Investing in Skills

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Malta

1 DESCRIPTION

Timespan	This policy instrument was implemented in 2014 and will come to an end in 2020.
Stage	FULLY OPERATIONAL
Focus area	MATCHING SKILLS FOR TODAY'S JOB MARKET

2 FOUNDATIONS

Policy Area	ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES The main policy of the instrument is to increase the productivity and adaptability of people currently working within the Maltese Labour Market.
Policy Goal	The goal of this policy instrument is to reach people who are active in the Maltese labour market and find it difficult to pursue courses to enhance their skills, as a part-time option. Through Investing in Skills, these people are able to train and better their knowledge in their place of work, at a minimal to no cost for the employer. The instrument will be helping both companies and workers alike. Companies will benefit through increased productivity of their workers, while these in turn would be more adaptable to the skills required in the Maltese labour market.
Mismatch	PART OF BROADER PROGRAMME, YET WITH EXPLICIT FOCUS While giving training to workers will undoubtedly reduced the mismatch between skills and jobs, this policy is aimed more at enhancing the knowledge and adaptability of the workers in their current workplaces.

Aim of policy instrument

UPSKILL EMPLOYED ADULTS

FACILITATE JOB/CAREER TRANSITIONS

Legal basis

REGULATION

Administrative level

NATIONAL

Main responsible body

Jobsplus is the agency responsible for implementing the Investing in Skills instrument.

Stakeholders

GOVERNMENT (CENTRAL & REGIONAL)

TRAINING PROVIDERS (PUBLIC/PRIVATE)

OTHER

The Investing in Skills instrument brings together Jobsplus, the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE), the Treasury Department, EU Funds Management Unit (EUFMU) within the Ministry for Finance (MFIN), as well as the beneficiaries themselves, that is, companies within the Maltese labour market. Jobsplus has the overall responsibility for the management and implementation of Investing in Skills, including conducting unannounced monitoring visits to workplaces of the beneficiaries. The Ministry for Education and Employment also has the possibility to conduct unannounced visits to the different workplaces, while the Treasury Department is responsible for carrying out relevant checks, particularly checking that the expenditure and supporting documentation is correct and in line with National financial regulations, and at the same time effecting reimbursement to beneficiaries through the Central Bank of Malta.

Funding

€8 million have been allocated for the implementation of the Investing in Skills instrument. These will be spread over the five years and will be co-financed by funds from the European Social Fund of the European Commission, the Maltese Government, and the beneficiaries of the instrument.

Intended beneficiaries

The intended beneficiaries of the instrument are the companies that employ the people they are willing to train, and therefore responsible for the implementation of the Scheme within the same company. Ultimately, the beneficiaries are also the workers themselves, who will be rewarded with enhanced skills and added knowledge.

3 PROCESSES

Use of labour market intelligence

- DESIGN TRAINING PROGRAMMES TO ACTIVATE UNEMPLOYED
- ENABLE STRATEGIC BUSINESS DECISIONS
- OTHER

Private companies are offered financial incentives to use trainers and create training courses based on their line of work, and teach their employees new skills, which will help them achieve more adaptability and increased productivity.

Financial schemes

Through Investing in Skills, a number of financial incentives for employers have been provided. Jobsplus is reimbursing the unit cost of €25 per trainee per hour, up to 15 trainees for the same training under IIS, irrespective if these claims derive from separate and unrelated beneficiaries. Jobsplus reimburses the unit cost based on the training hours actually attended by each trainee up to a maximum of 25 hours for non-accredited training. If training is accredited by the NCFHE (National Commission for Further and Higher Education), ITS (Institute of Tourism Studies), UOM (University of Malta) and MCAST (Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology) the capping of 25 hours will not be applied. Investing in Skills is also subsidising air travel costs, where involved, which are based on the Erasmus Plus Grant Support for the mobility of staff and Trainee Wage Costs, at a standard rate of €4.90 per trainee per hour, which is to be applied for external training that occurs during the normal working hours of the trainees.

Frequency of updates

Financial incentives offered as part of the Investing in Skills instrument are updated according to the agreed package of the European Social Fund, whilst training courses depend on the institution responsible for them, as well as the subject they cover.

Development	The Investing in Skills instrument is currently in operation in its third year and up to this point, no adjustment has been made to the scheme.
Barriers	No barriers and challenges have currently been faced, however the instrument is still in implementation phase.
Success factors	The constant engagement between the relevant stakeholders, especially when it comes to the private companies, have so far made the instrument successful.
Monitoring	Monitoring the correct implementation of the instrument is mostly carried out by Jobsplus, which looks at companies that apply under the scheme and the number of workers being trained as signs of progress. Progress under this instrument is measured yearly, when funds are also disbursed to the beneficiaries.
Innovativeness	**NOT INNOVATIVE** Investing in Skills is one of a number of programmes under the European Social Fund that provided training to workers in the private sector at a subsidized cost to the employer and thus, not a very innovative instrument. What makes Investing in Skills different from instruments implemented in other countries is the large number of SMEs that work in similar sectors and industries, and this can be beneficial to the companies themselves.

4 SUSTAINABILITY

Evidence of effectiveness	The instrument is still operational, however, in 2017 some 38 different private companies in various industries have benefited from Investing in Skills. These companies have been awarded around €145,804 for the training of their employees. The beneficiaries of the Investing in Skills instrument have been successful in tapping into this policy to further the knowledge and skills of their workers. However, the real benefits brought about by this instrument will have to be measured and monitored upon the end of this scheme in 2020. Currently, there have been no unexpected benefits or costs to the instrument.

Engagement of stakeholders	The agency that is mainly responsible for the national implementation of the instrument is in constant contact with the other stakeholders involved, namely: the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE), the Treasury Department at the Ministry for Finance, as well as the companies that apply under this instrument. While Jobsplus and MEDE come in contact with the beneficiaries through registration and shadowing of the companies, the Treasury Department is responsible for the distribution of the financial incentives offered through Investing in Skills.
Transferability	**EASILY TRANSFERABLE** In order to be able to transfer Investing in Skills to other EU Member States, one would be more successful in grouping companies, that can apply under this scheme, according to their specialisation or industry.
Sustainability	Investing in Skills is currently in its third year of operation and will come to an end in 2020. Continuing this instrument beyond 2020 is, however, questionable, if no ESF funds are allocated due to the extensive budget of this programme.