



Study for the Evaluation of ESF Support to Youth Employment

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

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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
EEDE	Hellenic Management Association
EGF	European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
EPAS	Professional schools of OAED
EQ	Evaluation question
ESEE	Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
GDP	Gross domestic product
HRD	Human Resources Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSETE	Institute of the Union of Greek Tourism Enterprises
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LLL	Life-long learning
LMP	Labour market policy
MS	Member State
NEET	Person not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OAED	Greek Manpower Organisation
OP	Operational Programme
PES	Public employment service
pp	Percentage points
SCO	Simplified cost option
TO	Thematic Objective
YE	Youth Employment
YEI	Youth Employment Initiative
YG	Youth Guarantee

1 Background & Context

1.1 Youth unemployment in Greece

In 2018, one in seven (14.1%) young people aged 15 to 24 in Greece were not in employment, education or training (NEET). This represents an improvement since the beginning of the programming period in 2014 (19.1%) but is still well above the rate observed at the EU level (10.5%, see Table 1). Two in five (39.9%) active young people of the same age were unemployed, which is more than double the proportion observed across the EU (15.2%), but down from 52.4% in 2014. The NEET rate for those aged 25 to 29 dropped from 39.5% to 29.5% and the unemployment rate from 40.8% to 28.5%. Both rates are well above 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 9.0% to 4.7%. It is now almost six pp lower than at EU level (10.6%). For both age groups but especially for those aged 25 to 29, unemployment rates for women are considerably higher than those of men. NEET rates are similar for women and men aged 15 to 24 (14.0% vs 14.2% respectively in 2018) but much higher for women aged 25 to 29 than men of the same age (36.8% vs 22.6%, see Table 1).

The Operational Programme (OP) Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning, which is covered by the case study, covers all types of regions (more developed, transition, less developed) but under Thematic Objective 8 only transitional regions are covered. One in six (17.3%) young people living in transitional area was NEET in 2018, while more than two in five (43.4%) of the active youth population were unemployed. These proportions are noticeably higher than those seen in more and less developed regions (see Table 1). Similarly, early school leaving rates are higher in transitional than in less and more developed regions but still below the proportion at EU level (8.3% vs 10.6% respectively). Between 2014 and 2018, NEET and unemployment rates decreased significantly in all types of regions but the decrease was higher in less developed regions than in transitional or more developed regions.²

Table 1. Key figures on the labour market situation of young people

		NEET rate (% of total pop.)		Unemployment rate (% of labour force)		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	19.1	14.1	52.4	39.9	9.0	4.7
	25-29	39.5	29.5	40.8	28.5		
Men	15-24	18.7	14.2	47.4	36.4	11.5	5.7
	25-29	35.1	22.6	38.7	23.7		
Women	15-24	19.6	14.0	58.1	43.9	6.6	3.6
	25-29	44.1	36.8	43.1	34.0		
Regional level (15-24)							
More developed		17.2	12.6	49.9	38.0	6.5	3.4
Transitional		22.1	17.3	50.1	43.4	13.9	8.3
Less developed		19.4	13.8	56.4	39.8	10.3	5.6

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 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 Source: Task 3

*Data at regional level contain estimations based on the share of early school leavers in regions of the same typology under the same NUTS1 level and where not available the proportion at national level.

1.2 National ALMP targeting young people

In Greece, the design and implementation of youth employment policies is a competence of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, which is also in charge of the strategic planning and implementation of the Youth Guarantee (YG). The Employment Directorate of the Ministry was appointed as the National YG Coordinator and is responsible for fostering dialogue and cooperation with all institutions involved. The Ministry is supported by the Public Employment Service (OAED in Greece) and other actors including the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Ministry for Development and Competitiveness, the Ministry of Merchant Marine and Island Policy, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Culture, local authorities and social partners.

During the programming period, young people residing in Greece could benefit from 24 active labour market policy (ALMP) measures funded only by national funds but were identified as a specific target group in seven measures, four of which were co-funded by the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF)³. These four measures targeted young NEETs and were all mixed interventions providing personalised services that included consultations, institutional training, subsidies for the creation of new businesses and mobility allowances. The remaining three interventions targeting young people offered traineeships, employment and start-up incentives. Employment incentives referred to subsidies for up to four years covering all or part of social insurance contributions related to the recruitment of young unemployed persons. The measure providing start-up incentives targeted recent graduates aged up to 34 (up to 42 for doctors and women with one or more underage children) and young women in particular as 60% of participants ought to be women. Finally, the vocational training voucher for traineeships in the tourism sector was available to all those aged 18 to 29.

³ Based on information from the LMP database:
<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1143&intPageId=3227&langId=en>

2 The ESF / YEI in Greece

2.1 Role of the ESF / YEI

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

Type of intervention	Distribution of expenditure			
	Nationally funded interventions		ESF (co)funded interventions	
	Million	%	Million	%
Institutional training	0.3	6.1%	9.6	7.2%
Traineeships	0.0	0.0%	46.8	35.1%
Apprenticeships	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Employment incentives	14.8	92.8%	64.2	48.2%
Sheltered/supported employment	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Direct job creation	0.0	0.0%	12.6	9.5%
Start-up incentives	0.2	1.1%	0.0	0.0%
Total	15.2	100%	133.3	100%

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. 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
Greece	Ensure that all young people up to 25 years old (including NEETs) will receive a good quality offer of employment, vocational training, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of leaving official education or becoming unemployed (2014, 2015, 2016) ⁴ .

2.2 Programme architecture and monitoring system

2.2.1 Programme architecture

Table 4. Programme architecture⁵

Programme architecture			
	Action-level		Main Actions/Interventions
OP	PAx	ESF/ YEI	
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning -	3	YEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apprenticeship programme at the Professional Schools of the Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED) for young 15 to 24 years old• Vouchers for NEETS aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 29, vouchers for acquiring work experience in private sector enterprises covering theoretical and practical experience

⁴ Greece was under a Macroeconomic Adjustment Programme so no CSRs were provided. As an alternative, National Reform Plans were assessed when available. Unfortunately the European Semester did not provide any report for Greece from 2017 onwards.

