

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME UNDER THE 'INVESTMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOBS' GOAL

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1. STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

1.1 Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1.1.1 Description of the programme's strategy for contributing to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

A EU LEVEL STRATEGIES

EU2020 Strategy

Europe 2020 is the European Union's ten-year growth and jobs strategy that was launched in 2010. It is about overcoming the crisis from which our economies are now gradually recovering and addressing the shortcomings of our growth model and creating the conditions for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Five headline targets have been set for the EU to achieve by the end of 2020. These cover employment; research and development; climate/energy; education; social inclusion and poverty reduction.

EU Flagship Initiatives

The objectives of the strategy are also supported by seven '**flagship initiatives**' providing a framework through which the EU and national authorities mutually reinforce their efforts in areas supporting the Europe 2020 priorities such as innovation, the digital economy, employment, youth, industrial policy, poverty, and resource efficiency.

They key ESF-relevant flagship initiatives at EU level are -

- Youth on the Move
- An Agenda for new Skills and Jobs
- European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion

The ESF Regulation also suggest in its Recitals that it should support relevant activities in the initiatives on the Digital Agenda and Innovation Europe.

EU 2020 Targets

The key elements of EU2020 that are relevant for the European Social Fund are reflected in the following targets that have been set for achievement by 2020-

1. Employment

- 75% of the 20-64 year-olds to be employed

2. Education

- reducing the rates of early school leaving below 10%
- at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education

3. Fighting poverty and social exclusion

- at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

B. Ireland's NEEDS in the Context of EU2020 Objectives for ESF

B.I Employment

Having been in decline for a number of years in succession, total employment rose in the year to Quarter 4 2013 by 3.3% (61,000 jobs). The total number of people at work now stands at 1.909 million, which already takes Ireland above the level in the same period in 2010. Significantly, 54,300 of these jobs are full time and will contribute strongly to economic activity in those households. The employment rate for those aged 20-64 stands at 66.6% (Q4, 2013), up from 64.1% a year earlier. While this is still a long way off the NRP target for Ireland of an employment rate of 69-71% by 2020, it is a sign of positive progress and first steps along that path. The EU27 employment rate at Q3 2013 was 68.9% and the rate for the Eurozone was 68%, giving some indicator of how we are doing relative to other Member States. A continuation of that level of employment growth would reduce these gaps and would confirm that the recovery is taking hold across the economy.

Males

Both male and female employment increased in 2013. For males, the rise was 5%. The male employment rate for those aged 20-64 was 72.5%. The male employment rate shows a big increase of 3.8% in one year. Notably, the total part-time male underemployed numbers have also decreased in the year. The rise in males at work is reflected across all age groups, except for the 25-34 group. It is also reflected across the majority of sectors in the economy with the only notable falls being in retail, financial and public administration sectors.

Females

Female employment rose by 10,700 in 2013 (1.25%). The female employment rate for those aged 20-64 has risen by 1.3% to 60.9% and the participation rate is also up. The total number of part-time underemployed females has come down by 1,000 and the full time number of females at work has increased by almost 8,700 in the year. The rise in employment is reflected across all age groups except for those aged under 34, which continue to see a decline in people at work. The rise in jobs is also reflected across the

majority of sectors in the economy with notable falls noted in only the education, financial and “other activities” sectors.

Sectoral Employment

The data on where jobs are being created and the sectors in which people are obtaining employment is particularly informative in terms of planning labour market interventions and for economic planning into the medium term. The employment data are showing annual growth in all major sub-categories of the economy, most notably in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector where 26,800 extra jobs have been added in a year (some caution is advised on the interpretation of this trend due to sampling issues but it is still very positive). This is supported by growth in employment in both industry and construction for the year, while services generally also show an increase in employment despite some sub-sectors shedding jobs. The construction sector improvement, if maintained, offers prospects to many skilled workers who have been out of work for a significant period of time. Jobs in the transportation and public sectors continue to decline while the substantial growth of opportunities in the accommodation and food service and the professional, scientific and technical sectors reflect the trend in future skills requirements expected. Further analysis underpinning these trends demonstrates that the occupations showing growth in 2013 are the professions, skilled trades and elementary occupations.

Age and employment

While the economic crisis has affected all age groups in terms of employment levels since it began, it is worth examining the latest trend from this perspective. The issue of youth employment will be addressed separately in the context of the Youth Employment chapter. All age groups experienced employment growth in 2013 with the exception of the 25-34 group. Job numbers have continued to fall for this category of people and unemployment cross-referencing would suggest that something more than gaining or losing jobs (including emigration) is relevant for this cohort. There have been significant rises in employment for persons aged over 55 in the last year, perhaps reflecting the effects of the crisis on incomes and outgoings for older workers.

Entrepreneurship

The data for self-employment show that those with paid employees have increased marginally in the year, but that those working on their own has increased markedly by almost 14% in 2013. This is significant in terms of how people are choosing to achieve gainful employment and a reflection of a strong growth in entrepreneurship during the period. However, in terms of total self-employment levels, the numbers overall at some 324,000 still leaves some way to go to reach the 2008 levels of 350,000 operating enterprises of their own. It will be interesting to see if this trend continues into the medium term.

Regional Employment situation

At a regional level, employment has grown for both the BMW (almost 25,000) and the South and East (36,000) regions in the year. The growth rate was 5.4% in the BMW region and some 2.6% for the S and E region. All of the NUTSIII regions have

experienced jobs growth. When compared to 2008 figures, the BMW region has a greater proportional challenge in getting back to employment levels experienced at that time. The numbers in employment in that region are similar to those at work in 2004. For the South and East, the gap to peak time employment in 2008 is over 170,000 jobs. Having experienced the most severe economic recession, employment in the regions is now, therefore, equivalent to a level of ten years ago rather than at some historic low level in nominal terms.

Employment Projections

There is evidence of increased activity in the economy during 2013 that suggests a modest recovery in domestic demand and employment outcomes. Forecasts project that the economy will continue to grow modestly over the medium term, even with a conservative outlook. Increased consumer spending and a decline in the savings rate should further assist in driving domestic demand and jobs growth. Employment levels are projected to grow by an average of circa 1.5% per annum until 2016. The exit from the bailout programme and the management of public expenditure policies should also help the investment and employment growth strategies. Investment levels are very low in the economy at this time and it is possible that investment will increase faster than forecast over the medium term. Better recovery in the international economy could also further improve the employment situation here. On the risk side, a slower international recovery or a negative impact of household debt on consumption forecasts could halt or impair employment growth.

