



Study for the Evaluation of ESF Support to Youth Employment

Annex 5: Case study - France
(Contract VC/2018/0715)

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
CSR	Country-specific recommendations
DG EMPL	Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
DGEFP	General Directorate for Employment and Vocational training
DIRECCTE du	Direction des Entreprises, de la Concurrence, de la Consommation, Travail et de l'Emploi
EC	European Commission
EQ	Evaluation question
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LMP	Labour market policy
NEET	Person not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PES	Public employment service
pp	Percentage point
YE	Youth Employment
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

1 Background and Context

1.1 Labour market context

In 2018, more than one in ten (11.1%) young people aged 15 to 24 in France were not in employment, education or training (NEET). This is practically the same as at the beginning of the programming period in 2014 (11.2%) and is now slightly above the rate observed at the EU level (10.5%, see Table 1). The proportion of active young people of the same age that were unemployed stood at 20.9%, noticeably higher than observed across the EU (15.2%), but down from 24.3% in 2014. Similarly, the NEET rate for those aged 25 to 29 dropped slightly compared to 2014 (from 19.7% to 18.7%), while the decrease of the unemployment rate is more substantial (from 14.5% to 12.7%). Both rates are higher than those seen at the EU level (17.1% and 9.2% respectively). Since 2014 there has been no change in the rate of early school leavers (8.8% to 8.9%) which remains lower than that at EU level (10.6%). Results for women aged 15-24 and 2 to 29 are similar to those of men of each respective age-group (see Table 1) with NEET rates for women aged 25 to 29 being the only exception – 7.8 pp higher than men. Women are also less likely to be early school leavers¹ (6.9% in 2018 vs 10.8% for general population). Results indicate that between 2014 and 2018 the early school leaving rate for men has increased by about 1 pp.

The case study covers one national Operational Programme (Youth Employment) and four regional ones (Operational Programme Réunion, Operational Programme Centre, Operational Programme Languedoc-Roussillon and Operational Programme Nord-Pas de Calais). The national Operational Programme covers all types of regions – more developed, transitional and less developed – whereas the regional Operational Programme Languedoc-Roussillon and Operational Programme Nord-Pas de Calais cover transitional regions, the Operational Programme Réunion is implemented in less developed regions and the Operational Programme Centre in more developed regions. There are important variations by type of region, with the less developed regions having more than double NEET, unemployment and early school leaving rates for young people than transitional and more developed regions in both 2014 and 2018. Between 2014 and 2018, NEET and early school leaving rates decreased only in transitional regions while unemployment rates decreased in all types of regions (Table 1). It is noticeable that in less developed regions more than half of active youth is still unemployed.

Table 1. *Key figures on the labour market situation of young people, France, 2014 and 2018*

		NEET rate (% pop.)		Unemployment rate (% active pop.)		Early school leaving rate (18-24)	
		2014	2018	2014	2018	2014	2018
EU28							
15-24		12.5	10.5	22.2	15.2	11.2	10.6
25-29		20.4	17.1	13.6	9.2		
National level							
Total	15-24	11.2	11.1	24.3	20.9	8.8	8.9
	25-29	19.7	18.7	14.5	12.7		
Men	15-24	11.6	11.8	25.1	21.5	9.9	10.8
	25-29	15.8	14.7	14.9	12.6		
Women	15-24	10.9	10.5	23.2	20.1	7.8	6.9
	25-29	23.4	22.5	14.0	12.9		
Regional level (15-24)							

¹ The early school leaving rate refers to the proportion of people aged 18-24 who have attained at most lower secondary education and who are not currently (within the last 4 weeks) participating in any further education or training: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/edat1_esms.htm

More developed	9.8	10.0	22.3	18.9	7.7	7.9
Transitional	13.2	12.3	26.3	23.4	10.4	10.1
Less developed	25.2	26.1	52.1	50.6	20.2	21.3

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS, [yth empl 150](#), [edat lfse 22](#), [yth empl 110](#), [edat lfse 16](#)), data extracted on 26 June 2019.

1.2 National ALMP targeting young people in France

In France, the General Directorate for Employment and Vocational training (DGEFP) is responsible for youth employment policies and is the national coordinator of the Youth Guarantee (YG) scheme. The main actors involved in the implementation of policies are Pôle Emploi, the Missions Locales and Cap Emploi (respectively the public employment services at national level, local level, and for disabled jobseekers).

During the programming period, young people residing in France could benefit from 30 active labour market policy (ALMP) operations funded only by national funds but were identified as a specific target group of eight operations providing training, apprenticeships, employment incentives, direct job creation and start-up incentives.

The training operations includes both general and vocational training and is restricted to young people aged 18 to 22 who are either low skilled or face difficulties at school or particular problems in terms of social or vocational integration. The apprenticeship programme targets low-skilled youth and lasts one to three years so that participants obtain a recognised vocational qualification with a diploma of vocational or technological education of secondary level or above.

The remaining six interventions aim to help young people aged up to 25 (or 30 in some cases if disabled) find employment. There are four employment incentives – one targets low-skilled as well as those living in disadvantaged areas, another targets early school-leavers and the remaining two are open to all young people. The direct job creation operation offers employment in local authorities, public bodies (except in the education sector) and associations and targets low-skilled and those living in sensitive urban areas or disadvantaged rural areas. Finally, for those older than 18, start-up incentives are also available and refer to an exemption from paying social contributions for up to two years.

2 The ESF / YEI in France

2.1 Role of the ESF / YEI

Table 2. *Distribution of expenditure on young people (<25) participating in active labour market operations by source of funding and type of intervention (Million and %), France, 2014-17*

Type of intervention	Distribution of expenditure			
	Nationally funded interventions		ESF (co)funded interventions	
	Million	%	Million	%
Institutional training	2 810.0	15.2%	264.6	53.6%
Traineeships	207.8	1.1%	0.0	0.0%
Apprenticeships	4 548.6	24.7%	0.0	0.0%
Not specified training	2 390.5	13.0%	0.0	0.0%
Employment incentives	1 534.8	8.3%	228.6	46.4%
Sheltered/supported employment	61.4	0.3%	0.0	0.0%
Direct job creation	6 657.0	36.1%	0.0	0.0%
Start-up incentives	219.9	1.2%	0.0	0.0%
Total	18 430.0	100%	493.2	100%

Source: LMP database, data extracted on 03.07.19.

Note: Data cover interventions in LMP categories 2-7 only. Expenditure on young people is estimated for each intervention as total expenditure times the proportion of young people (<25) amongst total participants (using the observation of average annual stock where available and otherwise entrants by age). Interventions with missing data on either expenditure or participants are excluded from the analysis. For France, information was available for 82.4% of expenditure. The source of funding for each intervention is based on responses to item 12 of the LMP questionnaire.

2.1.1 CSRs addressed by the ESF

Table 3. *Prevalence of recommendations linked to Investment Priority 8.ii Sustainable integration into the labour market*

Country (and number of CSR over 2014-2019)	Type of CSR
France	Improve the transition from school to work, notably by stepping up operations to further develop apprenticeship with a specific emphasis on the low-skilled (2014).

2.2 Programme architecture and monitoring system

2.2.1 Programme architecture

In France the YEI is implemented according to a two-pronged approach by:

- the central government, via the Directorate General for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP, *Délégation Générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle*) and, by delegation, the Regional Directorates for Enterprise, Competition, Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment (DIRECCTE, *Directions Régionales des entreprises, de la concurrence, de la consommation, du travail et de l'emploi*);
- the Regional Governments in 15 eligible territories².

The YEI National Operational Programme (National Operational Programme YEI) is divided between a central and a decentralised component. The State, through the

² A territory is eligible if the unemployment rate of young people is over 25%.

DGEFP, manages a specific National Operational Programme (YEI National Operational Programme) for eligible territories split between a "central" component financing major national schemes (see below) and a "decentralised" component to support actions in the 15 eligible territories³, led by the DIRECCTE. In addition, Regional Councils operate YEI Regional Operational Programmes in eligible territories⁴ (12 regions and 4 departments). In the rest of the regions not eligible to YEI, the ESF supports actions for young people with difficulties (low qualified, unemployed) in the framework of the general National programme on employment and Regional Programmes; the programmes other than those funded by the YEI do not target young NEETs.

Roughly speaking, the National Operational Programme YEI, both centralised and decentralised, deals with employment, social inclusion and school dropout, whereas the Regional Operational Programme YEI manage funds for vocational training. Within the national programme, a division is operated between the national coverage of youth employment policy (central component, financing 13 national schemes) and actions carried out at regional or department level (decentralised component implemented by the DIRRECTE). Given this structure, in a given region, funds may originate from the national centralised component, from the decentralised component or from the regional operational programmes. For example, the national scheme "Ecoles de la 2e chance" (second chance schools) is supported by the National Operatoinal Programme YEI, but in eligible territories, second chance schools may also be supported from the Regional Operational Programme, since the second chance schools contain a vocational training component.

Overall, the total financial allocation for the French YEI is EUR 1.18 billion:

- EUR 717 million under the National Operational Programme YEI
- EUR 400.5 million under the Regional Operational Programmes

In the table below, we provide an overview of the main typologies of operations that are implemented in France under Investment Priority 8.ii to support young people. For the purpose of the present report, we have considered the National Operational Programme YEI and 4 Regional Operational Programmes that have been selected for a more in-depth analysis.

Table 4. *Programme architecture*

OP	Pax	ESF/ YEI	Main Actions/Interv
OP YEI France	1	YEI	<p>The OP YEI supports the national employment strategy in favour of young NEETs. For this reason, the main actions existed before the implementation of the YEI (Youth Guarantee, which was experimented from 2013; Intensive Youth Support which started in September 2014; Emplois d’Avenir which started in 2012, SMA, digital platform to identify early school leavers). This point is essential for assessing and understanding the findings of the National Operational Programme evaluation.</p> <p>Given the general architecture of the implementation of the YEI in France, a governance system was set up to demarcate the scope of the National Operational Programme and that of Regional Operational Programme.</p> <p>The National Operational Programme develops actions aimed at identifying NEETs and at supporting them to elaborate a professional plan and finding a job; whereas the Regional Operational Programmes provide support mostly in the form training operations and to some extent actions aimed at identifying</p>

³ Including eight NUTS 3 territories ("départements") of five other regions which are also eligible according to the "10% flexibility" as of Art 16 of ESF regulation.

⁴ To be eligible, the unemployment rate of the 15-24 must be over 25%.

