



## HRDA Scheme for Job Placement and Training of Tertiary-Education Graduates

Σχέδιο Στελέχωσης Επιχειρήσεων με Απόφοιτους Τριτοβάθμιας Εκπαίδευσης

### Description

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#### Timespan

2009-2012

Note: Another version of the Instrument had been in operation long before 2009. During 2009-2012 it had undergone modifications. It is still running today in a slightly different/ modified version.

#### Stage

**OTHER**

**This is an HRDA scheme that was initially introduced in the eighties. It has undergone modifications on several occasions. 2009-2012 was an implementation period, where certain modifications took place in order to respond to the lessons learned from the prevailing economic conditions. The scheme is still running in a form not very different from the 2009-12 version (the core principles are the same).**

#### Focus area



**MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET**

### Foundations

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#### Policy area



**ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES**

**HRDA contributes towards minimising the effects of the economic crisis on the Cyprus labour market by tackling the unemployment issue among tertiary-education graduates.**

## **Policy goal**

To reduce unemployment amongst tertiary-education graduates by helping them find productive and suitable employment through acquiring work experience and specialised additional knowledge suitable to market needs. At the same time help businesses/organisations to improve their productivity and competitiveness by employing highly educated young graduates. The programme focused on the integration of highly qualified young people into the labour market by providing practical on-the-job experience in a company for a maximum period of 12 months.

## **Mismatch**

**PART OF BROADER PROGRAMME, YET WITH EXPLICIT FOCUS**

**This programme does not directly target skills mismatch. However, in the individual training programmes set for each candidate, there is in-company practical training and acquisition of work experience and participation in selected seminars on various subjects.**

## **Aim of policy instrument**



**MATCH SKILLS OF YOUNG GRADUATES**



**ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES**

## **Legal basis**

**OTHER**

## **Administrative level**

**NATIONAL**

## **Main responsible body**

Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HDRA)

## **Stakeholders**



**GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**



**The Social Partners are actively involved in all the HRDA initiatives. Employers’ and workers’ organisations are directly involved in policy and strategy formulation through their representation on HRDA’s Board of Governors. In direct partnership, they also implement training activities that satisfy specialised needs, within the framework set by HRDA. As part of the Board, they receive reports about the scheme's progress and, if necessary, they carry out modifications to bring the scheme up-to-date. They also influence policy decisions.**

**Funding**

The budget for 2012 amounted to €5.7 million with actual expenditure for 2012 reaching the amount of €6,227,934.  
 The Scheme is funded solely by the HRDA through its Human Resource Development Fund. The source of the Fund is a levy that is imposed by law on the payroll of all the employers in Cyprus, irrespective of size or sector of the economy.

**Intended beneficiaries**

1. Tertiary-education unemployed graduates who
  - Completed at least a 3 -year academic course of any discipline
  - Have no more than 12 months relevant work experience
  - Have completed academic studies up to 3 years before employment

The scheme/programme helps them find employment, by encouraging reluctant employers to participate in the scheme by subsidising the graduates wages for the duration of training.
  
2. Employers
  - From any economic sector
  - Have a need for recruiting and training a graduate to a position requiring higher qualifications
  - Suitable in-house trainer/coach
  - Appropriate company structure for the training and employment of the graduate

The employers benefit by recruiting highly educated young graduates while their remuneration is subsidised by HRDA.

## Processes

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### Use of labour market intelligence



**DESIGN TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO ACTIVATE UNEMPLOYED**



**INFORM DECISIONS ON COURSE FUNDING/PROVISION**



**INFORM JOB-SEARCH DECISIONS OF UNEMPLOYED**

**HRDA, through its Research and Planning Directorate, studies the economy and the labour market needs and decides where to place emphasis for meeting the identified urgent needs. High unemployment among tertiary-education graduates was and still is a serious issue that requires HRDA to intervene with appropriate measures to combat it.**

### Financial schemes

The employer receives subsidy from the HRDA that covers part of the graduate's salary and part of the employer's time for supervising, guiding and training the graduate during a fixed period of approved training.

### Frequency of updates

Just like all other schemes of the HRDA, this particular instrument is reviewed on an annual basis in order to report its progress to the Board of Governors for approval of its continuation and of the required funds. In addition, HRDA, undertakes a scheme evaluation of its impact on the graduates (in 2012 for the 2009-2011 implementation) either separately or together with other HRDA schemes.

### Development

During the implementation period of the scheme (2009-12), in order to combat the effects of the economic crisis and the steady increase in graduate unemployment, the subsidy to the employers increased from €1,100 to €1,600 euros month in order to encourage increased participation in the scheme.