⁵ Sources: Task 1/SFC2014, ESF website and other documents

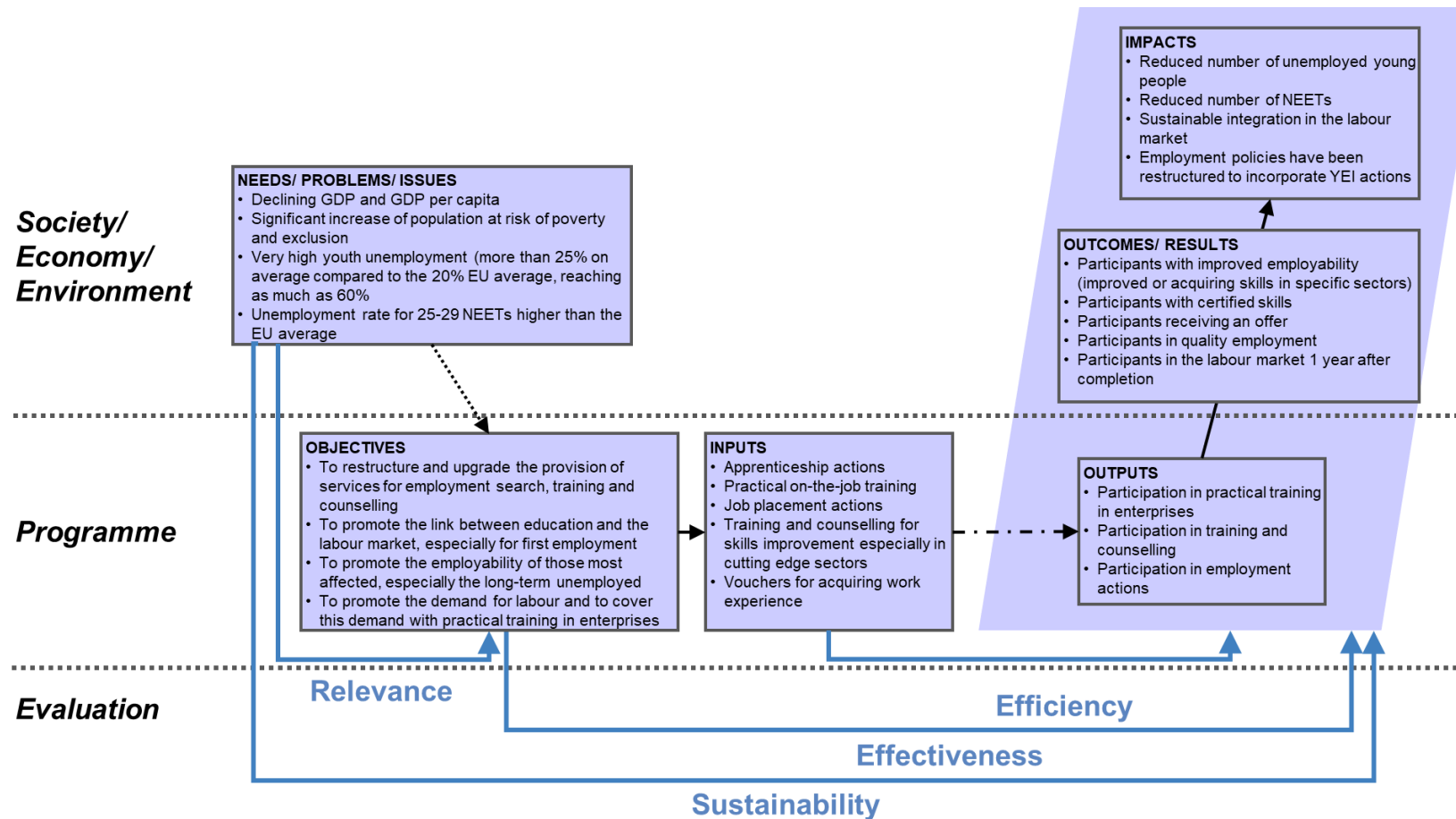
Programme architecture			
	Action-level		Main Actions/Interventions
OP	PAx	ESF/ YEI	
ESF/YEI			<p>as well as guidance and counselling services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vouchers for NEETs aged 25 to 29 for acquiring work experience in the tourism sector covering the same fields (theoretical, practical, guidance and counselling) • Work experience programme for NEETs aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 29 focusing on long-term unemployed and parents with children with special emphasis on women with children • Capacity building and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 in specialisations that concern cutting edge sectors of the Greek economy • Pilot programme for the support of business plans of young people aged 18 to 29 • Programme of subsidies to companies for the employment of 1 459 unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 and of 1 295 unemployed young people aged 25 to 29

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

YEI Managing Authorities		YG Impl. Authority		PES
Name	Type	Name	Type	
Managing Authority of the OP Human Resources Development	Ministry of Economy and Development	Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare, Directorate of Employment	Ministry of Labour/Social Policy	Greek Manpower Employment Organization

2.3 Intervention logic⁶

Figure 1. Logic of intervention



⁶ Sources: Chapters 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 ⁷		YEI ⁸		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	
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-	-	500.8	574.2	500.8	574.2	37
Grand total	-	-	500.8	574.2	500.8	574.2	37

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

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

OP	ESF ⁹		YEI ¹⁰		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
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-50.0	-64.6	157.8	181.5	107.8	117.0

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

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
YEI							
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	574.2	260.8	45%	73%	157.6	27%	45%

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

⁷ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI

⁸ Includes ESF allocations to YEI

⁹ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI

¹⁰ 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
YEI- IP8.ii								
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	26%	38%	45%	73%	15%	22%	25%	45%
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 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

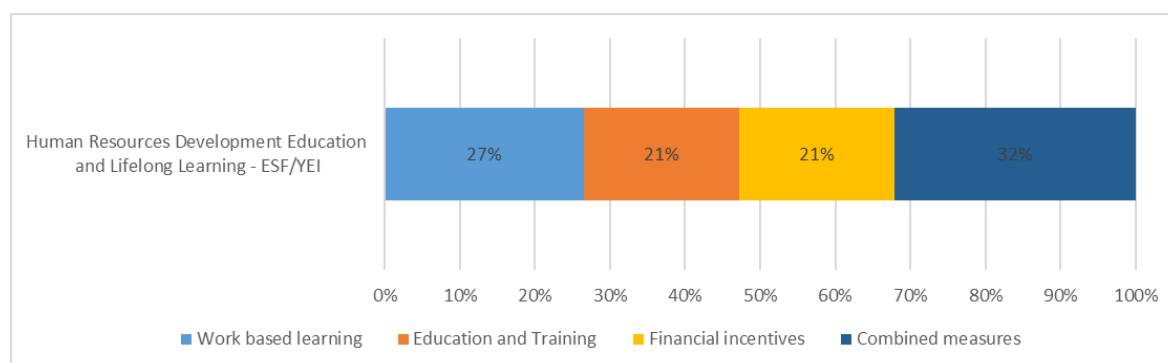
Table 10. Number of participations under Investment Priority 8.ii (ESF and YEI)

OP / IP8.ii	ESF ¹¹			YEI ¹²			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 %		
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-	-	-	60 893	63%	52%	60 893	22%

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

4.1.1.1 Type of interventions

Figure 2. Share of eligible costs by type of intervention, 2015-2018



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

¹¹ Excludes ESF allocations to YEI

¹² Includes ESF allocations to YEI

4.1.2 Results

Table 11. Overview results – Investment Priority 8.ii – Annex II common indicators YEI (1)

OPooooo	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
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	53 351	11 871	21 203	42 854	8 741	13 602
Grand total	53 351	11 871	21 203	42 854	8 741	13 602

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

Table 12. Overview results – measured by Annex II common indicators YEI (2)

	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
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-	-	-	1 705	13 645	837
Grand total	-	-	-	1 705	13 645	837

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

4.1.3 Target achievement

Table 13. 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	1 089	125
Output indicators – YEI	17	1
Total output	1 106	126
Result indicators – ESF	482	95
Result indicators – YEI	21	12
Total result	503	107

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

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

	Average achievement rate under IP8.ii (%)				Benchmark in (%)	
	ESF		YEI		TO8 Achievement rate	EU-28 IP8.ii
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Total
Participations						
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-	-	49%	49%	64%	67%
Results						
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-	-	46%	75%	38%	59%

Empty fields mean that no targets have been defined by Operational Programme in that Member State for youth employment

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...)?

The financial allocation to Priority Axis 3 (Investment Priority 8.ii) is EUR 574.3 million. 76% of the Priority Axis has been committed by the end of 2018.

The calls issued represent 50% of the financial allocation to this Priority Axis and the rate of absorption is 25%.

Under Investment Priority 8.ii 14 operations and 233 state aid operations have been incorporated into the programme with a total budget of EUR 260.8 million and aiming at the improvement of skills, the acquisition of work experience and the promotion of employment, including self-employment for young people aged 15 to 29 who are not in employment, education or training. This rate of implementation represents 45.4% of the total financial allocation for Priority Axis 3 which is considered average performance at this stage of the programme.

The milestones for 2018 for output indicators have been achieved and it is expected that the 2023 targets will be reached.

The rate of absorption is satisfactory and it is expected that the 2023 targets will be reached.¹³

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?

The concept of sustainable employment through the YEI should be addressed in combination with other factors (other forms of employment, limited motivation or interest for participation, lack of information) which act either as a setback or compete with each other for the successful completion of YEI policies. For instance, in the Greek case, the main concern of many participants was not the immediate access to employment but first and foremost the improvement of their skills through training and certification. For this reason, not everyone was interested in continuing with the practical training and in participating in employment, many preferred to receive more training as preparation for better labour market integration at a subsequent stage. This is very much related to the age group, notably, 18 to 24 years old participants are still in the education phase and prefer to improve their skills and enter the labour market at a later stage¹⁴.