OP	PAX	ESF/ YEI	Main Actions/Interv
			<p>NEETs.</p> <p>The main actions supported by the National Operational Programme are listed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Guarantee (<i>Garantie Jeune</i>⁵): Remedial programme to foster access to the labour market for young NEETs below 26 y.o., living outside of the parental home and facing financial difficulties⁶. The Youth Guarantee provides reinforced and individualised counselling, professional immersion, and a financial allowance. The Youth Guarantee is not a training programme. The monthly financial allowance may reach a maximum of EUR 492.57 and varies according to the financial situation of the beneficiary. The individualised support is implemented by the Missions Locales over the country and the duration is one year. This is the main and most important operation provided by the National Operational Programme since it absorbs 50% of the National Operational Programme budget. • Intensive Youth Support (IYS⁷) (<i>AIJ Accompagnement intensif des jeunes</i>): target young people below 26 y.o. experiencing difficulties vis à vis the labour market. To benefit from the IYS, participants must be below 26, registered at the PES, and facing difficulties to find a job (to be at risk of experiencing long-term unemployment, for instance). The IYS is implemented by the PES across France and consists of successive steps: identifying beneficiaries, establishing a diagnosis, individual support (professional plan, assistance to find a job or training). The IYS can be individual or collective; in most of the cases, young people enter individual support (97% of the beneficiaries). In this case, the duration is 6 months and is organised around regular interviews with PES counsellors. To perform the IYS, dedicated counsellors are made available in PES local agencies. The ratio is 50 to 70 beneficiaries by counsellor (4 to 5 times less than usual). The total financial allocation deriving from the National Operational Programme YEI is 32% of the total allocation for the National Operational Programme. The IYS is the second most important financial instrument of the National Operational Programme YEI. The action belongs to the central component of the National Operational Programme. • Emplois d'avenir⁸: target 16–25 years old, without qualification or with at least an ISCED 3 qualification, who are experiencing severe challenges in finding a job, and are not in employment, education or training (NEET). <i>Emplois d'avenir</i> are subsidised job contracts in the non-profit or private sector with training actions (on-the-work training, mentoring, guidance and possible access to a formal qualification). Training is mandatory and is supported by the employers and their sectoral collecting joint bodies (former OPCA, now OPCO). The total duration of an <i>Emploi d'Avenir</i> is one to three years. Employers who recruit under an <i>Emploi d'Avenir</i> benefit from financial incentives from the State corresponding to 75% of the minimum wage. In return, employers must support the training of the beneficiaries. The Missions Locales are in charge of the control of training participation. The total financial

⁵ <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi/mesures-jeunes/garantiejeunes/article/garantie-jeunes-fiche-pratique#ressources>.

⁶ To benefit from the YG, young people must earn less than the monthly amount of the Income of Active Solidarity (RSA, Revenu de Solidarité Active), which is determined by the Law (<https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi/mesures-jeunes/garantiejeunes/article/garantie-jeunes-fiche-pratique#ressources>).

⁷ http://www.pole-emploi.org/files/live/sites/peorg/files/documents/Statistiques-et-analyses/E%26S/es_28_aij29871.pdf.

⁸ <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/emploi/mesures-jeunes/article/les-emplois-d-avenir>.

OP	PAx	ESF/ YEI	Main Actions/Interv
			<p>allocation deriving from the National Operational Programme YEI is 15% of the total allocation of the National Operational Programme. The action belongs to the central component of the National Operational Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APEC assistance to graduated NEETs: intensive support action of the national agency for the employment of managers in direction to young higher graduated experiencing difficulties to find a job. Consist of individual and collective support actions. Beneficiaries are higher-educated young people under 26 registered at APEC (national agency for employment of executives), looking for their first job and being NEET. The total financial allocation deriving from the National Operational Programme YEI is 1% of the total allocation, 3 million €. The action belongs to the central component of the National Operational Programme. • Adapted overseas military service (SMA – Service Militaire adapté): created in 1961, the SMA is a military action in favour of low-qualified young people facing difficulties in finding a job and living in overseas territories. Consist of a training action (updating training sessions, technical training, citizenship training leading to a certificate), individual support in finding a job, as well as general military training. The SMA is implemented by the Overseas Territories Ministry and belongs to the decentralised component. Over 2014-2017, the financial allocation was 49.8 million €, representing 21% of the total amount of the allocation for the decentralised component and 40% of the total amount allocated for actions overseas (Etude de Cas SMA, 2018). • Access to training for overseas (PMFP – Passeport mobilité pour la formation professionnelle): created in 2002, PMFP is assistance for increasing mobility from overseas territories to the French metropolis. Individual support to find a training action in mainland France (usually operated by the national agency for adult education, AFPA), to arrange travelling details, to find a job once training action is over, financial allowance. Beneficiaries from the action are people in unemployment willing to participate in training in the mainland. The PMFP is implemented by the overseas agency for mobility (LADOM) with the support of DIECCTE. Over 2015-2017, the PMFP allocation was 21 million €, representing 8.5% of the decentralised component of the National Operational Programme. The number of participants is quite low, representing 2 373 participants over 2015-2017 (Etude de cas LADOM, 2018). • Combat against early school leaving (PSAD - Plateformes de suivi et d'appui aux jeunes en situation de décrochage scolaire): aim at favouring collective action of stakeholders in the field of education, of employment and training, of health and social services, of youth, and representatives of the State at local level. Dedicated counsellors are in charge of contacting school dropouts, using lists of contacts delivered by the Ministry of Education. Once contacted, young people benefit from individual support to elaborate a professional plan; The PSAD are implemented by GIP Académiques with the support of DIRRECTE and belong to the decentralised component. The total allocation is 7 million €, representing 4% of the total allocation of the decentralised component (Bilan à mi-parcours de l'IEJ, 2017).
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	6	YEI	<p>Decentralised component (DIRECCTE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Guarantee • Emplois d'avenir • Regional component (Regional Council) • Vocational Training actions (already existing) in the framework of

OP	PAx	ESF/ YEI	Main Actions/Interv
			<p>the regional plan for vocational training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cap Avenir: individual support to the elaboration of a professional plan, updated training sessions. Aiming at providing relevant skills to people in order to enter a vocational training and to obtain a qualification. At the end of Cap Avenir, people should enter the Cap Metier action. • Cap Métier: vocational training to obtain a first qualification. • Second chance schools
OP Reunion	2	ESF	<p>The general objective of the actions supported by the ESF in La Réunion is to facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market, in particular to those who don't find a job in the 3 months following the ending of their studies.</p> <p>The Reunion Island Region is a particular case, since it was decided that the Regional Council delegated the State (through a delegation to the regional directorate of the Ministry of Labour). The scope of the actions is: support to training actions, support to geographical mobility, support to action in finding a job ("L'Europe s'engage à la Réunion", https://www.europe-en-france.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/les_fonds_europeens_a_la_reunion_2014-2020.pdf)</p> <p>Two main actions are implemented in the Reunion Island Region: the Adapted overseas military service (SMA – Service Militaire adapté) and the Access to training for overseas (PMFP – Passeport mobilité pour la formation professionnelle).</p> <p>See the National Operational Programme YEI description for details.</p>
OP Centre-Val de Loire ⁹	7	YEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main objective of the Operational Programme Centre Val de Loire is to foster employment for people in unemployment and to improve the situation of young NEETs aged under 26. The Regional Operational Programme is highly connected to the vocational regional training plan (CPRDFP 2011-2014) in which the top priorities are: increasing the level of qualification of young people, improving participation in training and reducing inequalities young people are facing. • The Regional Council has used the ESF YEI to finance training actions of the vocational regional training plan. No new programme benefitted from the financial support of the YEI. The main advantage is the rapidity of implementation and quality of training actions selected. • The total financial allocation is 16 million € (http://www.europecentre-valdeloire.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/plaquette-feder_19-juillet-p-bd.pdf).

Table 5. Main actors in YE activities in France

YEI Managing Authorities		YG Impl. Authority		PES
Name	Type	Name	Type	
General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training	Ministry of Labour	General Directorate for Employment and Vocational training (DGEFP)	Ministry of Labour/Vocational training	Pôle employ Missions Locales
Regional Directorates for Enterprise, Competition, Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment (DIRECCTE)	Ministry of Labour			Pôle Emploi Missions Locales Cap Emploi
R.C. of Aquitaine R.C. of Auvergne R.C. of Bourgogne	Regional Authority			

⁹ <http://www.europecentre-valdeloire.eu/fseiej-du-po-feder-fse-centre-val-de-loire/>

YEI Managing Authorities		YG Impl. Authority		PES
Name	Type	Name	Type	
R.C. Center				
R.C. of Champagne Ardenne				
R.C. of Guadeloupe				
R.C. of Haute-Normandie				
R.C. of Languedoc-Roussillon				
R.C. of Martinique				
R.C. of Midi-Pyrénées				
R.C. of Nord-Pas-de-Calais				
R.C. of Picardie				
R.C. of Alsace				
R.C. of Lorraine				

Sources: Task 1/SFC2014, ESF website, other documents

2.3 Operational Programme monitoring system

The national Operational Programme benefits from an ad hoc monitoring and evaluation system through:

- A national steering committee, which manages the evaluation studies of the evaluation steering committee and decides to amend the programme according to the results of the evaluations studies;
- The General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP), which provides performance monitoring by publishing performance indicators, launching and managing evaluation projects. An evaluation plan was elaborated as requested by the 2014-2020 regulations¹⁰;
- An evaluation steering committee, established in 2015, whose objective is to assess the implementation of the ESF in France, both ESF-YEI and ESF-not YEI. The evaluation steering committee gives judgement on evaluation studies, which are carried out by external and independent evaluators;
- A national information system through the online website MDFSE (ma-demarche-fse.fr). This web portal is designed for beneficiaries¹¹ of the national Operational Programme. Organisations have the opportunity to ask and manage their financial support in the framework of the national Operational Programme. The national information system allows to:
 - Measure the attainment of the target performance objective through dashboards;
 - Measure the participation of participants in ESF interventions;
 - Provide information on participants in ESF interventions (situation at the time of entry);
 - Enter data on interventions and participants on an ongoing basis. However, it appeared that beneficiaries didn't enter data on an ongoing basis, so that extraction data in 2017 were biased (see the reports on performance objective published in 2016¹² and 2018¹³)
- Statistical surveys among participants in ESF-YEI interventions, 6 months after the ending date in 2016, 2017, and 2018 (2019 has not yet been published).

¹⁰ The complete document (in French language) can be found at http://www.fse.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/page- evaluations/document/plan_devaluation_po_national_fse_et_iej.pdf

¹¹ Beneficiaries are organisations that implement actions. They have to be distinguished from participants in the actions.

¹² "Rapport d'analyse du cadre de performance du PON FSE", DGEFP. The report can be found at <http://www.fse.gouv.fr/evaluations>

¹³ "Rapport d'analyse du suivi de la performance du PON FSE – Eclairage sur les RAMO régionaux", DGEP. The report can be found at <http://www.fse.gouv.fr/evaluations>

Compared to the previous ESF programme 2007-2013, France has elaborated a monitoring system based on micro-data, which allows impact evaluations of the interventions.

The regional monitoring system relies on a separate system which is based on the same general structure:

- Regional steering committee including stakeholders involved in youth labour market policy; enables to monitor the “Lignes de Partage” underlined at the beginning of this section;
- An ad hoc information system (<https://info.synergie.asp-public.fr/>).
- Statistical surveys among participants 6 months after the ending date (time of data-collection varies according to each Regional Council)
- A holistic programme of evaluation studies at regional and national level.

The evaluation of the Operational Programmes YEI is based on a statistical analysis of microdata and interviews following a theory-based impact evaluation, at national and regional level¹⁴. Overall, 12 regional monographs were carried out, as well as 1 national monograph based on 7 case studies of operations (those displayed in table 4). The main objective of the monographies is to evaluate the implementation of the operational programmes, investigating the role of the stakeholders, the difficulties linked to the implementation, the linkage of the actions within the regional youth employment policies. Based on qualitative interviews among stakeholders, regional evaluations provide an overview in each region of the stakeholders involved at regional and decentralised level, the coordination of these stakeholders, the objectives of each level (regional or decentralised).