### Barriers

The basic barrier was the effects of the economic crisis, which caused businesses to shrink in overall numbers and size, and as a consequence the labour market to follow suit. Instead of recruiting more people, businesses were letting people go and the interest in the scheme diminished.

**Success factors** Generous compulsory minimum salary for the graduates (€1,100 per month for the 6-month version and €1,150 per month for the 12-month version of the scheme).

Generous subsidy level for the employer (up to €1,600 per month) for the whole period of training (either 6 or 12 months). The subsidy took into account the graduate's salary and the employer's cost of providing the training.

## Monitoring

The Human Resource Development Agency (HRDA) carries out evaluation studies focusing on the impact on the participants of the scheme to whom a subsidy was granted with regular follow-ups. Within this policy, the HRDA designed and developed an integrated evaluation system on the impacts in general on the national economy of HRDA's social interventions and activities/schemes. The specific objectives of this exercise are as follows:

- Assessment of the achievement of the objectives of each action
- Evaluation of the mechanisms for implementing the actions
- Evaluation of the contribution of the actions in the economy and the labour market of Cyprus
- Record the basic characteristics of the beneficiaries that participated in actions of HRDA
- Assessment of the impact of human resources participation in the actions
- Assessment of the degree of satisfaction of individuals from participation

## Innovativeness **SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE**

**The specific policy is innovative, because it caters for the needs of two important stakeholders of the economy at the same time - the unemployed graduates and the employers. By subsidising the employment of graduates, employers benefit by having highly educated employees with fresh ideas that can improve the status and performance of their business, while at the same time the university graduates through the scheme can improve their skills at a suitable employment post. Through the training element of the scheme the graduates entertain the opportunity of a "smooth" entry into the labour market and upgrading their skills.**

## Sustainability

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### Evidence of effectiveness

In 2012, the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) completed an evaluation study regarding the impact on the participants of the Scheme to whom a subsidy was granted during the period 2009-2011, which revealed that 90% of scheme participants were employed, while

77% of them were employed by the initial enterprise. A second evaluation study was carried out in 2013.

Impact of the instrument is high. While the target for 2012 was to have 670 participants, the actual participants reached 709 persons. The success of this measure has led to its inclusion as an active labour market policy in the Special Prevention-Action Plan that was introduced by HRDA in close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance in 2009, for combating unemployment.

The scheme, over the years, has been well received by employers. Since its first introduction, it has undergone several modifications in order to adjust it to the prevailing market conditions. The graduate trainees are also very content with the scheme, because it enables them a "smooth" entry into the labour market and it gives them the opportunity for further development. No unexpected benefits have been observed.

### **Engagement of stakeholders**

The main stakeholders, the employers, the trade unions and the social partners are represented on the Board of Governors of the Human Resource Development Authority. The Board is frequently notified of the scheme's progress so that, if necessary, adjustments are made to cater for the prevailing needs of the economy.

### **Transferability** **EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

**All the basic features of the scheme could easily be transferred to another country. E.g. Unemployed university graduates. Employers willing to employ university educated labour force and train them on the understanding that they would receive a subsidy for a specific training-period to upgrade graduates' performance and cover their overhead cost of training. By doing so the employers benefit from the services of a highly qualified young person. Also most employers foresee continuation of employment of graduates at their organisations.**

### **Sustainability**

Over the years, the specific scheme has proved to be very successful and very useful for both employers and tertiary-education graduates. The scheme, which is currently in use, has undergone over the years modifications to reflect the prevailing market and economic conditions. There are no plans of discontinuing it.

## **STAD - Scheme for the Job Placement of Young Unemployed Graduates of Lower Secondary, Upper Secondary & Post-Secondary Education of up to 2**

# years for the Acquisition of Work Experience in Enterprises/Organisations (2014)

ΣΤΑΔ - Τοποθέτηση Ανέργων Νέων Αποφοίτων Γυμνασίων, Λυκείων, Τεχνικών Σχολών και Μεταλυκειακής Εκπαίδευσης μέχρι και Διετούς Διάρκειας για Απόκτηση Εργασιακής Πείρας σε Επιχειρήσεις / Οργανισμούς (2014)

## Description

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### Timespan

2014 - 2015

Note: There were 3 separate distinct implementations of the scheme 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. Each implementation was initiated with a Call for Participation for interested employers and graduates. Each Call had a fixed duration.

### Stage

**NO LONGER OPERATIONAL**

**The 2015 scheme, which lasted until early 2016, is now completed. Since then, HRDA, the organisation fully responsible for its operation, has implemented other schemes for the unemployed.**

### Focus area



**MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET**

## Foundations

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### Policy area



**ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES**

**HRDA contributes towards minimising the effects of the economic crisis on the Cyprus labour market by tackling the unemployment issue among secondary-education and post-secondary education (up to 2 years) graduates.**

### Policy goal

The instrument addresses the problem of unemployment among young people. The aim of the Schemes is to provide young unemployed persons (below tertiary-education graduates) the opportunity to acquire work experience in order to improve their employability, at the same time, giving the opportunity to enterprises/organisations to use the services of

those young persons at no financial cost to them. The scheme gives young graduates of secondary education the opportunity to enter/re-enter the labour market and improve their employability through acquiring training and work experience in companies and organisations.