Skills Shortages and Future Skills Needs

The economic recession has significantly increased unemployment levels and has put many low-skilled people out of work. The level of employment growth now being experienced has bypassed many low skilled and young people entering the labour market with no work experience or the wrong skills profile. Official statistics (CSO Quarterly National Household Survey

Educational Attainment Thematic Report 2011, Table 9 - Unemployment rate classified by highest level of education attained and age group, April-June 2010 and 2011 (see Annex) show that those with at best primary education have an unemployment rate of 24% (aged 25-64) and those with tertiary education had an unemployment rate of only 7%. The overall rate for all aged 25-64 was only 13% by comparison.

Unemployment rate classified by highest level of education attained and age group, April-June 2010 and 2011.

For early school leavers aged 15-24, the unemployment rate in 2011 was 37%, whereas the rate for other 18-24 year olds was only 15%. These statistics clearly show that there are poor outcomes for those with low skills and education in Ireland compared to the general population. The OECD paper on the Irish Youth Guarantee states that, in 2013, the unemployment rate for young people with below higher secondary education was 44%.

The latest Skills Bulletin from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs from July 2013 indicates shortages in a number of areas across the economy. Demand for biopharma and

pharmachem scientists, professional and technical precision engineers, ICT software developers, project managers and security experts, business and finance professionals, some healthcare professionals and specialist sales and customer service staff in online and contact centre sectors remains strong and presents opportunities for people with relevant and appropriate skills. Meeting the profiled shortages through relevant education and training opportunities for those in the education system and for those unemployed persons on labour market activation measures will be necessary to maintain employment growth, investment and confidence.

The advice given by the expert group on future skills needs is crucial for developing training programmes that correspond to the needs of the economy. On the basis of identified gaps and needs training programmes would also be developed in relation to the green or blue economy, energy efficiency etc.

It is estimated that by 2015, there will be a shortage of up to 864,000 ICT professionals across the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA). Ireland is likely to face an average increase in demand for high-level ICT skills of around 5% a year out to 2018 with the employment of ICT professionals anticipated to rise to just over 91,000.

The development of the new ICT Skills Action Plan has been informed by the EGFSN report Addressing Future Demand for High Level ICT Skills which examines the potential demand for high-level ICT skills at National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) Levels 8 and above over the period 2013 to 2018 and at progression levels NFQ 6/7, arising both within the broad ICT sector and across other sectors of the economy. The report indicates a continuing strong demand for high-level ICT skills with 44,500 job openings forecast to arise over the period to 2018 from both expansion and replacement demand.

This Operational Programme is providing assistance to the Joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan [2] and, more generally, to ICT reskilling/upskilling through ESF co-financing activities that in full or in part are ICT related. These activities include the ICT Skills Conversion Programme, Springboard, Momentum, ETB Training for the Unemployed, Third Level Access and the Back to Education Initiative.

B.2 Unemployment in Ireland

There were 253,200 people unemployed in Ireland at the end of Q4 2013. This was 41,400 people fewer than in 2012, a percentage fall of over 14% in twelve months. This reaffirms the employment figures and demonstrates that the Irish economy has improved very well in that period. However, total unemployment is still much too high and it represents 12.1% of the labour force without work on a seasonally adjusted basis. The unemployment figure has now fallen for four out of the last five quarters and this confirms that increased economic activity is finding its way into the jobs market. One of the key factors in our return to growth will be the ability to turn that growth into jobs. The employment intensity of economic growth was poor during the recovery after the 1980's recession and it placed a drag on the benefit to ordinary working people and on the Exchequer returns. Growth in domestic investment and domestic demand tends to produce more jobs and, as such, will be central to the rate at which Ireland can get its

people back to work in the coming years. The unemployment rate is still above the EU average rate of 10.5% but the gap is narrowing.

Males

The total number of males unemployed stands at 158,900 at Q4 2013. This is a reduction of over 37,000 in the year (i.e. 19%). It is almost entirely made up of those seeking full time work. The unemployment rate has fallen by over 3 percentage points in the year for males (now 13.3%). There is, however, only a small increase in the participation rate to 67.8%.

Females

The total number of unemployed females stands at 94,300, a fall of over 4,200 year on year, almost all again seeking full time employment. The unemployment rate has fallen by less than one percent to 9.8% and the female participation rate has only risen by less than one per cent to 52.8%. This indicates a continuation of the detachment of women from the labour market.

Long Term Unemployment

Long term unemployment was at 155,500 at the end of Q4 2013. This represents 61.4% of total unemployed persons. It is a reduction in nominal terms but in percentage terms on the year before it has risen by 1.5%. It indicates severe challenges for the people of Ireland in preventing permanent structural unemployment from ratcheting upwards and for public services in trying to deliver effectively to this population and in trying to get them back to work in the short term. The long term unemployment rate for men is very high at 63.5% and less so for females at 49.8%. In overall terms, the long term unemployment rate is at 7.2% of the labour force, a fall of 1 per cent in a year. Most of the indicators for LTU are down in 2013, but there is still a long way to go to effectively tackle this problem.

Unemployment by Age

Unemployment has fallen for all age groups in the year, except for the 60-64 age group. The fall was greatest for those aged 25-44 with a drop of over 24,000. The majority of the reduction was for males. There were 48,800 young people unemployed in 2013, a fall of over 10,000 in the year. This gives a youth unemployment rate of 24.2% at end Q4 2013 and indicates a continued fall of 3.5 percentage points in the year. A further analysis of youth unemployment is contained in the chapter on the Youth Employment Initiative.

Regional Unemployment

The fall in unemployment occurred in both regions, with the majority in the South and East (27,400 down). In the BMW region, unemployment fell by over 16% in the year with the smallest effect felt in the Border region. For the South and East, unemployment fell for all regions except the Mid-East where it stagnated at 32,200. Substantial falls in the South-East and Mid-West regions were recorded in the year.

Forecast for Unemployment

Unemployment is forecast to continue falling over the medium term, projected to reach 11.4% in 2016. The forecast is not correlated strongly with the employment growth forecast as increases in labour supply and migration flows tend to affect the take up to of jobs as the economy grows in Ireland. However, the trend is positive and while there are risks to the forecast, there are also upsides. In particular, the Government's Action Plan for Jobs and Pathways to Work strategies may provide better results than expected by forecasters in terms of the impact on unemployment. A key focus of the Action Plan for Jobs is to build employer engagement and buy-in that will lead to more job opportunities for the registered unemployed in particular. Substantial engagement directly with employers and firms should increase awareness of employers of initiatives in the labour market. Initiatives that focus on work experience such as JobBridge and TÚS are providing more labour market relevant job opportunities for the unemployed and this is expected to continue in the coming years. In addition, more targeted access to further education and training programmes and more labour market activation offerings in the FET and higher education space are also serving to enhance the prospects for the unemployed, especially those on the Live Register, in terms of upskilling, re-skilling and getting back to work. The continued improvement of the FET sector structure and provision should contribute further to transitions to work for the unemployed in coming years. The SOLAS project and the Intreo approach to employment services improvement should yield benefits over time to the unemployed. This gives hope that better labour market outcomes can be achieved.

