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Country Report – Ireland

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ESF Ex post Evaluation Synthesis 2007-2013

Country Report – Ireland

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Glossary of key concepts

A2E	Access and sustainable integration into employment – one of the Priorities of Article 3 'Scope of assistance' of the ESF Regulation No 1081/2006 and the focus of this evaluation
Action	The second level in the OP architecture, usually the Priority Axis (see below) consists of several actions
Adaptability	A key policy area in the ESF, consisting of activities to increase the adaptation of workers and enterprises to the changing economic circumstances and labour market demands - one of the Priorities of Article 3 'Scope of assistance' of the ESF Regulation No 1081/2006
Annex XXIII categories	The socio-economic characteristics of ESF participants reported in the ESF monitoring systems, relating to the participant gender, labour market status (employed (of which self-employed), unemployed (of which long-term unemployed), inactive of which in education and training), age (young people aged 15-24 and older people aged 55-64), disadvantaged status (migrants, minorities, disabled, other disadvantaged) and educational attainment status (by ISCED levels)
Category of expenditure (CoE)	Categorisation of the Structural Fund expenditure; cf ANNEX IV of COUNCIL REGULATION (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006. ESF expenditure relates to Categories 62 to 74.
Certified expenditure	Expenditure incurred in the implementation of the ESF activities which has been approved by the Managing Authority of the Operational Programme and the European Commission
Community added value (CAV)	The extent to which the ESF activities provided effects additional to the national / regional activities
Effectiveness	The extent to which the set aims and objectives have been reached
Efficiency	The comparison between the achieved outputs and results and the costs incurred
Gender sensitivity	The extent to which the planning, design, implementation and monitoring reflects the gender issues
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education, an international standard classification used to classify the education levels: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Primary education2 Lower secondary education3 Upper secondary education4 Post-secondary non-tertiary education5 Short-cycle tertiary education6 Bachelor or equivalent
Intervention	The third level in the OP architecture, usually the Actions in the OP consist of several interventions
Human capital	A key policy area in the ESF, consisting of activities to develop the skills and knowledge of human resources across the different stages of the education and training

	<p>system cycle, this theme is subject to another thematic evaluation - one of the Priorities of Article 3 'Scope of assistance' of the ESF Regulation No 1081/2006</p>
Managing Authority (MA)	<p>The institution in each Member State OP responsible for the strategic direction and financial management of the OP</p>
Operational Programme (OP)	<p>The means through which the ESF support was implemented in the Member States, as agreed between the European Commission and the Member States. Each OP consists of several Priority Axes, which in turn consist of several actions, which in turn consist of several interventions</p>
Output	<p>The immediate reach of the ESF activity (e.g. number of participants reached, number of schools or enterprises supported)</p>
Participant	<p>The person who participated in the ESF funded activity.</p>
Priority Axis (PA)	<p>The first level in the OP architecture, usually the OP consists of several Priority Axes (concepts of priorities, areas and others are also used in the OPs), which in turn consist of several actions and each action of several interventions</p>
Regional competitiveness and employment objective (RCE)	<p>Aimed at strengthening regions' competitiveness and attractiveness as well as employment by anticipating economic and social changes outside the least-developed regions: NUTS level 2 regions in the EU Member States whose gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was above 90 % of the average GDP of the EU-25 for the same reference period</p>
Result	<p>The change achieved through the activity upon leaving to long term achievements of ESF activities (e.g. number of qualifications acquired by participants, number of enterprises providing training)</p>
Sustainability	<p>The extent to which the achieved results last</p>

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Acronyms

A2E	Access to employment and sustainable integration into employment
AIR	Annual Implementation Report
ALMP	Active labour market policy
CAV	Community Added Value
CIE	Counterfactual Impact Evaluation
CoE	Category of expenditure
CF	Cohesion Fund
CSR	Country Specific Recommendation
EC	European Commission
EEN	Expert Evaluation Network
ESF	European Social Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
HC	Human Capital
HCI OP	Human Capital Investment Operational Programme
IB	Intermediary Body
LMAF	Labour market activation fund
LMP	Labour market policy
MA	Managing Authority
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Priority Axis
PES	Public Employment Service
SFC	Structural Funds Common Database
SI	Social Inclusion

Executive summary

Headline figures and key findings at the end of 2014

- Total financial allocation: EUR 750.7 million (contribution of EU was 50%)
- Activities were implemented under the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (HCI OP)
- 80.8% or EUR 607 million of which was incurred by the end of 2014;
- 1.2 million participations were registered by the end of 2014, of which 78% participated under the Human Capital theme.
- 36% were unemployed, 46% with primary or lower secondary education, 31% with upper secondary, 27% young people and 5% migrants and minorities.
- Aggregation of results:
 - People taking up employment or advancing to further education: 103,733
 - People who have increased the level of qualification: 283,326
 - Other positive results: 70,529
 - Products: 329
- The resource contribution of the ESF was substantial and of greater national importance than under the previous EU funding round when the Irish exchequer was in a position of unprecedented strength. The ESF facilitated higher levels of activity for the interventions Students Assistance Fund and the fund supporting disabled students than might otherwise have been the case with the funding of EUR 63 million.
- The Cost Benefit Analysis of Adult Literacy Training, targeting those with lowest educational attainment, found significant economic benefits. In particular, it was estimated that there is a 28% increase in income per improvement in one NFQ level for those in work or getting work after training (but it was estimated that only 25% of trainees were in work).

Background

The country synthesis report covers the programming period up until the end of 2014 and includes the analysis of expenditure, outputs and results in Ireland across all policy themes. It builds on the Human Capital, Social Inclusion and Access to Employment *ex post* evaluations, Annual Implementation Reports and on other available ESF evaluations carried out in Ireland.

1. Policy challenges addressed by the ESF

Ireland approached the programming period 2007-2013 on the back of a prolonged period of economic expansion but in 2008 it showed a strong reaction on the economic crisis, where the unemployment rate tripled from 2007 to 2011 from 4.7% up to 14.7%.

The 'Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007-2013' responded strongly to the Lisbon and NRP priorities, both at an overall level and specifically within its actions within the human capital theme. Improving worker adaptability and labour force flexibility was supported through Actions such as: 'Adult literacy', 'Back to education', and 'Skills training for the unemployed'.

The ESF funding in the human capital field over the period 2007-2013 has shown a reasonably strong strategic fit within the wider national strategy for human capital development although it has been very limited relative to national investment, and as such has been only a marginal driver of the national strategy.

Both PA 1 and PA 2 contributed to the implementation of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) before (Active Inclusion through supporting those excluded by virtue of educational or other specific causes of disadvantage) and after (long-term unemployment, improvement of AMLP) the crisis.

2. The scale of ESF investment

2.1 Funding:

Overall, EUR 751 million (50% of which was ESF funding) was allocated to Ireland, of which about 80.8% were spent by the end of 2014.

2.2 Participations

In total, there were approximately 1.2 million participations¹ in the interventions funded by the Irish ESF OP HCI in the programming period 2007-2013, of which 78% participated in the interventions under the HC theme. Almost half of the participants only have primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and 2). The share of people with upper secondary education (ISCED 3) made up about one third of the total number of participants. The largest group are the inactive, where 28% are in education/training and 15% are completely inactive. Unemployed are the second largest group of participants and made up 27%, LTU were 9%.

3. The effectiveness of interventions

Overall, 53% of the result indicators (57% for A2E, 50% for Human Capital) reached the targets set and 352,782 people successfully completed accredited programmes. However, it should be noted that for 20% of the result indicators no target was set.

The results of the Adult Literacy training programme show that the target of 60,000 was exceeded by 26%, but compared to the number of participants this means that about 17% of the entering participants achieved a certification of which 60% progressed to further education, training or employment.

About 56,000 out of targeted 47,000 students supported by the *Student Assistance Fund* successfully completed the academic year by the end of 2014, which means that about 71% of the total number of students supported (78,829) successfully completed the academic year as the number of students entering also exceeded the target set. Furthermore, between 2010 and 2013 the number of students with sensory, physical and or multiple disabilities participating in higher education almost doubled.

According to the *Evaluation of the NEAP: Activation in Ireland*, participation of unemployed people in training had a positive employment impact by reducing the probability of subsequent unemployment by between 10% and 14%.

Aggregation of results

- People taking up employment or advancing to further education: 103,733
- People who have increased qualification: 283,326
- Other positive results: 70,529
- Products: 329

Results are presented in accordance with indicators set by the AIR as such they do not represent complete achievements of the ESF in Ireland, especially relating to the number of individuals progressing into employment.

4. The efficiency of interventions

Overall, the average cost per participation was EUR 519.

The cost per result under the Undergraduate Skills programme is noticeably higher than the planned expenditure (EUR 8,102 vs. EUR 5,032) and result targets implied at the outset. This reflects a significant initial underestimation of the numbers of graduates that would emerge based on the level of funding provided through the intervention.

5. The sustainability

There is generally limited evidence on the sustainability of effects for individual participants. Qualitative evidence and stakeholder viewpoints also hold that participation often has long-lasting positive effects for many participants, even where labour market progression outcomes are less immediate or widespread and not necessarily central among objectives, however such comments often do not have a quantitative basis.

The intervention Undergraduate skills led to the introduction of a new ICT action plan 2014-2018 and an ICT Skills Conversion Programme and 'Springboard' initiative, which

¹ As one person could participate more than once, the term 'participations' is used here. In the rest of the document, 'participants' is used, but may include double counting of individuals.

are each intended to up skill specific target groups in advanced ICT, which will continue with the measures that were implemented during the programming period.

6. The gender sensitivity of interventions

Overall, the share of women of the total number of participants is 54.8%. The gender proportion of the in-depth intervention of the thematic evaluation on Human Capital show large variations. In the intervention Undergraduate skills, 3 out of 4 participants are male, while among the participants of the Students Assistance Fund 60% are female. The gender proportion of the Fund for Students with Disabilities and the intervention Youthreach are equal. Under this OP, gender mainstreaming and a more expanded equal opportunities focus, which covers the nine grounds set out in the Irish equality legislation, were included. There were two specific ESF supported activities contained within the Priority Increasing Participation and Reducing Inequality of the Labour Force promoting Equality Mainstreaming and Gender Equality. The Equality Mainstreaming Activity (ESF 2.9) contributed to addressing labour market gaps for specific groups experiencing discrimination. According to the interventions analysed in-depth in the Human Capital thematic evaluation, outputs and results do not show significant gender discrepancies.

7. Community added value of ESF investment (for each type, specify in which theme(s) the CAV has been predominant) present by order of importance.