## Mismatch

**PART OF BROAD POLICY MEASURE OF WHICH SKILL MISMATCH IS ONLY A MINOR PART**

**As a rule, the unemployed were placed in enterprises according to their skills or educational background. The scheme was not intended to tackle mismatch, and depending on availability of suitable places, there was some mismatch in the placing of the unemployed.**

## Aim of policy instrument



**MATCH SKILLS OF YOUNG GRADUATES**



**UPSKILL AND MATCH SKILLS OF UNEMPLOYED**

## Legal basis

**MINISTERIAL ORDER**

## Administrative level

**NATIONAL**

## Main responsible body

Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA)

## Stakeholders



**GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**



**EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS**



**TRADE UNIONS**



**CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**



## SOCIAL PARTNERS

**The HRDA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and the social partners, implemented this co-funded scheme by the European Social Fund and the HRDA. The Scheme was initiated by the Ministry and the HRDA, and monitored, controlled and evaluated by the latter. The authority is part of the wider public sector and governed by a tripartite Board of Directors, comprising government, employer, and trade union representatives.**

## Funding

The budgeted total expenditure of the scheme was €4.7 million. The project was co-funded from national sources drawn from the HRDA's own sources, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Youth Employment Initiative of the EU. The HRDA source of funds is the Human Resource Levy imposed by law on the payroll of all employers, in all sectors of the economy, irrespective of size.

## Intended beneficiaries

1. Secondary and Post-secondary (up to 2 years) unemployed graduates - the scheme offers them employment opportunities and improves their employability by giving them training and work experience opportunities .
2. Employers - the employers benefit by recruiting and utilising young graduates at no financial cost to them.

## Processes

### Use of labour market intelligence



**DESIGN TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO ACTIVATE UNEMPLOYED**



**INFORM JOB-SEARCH DECISIONS OF UNEMPLOYED**

**HRDA, through its Research and Planning Directorate, studies the economy and the labour market needs and decides where to place emphasis for meeting the identified urgent needs. High unemployment among young people was and still is a serious issue that requires a national concentrated effort to tackle it. The particular instrument was set up in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance as a result of the 2013 proclamation of the President of the Republic for measures to combat unemployment.**

**Financial schemes**

The secondary and post-secondary education graduates participating in the scheme receive a grant of €125 per week from the Human Resource Development Authority, paid monthly, for a six-month period. The employer does not bear any financial cost.

**Frequency of updates**

On an annual basis.

**Development**

There were no major adjustments to the previous (2013) implementation of the scheme. The 2014 implementation was along the same lines of its predecessor, but gave more emphasis for placement in the private sector rather than the public sector, as the previous scheme covered placement of unemployed young secondary graduates in both the private and public sectors.

**Barriers**

The serious barriers to the implementation of the instrument were:

1. The reluctance of some employers to take-on the young unemployed for a period of 6-months.
2. The drop-outs of the scheme - graduates leaving the scheme before its proper completion.

To a great extent, these barriers were tackled successfully by the HRDA's continuous monitoring and efforts.

**Success factors**

Due to the experience of the 2013 implementation, there was more careful and mindful placement of young people, taking into account certain factors such as geographical location, personal/family circumstances and others alike.

**Monitoring**

Three indicators were set in an evaluation study carried out by HRDA 4 months after the completion of the scheme:

1. Employability - 43% of those that were working when the study was carried out continued to be employed in the enterprise where they were placed.
2. Benefits from participating in the scheme - 91% of the participants evaluated the degree of utilisation of the knowledge and skills that were acquired through the scheme as very good to good.
3. Satisfaction of the participants - the degree of overall satisfaction for participating in the scheme was 3.4 out of 4

Progress is measured by relevant studies of HRDA on each implementation of the scheme.

## Innovativeness **SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE**

**The specific policy is innovative, because it caters for the needs of two important stakeholders of the economy at the same time - the unemployed secondary and post-secondary (up to 2 years) graduates on one hand, and the employers on the other. By removing the cost of remuneration from the employers, it encourages them to participate in the scheme and benefit from the input of these young unemployed to their organisation.**

## Sustainability

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### **Evidence of effectiveness**

Reported survey results carried out on behalf of the HRDA by independent organisation among the scheme participants, revealed that:

#### A. Impact of the scheme on employability

Approximately 1 in 3 (32.7%) of the participants in the scheme stated that they were employed at the time of the field research (May - June 2015), approximately 4 months after the completion of their participation. The employment rate was higher for the people who were placed in enterprises/organisations in the private sector.