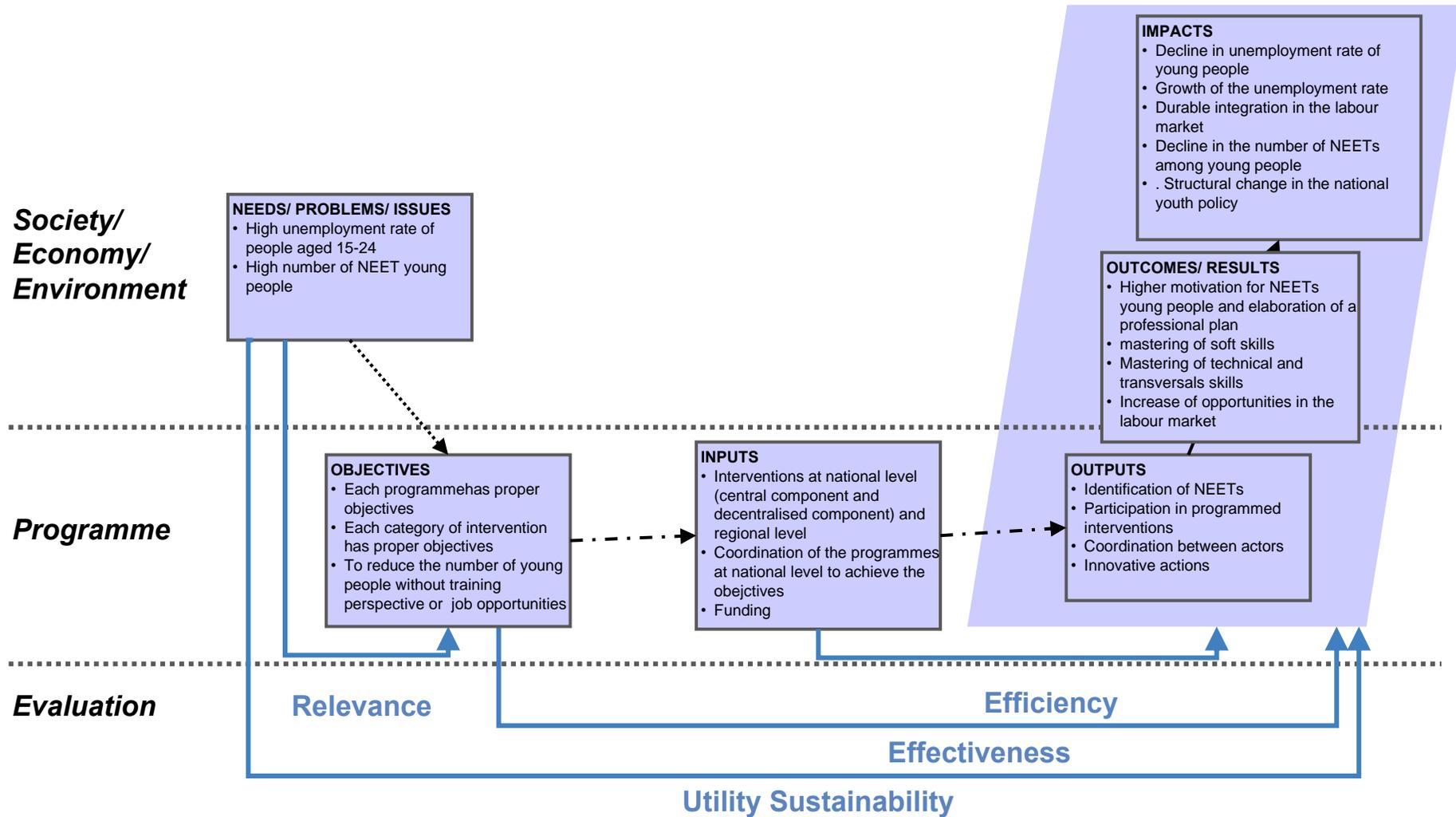
Counterfactual evaluation. The counterfactual approach provides an evaluation of the impact of the ESF-YEI actions by answering the question “what would happen to NEETs if they hadn’t participated in one of the interventions funded by the YEI?”.

- Counterfactual evaluation of three national operations of the National Operational Programme based on a statistical analysis of microdata. The three national operations evaluated are:
 - the Youth Guarantee implemented by the Missions Locales over France
 - The APEC assistance to graduate NEETs implemented by APEC.
 - Parcours Autonomie implemented by the Missions Locales. The evaluation targeted two regions: Champagne-Ardenne and Nord-Pas-de-Calais. The characteristics of the Parcours Autonomie are similar to Youth Guarantee, except regarding the financial allocation.
 - Counterfactual evaluation of YEI (Pack 3). The general approach is a comparison of the employment situation of participants with that of young people with similar characteristics not having participated in the operation. The counterfactual approach provides the calculation of the impact of the YEI in the eligible territories, by comparing eligible territories and non-eligible territories. The report also deals with displacement effects and specific effects for overseas territories.
- Monitoring of financial data. At regional level or for the deconcentrated component, finance management support services are devoted to the monitoring of financial data. Procedure manuals were elaborated in order to support the production of the financial indicators requested by the European Regulation.

¹⁴ A summary of the national report is available in English language at <http://www.fse.gouv.fr/evaluations>.

2.4 Intervention logic

Figure 1. Intervention logic



3 Scale of ESF/YEI investment and financial progress

Table 6. Allocations to Youth Employment ESF + YEI – including Operational Programme amendments until 2018

OP	ESF ¹⁵		YEI ¹⁶		Total		Share of total funding allocated to IP8.ii of TO8 in %
	EU amount in Mio. EUR	Total in Mio. EUR	EU amount in Mio. EUR	Total in Mio. EUR	EU amount in Mio. EUR	Total in Mio. EUR	
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	-	-	658.8	717.0	658.8	717.0	100%
OP Réunion	98.8	123.5	0.0	0.0	98.8	123.5	44%
OP Centre	-	-	32.8	49.3	32.8	49.3	100%
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	-	-	41.3	55.0	41.3	55.0	55%
Grand total	98.8	123.5	732.9	821.3	831.7	944.7	82%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 23.07.2019

Table 7. Changes to Youth Employment allocations in OP since start programming

OP	ESF ¹⁷		YEI ¹⁸		Total	
	EU amount in Mio. EUR	Total in Mio. EUR	EU amount in Mio. EUR	Total in Mio. EUR	EU amount in Mio. EUR	Total in Mio. EUR
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	0	0	226.9	246.9	226.9	246.9
OP Réunion	-3.9	-4.9	0	0	-3.9	-4.9
OP Centre	0	0	9.7	14.5	9.7	14.5
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	0	0	13.9	18.5	13.9	18.5

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 23.07.2019

Table 8. Overview of the financial progress - ESF / YEI

OP / IP8.ii	Allocated budget to YE in Mio. EUR	Eligible costs reported in Mio. EUR	Project selection rate IP8.ii (%) 2018	Project selection rate TO8 (%) 2018	Expenditure declared in Mio. EUR	Expenditure declared IP8.ii (%) 2018	Expenditure declared TO8 (%) 2018
ESF							
OP Réunion	123.5	109.6	89%	67%	89.9	73%	43%
YEI							
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	717.0	643.9	90%	90%	457.2	64%	64%
OP Centre	49.3	49.3	100%	-	31.8	65%	-
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	55.0	66.8	121%	76%	23.5	43%	55%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 23.07.2019

¹⁵ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI.

¹⁶ Includes ESF allocations to YEI.

¹⁷ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI.

¹⁸ Includes ESF allocations to YEI.

Table 9. *Financial progress*

OP / IP8.ii	Project selection rate (%)				% expenditure declared			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
ESF – IP8.ii								
OP Réunion	0%	38%	22%	89%	0%	0%	0%	73%
YEI– IP8.ii								
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	50%	70%	68%	90%	0%	15%	32%	64%
OP Centre	180%	86%	72%	100%	0%	32%	43%	65%
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	114%	114%	121%	121%	0%	11%	24%	43%
ESF EU-28 IP8.ii				77%				36%
YEI EU-28 IP8.ii				98%				49%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

4 Effectiveness

EQ 1 - How effective are the YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations in achieving their objectives?

4.1 Data based on the AIR 2018

This sub-section provides basic data from the AIR 2018 relevant to effectiveness.

4.1.1 Outputs

Table 10. Number of participations under Investment Priority 8.ii (ESF and YEI)

OP / IP8.ii	ESF ¹⁹			YEI ²⁰			Total number of participations	Share of total number of IP8.ii participation of TO8 in %
	Total number of participations	Share of women in %	Share of participations <25 years in %	Total number of participations	Share of women in %	Share of participations <25 years in %		
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	-	-	-	381 873	47%	94%	381 873	100%
OP Réunion	24 538	35%	94%	-	-	-	24 538	45%
OP Centre	-	-	-	10 693	46%	92%	10 693	100%
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	-	-	-	7 833	50%	94%	7 833	26%
Grand total	24 538	35%	94%	400 399	47%	94%	424 937	87%

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

4.1.2 Results

Table 11. Overview results – Investment Priority 8.ii – ESF

OP / Fund / Indicator	OP Réunion	OP Centre	OP Languedoc-Roussillon	OP YEI	Total ESF	Total YEI	Total
	ESF	YEI	YEI	YEI			
CR01 inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	1 701	0	0	21 959	1 701	21 959	23 660
CR02 participants in education/training upon leaving	6 248	837	2241	38 687	6 248	41 765	48 013
CR03 participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	3 631	4 302	754	18 812	3 631	26 745	30 376
CR04 participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	2 102	1 302	1 132	117 903	2 102	120 337	122 439
CR05 disadvantaged participants	1 590	2 939	1 842	67 089	1 590	71 870	73 460
Share of total in %	12%	46%	45%	73%	12%	28%	27%
Total number of immediate results	13 682	6 441	4 127	92 431	13 682	102 999	116 681

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

¹⁹ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI

²⁰ Includes ESF allocations to YEI

Table 12. Overview results – Investment Priority 8.ii – YEI (1)

OP	Unemployed participants			Long-term unemployed participants		
	who completed the YEI-supported intervention	who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	in education / training, gain a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	who completed the YEI-supported intervention	who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	in education / training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	201 411	143 922	137 347	56 293	35 778	33 578
OP Réunion	-	-	-	-	-	-
OP Centre	7 410	2 403	2 139	2 701	870	779
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	4 972	4 950	3 807	2 339	2 179	1 734
Grand total	213 793	151 275	143 293	61 333	38 827	36 091

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

Table 13. Overview results – Investment Priority 8.ii – YEI (2)

OP	Inactive participants			All participants, six months after leaving		
	who completed the YEI-supported intervention	who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	in education / training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	in continued education, training leading to a qualification, apprenticeship or a traineeship	in employment	in self-employment
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	-	27 994	25 415	42 367	140 124	2 150
OP Réunion	-	-	-	-	-	-
OP Centre	0	0	0	564	1 582	13
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	0	0	0	964	2 480	45
Grand total	0	27 994	25 415	43 895	144 186	2 208

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

4.1.3 Target achievement

Table 14. Overview of number of indicators with targets under Investment Priority 8.ii

	Total number of indicators	Number of indicators with a target
Output indicators – ESF	254	33
Output indicators – YEI	37	5
Total output	291	38
Result indicators – ESF	115	25
Result indicators – YEI	50	32
Total result	165	57

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

Table 15. Average achievement rate of targets by Operational Programme

	Average achievement rate under IP8.ii (%)				Benchmark in (%)	
	ESF		YEI		TOS Achievement rate	EU-28 IP8.ii
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Total
Participations						
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	-	-	177%	177%	177%	67%
OP Réunion	100%	100%	-	-	52%	67%
OP Centre	-	-	95%	95%	95%	67%
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	-	-	68%	46%	61%	67%
Results						
National OP Youth Employment - ESF/YEI	-	-	85%	85%	85%	59%
OP Réunion	171%	171%	-	-	73%	59%
OP Centre	-	-	61%	65%	61%	59%
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	-	-	101%	98%	93%	59%

Empty fields mean that no targets have been defined by OP in that MS for youth employment

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 06.09.19

4.2 Answers to the evaluation question

4.2.1 EQ 1.1 – To what extent have the financial implementation and the achievement of the expected outputs progressed according to the targets set in the programmes? What were the main factors involved (delays in implementation, ESF absorption...)?