B.3 Youth Employment

In Ireland, the under-25 age group had an unemployment rate of 26.7% in 2013 (35.5% for 15-19 year-olds and 24.5% for 20-24 year-olds) down from 30.4% in 2012. This compares to an unemployment rate of 12% for prime age workers (ages 25–54). About 40% of the young unemployed are out of work for more than one year.

Despite the high rate of youth unemployment, the absolute number of young unemployed people has fallen – from close to 80,000 on average in 2009 to 57,000 on average in 2013. The most recent figures show youth unemployment down by 10,000 year-on-year to 49,000 in Q4 2013.

While some of the fall in the number of young unemployed has been due to the improvement in the labour market it has also partly been a result of demographic developments arising from birth trends in the 1980s and 1990s, the tendency for some young people to stay longer in education rather than seeking work in a depressed market and the impact of emigration. As a result of this fall, young people now represent 20% of all the unemployed, down from a share of 35% in mid-2008.

Based on current trends and projections, the youth unemployment rate could fall to circa 20% by 2015.

B.4 EDUCATION

Tackling Early School Leaving

- **Integration of educational welfare services:**

On 1st January 2014, with the commencement of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, the National Educational Welfare Board became part of the Child and Family Agency and now operates as the Educational Welfare Services of that Agency. The Educational Welfare Services have developed a new Integrated Model of Service Delivery, involving the Educational Welfare Service, the Home School Community Liaison Scheme, the School Completion Programme and schools themselves, which is aimed at improving service delivery to schools, children and their families. This new service model is designed to facilitate a standardisation of service delivery across the country whilst also taking into consideration the need for flexibility, given the unique nature of difficulties presenting in individual children's lives. Pilot testing of the model is currently underway with full service roll-out anticipated over 2014.

- **National Strategy to improve literacy and numeracy among children and young people.**

The Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, launched in 2011, continues to be rolled out in 2014. Almost €9 million has been included in the 2014 allocation for the Strategy. The Strategy was launched in July 2011. It responds to areas of weakness identified in national studies and sets ambitious targets for improvement - covering early childhood, primary and secondary education. All primary and post-primary schools are participating in the implementation of the strategy, and all are required to set targets for the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills. Children who do not learn to read, write and communicate effectively are more likely to leave school early and, therefore the strategy is an important measure assisting achievement of the national early school leaving target.

Significant progress has been made since the launch of the Strategy. The time spent on literacy and numeracy at primary level has increased and the revision of the English and Irish curriculum is being prioritised in Junior Cycle Reform (see below). Major changes have been made to initial teacher education programmes, and literacy and numeracy units are now in place in the National Teacher Induction Programme. School self-evaluation has been rolled out and new requirements have been introduced on standardised testing, including the return of aggregate data to the Department of Education and Skills. A national programme of continuing professional development for primary and second level teachers continues.

- **Adult Literacy**

Participation in lifelong learning in Ireland is lower than the EU average; *Eurostat* figures for employed persons aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning in 2011 showed the percentage for Ireland was only 6.2% or 18th place out of the 27 Member States.

- **Youthreach**

The Youthreach programme provides two years integrated education, training and work experience for unemployed early school leavers who lack any qualifications or vocational training, and who are between 15 and 20 years of age. The programme usually provides two years integrated education, training and work experience. Basic skills training, practical work training and general education are features of the programme, and the application of new technology is integrated into all aspects of programme content. There is a strong emphasis on personal development, literacy & numeracy, communications and IT, along with a choice of vocational options and a work experience programme. Learners on the Youthreach programme are entitled to receive training allowances. Additional allowances for meal, travel and accommodation are also available

- **Reform of the Further Education and Training Sector**

The establishment of both SOLAS, the new Further Education and Training Authority, and the Education and Training Boards in 2013 will ensure that Ireland has a Further Education and Training sector that is responsive to the needs of learners, including early school leavers, and industry. SOLAS will fund and bring a strategic direction to the sector and enable and empower the new Education and Training Boards to deliver integrated further education and training.

SOLAS published a five year Further Education and Training Strategy in April 2014, which is organized around five key objectives to supply skills for the economy, to support the active inclusion of citizens, to implement a new planning and funding model, to raise the quality of further education and training and to promote the standing of the sector.

SOLAS has also published an integrated FET Services Plan for 2014. This plan presents a detailed picture of how the Irish State's investment in 2014 is being applied by ETBs and SOLAS against current policy objectives

- **Review of the Apprenticeship System in Ireland**

Since the current Irish system of apprenticeship was implemented in the early 1990s, the need to align education and training more clearly with the needs of the labour market and provide a central role for work-based learning has been identified.

As part of the Irish Government's Action Plan for Jobs initiative, the Government initiated a review of the Irish Apprenticeship system to determine whether the current model should be retained, adapted or replaced, taking into account the needs of learners, employers, the economy and the need for cost effectiveness into the future.

The Review Group's report was submitted in January 2014 and the Minister has recently published an implementation plan for the report's recommendations that includes invitation of proposals from enterprise sectors to develop new apprenticeships.

Third Level Attainment

The latest Eurostat data shows that Ireland's tertiary attainment rate for 30-34 year olds was 51.1% in 2012, up from 49.7% in 2011. Since 2009, Ireland has the highest rate for this indicator of all EU27 countries. In the tertiary attainment rate for 25-34 year olds indicator presented by OECD, Ireland ranks 1st in the EU27 and 4th in the OECD.

This increase is due to the high participation rates for school leavers - rates that have been growing steadily over the last decade, and the growing participation of adults in higher education.

Combined full- and part-time enrolments in publicly funded higher education institutions rose by 1.8% between the 2011/12 and 2012/13 academic years. Combined full- and part-time graduate numbers increased by 1% between 2011 and 2012. Part-time mature enrolments increased by over 2,000 (or 7%) while the number of full-time mature new entrants declined slightly. This is not surprising, as part-time provision is often more suitable to the needs of mature new entrants and, as the range and availability of part-time courses increases -such as the part- time labour market relevant programmes under the Springboard Initiative – learners may opt for these in preference to full-time courses.

Since the onset of the recession, there has been a notable rise in the participation of males in higher education. Undergraduate new entrant gender trends show that the number of male new entrants continues to grow at a faster rate than female. From 2007/08 to 2012/13, there has been a 23.9% increase in male new entrants and just a 5.6% increase in female new entrants over the same period. Males now comprise 50.6% of new entrants compared to 46.6% in 2007/08.

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030*, published in early January 2011, provides a framework for the development of the higher education sector for the next twenty years. An Implementation Oversight Group, established in February 2011, is supervising the implementation of the Strategy, which is taking place in partnership with the Higher Education sector and other stakeholders. Detailed Progress Reports are published on the Department's website www.education.ie

Engagement with enterprise is one of the core pillars of the National Strategy and a range of recommendations to ensure the system continues to respond to enterprise needs is being implemented. This includes structured employer surveys, increased work placement opportunities, staff mobility into enterprise, and a renewed focus on transversal skills. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has also published guidelines for the establishment of higher education institutional clusters at a regional level to support enterprise development and employment needs.

