
 - Xgħajra Local Council
 - Xewkija Local Council
 - Żebbuġ (Gozo) Local Council
 - Żejtun Local Council

- Żurrieq Local Council
- Local Councils Association
- Lotteries and Gaming Authority
- Malta Aquaculture Research Centre
- Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- Malta Communications Authority[1]
- Malta Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority
- Malta Council for Science and Technology
- Malta Enterprise
- Malta Environment and Planning Authority
- Malta EU Steering Action Committee
- Malta Financial Services Authority
- Malta Freeport Corporation
- Malta Freeport Terminal
- Malta Industrial Parks
- Malta Information and Technology Agency
- Malta Intelligent Energy Management Agency
- Malta International Airport
- Malta Libraries
- Malta Oil Tanking Ltd
- Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre
- Malta Statistics Authority
- Malta Tourism Authority
- Mater Dei Hospital
- Managing Authority (EAFRD)
- Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE)
- Ministry for Energy and Health (MEH)
- Ministry for European Affairs & Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto (MEAIM)
- Ministry for Finance (MFIN)
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Ministry for Gozo (MGOZ)
- Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security
- Ministry for Justice, Culture and Local Government
- Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties
- Ministry for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change (MSDEC)
- Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business
- Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity
- Ministry for Tourism
- Ministry for Transport & Infrastructure (MTI)
- National Archives
- National Book Council
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education Malta
- National Commission for Persons with Disability
- National Commission for Promotion of Equality
- National Employment Authority
- National Pensioners Organization
- National Statistics Office
- Occupational Health and Safety Authority
- Office of Manager Airport Security
- Office of the Permanent Secretary, Strategy and Implementation, OPM
- Office of the Prime Minister (OPM)

- Parliamentary Secretariat for Local Government
- Parliamentary Secretariat for Research, Innovation, Youth and Sport
- Paying Agency (MSDEC)
- Planning and Priorities Co-ordination Division
- Police (Cyber Crime)
- Policy Development and Programme Implementation, MSDEC
- Programme Implementation Directorate, MEDE
- Programme Implementation Directorate, MTI
- Programme Implementation – Head Office, MGOZ
- Public Broadcasting Services
- Sptar Ġenerali Ghawdex
- State Aid Monitoring Board
- Sustainable Development Network
- Transport Malta
- University of Malta
 - Computing Services Centre (CSC)
 - Department of Electronic Systems Engineering
 - Department of Metallurgy and Materials Engineering
 - Department of Social Policy and Social Work
 - Institute for Sustainable Energy
 - Junior College
 - Project Support Office
 - Research, Innovation and Development Trust
- Valletta Freeport Terminal
- Veterinary Regulation Division
- WasteServ Malta Ltd
- Water Policy Unit, MEH
- Water Services Corporation

B. Economic and social partners

- APS Bank
- Bank of Valletta
- Central Bank of Malta
- Chamber of Engineers
- Confederation of Malta Trade Unions
- Egg Producers' Organisation
- Forum Unions Maltin
- General Retailers and Traders Union (GRTU)
- General Workers Union
- Gozo Business Chamber
- Kooperattivi Malta
- Koperattiva Nazzjonali tas-Sajd
- Koperattiva Produtturi tal-Halib
- Koperattiva ta' min Irabbi l-Majjali
- Malta Chamber of Architects
- Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry[1]
- Malta Chamber of Pharmacists
- Malta Chamber of Scientists
- Malta Developers Association

- Malta Employers' Association
- Malta Hotels and Restaurants Association
- Malta Insurance Association
- Malta Poultry Producers' Organisation
- Malta Union of Midwives and Nurses
- Malta Union of Teachers
- Malta Viticulture Producer Organisation
- Medical Association of Malta
- The Petroleum Division within GRTU
- Union Haddiema Magħqudin

C.Relevant bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, NGOs, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination

- AEGEE Valletta
- Alternattiva Demokratika
- Aquaculture Sector
- Anti-Poverty Forum
- Archidioese of Malta and Gozo
- Arka Foundation
- Association of Car Importers Malta
- Association of Insurance Brokers
- Association of Ship Agents
- Assocjazzjoni tal-Bdiewa
- Book Publishers Association
- Chamber of Advocates
- Church Schools
- Civil Society Community
- Cospicua Community Forum
- Curia
- Din l-Art Helwa
- E-skills Malta Foundation
- EKOSkola
- Euromed Connect Coop
- Farmers' Central Co-operative Society
- Federated Association of Travel and Tourism
- Federation for Hunting and Conservation
- Filipino Migrants in Malta
- Fish4Tomorrow
- Fisheries Cooperatives
- Flimkien għall-Ambjent Aħjar
- Fondazzjoni Belt Victoria
- Fondazzjoni Nanniet Malta
- Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna
- Foundation for Shelter and Support to Migrants
- Foundation Medical Services
- Genista Research Foundation Malta
- Għaqda Koperattiva tas-Sajd
- Għaqda Produtturi tal-Laħam tal-Fniek
- Għaqda Produtturi tat-Tadam

