

Annual Implementation Report 2014-2015

Implementation of Ireland's Operational Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020



SICAP – TETB – Participants are given the first steps in Car Mechanics

Citizens Summary



The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is supported under PEIL 2014-2020

Introduction

Ireland's Operational Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) was formally approved by the European Commission in February 2015 and commenced in April of that year. The Programme sets out a framework for the allocation of a total of €1.153 billion over the period 2014-2020, comprising €542.4 million from the European Social Fund (ESF), an equal amount from the Exchequer and just over €68 million from the Youth Employment Initiative.

Building on the positive contribution made by the earlier Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (HCIOP) 2007-2013, the PEIL focuses investment in a number of key areas. These areas revolve around activation of the unemployed, improving social and labour market inclusion, enhancing education attainment, and tackling youth employment. It is expected that the allocated funding will help to provide our labour force, and in particular the unemployed, with the skills, experience and qualifications necessary to avail of job opportunities as we emerge from the financial crisis.

The PEIL's specific targets include training and upskilling of 135,000 unemployed people and job-seekers; providing social inclusion employability programme for 81,000 disadvantaged people; assisting 185,000 disadvantaged students and/or students with disabilities access and remain in third level education; providing further education/training programmes for 527,000 participants with low education levels and providing training/upskilling/personal development supports to 19,000 young people under the YEI initiative. Through this investment, the PEIL will support Ireland's efforts to pursue its Europe 2020 targets for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Following the needs analysis undertaken when designing the PEIL, and having regard to the Country Specific Recommendations, the programme concentrates on the following ESF thematic objectives with associated investment priorities:

- **Priority 1:** Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.
- **Priority 2:** Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market
- **Priority 3:** Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force
- **Priority 4:** Youth Employment Initiative
- **Priority 5:** Technical Assistance

There are 20+ specific activities within the 4 priorities investments while the Technical Assistance priority deals with the operation and administration of the overall programme. The Priority Axes are as follows –

[Priority 1: Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility](#)

€326 million, or 28% of the total funding allocated to the Programme, is assigned to Priority 1, which is intended to tackle unemployment and enhance labour mobility. Activities within this Priority Axis include –

- ***ETB Training for the Unemployed:*** Provides a range of vocational training courses to meet the needs of unemployed persons or other job-seekers.
- ***Springboard:*** Provide part-time flexible higher education opportunities to reskill or upskill unemployed or previously self-employed people in areas where there are identified skills shortages and where sustainable employment opportunities may arise as the economy recovers.
- ***ICT Skills Conversion Course:*** Provides graduates from other skills areas with the opportunity to upskill or reskill through a 1 year full time Conversion Programmes in core computing/programming skills.
- ***Momentum:*** Focuses on funding upskilling programmes for the long-term unemployed and those under 25 years of age.
- ***Intra-EU Mobility:*** EURES Ireland promotes labour mobility as well as sustainable employment via specific upskilling measures.

[Priority 2: Promoting social inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market](#)

€388 million, or 34% of the total funding allocated to the Programme, is assigned to Priority 2 to support active inclusion measures, to promote equal opportunities and to combat discrimination. Activities within this Priority Axis include –

- ***Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP):*** Tackles poverty and social exclusion, with a particular focus on delivering work readiness programmes for the young unemployed.
- ***Youthreach:*** Provides education, training and work experience for early school leavers.
- ***Garda Youth Diversion Projects:*** Supports young people at risk of/or involved in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour.
- ***Young Persons Probation Projects:*** Engages with young offenders in local communities.
- ***Social Inclusion of Prisoners/Ex-Offenders through Employability Guidance and Placement:*** Promotes labour market access for prisoners/ex-offenders.

- ***People with Disabilities Activation Project:*** Enhanced supported employment services for people with disabilities.
- ***Integration and Employment of Migrants:*** Promotes active inclusion and enhanced employment possibilities for vulnerable legally resident migrants.
- ***Tús Nua Project:*** Promotes independent living and positive reintegration into the community for women leaving prison and women offenders referred from the community.
- ***Gender Equality:*** Supports women wanting to return to the labour market.
- ***Equality Mainstreaming:*** Supports more effective integration of equality mainstreaming approaches into labour market programmes.

Priority 3: Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force

€215 million, or 19% of the total funding allocated to the Programme, is assigned to this Priority Axis to promote lifelong learning through the following activities –

- ***Third-Level Access:*** Enhances 3rd level attainment by disadvantaged students and students with disabilities.
- ***Back to Education Initiative (BTEI):*** Provides part-time learning opportunities for those with less than second level education.
- ***Adult Literacy:*** Provides increased access to literacy, numeracy and language tuition for adults.

Priority 4: Youth Employment Initiative

€204 million, or 18% of the total funding allocated to the Programme, is assigned to this Priority Axis. The purpose of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) is to tackle youth unemployment and implement the Youth Guarantee by providing job, education and training opportunities to young people aged 15-24 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). YEI funding is reserved for use in those regions, including Ireland, where youth unemployment levels exceeded 25% during the reference year of 2012. The specific YEI funding allocation for Ireland of €68 million is matched by equal amounts from our European Social Fund (ESF) allocation and from the Exchequer, giving an overall allocation of €204 million.

Given the urgent need to address youth unemployment, expenditure in this Priority Axis is front-loaded to the beginning of the overall Programme. For that reason certain activities, including Youthreach, Momentum and SICAP are being funded through the YEI Priority Axis initially, and will be funded through other Priority Axes later in the period of the Programme.

In addition to SICAP, Youthreach and Momentum, the following activities are funded under Priority Axis 4, (although it should be noted that not all of these activities are aimed exclusively at under 25s):

- ***Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme:*** Promotes the self-employment prospects of long-term social welfare recipients.
- ***JobsPlus Incentive Scheme:*** Incentivises employers to offer employment opportunities to the long term unemployed.
- ***Tús:*** Provides community work placements for young people on the Live Register.
- ***JobBridge:*** Provides Internships to assist job-seekers bridge the gap between unemployment and the world of work.

Priority 5: Technical Assistance

€20 million, or less than 2% of the overall funding allocated within the Programme, has been assigned to Technical Assistance to support the various preparatory, management, monitoring and control, administrative and technical support, evaluation, information, networking and co-ordination activities and audit measures. Training and guidance for Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries are also eligible for assistance as well as the costs associated with the new IT system required for data exchange under the 2014-2020 round.

National Context – Key Recent Developments

The general conditions in the economy continued to improve during 2014 and 2015 and there were improvements in a number of labour market indicators.