The first pilot national survey of employers, which was completed in December 2012, showed that over 75% of companies were confident that graduates have the right workplace and transferable skills and relevant subject or discipline knowledge.

The Department of Education and Skills has also introduced two new competitive funding streams at higher education level that address the specific skills needs of industry that support jobseekers into employment, and help increase the skills profile of the labour force.

The Springboard programme strategically targets funding of free part time higher education courses for unemployed people in areas of identified skills needs, such as ICT, Manufacturing and International Financial Services. More than 15,000 places have been provided under the three rounds of the programme to date. A new call for proposals, which issued during February, is expected to provide for an additional 5,000 places in 2014. A first stage evaluation report, published in February 2012[1], showed that 70% of participants were male and 20% had previously been employed in construction. A second stage evaluation report, completed in February 2013, shows that 30% of participants were back in work within 6 weeks of completing a Springboard course, and that 40% were back in work within 6 months of completion.

The joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan[2] has been developed as a direct response to identified ICT skills shortages, and contains a comprehensive range of short, medium, and long term measures to build the domestic supply of ICT graduates. As part of the Plan, almost 1,500 places have been provided for graduate jobseekers under two rounds of the ICT graduate skills conversion programmes that have issued to date. A new call for proposals, which issued during February, is expected to provide for up to 700 additional places in 2014. To date, the ICT conversion programmes have seen a 25% female participation rate as compared to mainstream undergraduate ICT programmes which see a 15% female participation rate.

This Operational Programme is providing assistance to the Joint Government-Industry ICT Action Plan [2] and, more generally, to ICT reskilling/upskilling through ESF co-financing activities that in full or in part are ICT related. These activities include the ICT Skills Conversion Programme, Springboard, Momentum, ETB Training for the Unemployed, Third Level Access and the Back to Education Initiative.

In 2013, the Minister for Education and Skills announced agreed commitments to a number of measures by 2nd and 3rd level education partners that will improve the transition between second level and higher education, entitled '*Supporting a Better Transition from Second Level to Higher Education: Key Directions and Next Steps*'. This initiative will, among other things, contribute to achieving improvements in retention and completion rates both at second level and in higher education. It is envisaged that an implementation plan, including the scope and timeframe for implementation of the three commitments and other further work, will be available by the end of 2014.

Widening Participation in Higher Education

Under-represented groups in Irish Higher Education

Achieving a more equitable higher education system has been a long-standing priority for the Department and the Higher Education Authority and the subject of national targets since 2001. The commitment in policy and legislation to tackling social inclusion through education has been underpinned by an investment of resources in student support and third level access measures under successive National Development Plans, as well as systems of planning for education, including two national access plans supporting work on equity of access to higher education (see www.hea.ie Higher Education Authority, Ireland, publications, 2005 & 2008).

While significant progress has been made, the proportion of people from some socio-economic groups i.e. students with disabilities, first time mature students and minority groups, such as Irish Travellers, does not yet reflect their representation in Irish society at large. The overall objective of national policy continues to be that of strengthening opportunities for access and participation so as to support increased representation by target groups.

The attached table provides a summary of progress on the most recent national targets to increase the representation of specific groups in Irish higher education. New targets are being developed for 2014 onwards as part of work on a third national access plan for Ireland.

The report published in 2014 by Eurydice entitled *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability* highlights, among the many findings of this review of government policy and institutional practice for widening access to higher education across 36 EU countries that:

- Ireland has the most comprehensive set of targets related to under-represented groups
- Only two countries, Ireland and the United Kingdom have established a system where funding is deliberately used as an incentive to higher education institutions to widen participation

A new National Access Plan for higher education will be developed to promote access for disadvantaged groups and to put in place coherent pathways from second level education, from further education and from other non-traditional entry routes, with the objective of progressing towards the Bologna Process objective of ensuring that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education reflects the diversity of Ireland's population.

Under the new performance framework for higher education, specific system objectives have been established, which include the promotion of access for disadvantaged groups, the putting in place of coherent pathways to higher education, and pursuing excellence in teaching and learning to underpin a high quality experience for a more diverse student population. The high-level system indicators for 2014-2016 will specifically cover these areas, and the HEA will report to the Minister on the performance of the system in meeting these targets on an annual basis.

The Department will also commence work on the development of a strategic life-course approach to social inclusion across the continuum of education as part of its Education and Training Integrated Reform Delivery Plan 2014.

- **Third Level Access:**

Under the National Reform Programme, (target 4 for Education), Ireland's headline target was to reduce the percentage of 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training to **8%**; and to increase the share of 30-34 year olds who have completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 60%.

The rate for 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training for the year 2011 was 10.6%, according to *Eurostat*.

In the OECD - *Education at a glance: OECD Indicators, in a Survey of Adult Skills* for students in tertiary education (20-34) for the year 2012 the following were the findings for Ireland:

- Whose parents have not attained upper second level education is **16%**; [OECD average is 9%]
- Whose parents have an upper secondary education is **33%**; [OECD average is 37%]
- Whose parents have a tertiary education degree is **51%**; [OECD average is 55%]

The targets for entry rates to higher education for underrepresented socio-economic groups for Ireland were as follows:

- for Non-manual in 2013 it is 42%; in 2020 it is 54%
- semi and unskilled manual in 2013 it is 45%; in 2020 it is 54%

According to the *National plan for Equity of Access 2008-2013* published in 2004, only one third of the children from the semi and unskilled manual socio-economic backgrounds enter third level education. In the skilled manual group, the figure was 50%. The lowest category of entrants at 27%, entitled 'Non-manual' accounted for one-fifth of Irish households.

B.5 Poverty and Social Exclusion

National data on poverty shows a national rate of consistent poverty of 7.7 per cent. The highest rate of consistent poverty was recorded for the Border, Midland and Western region at 9.4 per cent. This compares to and 7.1 per cent in the Southern and Eastern region. Another geographical pattern that can be examined is the rural-urban distinction: the consistent poverty rate in rural areas in 2012 was 7.3 per cent, as compared to 8 per cent in urban areas. The National Reform Programme for Ireland sets as a target the reduction of consistent poverty levels to 4% by 2016 and to 2% or less by 2020.

Currently, a reduction of 3.7 percentage points is required (almost 50 per cent) to meet the 2016 interim target. It also sets out an aim to reduce those in 'combined poverty' (i.e. consistent poverty or at risk of poverty or basic deprivation by 200,000 by 2020 as part of our contribution to the EU objectives in this area. The population experiencing 'combined poverty' was 35.7 per cent in 2012, equating to 1.6 million people.