Regarding volume, the resource contribution of the ESF is substantial and of greater national importance than under the previous EU funding round when the Irish exchequer was in a position of unprecedented strength. The importance of the ESF contribution is greater than anticipated at the planning and initiation stages of the HCI OP, given the economic collapse and deterioration in the public finances.

The ESF facilitated higher levels of activity for the interventions Students Assistance Fund and the fund supporting disabled students than might otherwise have been the case with the funding of EUR 63 million. The economic and national budgetary crisis exerted tremendous pressures on all national funding streams and resulted in cutbacks to numerous discretionary funding programmes in higher education and elsewhere.

Regarding scope effects, evidence can be found in the projects that participated in Equality for Women Measure (EWM) activity in 2014, which would not have taken place without the availability of ESF funding. These opportunities enabled a total 1,000 women to take the first step towards the labour market (as Strand 1 Projects only operated during 2014).

Several role effects can be found in the interventions of the HCI OP, such as the experience of the LMAF, co-financed by ESF, which is being rolled out more widely in current/new active labour market interventions – i.e., the method of 'open' call/competitive process.

Regarding process effects, the ESF co-financing of the OP is seen to ensure a level of planning, objective and target setting, management, monitoring and reporting discipline that few stakeholders consider would exist in its absence.

8. Socio-economic impact

The ESF was used to support the recurrent expenditure on very specific elements of further education and training, and niche activities within higher education, which had labour market and/or social inclusion objectives in addition to human capital ones.

Looking at the socio-economic trends in Ireland from 2007 to 2014, it is evident that the indicator values decreased during the economic and financial crisis, but the last year 2014 showed a modest recovery of most of the indicators.

9. Overall assessment of all evaluation criteria

Overall, the total number of participants was overachieved for each policy field and the OP set results were mostly achieved or very close to the targets. The interventions were targeted at specific target groups such as young and older people and the inactive. These

groups were effectively reached suggesting that the targeting was effective and the activities appropriate.

10. Key lessons

Overall, the ESF funding was largely used to fund niche activities and add to the larger 'pot' of national funding in all policy fields. ESF funding has shown a reasonably strong strategic fit within the wider national strategies for human capital development, social inclusion and active labour market policy.

The delivery mechanisms in Ireland were considered rather ineffective (*Literacy, Numeracy and Activation amongst the Unemployed*) and underwent quite significant restructuring in the framework of the bailout. Implementation was considered rather slow.

The monitoring systems in Ireland have been criticised for not collecting the data necessary for good evaluation (see 8.6 below). However, the output and the result indicators of the ESF OP were chosen appropriately. The aggregated result indicators (total number of participants under Priorities 1 and 2) were helpful when analysing the results.

The Irish OP was programmed at a time of economic growth and high employment. The crisis hit the country particularly hard necessitating three revisions to the OP in 2009, 2011 and 2012. The revisions were made to respond to the economic and public debt crisis. The latter affected the national co-financing capacity of the HCI OP. Overall, the changes were supportive of the programme implementation as the national contribution was reduced and the priority was laid on PA 1 to address large scale unemployment and provide, e.g. measures for the short-term unemployed to get them back into work more quickly. The key lesson here is to ensure flexibility and to make changes as necessary.

Table 1. ESF Ex post evaluation, main figures by policy theme

	PA 1 Increasing Activation of the Labour Force	PA 2 2 Increasing Participation and reducing Inequality in the Labour Force	Total
Allocated in millions EUR (EU + national funding)	448	295	751
Of it EU (%)	-	-	50
Certified expenditure in million EUR (and % of allocation)	336 (75%)	269 (91%)	607 (81%)
Participations (thousands)	523	645	1.2
Women %	52.8	56.4	54.8
Youth (16-24)%	28.7	25.3	26.8
Unemployed %	44.6	28.1	35.5
Inactive %	35.6	49.8	43.5
Disadvantaged %	21.0	17.2	18.9
Low skilled (ISCED 1-2)%	40.4	50.3	45.9
Results			
People taking up employment or advancing to further education	51,572	52,161	103,733
People who have increased the level of qualification	206,337	76,989	283,326
Other positive results	56,311	14,218	70,529
Products		329	329

Introduction

This country synthesis report for Ireland is part of *Evaluation Task 2B: National level analysis* of the ESF 2007-2013 Ex post Evaluation Synthesis. The purpose of the present report is to summarize the most recent and most robust evaluation evidence available, analyse the most recent data available and provide a succinct overview of the outputs, results and impacts of the ESF under the main ESF Priorities as defined in the ESF Regulation². These are generally:

- increasing adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs with a view to improving the anticipation and positive management of economic change
- enhancing access to employment and the sustainable inclusion in the labour market of job seekers and inactive people, preventing unemployment, in particular long-term and youth unemployment, encouraging active ageing and longer working lives, and increasing participation in the labour market
- reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people with a view to their sustainable integration in employment and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market
- enhancing human capital
- promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through networking of relevant stakeholders, such as the social partners and non-governmental organisations, at the transnational, national, regional and local levels in order to mobilise for reforms in the field of employment and labour market inclusiveness

The ESF achievements under each Priority have been evaluated in the following sections: Extent to which resources were used, Effectiveness, Efficiency/cost-effectiveness, Socio-economic impact, Community Added Value (CAV), Gender Sensitivity and Sustainability.

For this country synthesis report, existing reports have been used emanating from EU level evaluations, in particular the recent thematic ex-post evaluations on Human Capital, Social Inclusion and Access to Employment and the reports of the ESF expert evaluation network (EEN) as well as national evaluation material and other relevant reports. This information has been updated by the AIRs 2014.

Given the reliance of the country synthesis reports on existing material for the most part, some chapters have more detailed information than others. This is the case for the chapters on Human Capital and Social Inclusion. The programme is structured around three priorities: Priority Axis I: Activation of the Labour Force; Priority Axis II: Increasing Participation and Reducing Inequality in the Labour Force and Priority Axis III: Technical Assistance. Generally, the OP, structured by Priority Axes, does not correspond well to the ESF Policy Fields. For instance, while interventions focused on Social Inclusion are mainly under Priority Axis II, Social Inclusion is a horizontal principle and is reflected in Activities (the programming level below Priority Axis) across the OP. Access to Employment and Improving Human Capital are mainly supported under Priority Axis I but some Activities in Priority Axis II also reflect these objectives.

² REGULATION (EC) No 1081/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 5 July 2006 Article 3, Scope of assistance

1 Background and Context

1.1 Challenges and role/position of ESF

1.1.1 Challenges faced by the country in the different policy fields at the time of programming and during the programming period

Ireland approached the 2007-2013 EU structural funding period on the back of a prolonged period of economic expansion that began in the early to mid-1990s. The overall employment rate was over 70% for the first time in 2000. It peaked at approximately 73% in 2007, with 2.12 million in employment. Although the first two years of the programming period still showed positive developments in the labour market (employment and unemployment figures), 2008 showed a strong reaction on the economic crisis with decreasing GDP per capita (-6.4%), increasing unemployment and decreasing labour market participation.

The unemployment rate more than tripled from 4.7% in 2007 to its peak of 14.9% in 2012. The situation was even more drastic for 15-24 year olds. The youth unemployment rate rose from 9.1% in 2007 to just over 30% in 2012, with a substantial increase in the number of youth not working and not in education or training (NEET) from 10.8% in 2007 to its peak of 19.2% in 2010.

Some job-seekers are still experiencing difficulties getting back into the labour market. Long-term unemployment (LTU) remains stubbornly high having doubled between 2007 (30%) and 2012 (61.7%). The percentage of unemployed people who have remained out of work for 12 months or more has since remained close to 60%³.

The share of people at the risk of poverty or social exclusion increased from 23.1% in 2007 to 30.0% in 2012 and dropped slightly to 29.5% in 2013 (EU28 average is 24.5% in 2013).

The rate of tertiary education attainment of the age group 30-34 (52.2% in 2014) is above the average of the EU28. It increased by 8.9 percentage points during the 2007-2013 programming period, but it is still below the EU2020 target of 60%. The share of women with tertiary qualifications is substantially higher than for men for this age group (58.6% vs. 45.1%).

The ESF funding in the human capital field over the period 2007-2013 has shown a reasonably strong strategic fit within the wider national strategy for human capital development although it has been very limited relative to the national investment, and as such has been only a marginal driver of the national strategy. Total ESF support under the HC theme over 2007-2013 period is estimated at approximately EUR 329 million. This compares to national public expenditure in skills development, primary, secondary and third-level education of some EUR 8.5 billion in 2013 alone⁴. The ESF was therefore used to support the recurrent expenditure on very specific elements of further education and training, and niche activities within higher education, which had labour market and/or social inclusion objectives in addition to human capital ones.

ESF actions in the policy field Social Inclusion over the 2007-2013 period were embedded in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016.

1.1.2 CSR addressed by the ESF

In the context of the Semester, since 2011 the Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of EU Member States' plans of budgetary, macroeconomic and structural reforms and provides them with country-specific recommendations for the next 12-18 months. These recommendations also contribute to the objectives of the EU's long-term strategy for jobs and growth and the Europe 2020 strategy. Before 2011 Member States received country-specific recommendations in the context of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs.

³ Ex-post evaluation Investment in Access and sustainable integration into employment – EU27 National Template – Ireland.

⁴ Ex-post evaluation Investment in human capital – Country Report – Ireland (2015)

Both PA 1 and PA 2 contributed to the implementation of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) of 2007 and 2008 regarding Active Inclusion and through supporting those excluded by virtue of educational or other specific causes of disadvantage. Other recommendations included the social integration and placing a particular emphasis on support to older and low-skilled workers.

This is reflected, for instance, in the interventions 'Back to Education Initiative', 'Adult Literacy Training' and the Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres, offering 'second chance' education to those young people at risk of early school leaving (Youthreach) and vocational education and training options to ethnic minorities (e.g. Roma people) with low / no qualification⁵.

With the financial crisis the priorities and recommendations changed. The CSRs of 2009 refer to the urgent need to rebalance growth and to rebuild competitiveness through measures enhancing productivity growth and adequate wage policies.

Ireland was not subject to CSRs between 2010 and 2013 when it entered macroeconomic adjustment programme.

For 2013, it was recommended that Ireland pursue further improvements in active labour market policies, with a particular focus on the long-term unemployed, the low-skilled and, in line with the objectives of a youth guarantee, young people, which is well responded by both PAs. It was recommended that it advance the ongoing reform of the further education and training (FET) system, employment support schemes and apprenticeship programmes, offer more workplace training and improve and ensure the relevance of FET courses and apprenticeships with respect to labour market needs.

