



Study for the Evaluation of ESF Support to Youth Employment

Annex 5: Case Study – Malta
(Contract VC/2018/0715)

Marili Parissaki
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Directorate H Audit, evaluation and communication
Unit G.4: Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Contact: Jiří Polášek

E-mail: EMPL-G4-UNIT@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policy
AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CO	Common output indicator
CR	Common result indicator
CSR	Country-specific recommendations
DG EMPL	Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion
EC	European Commission
EGF	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
EQ	Evaluation question
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
GDP	Gross domestic product
HRD	Human Resources Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IP	Investment Priority
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLL	Life-long learning
LMP	Labour market policy
MA	Managing Authority
NEET	Person not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OP	Operational Programme
PAX	Priority Axis
PES	Public employment service
pp	Percentage points
TO	Thematic Objective
YE	Youth Employment
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

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1 Background and Context

1.1 Labour market context

In 2018, about one in 15 (7.3%) young people aged 15 to 24 in Malta were not in employment, education or training (NEET). This represents an improvement since the beginning of the programming period in 2014 (10.3%) and is significantly below 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 9.2%, again much lower than that observed across the EU (15.2%), and down from 11.7% in 2014. There were also positive developments for those aged 25 to 29 for whom the NEET rate dropped from 13.9% to 7.6% and the unemployment rate from 5.9% to 2.7%. Both rates are much lower than those seen at the EU level (17.1% and 9.2% respectively). Since 2014 there has been a noticeable decrease in the rate of early school leavers¹ from 20.9% to 17.5%, though this is still well above the EU level of 10.6%. Data by sex indicate that during 2014 and 2018 results have also been positive for women which still have lower unemployment and early school leaving rates for both age groups when compared to men. Nevertheless, the NEET rate remains higher than that of men and especially for those aged 25 to 29 (10.5% vs 4.8% in 2018) implying the need of operations to further activate women of this age group.

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

		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	10.3	7.3	11.7	9.2	20.9	17.5
	25-29	13.9	7.6	5.9	2.7		
Men	15-24	8.8	6.8	13.7	11.3	22.5	19.4
	25-29	9.2	4.8	7.4	3.1		
Women	15-24	11.9	7.8	9.5	6.9	19.2	15.5
	25-29	18.9	10.5	4.0	2.2		
Regional level (15-24)							
Not applicable							

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS, yth_empl_150, edat_lfse_22, yth_empl_110, edat_lfse_16), data extracted on 26.06.19.

1.2 National ALMP targeting young people

In Malta, the design and implementation of youth employment policies falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Education and Employment which, as the name indicates, is also responsible for educational policies. The Ministry together with the Public Employment Services (PES) (JobsPlus) are responsible for the implementation of the national Youth Guarantee (YG) Scheme.

During the programming period, young people residing in Malta could benefit from 21 active labour market policy (ALMP) operations funded only by national funds but were identified as a specific target group in three operations providing employment incentives², two of which are restricted to people aged up to 24. The Work Trial

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 four weeks) participating in any further education or training: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/edat1_esms.htm

² Based on information from the LMP database:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&intPageId=3227&langId=en>

scheme is in essence a short internship so that young people can acquire some work experience during the summer, while the other two operations refer to employment incentives for employers to hire young people.

2 The ESF / YEI in Malta

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 %), Malta, 2014-17

Type of intervention	Distribution of expenditure			
	Nationally funded interventions		ESF (co)funded interventions	
	Million	%	Million	%
Institutional training	0.1	2.7%	0.9	13.1%
Traineeships	0.0	0.0%	1.0	15.7%
Apprenticeships	0.1	2.0%	1.2	18.5%
Employment incentives	4.1	91.1%	2.5	37.7%
Sheltered/supported employment	0.0	0.3%	1.0	15.1%
Direct job creation	0.2	3.8%	0.0	0.0%
Start-up incentives	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Total	4.6	100%	6.6	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 Malta, information was available for 100% 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
Malta	N/A

2.2 Programme architecture and monitoring system

2.2.1 Programme architecture

Table 4. Programme architecture

Programme architecture			
	Action-level		Main Actions/Interventions
OP	PAX	ESF/ YEI	
ESF OP Investing in human capital	1	ESF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEET activation scheme• ICT Summer Classes• MCAST Preventative classes• SEC Preventative Classes