Main findings regarding financial implementation and achievement of expected outputs

In September 2018, a report containing an overview of the financial implementation and achievement of expected outputs of the ESF Operational Programmes was published on the ESF website (Amnyos and Edater, 2018). At the end of 2017, the total financial implementation rate was about 75%, involving more than 1 300 actions programmed. The financial implementation rate is higher for regional operational programmes (86% at the end of 2017). This may be explained by a slightly different general programming strategy, implying an over-programming of actions. By over-programming, Regional Councils prevented difficulties emerging from eligibility rules of the ESF. This enabled the Regional Councils' use of the funds. The financial implementation of the YEI can be considered as positive.

The achievement of expected output is analysed by comparing the target value (for 2023) of the Operational Programmes and the current effective values. The last progress report delivered by the national French Authorities indicates that the target – in terms of number of participants in a YEI supported action – has been reached. The national target was set up at 365 000 NEETs, including 300 000 for the national Operational Programme. At the end of 2018, the target was exceeded, with more than 500 000 participants (Progress Report, 2019, p. 120). More than half of the participants are low-qualified. While it is not possible to say whether this is a satisfactory outcome, it underlines that the global objective of reaching out to young people furthest from the labour market has been a driving element of the youth employment strategy in France.

The Annual Implementation Report offers additional information to deliver an overview of the national Operational Programme. Over the national Operational Programme, a target value of 358 005 unemployed who completed YEI action is expected. In 2019, the achievement ratio exceeded 100%, with 321 474 individuals in unemployment having completed a YEI action. A significant effort has been deployed to offer employment, continued education or apprenticeship opportunities to the young unemployed upon leaving the intervention, since the achievement ratio reaches 90%. The number of inactive participants not in education or training who completed the YEI-supported intervention is lower than the target value and reaches an achievement ratio of 61%, witnessing the difficulties to identify and involve people away from employment (AIR 2018 National Operational Programme, 2019).

Main difficulties to overcome

The main difficulty Managing Authorities at national and regional level had to face was the very short time available for the implementation of the YEI once the Operational Programmes were launched, at national and regional level. The eligibility rules linked to the NEET's status are another difficulty Managing Authorities have had to face. In the Annual Implementation Report, it is reported that these difficulties were overcome by setting stable rules, although with a certain delay.

As for the Regional Councils, a satisfactory financial implementation pace was hard to achieve since procedures to launch interventions enter a regional plan for vocational training subject to proper rules of functioning. The stakeholders interviewed at regional level mentioned the lack of flexibility of the ESF financial support. Furthermore, regional Managing Authorities interviewed reported difficulties in managing European funds, in particular regarding eligibility rules. According to the feedback received, eligibility rules were a major cause of under-achievement rate, which implied a high administrative burden for implementation. The difficulties were especially high in regional Operational Programmes in which actions were specifically targeted at young NEETs. For instance, the eligibility rules required young participants to justify – sometimes weeks or months after their participation in an action funded by the YEI – their NEET status.

In the Centre Val de Loire region, the choice to interlink the actions funded by the YEI and those of the vocational regional plan enhanced financial implementation and achievement of the targets. Since the training actions were identified and sometimes already “booked” by the Regional Councils, the implementation was smoother (Centre Val de Loire Monography, 2018). In return, the innovative dimension of the training actions was weakened.

Participants in the focus group once more underlined the difficulty linked to the financial management of ESF/YEI support and the need for beneficiaries to dispose of significant financial resources to kick start the operations, in advance of receiving the support. This requirement prevents, in particular, the involvement of smaller organisations, with limited financial capacities and not familiar with the financial rules of the ESF.

A specific issue pertains to the characteristics of the target population, the young NEETs, which departs from the "traditional" target of a regional vocational training plan and which needs an adaptation of the support and training interventions, as well as ad hoc identification and screening processes. This general observation applies to different levels of implementation (national, central or decentralised, regional). Traditionally, employment policies in France target young unemployed people and are implemented through national actions (such as Youth Guarantee, Emplois d'Avenir, Intensive support for young people) or by regional actions (vocational training plan for people in unemployment, work-based learning such as Contrat de Professionnalisation). Usually, the target population must be registered in a public employment service (Pôle Emploi, Missions Locales, Cap Emploi) to benefit from public support. The NEET approach is slightly different since NEETs, especially the inactive, are hardly captured by the traditional policies dealing with youth employment. As confirmed by the final evaluation report of the YEI, as well as by the interviews with regional Managing Authorities, it can be concluded that the difficulty in identifying young people outside the traditional category of young people in unemployment has contributed to slowing the implementation of the YEI.

4.2.2 EQ 1.2 – How and to what extent does YEI contribute to the achievement of the general objective of sustainable integration (also after the end of the operation) of young people into the labour market and to the specific objectives under ESF? How did it contribute to addressing the problems faced by NEETs?

Effect of the YEI to the achievement of the general objective of sustainable integration of young people

In very broad terms, one could say that the YEI in France has contributed to the general objective of sustainable integration of young people. The proportion of participants in employment or training is almost 50% in June 2018 (AIR2018 PON, 2019). Among them, 38% are in employment and 12% enrolled in a training programme. One in five participants received either a job offer, continued education, or a work-based learning programme upon leaving and 60% of participants received employment support; 23% received a training offer; 9% were offered an apprenticeship and 6% a traineeship.

The indicators measuring the achievement of the general objective of sustainable integration have been discussed during individual interviews and the focus group. There is a general agreement that common indicators should be interpreted carefully, since they do not fully capture the outcome. This is also linked for instance to the quality of employment (the 2018 Annual Implementation Report points to the low rate of employment offers by YEI participants above the minimum wage: 40%). Additional indicators such as the elaboration of a professional plan, the self-assessment of participants autonomy gained through the operation, and self-esteem are also considered as essential by stakeholders to gauge the effect of the actions funded through the YEI. For 54% of the participants, the action succeeds in the definition of a professional plan. Given the targeted population, this indicator is highly relevant. More than 60% of participants declare being more autonomous and 61% assert being more self-confident in their professional abilities.

Six months after leaving, 50% of participants are employed and 11% are enrolled in a training programme (AIR2018 National Operational Programme, 2019). The employment rate after leaving is higher than the employment rate upon leaving, by a difference of 12 percentage points. The enrolment rate in training is quite similar. The increase of the employment rate over time indicates progress toward sustainable integration and asserts a positive effect of the actions funded through the YEI. When employed, 25% of participants are employed through an open-ended contract and for 20% in a temporary contract of at least 6 months. Most of the jobs gained are full-time and for 50% of workers the monthly net income is comprised between EUR 1 000

and EUR 1 500. Half the employed participants consider that the skills required for their job are in line with their qualifications.

Counterfactual evaluations

It is difficult to interpret these indicators without a benchmark. Verifying that the targets are achieved is one aspect of the assessment of youth employment support. The counterfactual approach offers additional information by building a comparison. Several counterfactual evaluation studies have been carried out at the request of the General directorate for employment and vocational training. The main findings are described in the paragraphs below.

Global counterfactual evaluation: a controlled comparison of eligible territories and non-eligible territories

The counterfactual evaluation is based on a comparison between YEI eligible territories and non-eligible territories to YEI. The counterfactual evaluation launched at the national level concludes that YEI does not have a positive net effect as measured by the employment outcome. This global finding is actually hard to interpret since:

- Non-eligible territories have benefitted from ESF support to finance interventions in favour of young people facing difficulties in integrating the labour market. Consequently, it is hard to identify the proper effect of YEI support;
- In eligible territories, YEI support has been mainly channelled into pre-existing interventions;
- The scope of interventions is broad and with variable objectives. Some of them aim at providing support to enter vocational training, not to integrate the labour market. The global evaluation suffers from this heterogeneity, at least when it comes to measuring the employment rate;
- Furthermore, the employment rate does not capture the fact that the "NEET approach" that was introduced with the YEI – in spite of the difficulties it has created in terms of smooth implementation of the operations – has "forced" YEI beneficiaries to target young people with severe difficulties and for whom the employment rate is not the most relevant positive outcome;
- The proportion of YEI financial support within the total amount of funding for youth employment support was quite low (6.6%).

Moreover, the national counterfactual evaluation indicates that there is no significant effect of the YEI on inactive NEETs.

However, there is a positive and significant effect on the following.

- The long-term unemployment rate. This may be explained by the role of the PES which supported young people they would not support in the absence of YEI. The Youth Guarantee played probably a significant role in this regard.
- The entry rate in vocational training during the year 2015, but not in the following years due to interventions "overlapping" with those offered within the YEI.

Counterfactual evaluation of three national interventions

In addition to the global counterfactual evaluation comparing eligible and non-eligible territories, three national interventions were considered for more in-depth evaluation with the counterfactual methodology: the *Youth Guarantee*, the *APEC intervention* (intensive support to higher-educated young people) and the "*Parcours autonomie*" in two regions (Champagne-Ardenne and Nord-Pas-de-Calais).

Evaluation of the Youth Guarantee

The Youth Guarantee was launched independently of the YEI support. This is a remedial programme to foster access to the labour market for young NEETs under 26, living out of the parental home and facing financial difficulties. The Youth Guarantee

provides reinforced, individualised counselling and professional immersion, but it is not a training programme. It offers a financial allowance representing a maximum of EUR 492.57 and varies according to the financial situation of the beneficiary.

Main findings:

- *Youth Guarantee*: 12 months after participating in the Youth Guarantee, 30.6% of the participants in eligible territories are in employment; 29.3% of the control group in non-eligible territories are in employment. This first finding underlines the slight difference between the two groups (participants and control group). After controlling for the selection bias, the report concludes that there is no positive significant effect 12 months after the end of the intervention on the employment rate;

The APEC intensive support for higher-educated young people

The intensive support intervention is implemented by the national agency for the employment of managers (APEC) and targets young higher-educated young people experiencing difficulties in finding a job. The intervention consists of individual and collective support actions. The target population is well-educated, young NEETs under 26 who are registered with APEC (national agency for employment of managers), searching for their first employment.

