



First Results of the Implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative

LITHUANIA

March 2016



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Unit F1: ESF and FEAD Policy and Legislation

Contact: Resa Koleva-Demonty

E-mail: resa.koleva-demonty@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1049 Brussels*

First results of the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative

LITHUANIA

***Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union.***

Freephone number (*):

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

LEGAL NOTICE

This study has been prepared under the specific contract No. VC/2015/0662 in the context of the Framework Contract No. VC/2013/0084 "Analysis of the first results of the implementation of the 2014-2020 Operational Programmes Supported by the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) and related YEI and ESF youth employment actions in the Member States in 2015 and 2016".

The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Commission. The Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this study. Neither the Commission nor any person acting on the Commission's behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016
ISBN 978-92-79-60745-5
doi: 10.2767/070509

© European Union, 2016
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Contents

1. Overview of programming of the YEI and related ESF youth employment actions	1
2. Addressing NEETs' needs in 2014–2020.....	2
2.1 Programming arrangements for the YEI interventions	2
2.2. Programming arrangements for the ESF interventions.....	5
3. Implementation progress up to November 2015	5
3.1. Implementation of the YEI interventions	5
3.2. Implementation of the ESF interventions.....	8
4. Conclusions	9
Updated evidence from the national evaluation	10
Bibliography	13
Annex 1 The youth employment situation	14
Annex 2 Expected outputs and results of the YEI and other ESF youth employment actions	15
Annex 3 List of the interviewees.....	17
Annex 4 YEI project 'Discover Yourself'	18

Disclaimer:

This report covers YEI actions programmed in the specified OP and ESF actions programmed under Investment Priority (IP) 8.ii "Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee" in the same OP. Only ESF actions under IP 8.ii, which are programmed in the same Operational Programme as the YEI are taken into account.

This report is based on a desk review of documentary evidence including the national evaluation report, a survey of Managing Authorities and in-depth stakeholder interviews. Data collection for this report took place in October and November 2015, at which point up-to-date data was collected. As a consequence, the **reference period** for implementation progress is respectively 1 September 2013 to November 2015 for the YEI and 1 January 2014 to November 2015 for other relevant ESF actions. In March 2016, national evaluations submitted to the Commission by the end of 2015 were also reviewed. Data included in these evaluations may cover different reference periods.

1. Overview of programming of the YEI and related ESF youth employment actions

Overview of programming of the YEI and related ESF youth employment actions

The YEI is programmed as part of the single multi-fund 'Operational Programme for the European Union Funds' Investments in 2014–2020' which was approved in September 2014. The priority axis 7 'Promoting quality employment and participation in the labour market' includes all key investment priorities and specific objectives focused on employment promotion. Investment Priority 7.4 is directly focused on reducing youth unemployment. The specific objective implementing it – No 7.4.1 – contains both YEI and additional ESF funding beyond YEI. The YEI funding will be used until 2018 and the ESF will support similar activities after 2018 (see Table 1). Both YEI and ESF initiatives will cover all Lithuanian municipalities.

Table 1 - Programming arrangements for youth employment interventions in 2014–2020

Title of the operational programme (OP) supported by the YEI	OP for European Union Funds' Investments in 2014–2020
Specific objective of the YEI	7.4.1. Reduce the number of young people between 15 and 29 years of age not in employment, education or training (<i>until 2018</i>)
Specific objective of other ESF youth employment actions beyond YEI	7.4.1. Reduce the number of young people between 15 and 29 years of age not in employment, education or training (<i>after 2018</i>)

Overview of funding

Lithuania will receive more than €69 million YEI funding until 2018. The YEI specific allocation represents almost €31.2 million and is matched by the same amount from corresponding national ESF allocations which are co-financed with €5.6 million from the national budget (see Table 2). Original pre-financing from the YEI specific allocation amounted to €0.3 million, but has been increased to €9.5 million in 2015. In addition to the YEI funding, Lithuania will spend over €20 million of ESF funds for other youth-related employment actions under Investment Priority 8ii.

Table 2 - Funding for the YEI and other ESF youth employment actions (EUR)

YEI			Other ESF actions under Investment Priority 8.ii	
Total sum: 69,173,966			Total sum: 20,532,671	
Specific allocation for YEI (EU)	Corresponding national ESF allocation	Co-financing from the national budget	ESF part	Co-financing from the national budget
Sum: 31,782,633	Sum: 31,782,633	Sum: 5,608,700	Sum: 17,452,770	Sum: 3,079,901
Pre-financing for YEI in 2014-2015 (EU)				
Sum: 9,534,790				

Sources: European Commission, 'The Youth Employment Initiative Lithuania'; Lithuanian Ministry of Finance, '2014-2020 European Union Investment in Lithuania'; Republic of Lithuania, 'Operational programme for the European Union funds' investments in 2014-2020', Vilnius, 2014. Available online: <<http://www.esinvesticijos.lt/en/>> [Accessed 05 October 2015].