1.1.3 ESF response to the crisis

Reflecting changing labour market conditions (in particular the large increase in unemployment), the annual number of participants in interventions classified as A2E increased dramatically from 29,789 at the start of the OP in 2007 to 224,000 in total in 2014, which is about one third of the number of ALMP participants (618,175). The focus of action is on support via accredited training interventions – skills training for unemployed people. The introduction of the Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF) in 2010, based on an open call for proposals, resulted in interventions that were more focused on: (i) specific types of training for specific target groups, (ii) matching training to opportunities in the labour market, (iii) reskilling of unemployed from sectors worse hit by the recession and unlikely to recover to pre-recession employment levels, and (iv) progression into further education and training options along the pathway to access to employment.

Major reforms took place in the activation of the unemployed, in the further education and training (FET) sector, in the fight against youth unemployment by setting up Youth Action Teams comprised of national experts and officials of the European Commission and in the field of social protection during this programming period in Ireland. The impetus for these reforms came from the challenges presented by the crisis, in particular the high rates of unemployment and increased demand for places in further education, training and other activation measures and the need to address weaknesses of effectiveness and coherence of the existing system of activation and training. The objective of the Youth Action Teams was to reallocate Structural Funds in order to create job opportunities for young people and support access to finance for SMEs. The state training and employment agency FÁS was abolished in 2013. The functions previously performed by FÁS (information service and activation of unemployment and training) are now performed by new or reformed agencies: SOLAS is the new Further Education and Training Authority, set up in 2013 and responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programme in the state; Education and Training Boards (ETB) – 16 across the state – have been set up to replace the former Vocational Education Committees (VECs, previously 33, one in each local authority area of the state) and FÁS Training Centres (formerly 16). Education and Training Boards are responsible

⁵ EEN Country Report Ireland

for the delivery of further education and training in local areas across the state; a network of local Intreo Offices has been established under the Department of Social Protection (DSP) to act as the Public Employment Service (PES). The location of this service within the Department of Social Protection enables a stronger integration of passive and active labour market policy. Intreo Offices act as a single point of contact for all employment services and support for both jobseekers and employers, providing information regarding benefit entitlements, advice on training and further education options, employment opportunities and assistance in securing employment (for Jobseekers) and employees (for employers).

The reformed FET sector gave priority to unemployed people, in particular the long-term unemployed. The main means of delivery were learner-centred and flexible. Employment services were contracted out to private sector operators and the changes included the introduction of 'payment by results' in some programmes (for example Momentum). This was the main change compared with the past situation. The payment by results system is outcomes based and represents an innovative financing option which transfers risk to the providers by basing payment on performance⁶. In the public sector context where expected outcomes are sometimes ambiguous, the approach encourages providers to deliver results by using financial incentives⁷. In order to be effective and not penalise providers for influences they cannot control, the payment by results model should be used in an 'environment where there are 'known unknowns', where the linkages between inputs and outcomes are well understood and tightly connected'⁸. To avoid 'creaming' and the neglect of more disadvantaged groups who are likely to achieve lower results, the outcomes and types of behaviour the programme is trying to promote should be clear from the outset.

The funding within the policy field Social Inclusion was very modest relative to national exchequer funding, and extremely small relative to the rapidly growing social-welfare and income supports that were necessitated in light of the economic and unemployment crises. However its funding significance and importance varied within the different activities to which it was put, and in some areas it supplemented national core resources for important mainstream activities (e.g. activation of the recently unemployed), while in others it supported very specific target groups, innovative actions or intervention models⁹.

1.2 Support and Contribution to the Lisbon Strategy and Europe 2020 strategy and targets

The HCI OP 2007-2013 responded strongly to the Lisbon and NRP priorities, both at an overall level and specifically within its actions within the human capital theme.

Improving worker adaptability and labour force flexibility was supported through Actions such as: 'Adult literacy', 'Back to education', and 'Skills training for the unemployed'.

Ireland did not receive any country specific recommendations linked to the issue of human capital under the Lisbon or Europe 2020 processes.

Under the Europe 2020 process, national targets and commitments relevant to the human capital theme include increasing the employment rate of those aged 20-64, in particular young people, older workers and the low skilled. The national strategic response is twin-tracked, incorporating both job creation and labour market activation drives, and within the latter enhancing skills, education and training so as to improve employability. The ESF is playing an important role in this field, both in unemployment-focused Actions (e.g. 'Skills Training for the Unemployed') and in widening and enhancing participation in further education and training to support longer term employment prospects (e.g. 'Back to education' and 'Youthreach').

⁶ http://www.ibec.ie/IBEC/DFB.nsf/vPages/Public_services~News~payment-by-results-model-for-jobpath-programme-21-12-2013?OpenDocument#.VgJblsvtIbC

⁷ Evaluation of the Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF) 2010, Final Report, Prepared for the Department of Education and Skills, November 2011

⁸ Ibid, p. 51

⁹ ESF Ex-post evaluation: Supporting the integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market and society

Under the Europe 2020 Education priority, Ireland is committed to significantly reduce early school leaving and increase the proportions of young people gaining secondary and tertiary education. While there are numerous pillars to the national response to these goals, the ESF is playing a contributing role, in particular in relation to equity of access to education ('Third Level Access'), and in enhancing the skills deficits of early school leavers ('Youthreach').

2 Scale of ESF investment

Ireland was allocated EUR 375,362,370 ESF funding for the programming period 2007-2013. Including national funding (EUR 372 million) and private funding (EUR 3 million) this meant EUR 750.7 million.

The HCI OP has been revised three times (2009, 2011 and 2012). Revisions were made to respond to the difficult labour market conditions linked to the severity and prolonged duration of the economic crisis and the public debt crisis in Ireland. The latter affected the national co-financing capacity of the HCI OP.

The revisions in 2009 and 2011 involved a reduction in the national exchequer contribution to the OP; the 2009 revision involved a substantial increase in the total public financial allocation to Priority Axis 1, as a response to the large increase in unemployment, and a reduction in the allocation to Priority Axis 2; the 2011 revision re-allocated some public funding back to Priority Axis 2 and substantially reduced the national exchequer contribution under Priority Axis I. The original OP (2007) provided for total expenditure of EUR 1,359.0 million. The 2011/2012 revision of the HCI OP reduced the total public financial allocation to EUR 750.725 million, made up of equal contributions from the ESF and the national exchequer (EUR 375.362 million each). This revision involved an increase in the ESF co-financing rate to 50 percent, the maximum level allowed for Competitiveness and Employment Regions, justified by the significant socio-economic changes resulting from economic crisis in Ireland¹⁰.

As the implementation rate is only available at Priority Axes level, it is not possible to illustrate this rate by policy field. The total implementation rate of the HCI OP is 80.8%, as illustrated in table 2.

Access to Employment and Improving Human Capital are mainly supported under Priority Axis I but some Activities in Priority Axis 2 also reflect these objectives. Interventions focused on Social Inclusion are mainly under Priority Axis 2, but Social Inclusion is a horizontal principle and is reflected in Activities (the programming level below Priority Axis) across the OP.

Public expenditure on active labour market policy (ALMP) was EUR 7,803 million (Cat. 2-7) 2007-2013 which means that ESF (including national) funding makes about 10% of the national expenditure on ALMP.

Table 2. *Financial allocation and implementation rate of the ESF programming period 2007-2013*

OP	Priority Axes	Financial Allocation	Share of total funding HCI OP	Implementation rate (in %)
HCI OP	1 Increasing Activation of the Labour Force	448,274,316	59.7%	75.1
HCI OP	2 Increasing Participation and reducing Inequality in the Labour Force	295,102,834	39.3%	91.2
HCI OP	3 Technical Assistance	7,347,590	1.0%	14.4
Total HCI OP		750,724,740	-	80.8

Source: SFC2007

¹⁰ EEN Country Report Ireland

3 Effectiveness by Priority

3.1 Outputs and results

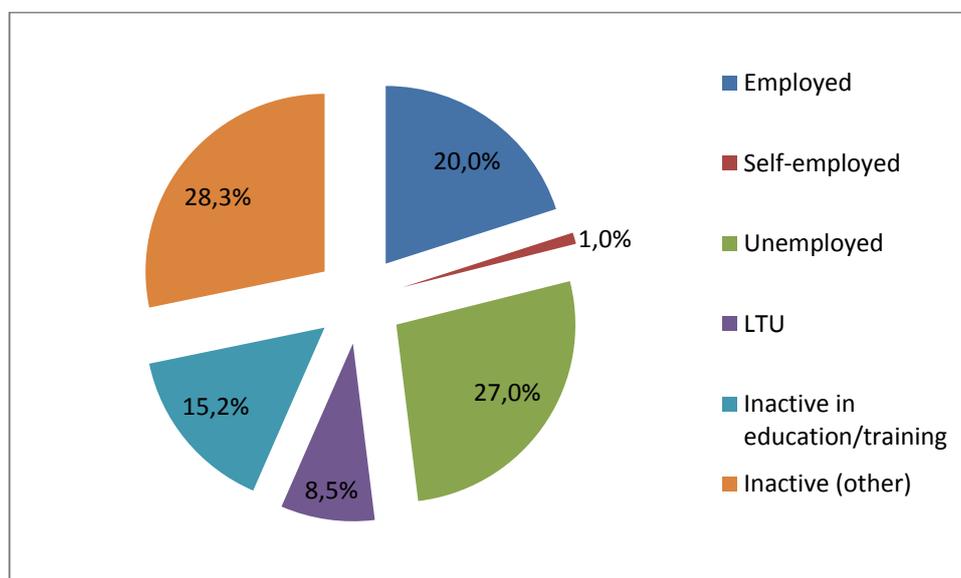
3.1.1 Outputs

In total, there were approximately 1.17 million participations¹¹ in the interventions funded by the Irish ESF HCI OP in the programming period 2007-2013. The majority (55.2%) was supported under the PA 2.

Overall, 88% of the output indicators (80% for A2E; 100% for Human Capital) reached the target set, illustrating the setting of the target was appropriate and the interventions were successful in terms of participations.

The following figures provide an overview of the employment and educational status of all participants entering over this programming period. The largest group are the inactive, where 28% are in education/training and 15% are completely inactive. Unemployed are the second largest group of participants and made up 27%, LTU were 9%. About 20% of the total number of participants are employed, just about 1% are self-employed.