- Gozo NGOs Association
- Gozo Tourism Association
- Gozo Regional Committee
- Hospice Malta
- Independent Schools
- Inspire
- IT Students' Association
- Junior Chamber International
- Kummissjoni Ambjent
- Light Pollution Awareness Group
- Local Action Groups
- Malta Association for Private Training Providers
- Malta Association of Physiotherapists
- Malta Aviation Business Council
- Malta Band Club Association
- Malta Bankers Association
- Malta Basketball Association
- Malta Business Bureau (MBB)
- Malta Dental Technology Association
- Malta Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies Association
- Malta Federation of Professional Associations
- Malta Fishing Forum (MFF)
- Malta Maritime Law Association
- Malta Motorsport Federation
- Malta Powerboat Association
- Malta Shortsea Promotion Centre
- Malta Society for the Blind
- Malta Tourism Society
- Malta Water Association
- Malta Yachting Association
- National Association of Pensioners
- National Council for Women Malta
- National Youth Council
- Nature Trust
- Organisation for Friendship in Diversity (OFD)
- Parents' Association
- Partit Laburista
- Partit Nazzjonalista
- Peace Laboratory
- Private Schools Association
- Recreational Fishing Organization
- Remote Gaming Foundation
- Representative of Environmental NGOs
- Richmond Foundation
- Saint Martin's Institute of Higher Education
- Santa Lucija Residents Action Committee
- Siggiewi Basketball Club
- SKOP (Solidarjetà u Kooperazzjoni)
- Solidarity Overseas Services (SOS) Malta
- Valletta Alive Foundation
- Women's Rights Foundation

- Xaghra Parish Office
- Youth Travel Circle

[1] The ICT & Telecom Industries as well as user groups and utilities in this sector were represented through the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry and the Malta Communications Authority.

Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Methodology for Result Indicators: Operational Programme II	Supplementary information	19-Dec-2014	Methodology for Result Indicators: Operational Programme II	Ares(2018)3004252	Methodology for Result Indicators: Operational Programme II	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
EAC 9.1 - Annex	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	17-Nov-2014	EAC 9.1 - Annex	Ares(2018)3004252	EAC 9.1 - Annex	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
Ex-Ante Evaluation Operational Programme II	Report of the ex-ante evaluation	30-Jun-2014	Ex-Ante Evaluation Operational Programme II	Ares(2018)3004252	Ex-Ante Evaluation Operational Programme II	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
EAC 10.1 - Annexes	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	17-Nov-2014	EAC 10.1 - Annexes	Ares(2018)3004252	Annex 3 - Exit Questionnaire Annex 4 - Tracer Study 2011 Annex 5 - Tracer Study 2012	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
EAC10.4 - Annexes	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	17-Sep-2014	EAC10.4 - Annexes	Ares(2018)3004252	Annex 7 - Malta Skills Audit Report Annex 8 - Manual EQAVET	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
EAC 9.3 - Annex	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	17-Nov-2014	EAC 9.3 - Annex	Ares(2018)3004252	Annex 2 - National Health Strategy	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
EAC 10.3 - Annex	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	17-Nov-2014	EAC 10.3 - Annex	Ares(2018)3004252	Annex 6 - Draft Life Long Learning Strategy	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
EAC 11.1 - Annexes	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	17-Nov-2014	EAC 11.1 - Annexes	Ares(2018)3004252	Annex 10 - Strategic Policy Framework for QMS Annex 11 - Strategic Policy Framework for Simplification Annex 12 - HR Strategy Annex 9 - Strategic Policy Framework for Better Governance	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
Revisions of Operational Programme II - Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the wellbeing of society (2014-2020)	Supplementary information	16-May-2018	Revisions of Operational Programme II - Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the wellbeing of society (2014-2020)	Ares(2018)3004252	Synopsis of the changes as proposed and approved by MC Revised Operational Programme II - Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the wellbeing of society (2014-2020)	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn

Submitted annexes by the Commission implementing regulation laying down the model of the programme

Document title	Document type	Programme version	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
Ex-Ante Evaluation Operational Programme II	Report of the ex-ante evaluation	2.0	30-Jun-2014	Ex-Ante Evaluation Operational Programme II	Ares(2018)3004252	Ex-Ante Evaluation Operational Programme II	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn

Document title	Document type	Programme version	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
EAC10.4 - Annexes	Documentation on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	2.0	17-Sep-2014	EAC10.4 - Annexes	Ares(2018)3004252	Annex 7 - Malta Skills Audit Report Annex 8 - Manual EQAVET	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn
Programme Snapshot of data before send 2014MT05SFOP001 2.0	Snapshot of data before send	2.0	08-Jun-2018		Ares(2018)3004252	Programme Snapshot of data before send 2014MT05SFOP001 2.0 mt	08-Jun-2018	nvassajn

Latest validation results

Severity	Code	Message
Info		Programme version has been validated.
Warning	2.18.6	At least one indicator must be defined in the relevant indicator tables. Priority axis "PA 5", specific objective "SO 1", Table 12
Warning	2.19.3	The sum of the annual EU Support per category of region "Transition" and per year "2018", must be smaller or equal than the corresponding annual EU Support specified in the Financial Perspectives: "78,381,101.00", "71,381,101.00".