Nominally, this represents an increase of 95,000 from 2011 or 225,000 people on the 2010 baseline figure. This upward trend in the National Social Target for Poverty Reduction and the Europe 2020 target population highlights the social impact of the economic crisis in Ireland. There is clearly much more work to do to attain the NRP target.

There is a well-documented correlation between poverty and unemployment. According to European Anti-Poverty Network Ireland nearly 33% of households where no-one is at work are at risk of poverty while the rate for households where two people are working is just 5%. Some in society are at a greater risk of poverty because of the barriers they face to employment:

- *The 2011 census showed 33% of people with disabilities of working age in work, compared to 66% of non-disabled people. Employment has a key role to play in preventing poverty among people with disabilities. Research carried out by the ESRI shows a strong link between disability, joblessness, and risk of poverty, and conversely that employment was a safeguard for people with disabilities against experiencing poverty in their working years or on retirement. Over 80% of people who were ill/disabled and at risk of poverty were in households with nobody at work. Over 80% of those who were ill/disabled but not at risk of poverty had income from employment (67%) or a private pension from employment (14%).*
- *An OECD Report in September 2013 on Ireland noted that we must do more to tackle youth unemployment and that activation policies are paramount. It noted that Ireland has the highest share of young people on income support in the EU and that it is more than 3 times the OECD average.*
- *In Ireland, over 70% of male prisoners and 80% of female prisoners self-report as unemployed on committal to custody. Nearly 50% of unemployed male prisoners and over 56% of unemployed female prisoners report having no occupation i.e. they do not see themselves as associating with any particular job or career. 56% of prisoners left school before age 14 (general population figure 21.9%) and 53% left school with no formal qualifications (general population figure 22.2%). Unemployment, a lack of work experience, and a lack of vocational and educational skills are just some of the multiple disadvantages which prisoners experience and which prevent their successful integration into society.*
- *About 12% of the population of Ireland are non-Irish; of these, 71% are EU nationals. The success of migrants in accessing employment is a key indicator of successful integration. Immigrants arriving in Ireland can encounter barriers to integrate within Irish society. Cultural differences, lack of recognition of qualifications and prior learning, and the need for general orientation to the labour market are some of their key challenges.*

Ireland's active inclusion strategy is set out in the National Reform Programme, which has a key policy component for activation and inclusive labour markets. An example of the challenge faced is that of the prevalence of jobless households. In 2014, the European Commission included a Country Specific Recommendation for Ireland on this issue.[3] Recent research has highlighted the high proportion of the population in jobless households and the attendant social and economic disadvantages. The population in jobless households increased from 13.7 per cent in 2008 to 24.2 per cent in 2011, before falling to 23.4 per cent in 2012. They comprise adults who are furthest from the labour market with a strong pattern of educational and social class disadvantages. The problem not only reflects the high percentage of the adult population who are not economically active but also the greater likelihood that jobless adults live with other jobless adults. It also indicates the high proportion of children living in jobless households. Household joblessness has intensified with the onset of the economic recession and the rise in unemployment. Furthermore, Ireland has over two times the rate of household joblessness as the EU (10.5 per cent). [4] Further research is underway to examine the factors influencing the level of jobless households in Ireland, to inform the development

of policy in this area. Major structural reforms have already been initiated which will impact on these households including labour market activation for the long-term unemployed and the reform of the One Parent Family Payment outlined in the NRP.

Active labour market policies are key to addressing the employment needs and capacities of jobless households in an inclusive labour market. A **Programme for Government** (i.e. “Government for National Recovery 2011-2016) priority for 2013 was to make sure that economic recovery does not bypass jobless households. It is an imperative to lift those in jobless households out of welfare dependency and to ensure that joblessness does not become an inter-generational phenomenon. The provision of targeted places on education, training and activation programmes, including work experience, for the long-term unemployed and those in jobless households is central to the progression of anti-poverty and social inclusion objectives for Ireland. The Pathways to Work and Action Plan for Jobs approaches enshrine this principle in labour market policy and should support the reduction of the numbers affected by both of these circumstances.

B.6 Equality and Equal Opportunities

The National Women’s Strategy 2007 – 2016 has as one of its key objectives “equalising economic opportunity for women and men” and specifically encourages Government Departments to undertake actions to increase women’s labour market participation. Under the ESF Human Capital Investment Operational Programme 2007 – 2013, funding was allocated for the Equality for Women Measure (EWM) which was designed to foster gender equality with a particular focus on women’s engagement in the labour market and their engagement as entrepreneurs. The economic downturn limited the scope of the Measure and its principal activities were targeted at actions to increase women’s employability with a particular focus on women from disadvantaged communities. At present, unemployed women and women who are on the live register can avail of a wide range of retraining and upskilling opportunities to enable them to resume work. The need to maximise the economic engagement of women to achieve the goals of Europe 2020 has been clearly established, as has the large number of women of all educational backgrounds who are detached from the labour market.

Member States are required to meet the horizontal equality and anti-discrimination objectives contained in the ESF Regulation across the nine equality grounds in Irish legislation.[5] Member States are expected to balance robust horizontal mainstreaming with specific actions to promote gender equality and prevent discrimination on other equality grounds.[6] The ESF in Ireland has co-funded gender mainstreaming activities for some time now. The measures to date have been provided by the Department of Justice and Equality and the Equality Authority. The Equality Authority has identified further needs in the area of promotion of equal opportunities requirements for employers and for social partners that are well suited to the objectives of the ESF. Their work in these areas will continue to enhance the awareness of opportunities for those facing barriers to participation or discrimination in their attempts to enter the workforce.

B.7 Social Innovation

While the priority for Ireland is to tackle and reduce unemployment and social exclusion under this Operational Programme, the value of social innovation is also recognised. The Operational Programme will support activities involving aspects of social innovation

targeting youth, unemployed and disadvantaged persons, including through innovative approaches to engagement with marginalised groups. During the implementation of the Operational Programme, the Managing Authority will also continue to monitor further opportunities to support innovative projects in the social field.

C IRELAND'S RELEVANT STRATEGIES

National Reform Programme

The key priorities and challenges for Ireland have been set out in the National Reform Programme 2011. These are supported by the European Council Recommendations on Ireland's 2014 National Reform Programme issued in June 2014. They are also underlined in the Commission Position Paper on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in Ireland issued in November 2012. Principal among the targets set in the primary national strategy, framed in the context of achieving the EU2020 objectives, are targets that are central to the ESF mission and objectives. These are: -

Target 1- Employment Ireland's Headline Target: To raise to 69-71% the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64, including through the greater participation of young people, older workers and low-skilled workers, and the better integration of legal migrants, and to review the target level of ambition in 2014, in the context of a proposed mid-term review of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Relevant European Council Recommendation on Ireland's 2014 National Reform Programme in respect of Employment Target-

Country Specific Recommendation(CSR) 3 . "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. Advance the on-going reform of the further education and training (FET) system, employment support schemes and apprenticeship programmes. Offer more workplace training; improve and ensure the relevance of FET courses and apprenticeships with respect to labour market needs.