#### B. Utilisation of Knowledge and Skills & Employment Prospects

Over 9 out of 10 of the participants (90.7%) evaluated the degree of utilisation of the knowledge and skills acquired during their participation in the scheme as very good or good. Over 8 out of 10 (84.4%) considered that their participation has improved their employment prospects.

#### C. Satisfaction of participants in the scheme

Over 9 out of 10 participants (91.1%) in the scheme were either very satisfied or satisfied from their participation and would recommend others to participate in similar Schemes (94.5%).

Further results of the survey mentioned above show that the majority of the scheme participants (70%), considered that it provided good to very good chances of finding employment, and 83% believed that the degree the scheme contributed to strengthening the prospect of employability was good to very good.

No unexpected benefits occurred.

### **Engagement of stakeholders**

The main stakeholders, the employers (from the public and private sector), are represented on the Board of Governors of the Human Resource Development Authority. They approved the implementation of the scheme and allocated the relevant funds for its smooth operation. The Board was informed of the scheme's progress throughout the evaluation study that was undertaken by HRDA on the impact of the scheme on the employability of the graduates.

## Transferability **EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

All the core features of the scheme could easily be transferred to another country, e.g. unemployed young secondary education graduates, and employers willing to train and offer them the opportunity to acquire work experience without incurring any financial cost. The employers can exploit the opportunity to retain some of those young people in their employment.

**Sustainability** The instrument was implemented for the last time in 2015. Since then it has been replaced by other instruments that cater for the unemployed.

# Subsidy scheme for attracting people in the labour market through flexible forms of employment

ΣΧΕΔΙΟ ΕΠΙΧΟΡΗΓΗΣΗΣ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΩΝ/ΟΡΓΑΝΙΣΜΩΝ ΓΙΑ ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΙΑ ΝΕΩΝ ΘΕΣΕΩΝ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΣ ΜΕ ΕΥΕΛΙΚΤΕΣ ΡΥΘΜΙΣΕΙΣ

## Description

**Timespan** 2007-2013 (extended to 2015). The implementation of the project started in the beginning of 2010 and ended on 31 August 2015.

**Stage** **NO LONGER OPERATIONAL**

The crisis the Cyprus economy suffered after 2008 impacted negatively on employment opportunities. Unemployment was widely spread and as a consequence, the continuation of the project became irrelevant to the prevailing labour market conditions.

**Focus area**



**MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET**

**Foundations**

## FOUNDATIONS

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### Policy area



**SOCIAL AND INTEGRATION POLICIES**

**The purpose of the promotion and publicity activities for the current programme period is to create awareness about Flexible Forms of Employment, their advantages and disadvantages and to inform and encourage the various stakeholders and citizens to participate in the various activities of the project.**

### Policy goal

The main objectives of the project are: keeping more people in the labour market by improving their employability and promoting the reconciliation of work and family life; and improved productivity and enhanced competitiveness of enterprises. The Scheme aimed to facilitate the employment of economically inactive and unemployed persons, who have difficulty entering or remaining in the labour market by way of some form of flexible arrangement.

### Mismatch

**PART OF BROAD POLICY MEASURE OF WHICH SKILL MISMATCH IS ONLY A MINOR PART**

**The objective of the scheme is to contribute to the increase of job positions and to facilitate the employment of economically inactive and unemployed people, who have difficulty entering and remaining in the labour market without the option of some form of flexible arrangement. The ultimate goal of the scheme is: to increase the employment participation of groups of people outside the labour market by creating new jobs with flexible arrangements; to facilitate these people to have a balanced work and personal life; and to support business/organizations to create new jobs with flexible working arrangements, in order to increase their efficiency and improve their competitiveness.**

### Aim of policy instrument



**OTHER**

**To facilitate employable population, especially women to enter/re-enter the labour market.**

### Legal basis

**MINISTERIAL ORDER**

**Administrative level** NATIONAL

**Main responsible body** Cyprus Productivity Centre

**Stakeholders**

-  GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)
-  EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS
-  TRADE UNIONS
-  CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
-  SOCIAL PARTNERS

**Other stakeholders involved come from the following two social partners groups:**

**(A) Industrialists, employers, commercial and other business organisations in particular: the Federation of Cyprus Employers and Industrialists; and the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry.**

**(B) Labour unions in particular: the Pancyprian Labour Federation; the Cyprus Confederation of Workers; and the Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus**

**Their role is limited to advising to formulate relevant policies; to this effect, an evaluation study conducted by an external evaluator procured by the Cyprus Productivity Centre, was delivered to them before hand for study and consideration.**

**Funding**

The total budget for subsidies (labour and travelling costs), is estimated at €3,000,000 for the employment of 500 people during the entire period of operation of the scheme. The maximum amount of aid that can be granted to a given firm cannot exceed €200,000 in any period of three years. In cases of aid granted to enterprises active in the transport sector, the ceiling is set to €100,000 in any period of three years.