Figure 1. Labour market status of participants in ESF 2007-2013 (entering)

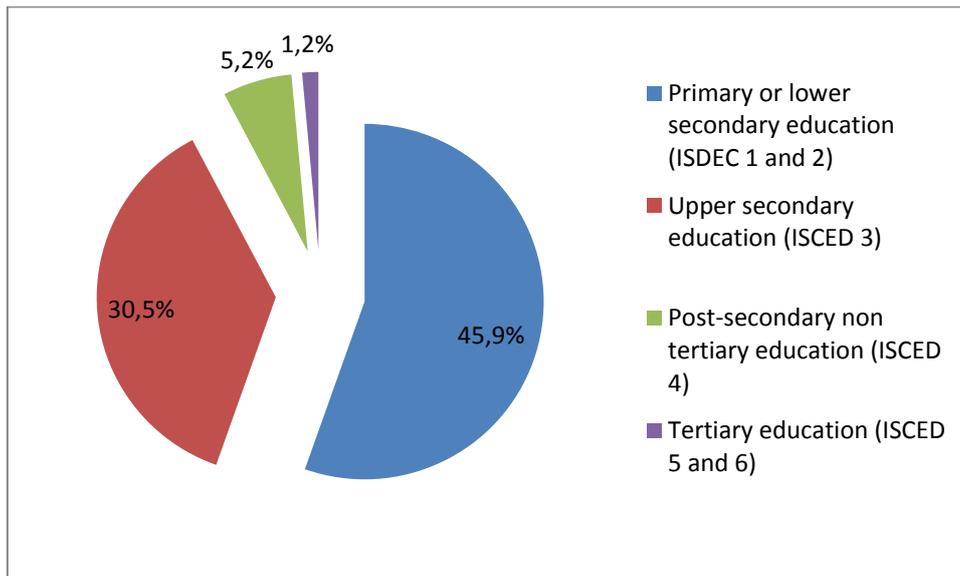


Source: own figure on the basis of SFC2007 (AIR2014)

Almost half of the participants only have primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and 2), as illustrated in figure 2. This reflects the focus of the OP on the integration and support of vulnerable, low qualified groups. The share of people with upper secondary education (ISCED 3) made up about one third of the total number of participants as there were several interventions targeting higher education students (Undergraduate Skills, Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities).

¹¹ As one person could participate more than once, the term `participations` is used here. In the rest of the document, `participants` is used, but may include double counting of individuals.

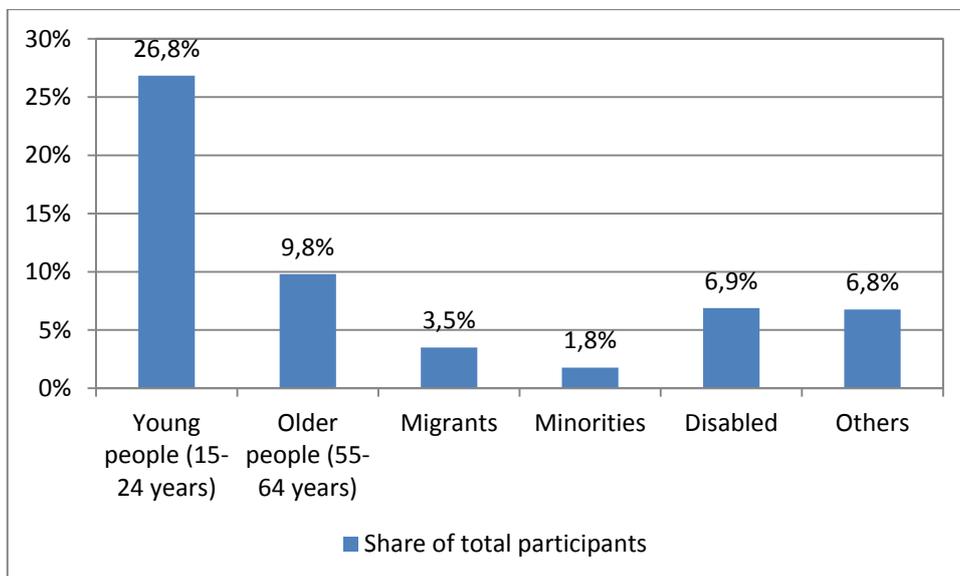
Figure 2. Education status of participants in ESF 2007-2013 (entering)



Source: own figure on the basis of SFC2007 (AIR2014)

The Irish OP targeted younger people and older people, as illustrated in figure 3. These were the largest groups among the vulnerable groups participating in ESF 2007-2013. People with disabilities (7%) and migrants (4%) were also targeted. The high share of young people reflects the target groups of the intervention Youth reach targeting early school leavers, the Student Assistance Fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities.

Figure 3. Vulnerable target groups participating in ESF 2007-2013 (entering)



Source: own figure on the basis of SFC2007 (AIR2014)

The majority of the participants (about 78% out of 1.11 million) participated in the interventions of the policy field **Enhancing human capital**, which reflects the high priority given to education and raising the level of qualification in the workforce in Ireland in general. There is also a prioritisation within this policy field, which is addressed to two levels: (i) raising qualifications amongst the adult population with lowest education and (ii) increasing the proportion of the population with third level education focused on increasing participation of groups under-represented in higher education. For those with lowest education, activities categorised in this policy field also support the objective to **Reinforce social inclusion**.

Looking at the outputs by policy field, with reference to Table 8 in the Annex, the following can be noted.

Enhancing human capital

The output indicators of this policy field show, that all indicators exceeded the target values set. About 430,000 (of targeted 340,000) people participated in the intervention *Adult literacy training programme*, which makes it the largest intervention in terms of participations during this programming period. In addition to reading and writing, the programme has been extended to such basic education as numeracy, social and personal development, learning to learn and IT skills.

Regarding the intervention *Undergraduate skills*, the objective is to address identified shortages of skilled graduates in areas highlighted by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) and other reports, in particular in the ICT/Engineering and Science disciplines, by funding additional places in third level college (universities and Institutes of Technology) undergraduate programmes in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The period 2007-2013 was effectively a continuation of an existing mainstream initiative, albeit with a focus evolving in line with national priorities for skills development. About 55,000 students were supported during this programming period. The *Student Assistance Fund* allows institutions to provide financial support to students who require it. The fund provides funding to contribute to the costs of rent, childcare and other living expenses which are essential for the participation of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

About 54,000 against a targeted 46,000 disabled students were supported by the *Fund for Students with Disabilities* which provides institutions with specific funding to support to people with disabilities. The support provided is key to the inclusion of these students in higher education. Typical support includes assistive technologies and personal or academic support (e.g. personal assistance, study skills). One of the targets of the National Access Plan 2008-2013 was that the number of students with sensory, physical and multiple disabilities in higher education would double by 2013. A final assessment of the outcome of the targets in the 2008-13 plan was published in 2014. The target was fully achieved and exceeded by 40%.¹²

The interventions providing unqualified school leavers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate fully in society and progress to further education, training and employment, and providing an opportunity for members of the Traveller community and others to engage in a programme of learning, also exceeded the targets set (33,000 compared to a targeted 24,000).

The activity In-company training has been removed from the ESF / labour market policy agenda in the revision of the OP 2009 and the allocated financial amount was re-allocated to Action 1.1 *Skills Training for the Unemployed* due to the dramatic increase in unemployment in 2008-09 and persistent high unemployment into the present.

Access to Employment

About 225,000 people (20% of the total number of participants) participated in the interventions of this policy field. The focus of action is on support via accredited training interventions – skills training for unemployed people. The number of unemployed people participating in the interventions belonging to this policy field reflects the changing labour market and economic conditions of Ireland. In the revision of the OP in 2009, there were significant re-allocations from three interventions to the intervention 1.1 *Skills Training for the Unemployed*. The number increased from about 12,556 in 2007 to 41,000 in 2010 and 42,000 in 2011. Since then, the numbers declined to less than 30,000 annually¹³. In 2010 the Labour market activation fund (LMAF) was introduced and it resulted in interventions focused on specific types of training for specific target groups, a stronger match of training to opportunities in the labour market and reskilling of unemployed from sectors worse hit by the recession. It placed a stronger focus on the long-term

¹² AIR 2014

¹³ Source: SFC data. The EEN country report reports even higher numbers of participants up to 80,000 in 2011.

unemployed, which was also continued under the Labour Market Education and Training Fund from 2011 to 2013¹⁴.

In terms of achievements, with reference to targets for the lower volume activities as the Equality for Women the numbers participating in Strand I (10,888) exceeded the target set (8,000) and the same is also true of Strand II (2,072 participants compared with a target of 200).

Social Inclusion

No output data can be reported for this policy field as it is a horizontal priority of the OP. Some interventions, e.g. Adult literacy, Student Assistance fund and the Fund for Students with Disabilities, can be clearly linked to the aim of reinforcing social inclusion, but it is impossible to estimate the total number of participants of this policy field as not all participants may be at high risk of social exclusion. In the EEN report it is estimated, that about half of the total number of participants can be attributed to this policy field.

Promoting partnerships

No activities of the HCI OP were linked to this policy field. However, there are a few examples in some activities where partnerships were established but no data were reported to estimate the absolute numbers: the Garda Youth Diversion Projects under PA 2 involve partnerships between voluntary organisations and the police service; the Labour Market Activation Fund included projects involving partnerships between voluntary organisations with good capacity to reach disadvantaged groups (Local Partnership Companies) and labour market services, and partnerships between third level educational institutions and businesses; the Disability Activation Project included networks of organisations working on disability issues and employability and access to employment for this group¹⁵.

3.1.2 Results

As outlined before, the HCI OP (latest revision) does not have any significant focus on **increasing adaptability** of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs. This policy field, however, is in part reflected in activities involving specific actions to promote gender equality (i.e., career progression of women in research and academic careers under Strand III of Equality for Women Measure) and in the Equality Mainstreaming Approach (Activity 2.9).

Overall, 57% of the result indicators (80% for A2E, 50% for Human Capital) reached the targets set. However, for 20% of the result indicators no target was set and 17% of the indicators were close to the target. Furthermore, aggregating all results lead to a total number of 356,796, which illustrate gaps in the results.

Aggregation of results¹⁶

- People taking up employment or advancing to further education¹⁷: 103,733
- People who have increased the level of qualification^{18, 19}: 283,329
- Other positive results²⁰: 70,529
- Products: 329

While the figures presented above, and elsewhere throughout the report, are taken from the AIR, it should be noted that those statistics are not exhaustive and will be subject to significant change in the final implementation report once account has been taken of those activities for which figures are not currently available. According to the estimates by MA the true figure is in excess of 200,000 relating to the people taking up employment or advance to further education.

¹⁴ ESF 2007-2013 Ex-post Evaluation: Investment in Human Capital (VT/2013/092) Country report: Ireland

¹⁵ EEN Country Report Ireland.