Increase the level and quality of support services provided by the Intreo labour offices. Put in place a seamless FET referrals system between Intreo offices and Education and Training Boards."

Relevant Priorities for Funding from the Commission Position Paper on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in IRELAND for the period 2014-2020

Combating long-term unemployment

"Support for the unemployed, with a particular focus on the long-term unemployed, to (re) access employment should be the main priority of CSF investment."

Combating youth unemployment

"Funds should also be focused on supporting young people not in employment, education and training (NEETS) to participate in education and training programmes, including work experience. Furthermore, while there is a need to ensure that young people remain in education, for those who leave school early, the availability of training programmes with strong links to the workplace or access to traineeships need to be ensured in order to enhance their suitability for employment."

The 2011 NRP highlighted five bottlenecks in the Irish labour market. These are

1. Weak labour market demand, particularly in domestic services
2. Long-term and structural elements of unemployment
3. Access to opportunities for upskilling and reskilling, especially sectors that have been most affected by the impact of the recession
4. The challenge of targeting cost-effective activation programmes to those most at risk of losing contact with the labour market and drifting into long-term unemployment, and of increasing labour market participation of those cohorts with lower than average participation rates, including lone parents and people on illness/disability payments, and to reintegrate into the labour market the group of women who have interrupted their careers for child rearing;
5. Developing a more effective and streamlined response to the needs of the unemployed and removing disincentives to participation in training, education and employment opportunities

Initiatives that focus on work experience such as JobBridge and TÚS are providing more labour market relevant job opportunities for the unemployed and this is expected to continue in the coming years. In addition, more targeted access to further education and training programmes and more labour market activation offerings in the FET and higher education space are also serving to enhance the prospects for the unemployed, especially those on the Live Register, in terms of upskilling, re-skilling and getting back to work. The continued improvement of the FET sector structure and provision should contribute further to transitions to work for the unemployed in coming years. In terms of targets for reducing youth unemployment, the *Pathways to Work* initiative has specific targets for increasing the number of people who are long-term unemployed moving into employment and reducing the average length of time spent on the Live Register; as two out of five young unemployed are long-term unemployed, these targets are pertinent to young people.

The ESF has a significant role to play in supporting and enhancing the delivery of measures to support this NRP target.

Substantial enhancements to the public employment services are being implemented through the rollout of the Intreo system. This is a significant strategy project and is being funded solely from national Exchequer resources at this time.

Youth Employment Initiative - (YEI)

The economic crisis is having an exceptionally severe impact on young people: the EU youth unemployment rate stood at 23.6 % in January 2013, more than twice as high as the adult rate, and no signs of improvement are in sight. 7.5 million Europeans aged 15-24 are neither in employment nor in education or training.

This poses a serious threat to social cohesion in the EU and risks having a long-term negative impact on economic potential and competitiveness. EU institutions and governments, businesses and social partners at all levels need to do all they can to avoid a "lost generation". The situation is particularly acute in Ireland.

In Ireland, unemployment is higher for young people with lower levels of qualification, and their labour force participation is below that of those with higher qualifications. Over recent times in Ireland, the unemployment rate for those aged 20-24 with no more than lower secondary education has been over 50%, as compared with about 30% for those with higher secondary education and 20% for third-level graduates. Those with the lowest level of qualifications make up 10% of the labour force in this age range, but for 20% of the unemployed; graduates account for 30% of the labour force but for 20% of the unemployed (see Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, 2014).

The Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) was proposed by the European Council. The objective of the YEI is to support young people not in education, employment or training in the Union's regions with a youth unemployment rate in 2012 above a certain threshold (currently 25%) by integrating them into the labour market.

In particular, the funds would be available for MS to finance measures to implement in the eligible regions the Youth Guarantee Recommendation agreed by the EU's Council of Employment and Social Affairs Ministers on 28 February.

Under the Youth Guarantee, MS are required to put in place measures to ensure that young people up to age 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

A total of €6 billion is being provided for the YEI in regions that qualify for support. Due to the high levels of youth unemployment, Ireland is one of these regions.

The investments supported by the YEI should be strongly oriented towards achieving concrete results and achieving them quickly. The Commission therefore proposes to frontload the YEI, notably by not submitting it to the performance reserve mechanism, to achieve tangible impact early on in the implementation.

Both Irish NUTSII regions will qualify for support from the YEI and a total YEI allocation of €68.145 million has been provided for Ireland. This will principally be targeted at measures identified in Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan that was submitted to the European Commission in December 2013.

In order to focus the ESF and YEI funding directly, a separate Priority Axis will be established in the ESF OP for the YEI. The Youth Employment Target Group is young people under the age of 25 not in employment, education or training, who are inactive or unemployed, including the long term unemployed, and whether or not registered as seeking work.

Action Plan for Jobs

The Action Plan for Jobs is a key component of the Government's response to the unemployment crisis and its specific ambition is to have 100,000 more people in work by 2016. The Government, in recognising that it is enterprise, not governments, that creates jobs, has set out an objective to create a positive environment to support business start-ups and growth, drive exports and facilitate job creation and retention by the enterprise sector.

The Action Plan for Jobs is a whole of government, multi-annual initiative which mobilises all Government Departments to work towards the objective of supporting job creation. It is monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure delivery and the Monitoring Committee comprises representatives of the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, Forfás, and the Office of the Tánaiste. The process has delivered. In 2012, 92 per cent of actions were delivered and in 2013 90 per cent were delivered. In a departure from the 2012 plan, Action Plan for Jobs 2013 contained seven headline 'Disruptive Reform' measures – these are high-impact measures with highly ambitious deadlines, implemented in partnership with senior industry partners and selected because of their potential to have a significant effect on job creation.

While significant progress has been made, unemployment and emigration remain unacceptably high and this Action Plan for Jobs 2014 reaffirms the Government's commitment to addressing these challenges as a matter of urgency. In 2014, we will strengthen further the framework for measuring the impact of the Action Plan for Jobs by establishing, where possible, the impact of actions in the Action Plan on "intermediate" objectives (such as Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Internationalisation, Skills Enhancement and Access to Finance) and the impact, in turn, of these "intermediate" objectives on our ultimate policy objectives of increasing employment and reducing unemployment while also increasing competitiveness and productivity in the Irish economy. There are 385 actions in this year's plan involving all Government Departments and 46 Agencies. The Action Plan was developed through a highly consultative process across the private and public sector, including engagement with representatives from employers, employees and those currently unemployed. This engagement generated new proposals and ensured that Government prioritised the right actions.