Despite this, the YEI interventions seem to progress well so far in terms of their result indicators that contribute to the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market. It is expected that 2023 targets for results indicators will be reached¹⁵, more specifically:

- For CR01 Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention, there is a delay towards the 2023 target, However, given the good progress of the related output indicator CO01, it is expected that the target will be achieved.
- For CR02 Unemployed participants receiving an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving, there is also a delay towards the 2023 target, but given the good progress of the related output indicator CO01, it is expected that the target may be achieved.
- For CR03 Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving, there is a small delay towards the 2023 target but again given the good progress of the related output indicator CO01, it is expected that the target will be achieved.
- For CR04 Long-term unemployed who complete the YEI supported intervention which is linked to output indicator CO02, there is over-achievement of the 2023 target.
- For CR05 Long-term unemployed receiving an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving and CR06 Long-term unemployed who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving, there is an important delay towards the 2023 targets. However, based on the implementation progress of operations, the achievement of the targets is considered possible, even if marginally.
- For CR10 Participants in continued education, training programmes that lead to a qualification, apprenticeship or practical placement within six months upon leaving and CR12 Participants who are self-employed within six months after

¹³ Source: AIR 2018

¹⁴ Source: Interviews

¹⁵ Source: AIR 2018

leaving, there is an important delay towards the 2023 target. However, based on the rate of implementation of operations, it is expected that the 2023 targets may be achieved. CR11 Participants who are in employment within six months of leaving presents overachievement.

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 balance¹⁶ achieved?

The participation of disadvantaged persons and marginalised groups is relatively small in the programme in relation to the total and there is an even smaller participation rate in YEI operations. There are, however, two YEI actions with special emphasis on women with children. Notably the "Work experience programme for NEETs aged 18 to 24" and the Work experience programme for NEETs aged 25 to 29", focus on long-term unemployed and parents with children with special emphasis on women with children.

In general, the actions did not have a specific focus on disadvantaged groups, but ensured that no one was excluded¹⁷. The main problem was to reach the main YEI target group, i.e. 18 to 24 years old people who are in education in Greece and are therefore not eligible under YEI, but need further training support and have limited prospects to enter the labour market. Reaching the 25 to 29 years old was easier as they are not in education. The focus group stressed that YEI can address this problem for the young aged 18 to 24 in future by incorporating professional advice and guidance in the education system, e.g. through vouchers for professional advisors at universities or vocational training schools. There is a lot to do already from an early stage, i.e. in schools/universities, so as not to educate young people who are then not able to enter the labour market and become NEETs. Currently, there is a gap in the field of professional advice and guidance for young people aged 18 to 24.

The field work sample of the YEI evaluation in Greece confirms the low participation of disadvantaged groups. The sample included 1-3% of the disadvantaged persons, mainly Roma, immigrants and disabled.

As mentioned above, the gender balance was not a key objective as the programme aimed to be inclusive, i.e. to ensure that no-one is excluded.

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

The quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the job offers received by participants are not satisfactory (limited number of jobs, relatively short-term and with the minimum/basic salary)¹⁸. More specifically, most employment posts were fixed term and short-term contracts, with salaries between EUR 301 and EUR 600 respectively¹⁹. These findings reflect the overall labour market situation which offers low-skilled jobs with flexible timetables and low remuneration, illustrating the general

¹⁶ 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.).

¹⁷ Second evaluation of YEI interventions in the Operational Programme Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning (HRD, Edu & LLL), 2018

¹⁸ Idem

¹⁹ According to the YEI evaluation in Greece (2018), the aggregate results of 10 measures (7 national and 3 regional) show that 43.99% of the job offers were fixed-term contracts, of which 89.33% were up to 6 months, 10.67% were between 7 and 11 months. 56.01% of indefinite-term contracts (130 women and 61 men, 120 of indefinite-term respondents belonged to the age group of 18 to 24 and 71 belonged to the age group of 25 to 29 years), of which 57.07% were full-time, while 35.08% were part-time contracts, 4.19% were part-time contracts on specific days, while 5.28% were seasonal and 0.29% other kind of employment.

business environment in the implementation areas. The focus group highlighted that there is even a sub-minimum wage²⁰ due to the economic crisis which also explains why finding a job for EUR 300-600 can even be acceptable compared to being unemployed in a crisis situation. However, the programme had an important contribution in terms of the improvement of personal and social skills, which in turn contributes to employability and integration in the medium and long term.

The quality of specific aspects of the YEI programmes can improve further so as to increase the possibilities of successful positioning of unemployed in the labour market in a sustainable and effective manner.

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)?

There are seven actions listed for 2018 (AIR 2018):

- a) Apprenticeship programme at the Professional Schools of OAED (the Greek Manpower Organisation) for young people aged 15 to 24 (see case study).
- b) Vouchers for NEETS aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 29, for acquiring work experience in private sector enterprises covering theoretical and practical experience as well as guidance and counselling services
- c) Vouchers for NEETs aged 25 to 29 for acquiring work experience in the tourism sector covering the same fields (theoretical, practical, guidance and counselling) - (see case study).
- d) Work experience programme for NEETs aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 29 focusing on long-term unemployed and parents with children with special emphasis on women with children.
- e) Capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 in specialisations that concern cutting edge sectors of the Greek economy. The sectors covered are: ICT, retail, supply chain-logistics and external trade sector with emphasis on the primary sector (see case study on the retail sector).
- f) Pilot programme for the support of business plans of young people aged 18 to 29, with the provision of counselling services initially to 3,000 unemployed for the maturity of their business ideas and the development of sustainable business plans.
- g) Programme of subsidies to companies for the employment of 1 459 unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 and 1 295 unemployed young people aged 25 to 29. The programme is addressed to private sector enterprises and to actors of the social and solidarity economy who have a regular economic activity.

The vouchers in the tourism sector (see action c) above) was one of the most effective programmes for the following reasons:

- The choice of the sector was one of the main employers in Greece, even if it is characterised by seasonality;
- It offered a high degree of specialisation to participants. Many participants already had some degree but were not in the labour market. The programme offered them the opportunity for greater specialisation that improved their employability;
- Another factor that contributed to effectiveness was the high number of offers from enterprises for the practical training of participants.

The apprenticeship programme implemented by OAED (see action a) above) has also been an effective one for the following reasons:

²⁰ The sub-minimum wage was abolished later, as of 1 February 2019.

- Its long-term character (two years programme) which improves employability in the longer term so participants remain in the labour market, even if they do remain in the same company (sustainability with respect to the labour market);
- Its content: combining practical and theoretical training, with the theoretical training being closely linked with the practical experience acquired in the enterprise;
- Its delivery: an electronic register of enterprises, that facilitates the matching between students and enterprises.

The capacity building and certification in cutting edge sectors, notably the retail sector, was an effective action for the following reasons:

- The choice of the sector, considered as the main entry point into the labour market for young people due to the structure of the Greek economy;
- The delivery of the action in several stages: two phases of theoretical and practical training and finally, certification;
- The role of the professional guidance advisor who analyses the skills of participants, assesses the most appropriate specialisation for the participant and proposes the company for the practical training of the participant;
- The contribution to self-confidence and self-esteem of participants as a consequence of the skills acquired.

Overall, the general satisfaction rate for the whole action has been characterized as positive (65.15 %) ²¹. Participants also show a relatively satisfactory acceptance of the qualitative elements of the actions and recognise the contribution of the programme to the improvement of their professional skills (81.08%). Similar results arise when the information is analysed by gender and age distribution.

The survey carried out by the evaluation reveals a low percentage of beneficiaries who received employment after their participation in the actions, i.e. out of 1.934 sample participants only 341 received a job offer mainly after the programme was completed. These jobs concerned mainly full-time indefinite terms contracts (57.07% or 191 people) Also, although the highest percentage was for full-time jobs (57.07%), their salary ranged between EUR 301 and EUR 600 respectively. These findings, however, are positively correlated with the general level of labour supply, which is characterised by relatively low-skilled jobs with low pay and working hours, expressing the wider business climate in the reference areas.

4.2.6 EQ 1.6 – What main factors (geographical, socioeconomic, organizational...) had a bigger impact in the effectiveness of ESF and YEI operations in the field of youth employment, by type of operation?

Overall, key factors that influence the effectiveness of the actions are mainly socioeconomic:

- The combination of the low educational level and skills of participants with the specialisation of the sector (e.g. the supply chain-logistics or the ICT sectors) influence the employment offers, which have been lower in these cases.
- The combination of low skills and low specialisation of participants is also an impeding factor for the achievement of sustainable employment posts with a monthly salary of more than EUR 600.
- The general economic environment in the areas of implementation is another impeding factor.