2. Addressing NEETs' needs in 2014–2020

2.1 Programming arrangements for the YEI interventions

Target groups

YEI-supported interventions are expected to provide support to 35,000 young people aged 15-29 who are not in employment, education or training until 2018. Based on 2014 figures when the number of NEETs aged 15-29 was around 75 000 (12.9 % of the total youth population), the YEI will target approximately every second NEET person in Lithuania. They will be engaged in two flagship projects that will target both active (registered) and inactive NEETs, around 23,000 and 12,000 respectively (see below). Among the projects' participants, the largest group will be unemployed NEETs aged 16-29 who are registered with the Lithuanian Public Employment Service but not prepared for the labour market, that is, with no marketable occupation (approx. 18,000 such people are to be targeted). According to the interviewees, both YEI projects are to prioritise the most disadvantaged NEETs, those from marginalised communities, leaving education without any qualifications and early school leavers. However, as was also noted by the interviewees, it may be extremely difficult to reach the most disadvantaged young people and some 'creaming effect' might be unavoidable.

Type of activities planned

NEETs will be involved in two flagship projects to be implemented between 2015 and 2018 by the Lithuanian Public Employment Service, called the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (LLE), and the Department of Youth Affairs (DYA), both under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The first project 'Discover Yourself' ('*Atrask save*') will offer early intervention services that will focus on the development of motivational, social and labour market skills through engaging NEETs in voluntary activities, various trainings, and traineeship experiences as well as providing them with psychological counselling, skills' assessment and other measures to enhance their motivation for work. The second project 'New Start' ('*Naujas startas*') will provide active labour market services, above all vocational training and wage subsidies, for those NEETs who successfully finished the first project but did not receive an unsubsidised offer for employment, traineeship, or continued education. Box 1 presents both YEI projects in more detail.

Box 1 Example of actions supported by the YEI

The project '**Discover Yourself**' is implemented by LLE, acting as a leading partner, and DYA. Each institution coordinates a separate strand of the project targeting different NEET groups. LLE's programme is designed for active NEETs who are officially registered with LLE as unemployed whereas DYA targets inactive NEETs. It is planned that 23,000 unemployed NEETs and 12,000 inactive NEETs will participate in the project 'Discover Yourself', which kicked-off in September 2015 and will be implemented until the end of 2018. Nearly €34 million (€33,798,580) will be invested in both programmes over the course of the project (approx. EUR 1000/participant on average).

The diagram in Annex 4 shows the different elements of the project 'Discover Yourself'. The project will involve the following activities.

- LLE programme:
 - Unemployed NEETs *that are unprepared for the labour market* will take a test on their work capabilities, professional interests and personality traits upon joining. They also will have personal consultations with professional psychologists. Depending on the results of both the test and the

consultations, the young person will be offered one of the following three packages of services: 1) a package for returning to the labour market, 2) a package for returning to the educational system, 3) a package for self-employment. Each package includes in-class individual and group activities as well as short traineeships in selected enterprises or visits to various companies and educational institutions. Most of these services will be additional new services to the standard provision of the Public Employment Service.

- Unemployed NEETs *that are prepared for the labour market* but lack specific competences or social skills will be involved in trainings on additional skills and competences. They will also participate in meetings with employees and visits to companies. In addition, about half of them will also be provided with informal vocational training of up to 3 months.
- **DYA programme:** the majority of services of the DYAs programme are dedicated to enhancing *inactive NEETs'* motivation for working or learning. Programme participants will receive psychological counselling and participate in various soft skill development workshops. In addition, participants will be encouraged to take part in voluntary activities at one of the companies or NGOs supporting the project 'Discover Yourself'. The services will be provided by the partner organisations (NGOs) working with youth that were selected by DYAs specifically for the project 'Discover Yourself' in August 2015. The network of DYAs partners covers all Lithuanian municipalities.

Support will be provided for up to 4 months, which should be a sufficient amount of time for unemployed NEETs, but is a relatively short period for the most disadvantaged inactive NEETs. The interviewees who contributed to designing the project 'Discover Yourself' expect that most participants will receive unsubsidised offers for a job, traineeship, or continued education after successfully finishing the project. Those young people (participants of LLE and DYAs programmes) who do not receive such an offer will be offered participation in the **second YEI project 'New Start'** to be launched by the end of 2015. The offer to participate in this second intervention will be also counted as a YG offer.

LLE, which will implement the project 'New Start', plans to involve a total of 11,895 unique NEETs in various active labour market measures investing EUR 35 375 386 over 3 years (the project will last until the end of 2018). This will account for one-third of all project 'Discover Yourself' participants; however, it is likely that there will be more NEETs willing to participate in the project 'New Start' than the currently foreseen 12,000. The project will spend roughly €3000 per project participant on average. This is sufficient funding for high quality ALMP services. Most of the participants of this project will be involved in vocational training (around 9,000). Other participants will receive subsidised jobs or a package of several services (for example, vocational training and subsidised job) depending on their needs. The project 'New Start' will provide an opportunity to support the most disadvantaged participants of the first YEI project for a longer period of time than just 4 months.