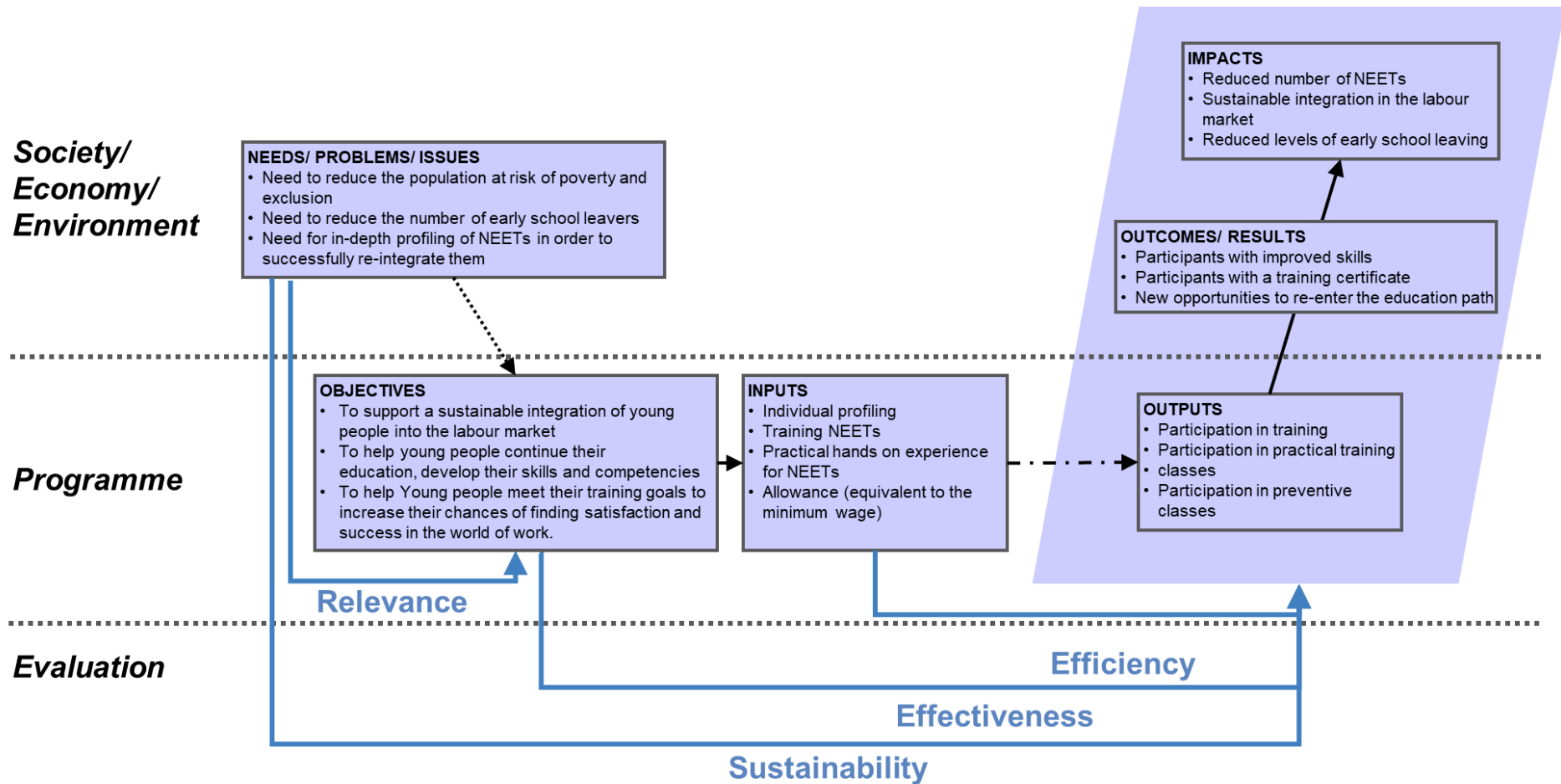
Table 5. Main actors in YE activities in Malta – preliminary data

YEI Managing Authorities		YG Impl. Authority		PES
Name	Type	Name	Type	
N/A	N/A	Ministry for Education and Employment	Ministry for Labour/Education	JobsPlus

