

Linking Industrial Needs and VET to Optimise Human Capital (ESF 2.85)

Linking Industrial Needs and VET to Optimise Human Capital



1 Description

Timespan

The instrument has been in operation between 2010 and 2015.

Stage

NO LONGER OPERATIONAL

The programme has been finalised, as the intended aim of skills mismatch was reached.

Focus area

MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET



MATCHING SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK

2 Foundations

Policy area

GENERAL EDUCATION

The instrument helped to address the anticipated educational needs of industrial sectors and identify the potential skill gaps and shortages of the present workforce.

Policy goal

Several goals were defined, including conducting research in ten sector groups, where a report generated for each sector will seek to identify skills, competences and qualifications that will be used as the basics to design tailor-made courses for each industrial sector. There was an aim to re-skill 20% of participants to enable them to take up new tasks in the same or different industry sector and to up-skill 80% of participants to enable them to take up new tasks or perform better the same tasks within the relevant industry. There was also the goal to identify and address emerging trends developing in the labour market by providing approximately 3,600 hours of training across 10 sectors. This project aimed to identify the specific skills needs and current gaps in 10 different sectors. After this, the instrument also allowed people to apply for courses related to these sectors, which will ultimately give them the adaptability to move around in the Maltese labour market and in turn close the skills mismatch that exists in the market.

Mismatch

EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH

The research groups specifically search for skills mismatches in each of the 10 sectors respectively. VET and education programmes for those sectors are then adjusted accordingly. Hence the measure explicitly addresses skills mismatches.

Aim of policy instrument

-  UPSKILL AND MATCH SKILLS OF UNEMPLOYED
-  ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES
-  UPSKILL EMPLOYED ADULTS
-  FACILITATE JOB/CAREER TRANSITIONS
-  BROADLY ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH

Legal basis

REGULATION

Administrative level

NATIONAL

Main responsible body

The agency responsible for the implementation of this instrument is the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST).

Stakeholders

-  TRAINING PROVIDERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)
-  CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
-  GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)
-  SOCIAL PARTNERS

The Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS), the Malta Chamber of Commerce, and the Malta Qualifications Council were responsible for coordinating the implementation of the project, along with research groups who establish the sectoral needs. The MCAST, the Qualifications Council and the Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS) coordinated the project implementation. The MCAST is the main VET institution in the country, closely affiliated with the ETC (Education and Training Corporation), which is the PES of Malta, while ITS is an institute of higher education. The Malta Qualifications Council is the body which oversees the Malta Qualifications Framework.

Funding

This programme costed €590,021 with 85% of the sum divided between the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), while the remaining 15% was funded through National Funds.

Intended beneficiaries

The ultimate beneficiaries are those people who follow the adapted training and education programmes. Other beneficiaries of this instrument are MCAST and the ITS, in that their programmes and curricula are adapted to accurately address current sectoral needs.

3 Processes

Use of labour market intelligence

-  ENABLE STRATEGIC BUSINESS DECISIONS
-  INFORM THE DESIGN OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS (NQFS)
-  DESIGN STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

Research has been conducted in ten sector groups; Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals, Financial Services, ICT,

Furniture, Printing, Infrastructure, Food, Beverages, Maritime and Plastics, and Tourism sectors. A report generated for each sector sought to identify skills, competences and qualifications that will be used as the basis to design tailor-made courses for each industrial sector.

Financial schemes

This policy instrument is financed through the European Social Fund (ESF), however the intended beneficiaries of the training did not receive any financial incentives to participate.

Frequency of updates

Content of the training remained the same throughout the implementation of the instrument.

Development

The approach taken by the responsible agency depended on the research made into finding the ten sector groups. After this step, the courses and training provided were adjusted accordingly.

Barriers

There were no serious barriers in the carrying out of this policy instrument. However, one might mention the lack of any incentives, whether financial or otherwise, which might have put some people off from attending the training and enhancing their skills.

Success factors

Some of the factors that have made this instrument a success was the research that took place, which in turn provided industry-specific training, and also the relatively short and free courses that were offered by MCAST in these sectors.

Monitoring

The greatest indicators that were used to measure the success of such an instrument were the number of applicants, whether in their attendance or in their educational success during the training and courses.

Innovativeness

SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE

Identifying skills gaps by collaborating with industries is quite an innovative approach in that this is one of the first skills mismatch identification policies in Malta. While similar measures exist in other countries, the notion of forming research groups to tackle the top 10 sectors experiencing growth appears quite an efficient approach. The collaboration with education and training related organizations is also important to actually use the results. Having these two stages in one programme is also a sound approach, as it guarantees the use of the research group's findings. This is to become a more systematic way of identifying skills mismatches and consequently which skills are needed in which sectors.

Evidence of effectiveness

Given the amount of sectors under examination within this project, and the fact that education and training programmes will be adapted across those industries, the impact was estimated to be high, while the effects of this measure are likely to be quite broader than the immediate sector. The intended beneficiaries of this policy instrument have been as expected, through addressing emerging trends in the labour market by providing approximately 3,600 hours of training across the ten sectors. There were no unexpected benefits or costs to this policy instrument.

Engagement of stakeholders

The Ministry for Education and Employment constantly consulted with the Malta Chamber of Commerce, the Malta Qualifications Council and the Institute of Tourism Studies. Companies involved in Pharmaceuticals and Chemicals, Financial Services, ICT, Furniture, Printing, Infrastructure, Food, Beverages, Maritime and Plastics, and Tourism sectors have also been consulted on the skill shortages of the labour workforce when it comes to their sectors, through thorough research done beforehand.

Transferability**NOT EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

Provided there is collaboration between similar VET and education related institutes with bodies organizing qualifications frameworks and occupational standards, this programme would be quite transferable. However, here the size and organization of Malta comes into play in that it has one main VET institution, MCAST, which collaborates closely with the Malta Qualifications Council. Organizing and co-ordinating research groups and tailoring training are made easier as most VET courses are to be found under one roof. As such, it is a transferable instrument provided there is close collaboration between organizations addressing organizational standards and qualifications, VET and education, and sectoral needs.

Sustainability

The sustainability of this programme without ESF funding is questionable. The measure does not appear to require too many extra permanent administrative structures. The research phase and tailoring of education and training programmes stage took place once for each sector throughout the project period.