¹⁶ According to the MA, these figures are not final and are expected to increase with the final AIR.

¹⁷ Including the indicators 1.12, 1.14, 2.19, 2.22, 2.23, 2.31 and 2.16

¹⁸ According to the MA, this number also includes participants completing a programme without necessary increase of qualification.

¹⁹ Including the indicators 1.10, 1.8, 2.10, 2.11, 2.14 and 1.17

²⁰ Including the indicators 2.12, 2.37 and 2.17

Enhancing human capital

With regard to this policy field, external factors, namely the economic recession and the high unemployment affected the demand and the increased competition for places on training, further education and third level access programmes. The lack of employment opportunities is also likely to have encouraged progression within further education and training.

About 96,000 or 41%, of the participants of the part-time Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) gained a certification, of which about half progressed to further education or work. The absolute numbers of the result indicators are close to the targets set, but as the number of people entering exceeded the targeted number of entrants, success rates are lower than expected. The Mid-Term Evaluation partially attributes poor progression to the sharp contraction in employment opportunities available to those that complete the programme and the increased competition for further education places among the newer unemployed. The results of the Adult Literacy training programme show that the target of 60,000 was exceeded by 26%, but compared to the number of participants this means that about 17% of the entering participants achieved a certification of which 60% progressed to further education, training or employment.

Focusing on *Undergraduate Skills*, this activity aims to increase the supply of graduates qualified in key areas in engineering, science and technology and ICT in order to address skills shortages in key areas of importance in the national economy.

About 56,000 out of targeted 47,000 students supported by the *Student Assistance Fund* successfully completed the academic year by the end of 2014, which means that about 71% of the total number of students supported (78,829) successfully completed the academic year as the number of students entering also exceeded the target set. The increase in the completion rate which was reported in 2012 and 2013 reflected research undertaken by both the HEA and externally that indicated significantly lower drop-out rates among students with disabilities than had been estimated previously. The progress was reasonably steady each year between 2008 and 2011, but activity levels grew strongly in 2012 and again in 2013.

The intervention *Fund for Students with Disabilities* brings tangible improvements in the equity of access. Between 2010 and 2013 the number of students with sensory, physical and / or multiple disabilities participating in higher education almost doubled. Although lower than anticipated numbers of students successfully completed the academic year. The stakeholders see the fund as very successful in supporting such students and are encouraging the adoption of suitable strategic policies and services for students with disabilities by institutions. They view it as equally effective in attracting such students to higher education as supporting their retention and ultimate graduation once enrolled²¹.

Regarding the *Youthreach & Traveller programmes* every third participant (10,367 by the end of 2014) successfully completed the programme or achieved a certification, of which 20% progressed to further education/training or employment, which is significantly lower than planned.

The intervention *Undergraduate Skills* aims to increase the supply of graduates qualified in key areas in engineering, science and technology and ICT in order to address skills shortages in key areas of importance in the national economy. The demand and enrolment increased substantially during the programming period. The ESF intervention appears to support approximately 25% of all students in these disciplines²². The success rate of 16% is below the target of 21%.

²¹ ESF 2007-2013 Ex-post evaluation Human Capital Volume III

²² ESF 2007-2013 Ex-post Evaluation: Investment in Human Capital (VT/2013/092) Country report: Ireland

Access to Employment

In this policy field, by the end of 2014, 76,989 (out of 202,321 participants) unemployed people trained gained a certification, which is probably under-estimated as no data were reported for 2012. 50% out of the people trained are in employment or further education compared with a target of 60%.

Migrants were only a minor target group in this policy field. 2,201 out of 3,808 (58%) participants completed specific training and/or individualised mentoring and are considered to be ready to enter the labour market.

In relation to the lower volume activities (Equality for Women, Strands I – access to employment - and II – entrepreneurship), the results indicate that only 2,451 or 22.3% of the entering participants (11,014) achieved certification while the rate of progression in terms of entering employment or further education or training is just under one-fifth (19.9%).

The 2012 AIR specifically reports that 27.6 percent of the participants in Equality for Women, Strand I (access to employment) in 2011 were in employment or further education or training one year later, while 18.4%(197) of those who participated in the entrepreneurship development programme under Strand II moved into early entrepreneurship in 2012. The 2012 AIR comments that the progression results are good taking into consideration the difficult employment / labour market situation in the state - i.e. the lack of job opportunities or few new job vacancies.

3.2 Evidence of effectiveness

Several evaluations were carried out to assess the results and the impact of the ESF funding during this programming period in Ireland.

Enhancing human capital

All four HC-related interventions assessed in depth reached appropriately the intended target groups of higher education students and young people outside the formal education system. This is demonstrated in the analysis of the socio-economic profile of interventions' participants, which is fully consistent with the specific interventions' aims.

All interventions assessed in depth were re supporting the mainstream policy initiatives, operating in the areas of further or higher education, and in the general form all predate the 2007-2013 funding round. Each therefore had an established existence and track record prior to that period, and a record of delivery and operation as interventions or policy initiatives.²³

The *Evaluation of the LMAF* states that strong emphasis was placed on the need for all education and training provided via Labour market activation fund (LMAF) projects to be accredited by the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). This ensured that all participants had a tangible outcome from the skills obtained regardless of the immediate outcome. The focus on NFQ accreditation also facilitated the overall progression pathway, providing a platform for people to move on to the next stage of education, training or ultimately employment.

The *Cost Benefit Analysis of Adult Literacy Training*, targeting those with lowest educational attainment, found significant economic benefits. In particular, it was estimated that there is a 28% increase in income per improvement in one NFQ level for those in work or getting work after training (but it was estimated that only 25% of trainees were in work). The study also estimated that literacy training increases employment by about 12% per increase in NFQ (qualification) level.

According to the evaluation *Cost-Benefit Analysis of Adult Literacy Training and Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Activation Amongst the Unemployed* Adult literacy training – as a 'stand alone' intervention supported by ESF – has relatively low unit costs and improved literacy / numeracy literacy shows positive results in terms of income and access to

²³ ESF Ex-post evaluation Investment into Human Capital – Country report Ireland

employment. The latter study indicates the need to integrate adult literacy training into skills training / provision in general and recommends that this should be a key part of the curriculum for those assessed as in need of such support.

Access to Employment

According to the *Evaluation of the NEAP: Activation in Ireland* participation of unemployed people in training had a positive employment impact by reducing the probability of subsequent unemployment by between 10% and 14%. Findings from the evaluation *Literacy, Numeracy and Activation amongst the Unemployed* showed that integration of literacy and numeracy training into training programmes to respond to the needs of unemployed people with such difficulties is an effective (and also cost effective) strategy, strengthening the likelihood of exit to employment. But the evaluation also states that the effectiveness of ESF-supported interventions (e.g., training, further education) has been diluted by poor effectiveness of the overall activation system in Ireland. The *Evaluation of the LMAF 2010* found variations between the different categories of the projects. The best performing projects were in the Higher Education Platform (33% into employment and 44% into self-employment) while those engaging vulnerable groups were slower to achieve results. A general conclusion from the *Review of the Labour Market Programmes* and the *Evaluation of the LMAF 2010* is that the best Access to Employment results were achieved where interventions engaged participants closer to the labour market, for instance, with higher levels of education and skills at the outset (e.g., Higher Education Platform LMAF) and a more recent history of employment. In conditions of high unemployment and few job vacancies, progression into employment is clearly more difficult for groups furthest from the labour market.

The *Evaluation of the LMAF 2010* highlighted that that industry-led projects, at least immediately post completion, were not more successful in achieving progression to employment for unemployed participants. This again highlights the influence of labour market conditions on achieving positive employment results. Evaluation findings show reasonably good progression rates to employment and self-employment across the LMAF (29% into employment, 13% into self-employment, 43% to further education and training and just 15% are still unemployed) taking into consideration the very difficult labour market conditions in 2010²⁴.

Regarding the objective of increasing the participation of disabled people and lower socio-economic groups in higher education, which is also linked to the policy field **Social Inclusion** the *External Audit of the Equal Access Survey* shows that participation in higher education is increasing for all priorities but from a relatively low base. Two different approaches are adopted in ESF: in the Disability Strand, ESF co-funds elements of the infrastructure and services in third level educational institutions to support students with disabilities, while the Student Assistance Fund offers financial support to students on low incomes. Ambitious targets have been set to be achieved by 2020 (54% representation of lower socio-economic groups, up from 22.4% in 2008-09). Higher education participation among students with disabilities increased substantially over the period in question. For example, the number of students with sensory, physical and multiple disabilities increased from 466 in 2007 to 1,302 in 2013, while the number of students supported under the Fund for Students with Disabilities (a much wider group of such students) increased from 2,501 in 2007 to 9,020 in 2013). The national target for the former group had been 932 by 2013, which was exceeded significantly. In terms of overall student retention rates, the *Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education* found that the rate of new entrants in 2007/08 not present one year later was 15%. Highest retention rates were for students from higher socio-economic groups. Financial support, including the Student Assistance Fund, co-funded by ESF, was found to be important in student retention suggesting the effectiveness of the instrument. The increase in the completion rate which was reported in 2012 and 2013 reflected research undertaken by both the HEA and externally that indicated significantly lower drop-out rates among students with disabilities than had been estimated previously²⁵.

²⁴ Evaluation of the Labour Market Activation Fund (LMAF) 2010, p. 59

²⁵ ESF 2007-2013 Ex-post Evaluation: Investment in Human Capital (VT/2013/092) Country report: Ireland

4 Efficiency by Theme

Overall, the average cost per participation is EUR 519, while the cost per result is EUR 1,720, as illustrated in the table below. As a comparator, the average cost per ALMP participant is EUR 1,262 during this programming period. Please note that numbers are provisional and a calculation of participants and certified expenditure, so that interpretation should be done carefully. According to the MA cost per participant could be significantly higher as it does not reflect the 'real' cost per participant.

Table 3. Cost per output by priority

Priority	Cost per output (in EUR)	Cost per result (in EUR)
1 Increasing Activation of the Labour Force	644	1,846
2 Increasing Participation and reducing Inequality in the Labour Force	417	1,578
Total	519	1,720

Source: SFC2007; Authors calculation

Human Capital

Adult literacy training – as a 'stand alone' intervention supported by ESF – has relatively low unit costs and improved literacy / numeracy shows positive results²⁶.

As illustrated in the table below, the cost per result under the Undergraduate Skills programme is noticeably higher than the planned expenditure (EUR 8,102 vs. EUR 5,032) and result targets at the outset implied. This reflects a significant initial underestimation of the numbers of graduates that would emerge based on the level of funding provided through the intervention. This means also that the targets set for the intervention were probably not realistic.