²¹ Second evaluation of YEI interventions in the OP Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning (HRD, Edu & LLL), 2018

The focus group revealed also other factors related to the content and delivery of the actions, notably:

- The quality of the services offered (e.g. quality of training, quality of professional advisors, etc.);
- The technical knowledge and experience of professional advisors;
- The content of the training which was continuously updated and specialised when needed;
- The delivery methods of training.

4.2.7 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 YEI has proved to be an important tool for linking different strategic priorities and implementing them with relatively easy financing conditions (because national participation was lower than funding from other instruments). Given the long-standing commitment of the EU and the Greek government to address specific problems of young people through the YG, it is expected that in the coming years, thematic youth strategies in Greece will take into account the implementation and approaches of YEI. A typical example is the introduction of the concept of 'quality employment' in the updated version of the Greek Action Plan as compared to simple references to the creation of new employment posts in the original version of 2014.

In 2018, based on the lessons from the implementation of the YEI, two relevant texts have been produced, the Framework for Strategy and Actions for Empowerment of the Young ('Youth 17-27') of the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth of the Ministry of Education and the Updating of the Action Plan for the Youth Guarantee.

More specifically, the 'Youth 17-27' framework aims to promote the autonomy and independence of youth and facilitate their transition to adulthood, provide a fair and high quality education/ training/ apprenticeship, ensure decent work for youth, encourage young people's entrepreneurship, strengthen their health and welfare, their participation in decision-making, the reduction of inequalities among young people and the creation of youth-friendly cities. The main tools for the implementation of this framework are inspired from the YEI actions as a vehicle for adapting European decisions, directives and priorities for young people in Greece over a 10-year period.

In addition, the updated Youth Guarantee Action Plan is also based on the experience of the YEI implementation, with a large number of actions being parallel to YEI actions. Indicative cases include: a) the voucher for young people aged 18 to 24, but also the voucher for young people aged 25-29 for acquiring work experience; b) the related action in the tourism sector; c) training and certification actions for people aged 18 to 24 in companies of cutting edge sectors of the Greek economy.

At the same time, the new generation of integrated interventions for training, certification, internships and subsidies for new jobs in sectors such as agri-food, processing, circular economy, ICTs, economic science and theoretical sciences is expected to be funded and based on the experience of the YEI.

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			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
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI	-	-	-	60 893	157 568 575	2 588
EU-28 – IP8.ii average			-			3 096

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			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
Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI				22 129	157 568 575	7 120
EU-28 – IP8.ii			-			1 483

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

The unit cost per action is calculated based on the cost per participant. There is a distinction between actions that have been completed (currently only one for which data is provided, the vouchers for NEETs aged 25 to 29 for acquiring work experience in the tourism sector) and those that have not been completed. For the latter, the unit cost has been calculated as programmed expenditure per participation. For the completed action, the unit cost is calculated with and without conversion of the practical training to a ≥ six months employment contract.

Table 17. Budgeted expenditures per participation

Action	YEI		
	Total participation	Expenditure budgeted in EUR	Unit cost in EUR
Vouchers for NEETs aged 25-29 for acquiring work experience in the tourism sector	8 000	29 574 918	3 697 implemented (5 088) with conversion (3 818)
Vouchers for NEETS aged 18-24 for acquiring work experience in private sector enterprises	10 000	17 115	1 712

Action	YEI		
	Total participation	Expenditure budgeted in EUR	Unit cost in EUR
Vouchers for NEETS aged 25-29 for acquiring work experience in private sector enterprises	3 000	5 990 275	1 997
Capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18-24 in the supply chain – Logistics	500	1 298 000	2 596
Capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18-24 in the external trade sector, with emphasis on the primary sector	900	2 336 400	2 596
Hellenic Management Association - Capacity building, certification and counselling to strengthen the skills of unemployed aged 18-24 in the external trade sector, with emphasis on the primary sector	3 600	9 399 600	2 611
Association of ICT companies - Capacity building, certification and counselling to strengthen the skills of unemployed aged 18-24 in the ICT sector	3 000	7 860 000	2 620
Capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18-24 in the ICT sector	1 000	2 619 810	2 620
Hellenic Management Association - Capacity building, certification and counselling to strengthen the skills of unemployed aged 18-24 in the supply chain – Logistics	2 000	5 239 800	2 620
Capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18-24 in the retail sector	4 000	10 456 000	2 614

Source: Second evaluation of YEI interventions in the OP Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning (HRD, Edu & LLL), 2018 (data from 30.10.18)

According to the table above, the vouchers for NEETs present the lowest unit costs (EUR 1 712 and EUR 1 997), while all the rest of the actions present a similar unit cost of around EUR 2 600. It is notable that the voucher for NEETs in the tourism sector is the most expensive action with a unit cost of almost EUR 3 700, which increases further after implementation to over EUR 5 000. When the conversion of the practical training to an employment contract is taken into account, then the unit cost falls back closer to the programmed data (EUR 3 818).

5.2 Answers to the Evaluation Questions

The YEI actions have contributed to a limited extent to the overall objective of "Sustainable integration young people in the labour market of young people" in the short-term. The most efficient actions were those related to the acquisition of work experience as well as actions in specific sectors related to smart specialization strategies. The efficiency is higher when the actions are linked to the local labour market and the real needs and problems are identified.

The focus group stressed that the use of SCOs contributed to efficiency because it simplifies programme administration (less paperwork, link to e-administration) and therefore leaves more time available for the content.

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?

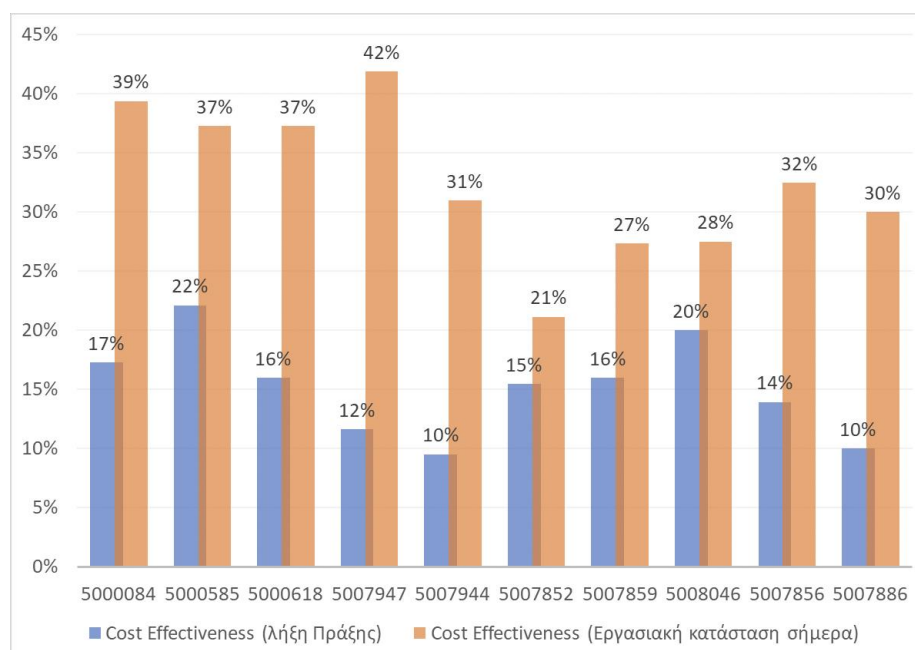
This question is answered together with EQ 2.2 below.

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,

The cost effectiveness of actions has been analysed in the YEI evaluation based on the number of people who received a job offer upon completion and the number of people who were in employment at the time of the evaluation.

The following figure depicts cost effectiveness upon completion (blue) and cost effectiveness of actions under implementation (orange).

Figure 3. Cost effectiveness upon completion and of actions under implementation



Source: Second evaluation of YEI interventions in the OP Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning (HRD, Edu & LLL), 2018 (data from 30.10.18)

The most cost-effective actions upon completion of each cycle of the action were:

- The most cost-effective action is the "Work experience programme for NEETs aged 18 to 24" because it is linked to employment creation by its nature. It is also one of the most effective operations (37%);
- This is followed by "Actions for capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 in the ICT sector" (20%);
- "Vouchers for NEETS aged 25 to 29 for acquiring work experience in private sector enterprises in the tourism sector" (17%);
- "Work experience programme for NEETs 25 to 29" (16%)

The least cost-effective actions were the "Actions for capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged

18 to 24 in the retail sector" and "Actions for capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 in the external trade sector with emphasis on the primary sector".