Expected outputs and results

Both YEI projects will support 35,000 NEETs in total (unique participants). It is expected that at least 50 % of unemployed participants and 30 % of inactive participants will receive a YG offer of employment, continued education or traineeship after leaving the projects. A full list of result indicators of the YEI-supported youth employment projects is provided in Annex 2. These result indicators are set out in the Lithuanian Operational Programme for the European Union Funds' Investments in 2014–2020. The interviewees described the target values of the result indicators as realistic to achieve. The YEI projects are planned according to the goals set in the OP and are very clearly linked with the specific objective 7.4.1 under which they are implemented.

Added value and national significance of YEI interventions

According to the interviewees, the YEI, being the most important intervention for youth employment envisaged in 2014–2020 in Lithuania, not only provides much-needed additional financial resources, but also enables the implementation of innovative initiatives which provide a whole new perspective on how to solve the youth unemployment problem:

- First, the project 'Discover Yourself' introduces services tailored to the needs of different NEET groups including services which were not previously available to young persons and which are designed as one comprehensive package (for example, including psychological services, social skills development, career consulting, etc.). The possibility to participate in the second YEI project 'New Start', which will provide ALMP measures, will also ensure that project participants, in particular the most disadvantaged NEETs, will receive a comprehensive package of well-integrated services, starting from motivational seminars and finishing with vocational training and subsidised job offers. To increase the impact of activation the NEETs will be allowed to participate in a few ALPM measures.
- Second, the services will be provided in an individualised manner based on a personal needs' assessment and a plan made for each participant individually. To this end, the implementing bodies (LLE and DYA) have hired a number of project coordinators who will work in their regional branches or selected partner institutions located in each Lithuanian municipality and will be responsible for each project participant.
- Third, the projects involve various different social partners (employers, educational institutions or NVO) and seek to establish a comprehensive collaboration between them and government institutions while solving youth employment problems. This is new approach in Lithuania as previously collaboration was less systematic and more fragmented.

The YEI interventions constitute a very important part of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP), launched on 18 December 2013 and [updated in May 2014](#). The YEI funding accounts for around two-thirds of all financial resources allocated for the implementation of the national YGIP. Moreover, the success of the YGIP will be assessed to a large extent on the success of the YEI interventions. In the survey of Managing Authorities, Lithuanian representatives strongly agreed with the statement that the YEI will have an important influence on the design of youth employment policy in Lithuania.

According to the interviewees representing the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the YEI interventions are also the key instruments for implementing the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) of the European Commission in which Lithuania is advised to 'address the challenge of a shrinking working-age population by improving the labour market relevance of education, increasing attainment in basic skills' (2015) and 'in order to increase the employability of young people, prioritise offering quality apprenticeships, other forms of work-based learning, and strengthen partnership with the private sector' (2014). Previous CSRs of 2012 and 2013¹ were important factors influencing the selection of priorities of the Lithuanian OP for 2014–2020 and designing YEI and other relevant ESF youth employment actions.

¹ **2012:** 'Tackle high unemployment, in particular among youth, low-skilled and long-term unemployed, by focusing resources on active labour market policies while improving their efficiency. Enhance the effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes.'

2013: 'Tackle high unemployment amongst the low-skilled and the long-term unemployed by refocusing resources on active labour-market policies while improving their coverage and efficiency. Improve the employability of young people, for example through a Youth Guarantee, enhance the implementation and effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes, and address persistent skill mismatches.'

2.2. Programming arrangements for the ESF interventions

Target groups

Related ESF actions on youth unemployment will be equivalent to the YEI actions, with the difference that they will be implemented after the end of the YEI funding in 2018. It is planned that 10,000 additional NEETs will receive early intervention or active labour market policy services between 2019 and 2020. As a result, the total number of supported NEETs will be 45,000 over the five years.

Types of activities planned

ESF youth employment actions beyond the YEI will provide funds for the follow-up projects of 'Discover Yourself' and 'New Start' that will be implemented after 2018 by the same institutions – LLE and DYA. According to the interviewees representing the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, additional funding from the ESF will allow the same or very similar activities to be continued until 2020 applying the same eligibility criteria for participants. Since the ESF will finance the same activities as the YEI, participating NEETs will receive the same YG offers for employment, traineeships or continued education and training after 2018 as before.

Expected outputs and results

The same result indicators as those set for the YEI interventions will be used to measure the success of the ESF youth employment action beyond YEI, that is, of the follow-up projects of 'Discover Yourself' and 'New Start' – see Annex 2.

3. Implementation progress up to November 2015

3.1. Implementation of the YEI interventions

YEI supported actions launched up to November 2015	One of the two programmes planned under the project 'Discover Yourself', namely, the one targeting the inactive NEETs
---	---

Ongoing activities

The contracts between the Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the European Social Fund Agency and the Lithuania Labour Exchange and between the Lithuania Labour Exchange and the Department of Youth Affairs launching the YEI project 'Discover Yourself' were signed in September 2015. Up to November 2015 one of the two project strands planned under 'Discover Yourself' has already started: the programme for economically inactive NEETs, which is implemented by DYA, officially started on 1 October. The programme for unemployed NEETs implemented by LLE is most likely to be launched in early 2016. According to the interviewees representing LLE, this delayed start of the programme is caused by complex public procurement procedures which are still in progress. These procedures are being implemented in order to select public suppliers who have the necessary expertise to provide the new services to unemployed NEETs which have not been provided by LLE before. The start of the second YEI project 'New Start', which will provide ALMP measures, was postponed until December 2015 as the participants of this project should first finish the first YEI project. Currently (at the end of November 2015), the final version of the project's implementation plan is being evaluated by the European Social Fund Agency.