The structure of Action Plan for Jobs 2014 contains a number of consistent elements from previous Action Plans:

- Disruptive Reforms
- Competitiveness
- Pathways to Work
- Access to Finance
- Growing Irish Enterprise
- Developing and Deepening the Impact of FDI
- Sectoral Opportunities

From the ESF perspective, the central strategic action under the AJP2014 is the Pathways to Work policy as it is focussed on getting those who are dependent on passive unemployment supports back into the jobs that are created as the economy recovers.

Pathways to Work

The Government's Pathways to Work policy is complementary to the Action Plan for Jobs, and is designed to ensure that as many as possible of the new jobs created in the recovering economy go to people on the Live Register. While doing all we can to stimulate the demand for labour, we must simultaneously ready jobseekers for work, and ensure that working always pays, no matter the nature of that work.

Pathways 2013 represents a 50-point action plan built around key strands of activity:

- More on-going and intensive engagement with those who are unemployed;
- Greater targeting of activation places and opportunities for those on the Live Register;
- Removing disincentives for unemployed people to take up employment and other opportunities;
- Incentivising employers to provide more jobs for those who are unemployed;
- Reforming institutions to deliver better services.

Taken together, the 50 actions represent a major reform of welfare services for the unemployed, the public employment service, and their interaction with other public services, most notably in the area of training and vocational education.

One element of Pathways to Work involves planning for the implementation in Ireland of the EU Council Recommendation on a Youth Guarantee. The Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan (YGIP) for Ireland was submitted to the European Commission in December 2013 and is currently being implemented. Elements of the YGIP are very relevant for both the ESF and, in particular, the Youth Employment Initiative.

Another key element is the alignment of skills with the needs of enterprises, through targeted skills initiatives, investing in management development, further education and training reform and the development of appropriate strategy in this area and higher education activation initiatives.

Modernisation of Labour Market Institutions

This was identified in the Commission Position Paper under Thematic Objective 8, Investment Priority (3) *“Modernisation and strengthening of labour market institutions, including actions to enhance transnational labour mobility.”* The Commission suggests that supporting the development of skills of PES staff is an important element of the delivery under this heading. While Ireland agrees with this aspect, it is already addressing this point comprehensively through national re-structuring of labour market institutions, the upgrading of the Intreo service and staffing and the implementation of the new Further Education and Training Strategy. These are being funded by the Exchequer as part of our national labour market policy priority responses.

Target 4 - Education : Ireland's Headline Target: To reduce the percentage of 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and

training to 8%; to increase the share of 30-34 year olds who have completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 60%.

Relevant Priorities for Funding from the Commission Position Paper on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in Ireland for the period 2014-2020

2.1.1 Combatting long-term unemployment

Support for the unemployed, with a particular focus on the long-term unemployed, to (re) access employment should be the main priority of CSF investment.

Activities to support the (re)integration into the labour market need to aim at improving qualification levels of the unemployed, in particular the low skilled, and reduce the skills mismatch of labour demand and supply. Evidence suggests that vacancy levels among certain high skilled sectors requiring tertiary qualifications such as ICT, engineering, science, health and financial services are rising. This points to an urgent need to up-skill the unemployed with skills relevant to those areas in demand, and to retrain those with existing skills to more relevant sectors. This should be done in cooperation with businesses to identify the skill sets needed.

- The percentage of early school leavers in Ireland fell from 11.4% in 2010 to 9.7% in 2012. This represents positive progress towards achievement of our 8% target.
- The latest Eurostat data shows that Ireland's tertiary attainment rate for 30-34 year olds was 51.1% in 2012, up from 49.7% in 2011.

The improvement of education levels and retention levels in all cycles of education are central aims of the NRP for Ireland. The support to be provided through the ESF for many of the initiatives in this area and, in particular, for those measures in the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative will be crucial to continuing our move towards delivery on the targets set.

Target 5 - Poverty Ireland's Revised Headline Target: To reduce consistent poverty to 4% by 2016 (interim target) and to 2% or less by 2020, from the 2010 baseline rate of 6.3%.

The Irish contribution to the Europe 2020 poverty target is to reduce by a minimum of 200,000 the population in combined poverty (either consistent poverty, at-risk-of-poverty or basic deprivation).

Relevant European Council Recommendation on Ireland's 2014 National Reform Programme

Country Specific Recommendation (CSR) 4 "Tackle low work intensity of households and address the poverty risk of children through tapered withdrawal of benefits and supplementary payments upon return to employment. Facilitate female labour market participation by improving access to more affordable and full-time childcare, particularly for low income families"

Relevant Priorities for Funding from the Commission Position Paper on the development of Partnership Agreement and programmes in IRELAND for the period 2014-2020

Combating long-term unemployment

Support for the unemployed, with a particular focus on the long-term unemployed, to (re) access employment should be the main priority of CSF investment.

Measures in support of women to (re-)enter the labour market will also need to be implemented in order to increase the employment rate.

Combating social exclusion

Active inclusion should be the main objective of CSF funding to support social inclusion. In 2010, 7.5% of the Irish population suffered from severe material deprivation, a sharp increase compared with the figure in 2007 (4.5%) and a much higher percentage than the EU-15 average of 5.4%. Young people under 18 are even more strongly affected by severe material deprivation, with 10.6 % suffering from it in Ireland, compared to 6.7 % in EU-15. The primary policy tools to reduce severe material deprivation and consequently poverty are measures that increase employment. These measures should be targeted at those identified as being further from the labour market such as: single parents, the disabled and the economically inactive. Measures to support, at an early stage, children and teenagers of vulnerable groups to help them integrate into society and labour market should also be implemented. Those in poverty or at risk of poverty with very low skills should be helped in gaining at least upper secondary education.

The National Reform Programme for Ireland sets as a target the reduction of consistent poverty levels to 4% by 2016 and to 2% or less by 2020. It also sets out an aim to reduce those in ‘combined poverty’ (i.e. consistent poverty or at risk of poverty or basic deprivation by 200,000 by 2020 as part of our contribution to the EU objectives in this area. Ireland’s active inclusion strategy is set out in the National Reform Programme, which has a key policy component for activation and inclusive labour markets.

Active labour market policies are key to addressing the employment needs and capacities of jobless households in an inclusive labour market. **A Programme for Government** (i.e. “Government for National Recovery 2011-2016) priority for 2013 was to make sure that economic recovery does not bypass critical groups such as jobless households. The delivery of activation measures to the most disadvantaged through the ESF is an essential element of the national recovery strategies.

Childcare

The Country Specific Recommendations issued to Ireland in 2014 include the following point in CSR 4 -

Facilitate female labour market participation by improving access to more affordable and full-time childcare, particularly for low income families.