There was an annual increase in employment of 2.3% to Q4 2015. This compares with an annual increase of 1.5% to Q4 2014. At the end of 2015 the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate had decreased to 9.1%, broadly in line with the EU average. The long-term unemployment rate decreased from 5.8% to 4.7% at the end of Q4 2015 at which time long-term unemployment accounted for 54.5% of total unemployment, compared with 57.8% a year earlier, and 61.4% in Q4 2013.

The unemployment rate for certain sections of the population remained high, but there was a decrease in the youth unemployment rate (15-24 year olds) from 20.3% to 18.9% over the year to Q4 2015.

Employment increased in twelve of the fourteen economic sectors over 2015, with the largest rates of increase recorded in the Construction Industry (Source CSO QNHS Q4 2015).

In summary, while the economic recovery that has taken place since 2012 has outpaced projected growth, challenges remain. The education profile of working age persons participating in the labour force has improved, but the share of persons with only NFQ Level 3 (ISCED Level 2) qualifications stands at over 15%, eight percentage points above the target set in the 2007 National Skills Strategy.

SOLAS, the Further Education and Training Authority, published the first **Further Education and Training (FET) Strategy** in May 2014. The Strategy provides a road map for a more integrated FET system and an overarching framework, within which outcomes based funding and planning, based on robust evidence, reflect learner and enterprise needs. In responding to the economic and labour market challenges, the FET Strategy's strategic goals include a strong focus on skills for the economy, as well as active inclusion. A strategic planning framework undertaken by SOLAS and the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) commenced in 2015 and aims to embed strategic planning systems to enable ETBs respond effectively to changing economic and social needs.

The OECD's **Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)** survey showed that while the proportion of Irish adults scoring at lower literacy levels dropped by 4% compared with the adjusted results of the 1996 study (IALS), approximately 18% of adults still scored at, or below Level 1, placing Ireland 17th out of the 24 participating countries. With regard to numeracy, Ireland was placed 19th out of the 24 participating countries. The FET Strategy identifies literacy and numeracy as one of five high level strategic goals.

Following a system review, a new **Apprenticeship Council** was launched in November 2014. The Council is tasked with the expansion of apprenticeship into new sectors of the economy. 25 new apprenticeship proposals were announced in July 2015, led by industry groupings.

The **National Skills Strategy 2025**, published in January 2016, sets out the projected skills needs of the economy and provides a framework for skills development that will help drive Ireland's growth, both economically and societally over the next decade. The Strategy sets out a wide range of actions under 6 key objectives aimed at improving the development, supply and use of skills over the next decade. The Strategy consolidates a number of actions already underway and proposes new actions in each key area, including:

- The production of employability statements by further education and higher education institutions;
- The development of a new Entrepreneurship Education Policy Statement and Guidelines for schools to support the delivery of Entrepreneurial Education and experiential learning opportunities; and

- A full review of guidance services, tools and resources to ensure they are fit-for purpose.

A new **National Skills Council** is being established and ambitious targets have been set for FET, relating to apprenticeship, traineeship, adult literacy and numeracy, up-skilling of employees, particularly those with low levels of initial education, and lifelong learning.

The Department of Education and Skills has also established a network of 9 **Regional Skills Fora** as a mechanism for enterprise and education and training providers to work together in building the supply of skills for their regions. Funding has been allocated to support the establishment and work of the network in 2016.

The recently published **Pathways to Work 2016-2020 Strategy** commits to continuing implementation of the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan and to:

- Increasing the share of workplace based interventions;
- Restructuring First Steps (the work experience programme for particularly disadvantaged young people);
- Ensuring monthly engagement with young people is consistently maintained; and
- Implementing the Defence Forces Skills for Life employment support programme.

Building on the 8 **Regional Action Plans for Jobs** launched in 2015 which focus on specific regional dynamics, the **Action Plan for Jobs 2016** aims to create 50,000 extra jobs in 2016 in the context of the overall goal of 200,000 net additional jobs by 2020.

The **Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities 2015-2024** was launched in October 2015 with 6 strategic priorities, to:

- build skills, capacity and independence;
- provide bridges and supports into work
- make work pay;
- promote job retention and re-entry into work;
- provide co-ordinated and seamless support; and
- engage employers.

The new **National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-19** aims to integrate the “access mission” across all faculties and areas of work in higher education institutions (HEIs). The plan is complemented by the System Performance

Framework which seeks to promote access for disadvantaged groups and to establish coherent pathways from second-level education, further education and non-traditional entry routes. The 5 key goals set out in the plan are to

- Mainstream delivery of equity of access in HEIs;
- Assess the impact of current initiatives to support equity of access;
- Gather accurate data and evidence on access and participation to inform policy;
- Build coherent pathways from further education and foster new entry routes into higher education; and
- Develop regional and community partnership strategies for increasing access to higher education with a particular focus on mentoring.

Specific goals and targets are set for under-represented socio-economic and other groups. Evaluations of the Student Access Fund and Fund for Students with Disabilities are being undertaken.

Progress towards our EU2020 Targets

Europe 2020 is the EU’s ten-year growth and jobs strategy, launched in 2010. Five headline targets have been set for the EU to achieve by the end of 2020, of which three are relevant to this Programme – employment, education, and social inclusion and poverty reduction.

Positive progress has been made towards the achievement of Ireland’s targets, and data relating to the targets on employment and education are set out below -

Indicator	Position in 2010	Position in 2015	Target 2020
Employment			
% 20-64 year olds in employment	64.7%	68.8%	69-71%
Education			
Early school leavers	11.4%	8.4%	8%
Tertiary attainment of 30-34-year-olds	50.1%	52.6%	60%

With regard to poverty, Eurostat figures show that in 2010, Ireland’s “at risk of poverty or social exclusion” rate was 27.3%, while in 2014, the rate stood at 27.6%, an increase of 0.3%. However, rates of basic deprivation have recently fallen for the first time since 2007. The Government’s **National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 (NAPinclusion)** was recently updated and extended to 2017. The updated plan has 14 high level goals that better reflect the current issues and interventions to

tackle poverty and social exclusion. The reformulated goals include a focus on early childhood development, youth exclusion, access to the labour market including measures for people with disabilities, migrant integration, social housing and affordable energy.

Progress to Date

The PEIL 2014-2020 was approved in February 2015 and formally launched in April 2015. Many of the activities included in the Programme were previously supported under the earlier HCIOP and some of these activities in 2014/15, particularly in the Border-Midlands-West (BMW) Region, will actually be claimed through the previous Operational Programme. However, from 2016 all relevant expenditure will be reimbursed through the PEIL.