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

2.3 Intervention logic

Figure 1. Logic of intervention



Sources: Chapter 1 and 2 of this report, interview

3 Scale of ESF / YEI investment

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

OP	ESF ³		YEI ⁴		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
ESF OP Investing in human capital	4.8	6.0	-	-	4.8	6.0
Grand total	4.8	6.0	-	-	4.8	6.0

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

Table 7. 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 (%) 2018	Expenditure declared in Mio. EUR	% expenditure declared 2018
ESF OP Investing in human capital	6.0	5.1	85%	1.8	30%

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

Table 8. Financial progress

OP / IP8.ii	Project selection rate (%)				% expenditure declared			
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2015	2016	2017	2018
ESF OP Investing in human capital	6%	17%	85%	85%	2%	8%	0%	30%

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

After a slow start, the Operational Programme financial implementation has progressively increased since 2015 and in particular in 2018. Thus, the project selection rate rose to 85% in 2017 and 2018. Regarding the expenditure declared, there has been a certain delay, possibly due to the introduction of Simplified Costs Options which involved a lengthy learning curve due to a change in the methods of payment, resulting in delays in payments. After that, the delay was fully recovered in 2018, therefore a 30% declared expenditure in 2018.

³ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI

⁴ Includes ESF allocations to YEI

4 Effectiveness

EQ 1 – How effective is 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 9. Number of participations under Investment Priority 8.ii (ESF and YEI)

OP / IP8.ii	ESF ⁵				YEI ⁶			Total number of participations
	Total number of participations	Share of total number of TO8 participations in %	Share of women in %	Share of participations <25 years in %	Total number of participations	Share of women in %	Share of participations <25 years in %	
ESF OP Investing in human capital	2 632	50%	48%	100%	-	-	-	2 632
Grand total	2 632	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 632

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

Table 10. Total common outputs for participations ESF/YEI under Investment Priority 8.ii, cumulative until 2018, by indicator

Description Common Output indicator	ESF			YEI			Total		
	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women
Employment status									
C001 Unemployed	484	18%	47%				484	18%	47%
C002 of which Long-term unemployed	51	2%	45%				51	2%	45%
C003 Inactive	2 028	77%	49%				2 028	77%	49%
C004 of which not in education or training	192	7%	42%				192	7%	42%
C005 Employed, including self-employed	120	5%	42%				120	5%	42%
Total C01+C03+C05	2 632	100%	48%				2 632	100%	48%
Age									
C006 Below 25 years of age	2 632	100%	48%				2 632	100%	48%
C006a Between 25-54 years of age	0	0%					0	0%	
C007 Above 54 years of age	0	0%					0	0%	
C008 Above 54 years of age who are	0	0%					0	0%	

⁵ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI

⁶ Includes ESF allocations to YEI

Description Common Output indicator	ESF			YEI			Total		
	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women
<i>unemployed, or inactive</i>									
Education level									
CO09 With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)	944	36%	45%				944	36%	45%
CO10 With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)	1 650	63%	50%				1 650	63%	50%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)	38	1%	32%				38	1%	32%
CO11a Other / unknown ISCED	0	0%					0	0%	
Other background characteristics									
CO12 Participants who live in jobless households	-	-	-				-	-	-
CO13 <i>Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children</i>	-	-	-				-	-	-
CO14 Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children	-	-	-				-	-	-
CO14a Other households	2 632	100%	48%				2 632	100%	48%
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background, minorities	102	4%	48%				102	4%	48%
CO16 Participants with disabilities	56	2%	41%				56	2%	41%
CO17 Other disadvantaged	138	5%	55%				138	5%	55%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion	30	1%	57%				30	1%	57%
CO19 From rural areas	0	0%					0	0%	

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

4.1.2 Results

Table 11. Immediate results – Investment Priority 8.ii - Annex I indicators (ESF – Investment Priority 8.ii)

OP	Immediate result indicators						
	All results					Disadvantaged	
	CR01 – Job searching	CR02 – into education	CR03 – qualified	CR04 – employed	Total	CR5 – any result	% of total results (CR1,2,3,4)
ESF OP Investing in human capital	178	72	1 543	411	2 204	138	6%
Grand total	178	72	1 543	411	2 204	138	6%

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

4.1.3 Target achievement

Table 12. 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	27	9
Output indicators – YEI	-	-
Total output	27	15
Result indicators – ESF	11	4
Result indicators – YEI	-	-
Total result	11	-