Main findings:

- *APEC intensive support*: half of the participants hold a university degree and 90% of the participants were unemployed for 6 to 12 months before registering to APEC. The evaluation report indicates that the construction of the control group was hard to achieve due to the lack of appropriate microdata. Nevertheless, the research conducted shows a significant effect 6 months after the end of the intervention on the employment rate and on job quality. 66% of the participants to the intervention are employed upon leaving; 37% of the control group is employed upon leaving, indicating a difference of 29 points. The employment rate 6 months later increases and reaches 79% for the participants, 45% for the control group. 66% of the participants consider that intensive support has helped to improve their job search methods. The APEC intervention is one of the interventions that expresses a positive and significant effect.

Parcours Autonomie

Parcours Autonomie consists of intensive support for young people registered in a Mission Locale and targets young NEETs under 26. *Parcours Autonomie* is the example of an integrated pathway aiming at improving the employment rate of the target population. The YEI financial support is used to finance additional counsellors who are in charge of 50 young people under a *Parcours Autonomie*. In the evaluation methodology, two regions were evaluated.

Main findings:

- *Parcours Autonomie*: here the CIE measuring employment rate of participants 6 to 16 months after leaving finds contrasting results in the two regions analysed: a negative effect in Champagne-Ardennes and a positive effect in Nord-pas-de-Calais. This finding seems to underline that the effectiveness of youth employment (and other) operations depends on the context and the way they are implemented. In the Nord-pas-de-Calais Region, despite the higher share of inactive NEETs participating in the operation, the higher number of counsellors balanced the composition effect. This finding is corroborated by observations made during the focus group on the importance of having an adequate number of staff when implementing operations.

Counterfactual evaluation of regional interventions

Among the numerous regional interventions funded by the YEI, three of them benefitted from a counterfactual approach. *Cap-Métiers-Cap Avenir* is implemented in the Languedoc-Roussillon region, and the *SAS Apprentissage* is implemented in the Nord-pas-de-Calais region. Both interventions aim to support young NEETs to enter a training programme and to prevent dropouts during the training programme. The Second Chance Schools can be found both in eligible territories and non-eligible territories. They offer an individualised training programme to young people experiencing many difficulties (health, employment, etc.). The choice of these three interventions leads to consider these interventions as good practices.

The three interventions include individualised support, aiming at providing young people with basic skills and soft skills, in order to facilitate their enrolment in a training programme leading to a qualification. The findings are mitigated, since one intervention has a significant and positive effect on the entry rate into vocational training, whereas Second chance schools and *SAS Apprentissage* have a negative or no effect. In this regard, we may suspect that the methodology is biased, especially regarding Second chance Schools. Additional funds coming from the YEI support allow the Second chance Schools to host young people with the most severe difficulties; consequently, this could explain the difference with Second chance Schools which haven't benefitted from the YEI.

"Cap Métiers-Cap Avenir": significant effect on the employment rate in the month following the end of the intervention (+8.5 pp), in particular for young people having benefitted from the Cap Métier intervention. Significant effect on the entry rate into vocational training (+15pp).

Second chance schools: young people in YEI supported by second chance schools have lower chances to get a job than young people in non-YEI supported second chance schools. This may be due to the fact that second chance schools supported by YEI funds hosted young people with greater difficulties.

SAS Apprentissage: the objective of this intervention was to prevent dropouts during the first months of an apprenticeship. The counterfactual analysis concludes the absence of effect in preventing dropouts.

To conclude, it is difficult to summarise the global effect of the interventions. Interventions are designed differently, even if all intend to reduce the number of young people without any offer upon leaving. The interventions that seem to yield the best results are those in which the ratio of staff is high and the number of interviews with young people is also high and frequent. Regarding the overall findings of the national counterfactual approach, we recommend interpreting it carefully, since it gathers numerous interventions and heterogeneous groups of young people. Furthermore, it does not mean that the interventions funded by the YEI are not efficient, but that the additional funds of the YEI, in certain cases, do not offer significant added value. This assumption is however weakened by what we heard from practitioners. To them, the YEI allows to strengthen the number of counsellors and to establish a narrow link with young people. In addition, these counsellors have time and opportunities to solve other issues than training or employment and may help young people to overcome health issues, accommodation issues, transportation issues, etc. These elements are absent from any monitoring or evaluation process. From the practitioners' point of view, they regret the lack of global consideration of issues young people are facing. Training or employment issue should be addressed with barriers not directly connected. This implies greater cooperation of stakeholders in different fields of intervention.

4.2.3 EQ 1.3 – To what extent were the target groups reached by the operations, including disadvantaged persons, those from marginalised communities and those leaving education without qualifications?

From the national evaluation report published in 2018, it appears that *"The young people involved in these different activities are on average 21 years old, with*

variations according to the components: for instance, the Regions welcome a larger number of unskilled young people, and the decentralised component of the National OP more inactive people"²¹. Gender balance is achieved in the central component, the decentralised component and the regional Operational Programmes. A synthesis table displayed in this report points out the differences between national and regional components of the ESF-YEI regarding the target groups:

Table 16. Differences between national and regional components regarding target groups

	Central component	Decentralised component	Regional OP
Total participants	197 926	107 969	63 440
Gender	W : 46,8 % - M : 53,2 %	W : 44,6 % - M : 55,4 %	W : 45,5 % - M : 54,5 %
Average age	21 years	21 years	21 years
Education level	< ISCED 2: 47 % ≥ ISCED 4 : 19 %	< ISCED 2: 50 % ≥ ISCED 4 : 15 %	< ISCED 2: 65,2 % ≥ ISCED 4 : 31,4 %
Status upon entering the operation	Unemployed :89,7% Inactive : 10,3 %	Unemployed:67,2% Inactive : 32,8 %	Unemployed :86% Inactive : 14,0 %

Source: Summary of the national evaluation report of the ESF-YEI, p.4

The status upon entry is a relevant indicator to analyse the extent to which the heterogeneity of the NEETs is addressed. Interventions of the central component and the regional OPs supported mainly young people in unemployment, whereas an effort was made by the DIRECCTE in charge of the decentralised component to target inactive NEETs. The data from the AIR2018 completes the landscape by providing figures on migrants, young people with disabilities, homeless or young people living in rural areas. The column on total participants can be interpreted as an indicator of diversity of the NEETs, in terms of their origin, their living conditions, etc. The most difficult category to reach is the homeless and people with disabilities (respectively 4% and 2% of the total number of participants), which is not surprising.

Table 17. Overview of participants upon entry

Participants upon entry	Total	Men	Women	% total participants	% women
Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	91 171	47 266	43 905	24%	48%
Participants with disabilities	7 585	4 483	3 102	2%	41%
Other disadvantaged	63 018	31 810	31 208	16%	50%
Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	14 697	8 723	5 974	4%	41%
From rural areas	79 632	42 828	36 804	21%	46%

Source: AIR2018 and own calculations of the author

The NEETs in the Regional Operational Programmes

The examination of the regional operational programmes confirms that NEETs are rather heterogeneous. In the case of Region Languedoc-Roussillon, most of the interventions are however carried out by the Missions Locales and address the usual NEET population. Some interventions are more specific and target people living in

²¹ Summary of the national ESF-YEI evaluation, 2018, p. 4

deprived areas and women victims of physical violence for instance (80 women and 20 men), disabled young people (36 participants), young people facing accommodation difficulties (30 participants) or early leavers (1 200 participants expected). In the Region Languedoc-Roussillon, the interventions implemented by the DIRECCTE (a decentralised component of the national Operational Programme) faced difficulties to reach young NEETs. At the beginning of the intervention, the Missions Locales network should provide the target population. However, since regional interventions relied on Missions Locales, a form of competition occurred. For instance, the target population of the Second Chance Schools (benefitting from the YEI through the Operational Programme) is similar to the target population of the Youth Guarantee (national Operational Programme). In the Languedoc-Roussillon monography carried out by KPMG and Quadrant Conseil (2018), it is explained that the Second chance Schools in one department of the region faced a diminution of the participants due to the competition with the Youth Guarantee. To sum up, in this region, access to the usual category of NEETs was hard to achieve due to the plurality of interventions targeting the same population.

In the Region Centre, against all odds, the proportion of NEETs increased between 2014 and 2016 (from 8.8% to 11.7%) before reaching 10.9%, as underlined in the monography carried out by KPMG and Quadrant Conseil in 2018. It is interesting to mention that the regional YEI funds are allocated to the vocational regional training plan, which could dampen the achievement of targeting NEET young people. Half of the funds allocated to the decentralised component are distributed to interventions aiming at identifying early leavers and providing them with a job offer, a place in a training programme, or a traineeship. As for the Region *Languedoc-Roussillon*, a form of competition arose to reach NEETs. To implement its regional vocational plan, the Regional Council works in partnership with *Missions Locales*, *Pôle Emploi* and *Cap Emploi* (the three components of the PES). In return, they target the same population as the *Emploi d'Avenir*. Competition to reach the NEETs also occurs between the interventions implemented by the DIRECCTE and the national Operational Programme, through the Youth Guarantee.

From this short analysis of two regional Operational Programmes, it can be concluded that interventions targeted the young unemployed, mainly aged under 26, which is the standard target population of the Regional Councils. This reveals the difficulty to reach young people outside the usual area of intervention of the stakeholders.

Reaching the NEETs: key issues

The final evaluation report published in 2019 points out the difficulty to reach NEETs, since NEETs are not a homogenous category and are not well-known to stakeholders involved in training or employment programmes. In fact, the NEET approach decided at European level was finally hard to roll out since the target population is to a certain extent outside the scope of the existing public intervention in favour of young people. In the case of France, public intervention for young people targets young people in unemployment (that means registered at PES), young people without qualification, or young people located in deprived areas. The implementation of the YEI obliged to consider young people outside the scope: young people not registered at PES, young people aged over 26. As a lot of interventions intended to target a similar group, it was more and more difficult to attain the less "visible". The main result regarding the NEETs with the YEI is better knowledge of the heterogeneity of this population and innovative practices to reach them, as mentioned in the aforementioned national report: *"In this way, the YEI has proven the relevance of a NEET approach to broaden the target audience and include those who do not currently rely on the PES. Reaching this public in all its diversity, however, implied a major change in the practices of employment actors"*. This question was addressed during the focus group and strengthens this statement. Furthermore, the conclusion of the focus group is that the concept of "invisible" must be discussed, since young people experiencing the most severe difficulties are well-known from the childcare system. In return, they are not

identified by the stakeholders in charge of employment. Greater cooperation between stakeholders is considered a relevant option to overcome this issue. A director of a *Mission Locale* explained that, most of the time, young NEETs experience difficulties long before 16 years old, but at the age of 16 – the upper limit of compulsory school – they disappear from the informational system of public organisations, except from the childcare system or the Ministry of education. Another solution that is already being experimented by social workers is to go from door to door in deprived neighbourhoods. To his point, interventions in favour of NEETs should draw from the methods used by social workers.