There was no implicit original target of the outcome cost per result under the Student Assistance Fund and Fund for Students with Disabilities.

In the case of Youthreach the significantly higher cost per result than anticipated at the outset appears to reflect very significant overestimation of prospective completion/accreditation rates at the outset.

Access to employment

Data about the cost effectiveness of this policy field is very limited in terms of availability. Sources found refer to the Review of Labour Market Programmes, which is not up to date.

In the early period of the current programme (2007-2008), the better performing programmes (e.g. Specific Skills Training, Traineeship Programme) were not necessarily those with the highest unit costs. For instance, the highest unit cost per person progressing to further training, education and / or employment was for the Community Training Centres (EUR 53,271), followed by the Traineeship Programme (EUR 20,640) while it was second lowest for Specific Skills Training (EUR 13,640) in 2007.

Social Inclusion

Training interventions targeting the most excluded and vulnerable groups typically have high unit costs. For instance, the Evaluation of the LMAF in 2010 stated that the Core Skills Development projects in the LMAF had higher unit costs per completion (EUR 3,565) compared with the average unit across all projects (EUR 1,731) but achieved good results. The Review of Labour Programmes found that training programmes targeted on more excluded groups had highest unit costs (e.g. Community Training Centre) and some produced poor results. The Mid-Term Evaluation of the HCI OP showed that Youthreach and STTC, involving intensive support over a relatively long period of

²⁶ Cost-benefit Analysis of Adult Literacy training; Literacy, Numeracy and Activation Amongst the Unemployed

time (2 years), have high unit costs per participant (EUR 22,148) but show good results as the target set was overachieved.

Table 4. Cost effectiveness of selected interventions in the field of Human Capital

Intervention	Indicator	Planned	Actual
Undergraduate Skills	The number of additional graduates of key courses identified such as ITC, Engineering and Science	5,032	8,102
Student Assistance Fund	Number of students supported by the Student Assistance Fund successfully completing the academic year		704
Fund for Students with Disabilities	Number of students supported by the Fund for Students with a Disability successfully completing the academic year		876
Youthreach	Number of participants successfully completing programme or achieving accreditation	10,936	24,310

Source: ESF Ex-post Evaluation 2007-2013 - Human Capital

5 Sustainability

Sustainability of result for individuals and entities

There is some but generally limited evidence of the sustainability of effects for individual participants. Attempts are made to capture the post-participation labour market or education/training progression of past participants, and in some cases these show positive outcomes, although in some cases the estimates do not relate to the specific participants in question exclusively, and establish few links between their participation and later outcomes. Qualitative evidence and stakeholder viewpoints also hold that participation often has long-lasting positive effects for many participants, even where labour market progression outcomes are less immediate or widespread, and not necessarily central among objectives, however such comments often do not have a quantitative basis.

The strong demand for high level ICT skills in the economy suggest that the benefits for graduates of places funded under the Irish intervention 'Undergraduate Skills (1.4)' are likely to be sustainable. Already the reported proportion of students progressing to employment or further education (94.1%) is higher than the wider rates for other third-level graduates (89%).

Sustainability of interventions

Regarding the sustainability of the interventions it is important to state that many interventions have their origins long before the 2007-2013 programming period. The intervention Undergraduate skills led to the introduction of a new ICT action plan 2014-2018 and an ICT Skills Conversion Programme and 'Springboard' initiative are each intended to upskill specific target groups in advanced ICT, which will continue with the measures that were implemented during the programming period.

The *Student Assistance Fund* remains a key measure supporting equity of access policy and is likely to continue to do so. Similarly, the *Fund for Students with Disabilities* is generally a mainstreamed programme despite its ESF co-financing, and will be continued in future in a renewed strategy for equity of access in higher education.

6 Gender sensitivity

Under this OP, gender mainstreaming and a more expanded wider equal opportunities focus which covers the nine grounds set out in the Irish equality legislation were included. Under Priority 2 of this Programme, specific activities are supported which can contribute directly to meeting the objectives of pursuing equality between women and men in relation to gender equality and the National Women's Strategy. Co-funding under this OP contributed to achieving the targets for equality, both from a gender and wider equality basis, by focusing on particular interventions in relation to increasing participation and reducing inequality in the labour force, supports to migrants, language skills provision and the promotion of equality interventions.

There were two specific ESF supported activities contained within the Priority *Increasing Participation and Reducing Inequality of the Labour Force* promoting Equality Mainstreaming and Gender Equality. The *Equality Mainstreaming Activity (ESF 2.9)* contributed to addressing labour market gaps for specific groups experiencing discrimination by putting in place measures to improve labour market access and participation of groups experiencing inequality

The purpose of the *Positive Actions to Promote Gender Equality (ESF 2.8)* Activity is to foster the engagement and advancement of women in the labour market, both as employees and as entrepreneurs, and to encourage the greater involvement of women in decision-making roles.

The projects who participated in Equality for Women Measure (EWM) in 2014 enabled participants to fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and enhancing their opportunities for employment or further education/training. These opportunities enabled a total 1,000 women to take the first steps towards the labour market (as Strand 1 Projects only operated during 2014).

However, the higher level of participation of males in retraining/up-skilling and employment support in ESF interventions reflects that male-dominated sectors (particularly, construction, manufacturing, transportation, storage and construction-related services) were worst affected by the economic recession and unemployment, with a strong decrease in employment in these sectors from the early years of the crisis. Over time, females were increasingly affected by unemployment linked to job losses in sectors including public administration, accommodation, food and catering, retail etc.

Table 5. Share of women by Priority

OP	Priority	Share of women (in % of total participants)
HCI OP	Enhancing human capital	59.4
HCI OP	Access to employment	48.0
HCI OP	Total	54.8

Source: EEN Country Report Ireland

Overall, the share of women of the total number of participants is 54.8%. The gender proportion of the in-depths intervention of the thematic evaluation on Human Capital show large variations. In the intervention *Undergraduate skills*, 3 out of 4 participants are male, while among the participants of the *Students Assistance Fund* 60% are female. The gender proportion of the *Fund for Students with Disabilities* and the intervention *Youthreach* are equal. According to the interventions analysed in-depth in the Human Capital thematic evaluation, outputs and results do not show significant gender discrepancies. A systematic gender sensitive approach in the planning, implementation and monitoring was not generally implemented across all in-depth interventions²⁷.

The courses offered by Youthreach centres are to a great degree tailored for the individual and their needs, and these may be gender-defined. For instance, there is evidence that parenting programmes and programmes addressing gender roles and

²⁷ ESF Ex-post evaluation Investment into Human Capital, Country report Ireland.

gender stereotyping in personal development classes were developed with ESF support. Participation has traditionally been quite evenly split between male and female learners.

Over the course of 2007-2013, males accounted for 48.5% of participants, and females for 51.5%. Certification and progression rates were also similar for both genders.²⁸

²⁸ Ex-post evaluation Human Capital Volume III

7 Community Added Value

7.1 Volume effects

The *Mid-Term Evaluation of the HCI OP* identifies volume effects (without quantification) in that the resource contribution of the ESF is substantial and of greater national importance than under the previous EU funding round when the Irish exchequer was in a position of unprecedented strength. The importance of the ESF contribution is greater than it was anticipated at the planning and initiation stages of the HCI OP, given the economic collapse and deterioration in the public finances²⁹.

The Ex-post evaluation of Human Capital assessed the following volume effects in the in-depth analysis of the selected Irish interventions:

- The provision of additional financial support of EUR 55 million for the intervention Undergraduate skills increased the volume of activity in an educational area of identified national importance.
- The ESF facilitated higher levels of activity for the interventions Students Assistance Fund and the fund supporting disabled students than might otherwise have been the case with the funding of EUR 63 million. The economic and national budgetary crisis exerted tremendous pressures on all national funding streams and resulted in cutbacks to numerous discretionary funding programmes in higher education and elsewhere.

7.2 Scope effects

The resources of the Youthreach intervention were used to create new courses and activities which could not have been funded from the national budget alone.

The projects which participated in Equality for Women Measure (EWM) activity in 2014 would not have taken place without the availability of ESF funding. The latter source of funding enabled the projects to proceed and enabled participants to fulfil their potential by giving them better skills and enhancing their opportunities for employment or further education/training. These opportunities enabled a total 1,000 women to take the first steps towards the labour market (as Strand 1 Projects only operated during 2014).³⁰

7.3 Role effects

There is some evidence of role effects:

- The experience of the LMAF, co-financed by ESF, is being rolled out more widely in current / new active labour market interventions – i.e., the method of 'open' call / competitive process.
- The initiative, Springboard, delivered by the Higher Education sector for unemployed people is modelled on projects supported under the LMAF.
- The new activity, Momentum under PA 1 (Activity 1.7) is modelled as a continuation of the LMAF;
- The pathways approach in the LMAF is informing government's new Pathways to Work initiative (2011 onwards), targeted on long-term unemployed people.³¹

Another role effect (and also process effect) concerns the Fund for Students with Disabilities and the higher education sector. From the academic year 2010-11, an approach was implemented for the application and assessment process for higher education institutions in receipt of support through the Fund for Students with Disabilities. The assessment of students for eligibility for funding was decentralised to disability officers at institutional level. Institutions then submit a claim for funding based on the numbers of students that meet the eligibility criteria. This model was extended to the Further Education sector in 2013-14. The implementation of the new model of assessment and allocation began in September 2010 and it is eliminating administrative duplication and, in turn, significantly improving the timeline for approval of funding.

²⁹ Metis evaluation A2E Ireland 2012

³⁰ AIR 2014

³¹ EEN Country report Ireland

Feedback from institutions in respect of the new allocation model has been very positive to date.³²

7.4 Process effects

Process effects are identified in the *Mid-Term Evaluation of the HCI OP*. In particular, the evaluation states that ESF co-financing of the OP is seen to ensure a level of planning, objective and target setting, management, monitoring and reporting discipline that few stakeholders consider would exist in its absence. In this sense the Community added value is considered to have considerable process effects on the implementation and administrative approaches.