The most cost-effective action at the time of the evaluation was the action for "capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18 to 24 in the supply chain-logistics sector" (42%). The least effective action was the action for "capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people 18 to 24 in the external trade sector with emphasis on the primary sector" (21%), which was also the least cost-effective action upon completion of each cycle.

The average cost for a person included in the labour market was on average EUR 6 032,621 (calculated as payments for participants who received a job offer to the total number of participants), with the prospect of the benefit for the individual being significantly higher on the basis of his/her earnings over a period of more than six months, even with the applicable minimum wage costs.

An important dimension of the efficiency of actions is the degree to which the result indicator in terms of the number of final participants in comparison with the planned participants has been achieved. In relation to the completed action "Vouchers for NEETs aged 25-29 for acquiring work experience in the tourism sector", this result indicator is 50%²². As for the actions that are under implementation, the result indicator was achieved to a degree between 39%-42%, which is quite satisfactory given that the actions have not been completed yet.

The evaluation concludes that the efficiency of YEI actions in terms of contributing to the objective of sustainable integration in the labour market, is higher in the medium to long-term and less so in the shorter term. This indicates that it takes some time from completion of an action until its effects are actually visible in terms of sustainable labour market inclusion. The most efficient actions are those related to the acquisition of working experience, as well as those in cutting edge sectors of the Greek economy, especially when they are related to the local labour market after diagnosis of the real problems and needs.

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?

There were some aspects of gold plating due to the legislative framework, more specifically:

- The state aid rules as applied in Greece give more emphasis on the enterprise than on the unemployed young person. As a consequence, the unemployed person could not always choose an enterprise for practical training; (confirm in focus group)
- Personal data protection rules did not allow participants and enterprises to have a more direct link leading potentially to interviews that could confirm the match between participant skills and enterprise needs;

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

There was no real administrative burden. The difficulty lies more in designing actions adapted to the needs of young people. There were two levels of control: at the application stage and at the beginning of the action.

²² Although the action has been completed in terms of physical implementation, there are still some outstanding payments which may change the final value of the indicator. The current value is based on data from 31/10/2018.

The focus group confirmed that the procedures for reporting and monitoring were smooth and the communication with the EC worked well.

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

The opportunities offered by the YEI are communicated to participants by the relevant bodies, e.g. OAED communicates to its members for the apprenticeship programmes that are on offer. There are publications of calls in the programme website, press advertisements and press releases to inform potential participants of the actions offered by the YEI. There is, however, no dissemination yet of the results achieved by YEI.²³

²³ Source: Interviews and focus group

6 Relevance

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

YEI is very relevant as it offers interventions that are targeted at an age group that has been particularly affected by the crisis and continues to be in a precarious position with respect to the labour market. (See answer to EQ 3.1 below)

However, the programme would have been more relevant if students were also eligible. Many young people also had to work during the crisis (any kind of job for survival purposes) but this did not make them better off than real NEETs. They needed to improve their skills in terms of specialisation and practical experience, but they were not eligible either.

These particular conditions in Greece could have been taken into account to increase the flexibility in the eligibility conditions.

The focus group revealed that the programme was particularly relevant because of:

- The targeting of the actions to emerging and dynamic sectors, such as tourism, retail trade, ICTs);
- The quality of the services offered during the actions;
- The duration of training (especially for apprenticeships) that prepares participants and therefore facilitates the integration into the labour market

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?

The most pressing need of young people in Greece is to improve their skills, more than entering the labour market. There are many students who need to acquire professional skills and cannot do it in the context of the YEI because they are in education and are therefore not eligible. In this sense, the YEI could become more flexible and offer the possibility to offer practical courses and practical training, even to young people who are in education. This would increase their employability and improve the prospects of finding employment. The key message is that being in education in Greece does not make young people more likely to integrate into the labour market. They need practical training / acquire practical experience that is currently not offered by any other programme so they are eventually left out of the labour market anyway.

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 OP has been flexible to adapt as shown by the actions that offer capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18-24. These actions have been adapted to address the problems in cutting edge sectors of the Greek economy, notably, tourism, ICTs, retail, logistics and external trade with emphasis on the primary sector.

The focus group highlighted the flexibility of the YEI with respect to:

- The acquisition of employment experience was recognised as a need stemming from the changes in the labour market and was incorporated in the programme through the vouchers for NEETs;

- OAED identified the need to train NEETs in the public sector and incorporated in its programme an action that supports NEETs with tertiary education to obtain practical experience for one year at public sector departments;
- OAED also include a new figure, that of the 'mentor' for unemployed young people to advise them on self-employment and entrepreneurship, as a consequence of the changes in the labour market.

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 most relevant groups in Greece are young people aged 25 to 29, who are out of any form of education and have limited or no skills to enter the labour market. These are the most vulnerable groups in this sense. The 18 to 24 age group does face such acute problems as they can be in some form of education, but they are somehow also protected by the family network which is a special feature of the Greek culture and society. The programme has therefore been adapted to include actions targeting specifically the 25 to 29 age group.

Other than this, the programme was relevant for all and was not designed to favour any specific disadvantaged group. Disadvantage was taken into account however in the selection of participants through a point system, through which participants obtained extra points based on their disadvantage, e.g. migrants, certain geographic areas, single parent families, young people with very low skills, etc.

The point system used the following criteria:

- The length of unemployment;
- The family or personal income;
- Non-participation in similar actions.

With this system, YEI interventions clearly target the long-term unemployed with low income, coming from vulnerable groups who have not received any support from similar types of interventions.

The results of the evaluation showed that there was higher participation of young people from migrant families.²⁴

²⁴ Source: Interviews and focus group

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?

Only YEI interventions are included in the Operational Programme.

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...)?

There is complementarity with Erasmus placements after studies.

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?

This Operational Programme is the main one that offers targeted interventions to address NEETs in Greece. The EGF in Greece also includes NEETs as beneficiaries of some its actions.²⁵

²⁵ Source: Interviews and focus group

8 Added value

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

8.1 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?

The YEI actions entail significant costs at national level according to Eurofound²⁶, which estimated the cost of such programmes at EUR 50 million per year. However, the alternative scenario of not carrying out any action and leave young people under unemployment subsidies and inactive, would have a much higher cost (more than double, estimated amount of more than EUR 160 million per year).

A good example comes from the OAED on the apprenticeship action. The OAED has its own budget from employers' and employee's contributions, but for many years apprenticeships have been financed by Operational Programmes. Companies should also finance the apprenticeship like in other countries, however, under the current economic conditions in Greece, the EU finance is important. In 2014-2016, the EU funding was vital due to the crisis (companies could not otherwise offer working experience to EPAS students).

Without the YEI funding, there would not have been any interventions targeted at young people (particularly NEETs) and any available funds would have been directed to other pressing priorities in Greece.

Participants would not have looked for another programme if it was not for the support received, i.e. if they had to pay. They would simply look for any job to be able to support their families. Another element of value added is their self-esteem, self-confidence, getting mature, getting into the system; as long as they do something it is a moral boost, especially for this generation.²⁷

²⁶ Social Inclusion of Young People, EUROFOUND, 2015

²⁷ Sources: Interviews and focus group

9 Sustainability

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

9.1 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?

YEI actions in Greece are sustainable in terms of improving the employability of young people. The existence of an employment offer after completion was not considered the most important outcome of the programme. What is more relevant is that participants are in the labour market one year after completion, not necessarily in the enterprise where they did their practical training.

In addition, one of the most successful actions, the vouchers in the tourism sector, produce results in a sector that is seasonal. This stresses the above point, i.e. that sustainability is to be hired again next year, rather than remain in the same post, given the seasonality of employment.,

It is currently too early to assess sustainability. However, the sustainability rate of the completed action on apprenticeship showed that 45% of participants remained in employment.