However, intensive preparatory work for the project 'Discover Yourself' has been going on since July 2015. As most of the services foreseen in the project 'Discover Yourself' will be delivered by third parties, both the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and the Department of Youth Affairs have established positions for project coordinators in each Lithuanian municipality. The Department of Youth Affairs has also conducted trainings for their project coordinators which, according to the interviewed representative of DYA, not only enhanced the coordinators' skills, but also helped to create a professional network. The network will be instrumental in sharing good or bad practice examples of the programme implementation in the future. The Lithuanian Labour Exchange has also started employing and training project coordinators at the regional branches of LLE.

Funding up to November 2015

All funding for YEI has been committed up to November 2015 (see Table 3) and almost half of it has been contracted out. Around 7 % of the YEI funding has already been paid out to beneficiaries. According to the interviewees, the increased pre-financing did not influence their plans or speed of implementing the YEI interventions since the YEI projects could not be started earlier.

Table 3 - The amount of funding up to November 2015 (EUR)

	Total (EUR)	Share of total amount budgeted (%)
Amount of funding committed	69,173,966	100
Amount of funding contracted out	33,798,580	48.86
Amount of funding paid out to beneficiaries	5,000,000	7.23

Source: Survey of Managing authorities – Lithuania.

Outputs and results achieved up to November 2015

Since the planned YEI activities are just about to start, it is too early to discuss any achieved results or provided Youth Guarantee offers in Lithuania (see Table 4).

Table 4 - Key characteristics of the NEET target population supported (number of individuals)

15-24 years	15-29 years	Female	Male	ISCED11 Levels 0-2	ISCED11 Levels 3-8	Unemployed	Inactive
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: stakeholder interviews

Communication of the YEI

Recently, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour has launched a public campaign on the Youth Guarantee (see Picture 1), which also promotes the foreseen YEI interventions which are the key instruments to implement the national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan. The campaign has involved both traditional communication methods (posters, press releases, informational notices for NGOs working with youth) and more innovative approaches, such as social media communication ([Facebook profile](#)) and public events with a group of popular actors in several Lithuanian municipalities. During the events, the idea of the Youth Guarantee is explained in a youth friendly manner and young people are encouraged to enrol in the project 'Discover Yourself', when it is launched later this year. The interviewed representative of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour acknowledged that it was initially planned to launch the public campaign on YG/YEI and enrolment to the project 'Discover Yourself' in parallel, but due to the delayed kick-off of the project, the events exclusively fulfilled

a promotional function. Further plans of the YG communication include the setting up of a national Youth Guarantee Website, motivational videos, banners in popular websites, promotional souvenirs. Some additional communication activities are envisaged specifically for YEI to be implemented under each YEI project. In general, the distinction between communicating the YG and the YEI is not very clear-cut as the implementation of both initiatives is very closely linked in Lithuania.

Risks and challenges

Although the YEI projects will not be fully launched until at the end of 2015 or in early 2016, it is already possible to identify some challenges that might impede a successful implementation process. First, Lithuania still lacks a nationwide database for identifying and enrolling the most disadvantaged NEETs in the project 'Discover Yourself'. That creates the risk that these young persons will not be reached at all. That would also make it difficult to achieve the objectives of the YEI intervention. To mitigate this risk, the Lithuanian authorities have started establishing a database of inactive NEETs, that is, for NEETs who are not registered with the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (this is one of the measures foreseen in the national YGIP). The Department of Youth Affairs, which needs data on inactive NEETs to be able to implement its strand of the project 'Discover Yourself', has only very recently gained the right to work with personal data and is preparing to sign contracts with other data holders (national registers). This could help them to identify which young people belong to the group of inactive NEETs. Successful identification of inactive NEETs is seen by stakeholders as one of the key preconditions for the objectives of YEI to be met, as the results of the survey of Managing Authorities show.

Second, the YEI interventions involve a number of different stakeholders: the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, the Lithuanian Labour Exchange, the Department of Youth Affairs, services providers selected by LLE and partner organisations (NGOs) selected by DYA, selected project coordinators, educational institutions, employer organisations and municipality-level officials. Most of these actors have only limited experience of working together, including the two key implementing bodies – LLE and DYA – that have never before jointly implemented a project. According to the interviewees, the coordination process will be complex and will require considerable communication efforts. Moreover, the smooth implementation of public procurement procedures when selecting service providers for the project 'Discover Yourself' is an important precondition for a relatively timely start of the YEI activities and the achievement of the objectives later on.