These global findings are also underlined in this national evaluation report: “*One of the objectives of the NEET approach was to reach publics who were not already covered by youth employment policies. However, the young people most targeted by the funded operations are the low-skilled, unemployed 18-21-year olds, who are precisely the young people already most targeted by the existing operations. By contrast, only 17% of YEI participants are inactive, compared to 43% of NEETs in France. The Regional OPs and the decentralised component of the National OP in particular have tried to expand the affected population but not enough to transform youth policies*” (ibid, p.4). As a result, the NEET approach is difficult to implement, since beneficiaries often set up interventions among their usual public which is only one part of the NEET population.

4.2.4 EQ 1.4 – What was the quality and timeliness of the offers received by the participants?

Upon leaving, half of the participants are still NEETs. 22% of the participants received a job offer, a training offer or a traineeship opportunity. This proportion increased from scratch but diminishes a little in 2019. Among participants who received an offer, 60% received a job offer, 23% a training offer, 9% an apprenticeship contract, 6% a traineeship. In the central component, 59.3% of participants are NEETs upon leaving, 48.5% in the decentralised component, and 57.4% in the regional Operational Programmes (source: final evaluation report, p. 57).

The quality of job offers varied, since 75% of the job offers are full-time, but 60% of job offers are at less than the minimum wage. The quality of training offers seems to be better, since most of the training offers are in correspondence with the level of qualification or higher, and participants find the training contents valuable (77%).

4.2.5 EQ 1.5 – Which types of interventions were the most effective and most sustainable, for which groups and in which contexts (e.g. more developed, less developed and transition regions; urban and rural areas etcetera)?

First of all, we should remember the richness and diversity of interventions supported by the YEI. The counterpart is the difficulty to provide a synthesis of effective and sustainable interventions, since the target, the scope, the duration and the nature of the interventions were diverse. Some elements are given in section 4.4.2.

In addition to the main findings described in section 4.4.2, it is interesting to point out the results of an evaluation of innovative or experimental interventions supported by the YEI. Even if, in general, the YEI funds were attributed to existing interventions in order to reinforce them, some interventions could be considered innovative or experimental. Innovative interventions are mostly found in the regional component of the National Operational Programme implemented by the DIRECCTE. This is less the case of the Regions who chose to support existing interventions in the framework of their vocational training plan (except Nord-Pas-de-Calais Region). One of the reasons that explains this fact is the very short deadline granted to call for tenders impairing innovative interventions. This could be also be explained by the relatively complex requirements of the ESF tenders.

Among 93 interventions recorded in the “Ma Démarche FSE” data source, 15 interventions were considered to carry out case studies. Among the latter, 7 interventions aim to implement innovative methods to identify the NEETs, 9 interventions propose intensive support, and 6 interventions focus on atypical support. The analysis of these interventions is reported in the DGEFP report named “*Evaluation 2018 de l’impact de l’initiative pour l’emploi des jeunes en France – Lot n°5*”. In most of the interventions mentioned in this report, the innovation process is rather limited. The main added value of these interventions is not to offer a different approach of targeting NEETs, nor a pedagogical approach, it is merely an improvement of existing approaches. For instance, an improvement could be an intensification of the support (increased number of counsellors, increased number of individual interviews), a partnership with local employers, or diversification of hiring channels. The report states that even with limited innovation progress, relevant interventions with interesting results should be taken into consideration. The main finding is not the usual indicator of employment rate upon leaving but the way beneficiaries tried to overcome the difficulties of NEETs, by offering comprehensive support and removing the barriers to employment. This has been already mentioned: the ratio of staff and the comprehensive approach are two central elements for innovation. But the sustainability of innovative interventions is connected to the sustainability of YEI funds. From the stakeholders’ point of view, this is a strong limitation to innovation.

In terms of targeted groups, the final evaluation report states that the more the targeted group suffers from severe difficulties, the less the results indicators are high (a positive result indicator is either employment or training). For young people facing great difficulties to integrate the labour market, the effective interventions are those in which young people discover and learn a particular job and those with intensive support. The duration of the support is less of a key driver than its intensity. For young people with a lot of difficulties, the duration of the support was generally short, but intensive: this reveals to be more effective for this group. In a global perspective, young people facing little difficulties find a job more frequently, whereas young people with high difficulties enter a vocational training – before getting a job afterwards, at least for a part.

4.2.6 EQ 1.6 – What main factors (geographical, socioeconomic, organisational...) had a bigger impact on the effectiveness of ESF and YEI operations in the field of youth employment, by type of operation? Please identify the method used to identify impacts

In the different evaluation reports available, there is no element indicating that one or other factors (geographical, socioeconomic, organisational...) had a bigger impact in the effectiveness of ESF and YEI operations in the field of youth employment. The analysis focuses mostly on the nature of the interventions rather than on the economic context, which is systematically described but not connected to the results of the operations.

4.2.7 EQ 1.7 – To what extent did YEI and ESF contribute to structural changes in national education systems, vocational training systems, public employment systems or youth policies?

The different evaluation reports generally point to a lack of effect on structural changes in youth policies. A structural change is seen as a substantive change leading to renewed fresh youth policies, or new instruments. The reasons are twofold:

- In France, a long tradition in youth policies and the policies themselves are strongly established and structured. Moreover, France addressed the recommendations of the European Commission in terms of youth policies a long time ago. For this reason, the impact of the YEI and the ESF on structural/substantive changes could not be so high; this finding was expected, as stated in the Asdo and Amnyos report (2017).

- As seen in section 4.4.4, innovative interventions count for 20% of the total number of interventions. The YEI support is more directed at existing *operations* than innovative *operations*. The final evaluation report of the YEI defines four categories of response to the YEI. This finding is at the heart of the final evaluation report and allows to understand the general implementation of the YEI in France. The four categories are:
 - *Contribution*: "The MA already has a youth employment policy that is broader than the perimeter of the YEI and the Structural Funds in general. YEI is used to support its existing activities towards young people" (KPMG and Quadrant, 2018). This category counts for 55% of the total programmed amounts. This explains why no significant change in youth policy can be perceived.
 - *Strengthening*: "the MA has recently developed a new strategy or programme dedicated to young people who are far from the labour market or vulnerable. The YEI is an opportunity to give it a greater scope" (KPMG and Quadrant, 2018). This category counts for 25% of the total programmed amounts. Contribution and strengthening categories correspond to the choice of the Managing Authority to support the national youth policies. This does not lead to transformation.
 - *Transformation*: "is the approach closest to the objectives of the YEI. The MA takes the opportunity to set up new actions, or even a new strategy, specifically for young NEETs, and seeks to do so by relying on new and, if possible, innovative project holders" (KPMG and Quadrant, 2018). This category counts for 15% of the total programmed amounts, a proportion very low in comparison to the two former categories.
 - *Absorption*: "the MA does not really have an existing employment policy for young people. It uses the funds to supplement existing resources allocated to *operations* not specifically intended for young people, without changing its strategic orientations" (KPMG and Quadrant, 2018). This has been observed in some regional Operational Programmes, in which the YEI and ESF funds were used to support the regional vocational training plan developed for people in unemployment irrespective of their age or status (NEET or not).

The final synthesis report states very clearly the reasons of the low proportion of the Transformation category: "*They (Managing Authorities) were subject to a twofold requirement: on the one hand, to program the funds as quickly as possible to respond to the economic challenge of youth unemployment and, on the other hand, to secure the funds so as to guarantee their proper use and limit the risks associated with future control operations. Furthermore, YEI funding was too limited, in comparison to the employment or youth budgets at stake, to constitute such an issue as to really shake up the agenda of employment policies implemented by the Managing Authorities, which are governed by their own decision-making cycle*"(YEI Summary evaluation report, p.6).

The case of Languedoc-Roussillon Region is relevant as the Region takes advantage of the YEI and of previous experimentation to implement at a larger scale the "Cap Avenir-Cap Métier" operation. This operation tackles young people's difficulties by addressing several barriers to enter vocational training such as basic skills and soft skills, elaboration and validation of a professional plan. The innovative aspect of the *operation* is also the linkage between Cap Métier and Cap Avenir, bound to become a complete training programme for different categories of NEETs.

5 Efficiency

EQ 2 - How efficient have the YEI and other youth-employment operations funded by the ESF been in the achievement of their objectives?

5.1 Data based on the AIR 2018

This sub-section provides basic data from the AIR 2018 relevant to efficiency, including cost per output/result.

Table 18. *Eligible expenditures declared to EC per participation*

OP	ESF			YEI		
	Total participation 8ii	Expenditure declared 8ii in EUR	Overall unit cost 8ii in EUR	Total participation	Expenditure declared in EUR	Overall unit cost in EUR
OP YEI	-	-	-	381 873	457 177 702	1 197
OP Réunion	24 538	89 924 290	3 665	-	-	-
OP Centre	-	-	-	10 693	31 847 778	2 978
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	-	-	-	7 833	23 526 851	3 004
EU28 – IP8.ii average			3 591			3 096

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 23.07.2019

Table 19. *Eligible expenditures declared to EC per immediate result achieved*

OP	ESF			YEI		
	Total results 8ii	Expenditure declared 8ii in EUR	Overall unit cost 8ii in EUR	Total results	Expenditure declared in EUR	Overall unit cost in EUR
OP YEI	-	-	-	92 431	457 177 702	4 946
OP Réunion	13 682	89 924 290	6 572	-	-	-
OP Centre	-	-	-	6 441	31 847 778	4 945
OP Languedoc-Roussillon	-	-	-	4 127	23 526 851	5 701
EU28 – IP8.ii			13 666			1 483

Source: SFC2014, based on AIR 2018, data extracted on 23.07.2019

Table 20. *Cost by type of operator, expected cost and real cost, National Operational Programme*

	Total amount in EUR	Number of interventions	Number of participants, at entry time	Number of participants, at ending time	Expected cost by participant (programmed) in EUR	Real cost by participant (certified) in EUR
SMA: adaptative military service	56.4 million	5	5 640	3 413	7 387	10 004
Missions locales (PES for people under 26)	3.4 million	26	5 075	4 668	672	942
Pole Emploi (PES)	24,5 million	1	55 257	27 728	57	442
GIP, Greta	1,3 million	5	5 092	5 092	331	260

	Total amount in EUR	Number of interventions	Number of participants, at entry time	Number of participants, at ending time	Expected cost by participant (programmed) in EUR	Real cost by participant (certified) in EUR
(training centers)						
Other	1,6 million	9	1 588	1 261	1 042	1 017

Source: "L'efficience des opérations des PON FSE et IEJ: analyses, 1ers résultats et éléments de méthode" (2017), DGEFP report, p. 16.

5.2 Answers to the evaluation question

The most effective operations²² are those including training long-term, leading possibly to a qualification. However, training actions with a long duration are more costly than shorter ones. The effectiveness of training programmes according to their duration has been treated by economists and converges with the result indicators of the YEI. Actually, this is not an unexpected result, since the target population is a population of young people experiencing difficulties in the labour market. To foster access to training or employment for NEETs, intensive and individualised support is necessary (see part on the effectiveness) but is costly.

5.2.1 EQ 2.1 – To what extent were operations cost-effective? What types of operations were more and less cost-effective? In what contexts? What were the determining factors?