Advance payments of €14.5m were received from the Commission under the PEIL (including the YEI) up to the end of 2015 and these have been distributed across the individual activities. Separately, additional initial pre-financing of €19.8m, to bring the rate to 30% in 2015 of the YEI allocation, has also been received. However this funding had not been distributed as Ireland is not in a position to submit an interim payment application for 50% of this amount by 23 May 2016¹ and accordingly the Commission may request the reimbursement of this pre-financing. However, this reimbursement will not result in any loss, as the full YEI allocation of €68m to Ireland will still be available for drawdown before year-end 2018, and it is expected that this funding will be fully drawn down. Furthermore, as the activities concerned are fully funded up-front by the Exchequer there is no resulting reduction in the funding available to those activities.

Individual Activity Updates

Priority 1

ETB Training for the Unemployed

For 2014 and 2015, this activity included the following former FÁS programme groups:

- *Specific Skills Training* - mainline courses which are employment-led and lead to qualifications that offer learners both generic skills and skills specific

¹ The systems designation requirements include the provision of a new IT system to meet the 2014-2020 functionality requirements - all information exchanges between beneficiaries and the relevant authorities to be carried out by means of electronic data exchange systems (known as E-Cohesion) with single entry of information. The national IT system to meet the 2014-2020 ESIF requirements is being pursued presently.

to particular jobs or occupations. Both short courses and longer 6+ month courses are included.

- **Bridging-courses** for people who have left school early, or for other reasons need broader-based, generic skills training.
- **Traineeships** - occupational-specific training courses, typically of 9 months duration, that use a combination of off-the-job and structured on-the-job workplace training.

Continuity in all training activity was maintained throughout the transfer to the ETB sector of the former FÁS training centre network, associated staff and provision in 2014. Key targets were delivered and the needs of priority cohorts were addressed, including the long-term unemployed, those who are disadvantaged or have low standards of education or qualification and those who have suffered job losses in sectors most impacted by the economic downturn. A range of new and updated courses were provided with QQI or Industry recognised accreditation in areas such as Virtualisation and Cloud Computing, Cisco Certified Network Associate, Medical Administration, Heavy Good Driving and Supply Chain Logistics. Traineeships offered included IT Support; Beauty Therapy; Software Development; Office Administration and Aircraft Maintenance.

ESF 1.1 ETB Training for the Unemployed National Figures

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
Number of participants	108,681	8,142	4,197	12,339	6,889	3,479	10,368
Number of LTU participants	20,975	3,890	1,457	5,347	3,497	1,208	4,705
Number of youth (<25yrs) participants	15,759	2,357	1,519	3,876	2,154	1,193	3,347
Results							
Number of participants completing an education/training programme	86,945	6,833	3,734	10,567	5,373	2,768	8,141
Number of LTU participants completing education/training	16,780			n/a			n/a
Number of <25yrs participants completing an education/training	12,607			n/a			n/a

Springboard

Established in 2011, Springboard provides free part-time higher education places in enterprise sectors with identified skills shortages and employment opportunities. Some 90% of courses include work placement. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) issues an annual call for course proposals in areas identified by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN). A dedicated website <https://www.springboardcourses.ie> provides information on all course options and a

freefone guidance line is available for potential participants when the new round of courses is launched

The evaluation framework for Springboard provides for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of outputs. A third trend analysis which was published in June 2015 and showed that employment outcomes for Springboard graduates are very positive. A survey of all graduates 2011 – 2014 indicates that within two years of completing a Springboard course, 60% of respondents are employed or self-employed, with progression to employment steadily increasing over time.

ESF1.2 Springboard

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
Number of participants	16,209	2,648	1,455	4,103	3,315	2,202	5,517
Number of LTU participants	8,915	1,454	776	2,230	1,837	1,093	2,930
Number of youth (<25yrs) participants	1,135	173	105	278	258	152	410
Results							
Number of participants completing an education/training programme	10,370	2,235	1,189	3,424	1,883	1,085	2,968
Number of LTU participants completing an education/training programme	5,703			0			0
Number of youths (<25yrs) participants completing an education/training programme	726			0			0

ICT Skills Conversion Courses

This activity provides free ICT skills conversion courses at Level 8 for graduates, which include work placement of 3-6 months to address ICT skills shortages. The programme is now incorporated under Springboard+ and are subject to an annual call for course proposals by the HEA.

The evaluation framework for the ICT skills programme provides for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of outputs. A third trend analysis which was published in June 2015 showed that employment outcomes for ICT skills conversion graduates are very positive. A survey of all graduates 2011 – 2014 indicates that 80% of conversion course graduates are back in employment within 6 months, with 5% going on to further study.

ESF 1.3 ICT Skills Conversion Courses

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
Number of participants	1,950	526	207	733	720	262	982
Number of LTU participants	831	177	73	250	208	72	280
Results							
Number of participants completing an education/training programme	1,305	284	104	388	341	140	481
Number of LTU participants completing an education/training programme	556	n/a	n/a	168	n/a	n/a	180

Momentum

This activity targets the long-term unemployed. The recovering economic landscape has impacted on the time required to activate potential participants, with additional phases of recruitment taking place over 2015 to ensure the participation targets were met. This may impact on the 2nd cycle of the programme. There is also evidence that the economic recovery is positively impacting programme outcomes, with an increase in positive outcomes for the participants in terms of full time jobs.

ESF 1.4 Momentum

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
Number of participants	8,000	1,512	639	2,151	1,927	589	2,516
Number of LTU participants	6,800	1,377	556	1,933	1,713	473	2,186
Number of youth (<25yrs) participants	4,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Results							
Number of participants completing an education/training programme	3,400						n/a
Number of LTU participants completing an education/training programme	3,400						n/a
Number of youths (<25yrs) participants completing an education/training programme	3,400						n/a

Intra-EU Mobility

This activity is being included under the PEIL from 2015.

EURES Ireland organises Jobs & Advice Fairs to support labour mobility and DIALOG events to support non- Irish nationals enter the Irish labour market. The

aim is to promote EURES for use by employers and jobseekers. 3,000 attended the 2015 Midlands Jobs Fair, with 74 job placements being a direct consequence. Overall satisfaction rates were high with 92% of exhibitors and 83% of visitors being satisfied.

The rollout of the Your First EURES Job (YFEJ) commenced in 2015, with 14 applicants being approved for financial support with relocation expenses or travelling expenses for interviews.

A Co-Sponsored Placement Programme was also implemented in 2015 with 8 participants, 5 of whom were placed in the Netherlands and 3 others in Germany, Poland and Denmark. This involved linking with the Goethe Institute in Dublin to look at establishing a programme whereby prospective participants could avail of online language courses in advance of taking up their placement.

ESF 14 Intra-EU Mobility

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Number of participants on training and upskilling programmes	230			22
Number of Jobs & Advice Fairs and DIALOG Projects	24			7

Priority 2

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme

SICAP activities proposed for inclusion in the PEIL are those supporting young unemployed people from disadvantaged groups and communities and is initially delivered under Priority 4 - the YEI.