**Intended**

Eligibility criteria to participate in the Scheme (intended beneficiaries) are

## **beneficiaries**

(1) people pursuing work on flexible terms of employment and (2) employers willing to employ such people:

(1) People applying to join the scheme should be aged 15 or more, citizens of the Republic of Cyprus (RoC) or any other Member State of the Union. Citizens from other countries are eligible provided they have residence and work permission from the RoC and furthermore, have been legally residence in Cyprus for at least 12 months prior to the date they submit their application. Additionally, for a person to participate in the Scheme, he/she must be economically inactive and be either:

- a woman, not having worked for at least 12 of the last 16 months
- at least 50 years old, not having worked for 12 of the last 16 months
- a parent whose children are under the age of 16
- a person who has the care of dependent children/persons with disabilities or chronic health problems that require constant care
- an unemployed person, who is referred to the scheme by the Department of Labour and are in need of work with some form of flexible arrangement.

(2) Employers could be any national stakeholder (employers/industrialists organization or trade union) or any business / organization who fulfil the following criteria:

- located in areas controlled by the Republic of Cyprus
- meet the conditions for state aid under the Regulation on de minimise aid, and operating in any sector of the economy except companies engaged in fisheries and aquaculture or primary production of agricultural products
- are not in difficulty, within the meaning of the Community guidelines on State aid for rescuing and restructuring firms in difficulty
- have all their Social Insurance obligations settled
- meet the following conditions:

(i) They shall create a new job position (or positions) with flexible arrangements, representing a net increase in the number of workers relative to the average of 12 months preceding the date of hiring a person through the scheme. Due to the economic financial crisis, the period of 12 months is reduced to 6 months only for the first year of the operation of the scheme.

(ii) When the proposed job position does not represent a net increase in the number of employees, then offered job must concern new duties or functions that did not previously exist in the company or in the department in which the position is created.

(iii) the person they hire to fill a flexible job post meets the criteria set out as above in (1).

Expected benefits to the beneficiaries of the Scheme:

(1) Employees: In addition to giving the opportunity to unemployed persons to become active in the labour market, the Scheme allows for transport subsidy for the cost of moving to and from their place of work. This allowance is granted directly to employed persons for a period of 12 months for the initial call and 6 months for the following ones.

(2) Employers: A financial grant is provided to companies/organizations for the salary costs of persons recruited by them into flexible jobs for the purpose of encouraging employers to create such jobs and recruit

interested persons who meet the eligibility criteria, for a period of 12 months for the initial call and 6 months for the following ones.

## Processes

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### Use of labour market intelligence



#### INFORM JOB-SEARCH DECISIONS OF UNEMPLOYED

**A market investigation study was conducted in 2006, which recorded the needs in flexible forms of employment and the receptiveness by employers of such forms of employment. The design of the instrument relied on the findings of this investigation. The implementation of the instrument was fully endorsed by the social partners, who were consulted by the competent Ministry prior to its implementation. The understanding shown by the social partners of the benefits of employment opportunities generated to specific population groups through flexible forms of employment, contributed to facilitating its realisation.**

### Financial schemes

In order to encourage enterprises to create new job positions with flexible arrangements and to recruit people from the specified target groups, a subsidy is granted to them, covering 65% of the labour cost (salary + employer social insurance contributions) of people employed in such posts for a period of 12 months. A subsidy is also granted directly to the persons employed covering their travelling expenses to and from their workplace.

### Frequency of updates

The instrument is no longer in operation. However, during the course of implementation of the pilot instrument, two calls followed based on flexible forms of employment. These two calls added more groups of unemployed persons to be covered by the scheme of flexible forms of employment.

### Development

During the course of implementation of the first call of the project in 2007, which acted as a pilot scheme, several market and economic changes took place that necessitated adjustments to the original scheme. Thus, new calls followed reflecting the prevailing employment conditions at the time of the calls. It is noted that after 2009 an economic crisis started in Cyprus.

1) In April 2010, a new call for participation in the scheme of flexible forms of employment was publicly invited. The new call extended the coverage of the number of groups of unemployed covered by the previous call. The purpose of the new call was to attract economically inactive women, older

people and other economically inactive people looking for a job under special working hours, because of family responsibilities, who had difficulty entering or remaining in the labour market and wanted to work based on a flexible form of employment, as well as unemployed persons referred to the Managing Authority ((i.e. Cyprus Productivity Centre -CPC-) by the Public Employment Services.