No elements are available to determine the cost-effectiveness of the operations, by types.

5.2.2 EQ 2.2 – Are there significant cost differences between regions in the implementation of the operations? What are these differences related to? Please be specific with regard to the cost structure and whether the costs are programmed, committed, or declared/certified

No elements are available to answer this question.

5.2.3 EQ 2.3 – To what extent were the organizational arrangements, including management and control systems at all levels conducive to the effectiveness of operations? Was there administrative burden, in particular gold plating involved?

5.2.4 EQ 2.4 – In particular, how timely and efficient were the procedures for reporting and monitoring?

Remark: sections 5.2.3 and section 5.2.4 are simultaneously treated.

Evaluation reports (national and transversal), monographs reports, as well as elements coming from interviews systematically address the administrative burden, in particular the procedures for reporting and monitoring. The procedures required to justify the participation of each participant were judged absolutely burdensome and to some extent unfeasible. For instance, in the case of young people with severe difficulties, who have limited career prospects and become marginalised despite their participation to a programme funded by the YEI, asking for receipts (such as identity card or proving that the participant was unemployed before his/her participation) weeks or months after is not realistic. The Managing Authority spent time to collect the receipts required by the control services from the ESF. In some case, it leads to under-implementation rate in official documents, for the simple reason that the participation could not be justified. In Regional Councils, interviews with some departments in charge of YEI funds reveal that managing costs were judged

²² Effectiveness is measured through the result indicators, see part on Effectiveness.

excessive. Overall, the management of ESF funds is not flexible and may affect the effectiveness of operations.

The monitoring of participants at national level does not seem to be problematical. However, at regional level, the use of different digital tools to carry out the monitoring obstructs national consolidation and lack of comparable data.

5.2.5 EQ 2.5 – How visible were YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations?

From a general point of view, administrative rules of the ESF are considered an obstacle to new operators. Because of burdensome administrative rules, both to submit and manage projects, beneficiaries may renounce asking for European funds; this has been reported in individual interviews and in the focus group.

To secure the quick allocation of the ESF funds, in particular the ESF-YEI, the YEI funds were used for interventions managed by operators already known by the Managing Authorities and accustomed with the ESF rules. This should be connected to the point 4.4.7, in which the proportion of the category Contribution is high (this category corresponds to support to existing youth programmes). Moreover, the final evaluation reports that regional MA did not make sufficient communication efforts on new funds such as the YEI.

Considering the point of view of participants, the operations funded by the ESF are not well known. From the last survey carried out among participants having benefitted from an *operation* financed by the YEI, it appears that only 25% of participants have heard about YEI, and 50% of participants know that they benefitted from a YEI funding.

6 Relevance

EQ 3 - How relevant are the YEI and the other ESF-funded youth employment operations?

In France, the youth employment policies started in the 70s, immediately after the first economic crisis. In recent decades, due to a high level of youth unemployment, policy makers have sought to tackle unemployment by developing vocational training policies, intensive and individual support, and integrated tracks. A lot of existing youth programmes were launched before YEI started. The example of Second Chance Schools is very telling. The first Second Chance School opened in 1997, in a disadvantaged neighbourhood of Marseilles, a large city in the South-East of France. It was the first in a network that now has more than 40 schools all over the country. The idea is to provide courses to unqualified unemployed young people, who have often been unemployed for a long time. The Second Chance Schools are part of the general attempt France has been making to fight youth unemployment and social exclusion of young adults. Public policies for promoting youth employment primarily target young people with educational disadvantages that are therefore faced with severe difficulties in having a smooth school-to-work transition phase. Consequently, it is the young people without qualifications and the NEETs that benefit the most from specific schemes and youth contracts. Improving the labour market situation of NEETs is then a foremost preoccupation. This is a piece of evidence of the strong relevance of the YEI which targets young people experiencing the most severe difficulties. Beneficiaries interviewed totally agree with the relevance of the YEI, since it allows to work with a part of the population which is sometimes not known by the PES (Missions Locales and even more Pôle Emploi).

6.1 EQ 3.1 - To what extent were the objectives and the operations funded by the YEI relevant to the needs of young people in the Member State/region? To what extent were the objectives and operations of other ESF funded youth employment operations relevant for them?

Question 6.1.4 is simultaneously addressed in what follows.

The NEET approach does not fully reach its objective: this is one of the major policy learnings of the YEI implementation. The notion of NEET does not fall in usual categories, so that *"the actors involved in the YEI have often considered the NEETs as synonymous with "vulnerable publics", those "remote from employment" or even simply for their usual public"* (YEI evaluation summary, 2018). Interviews with Managing Authorities at regional level highlight this issue by underlining the difficulty to reach people outside the usual categories, either because competitive interventions target the same population, or because traditional approaches to identify the NEETs are not totally relevant. To some extent, population like young migrants, young parents or young people with disabilities were not reached by the interventions, except in certain cases (Farvaque, 2018²³).

This implies changing the practices of the operators but does not call into question the relevance of the NEET approach. In fact, one of the lessons learnt is that NEETs are not a homogeneous category and the diversity is somehow difficult to grasp. Moreover, within the NEETs, unemployed young people or people around 21 were the target of many interventions, whereas other NEETs were less considered (such as people between 25 and 29). However, an important contribution of the YEI was to enlarge the population targeted, even if some were left out: *"In a number of cases, the YEI has enabled operators, including Missions locales, to strengthen their existing actions; to reach a larger number of young people, or to avoid excluding those who*

²³ Farvaque N. (2018) « Synthèse des travaux Evaluation de l'impact de l'IEJ en France ».

were more difficult to assist; and to refocus their services on the NEETs and their needs" (YEI Evaluation summary, 2018, p.7).

The notion of "invisibility" of the NEETs is often mentioned to justify the difficulty to overcome the diversity and the fact that a part of them were left out of the scope of the interventions. Even if the interventions proposed were relevant for them, a part of this population does not knock at the door of PES. Actors have to "pick them up", as social workers usually do. This could be considered as a potential for improvement.

Moreover, interventions like access to rights or specific support to the most vulnerable were particularly effective, since they address the need for specific support for a part of this population who is far from employment²⁴. The case of Cap Avenir-Cap Métier is of strong interest since it provides two *operations* for people away from employment by upgrading their soft skills and basic skills, for instance. In the Centre-Val de Loire Region, the YEI was used to strengthen activities dedicated to low-qualified young people by providing up-skilling activities. Overall, the needs of the young population are evolving, and actors witness that traditional training is no longer relevant for all the NEETs. In vocational training plans of the Regional Councils, innovative interventions are more than welcome to address the specific needs of the NEETs. As reported by one of those responsible interviewed in the framework of the case study, "We have to progress in training engineering, to propose training without saying that this is vocational training, to propose collective projects and project-based learning. The future stakes are how we identify NEETs and to transform our vocational training actions".

6.2 EQ 3.2 – To what extent were OPs flexible and able to adapt to changes in the implementation context, notably the evolution in the situation of youth employment?

The national steering committee pays particular attention to the adaptation of the OPs regarding the evolution in the situation of employment. The examination of the minutes of the national steering committee shows that the Managing Authority had proposed changes to better adapt to the additional funds for the YEI.

In addition, the difficulty to reach NEETs has led to changes in the Operational Programme to better adapt to the implementation context. For instance, a change in the eligibility criteria for NEETS was approved in June 2018, extending to 30 years old.

Even if there are credit transfers or changes in the implementation context, the programme itself is not really flexible since most of the financial support was directed at existing *operations* (Farvaque, 2018). At regional level, the Regional Operational Programmes were not able to adapt to changes for at least two reasons:

- When the YEI was launched, regional Managing Authorities were invited to program the funds as quickly as possible, limiting their capacity to adapt to the situation of the NEETs;
- The YEI was mainly directed at the existing vocational training plan of the Regional Council, whose flexibility is rather limited: training actions are purchased often one year in advance; and training operators are not always aware with ESF managing funds, which generates an additional difficulty.

²⁴ These interventions were essentially at the initiative of the DIRECCTE.

6.3 EQ 3.3 – Were the most relevant groups, in the different socioeconomic contexts (e.g. more developed, less developed and transition regions; urban and rural areas etcetera), targeted from the design stage? Were the most important needs of these groups addressed? How were gender issues addressed?

See 6.1.2

7 Coherence

EQ 4 - How coherent are YEI and the other ESF-funded youth employment operations among themselves and with other actions in the same field?

7.1 EQ 4.1 – In which manner were the YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations complementary with each other? What were the main factors in this regard?

The DGEFP is the coordinating authority for the ESF in France. It contributes to guaranteeing the coherence of the implementation of the ESF funds including the YEI at national level, as well as regional level. Monitoring the implementation of the programmes (other ESF-funded youth employment operations as well as YEI) ensures that the funds work in the right direction.

At national level, the YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations are coherent and complementary, since both funds are used to strengthen existing operations. Additionally, regarding the YEI, in non-eligible territories, the ESF funds were used to support the same actions. As an illustration, the case of the second chance schools is relevant. Some are in eligible territories and funded by the YEI; others are in non-eligible territories and funded by ESF funds. To ensure national coherence, funds were allocated in accordance with the eligibility to the YEI.

At regional level, the YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations are sought in synergy and complementarity. For instance, other ESF funds are used for actions for which YEI is not eligible. Furthermore, within the framework of the vocational training plan of the Regional Councils, the ESF funds are largely integrated, and the linkage between different funds becomes easier and effective. Steering committees gathering in each Region, the Regional Council and the DIRECCTE are also a guarantee of coordination.

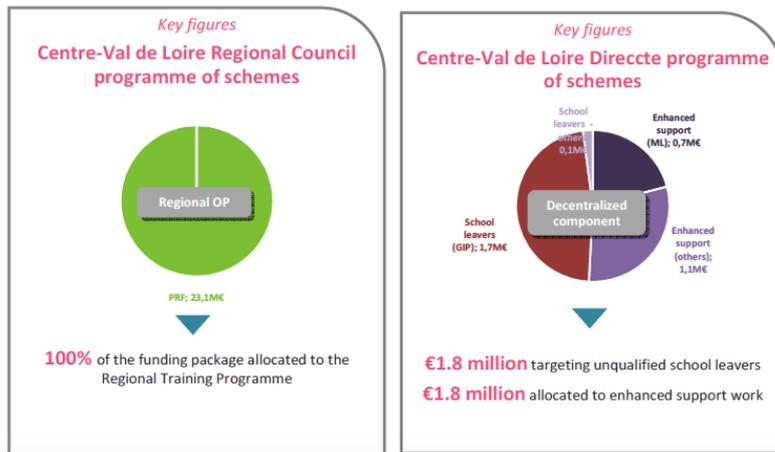
7.2 EQ 4.2 – To what extent were they complementary and coherent with other policy objectives funded by the ESF and other EU programmes and policy initiatives oriented to young people and youth-employment (e.g. ERDF, EAFRD, EMFF, Erasmus+, Eures...)?

7.3 EQ 4.3 – To what extent were they complementary and coherent with other national/regional activities oriented to young people and youth employment at national/regional level? Please focus on employment-related activities funded through national and regional funds.