Finally, the relatively short duration of the early intervention programmes (up to 4 months) is another concern for the stakeholders of the YEI. According to the interviewees, inactive NEETs require intensive and long-term intervention of at least half a year in order to fully prepare them to participate in the labour market or return to the educational system. To address this challenge, the second YEI project 'New Start' will provide further support in the form of active labour market measures designed for the most disadvantaged NEETs among those who will successfully finish the first YEI project. Moreover, the implementing bodies (LLE and DYA) have started to establish a YEI implementation monitoring system that will allow them to obtain



Picture 1. The logo and the symbol (the colourful van) of the public campaign promoting the Youth Guarantee and the YEI in Lithuania

data on how soon NEETs are integrating into the labour market or returning to the educational system after completing the YEI activities.

3.2. Implementation of the ESF interventions

ESF supported actions under Investment Priority 8.ii launched up to November 2015	None
--	------

Ongoing activities

None of the ESF-supported youth employment actions beyond YEI have been launched up to November 2015. As stated in Section 2.2 above, the relevant ESF youth employment initiative – the follow-up of the projects 'Discover Yourself' and 'New Start' – will start in 2019. Consequently, it is too early to discuss any achieved outputs and results.

Funding up to November 2015

No funding for the foreseen ESF youth employment actions beyond YEI has been used so far (see Table 5).

Table 5 - The amount of related ESF funding up to November 2015 (EUR)

	Total (EUR)	Share of total amount budgeted (%)
Amount of funding committed	0	0
Amount of funding contracted out	0	0
Amount of funding paid out to beneficiaries	0	0

Source: stakeholder interviews.

Outputs and results achieved up to November 2015

Since the relevant ESF youth employment actions will start only in 2019 no results have been achieved up to November 2015 (see Table 10).

Table 6 - Key characteristics of the NEET target population supported (number of individuals)

15-24 years	15-29 years	Female	Male	ISCED11 Levels 0-2	ISCED11 Levels 3-8	Unemployed	Inactive
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: stakeholder interviews.

4. Conclusions

The YEI intervention will be the major instrument to tackle youth unemployment in Lithuania in 2014–2020. Two large projects have been designed to implement the YEI and to provide 35,000 Lithuanian NEETs between 15-29 with Youth Guarantee offers for a job, traineeship, or continued education. The YEI introduces innovative elements in the Lithuanian youth employment policy through: 1) encouraging innovative approaches to increasing youth employment and introducing services tailored to the real needs of NEETs; 2) fostering active cooperation between different institutions which were used to working separately and help establish new networks of stakeholders. It is still too early to assess progress towards the target outputs and results. The activities of the first flagship project of the YEI are just about to start while the second YEI project is most likely to be launched in early 2016. The YEI interventions will be complemented by other ESF youth employment actions supporting the implementation of the same actions targeting the same NEET groups in the same region as the

YEI but after 2018. These follow-up activities are expected to involve 10,000 additional NEETs. The key risks to the successful implementation of the YEI and relevant ESF interventions are 1) potential difficulties in reaching inactive, especially the most disadvantaged NEETs, and 2) complexity of foreseen interventions as regards the number of stakeholders involved and new services to be launched.

Updated evidence from the national evaluation

Type of evaluation

External process evaluation, which assesses how Lithuanian institutions are preparing to implement the YEI projects at a national and local level. The YEI-supported activities were still not fully launched at the time of the evaluation; therefore, it was impossible for evaluators to assess any results, outputs or impacts of the YEI in Lithuania.

Quality of the evaluation

The evaluation is based on a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including an on-line survey of and in-depth interviews with local project coordinators contributing to the YEI implementation. In addition, the evaluators organised a focus group and interviews with representatives of relevant national level institutions and conducted desk research of primary and secondary sources (statistical data, previous researches, legislation and other documents). The evaluation methodology is transparent and adequate.

Reference period for the evaluation

January–December 2015

Key findings from the evaluation:

- The YEI encouraged Lithuanian policy-makers to create a more consistent system of individualised assistance for the NEET youth in Lithuania. The YEI projects will offer a great variety of services, including new ones, such as job shadowing and short-term traineeships. According to the evaluators, the services to be provided under the YEI projects are highly suitable for relatively less disadvantaged youth, such as young people who lack work experience or skills, but might be insufficient to address the needs of youth who face specific obstacles to employment, for example, persons with disabilities or family responsibilities, or young people who have addictions. To avoid the so called 'creaming effect' when selecting participants for the YEI projects, the evaluation recommended establishing priority criteria that would encourage the project coordinators to involve relatively more disadvantaged young people in the projects, for example, those who are long-term unemployed, living in rural areas, etc.
- The YEI projects shall involve 35,000 young people until 2018 or, based on the Eurostat data from 2014, every second to third NEET in Lithuania. This is an ambitious goal given the fact that reaching out and convincing NEETs, especially inactive ones, to participate in the YEI activities is a real challenge. Moreover, the NEET group in Lithuania has been decreasing recently as the Lithuanian economy continues to grow. This makes it even more difficult to reach the targeted number of YEI participants by the end of 2018.
- To facilitate the implementation of the YEI projects, the institutions responsible for YEI implementation in Lithuania (LLE and DYA) have established a network of local project coordinators. The coordinators are supposed to actively cooperate not only with each other but also with local stakeholders when providing services for NEET youth. However, at the time of the evaluation, not all coordinators were equally well informed about all elements of the YEI interventions or successful in developing effective partnerships with local social partners.
- The start of the programme for active (registered) NEETs to be implemented by LLE within the YEI project 'Discover Yourself' has been postponed because of the delayed public

procurement procedures. Since the public procurements were still ongoing at the time of the evaluation, it was impossible to assess their results. However, there is a risk that the procured services might be of low quality as the qualification requirements for the service providers are not high and tenders are assessed on the basis of lowest price.