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

Table 13. Average achievement rate of output targets under Investment Priority 8.ii – by Operational Programme

OP	Average output target achievement		Average output target achievement (weighed)	
	ESF	YEI	ESF	YEI
ESF OP Investing in human capital	49%	-	97%	-
<i>Empty fields mean that no output targets have been defined by Operational Programme in that Member State for youth employment</i>				

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

Table 14. Average achievement rate of result targets under Investment Priority 8.ii – by Operational Programme

OP	Average result target achievement		Average result target achievement (weighed)	
	ESF	YEI	ESF	YEI
ESF OP Investing in human capital	57%	-	113%	-
<i>Empty fields mean that no output targets have been defined by Operational Programme in that Member State for youth employment</i>				

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

4.2 Answers to the Evaluation Questions

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...)?

Youth employment is promoted through Priority Axis 1 in Malta, which covers Investmet Priority 8i and Investment Priority 8.ii. By the end of 2018, Priority Axis 1 continued to register great progress under both Investment Priority 8.i and Investment Priority 8.ii. There is one project under Investment Priority 8.ii, Youth Guarantee 02, with a total investment of EUR 5.1 million, aiming at increasing employment opportunities for current NEETs as well as on those at risk of becoming NEETs or young unemployed through training and personalised assistance reducing their risk of becoming long-term unemployed.

The Annual Implementation Report (AIR) 2018 reports the success of the programme both in financial and physical terms which led to the full achievements of the performance milestones by end of 2018 (physical overachievement as the number of people exceeded the Operational Programme targets, the demand was exceeded). The physical and financial progress under Priority Axis 1 was remarkable.

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?

YEI is not implemented in Malta. Under ESF Operational Programme, Investment Priority 8.ii targets the sustainable integration into the labour market of youths through the Youth Guarantee. A total number of 2 632 youths below 25 benefited from the Youth Guarantee 2.0 project, out of which 2 020 (77%) managed to be in education/training, gaining a qualification/certification or in employment, including self-employment upon leaving, by the end of 2018. This project provides a multi-facet approach to support youth employability.

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? To what extent was gender balance⁷ achieved?

Youth, youth workers and other persons working with young people are mainly targeted under Investment Priority 8.ii. The output indicators (see table 10 above) show a relatively good gender balance, with an average 48% of women in the various indicator values.

In Malta, the main actors involved in outreaching to NEETs, together with the Public Employment Service (PES), are the National Youth Agency in Malta (<http://www.agenzjazghazagh.gov.mt/>), the National Agency for Children, Families and the Community (<https://www.gov.mt/en/Communities/Parents/Pages/Government-Agencies-related-to-Children.aspx>) and youth centres.

In addition, tracer studies have been developed by PES Malta in cooperation with state post-secondary education institutions to find out the situation of different beneficiaries

⁷ Under gender balance, we understand not only parity (50/50) but evidence of the extent to which the different needs of men and women in accessing labour market are taken to account in the programmes. Please distinguish between specific interventions for women and gender mainstreaming. Please also mention, if possible, which political goal is being pursued in relation to gender (glass ceiling, horizontal segregation, integration of migrant women with a migration background, etc.).

in their support actions. This is another tool for ensuring that the most disadvantaged NEETS can be reached.

To ensure the most vulnerable are reached, the beneficiaries inform the Managing Authority of the state of vulnerability of people (e.g. level of education, age, vulnerability status and employment status), so they know how many disadvantaged have been supported. Data shows that out of 2 632 participants, 102 were migrants or from a foreign background or minorities, 56 disabled, 138 other disadvantage and 30 were homeless or at housing exclusion.

Despite significant efforts to engage with all known NEETs, the estimated coverage of the Youth Guarantee is still low (6.1%, 15 to 24, in 2018). This is partly explained by the rapid throughput (so that for calculation purposes the stock seems small) and the fact that some of the Youth Guarantee initiatives are active only part of the year because of their focus on school leavers.

Individualised support targeting specific sub-groups of NEETs e.g. those with low educational attainment, disabilities or with refugee and asylum seeker status could be further enhanced as findings suggest that outcomes for these groups are still lagging.

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

Out of 2 632 participants, 2020 were in employment or education after 4 weeks, however, there is no data/information on the quality of offers received, since no evaluation has been carried out yet.