Youthreach

Similarly, Youthreach is initially being delivered under Priority 4 – the YEI.

Garda Youth Diversion Projects (GYDP)

There are 100+ GYDPs operating in the community in partnership with An Garda Síochána engaging with young people (12-17 years) at risk of /involved in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour. These projects were previously included in the HCIOP and are supported by the PEIL from 2015. All participants are assessed using

internationally recognised tools, following which case management plans to respond to the individual needs identified are drawn up. Tailored suites of interventions are used depending on the individual circumstances and can include:

- Family circumstances and parenting support
- Education and employment support
- Peer relations support
- Substance use support
- Leisure and recreation support
- Personality and behaviour support
- Attitudes and orientation support

The most significant change between 2014 and 2015 is that the numbers of participants on GYDPs decreased by 11.5%, from 4,966 participants in 2014 to 4,393 in 2015. The latest figures available indicate that between 2013 and 2012, there was a reduction of 16% of the numbers of young people referred to the Garda Diversion Programme.

Youth Crime Policy and Programmes (YCPP) Division of the Irish Youth Justice Service (IYJS) established a working group comprised of IYJS staff and representatives of the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) delivering GYDP services to develop the reporting framework for GYDPs under PEIL 2014-2020.

In November 2014, an information seminar for EOs and Finance Officers was delivered by YCPP with presentation from the Managing Authority and YCPP on the PEIL financial framework, eligibility rules and the certification and control system. A guidance note was distributed to all Finance Officers.

Training and information seminars were held for the GYDPs in Cork and Dublin in July 2015. Presentations were given on eligibility rules and the regulatory framework of PEIL and on the assessment tool to assist Youth Justice Workers (YJW) in GYDPs in better targeting and planning interventions with young people. A similar series of training sessions, with over 200 YJWs, were held in late 2015/early 2016. Draft Procedures Manuals and instructions to meet Publicity Requirements were issued by YCPP to the GYDPs during the year.

Plans for the opening of 10 new GYDPS are progressing, with 3 starting in 2015 and the remaining 7 due to commence in 2016.

ESF 2.3 Garda Youth Diversion Projects

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Outputs				
Number of participants	27,000	3,314	1,079	4,393
Number of youth (<25yrs) participants	27,000	3,314	1,079	4,393
Results				
Number of participants completing interventions and are in training/education/job search/ work related environments	18,900	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of youths (<25yrs) participants completing an education/training programme	18,900	n/a	n/a	n/a

Young Persons' Probation (YPP) Projects

There are 18 YPP projects funded by the IYJS to develop and deliver services to young offenders in their communities. Of these, 4 are included in the PEIL with effect from January 2015, namely :

- Le Chéile which is a nationwide mentoring service;
- Céim ar Chéim and Southill projects based in Limerick City, and
- Dochas don Óige project based in Galway.

The main intervention programmes provided by Céim ar Chéim are:-

- a full-time Education & Training Day Centre offering accredited programmes
- an Evening Support Programme for youths at risk and
- other programmes such as Parenting Programmes, Junior Leadership Programme, Physical Health & Emotional Wellbeing Programmes.

Dochas Don Óige provide the following intervention programmes:-

- a 48 week Core Programme including QQI accredited Education and Training courses for the young adults/children,
- An Evening Support Programme/ Youth Club, which runs weekly from Oct - May catering for between 5-20 children or young adults and
- a Strengthening Families (Parenting) programme.

The core services provided by Le Chéile include the mentoring of young offenders and parent mentoring together with Restorative Justice.

Southill Outreach project provides a number of workshops and technical interventions, including mechanics, carpentry etc., as well as a number of programmes including an Inreach programme.

2.4 Young Persons Probation (YPP) Projects

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Outputs				
Number of participants	996	267	55	322
Number of youth (<25yrs) participants	996	259	54	313
Results				
Number of participants completing an education/training programme	697	n/a	n/a	n/a

Social Inclusion of Prisoners/Ex-Offenders

This activity is no longer going ahead under this Operational Programme and it is proposed that funding will be reallocated to the IYJS for the expansion and provision of services.

Disability Project

The Department of Social Protection is currently developing proposals for utilising the ESF funding available under this activity to enhance the delivery of the Intreo service to people with disabilities. This approach is in keeping with the proposal in the **Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities** to use Intreo as a gateway to employment activation for people with disabilities.

During 2014 and 2015 Disability Activation activities focussed on the closure of the DACT projects funded under the HCIOP and the completion of an evaluation of the outcomes and impacts of these projects. The key learnings arising from this evaluation will feed into the design and implementation of activities under PEIL.

Integration and Employment of Migrants

This activity has not commenced yet, but it is intended to publish a call for proposals shortly.

Of relevance to this activity is the Irish Refugee Protection Programme, which was approved by Government on 10 September 2015 in response to the migration crisis in Southern Europe. The Government has confirmed that Ireland would take in up

to 4,000 persons by the end of 2017, in respect of relocation of asylum seekers and resettlement of refugees. This figure of 4,000 includes approximately 2,600 asylum seekers to be taken in from migration hot spots and is expected to result in increased activity for the intervention.

Tus Nua Project

At the end of 2014, Tus Nua opened its new residential accommodation centre to support women leaving prison and those with a history of offending referred from the community. The activity faced a number of initial challenges, both internal and external, in getting up and running. Collaboration and consultation with local agencies, residents/businesses and the centre's residents helped in overcoming these challenges and the activity is now fully operational, with 17 participants in 2015. Interventions provided include personal development programmes, addressing life skills and health and wellbeing.

3 women completed their interventions during 2015.

Gender Equality

Under the previous Equality for Women Measure 2009-2013, the Department of Justice and Equality employed an external service provider to administer the funding to the projects. However, it was not feasible to employ a similar approach under the new programme on the grounds of cost. The Department is currently in the process of setting up a centralised departmental unit to replace the external service provider and it is envisaged that a call for proposals with regard to strand 1 "Women Returning to the Workforce" will issue during Q3 2016. It is also envisaged that a call for proposals with regard to the strand 2 project "Women's Entrepreneurship" will, as the project is small in scale, issue in the coming weeks.

Equality Mainstreaming

This activity has not yet commenced.

Priority 3

Third Level Access

There are two broad objectives under this measure: The Student Assistance Fund (SAF) which aims to support students facing ongoing or temporary financial hardship which would otherwise negatively impact on their chances of retention or completion of their higher education course. The Fund for Students with Disabilities (FSD)

supports students in overcoming barriers to participation in higher education due to disability. Support under both these objectives are offered to eligible students on full-time higher education courses. For practical purposes, the two objectives are administered separately as sub-programmes.

Both the SAF and the FSD continue to operate as per the earlier HCIOP.