The focus group highlighted some conditions for ensuring the sustainability of the YEI:

- Follow-up participants over time through surveys to assess the sustainability of results;
- Design interventions that have a personalised character (e.g. personalised learning) and include alternative approaches for the acquisition of practical experience (e.g. company mentors who follow up the participant in the company during his/her practical training, professional advisors in schools/universities, etc.) in order to maximise the possibility of sustainable results;
- A YEI II could for instance incorporate a new target group, notably the refugees, with targeted actions for their integration.²⁸

²⁸ Sources: Interviews and focus group

10 Gender sensitivity

There were no gender criteria in the selection of female participants. It is simply an observed pattern that more women participated in the programme.

11 Conclusions

Effectiveness

The YEI in Greece has been effective in supporting NEETs to acquire new skills and enter the labour market through programmes that combine theoretical and practical training, with some (vouchers) giving emphasis on work experience in emerging and dynamic sectors of the Greek economy. The combination of capacity building, practical training, counselling and certification has also been effective for unemployed NEETs. While the programme has helped a lot the 25 to 29 years old NEETs, it can further improve for the 18 to 24 year olds. This age group consists of people who have completed their studies only to become NEETs. The anticipation of this problem is possible through, for instance, the provision of professional guidance and counselling already at the school and at the university so that young people graduate with better employment perspectives.

Having said that, the programme has also been effective given the context in which it was implemented, notably the severe economic crisis in Greece. Its success is not only measured in terms of the employment offers generated but also in terms of improvement of personal and social skills which in turn contributed to employability and medium to long term labour market integration.

The effectiveness of the YEI can improve so that more NEETs enter the labour market. Preconditions for this include inter alia:

- The quality of services offered to participants;
- Making the YEI attractive to all stakeholders, i.e. participants, companies and implementing bodies by reducing bureaucracy and increasing flexibility in the delivery of the actions;
- incorporate into YEI actions that address the source of the problems, e.g. the provision of quality professional guidance from the school/university stage, before students graduate to become NEETs.

Efficiency

The use of SCOs has contributed to efficiency by reducing administrative burden and allowing more time to be devoted to designing and delivering actions with good content. YEI actions are efficient in terms of contributing to the objective of sustainable integration in the labour market, especially in the medium to long-term but less so in the shorter term. This indicates that it takes some time from completion of an action until its effects are actually visible in terms of sustainable labour market inclusion. The most efficient actions are those related to the acquisition of working experience, as well as those in cutting edge sectors of the Greek economy, especially when they are related to the local labour market after diagnosis of the real problems and needs.

In terms of the visibility of the actions, although there are various channels for informing participants of the opportunities offered to them by the programme, there is no dissemination of the programme's achievements/results. One recommendation in this respect, is – in addition to reporting results to the Commission - to develop some communication material for the public in general, such as leaflets or press releases.

Relevance

The YEI actions have been relevant for the needs of the target group, especially for obtaining training and gaining practical experience. This was considered the most pressing need as a first step, with a view to enter the labour market as a second step. Other aspects of relevance include: the content of the actions was also relevant because of their focus on emerging and dynamic sectors (such as tourism, retail, ICT); the quality of the services offered (e.g. quality and updated training material,

experienced counsellors, etc.); the duration of some actions (e.g. apprenticeships lasting two years) that prepare participants and therefore facilitate the integration into the labour market. Furthermore, the possibility to enlarge the target group to include refugees may also be relevant in a changing the labour market and the social context in Greece.

Coherence

The programme is coherent with some Erasmus actions and with the EGF in terms of the target group.

Sustainability

NEETs have benefited from the programme in a sustainable way, by improving their employability. The most important outcome was not the employment offer after completion but the possibility to be in the labour market one year after completion, not necessarily in the enterprise where they did their practical training. Recommendations to ensure sustainability in the future include to design interventions that have a personalised character and to include alternative approaches for the acquisition of practical experience (e.g. company mentors) in order to maximise the possibility of sustainable results.

Added value

The programme had an important volume effect, since without it, there were no funds to address the needs of NEETs given the economic conditions of the country. Without the YEI, the limited funds available in Greece would have been directed at other pressing priorities. There was also added value at the level of participants in terms of self-esteem, self-confidence, getting mature, getting into the system, and giving them a moral boost.

12 Good Practice

Three good practice cases have been identified and analysed.

<p>Title: Apprenticeship programme at the Professional Schools of the Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED) for young aged 15 to 24</p>
<p>Lead organisation: Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED) Implementation period: 2014-2016 Funding: YEI Target groups: 15 to 24 years old NEETs Type of intervention: Apprenticeships</p>
<p>Description of the operation</p> <p><u>Objectives</u> The main objective of the action is the smooth transition to the labour market for young people aged 15 to 24 through participation in apprenticeship programme implemented in the Professional Schools (EPAS in Greek) of OAED. The dual system of apprenticeship combines theoretical and practical education in school with on-the-job training. Attendance at EPAC lasts two years and students must be ISCED level 2 graduates. The specific objective is to help students who do not wish to continue to enhance their education to find a solution for their professional career.</p> <p><u>Content and delivery</u> The apprenticeship programme has a two-year duration and belongs to the ISCED level 4 category. The method used is learning by doing. It is therefore structured as follows: In the morning students go to the enterprise for their practical on-the-job training; in the afternoon they go to EPAS (the OAED professional schools), where they receive theoretical and practical training. The practical training consists of resolving doubts and issues they encountered in their morning work at the enterprise, so the school programme in the afternoon is closely linked to the working experience in the morning. The match between the student and the enterprise is done by the EPAS schools. In 2014, they set up liaison offices between the school and the labour market so the school teacher identifies the most pertinent enterprise for the practical on-the-job training of the student. These liaison offices have contributed to the cooperation culture between EPAS schools and enterprises. Every year there is a local consultation between schools and enterprises, where OAED brings in every time more experience from its participation in EU networks (e.g. the EU network on apprenticeship). They also organise competitions and demonstration fairs where students can demonstrate the skills acquired in sectors like bakery, watch-making, silversmiths, electricians, hairdressing, marble carving, furniture design, etc. according to the 34 specialisations offered to EPAS students. Based on the liaison with enterprises, OAED has developed an electronic register of private sector enterprises (updated every year) and a system to check implementation of apprenticeship in enterprises. There is also a feedback system, thus, if something goes wrong, the contract between the enterprise and student can be changed. The first two months are trial months. The matching is decided by the teacher of EPAS schools who know the capacities and profile of their students. Participating enterprises receive a subsidy for 60% of the social insurance contributions, while students also receive a small subsidy. Therefore, enterprises also have to put a contribution into the programme. It is considered as expensive for the employer and larger enterprises prefer to find students directly from the Technical Universities who organise working practice programmes with a duration of six months.</p> <p><u>Effectiveness</u> 3 330 young people benefited from the operation, of which around 40% have entered the labour market. The apprenticeship programmes of OAED have generally a high success rates. A self-evaluation study, carried out in 2015, showed that 45% of beneficiaries remain in employment. Despite the economic crisis in Greece, OAED graduates are in the labour market while the offer of practical training in enterprises (SMEs and microenterprises) is rising. Although there is no specific research on why not everyone remains in employment, the experience shows that some male students prefer to go to the army after completion of the programme (the army is compulsory in Greece) and after the army to the labour market. The most important achievement of the apprenticeship programme is the acquisition of professional (working) experience which promotes the employability of young people. A feature that highlights the success of the programme is that even higher education graduates (e.g. architects) want to follow the OAED apprenticeship programme workshops as observers (e.g. the carpentry specialisation).</p> <p><u>Disadvantaged groups:</u></p>

Social criteria are very important for OAED. All their apprenticeship students are regarded as disadvantaged as they come from low income families. Other disadvantaged persons include orphans, families with disabled, single parent families, learning difficulties, etc.

Added value

OAED has its own budget from employers and employee contributions, but for many years it has been financed by Operational Programmes. Companies should also finance the apprenticeship like in other countries, however, under the current economic conditions in Greece, the EU finance is important. In 2014-2016, the EU funding was vital due to the crisis (companies could not otherwise offer working experience to EPAS students).

