



The European Social Fund in Madeira, Portugal, 2007-2013

Madeira is using ESF funding to create the jobs it needs to support its growing economy. More and better training for its people will provide them with the skills businesses need, thus opening more job opportunities for more young people, women and older workers. The Operational Programme is also supporting job creation through entrepreneurship and new businesses that will build up the region's competitive advantages.

The European Social Fund in brief

The European Social Fund, created in 1957, is the European Union's main financial instrument for investing in people. It supports employment and helps people enhance their education and skills. This improves their job prospects.

Member States and regions devise their own ESF Operational Programmes, in order to respond to the real needs 'on the ground'. Over the period 2007-2013, the ESF will spend over 10 billion euros per year across all Member States. This represents more than 10% of the European Union's total budget.

These are the five priorities of ESF funding at EU level:

- Helping workers and enterprises adapt to changing circumstances in the economy
- Enhancing access to employment and participation in the workforce
- Improving training and skills, both for individuals, and through better education and training systems
- Promoting partnerships between actors such as employers, trade unions and non-governmental organisations, for reform in the fields of employment and inclusion in the labour market
- Reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people and combating discrimination in the labour market

In some Member States and regions, the ESF can also support actions to improve the capacity and effectiveness of public administrations and public services.

The socio-economic and employment situation in Madeira

The Madeira archipelago is an autonomous region of Portugal situated off the west coast of Africa in the North Atlantic Ocean, 1000 kilometres from Lisbon. Its population of around 250 000 inhabits on the two main islands – Madeira and Porto Santo. Over the past decade, Madeira has seen dynamic economic growth with GDP per capita in 2007 reaching 97 % of the EU-27 average – above that of most of mainland Portugal. Much of this growth has been driven by the increasing importance of the services sector in the economy, including real estate and tourism services, which complement more traditional industries such as agriculture and fishing.

While in the past Madeirans would emigrate to find work, economic growth has largely reversed this trend and today the region has low unemployment by Portuguese standards – 6.0 % in 2008. Employment has also grown, by 8.3 % in the decade up to 2008, in particular in the 25-44-year age group. Growth in the services sector has contributed to rising levels of female employment that reached 61.3 % in 2008, although this remains below the EU target of 60 %.

Education levels are also improving. Between 2000 and 2008 the number of workers without basic qualifications fell to 14.5 % and those with basic, secondary and higher levels of education all increased. This feature is due to earlier investments in the education and training system in Madeira. However, among job-seekers, 3 in 4 of them have less than a secondary level of education. The number of long-term unemployed is stable at around one-third of the total unemployed.

Madeira is making extensive efforts to develop its economy and private sector in ways that capitalise on the particular advantages the region can offer, including by making significant infrastructure investments even though these are less than in the earlier 2000-2006 funding period. To sustain economic growth and rising employment Madeira now needs to expand its labour market and provide its workers with the skills the Madeiran economy and businesses need today and in the future.

ESF priorities in Madeira

Madeira's strategy for ESF funding has five global objectives: to significantly increase the level of education and training among its people, and in particular in technology-related areas, to create more jobs in ways that support entrepreneurial initiatives and the requirements of the regional labour market; to improve social cohesion and regional governance. To achieve these objectives the ESF Operational Programme has two main priorities.

Priority 1 : Education and training

- Bringing clear improvements to general levels of education by supporting mobility within the educational and training system. Raising the overall quality of the education and training system.
- Improving the skills of young people, both at school and at work. Providing vocational training opportunities to young people who do less well in formal, school education. Improving youth employment by identifying at-risk students at an earlier stage. Supporting high-levels of education through actions to increase the number of postgraduate students leaving university to 650 p.a. by 2015
- Promoting lifelong learning and the recognition of skills acquired informally 'on-the-job' through improvements to the CRVCC certification body
- Using training to improve the adaptability of workers, businesses and entrepreneurs. For example, this priority aims to increase the

participation of workers in professional training to 16% by 2010 and to 28% by 2015

- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration bodies and the structures and services that support the education system. For example, by training public administrators
- Providing more tailored training opportunities to people who find it difficult to get a job, and improving the social support mechanisms for this group.

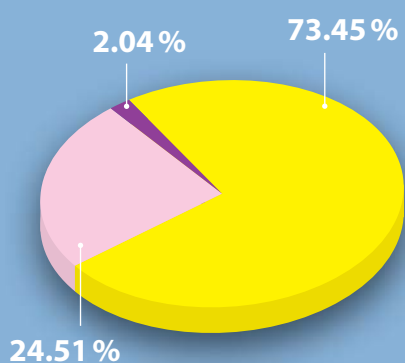
Priority 2: Employment and social cohesion

- Creating pathways for the entry of young people into the labour market so that more of them will get a job within six months after being enrolled with the Public Employment Service as a jobseeker. Developing active measures to help the unemployed get a job and improving their access to the labour market

- Encouraging job-creating entrepreneurial initiatives and helping individuals and groups of unemployed to develop the skills needed to start their own businesses
- Supporting the entry into work of people from disadvantaged groups, such as older people or parents returning to the labour market, and in particular those receiving social welfare payments
- Combating poverty and social exclusion with new schemes and tools. Developing new structures and services that will support employment.

In addition to the two main priorities there is also a Technical Assistance priority that will support the implementation and monitoring of the Operational Programme and its projects.

Financial Plan for the European Social Fund in Madeira, 2007-2013 (euro)



Priority axis	Community funding	Regional/ National counterpart	Total funding
Education and training	91 700 000	22 925 000	114 625 000
Employment and social cohesion	30 600 000	7 650 000	38 250 000
Technical assistance	2 700 000	476 471	3 176 471
Total	125 000 000	31 051 471	156 051 471

Some earlier ESF projects in Madeira, 2000-2006

- Nine women were helped into work by the 'Family assistants: help is at the door' project. The initiative targeted unemployed women with low qualifications who faced real obstacles to getting a job and thus suffered social exclusion. Close to 2 245 hours of training were provided in skills related to home help and the caring professions, for example, looking after the aged, young children and other dependent people. The project employed active training methodologies to fight exclusion and help these women get themselves back into sustainable work with skills that are in demand.
- Supporting employment by providing help to small companies from rural areas was the aim of the 'Piame-CR' project. Trained business consultants went out to around 150 small enterprises in all sectors that could benefit from guidance on how to meet the challenges of changing markets. These traditional companies were helped across a range of management areas, such as strategic planning, communications, accounting and marketing. Finally, after a diagnostic phase, the companies were helped to devise development plans for the future. The project was implemented by the industrial and trade promotion association.
- Using e-learning methods to overcome the barriers that the sea presents to an island region was the aim of the leaders of the 'E-student' project. Mathematics teaching was known to be posing problems so the project developed an on-line course addressing the modules that were causing the most difficulty. A computer application, a teaching manual to accompany the on-line content, and a manual for the teaching staff were created, as were a series of on-line mathematical exercises. This innovative approach to a clearly identified problem allowed school students across the islands of Madeira to receive better teaching in a difficult subject area as well as a valuable introduction to on-line learning.

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Eligible regions 2007-2013



The level of ESF funding differs from one region to another depending on their relative wealth.

■ The autonomous region of Madeira is a phasing-in region with a GDP per head of less than 75 % of the EU-15 average in the period 2000-2006 but of more than 75 % of the EU-15 average in the period 2007-2013.