ESF 3.1 TLA – PEIL Figure S&E Region

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons	185,296	8348	9692	18,040	3606	3461	7,067
Number of LTU disadvantaged and/or disabled persons	10,917	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Results							
Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted that gained a third level qualification upon leaving	61,148	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Number of LTU disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted that gained a third level qualification upon leaving	3,603	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note 1: Courses are ongoing, therefore no students have gained a qualification as of yet.

Note 2: The 2014 figures are based on the total number of beneficiaries supported under the FSD and SAF in the 2014-15 academic year. The 2015 figures are based on the numbers supported by the FSD in the 2015-16 academic year (all applications submitted Oct-December 2015). Data for SAF beneficiaries will be available from Mid-October 2016 onwards.

Back to Education Initiative (BTEI)

The BTEI offers part-time provision of up to 400 hours per year, leading to certification at QQI levels 1-6. The primary target groups are those that experience strong barriers to participation and are more difficult to engage in the formal learning process.

With employment opportunities improving throughout 2014 and 2015, BTEI saw a continued high level of demand for higher level courses, because of an on-going demand for up-skilling. However, efforts continued to ensure that course opportunities were provided to key target groups.

Specifically a process was commenced to review areas in which courses were provided and to ensure providers researched employment opportunities within their geographical areas so that course provision was linked to available employment opportunity and to ensure that all courses offered led to certification.

The BTEI Operational Guidelines informed and gave overall direction to BTEI provision in 2014 and 2015, under the broader strategic framework of the FET Strategy. The BTEI enabled providers to address the skills needs of unemployed people, in particular priority groups identified in the Government’s activation agenda, and to develop part-time education and training opportunities for low-skilled people in employment. The focus on male participation and provision at lower levels of the NFQ (levels 3 and 4) was also maintained.

Continued attention was paid to prioritising the provision of integrated programmes leading to major awards (as opposed to the provision of single modules or components) through QQI.

ESF 3.2 BTEI – National Figures

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
The number of participants with low education levels	208,600	6,763	14,266	21,029	6,484	13,772	20,256
The number of LTU participants with low education levels	60,494	2,638	3,307	5,945	2,523	3,553	6,076
Results							
The number of participants with low education levels gaining a qualification or successfully completing the programme.	91,000	2,307	5,436	7,743	3,395	8,953	12,348
The number of LTU participants with low education levels gaining a qualification or successfully completing the programme	26,390	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Adult Literacy

A National Literacy and Numeracy Advisory Committee was established in January 2015 to oversee the full implementation of the objectives of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy. The Committee and the ETBI Literacy and Numeracy Forum commenced work in 2015 on the implementation of the strategy. ETBs progressed adult literacy provision in 2015 in line with the established overarching planning and funding parameters and requirements.

The number and variety of programmes on offer has increased and now includes intensive literacy provision as well as English Language tuition for migrants. Workplace basic skills provision is also provided. A number of ETBs have developed themed literacy programmes to attract learners to participate in courses that have a large literacy content but are delivered through a variety of vocational subjects. Examples include retail and tourism, catering and heritage studies. Others have developed models of integrated literacy provision with literacy, numeracy and

ICT embedded in pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and transition and bridging programmes. One ETB has established Open Learning Centres to support learners and increase major award accreditation rates.

ESF 3.3 Adult Literacy – National Figures

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
The number of participants with low education levels	318,000	24,593	31,484	56,077	22,877	29,663	52,540
The number of LTU participants with low education levels	86,814	4,924	5,723	10,647	4,949	6,295	11,244
Results							
The number of participants with low education levels gaining a qualification or successfully completing the programme.	57,500	3,216	7,922	11,138	4,520	5,902	10,422
The number of LTU participants with low education levels gaining a qualification or successfully completing the programme	15,697			n/a			n/a

Priority 4

Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme (BTWEA)

This scheme encourages long-term unemployed social welfare recipients to engage in self-employment/develop a business while retaining a reducing proportion of their social welfare payment over 2 years (100% in 1st year and 75% in the 2nd year). Under-25 NEETs on jobseekers, one parent family payment and various illness related payments can apply. There were no significant changes in the operating environment that impacted on the performance of the activity, which is being funded under the PEIL with effect from June 2015. Participants may avail of financial support from the Enterprise Support Grant.

A review of the BTWEA scheme commenced in 2015 to ensure the scheme is fully aligned with national policy and operational developments. It is expected to be completed in 2016. In general the numbers on BTWEA who are under 25 are low as per the table below. As the economy recovers this number is ever decreasing.

Year	Total No. BTWEA	No. Under 25	% of Total
2011	10,751	324	3%
2012	10,811	312	2.8%
2013	10,098	266	2.6%
2014	11,167	255	2.2%
2015	11,861	204 (107 under PEIL)	1.7%

ESF 4.1 BTWEA (Note: the scheme is 2 years duration)

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Outputs				
The number of YEI eligible participants	540	75	32	107
Results				
Participants leaving BTWEA after the two years are still in self-employment (60%)	324	0	0	0
Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	324	0	0	0
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	324	0	0	0
LTU participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	324	0	0	0
LTU participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	324	0	0	0
Participants in self-employment six months after leaving	293	0	0	0

JobsPlus Incentive Scheme

Operational since July 2013, this scheme supports longer term jobseekers back into employment. The initiative is targeted at employers who take on additional employees from the Live Register and those transitioning into employment. It provides employers with two levels of payment - €7,500 or €10,000 over two years – paid in monthly instalments provided the employment is maintained. The rate of payment depends on the length of time the person is unemployed. Jobseekers under 25 years of age who had been at least four months on the live register are included in the Scheme for YEI purposes. The targeted number of jobseekers under this scheme has increased from 2,500, to 3,000 and subsequently to 6,000 as part of a suite of initiatives to support jobseekers in Budget 2015. Entry to the scheme was also extended to include former recipients of the one parent family scheme who transferred to the Jobseekers Transition payment.

ESF 4.2 JobsPlus Incentive Scheme

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Outputs				
The number of YEI eligible participants	1,800	263	211	474
Results				
The participants completes the two year period (70%) in employment	1,260			0
Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	1,260			0
Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	1,260	14	13	27
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	1,260	14	13	27
LTU participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	1,260			0
LTU participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	1,260	14	13	27
LTU participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	1,260	14	13	27
Participants in employment six months after leaving	1,080			

Note: Data for 52 of the leavers in 2015 - None have reached the six months since leaving

Tús

Tús is a community work place initiative for long-term unemployed people, delivered through a network of local development companies and Údarás na Gaeltachta in Gaeltacht areas. Participants receive a payment equivalent to their social welfare payment + €20, subject to a weekly minimum of €208.