The Fund for Students with Disabilities provides a relevant example of the improvement in processes in recent years. As part of the application for support students will undergo an assessment of need at institutional level. This needs assessment will inform the application for supports from the Fund. The application process for the Fund itself has undergone significant streamlining in recent years to alleviate and guard against delays in assessments and avoid duplication of administrative tasks. For example, students who have been previously approved for support do not need to submit an application for support the following year(s). Under the streamlined processes of the fund this element of the application is now completed electronically through an information management system. The supports for students who have already been approved are now automatically renewed. Institutions will then confirm the updated registration status of the students approved to ensure they are registered in their institution for the relevant academic year.³³

³² AIR 2014

³³ idem

8 Socio-economic impact

Macro-level

During 2007-2013, the ESF was used to support the recurrent expenditure on very specific elements of further education and training, and niche activities within higher education, which had labour market and/or social inclusion objectives in addition to human capital ones. While its 'footprint' has therefore been modest in terms of its resource contribution, the ESF has been used in strategically important areas within this wider milieu.³⁴

Looking at the socio-economic trends in Ireland from 2007 to 2014, it is evident that the indicator values decreased during the economic and financial crisis and most of them remained at a low level until 2011 or 2012. The last year 2014 showed a modest recovery of most of the indicators.

Table 6. Socio-economic indicators - trends

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Trendline
Access to Employment									
Employment rate	69.2	67.4	61.9	59.6	58.9	58.8	60.5	61.7	
Unemployment rate	4.7	6.4	12.0	13.9	14.7	14.7	13.1	11.3	
Young people NEET, 15-24y.	10.8	15	18.6	19.2	18.8	18.7	16.1	15.2	
Employment rates, Females, 15-64y.	60.6	60.1	57.4	55.8	55.1	55.1	55.9	56.7	
Human capital									
Early school leaving	11.8	11.4	11.7	11.5	10.8	9.7	8.4	6.9	
Educational attainment	43.3	46.3	48.9	50.1	49.7	51.1	52.6	52.2	
Social Inclusion									
Population at risk of poverty	23.1	23.7	25.7	27.3	29.4	30	29.5	27.4	

Source: Eurostat

Meso-level

A further factor influencing socio-economic impact of all programmes and which has been highlighted recently (e.g. in the EC Position Paper on Ireland, Commission Staff Working Document³⁵) is the welfare system. The current welfare system creates welfare traps by having flat rates of benefits with no tapering off of benefit payments over time. This affects single female parents in particular. Reforms are being made in welfare entitlement to address such disincentives to labour market participation and progress is being made. The lack of quality and affordable childcare is affecting labour market participation of women with children. The complexity of financial supports for low income families for childcare are further barriers to participation in education and training and access to employment for this group.

Micro-level

Evaluation findings and results indicate that actions which can be linked to the horizontal priority **Reinforcing social inclusion** showed mixed effectiveness. Good / promising results were achieved in some interventions. However, the overall picture is that there are more people and a higher proportion of the population moving into a situation of 'at risk of poverty and social exclusion' over the period of implementation of the OP (from 1.005 million in 2007 to 1.358 million in 2013). Linked to the impact of the economic recession, ESF combined with national policy interventions are not impacting on reducing the numbers at risk of social exclusion.

³⁴ Ex-post evaluation of 2007-2013 ESF investment into human capital – National template Ireland

³⁵ Commission Staff Working Document: County Report Ireland 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances COM (2015) 85 Final.

9 Key lessons learned

9.1 What are the key lessons in terms of policy choices?-

The ex post evaluation of the bailout programme argues that reforms of active labour market interventions and the PES institutions were needed, and are being instituted. However, it also states that the pace of these structural reforms is slow and could be sped up. Long-term unemployment and youth joblessness remain high and there is still a risk that some cyclical unemployment will become structural if action is not taken more quickly.

Labour market activation policies and programmes need to be adaptable to the changing situation of the labour market and the needs of unemployed people. Some of the actions taken at the height of the crisis to deal with the strong increase of unemployment were appropriate then but may not be what's needed now.

In the crisis situation, the priority was to reduce the numbers in unemployment and there were successes here. Because of the prolonged duration of the recession, with a lack of jobs, some unemployed that had quite good work-related skills and level of qualification became unemployed and long-term unemployed. It was important to address the needs of this pool of unemployed as quickly as possible, to enhance their employability and get them back into employment (avoiding moving from cyclical into structural unemployment). This group was not the most difficult to activate especially when the recovery began. Similarly with young people with a good level of education, coming onto the labour market, they will not be difficult to place in employment as the number of opportunities in the labour market increases. However, as the number of unemployed are shrinking, the unemployed are increasingly those furthest from the labour market. This is where there needs to be further attention given to reforms, to enhance their effectiveness.

The ESF has played a role in focusing investment on the unemployed and inactive, in particular the young, which has been a policy necessity in the wake of the economic crisis.

Overall, the policy choices were appropriate and contributed towards economic stability and growth. Unemployment is falling, and cost-competitiveness has improved considerably. However, the reforms have been slow to implement and further efforts are needed to ensure they are sustainable.

9.2 What are the key lessons in terms of target groups?

The share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion increased from 23.1% in 2007 to 30.0% in 2012 and dropped slightly to 29.5% in 2013 (EU28 average was 24.5% in 2013). The CSRs strongly recommended the active inclusion of the disadvantaged on the labour market. Other recommendations included social integration and support to older and low-skilled workers. These goals were pursued, and the ESF OP was also better targeted at disadvantaged groups, in particular the young (27% of the participants). In the field of Human Capital, this is reflected in the interventions 'Back to Education Initiative', 'Adult Literacy Training' and the Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Centres³⁶, offering 'second chance' education to those young people at risk of early school leaving (Youthreach) and vocational education and training options to ethnic minorities (e.g. Irish Travellers) with low/no qualification. The key lesson was that disadvantaged target groups should be more specifically targeted and receive particular and intensive follow-up.

9.3 What are the key lessons in terms of appropriate programming?

The Irish OP was programmed at a time of economic growth and high employment. The crisis hit the country particularly hard necessitating three revisions to the OP in 2009, 2011 and 2012. The revisions were made to respond to the economic and public debt

³⁶ Senior Traveller Training Centres were discontinued after mid-term of the OP as wider policies in social inclusion favoured an integrated model of provision of education and training, for Travellers rather than segregation of this group into separate education and training centres.

crisis. The latter affected the national co-financing capacity of the HCI OP. Overall, the changes were supportive of the programme implementation as the national contribution was reduced and the priority was laid on PA 1 to address large scale unemployment and provide, e.g. measures for the short-term unemployed to get them back into work more quickly. The key lesson here is to ensure flexibility and to make changes as necessary.

9.4 What are the key lessons in terms of effective implementation?

The funds were shifted to PA 1 in order to address the rising numbers of unemployed. The interventions were aimed at specific target groups such as young and older people and the inactive. These groups were effectively reached suggesting that the targeting was effective and the activities appropriate. The lesson here would be that reallocating funds to adapt to new situations can be considered a good strategy.

The delivery mechanisms in Ireland were considered rather ineffective (*Literacy, Numeracy and Activation amongst the Unemployed*) and underwent quite significant restructuring in the framework of the bailout. This can be considered a good way forward even if implementation was considered rather slow.

A further difficulty identified in many recent reviews (EC Position Paper on Ireland, Commission Staff Working Document³⁷), which has limited the impact of programmes addressing the problem of low work intensity households and social exclusion, is the welfare system. The structure of the welfare system – flat rates of benefits with no tapering off of benefit payments over time – has created poverty/welfare traps or inactivity traps. This has particularly affected labour market participation of single female parents. Reforms have been introduced to address these issues and progress is being made. What can be learned is that social inclusion needs a holistic approach including quality and affordable childcare and financial support that does not lead to a benefit trap. Measures in education and training provision, including those supported under the ESF HCI OP, are only one part of the picture to support inclusion and access to employment. In order to enhance their effectiveness, particularly for some target groups in poverty, other parts of the system require reform.

9.5 What are the key lessons in terms of monitoring?

The monitoring systems in Ireland have been criticised for not collecting the data necessary for good evaluation (see 9.6 below). However, the output and the result indicators of the ESF OP were chosen appropriately. The aggregated result indicators (total number of participants under Priorities 1 and 2) were helpful when analysing the results. More result indicators measuring the long-term effects of the implemented activities should be used, which would provide a good input to planning the activities of subsequent periods and allow the assessment of which activities are more sustainable.

9.6 What are the key lessons in terms of evaluation?

Deficiencies in the monitoring systems and data collection and in the tracking of outcomes directly after exiting interventions have been flagged by recent studies (NESC review of further education and training, 2013³⁸). Improved data systems and creating a stronger evidence base for strategies and policies were identified as priorities. Work has been carried out to improve the monitoring systems and to use existing datasets (DSP, Department of Education and Skills, Revenue Commissioners) in evaluations and to undertake counterfactual impact evaluation. A new tool has been introduced for tracking clients from their entry into the system (when they sign onto the Live Register), through their activation process up until they are registered as being in employment in the income tax system. This system of tracking impact over a longer period will be used to monitor outputs and to carry out evaluations in future. In terms of lessons, although this quantitative system of tracking forms the basis for monitoring and evaluation, evaluation studies using qualitative methods should also be carried out in order to build up an

³⁷ Commission Staff Working Document: County Report Ireland 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances COM (2015) 85 Final.

³⁸ National Economic and Social Council (Autumn 2013) *A Strategic Review of Further Education and Training and the Unemployed. A Review undertaken for the Department of Education and Skills*, NESC Dublin

understanding of what works and what does not work. Qualitative approaches are needed to build up the evidence base with regard to the effectiveness of different approaches and process-related types of intervention and delivery.