2) As the economic crisis was getting worse in the country, in May 2013 another call for a scheme of flexible form of employment was announced, the purpose of which was:

- (a) to help alleviate the problem of unemployment by attracting unemployed people registered with the Public Employment Service, who wished to work on a flexible form of employment, and
- (b) to give businesses a means to cope with the difficulties that the economic crisis had created, by creating new jobs, while at the same time achieving more efficient organisation and improving their competitiveness.

## **Barriers**

Bureaucracy was a barrier, due to the fact that the instrument was co-funded.

Another barrier was the ignorance of the labour law by the employers, who lacked knowledge of such legislation. Thus their compliance to labour laws was problematic.

The attitude of a considerable number of employers was negative towards employing women over 40 years of age.

Another barrier was the economic crisis that started in 2008/2009.

## **Success factors**

During the course of the instrument's implementation, dissemination of information was an on-going activity, targeted at stakeholders, trade unions, women's organisations, local authorities, business and unemployed. Labour unions also put efforts into this endeavour.

Employers were informed of the importance of applying labour and social insurance laws, in order to comply with national legislation; otherwise, payments to non-complying employers were withheld.

## **Monitoring**

The project evaluation was assigned to an external consultant, which was conducted only once in 2008; while in 2009 the authority responsible for the project carried out an evaluation concerning the employment of those originally placed in organisations. The main objective of the study conducted by the external consultant was to determine the degree of achievement of the objectives originally set, as well as the effectiveness of the initial recommendations made, regarding the implementation of flexible forms of employment in Cyprus.

The authority responsible for the project was also constantly monitoring the implementation of the instrument.

## **Innovativeness** SLIGHTLY INNOVATIVE

**Given that flexible forms of employment have not been widely used in the Cyprus labour market this is quite an innovative initiative.**

## Sustainability

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### **Evidence of effectiveness**

According to the ex-post evaluation study conducted by external evaluators and the monitoring report of the scheme issued by the Cyprus Productivity Centre, the following major results had been recorded covering the pilot scheme up to the end of February 2009:

- 768 women filed applications to join the scheme of whom 195 women were placed in 145 enterprises (the original target of the scheme was to provide access to the labour market of 60 unemployed or inactive women).

- At the end of the grant period (end of August 2008), 139 people remained in employment at their original placement posts (71% of those were women), while for different reasons, including change of employer due to better work conditions and not being satisfied, 56 (29%) of them ceased to work at the original placement posts.

- At the end of February 2009, 104 out of 195 women remained at their posts, 40 found another job and 35 were left without employment, while 7 could not be traced.

- Of those who filed applications to join the scheme 492 women (64% of 768) were unemployed for over a year and 133 of them were employed under the scheme.

The targets for placement of women in jobs under the scheme were surpassed, as well as the funds originally allocated (€792,790), in order to meet funding of the number of placements. The increased demand to participate in the scheme from both women and businesses led to a review of the targets. After being reviewed, the budget was set at €1,218 million, and resulted in employing 195 women. The scheme contributed in:

- alleviating underground and unregistered employment;
- increasing capacity of the body responsible for the scheme (i.e. Cyprus Productivity Centre).

### **Engagement of stakeholders**

It is a tradition in Cyprus that all matters related to labour are subject to consultations between the two parties, on one side the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social insurance and on the other the social partners. The close cooperation between the Ministry and the social partners in the formation, design, and implementation of the employment scheme in consideration followed the tradition. And the establishment of any future schemes will be subject to such consultations.

## Transferability **EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

**The involvement and cooperation of the social partners is considered as a good practice in Cyprus, producing positive results. This practice could be transferred to other countries. However, It is admitted that other countries implement more innovative approaches to similar instruments.**

## Sustainability

There are plans in the Programming Period 2014-2020 for re-establishing the instrument. However, no particular form of the scheme has been discussed, nor have any consultations taken place yet. Additionally, the economy has still not fully recovered, and among others, the banking system is not fully "operational" in the sense that granting of loans is of limited scale. Thus, unemployment is high enough and employers in general are reluctant to fill any posts in their organisations, and in particular under special forms of employment.