Implementation of the Activity remained consistent in 2015. A number of changes were implemented during 2015 to the Tús initiative to support and target the activity, including -

- 20% assisted referral was introduced for Tús places. These customers are mediated through a Case Officer in their Local Intreo Office.
- Assisted referral to Tús was extended to include former OFP customers whose youngest child is 14 years of age or over who transferred to the Live Register and those on JST, no qualifying period applies.
- A review of means for participants on Tús was implemented to ensure continued entitlement to participate

ESF 4.3 TÚS

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Outputs				
The number of YEI eligible participants	5,940	625	373	998
Results				
Number of participants who complete intervention	3,421			0
Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	3,421			0
Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	854	12	4	16
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	854	13	6	19
LTU participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	3,421			0
LTU participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	854	12	4	16
LTU participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	854	13	6	19
Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	267	0	1	1
Participants in employment six months after leaving	267	1	1	2

Note: Placements are generally 1 year so many clients have not finished or reached the 6 months.

JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme

JobBridge offers work experience placements of 6 or 9 month to jobseekers in the private, public, community and voluntary sectors. Participants receive an additional €50 per week on top of their social welfare entitlement. The First Steps stream within JobBridge provides 1,500 placements for disadvantaged under 25s.

The economic recovery has had a negative impact on the activity, with just less than 2,000 under 25s participating in 2015.

Upon review of the First Steps programme the JobBridge Policy Unit of the Department of Social Protection made some changes to the scheme to allow a smoother roll out whilst encouraging maximum participation levels-

- The employer eligibility criteria are now in line with the standard JobBridge scheme.
- The standard First Steps Programme was originally for 6 months but this has now been amended to 3 months, with the option to extend to a 6 or 9 month placement.
- Previously a participant would work for 4 days per week with the option of meeting their Case officer on the fifth day, this is now a requirement as we feel 1-2-1 reviews weekly are needed given the target group.
- The Case officer will now also meet with the Host organisation on a monthly basis to review its experience and address any issues arising. This meeting may also be combined with the meeting with the participant.

A critical success factor will be the young person's motivation. Therefore participation, although offered and encouraged, will now be voluntary.

The outcome of an independent economic evaluation of JobBridge will inform future plans made in relation to the scheme and any possible replacement of same, and will take all participants on the scheme into consideration. This independent report is due to be published in September 2016.

ESF 4.4 JobBridge

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2015		
		Male	Female	Total
Outputs				
The number of YEI eligible participants	10,440	853	1,045	1,898
Results				
Number of participants who complete the intervention	4,900	452	543	995
Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	4,900	452	543	995
Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	2,440	75	106	181
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	2,440	75	106	181
LTU participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	1,960	275	337	612
LTU participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	936	48	67	115
LTU participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	936	48	67	115

Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving		22	31	53
Participants in employment six months after leaving	6,368	19	45	64

Youthreach

This activity is continued from the earlier HCIOP and offers 2 year integrated education, training and work experience programmes for early school leavers typically aged 15-20. The Department of Education and Skill's Inspectorate undertook evaluations of six Youthreach centres in 2014 and four centres in 2015 and the evaluation reports are available on the DES website

<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Evaluations-of-Centres-of-Education-List-/?pageNumber=1>.

Allocations for guidance, counselling and psychological services are made available in Youthreach Centres and Community Training Centres. A further allocation was made to 20 Youthreach centres to support work with learners with Special Educational Needs. A Special Educational Needs Initiative review was developed in 2015.

During 2014 Youthreach centres continued to engage in the Quality Framework Initiative (QFI). The QFI involves centre development planning and internal centre evaluations. A review of the Q.F.I. was initiated in 2014, and new quality standards in four new areas have been developed to date: Teaching and Learning; Measurement of Soft Skills; Learner Support and Special Educational Needs. A Centre Evaluation Improvement Plan template is to be launched at the Youthreach Coordinators' Conference in 2016.

A job skills programme between the Department of Social Protection, Youthreach and Food Companies, entitled 'Feeding Ireland's Future' is focused on 20 Youthreach centres. The programme involves job search skills and company visits.

A national Youthreach health programme promoting mental health has been developed in conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland.

ESF 4.5 Youthreach National Figures

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
The number of YEI eligible participants	5,950	1,320	934	2,364	1,354	966	2,320
Results							
The number of Youthreach participants successfully completing programme or achieving certification	2,117	1,032	802	1,834	1,160	818	1,978
Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention	2,117	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship, upon leaving	1,397	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	483	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	995	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Participants in employment six months after leaving	379	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Momentum

Momentum provides education and training programmes to young people who qualify under the Youth Guarantee. The activation of potential applicants has impacted on the duration necessary to complete the first cycle, with an additional 12 months being required to recruit the target participants. This reflects the recovering economic landscape. The completion rate is expect to be some 60% of starts and the first round will be completed in March 2017.

ESF 4.6 Momentum

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023	2014			2015		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Outputs							
The number of YEI eligible participants	4000	476	257	733	766	291	1057
Results							
Participants (under 25yrs) that gain a certification after completion of programme	3,400	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	3,400	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	1,360	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	3,400	0	0	0	0	0	0
LTU participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	3,400	0	0	0	0	0	0
LTU participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	1,360	0	0	0	0	0	0
LTU participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	3,400	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	340	0	0	0	0	0	0
Participants in employment six months after leaving	1,020	0	0	0	0	0	0

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

SICAP is a national programme that is led in each local authority area by a Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). LCDCs were established on a statutory basis in all 31 local authorities in Ireland in 2015, for the purpose of bringing a more co-ordinated and joined-up approach to local and community development at local level. Following a public procurement process, contracts for the implementation of SICAP were awarded by LCDCs to 45 Programme Implementers (PIs). At the national level, a dedicated IT system facilitates national programme oversight by the DECLG and ongoing programme monitoring and evaluation, supported by Pobal.

SICAP has been designed and funded to impact on the following areas:

- Engagement with the most hard to reach in the most disadvantaged areas;
- Focus on youth interventions to address youth unemployment;
- Preparing and supporting disadvantaged people to take up mainstream services;
- Contribute to citizen engagement in line with national policy.

SICAP has three goals and incorporates horizontal themes fostering promotion of an equality framework, use of community development approaches and collaborative networking with local and national stakeholders. In the nine months the programme has operated, from its establishment in April to end December 2015, SICAP has supported a total of 36,854 individuals nationally.

Goals of SICAP

Goal 1: Empowering Disadvantaged Communities. To support and resource disadvantaged communities and marginalised target groups to engage with relevant local and national stakeholders in identifying and addressing social exclusion and equality issues.

Goal 2: Lifelong Learning. To support individuals and marginalised target groups experiencing educational disadvantage so they can participate fully, engage with and progress through life-long learning opportunities through the use of community development approaches.

