



European Commission

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Brussels, 2 April 2013

Youth Employment Initiative

1. How is the target population of the measures defined? Who will benefit?

The target population is defined in Article 15.i of the ESF draft regulation. Member States will be able to deliver measures to all young people aged 15-24 not in employment, education or training, residing in the eligible regions. These young people may be inactive or unemployed and registered or not as seeking work.

2. What kind of measures will the Member States be able to finance with this money?

All measures will target individual persons, rather than systems or structures for which other ESF support can be used.

The precise measures to be supported through the YEI will be agreed between the Commission and the Member States in the context of the ESF programming process. As the needs in the different regions may be quite different, we consider that it is not useful to have a mandatory list of measures. However, the Member State / Region will have the obligation to clearly demonstrate in their operational programmes that it has selected the appropriate actions to address the existing needs and ensure the implementation of the youth guarantee.

Examples of measures targeted to the individual young person:

- Direct support for high-quality traineeships and apprenticeships
- Provision of first job experience (placements for at least 6 months)
- Reduction of non-wage labour costs
- Targeted and well-designed wage and recruitment subsidies (these could for example be delivered through voucher schemes)
- Mobility measures to bring skills and jobs together
- Start-up support for young entrepreneurs (mentoring and access to finance)
- Quality vocational education and training
- Second chance programmes

3. What is the link with the ESF – as part of the Initiative and the ESF used for young people outside the Initiative?

The original proposal for the ESF Regulation already contains a specific investment priority on sustainable integration of young people not in employment, education or training, into the labour market. All Member States having an EU2020 country-specific recommendation on youth are expected to programme some ESF resources under this priority. These measures can cover a broader range than the YEI, including e.g. modernisation of services and structures to facilitate the implementation of the YG.

The YEI, on the contrary, including its ESF component, will target directly measures for individuals and in the regions concerned (NUTS 2 level, youth unemployment rate above 25%). The aim is to directly work with the young people to place them within or close to the labour market. However, both the YEI and any other ESF measures supporting youth employment should contribute to the overall implementation of the Youth Employment Package and the Youth Guarantee. The YEI would thus not replace ESF youth employment action but would enhance it, with particular focus on the regions (and subregions) worst affected.

4. How will YEI be operationally implemented?

The Initiative will be fully integrated into the ESF programming framework. It could take the form of a dedicated Programme, a dedicated priority axis within an Operational Programme with a broader (geographic or thematic) scope or a part of a priority axis. These possibilities are provided to find an appropriate balance between the need to trace the YEI interventions specifically in the regions concerned, while giving some flexibility about the form to be chosen. The choice of the form will mainly depend on the integration with other types of actions and with the amounts available. For instance in Member States, where the overall YEI budget is likely to be significant and all the territory of the Member State will be concerned, designing a separate YEI Operational programme could be the appropriate option. But when only one region is eligible and the amounts are limited, the inclusion of YEI as a part of a priority axis could be the best solution.

5. How will the results be tracked?

Member States submit monitoring data at the level of the investment priority that has been chosen. In order to be able to receive data linked to YEI funding, it is thus necessary to establish at least a separate investment priority for the additional YEI funding in the operational programmes. The proposal introduces specific YEI result indicators which are to be reported for all operations under the NEETs investment priority.

6. What is the relationship between the YG and the YEI?

The purpose of the YEI is to provide financial support for the implementation of the Youth Employment Package, and in particular the Youth Guarantee, in those regions

that will have to make the biggest effort in order to implement the package due to very high numbers of young unemployed.

Member States will still be expected to fulfil the Council Recommendation on Establishing a Youth Guarantee in all regions.

The measures of the YEI are meant to be targeted at the young people directly. Other ESF funds can be used to implement any structural changes needed to implement the Youth Guarantee (such as setting up a framework for apprenticeships or developing employment services to effectively deliver the Youth Guarantee).

Given that the measures are to be targeted at achieving results for the individual who is currently facing difficulties in an eligible region, the measure would not necessarily need to be delivered in the eligible region itself. The condition is that the supported person must reside in the eligible region.

7. What does the Commission mean by "frontloading"?

The economic crisis is having an exceptionally severe impact on young people. Creating the Youth Employment Initiative is an important part of the EU answer to the urgent priority to address youth unemployment in the Union's most affected regions. This initiative is an additional effort to target an emergency situation, 'here and now'. The investments supported by the YEI should be strongly oriented towards achieving concrete results and on achieving them quickly. Hopefully when the EU will exit the crisis, the ESF and national Funds should be sufficient to tackle the problem of youth unemployment.

The Commission has proposed not to make this initiative subject to the performance reserve. Thus, no funds will be retained to be allocated only at the end of the programming period.

An additional way to frontload the initiative by making more resources available at the beginning of the period would require a change to the profile for commitments agreed by the European Council.

8. Will the measures be only open to young people residing in the eligible NUTS II regions?

The initiative should be primarily focussed on the young people from the regions that need it most – NUTS 2 regions where youth unemployment is higher than 25%. However, in exceptional cases, it might be useful to support people residing in parts of non-eligible regions which also suffer from particularly high youth unemployment levels.

That is why the Commission has proposed some flexibility for the Member States allowing them to spend up to 10% of the resources outside the eligible regions.