Updated information from the evaluation

Funding:

The national evaluation does not discuss the funding or the additional pre-financing for the YEI.

Activities:

The national evaluation confirms the findings in the country chapter with regard to the types of actions to be implemented and the implementation process (participating organisations, beneficiaries, etc.). The evaluation adds, however, some more information on the public procurement procedures carried out by LLE to select providers of the services for the registered NEETs. The evaluators indicate a significant risk to the quality of the future services because the qualification requirements for the service providers are not high and the winning bids are to be selected using the lowest price criterion. The delay in public procurement also led to the postponement of the full launch of the YEI project 'Discover Yourself'. In contrast to the dates given in the country chapter, according to the evaluation, the programme for active (registered) NEETs to be implemented by LLE within the YEI project 'Discover Yourself' will only be launched in June or July 2016.

Despite the late start, the project coordinators have already begun building partnerships with local stakeholders, first of all, social workers. Those coordinators who have more experience of working with youth have also started sharing their knowledge with their less experienced colleagues. The network of coordinators enables work between different coordinators in the same municipality and also across municipalities to be better coordinated.

Other than the new findings highlighted above, the national evaluation confirms the findings in the country chapter.

Outputs:

The national evaluation complements findings in the country chapter by providing additional information on the methods to be used for approaching the target group. To reach inactive NEETs, the local project coordinators plan to use posters, also advertisements in local radio or TV stations and newspapers as well as in social media. However, the major source of information on inactive NEETs will most likely be local social workers.

Other than the new findings highlighted above, the evaluation confirms the findings in the country chapter.

Results:

According to the evaluation, policy-makers have not yet reached definitive agreement on how the quality of offers should be evaluated. Most likely they are going to use 'work suitability' as the main criteria which is formally defined in the Law on Support for Employment and which means that an offer of work has to be compatible with a person's qualification, work experience, health condition and family commitments. In addition, the evaluators suggested that, when assessing the quality of any offer, the situation of each NEET should be evaluated individually; the opinion of both an external evaluator and the young person should be taken

into account; and the ex-ante (before starting work/study) and ex-post (when a person has started working/studying) evaluations should be combined.

Other than the new findings highlighted above, the national evaluation confirms the findings in the country chapter.

Learning around challenges and risks:

The evaluation expresses concern that changing economic conditions, absence of reliable information on the NEET population, and prolonged public procurement procedures may have negative effects on the implementation of the YEI.

The evaluators found that the size of the NEET group in Lithuania seems to be highly dependent on the general economic situation of the country. Hence, if the Lithuanian economy continues to grow, it might become very difficult to find and involve the targeted number of young people, i.e. 23,000 unemployed (registered) NEETs and 12,000 inactive (unregistered) NEETs, in YEI-supported activities until 2018. Reaching out for inactive NEETs is extremely challenging since Lithuania lacks reliable data on NEET youth. Therefore, the local project coordinators will have to rely on the voluntary help of social workers and other local stakeholders to identify potential participants of the YEI interventions. In addition, the national evaluation points out that the workload for some coordinators who are working with inactive NEETs is enormously high. Because of that, the coordinators may not be able to reach the goals set for them and, thus, there is a risk that the objectives of the YEI interventions may not be achieved. Another serious risk to successful achievement of the YEI objectives is the delay in the implementation of the YEI activities. Due to the complexity of public procurements, the full launch of the YEI project 'Discover Yourself' is now only foreseen for June or July 2016, although initially the responsible authorities planned to launch the project in autumn 2015. As a result, the project coordinators will have to involve the same number of NEETs in YEI activities within a shorter period of time than initially planned. To mitigate these risks, the evaluation recommends reconsidering some output and result indicators of the YEI projects and facilitating cooperation between local institutions and the project coordinators.

Other than the new findings highlighted above, the national evaluation confirms the findings in the country chapter.

Bibliography

Council of the European Union Recommendation of 14 July 2015 on the 2015 National Reform Programme of Lithuania [2015] OJ C272/70.

Council of the European Union Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Lithuania and delivering a Council Opinion on the convergence Programme of Lithuania, 2014 [2014] OJ C247/67.

Council of the European Union Recommendation of 9 July 2013 on the National Reform Programme 2013 of Lithuania and delivering a Council Opinion on the convergence Programme of Lithuania, 2012-2016 [2013] OJ C217/51.

Council of the European Union Recommendation on the National Reform Programme 2012 of Lithuania and delivering a Council opinion on the Convergence Programme of Lithuania, 2012-2015 [2012].