Goal 3: Employment. To engage with marginalised target groups/individuals and residents of disadvantaged communities who are unemployed but who do not fall within mainstream employment service provision, or who are referred to SICAP, to move them closer to the labour market and improve work readiness, and support them in accessing employment and self-employment and creating social enterprise opportunities.

In 2015, SICAP provided lifelong learning and employability supports under Goals 2 and 3 above, benefiting 3,958 young people aged 15-24 years, who were not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and co-financed under the ESF / Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The majority of young people in this category (58%) were male and 42% were female. A high proportion of NEETs reported their principal economic status as Long Term Unemployed (48%). In addition, 39% indicated that they lived in a jobless household. A small proportion of young people described as NEETs supported under SICAP had a disability (6%) or were lone parents (6%) and

4% were homeless or were affected by homelessness. The highest level of educational attainment for a significant majority (89%) was of Leaving Certificate level (ISCED3) or below, with one third having the highest level of education attainment of Junior Certificate (ISCED2) or below.

SICAP supports for NEET participants are aimed at bringing these young people into, or closer to, the labour market by way of increasing employability skills, vocational training or activation supports for self-employment. Some examples of training offered are:

- One-to-one supports including job coaching, career guidance, mentoring and employment skills;
- Workshops on personal development, career planning, CV preparation and Interview skills;
- Accredited (QQI) and non-accredited education courses, largely on vocational topics such as Barista Skills, Safe Pass, Manual Handling, Computers (Coding / App design), Start Your Own Business etc.
- Outreach and information sessions with education providers and other external agencies.

SICAP was a new programme in 2015 and therefore involved a changing pattern of national programme governance and delivery. In addition, the integration of the Youth Employment Initiative into SICAP added a layer of complexity to local implementation, involving stringent requirements for data collection and results reporting for NEETs.

Positive changes in the Irish labour market improved employment opportunities in 2015 for all SICAP groups, including NEETs. Since the national population of NEETs is reducing, an integrated and cross-agency approach to supporting those most distant from the labour force at the local level will maximise SICAP outcomes for NEETs. On this basis, a protocol was established between the DECLG and Department of Social Protection (DSP) in 2015 to support referrals from DSP to SICAP.

ESF 4.7 SICAP

Outputs and Results Indicator Targets	Target Value 2023			
2015 Outputs		Male	Female	Total
The number of YEI eligible participants	4,000	2,284	1,674	3,958
Results				
The number of YEI eligible participants completing an training/upskilling/personal development towards employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects	3,200			
Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	2,560	164	85	249
Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	480	44	26	70
Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	960	139	68	207
LTU participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	1,280	67	42	109
LTU participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	240	18	12	30
LTU participants who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employed, upon leaving	480	61	37	99
Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention	640	9	7	16
Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship, upon leaving	120	3	2	5
Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gain a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	240	5	3	8
Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	300	6	5	11
Participants in employment six months after leaving	300	5	2	7
Participants in self-employment six months after leaving		4	0	4

Priority 5 - Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance activities include the preparatory, management and control, evaluation, information and communication, and audit activities undertaken by the Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority in implementing the

Programme. The costs associated with the new e-Cohesion system attributable to the ESF will be supported from this Priority, as will the training and guidance measures for Intermediary Bodies and Beneficiaries.

Output Indicators				
Indicator	Measurement Unit	Output 2014	Output 2015	Target Value 2023
Audit Output indicator	Number of audits p/a	0	0	270
Number of Employees	Number of Employees	6	7	6
Number of Meetings per Annum	Number of Meetings p/a	0	1	14

Evaluation Activity

Article 54 of the Common Provisions Regulation (1303/2013) states that “*evaluations shall be carried out to improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes, as well as to assess their effectiveness, efficiency and impact*”. Article 56 of the Regulation requires that each Member State prepare an evaluation plan setting out its approach to evaluation, and also requires that such evaluations are carried out in accordance with that plan and are appropriately followed up.

The Evaluation Plan for PEIL was prepared by the Managing Authority in Q1 2016 and provides an overall framework for the evaluation of PEIL 2014-2020. In doing this, it addresses the data needs arising from evaluations as well as the proposed approach to evaluations of the Programme, including timing, methods and resource issues arising. In line with the requirements that evaluations are carried out by experts who are functionally independent of the Managing Authority, it is proposed that all evaluations will be commissioned from external experts by competitive tender and financed from the Technical Assistance budget under Priority Axis 5.

The relevant regulations require that both *ex-ante* and *ex-post* evaluations are carried out on the overall Programme, while at least once during the programme period 2014-2020 an evaluation shall assess how support from the ESF has contributed to the objectives for each Priority Axis. It is also required that Member States undertake two evaluation of the Youth Employment Initiative, the first to be completed by December 2015, and the second by end-2018.

Taking into account the above, the Plan sets out a preliminary programme of evaluations, which will be regularly reviewed to ensure any emerging evaluation needs are met. This preliminary programme provides for the following evaluations –

- YEI Evaluation - completed December 2015
- Mid-Term Programme Evaluation - Q4 2017
- YEI Evaluation - end-2018
- Programme Evaluation - Q4 2019

The Plan also notes that other evaluations, outside the scope of the evaluation plan itself, are planned and will take place over the course of the programme period, including –

- the established evaluation framework underpinning Springboard,
- the review of the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities to be completed in 2016,
- the evaluation of the JobBridge Activation Programme to be completed in 2016, and
- the review of the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance, to be completed in 2016.

The Plan also notes that the Managing Authority will ensure that all relevant stakeholders are made aware of evaluation work, in the interest of transparency and to promote the emergent learning.

It should be noted that the European Commission provided its observations on Ireland's ESF Evaluation Plan in May 2016 and, as a result, the plan will be revised and updated. The opportunity will also be taken to reflect additional planned evaluations, most notably research under SICAP in 2016 (both quantitative and qualitative) to identify and document good practice for engagement with NEETs.

With regard to the mandatory *Ex-Ante Evaluation* of the overall Programme, this was carried out by Fitzpatrick Associates Economic Consultants, in conjunction with AECOM, and provided to the European Commission, together with the Operational Programme document, in February 2015.

The evaluators considered that the marked negative social and labour impact of Ireland's extreme economic recession should be the priority for ESF focus, while also identifying other challenges relating to equal opportunities, long-term disadvantage, educational attainment, skills shortages and poverty. In their view, the draft proposals for the Programme responded broadly to these priorities. However, they also recommended that the Programme be flexible to respond to changing needs.

As noted above, an **Evaluation of the Operation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)** was also completed in December 2015. This evaluation was carried out by Gauge NI on behalf of the Managing Authority and utilised a mixed methodology, including desk research, interviews and surveys.