10 Annexes

Table 7. Data on participants of the OP HCI

	PA 1	PA 2	Total	Share of women
Total number of participants	522,647	645,137	1,167,784	54.8%
Employed	19.8%	22.1%	21.1%	57.3%
of which self-employed	10.1%	1.2%	4.9%	30.5%
Unemployed	44.6%	28.1%	35.5%	48.2%
of which LTU	18.0%	31.5%	23.9%	53.5%
Inactive	35.6%	49.8%	43.5%	59.0%
of which in education/training	25.9%	40.3%	35.0%	45.2%
Young people (15-24 years)	28.7%	25.3%	26.8%	45.3%
Older people (55-64 years)	10.5%	9.3%	9.8%	56.9%
Migrants	4.6%	2.6%	3.5%	60.7%
Minorities	2.2%	1.4%	1.8%	46.6%
Disabled	5.8%	7.7%	6.9%	49.9%
Others	8.3%	5.5%	6.8%	64.0%
Primary or lower secondary education (ISDEC 1 and 2)	40.4%	50.3%	45.9%	55.4%
Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	37.6%	24.9%	30.5%	55.3%
Post-secondary non tertiary education (ISCED 4)	3.5%	6.5%	5.2%	67.4%
Tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6)	0.5%	1.7%	1.2%	66.5%

Source: SCF2007

Table 8. Output indicators by policy field

Type	Indicator	Priority	Final Target	2007-2014	Implementation rate
Enhancing human capital					
Output	1.1 - Total Number of persons supported under Priority 1	1	461,256	492,161	106.7%
Output	1.2 - n/a	1	0	0	
Output	1.3 - Number of additional students enrolled (UGS)	1	35,939	55,229	153.7%
Output	1.4 - Number of part-time BTEI participants	1	217,117	234,611	108.1%
Output	1.5 - N/a	1	0	0	
Output	2.1 - Number of participants supported (disability)	2	46,360	54,725	118.0%
Output	2.2 - Number of participants supported (Youthreach & Travellers)	2	24,193	30,945	127.9%
Output	2.25 - Total Number of Persons Supported under Priority 2	2	484,203	620,183	128.1%
Output	2.3 - Number of participants supported (Student Assistance Fund)	2	60,867	78,829	129.5%
Output	2.5 - Number of participants in Adult Literacy Training Programmes	2	340,000	431,174	126.8%
Access to Employment					
Output	1.15 - Number of unemployed persons trained (incl. 1.1, 1.6, 1.7)	1	208,200	202,321	97.2%
Output	2.27 - Number of sectoral projects delivered to enable employers to develop equality policies and strategies	2	12	26	216.7%
Output	2.28 - Number of women availing of in service development training under Equality for Women	2	0	0	
Output	2.29 - Number of women availing of training for entrepreneurship under the Equality for Women	2	200	2,072	1036.0%
Output	2.36 - Number of youth workers recruited to provide employment support for GYD projects	2	100	586	586.0%
Output	2.4 - Number of participants supported (Garda Youth diversion Projects)	2	2,588	4,880	188.6%
Output	2.6 - Number of enterprise-level Equality Supports delivered to enable employers to develop equality policies and strategies	2	240	282	117.5%
Output	2.7 - Number of full (part)-time courses aimed at labour market activation under Equality for Women	2	175	289	165.1%
Output	2.8 - Number of participants in full (part) time courses aimed at labour market activation under Equality for Women	2	8,000	10,888	136.1%

Type	Indicator	Priority	Final Target	2007-2014	Implementation rate
Output	2.9 - Number of individuals (migrants) participating in preparation for employment programme	2	1,995	3,808	190.9%

Source: SCF2007

Table 9. Result indicators by policy field

Type	Indicator	Priority	Final Target	2007-2014	Implementation rate	Result aggregation
Enhancing human capital						
Result	1.10 - Number of part-time BTEI participants gaining certification	1	103,383	96,451	93.3%	qualification
Impact	1.12 - Number of additional graduates progressing into employment (UGS)	1	0	6,539	0	employment
Impact	1.14 - Number of part-time participants (BTEI) who progress to further education or work	1	50,948	43,769	85.9%	employment
Result	1.6 - Total Number of persons successfully completing accredited programmes under Priority 1	1	226,142	182,281	80.6%	
Result	1.7 - N/a	1	0	30,051		
Result	1.8 - Number of additional graduates on key courses (UGS)	1	7,389	8,842	119.7%	qualification
Result	1.9 - N/a	1	0	0		
Result	2.10 - Number of participants achieving certification/accreditation (disability)	2	38,799	15,222	39.2%	qualification
Result	2.11 - Number of participants on Youthreach & Traveller programmes successfully completing or achieving certification	2	13,171	10,367	78.7%	qualification
Result	2.12 - Number of students supported by the Student Assistance Fund successfully completing academic year	2	47,721	56,311	118.0%	other positive result
Result	2.13 - Number of participants receiving support on Garda Youth Diversion Projects successfully completing training	2	2,329	0	0.0%	
Result	2.14 - Number of participants on Adult Literacy Training Programmes successfully completing programme or achieving certification	2	60,000	75,455	125.8%	qualification
Impact	2.19 - Number of participants on Youthreach and Senior Traveller Training Programmes progressing to further education/training or employment	2	3,252	2,025	62.3%	employment
Impact	2.22 - Number of participants who have progressed to other further education training and education (Adult Lit)	2	70,000	45,616	65.2%	employment
Result	2.26 - Total number of persons successfully completing accredited programmes under Priority 2	2	167,330	170,501	101.9%	
Result	2.37 - Number of participants served by youth workers providing employment support	2	23,538	12,017	51.1%	other positive result

Type	Indicator	Priority	Final Target	2007-2014	Implementation rate	Result aggregation
Access to Employment						
Result	1.17 - Number of unemployed persons gaining certification	1	115,370	76,989	66.7%	qualification
Result	2.15 - Number of equality mainstreaming actions and tools developed by grant beneficiaries at enterprise level	2	240	303	126.3%	product
Result	2.16 - Number of participants under Positive Action Programmes taking up employment or advancing to further education (EFW)	2	900	2,612	290.2%	employment
Result	2.17 - Number of participants (migrants) who complete specific training and/or individualised mentoring and are considered ready to enter the employment market	2	1,750	2,201	125.8%	other positive result
Impact	2.24 - Number of participants (migrants) gaining employment	2	750	594	79.2%	employment
Impact	2.31 - Number of participants in labour market activation course who were still in employment or further education a year later (EFW)	2	325	1,314	404.3%	employment
Result	2.34 - Number of equality mainstreaming actions and tools developed by grant beneficiaries at sectoral level	2	12	26	216.7%	product
Result	2.35 - Number of participants who availed of entrepreneurship development who have moved to early stage entrepreneurship	2	0	0		

Source: SCF2007

Table 10. Inventory of evaluations

Title of evaluation	Author	Type of evaluation	Date	Scope
Evaluation of the LMAF 2010	PA Consulting Group	Impact evaluation	2012	Evaluation of cost, outputs and result of LMAF. Assesses relevance to government policy.
Cost Benefit Analysis of Adult Literacy Training	NALA	Impact evaluation	2009	Evaluates the effectiveness of expenditures on adult literacy training. The purpose is to conduct a cost benefit analysis of literacy training using data and research from Ireland and, where relevant, abroad.
Evaluation of the NEAP: Activation in Ireland	Economic and Social Research Institute	Impact evaluation	2011	Examines impact of 2 interventions under the NEAP: (i) Referral of unemployed by the Dept Social Protection for activation interview with FÁS (employment & training services); (ii) Participation in training provided by FÁS, following interview.
Literacy, Numeracy and Activation amongst the Unemployed	Economic and Social Research Institute	Impact evaluation Counterfactual approach	2012	Adult literacy and numeracy training is supported as a type of intervention in the HCI OP 2007-2013
Review of the Labour Market Programmes	Forfas - Ireland's national policy advisory body for enterprise and science	Impact evaluation Counterfactual approach	2010	Analysis of efficiency and effectiveness of FÁS and Skillnets programmes in 2007/08. Key performance metrics: people obtaining employment, people progressing to further education and training and qualification awards received
External Audit of the Equal Access Survey	Audit Panel: Prof. Patrick Clancy, Mr John Hayden and Mr. Michael F. Kelleher and Insight Statistical Consulting	Impact evaluation	2010	Examines robustness of the systems used in Universities / third level institutions in recording characteristics of students to establish student numbers in access categories (disabled, mature, disadvantaged socio-economic groups, ethnic minorities)
Study of Progression in Irish Higher Education	Higher Education Authority	Impact evaluation	2010	Analysis focused on the academic years 2007/08 and 2008/09 and the issue of non-presence rates over that period (i.e. students who enter in year 1 and are not present in year 2). Examines factors associated with non-progression
Mid-Term Evaluation of the HCI OP	Fitzpatrick	Other	2011	Comprehensive evaluation of the programme,

Title of evaluation	Author	Type of evaluation	Date	Scope
	Associates, Dublin, IE			addressing analysis of implementation (physical and financial indicators), effectiveness, efficiency and impact. Covers all measures across two priorities

Table 11. CSRs and ESF contribution

Year	Human Capital	ESF contribution	Access to Employment	ESF contribution	Social Inclusion	ESF contribution
2004			<p>1) should give immediate priority to: increasing access to active labour market measures for a larger share of the unemployed and inactive population and ensure their effectiveness;</p> <p>2) increasing the supply and affordability of childcare facilities and taking urgent action to tackle the causes of the gender pay gap.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>increasing access to active labour market measures for a larger share of the unemployed and inactive population</p> <p>increasing the supply and affordability of childcare facilities and tackling the causes of the gender pay gap</p>	<p>✓</p>
2005	CSR 1 increasing access to active labour market measures for a larger share of the unemployed and inactive population and ensure their effectiveness.	✓				
2006						
2007			<p>1) speeding up progress in formulating concrete measures to reform pension arrangements;</p> <p>2) accelerating progress in increasing labour market participation, including by establishing a comprehensive childcare infrastructure,</p> <p>3) further developing the policy framework for labour market and social integration of migrants and by placing a particular emphasis on support to older and low-skilled workers.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	further developing the policy framework for labour market and social integration of migrants	
2008			<p>1) speeding up progress in formulating concrete measures to reform pension arrangements</p> <p>2) accelerating progress in increasing labour market participation, including by making further progress in establishing a comprehensive childcare infrastructure;</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		

Year	Human Capital	ESF contribution	Access to Employment	ESF contribution	Social Inclusion	ESF contribution
			3) further developing the policy framework for the labour market and social integration of migrants and placing a particular emphasis on support to older and low-skilled workers.			
2009						
2010						
2011			recommend to Implement the measures laid down in Implementing Decision 2011/77/EU, as amended by Implementing Decision 2011/326/EU, and further specified in the Memorandum of Understanding of 16 December 2010 and its update of 18 May 2011			
2012			recommend to implement the measures laid down in Implementing Decision 2011/77/EU and further specified in the Memorandum of Understanding of 16 December 2010 and its subsequent supplements.			
2013			<p>1) it is recommended that Ireland pursue further improvements in active labour market policies, with a particular focus on the long-term unemployed, the low-skilled and, in line with the objectives of a youth guarantee, young people.</p> <p>2) Advance the ongoing reform of the further education and training (FET) system, employment support schemes and apprenticeship programmes.</p> <p>(3) Offer more workplace training; improve and ensure the relevance of FET courses and apprenticeships with respect to labour market needs.</p> <p>(4) Increase the level and quality of support services provided by the Intreo</p>	√		

Year	Human Capital	ESF contribution	Access to Employment	ESF contribution	Social Inclusion	ESF contribution
			labour offices. Put in place a seamless FET referrals system between Intreo offices and Education and Training Boards			

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