# WE-Qualify: Improving Skills and Qualifications for the Building Workforce in Cyprus

WE-Qualify: Βελτίωση δεξιοτήτων και προσόντων των τεχνιτών για κατασκευή κτηρίων με αυξημένη ενεργειακή απόδοση

## Description

### Timespan

01/11/2013 to 31/10/2016

### Stage

**PILOT**

**The aim of the initiative was to be implemented as a pilot project and as such it was tested. During the pilot stage it went through improvements. The documentation and the material produced is available for full-scale implementation. At present a number of organisations are making use of it providing training programmes in the area of energy efficiency in buildings.**

### Focus area



**MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET**

# Foundations

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## Policy area



**ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**The "Build Up Skills" initiative, co-funded by the European Commission through the program "Intelligent Energy for Europe" aims at providing continuous vocational education and training of workers in technical professions in the construction and related fields for installation and maintenance of systems for energy savings and use of renewable energy sources in buildings.**

## Policy goal

According to the current national labour statistics there is lack of a sufficient number of skilled workforce for the implementation of measures relating to the construction of energy efficient buildings, and furthermore, a lack of appropriate training programmes for the training of the workforce in this area is evidently present. The project primarily aims at achieving national targets 2020 (Buildings and RES technologies) concerning renewable energy sources technologies in buildings through training of workers in the building and related sectors. In order to achieve this policy targets, there is a need of a qualified workforce with appropriate knowledge, experience, skills, and attitudes not only in the building sector, but in all sectors related to the building industry.

## Mismatch

**EXPLICITLY DESIGNED TO ADDRESS SKILL MISMATCH**

**Focuses on the building sector, which lacks a qualified workforce that meets the European criteria and standards of Energy performance of Buildings, and in particular in meeting the 2020 targets.**

## Aim of policy instrument



**FACILITATE JOB/CAREER TRANSITIONS**



**ADDRESS SKILL SHORTAGES**

## Legal basis

**OTHER**

**Administrative level** NATIONAL

**Main responsible body** Cyprus Energy Agency

**Stakeholders**

 **GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)**

 **TRAINING PROVIDERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)**

 **EMPLOYER FEDERATIONS**

 **RESEARCH CENTRES AND UNIVERSITIES**

 **OTHER**

**The following stakeholders are involved in advising/consulting, monitoring, and control of the programme; and as they come from different background areas, each contributes to the implementation of the programme within the context of their capacity:**

- **Cyprus Productivity Centre: a training and consulting institution operating under the Ministry of Labour**
- **Cyprus Organisation for Standardisation: the National Standardisation Body of Cyprus, whose principal activity is the production of standards and the supply of standards-related services**
- **Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus: its mission is to create the conditions for planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus at all levels and in all areas to meet the needs of the economy within the framework of the social and economic policy of the state**
- **The Cyprus Scientific and Technical Chamber (ΕΤΕΚ): the statutory Technical Advisor to the State and is the umbrella organisation for all Cypriot Engineers**
- **Energy Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry And Tourism: the responsible body promoting energy efficiency in the country**

## Funding

The Social Partners are actively involved in the decision making for all the HRDA initiatives. Employers' and workers' organisations and the social partners are directly involved in policy and strategy formulation through their representation on HRDA's Board of Governors. They, being part of the Board, receive reports about the scheme's progress and, if necessary, they participate in the decisions making for modifications that bring the scheme up-to-date.

## Intended beneficiaries

Construction workers are the beneficiaries of the instrument by acquiring specialised skills in the construction of energy efficient buildings. Another beneficiary is the society at large, who can enjoy energy efficient buildings.

## Processes

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### Use of labour market intelligence



**INFORM THE DESIGN OF NATIONAL QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS (NQFS)**



**DESIGN TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO ACTIVATE UNEMPLOYED**



**DESIGN STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION**

**The instrument was implemented on the basis of the results and lessons learned from the initiative "BUILD UP SKILLS CY", whose objective was to pave the way for significant improvement of the skills of the workforce in the building sector in occupations capable of achieving the EU 2020 targets for energy efficiency buildings and certifying these skills. In order to achieve this, the national state of affairs was thoroughly analysed, the barriers, and gaps identified, and a roadmap was developed.**

**The "BUILD UP SKILLS CY" project identified the workforce skills needed in the building sector and other ancillary sectors relating to the energy efficiency and the utilisation of Renewable Energy Sources in buildings, and also identified the areas of intervention. This paved the way and contributed significantly towards achieving Cyprus' energy targets by 2020 and at the same time complying with the EU directives on Energy Performance of Buildings and the EU2020 targets.**

**The project "We-Qualify" utilized the findings of the national roadmap ("BUILD UP SKILLS CY") and the knowledge of other European countries in relation to buildings energy efficiency and**

through partners consultations and meetings, to develop a series of documents such as manuals, reports, training programmes and materials, for both trainers and trainees, and implemented the training programmes and several other critical and crucial actions, all of which contributed to the constitution and implementation of the initiative. All of the material and reports produced are recorded on the website of the partner who led the instrument (the Cyprus Energy Agency, website [http://www.cea.org.cy/we\\_qualify/](http://www.cea.org.cy/we_qualify/)) and all the other partners sites.