Council of the European Union Recommendation of 12 July 2011 on the National Reform Programme 2011 of Lithuania and delivering a Council Opinion on the updated convergence Programme of Lithuania, 2011-2014 [2011] OJ C210/1.

European Commission (2015), *Youth Employment Initiative Lithuania*, Country fiche.

European Commission (2014), *Guidance on Evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative, ESF Thematic Paper*, September 2014.

European Commission (2014), *Guidance on Implementing the Youth Employment Initiative*, ESF thematic paper, September 2014.

European Commission (2014), *Youth Employment Initiative and the European Social Fund, ESF thematic paper*, March 2014.

Government of the Republic of Lithuania, 'Operational Programme for the European Union Funds' Investments in 2014-2020', Vilnius, 2014. Available online: <<http://www.esinvesticijos.lt/en/>> [Accessed 05 October 2015].

Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, 'Order on Amending the Order of the Minister of Social Security and Labour of 16 December 2013 No. A1-692 'On Establishing the Youth Guarantee Initiative Implementation Plan.', 27 November 2014 (No. A1-584).

PPMI (2015), *Integration of NEET youth into the labour market and society: evaluation of NEETs-oriented policy interventions*, Evaluation report, Vilnius.

Annex 1 The youth employment situation

Proportion and characteristics of NEET population in a country (age groups 15–24 and 25–29)

	NEET proportion in the respective age group (%)	NEET proportion by sex (%)		NEET proportion by education (%)		NEET proportion by labour market status (%)	
		Female	Male	ISCED11 Levels 0-2 ²	ISCED11 Levels 3-8 ³	Unemployed	Inactive
AGE GROUP 15–24							
2013	11.1	10.6	11.6	3.4	7.8	5.8	5.3
2014	9.9	10.3	9.5	2.9	7.1	5.3	4.6
AGE GROUP 25-29							
2013	19.4	22.4	16.5	4.1	15.3	10.7	8.7
2014	19.1	22.8	15.6	4.3	14.8	9.3	9.8

Source: Eurostat yth_empl_160, yth_empl_150, accessed 07 October 2015.

Proportion and characteristics of young unemployed in your country (age groups 15–24 and 25–29)

	Total youth unemployment rate (%)	Youth unemployment rate by sex (%)		Youth unemployment rate by education level (%)		
		Female	Male	ISCED11 Levels 0-2 ⁴	ISCED11 Levels 3-4 ⁵	ISCED11 Levels 5-8 ⁶
AGE GROUP 15–24						
2013	21.9	20.4	23	38.5	20.2	19.1
2014	19.3	18.7	19.6	39.7	17.8	14.0
AGE GROUP 25-29						
2013	13.4	13.3	13.4	NA	18.1	7.0
2014	11.0	9.7	12.1	NA	16.3	5.1

Source: Eurostat yth_empl_090, accessed 07 October 2015.

² Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

³ Upper secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary and tertiary education.

⁴ Less than primary, primary and lower secondary education.

⁵ Upper secondary, post-secondary non-tertiary education.

⁶ Tertiary education.

Annex 2 Expected outputs and results of the YEI and other ESF youth employment actions

Output indicators	Target values	Reference population of the output indicator
Youth Employment Initiative		
Persons aged between 15 and 29 who are not in education or training, who participated in YEI-supported intervention	35,000	Project participants
Persons who are not in education or training, who participated in YEI-supported intervention, of which aged between 25 and 29	8,000	Project participants
Other ESF youth employment actions		
Persons aged between 15 and 29 who are not in education or training, who participated in YEI-supported intervention	10,000	Project participants
Persons who are not in education or training, who participated in YEI-supported intervention, of which aged between 25 and 29	2,000	Project participants

Result indicators	Target values	Reference population of the result indicator
Youth Employment Initiative and other ESF youth employment actions – the same result indicators used		
Unemployed participants who completed participation in YEI/ESF-supported intervention	75 %	Project participants
Unemployed participants who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship after leaving	50 %	Project participants
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, after leaving	50 %	Project participants
Long-term unemployed participants who completed participation in YEI/ESF-supported intervention	50 %	Project participants
Long-term unemployed participants who received an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship after leaving	32 %	Project participants
Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, after leaving	26 %	Project participants
Inactive participants not in education or training who completed participation in YEI/ESF-supported intervention	35 %	Project participants
Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship after leaving	30 %	Project participants
Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	16 %	Project participants