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)?

It is important to note that Malta is not implementing the YEI yet. The Youth Guarantee is a project approved under the ESF programme and it is the second Youth Guarantee project approved.

Under the Youth Guarantee 02 project, various activities were implemented in 2018, including: the NEET activation scheme, ICT Summer Classes, MCAST Preventative classes and SEC Preventative Classes.

- The NEET Activation Scheme II which was launched in Quarter 4 2016 saw the organisation of 36 training groups throughout 2017 and 2018. The scheme has profiled 336 youths with 111 participants achieving a training certificate accredited at MQF Level 2. Moreover 90 participants successfully finished the scheme completely by the end of 2018.
- The ICT summer course, similar to the one in 2017, provided two types of courses. The MQF level 2 course which provided a more practical and hands on experience for those who would find the ECDL experience too difficult, and the Standard ECDL Course. The introduction of a profiling system ensured that applicants were provided the most beneficial training possible. This resulted in 23 participants who attained the MQF Level 2 Certification, together with 69 participants attaining the ECDL certification.
- 89 students made use of the **MCAST Preventive classes** initiative offered by the Youth Guarantee, with 81 achieving full qualification or progressing with the education and hence the project avoided the risk that the youth become NEET if they had dropped out from MCAST.
- Throughout 2018, 588 participants benefitted from the services **SEC Preventive Classes** initiative with 433 registering a mark improvement.

The interventions which are provided through Malta's Youth Guarantee are classified as both preventive and corrective operations. Through the NEETs Activation Scheme II, Malta provides holistic support to re-engage youth through training, work exposure and traineeships or continued education.

The intervention in Malta which was the most effective was the SEC Revision Classes. 72.3% of exits from the 15 to 24 age group from this intervention in 2018 were to a positive destination (Education, Employment, Traineeships or Apprenticeships). Moreover, slightly more females went to education than males (36.3% vs 35.9%). The second highest intervention which produced the most positive exits pertained to the ICT Summer courses (15 to 24 age group) whereby 70.9% of exits were to a positive destination.

An interesting observation was that more females (15 to 24 age group) exited to Traineeships from the NEET Activation Scheme than males (4.8% vs 3.5% of all exits). With regards to the 25 to 29 age group, there were more female exits than males in general. Notwithstanding, from the positive exits, males amounted to 24.4% whereas females amounted to 41.5%. On the other hand, negative exits constituted of 24.4% (males) versus 9.8% of females.

With regards to sustainability of interventions, it is worth noting that from all positive exits, 83.3% were still in a positive destination 6 months after exit. Another interesting point is that from all negative exits, 62.4% were found to be in a positive situation 6 months after exit. When analysing sustainability scheme by scheme, the most positive results were again attributed to the SEC Revision classes. 93.3% of positive exits from the SEC Revision Classes were found to be in a positive situation 6 months after. Furthermore, 83.7% of negative exits were found to be in a positive situation 6 months after exit.

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

The YG reflects government policies to support youth and it is quite successful because the project results exceeded the targets.⁸

Following the Council Recommendation on establishing a Youth Guarantee, a Youth Guarantee Office has been established. Furthermore, a call for expression of interest was published to involve civil society in supporting Jobsplus in the delivery of the operations to this particular target group on a voluntary basis. Through the Youth Guarantee Consultative Committee of civil society which is made up of members from the following organizations / departments / entities: Agenzija Zghazagh, Malta National Youth Council (KNZ), GRTU, GWU Youths, Department for Life Long Learning (MEDE) and the Active Labour Market Committee (MEDE), the committee reviews the efficacy of policies and schemes under the Youth Guarantee and recommends revisions as deemed necessary.

⁸ Sources for the answers on effectiveness questions: Data from this chapter, interviews and the focus group

5 Efficiency

EQ 2 – How efficient has 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.

Table 15. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per participation

OP	ESF		
	Total participation 8.ii	Expenditure declared 8.ii in EUR	Overall unit cost 8.ii in EUR
ESF OP Investing in human capital	2 632	1 790 014	680

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

Table 16. Eligible expenditures declared to EC per immediate result achieved

OP	ESF		
	Total results 8.ii	Expenditure declared 8.ii in EUR	Overall unit cost 8.ii in EUR
ESF OP Investing in human capital	2 204	1 790 014	812

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

5.2 Answers to the Evaluation Questions

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?