## **Financial schemes**

The participants enjoyed free training in a new highly promising and high quality programme in the building sector, and had the opportunity to acquire a certification of their achievement.

## **Frequency of updates**

The instrument was implemented once as a pilot project and no updating has been effected since its completion. However, the project is leading other organisations to similar ideas and scope, but in other areas of energy efficiency in buildings, for example of the use of photovoltaic technology to be used in buildings.

## **Development**

During the course of the implementation the training material was reviewed, taking into account feedback from the trainers and trainees and the views of several stakeholders.

## **Barriers**

Convincing technicians to attend training provided by the instrument was a major issue as stereotypes are strong in the building industry. Technicians were reluctant to register due to objecting/not favouring the combination of theory and practice. A lot of effort was exerted to overcome this issue.

Registration for thermo panes and exterior sunshades training was below target. Two sessions of training were expected to be held, but in the end only one session was held, due to reduced interest expressed by technicians.

## **Success factors**

The well functioning collaboration of the partners and the background set-up of the instrument. Also the knowledge gained from other European initiatives and instruments.

## **Monitoring**

Targeted 125 trainees; achieved 74% of target

Targeted 100 certified trainees; achieved 76% of target

Establishment of a consultative committee comprising of universities representatives, Ministry Education and Culture, Energy service and

Employers and Industrialists Federation

The intervention was run as a pilot project only once and consequently the above achievements are the results of the pilot intervention. Assessing the results achieved against the original targets, the leaders of the intervention consider them quite satisfactory, because it was implemented against a culture of strong stereotypes in the construction industry. However, they do believe that through the role of the partners in the construction sector and the cooperation of the technical training bodies, the pilot achievements shall have a multiplier effect.

## **Innovativeness**    **VERY INNOVATIVE**

**The design and implementation of the instrument followed a process in which different partners of different disciplines jointed forces, effort and knowledge to set it up and implement it. The "WE-Qualify" project was distinguished among the 3 top nominations of the most successful European Projects for the year 2016. It was judged to contribute to the promotion of clean, safe, and efficient energy in Europe in the Public Sector category.**

## **Sustainability**

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### **Evidence of effectiveness**

The completion of the instrument as a pilot project has brought about several positive impacts in the construction of energy efficient buildings in Cyprus. Two fully equipped laboratories were created for the training of technicians as part of the pilot project, one in the area of training in thermal insulation and thermo-panes and the other in the area of training in the installation and maintenance of biomass boilers and stoves. These labs are the only ones of their kind in the country. The labs in question are currently being used for training technicians in their respective areas. Training material produced by the instrument included training methodology for each skill covered, guides for trainers, training presentations for each skill various training bodies also use them. The secondary technical education system has adopted the training material and introduced training of skills for energy efficient buildings in its curriculum. Also one of the project partners, the Cyprus Productivity Centre, which is a state training institution, is offering training in the areas covered by the project.

Upon completion and under the influence of the results of the pilot project, legislation was passed for the certification concerning the installation and maintenance of small units of biomass boilers and stoves. Qualified installers must be registered on the official register provided by law. Efforts are being made for similar legislation to cover the other skills as well.

Upon completion, a survey was conducted among the participants in the training programmes. The majority of them (88%) indicated that their knowledge and skills improved much to very much; and of those who received certification, 85% considered this qualification as a competitive advantage. Recently, one of the main banking institutions established a loan scheme for the conversion of existing houses to energy efficient ones, provided that the technicians involved are certified installers. This post-project requirement is considered by the leader of the project as a recognition of their effort.

The cost of the lab equipment was unexpectedly higher than it was initially estimated, thus the partners covered the extra costs.

## **Engagement of stakeholders**

One of the partners, namely the Cyprus Productivity Centre, which is a government organisation under the Ministry of Labour, is delivering training to technicians based on the training material produced by the instrument. Furthermore after consultations, the Department of Secondary Technical and Vocational Training has introduced to its curriculum teaching of technicians for energy-conservation, making use of the manuals and material generated by the instrument concerning house thermal insulation and the use of biomass as energy material for boiling water.

## **Transferability** **EASILY TRANSFERABLE**

**The instrument We-Qualify relies on the BUILD UP initiative, which was established by the European Commission in 2009 to support EU Member States in implementing the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). The scope and idea of this instrument is easily transferable, however the market, social economic and other conditions in other countries could require adjustments to the topics covered, content or context. Similar instruments have been implemented in other countries, drawn from the BUILD UP initiative as well.**

## **Sustainability**

The instrument as such is not expected to continue. It was initially introduced as a pilot project, which proved not to be feasible to go into full-scale implementation in the sector of the construction of buildings conforming to the energy efficiency requirements.