Lessons learnt

- The regulatory framework is very important so as for enterprises not to use apprenticeships as a substitute for employment. The number of apprenticeships per company is limited, for instance companies with one to five employees can take one apprenticeship student and companies with five to ten employees can take two students. Larger companies can take students that represent 17% of their employee base. In addition, there is a learning agreement and contract between the enterprise and the student, supervised by OAED.
- The duration of the apprenticeship. It is a two year programme and this differs from internships or traineeships which are usually six months. Social partners²⁹ recognise the value of apprenticeships for their duration and they even recommend to increase them to three years. At the beginning the student can be a burden for the enterprise but with time the student becomes more productive (with more skills). As a consequence this is a win-win situation, where the student acquires more skills and working experience and the enterprise acquires a more productive employee.
- The weakness of apprenticeships is that they do not address large enterprises. The reason is that the lead organisation (OAED) traditionally has links with GSBEE (General Confederation of Professional Craft Traders in Greece) which represents small enterprises. Therefore, a lesson was that OAED became more proactive and contacted SEB (Hellenic Federation of large Enterprises) who presented the apprenticeship programme of OAED as a model due to its long-term character.
- The important thing is to remain in the labour market not in the company. So students may leave after completion and go to another company as they have acquired working experience as a result of the programme. Many SMEs and professionals of technical specialisations in Greece were built upon the apprenticeship programmes of OAED (in general, not only the one funded by the YEI).
- The electronic register of enterprises facilitates the matching between students and enterprises, although more could be done to provide information to more enterprises and obtain more offers for apprenticeships.

Title: Vouchers for NEETs aged 25 to 29 for acquiring work experience in the tourism sector

Lead organisation: Institute of the Union of Greek Tourism Enterprises (INSETE)

Partner: Hellenic Management Association (EEDE)

Implementation period: 2014-2018

Funding: YEI

Target groups: 2 to 29 years old NEETs

Type of intervention: Vouchers

Description of the operation

Objectives

The objective of this measure is to contribute to the work experience of 25 to 29 years old NEETs through vouchers in private enterprises of the tourism sector covering theoretical and practical experience as well as guidance and counselling services. The action was completed in 2018 although in terms of financial implementation, some payments have not been made yet as beneficiaries have not provided all the required documentation.

Content and delivery

The action concerns the provision of continuing vocational training to unemployed and economically inactive young people aged 18 to 29, comprising: 80 hours of theoretical training, 420 hours of practical training in private sector enterprises that serve directly or indirectly the tourism sector and promote the tourism products of the country; support and counselling services to beneficiaries throughout their practical training (internship). Participants acquire certification of their professional qualifications.

The voucher included seven specialisations in the field of tourism. It was the first voucher ever

²⁹ Study by GSBEE (General Confederation of Professional Craft Traders in Greece), 2015

that included its own training material.

Effectiveness

The operation has been completed and the beneficiaries amounted to 7 619 people. There was a low percentage of participants who received an offer upon leaving (34%). Most employment posts were fixed-term and short-term contracts, with salaries between EUR 301 and EUR 600 respectively³⁰. These findings reflect the overall labour market situation which offers low skill jobs with flexible timetables and low remuneration, illustrating the general business environment in the implementation areas (the majority were in Attiki, Central Macedonia and Epirus).

The effectiveness is influenced by the following factors:

- The seasonality of tourism, where most specialisations are needed only for the tourism season. However, those who have performed well are recruited again the following year.
- The salary level. Although the tourism sector is one of the few sectors with a collective agreement that has set the minimum salary at EUR 700 with an annual increase, the crisis in Greece has led to wages below the minimum imposed by the Troika. The type of employment also influences the salary level, e.g. in case of part-time employment, the salary is lower.
- The regulatory bureaucracy, for instance personal data protection, did not allow to match young people with the register of enterprises. So participants could not carry out interviews with companies, they had to go to the company chosen for them by their trainer. The opposite would have been more effective, i.e. to let the company identify how many interns they want and then also define the training they would need in order to be integrated into the company.
- Another bureaucratic impediment were the implementation rules of the voucher. The trainers had to be members of the National Organisation for Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance, whereas other very experienced trainers could not participate. It would have been more effective to select the trainers through an open (international) procurement procedure, which can even set the unit cost as a condition.

On the positive side, participants accepted the employment offers and are generally satisfied with the support received (88.8% accepted the offer and 44% sustains the employment position)³¹. There was a somewhat lower percentage satisfied with the relation between practical and theoretical training, considering that the content of the theoretical training did not always correspond entirely to the practical field of the enterprise.

Disadvantaged groups

In terms of participation of disadvantaged persons, this was only 1.53% of the total sample for the field work of the 2018 evaluation³². Notably, seven participants, of which three women (two of which disabled and one immigrant) and four men (disabled).

Added value

Without the YEI funding, there would not have been interventions targeted at young people (particularly NEETs) and any available funds would have been directed to other pressing priorities in Greece.

Lessons learnt

- Vouchers can work better if the participants can contact the companies in advance and have an interview to confirm a) that they match, b) what training they need to acquire the required skills.
- The training material should take into account both the profile of the participant and the skills required by the enterprise. A possible good practice would be to expand cooperation with enterprises for a more focused practical training.
- Vouchers are a good instrument as they put the unemployed person (participant) at the centre and are also fast and efficient to implement. The participant chooses the thematic topic that best fits her/his needs and the training provider. As mentioned above, the main weakness is the lack of possibilities to contact the enterprises and have an interview with them. As a consequence, it is not always evident that the thematic topic chosen by the participant will correspond to the needs of the enterprise.

Title: Training and certification opportunities for unemployed young people aged 18-24 in specialisations related to cutting-edge sectors of the Greek economy - **retail sector**

³⁰ Second evaluation of YEI interventions in the OP Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning (HRD, Edu & LLL), 2018

³¹ Second evaluation of YEI interventions in the OP Human Resource Development, Education and Lifelong Learning (HRD, Edu & LLL), 2018

³² Idem

Lead organisation: Managing Structure for Employment and Social Economy
Partners: Sectoral organisations, in this case study, the Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE)
Implementation period: 2014-2018
Funding: YEI
Target groups: 18 to 24 years old NEETs
Type of intervention: Training and certification of skills

Description of the operation

Objectives

The action concerns the training, counselling and certification of 15,000 unemployed young NEETs, up to 24 year-old in cutting-edge sectors of the Greek economy. This case study has analysed the implementation of the action in the retail sector. The action was completed in 2018 although in terms of financial implementation, some payments have not been made yet as beneficiaries have not provided all the required documentation.

Content and delivery

The action comprises a first stage of advisory support, two phases of theoretical and practical training and certification. The professional guidance advisor: 1) analyses the skills of the participant; 2) assesses which specialisation the participant should follow during the theoretical training (there were five specialisations: retail sales, external salesman, merchandiser, office clerk, employee, warehouse management, exports); 3) proposes the company in which the participant should do his/her practical training based on matching criteria. Once the participant is in the company for the practical training, there is a supervisor who carries out continuous monitoring. After completion, the company would decide whether to offer an employment position. In rare cases, the supervisor identified a problem and suggested a change for the participant (different position or different company).

Effectiveness

There was a low percentage of participants who received an offer upon leaving (6-7%). Most employment posts were fixed term and short-term contracts, with salaries between EUR 301 and EUR 600 respectively³³. These findings reflect the overall labour market situation which offers low skill jobs with flexible timetable and low remuneration, illustrating the general business environment in the implementation areas.

On the positive side, participants accepted the employment offers and are generally satisfied with the support received. The retail sector is the main entry point into the labour market for young people. Usually participants received an offer in retail for a year. When the percentage of 6-7% is translated into numbers of participants it is not negligible: out of 4,000 around 300 received employment after leaving. Therefore, the action in the retail sector attracted a lot of participants who have been certified and a good number of them continue to be employed in the enterprises (sustainability)³⁴.

Another important outcome, in addition to the improvement of skills, is the improvement of self-confidence and trust in themselves. Young participants have realised that it is important to rely on their skills and their self-improvement.

A negative finding is the quality of the offer (50% accepted the offer in 2018) and that offers were not sustainable.³⁵

The action had some regional differences: In regions that rely on tourism and agriculture and less on retailing or where the family ties is strong (South Aegean, Crete, Dodekanese, Ionian islands), there were no participants. In the region of Thessaly, for instance, where the economic situation is worse and the structure of the economy is based more on retailing, there were more participants.