YG is benefiting from Simplified Cost Options (SCOs), this means the interventions on the ground are cost effective. A Delegation Act between the Managing Authority and the EC on the application of SCOs is based on output on the ground.

There is currently only one project under Investment Priority 8.ii.

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,

Regional differences are not relevant for Malta.

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?

According to the AIR 2018, the year 2018 brought about a significant positive change under Priority Axis 1, including under the Youth Guarantee. Milestones and rates were established allowing for payments to be processed utilising simplified costs options (SCOs) inter alia under the Youth Guarantee. This undoubtedly has accelerated the payment process eliminating considerable administrative burden when linked to the payment process.

The establishment of SCOs undoubtedly involved a lengthy learning curve for both beneficiaries and stakeholders involved due to a change in methods of payment resulting in delays in payments. Still this delay was fully recovered in 2018. The

majority of PA1 is expected to continue to be implemented utilising SCOs according to the AIR2018.

It is expected that with the application of SCOs they will see an improvement in reducing administrative burden when linked to the payment process.

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

Beneficiaries know what they need and they have information on what to provide. There are no issues with the beneficiaries. No issues with the EC either, especially because the use of SCOs makes the procedures easier.

Monitoring is timely and efficient, however, some reporting may be time-consuming particularly when it requires information via third parties. When a number of different parties are involved the process of data collection is slower. The Delegated Act and the Grant Agreement between the BN and the Managing Authority include the arrangements to ensure quality, collection and storage of data on achievements. These documents also include the body(ies) responsible for these arrangements, the frequency of data collection, and where the data will be stored.

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

The visibility of youth employment operations is through newspapers, social media and MA and JobsPlus websites. PES has a database with all those registered and reaches them directly to inform them about job opportunities, e.g. if people are registered for work, JobsPlus has a system to reach individuals directly. There are people who are not registered but can only be informed via other channels (media). The size of the country makes it anyway difficult to leave anyone out, so difficult not to reach the most disadvantaged.

In order however to address any NEETs that may be hard to reach, the Youth Guarantee office has enhanced its outreach mechanisms to minimise the numbers of youths neither in education nor in employment. As such, the Youth Guarantee Office has substantially increased in outreach activities to ensure visibility, ranging from informative sessions with educators and psychosocial teams to full-blown national events such as the 'I Choose' fair which sees the participation of Malta and Gozo's entire school-leaving cohort. At every school-based or nation-wide educational event attended, participants are not only provided with comprehensive materials and custom Youth Guarantee merchandise, but are also given the opportunity to engage in focus-group style motivational sessions with the team.

Targeted initiative specific newsletters are sent out to a database including educators, school psychosocial teams and senior management school staff. These newsletters are in turn uploaded to the schools' internal platform and disseminated to parents and students alike. NEETs are also sent a personal invitation which encourages them to engage in the Youth Guarantee Programme. These letters are sent out every year between Q1 and Q2 to all inactive youths depending on availability of the lists. Each invitation is sent together with an application form. Furthermore, to further enhance outreach of inactive youths, a team of youth and social workers are tasked with carrying out door-to-door visits to maximise outreach potential. To increase the engagement rate for NEETs, social media campaigns across the Youth Guarantee Facebook and Twitter pages, newspaper and YouTube channels and radio advertisements are used in conjunction with the invitation to increase visibility.

In terms of communicating the results of the actions, they have organised an event, they carry out ongoing communication activities. Each time a project produces results, they try to ensure that the website is updated with the information. They also

produced a video clip published on Facebook and on the website "Investing in Your Future".⁹

⁹ Source for the answers on efficiency questions: Interviews

6 Relevance

EQ 3 – How relevant is the YEI, and the other ESF-funded youth employment operations?

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?

All four YG initiatives are relevant for young NEETs for the following reasons:

The 'NEET Activation Scheme II' is relevant for offering personal and professional training and development to NEETs and thus contribute to their labour market integration. Participants are provided with practical skills training, as well as a work experience with an employer based on their skills and preferences; or an accredited course (e.g. MCAST, ITS) of one's choice. Its relevance is ensured due to its design that caters for both the NEETs' and the employers' needs, notably:

- For NEETs, it is organised in steps, starting from an individual profiling, based on which the participant is offered 4 weeks of training and 12 weeks of job placement according to their skills and preferences. Throughout the scheme, participants are offered ongoing mentoring and personal support, including from psychologists and youth workers. They are also offered a final certificate upon completion of 80% of the scheme.
- For employers, the scheme is relevant for giving them the opportunity to train and evaluate a potential employee prior to employment, therefore facilitating prospective recruitment, without any extra costs. Employers can then retain one or more participants after the traineeship phase and qualify for a tax refund.