The evaluators found that, within the context of its early phase of delivery, there is emerging evidence that the YEI activities are making a collective contribution to the objectives of the YEI, the extent of which would be assessed in more detail in the 2018 evaluation.

The evaluation also set out a number of recommendations, including further provision of training to relevant staff, that eligibility criteria be applied consistently across activities and that so-called “soft” outcomes be monitored.

Communications and Information Activity

Under the relevant regulations, it is a requirement that Member States undertake a range of communication and information activities to ensure that the role and achievements of cohesion policy, and of the ESF in particular, are publicised. To meet this requirement, a number of activities were undertaken in the period 2014-2015.

The Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning 2014-2020 was **formally launched** on the 23rd April 2015.

The PEIL **Communication Strategy/Plan** for 2014-2020 was approved by the PEIL PMC on the 20th August 2015.

A new **ESF website** (<http://esf.ie/en/>) was launched in December 2015.

In 2015, there were a total of 13,458 visitors to the ESF website, demonstrating its use as a source of information on the ESF in Ireland.

The ESF website continues to be the main source of information on the ESF in Ireland. The website contains all the relevant information in relation to eligibility and compliance with the EU Commission’s requirements for European Social Funding, including -

- ESF Guidelines on Publicity
- The ESF Communications Strategy
- The relevant ESF and National Logos
- The Activity Implementation Plans

The sixth and seventh issues of the **ESF Newsletter**, issued in June of 2014 and 2015 respectively, highlighted some of the achievements of the ESF in Ireland. The articles showed the variety of projects that benefited from the ESF during these years.

The Managing Authority again produced its ESF (desk) **Calendar** in 2015. The calendar contained photos of twelve projects representing all the Activities under the HCI OP. The calendar continues to be popular amongst Beneficiaries and Projects.

Training

A number of training events/seminars were arranged for Intermediary Bodies and Beneficiaries in 2014 and 2015. Details of those events are set out below -

- **Seminar on Simplified Cost Options – 27th January 2014**
 - Simplification Cost Options & Joint Action Plans current use and perspectives 2014 – presentation by Laurent Sens, DG EMPL.
 - Simplified Cost Options: DG EMPL Audit Approach; audit perspective 1 – presentation by Jeroen Jutte (Relations with Control Authorities, Legal Procedures, Audit Direct Management).
 - Audit of SCO: audit perspective 2 – presentation by Mr González Bastero, European Court of Auditors.
 - Member States’ experience with simplification: Italy – presentation by Ms Christina Columbo (ESF in Lombardy).

- **Seminar on Performance Framework – 20th February 2014**
 - “Monitoring and evaluation in the 2014-2020 Programming Period” - Presentation by Ms Effie Meletiou, from the EU Commission’s DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion Evaluation Unit.

- **European Commission one-day presentation and workshop on new regulations, Europa Hotel Belfast – 19th June 2014**
 - Introduction of new regulations – presentation by Mr Andreas von Busch, DG Regio Operational Efficiency Unit.
 - Overview of the main changes in comparison with the 2007-13 period – presentation by Ms Lynsey Moore, DG Regio, Operational Efficiency Unit.
 - Eligibility, Audit and Annual Accounts – presentation by Ms Carol Mancel-Blanchard, DG Regio, Legal Unit.

- Financial Instruments, Major and Net Revenue Generating Projects, and Simplified Costs – presentation by Mr Andreas von Busch, DG Regio, Operational Efficiency Unit.
- **Seminar on the proposed ESF Programme for the 2014-2020 period - 24th June 2014**
 - Partnership Agreement – Dept of Public Expenditure and Reform – Mr. J Deane.
 - Draft of the ESF Programme – proposed priorities and funding; Q and A session.
- **Training Session for new ESF Requirements on – 23rd January 2015**
 - Draft Certifying Authority ESF Circular for 2014 -2020 - ESF Certifying Authority.
 - Data Collection – ESF Managing Authority.
 - Communication and Publicity – ESF Managing Authority.

The ESF Managing Authority keeps the training needs of Intermediary Bodies and Beneficiaries under review.

Data Collection

The relevant regulations require that a significant amount of data is gathered regarding each participant in a co-funded activity, both at the time of their commencement of the relevant activity and following their exit from that activity.

At the time of the adoption of the Programme, only some of the activities had the systems in place to ensure the return of 100% of this data. However, a Data Collection Summary Action Plan, setting out a set of specific actions to be undertaken by the relevant bodies to ensure that all relevant data could be collected, was provided to the Commission in conjunction with the Operational Programme document in 2015.

Updates in relation to each of the relevant activities are set out below.

ETB Training for the Unemployed, Youthreach, Back to Education Initiative (BTEI), Adult Literacy and Youthreach (delivered by SOLAS)

A Programme and Learner Support System (PLSS) is being implemented for all 16 ETBs. This IT restructuring project will address the 2014-2020 ESF data collection

requirements. The PLSS is developing three associated IT infrastructures and business processes required for systematic and timely access to the data within Further Education and Training (FET) provision. The IT infrastructures are:

- The National Programme Database (NPD)
- the Course Calendar Scheduling System (CCSS)
- The Learner Database.

To date, the work has primarily focused on the development of the NPD and CCSS, in consultation with Department of Social Protection. The third element of this work, the Learner Database, is currently being progressed.

The purpose of SOLAS' Learner Database is to attain learner details and learner (and course) outcomes and indicators, as well as facilitate data exchanges between SOLAS, ETBs, DES and DSP. Data from the Learner Database will be used to support policy formulation, inform programme planning to ensure labour market demands are met, and will provide a platform to facilitate reporting to the ESF Monitoring Committee.

The development of the FET Learner Database strand of PLSS development for completion in Quarter 4 is on target. The pilot for this Database will commence in May 2016.

Back to Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA) Scheme, JobsPlus Incentive Scheme, Tús, JobBridge, the National Internship Scheme (delivered by Department of Social Protection)

With regard to BTWEA, JobsPlus and JobBridge, 'Participant Detail Forms' have issued to all ESF eligible clients in order to collect the indicator data set out in Annex 1 (i.e. indicators on entry to the activity) which was not previously collected by Department of Social Protection (DSP) systems.

DSP have developed a longitudinal database for clients in order to determine their status post completion. This uses data from DSP, the Education and Training Boards and the Revenue Commissioners.

With regard to Tús, DSP continues to work with Pobal to enhance the data collection process to allow the collection of all relevant data.

Further information regarding the Operational Programme can be found on the Irish ESF website, <http://www.esf.ie/en/Programmes/ESF-Programme-for-Employability-Inclusion-and-Learning-PEIL-2014-2020/>



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