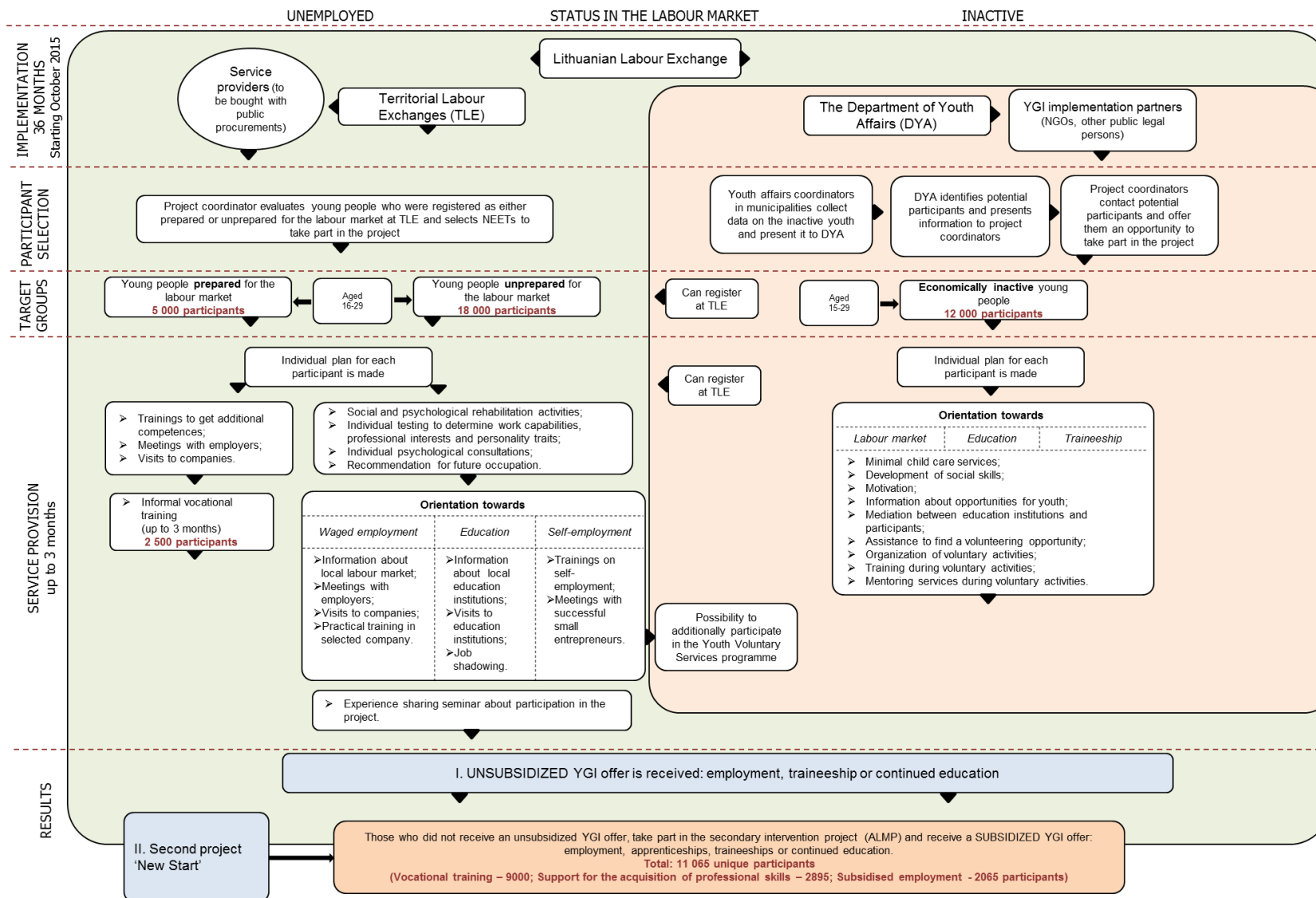
Result indicators	Target values	Reference population of the result indicator
Youth Employment Initiative and other ESF youth employment actions – <i>the same result indicators used</i>		
Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gained a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, after leaving	10 %	Project participants
Participants in employment six months after leaving	44 %	Project participants
Participants in self-employment six months after leaving	9 %	Project participants

Source: Republic of Lithuania Operational programme for the European Union funds' investments in 2014-2020 Vilnius 2014.

Annex 3 List of the interviewees

Type of interviewee	Position	Organisation	Interview mode (face-to-face Skype/ phone)	Date of interview
Managing authority	YGI coordinator / Chief Specialist at the Labour Market Division	The Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Face-to-face	2015-09-29
Managing authority	Chief specialist at the Structural Support Policy Division of the Department of European Union Structural Support	The Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Face-to-face	2015-09-29
Managing authority	Chief specialist at the Structural Support Policy Division of the Department of European Union Structural Support	The Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Face-to-face	2015-09-29
Implementing body	Head of the Youth Policy Development and Program Implementation Division	The Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Face-to-face	2015-09-29
Implementing body	Head of the European Union Assistance Management Subdivision of the Employment Support Division	The Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Face-to-face	2015-10-01
Implementing body	Chief specialist at the European Union Assistance Management Subdivision of the Employment Support Division	The Lithuanian Labour Exchange under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour	Face-to-face	2015-10-01

Annex 4 YEI project 'Discover Yourself'



HOW TO OBTAIN EU PUBLICATIONS

Free publications:

- one copy:
via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>);
- more than one copy or posters/maps:
from the European Union's representations (http://ec.europa.eu/represent_en.htm);
from the delegations in non-EU countries
(http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)
or calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu>).

Priced subscriptions:

- via one of the sales agents of the Publications Office of the European Union
(http://publications.europa.eu/others/agents/index_en.htm).