Weaknesses in the implementation of the action include:

- Lack of a specific implementation and monitoring framework to define for instance the eligibility and selection criteria. The main partner (ESEE) therefore developed their own guides for stakeholders, trainees, advisors, trainers, supervisors and for their own team. As a consequence, the offer of practical training positions from enterprises was higher: they wanted to cover 4 000 positions and they received applications for 11 000 from 8 000 enterprises.
- Weaknesses in the legislative framework created inconsistencies, for example, OAED would cut the unemployment benefit card for participants until they completed the action. As a consequence, they were no longer NEETs and could not qualify for support. To resolve this inconsistency, the Ministry decided to accept them as NEETs if they participated in the

³³ Idem

³⁴ Based on a survey to participants up to June 2018, carried out by the partner ESEE.

³⁵ Idem

action and the unemployment benefit card was not 'stopped' but only 'postponed', until completion of the action. But until this was resolved, there were long delays and many participants decided not to take part in the action as they preferred their unemployment benefit card. Participation in the action offered a subsidy (lower than the unemployment benefit) but worth the effort as they acquired skills and certification which improved their employability in the retail sector.

- The action was a continuation of the 2007-2013 period. But there were delays in implementation due to political changes, therefore it took almost two years to select the training providers. Although the action was supposed to pass to the 2014-2020 period in July 2015, the process was frozen for six months.
- The various IT systems between the stakeholders involved in the programme are not coordinated, for instance, ESEE cannot check if the employer has made a redundancy during the programme. This is a very important condition to ensure that employers do not substitute employees for young people subsidised by the programme.

Disadvantaged groups

Disadvantaged groups received more points during the selection procedure of participants, notably minorities (e.g. Muslim), people at risk of exclusion, very low income, etc.

Added value

Participants would not have looked for another programme if it was not for the support received, i.e. if they had to pay. They would simply look for any job to be able to support their families. Another element of added value is their self-esteem, self-confidence, getting mature, getting into the system, as long as they do something it is a moral boost, especially for this generation.

Lessons learnt

- The development and certification of skills will help young people to find employment, even if at a later stage (1-1.5 years). We also need to take into account the market conditions. The retail sector in Greece has been recognised as a key employer. If a small and very small enterprise employs one participant, the result is important, because the vast majority of enterprises in Greece are small and very small. Many are family businesses and their employees become like family members and are taken care of.
- The action contains elements that can be used as a pilot in other sectors, notably, the two stage advisory support, followed by theoretical and practical training. This is considered an innovation in Greece, where usually training is offered without advisory support.
- It is important to ensure coordination between all the stakeholders, especially for checking that key conditions of the programme are met.

13 Information sources

Documentary sources:

- AIR 2018
- Citizens summary of the AIR 2018
- ECORYS, PPMI, "First results of the Youth Employment Initiative", final report, June 2016
- Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers, "Evaluation of YEI", final report, 2016
- OAED, "Survey results of participants in apprenticeship programmes"
- Various legal documents on the functioning of apprenticeship schools of OAED
- Hellenic Confederation of Professionals, Craftsmen & Merchants (GSEBEE), "Social dialogue for professional training in Greece", 2017
- Premium Consulting, "Evaluation report of YEI of the OP Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning", December 2018
- EC, "Youth Guarantee country by country: Greece", May 2018

Interviews:

- DG Employment desk officer for Greece, Directorate A Employment & Social Governance, Unit A5: Vassiliki Riga
- Managing Authority (Head of the MA): Adriana Manoli
- Managing Authority, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit: Stamatis Litinas
- Managing Authority, Managers of the Operational Programme actions: Akrivi Gouma, Sotiria Vassilidaki, Anna Karoki, Marianna Arvaniti
- Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED): Natassa Sakka (head), Maria Martsoka (Department of Professional Education)
- Institute of the Union of Greek Tourism Enterprises (INSETI): Michalis Kyriakidis, M Doulaveri
- Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE): Giannis Pappas

The focus group was organised on 25th of September at the premises of the "Management Unit of the OP Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning" of the Ministry of Development and Investments. The objective of the focus group was twofold: a) to validate the findings from desk research and interviews and b) to cover information gaps. Participants comprised:

- Akrivi Gouma, Manager of the OP actions
- Stamatis Litinas, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
- Natassa Sakka, head of the Greek Manpower Organisation (OAED)
- Giannis Pappas, Hellenic Confederation of Commerce and Entrepreneurship (ESEE)
- Despina Doulaveri, Programme management, Institute of the Union of Greek Tourism Enterprises (INSETI).

14 Annex

Table 18. Total common outputs for participations ESF/YEI under Investment Priority 8.ii, cumulative until 2018, by Operational Programme and indicator

Description Common Output indicator	Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI						Total		
	ESF			YEI					
	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women
Employment status									
CO01 Unemployed	-	-	-	60 893	100%	63%	60 893	100%	63%
CO02 of which Long-term unemployed	-	-	-	45 699	75%	66%	45 699	75%	66%
CO03 Inactive	-	-	-	0	0%		0	0%	
CO04 of which not in education or training	-	-	-	0	0%		0	0%	
CO05 Employed, including self-employed	-	-	-		0%			0%	
Total CO1+CO3+CO5	-	-	-	60 893	100%	63%	60 893	100%	63%
Age									
CO06 Below 25 years of age				31 828	52%	61%	31 828	52%	61%
CO06a Between 25-54 years of age				29 065	48%	65%	29 065	48%	65%
CO07 Above 54 years of age					0%			0%	
CO08 Above 54 years of age who are unemployed, or inactive					0%			0%	
Education level									
CO09 With primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1/2)				2 196	4%	50%	2 196	4%	50%
CO10 With upper secondary or post-secondary Education (ISCED 3/4)				41 464	68%	58%	41 464	68%	58%
CO11 With tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8)				17 143	28%	78%	17 143	28%	78%
CO11a Other / unknown ISCED				90	0%	72%	0	0%	72%
Other background characteristics									
CO12 Participants who live in jobless households					0%			0%	
CO13 Participants who live in jobless households with dependent children					0%			0%	
CO14 Participants who live in a single adult household with dependent children					0%			0%	
CO14a Other households				6 893	100%	63%	60 893	100%	63%
CO15 Migrants, participants with a foreign background,				5 795	10%	60%	5 795	10%	60%

Description Common Output indicator	Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI						Total		
	ESF			YEI					
	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women	Total	%	% of women
minorities									
CO16 Participants with disabilities				288	0%	45%	288	0%	45%
CO17 Other disadvantaged				1 640	3%	55%	1 640	3%	55%
CO18 Homeless or affected by housing exclusion				59	0%	56%	59	0%	56%
CO19 From rural areas				0	0%		0	0%	

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

Table 19. Common result indicators IP8.ii, ESF/YEI, by OP

OP / Fund / Indicator	Human Resources Development Education and Lifelong Learning - ESF/YEI			Total ESF	Total YEI	Total
	ESF	YEI	Total			
CR01 inactive participants engaged in job searching upon leaving	-	0	0	-	0	0
CR02 participants in education/training upon leaving	-	992	992	-	992	992
CR03 participants gaining a qualification upon leaving	-	14 628	14 628	-	14 628	14 628
CR04 participants in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	-	6 509	6 509	-	6 509	6 509
CR05 disadvantaged participants engaged in job searching, education/ training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment , upon leaving	-	5 972	5 972	-	5 972	5 972
Share of total in %	-	27%	27%	-	27%	27%
Total number of immediate results	-	22 129	22 129	-	22 129	22 129

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

Table 20. Common result indicators Investment Priority 8.ii, ESF/YEI, by Operational Programme (2)

OP / Fund / Indicator				Total ESF	Total YEI	Total
	ESF	YEI	Total			
CR06 participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	-	13 645	13 645		13 645	13 645
CR07 participants with an improved labour market situation 6 months after leaving	-	0	0		0	0
CR08 participants above 54 years of age in employment, including self-employment, six months after leaving	-	0	0		0	0
CR09 disadvantaged participants in employment, including self-employment, 6 months after leaving	-	1 490	1 490		1 490	1 490
Total number of long-term results	-	15 135	15 135		15 135	15 135

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

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