At regional level, the coherence is achieved through:

- The elaboration of a vocational training plan by the Regional Council, which ensures the coordination of employment-related activities. The actions included in the vocational training plans are partially financed by the ESF and the ESF-YEI;
- The Regional Councils and the DIRECCTE (a decentralised component of the National Operational Programme) are complementary. In brief, the Regional Councils are in charge of vocational training (pre-qualification actions, qualification actions, apprenticeship...), and the DIRECCTE of the early identification of NEETs and social and employment support (job placement).

The case of the Centre-Val-de-Loire Region is an illustration of the clear division between authorities.



Source: "Evaluation of the impact of the European "Youth Employment Initiative" programme 2015 - Synopsis of the Centre-Val de Loire region YEI evaluation report" (2016)

At national level, the coherence is achieved through the coordinating authority (see 7.1.).

8 Added value

EQ 5 - What is the EU added value of the YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations?

Following theoretical perspectives, the added value of the YEI and other ESF-funded youth employment operations should be evaluated through three drivers:

- to what extent the ESF funds have an impact on structural youth policies and to what extent they are redirected to take into account the European recommendations;
- to what extent the ESF funds encourage the development of innovative interventions;
- to what extent the ESF funds support structural reforms.

Throughout this case study, we have underlined how youth policies have been largely developed and structured in France for a long time. Nevertheless, we would not like to conclude that there is an absence of added value of European funds. From our point of view, there is a mutual effect, in the way that France has anticipated and oriented its youth policy following the pillars of the European strategy for employment, before the YEI. Consequently, the YEI would not produce significant effects in this regard. A comparative analysis with countries in which the use of European funds is recent should be highly relevant. Additionally, the YEI itself introduces changes, in particular regarding the consideration of the NEET population, which is a significant improvement of the French youth policy. We have seen throughout this report how the consideration of the NEET population has created difficulties.

Considering the second point, we cannot conclude that the ESF funds, at least for the ESF-YEI, have promoted innovative interventions (see section 6.1.2).

Finally, considering the last point, there is proof to conclude that support from structural reforms would be needed.

9 Sustainability

EQ 6 - How sustainable are YEI and the other ESF-funded youth employment operations?

Sustainability of operations: general statement

Given that most of the funds were allocated to existing *operations*, the sustainability of the operations is not really questioned. At national level, the existing *operations* were created in the framework of national youth employment strategy; in this case, the ESF funds serves to strengthen and extend the scope of these *operations*.

The issue of sustainability appears for experimental and innovative interventions. In those cases, as reported in the final YEI evaluation report and the YEI evaluation report of innovative *operations*, the experimental operations will probably not be renewed in absence of extra funds. This was confirmed by participants to the focus group who regret the lack of continuation in the youth policies, especially when it comes to EU funds. The workload is considered very high compared to the duration of the operational programmes.

Sustainability of results

Results indicators are calculated 6 months after leaving the intervention. This is too short to determine the sustainability of results. However, in the counterfactual evaluation reports, results indicators for the Youth Guarantee are provided until two years. This example highlights the sustainability of results. In the short term, the effect of the Youth Guarantee is significant and positive, but the effect disappeared in the mid term. The evaluators assume that the Youth Guarantee plays a significant role in job search intensity more than in skills development. Job search intensity raises the chances to find a job in the short term, whereas skills acquisition would allow young people to get a qualified and sustainable job.

That said, the sustainability of results should be related to general indicators of the labour market functioning. In France, the segmentation between permanent contracts and temporary jobs is particularly visible. The National Institute of Statistics reports that 75% of employees have a permanent contract, a figure that has remained relatively stable over 20 years. But three of four people have been hired in temporary work, particularly on short-duration contracts (lasting less than six months), since the beginning of the 2000s. This is problematic, as temporary jobs are not considered a stepping-stone to permanent jobs in France, due to the strict labour laws which can make it challenging for companies to dismiss workers with permanent contracts. As a result, workers who accept temporary contracts in France are more likely to be working in temporary jobs several years later. Then, if the YEI interventions improve the employment rate in the short term, the way the labour market is functioning is a limitation to a durable effect of youth policies.

9.1 EQ 6.1 – To what extent are the effects of YEI and ESF support likely to continue after the end of the funding, both at individual and youth employment policy level?

As stated in section 8.1.1, the sustainability of experimental *operations* is questioned. Nonetheless, several learning pointers may operate a transformation of the future of interventions among NEETs. We have already mentioned the lessons learnt from the early identification process, the need for addressing in a new manner the needs of a heterogeneous NEET population, and the need to change the practices of actors involved in the youth policy environment. We then may expect that these lessons learnt will lead to better coverage of the NEET population its needs, and thereby to policy instruments which are better adapted to this changing, heterogeneous population.

10 Gender sensitivity

Gender sensitivity is analysed here in accordance with the results of the last national follow-up survey (Edater and Amnyos, 2019), by comparing performance indicators between females and males. When available, analysis of the same indicators at regional level will be provided.

From the last national follow-up survey, we learn that one in two participants are employed six months after the end of the intervention (CR-11-YEI Indicator). There is no significant difference between females (50.4%) and males (50.2%). However, the proportion of short-term jobs is higher for females (40%) than for males (30.5%). Moreover, the proportion of full-time jobs is lower for females (65%) than for males (77%), a finding which is also observed for women, whatever their age, on the French labour market. Involuntary part-time work is however not higher for females, whereas it is commonly stated that in national statistics on employment, this proportion is higher for females (Insee, 2017) and is particularly high for young people aged 15-29.

In the Region Centre Val de Loire, the female employment rate is lower compared to the national level (46.5%) and lower than the employment rate of male (55.5%) (Itinere Conseils, 2018). Underprivileged females have a lower employment rate (43.5%) than underprivileged males (50.8%), even if compared to the follow-up survey carried out in 2017, the employment rate of underprivileged participants increases.

11 Conclusions

Public policies to promote access to employment for young people facing difficulties are supported by a large national Plan, set in 2013 at the request of the European Commission and of the Council of the European Union. From this national Plan, several instruments emerged or benefitted from upscaling, such as *Emplois d'Avenir* or Youth Guarantee. France was one of the first countries in Europe to elaborate such a Plan and benefitted of 471 million euros for the period 2014-2020 (under the YEI) and 473 million euros under the European Structural Fund. France was the third-largest beneficiary of the Youth employment initiative (after Spain and Italy).

In France, three levels of operational programmes are found: a national level, including a central component (interventions over the eligible territories), a decentralised component (implemented at local level by the DIRECCTE), and a regional level following the decentralised structure of the vocational training policy in France. This global structure leads to a certain level of complexity in the implementation, even if "Ligne de partage", a clear-cut division of responsibilities among the policy makers, was agreed and managed by all the stakeholders. Roughly speaking, the regional Operational Programme manages the European funds in relation to their area of intervention: vocational training policy in direction of people in unemployment. The decentralised component of the national level manages funds to identify NEETs and to provide job support. The central component of the national Operational Programme deals with a diversity of interventions, pre-existing to the YEI.

The YEI funds are mainly allocated to existing interventions at national or regional level. This counts for more than 75% of the total amounts programmed. This also limits the capacity of the YEI to initiate fresh initiatives. In return, the rate of programming is particularly high and the number of participants exceeds the target value.

All in all, upon leaving, 22% of participants receive an offer, either a job offer or a training offer. Six months after leaving, 60% of the participants are in employment or enrolled in a training programme (50% in employment and 10% in a training programme), which can be considered a positive result. The counterfactual approach designed by the national Managing Authority limits this finding, since a comparison between eligible territories and non-eligible territories does not display any significant difference. Differences are to be found in practices of practitioners, by enlarging their capacity to reach NEETs.

The identification of NEETs is one of the main issues beneficiaries have to face. NEETs population was frequently associated to the group of young people in unemployment, since it constitutes the usual target population of the PES, Missions Locales and other actors involved in youth employment. In the two regions of the case study, a certain competition arose between beneficiaries of the regional OP and beneficiaries of the decentralised component of the national Operational Programme. The NEET approach was difficult to implement but forced the beneficiaries to adapt their practices. This is a positive impact of the YEI.

Nevertheless, in general, the YEI has not led to substantive changes in the French youth policies, since there is a very long experience of youth policy in France. The YEI could be considered relevant support to strengthen the existing youth policy rather than to change it radically.

Good Practice: the Second Chance Schools

The Second Chance Schools (*Écoles de la deuxième chance, E2C*) belong to a public programme, not owned by the government, set in motion in France to address issues young people without qualification are faced with during their school-to-work transition. This six to nine-month programme targets 16-25-year-olds with severe issues in finding a decent job. The E2C pedagogy heavily relies on a concrete approach to learning, including work-based learning, taking into account the participants'

learning style. Participants are mainly identified by Missions Locales counsellors, who decide to send them to an E2C based on an assessment of their needs. The first Second Chance School was created in 1997 following the recommendation of Edith Cresson's EC White Paper. The conclusions set the milestones of a programme for the establishment of second chance schools in order to tackle social exclusion that hit disadvantaged young people, especially those living in deprived neighbourhoods. It contains the key components of the E2C Programme, which became a network in 2004. The YEI funds were used from 2014 to support additional funding to second chance schools in eligible territories. They were able to identify and involve more young people, of whom a part with severe difficulties.

In practice, the average age of young people registered in the E2C Network is 20 (E2C, 2015), and almost all (87%) do not have any qualification. One in every five are early school leavers: they have left school before the end of the junior cycle of secondary education (9th grade); probably the very day they turned 16, which is the compulsory schooling age. This group, therefore, is educationally disadvantaged, and often suffers from additional issues such as family conflicts or legal issues.

The programme aims at providing them with vocational preparation for personal development and for easing the school-to-work transition process. It also aims at providing them with social competences so that they are better integrated into society. Before participating in the programme, most of them are out of the labour force, or long-term unemployed. The second chance schools perfectly correspond to the target of the YEI funds.

Second chance schools are an example of a good practice since:

- they target NEETs, including those with familial or legal difficulties. Second chances Schools address the diversity of the NEETs
- they offer individualised support and innovative pedagogical tools, particularly adapted to the NEETs.

For instance, everything is done to put young people in a position to be responsible for their own choice – young people sign a contract with the E2C – and through a project approach (identification of competences, elaboration of a portfolio of competences), the promotion of the esteem of the young person and on her/his success (no scoring/grading, but a monitoring of the progress made in terms of targeted competences).

Second chance schools display some key successes, such as:

- Second chance schools combine education and training to develop basic competences using appropriate pedagogy based on e-learning approaches, immersion internships in partner enterprises; and extra-curricular activities for the development of social competences. The success of the programme is due to its personalised support (lectures are like private lessons with a tutor, individual guidance and individual commitment).
- Second chance schools allow young people to obtain their first formal document for seeking a job, by delivering a certificate of learning outcomes.
- Second chance Schools developed a solid partnership with local companies in order to easier the transition from school to work.

12 Information sources

12.1 Interviews

National OP

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Managing authority DGEFP – General Delegation for employment and vocational training

Responsible for evaluation and monitoring of ESF performance

Guillemine, Frédéric

Managing authority DGEFP – General Delegation for employment and vocational training

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DIRECCTE Ile de France

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DIECCTE Ile de la Réunion AGILE

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