The 'SEC Preventive Classes' are a crucial initiative developed within the Youth Guarantee Scheme to address the issue of Early School Leavers. It provides students who have failed their May SEC examinations with an opportunity to re-take the exams in a more prepared manner. Their brevity and intensity throughout the summer, as well as the particular nature of the student cohort, require a difference in approach when planning and delivering these revision classes. A key lesson stemming from the implementation of this action is that a short preparation course ought to be delivered by education professionals; providing teachers with the tips, insights, and techniques required for the successful delivery of short courses, including but not necessarily exclusive to the SEC Preventive Classes.

The 'MCAST Preventive Classes' offer students under the age of 25 who fail one of the exams through Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 of their respective course at the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) free prevention classes during the summer period, in preparation for their final assessments the following September.

The 'ICT Summer Courses' are a summer programme designed to help young people gain additional ICT skills (ECDL Core or Level 2), and consequently boost their chances of successful employment.

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

In the opinion of the Managing Authority, the Operational Programme is flexible enough to adapt to the changes in the context. However, the extent of this flexibility (should be established through an evaluation (no evaluation carried out yet).

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?

The Operational Programme ensured that the most relevant groups, notably youth organisations, were targeted from the design stage through the "Youth Guarantee Committee" which was set up as a consultative body. It is made up of a number of youth organisations including the National Youth Council. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the efficiency of Youth G policies and schemes and for related proposals, and new ideas to achieve the main goal of the Youth Guarantee.¹⁰

In addition, target groups were relevant since each scheme is targeted to a specific cohort based on the initiatives' eligibility criteria. Moreover, due to the flexibility of Malta's target group, and the fact that the majority of the schemes offered either complement or build on each other, Malta is able to refer participants to different routes based on their needs and skills and hence providing a more efficient and holistic service to the youths.

¹⁰ Source for the answers on relevance questions: Interviews

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?

YG is the main contributor to youth employment at national level.

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?

Other ESF projects (outside the context of Investment Priority 8.ii) support young people (e.g. access to employment, includes young people) and other funded projects (e.g. training for employment to enhance their skills) include young people. It is the same Managing Authority, same project Selection Committee and same beneficiaries, therefore this ensures complementarity and the Implementing Body is aware of who is doing what.¹¹

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...)?

According to the Operational Programme, there are mechanisms to ensure coordination between the Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the European Investment Bank (EIB), taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework.

More specifically, Malta maintains the coordination mechanisms set up under the 2007-2013 programmes to ensure coordination between European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds and other Union and National funding instruments. Notably, coordination will be ensured through the framework of the Inter Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) already set up under the 2007-2013 period. These mechanisms can be optimised when needed to facilitate synergies between the different programmes, but also with a view to avoiding duplication of effort.

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?

Through the established referral system between the Youth Guarantee Office and the employment advisory section within Jobsplus, participants who complete phase one of the NEETs Activation Scheme II are offered a work exposure phase and after a traineeship, both of which are ESF funded and administered by Jobsplus.

As discussed above, with regards to the coverage of females in the Youth Guarantee schemes, there is a minimal gap between the share of female entrants when compared to their male counterparts. In 2017 58% of entrants were males while 42% were females. The situation in 2018 remained more or less except for a minor improvement. In fact, in 2018 54.6% of entrants in any Youth Guarantee scheme were males whereas 43.4% were females. This shows that female NEETs are actively participating in Youth Guarantee schemes in Malta and are striving to change their status.

¹¹ Source for the answers on the coherence question: Interviews

According to the AIR 2018 (section 11.5), the Inter-Ministerial Co-ordination Committee (IMCC) has been established in order to enhance synergies and co-ordination between the different funding mechanisms as well as avoid overlap and duplication of effort and resources.

8 Sustainability

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

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

According to the interviews and the focus group, no information is available on this question. Also, evaluations have not been undertaken yet. The programme is in the process of revising the evaluation strategy so it is not clear yet when the evaluation will be carried out.

9 Added value

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

Youth employment operations would not have been carried out at this large scale without the Youth Guarantee.

9.1 EQ 5.1 – To what extent did the YEI and other ESF-funded operations produce effects at the national and regional level that would not have taken place without the EU intervention?

Through the Youth Guarantee which is ESF funded, inactive youths who participated in the scheme would have been lost. The Youth Guarantee in Malta placed considerable amount of effort on outreach and promotion in order to attract these youths. Through the promotion and awareness campaigns launched by the Youth Guarantee Unit, the general public is aware of the schemes and initiatives offered under the Youth Guarantee umbrella.

10 Gender sensitivity

The project does not distinguish between genders. All the training and work exposure placements are offered and accessible to all participants irrespective of their gender. All professionals coming in contact with the Youth Guarantee participants shall ensure that all available services offered are made available to the participants regardless of their sex. The operations and initiatives implemented through the Youth Guarantee are in line with the participants' needs, interests and future goals. Furthermore, images used by the Youth Guarantee Office for the purposes of publicity, to portray success stories etc. are not gender biased.

11 Conclusions

Under the ESF Operational Programme, Malta has implemented one project related to youth employment, the Youth Guarantee 2.0 project, which includes four activities, the NEET Activation Scheme, the ICT summer course, the MCAST preventive classes and the SEC preventive classes. The emphasis of the Youth Guarantee project has therefore been the improvement of skills of participants as there is a strong focus on training and education actions.

In terms of **effectiveness**, all actions have performed well, with an overachievement of their physical and financial targets. 77% of participants managed to be in education or training, gaining a qualification/certification or in employment, including self-employment upon leaving, by the end of 2018. This is due to the multi-facet approach of the Youth Guarantee project to support youth employability. The most vulnerable can be reached due on one hand to the size of the country where it is very difficult to leave anyone out and the cooperation between PES and relevant youth organisations (National Youth Agency, National Agency for Children, Families and the Community and youth centres).

In terms of **efficiency**, the use of SCOs has been beneficial, after a learning curve. It has contributed to speed up payments and improve and reducing administrative burden. There are no reporting or monitoring issues reported. There is visibility of the Youth Guarantee through the standards channels (media, newspapers, PES) but there has been a video published on social media for communicating the outcomes of the Youth Guarantee.

In terms of **relevance**, the Youth Guarantee is relevant in addressing the needs of students, teachers and employers through its short intensive courses and the focus on employability. In addition, a Youth Guarantee Committee ensures the most relevant groups are targeted from the design stage.

In terms of **coherence**, this is ensured by having the same Managing Authority and project selection Committee for all youth related projects, while there is also complementarity with all other ESF projects that include young people.

The YG brings **valued added** in terms of volume effect as the actions would not have been implemented at this large scale without the Youth Guarantee. As far as **sustainability** is concerned, it is still early to assess this, while there has not been an evaluation carried out yet at this stage.

12 Good Practice

Youths in Malta benefit from an inter-institutional approach between multiple actors that aim to provide a holistic service. The Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) and Jobsplus (Malta's PES) engage with different stakeholders through partnerships to better target youths and improve the design and implementation of the various schemes under Malta's Youth Guarantee Scheme. As indicated in the previous questions Malta has a number of good practices when it comes to outreach and methods of delivery of schemes, particularly as the operations are targeted according to the needs of the individual.

13 Information sources

- Annual Implementation Report 2018
- Citizens Summary 2018
- Youth Guarantee 02, NEET Activation Scheme II (brochure)
- DG Employment, "Report on PES implementation of the Youth Guarantee" 2017, written by ICON-INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH
- Marketing Advisory Services, "Research on the Youth Guarantee: qualitative and quantitative research (Malta)", 2015
- "The Intensive Summer SEC Revision Classes: a handicap or opportunity?", Best practices for teachers of the Youth Guarantee - SEC Revision Classes
- Interviews with:
 - Loredana D'Arrigo, Senior Manager, Operational Programme II, Planning & Priorities Coordination Division, Ministry for European Affairs and Equality
 - Constantin Viorel MIHAI, Programme Manager - Malta, European Commission, DG EMPL, B4 Spain, Malta

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