The Irish Government has been enhancing its focus on early childhood policies and early years care and education. Ireland's child income support is high by international standards. Most early childhood care and education services are paid for by parents. The Government has introduced the preschool year initiative, providing a 38 week programme in the year before school on a universal basis. Following on from this very successful initiative, proposals on the provision of a further preschool year and on care and education standards are actively being considered. Given the significant size and cost of such proposals, they are currently funded exclusively from the national Exchequer and this is likely to continue as it progresses.

This is also applicable to the *Working Family Dividend scheme* that was introduced in Budget 2015 to help support low income families to take up employment opportunities through the continued provision of child-related income supports for a period of time in employment. The payment will allow an unemployed or lone parent family to keep the Qualified Child Increase (QCI) for a period of up to 2 years after transitioning from unemployment into work. The family will keep 100% of the QCI in year 1 dropping down to 50% in year 2. The cost in 2015 of this measure is €22m.

In addition, Budget 2015 further demonstrated the Government's commitment to children by introducing the following measures:

- An increase of €5 per month in Child Benefit from €130 per child to €135 from January 1st, 2015. The cost in 2015 of this measure is €72m.
- A €20m increase in the annual budget of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency established in 2014 as the dedicated State agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

Further to this, and in line with the objective of increasing the labour market participation of women, this Operational Programme will support women facing childcare challenges seeking to return to work. In some activities, childcare support is provided to enable participation by women with childcare needs. In other activities, the financial support provided to participants can be used to contribute to childcare costs. For those participating on some other activities, single parents are assisted in finding affordable childcare and, in cases of hardship, they are assisted to access small grants from other organisations for such costs.

D ALIGNING NRP AND RELEVANT STRATEGIES WITH ESF THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

From the assessment of strategies and objectives above, one can see clearly that the key priorities for Ireland are

- Increasing the employment rate and the reduction of unemployment (in particular long term and youth unemployment) through increasing skills levels relevant to the labour market opportunities,
- improving education levels and
- progressing towards social inclusion objectives.

The mission and role of the ESF is directly relevant to the delivery of the necessary interventions to help get our unemployed workforce upskilled and re-skilled in order to be able to avail of emerging employment opportunities. The emergence of jobs in new sectors and the skills profile required to meet that demand in the labour market pose challenges for Ireland. The sectoral nature and skills profile of those new jobs must be matched by the training, education and upskilling offers from the systems that are producing the people to fill them. The areas where identified skills shortages exist must be targeted by relevant education, training and work experience programmes, including labour market activation programmes. Evidence of growth in self-employment and entrepreneurship must also be supported through relevant upskilling and re-skilling opportunities for those seeking to follow that path.

The ESF Thematic Objectives and the associated Investment Priorities are well suited to accommodate investment that will tackle the needs identified for the Irish labour market recovery in the NRP and Pathways to Work strategies. These are-

- Promoting Social Inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.
- Investing in Education, Training and Vocational Training for skills and lifelong learning.
- Promoting Sustainable and Quality Employment and Supporting Labour Mobility

1.1.2 A justification for the choice of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities having regard to the partnership agreement, based on an identification of regional and, where appropriate, national needs including the need to address the challenges identified in relevant country-specific recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 121(2) TFEU and the relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148(4) TFEU, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

Table 1: Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	<p>Ireland's target under the Europe 2020 for the employment rate is 69-71%.</p> <p>Relevant CSR on Ireland's 2014 NRP in respect of Employment Target-</p> <p><i>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. Advance the on-going reform of the FET</i></p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p><i>system, employment support schemes and apprenticeship programmes. Offer more workplace training; improve and ensure the relevance of FET courses and apprenticeships with respect to labour market needs.</i></p> <p>Facilitate female labour market participation(52.8% at end of 2013) by improving access to more affordable and full time childcare, particularly for low income families.</p> <p>The current employment rate in Ireland is 66.6% (Q4 2013).</p> <p>The overall unemployment rate in Ireland is 11.7% (Q4 2013). At the end of 2013, 253,200 people were unemployed</p> <p>Ex-Ante Evaluation Findings support this investment.</p>
08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee	<p>Relevant Country Specific Recommendation on Ireland's 2014 National Reform Programme</p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p>Following the recession and the financial crisis of 2008, there was a 54% reduction in the numbers of young people in employment.</p> <p>The current scale of the youth unemployment stands at 24.2% (Q4 of 2013). This proposal identifies specific actions to increase the</p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>capacity of the youth sector and the impact of youth work services in promoting and enhancing youth employability, entrepreneurship, youth employment and social inclusion and integration.</p> <p>This Priority contributes to the delivery of the Youth Guarantee in Ireland.</p> <p>The Ex Ante Evaluation found that the Thematic Objectives, Investment Priorities and Specific Objectives of the OP respond directly to the challenges and needs identified.</p>
09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	<p>The Irish contribution to the Europe 2020 target is to reduce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consistent poverty to 4% by 2016 (interim target) and to 2% or less by 2020, from a baseline rate of 6.3% in 2010. • by a minimum of 200,000 the population in ‘combined poverty’ (i.e. consistent poverty or at-risk-of-poverty or basic deprivation) between 2010 and 2020. <p>Relevant CSR on Ireland's 2014 NRP in respect of Employment Target-</p> <p>Facilitate female labour market participation by improving access to more affordable and full time</p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>childcare, particularly for low income families.</p> <p>However, the latest (2012) data for Ireland is that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the consistent poverty rate has increased to 7.7%. • the 2012 figure for combined poverty exceeds the 2010 baseline figure by 225,000. <p>Ex-Ante Evaluation Findings support this investment.</p> <p>For those participating in Youthreach, support services including childcare are provided from national funds thus promoting female participation in the labour market.</p>
09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities	<p>The 1304/2013 ESF Regulation clarifies and strengthens its commitment to eliminating gender inequality and combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. In this regard, Member States are expected to implement specific actions on equality and social inclusion as well as providing robust horizontal mainstreaming with specific actions to promote gender equality and combat discrimination on the other equality grounds.</p> <p>It will be supported by the new equality and human rights duty for public bodies which is included in the Scheme of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill, published in May 2012.</p> <p>The female participation rate at end-</p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		2013 was 52.8%. On Migrant Integration activities, single parents are assisted to find affordable childcare and, in cases of hardship, they are assisted to access small grants from other organisations for such costs. This improves female participation in the labour market.
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups	<p>Under the <i>National Reform Programme</i>, (target 4 for Education), Ireland's headline target was to reduce the % of 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training to 8%; and to increase the share of 30-34 year olds who have completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 60%.</p> <p>The rate for 18-24 year olds with at most lower secondary education and not in further education and training for the year 2011 was only 10.6%, according to <i>Eurostat</i>.</p> <p>In the OECD - <i>Education at a glance: OECD Indicators</i>, the targets for entry rates to higher education for underrepresented socio-economic groups for Ireland were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for Non-manual in 2013 it is 42%; in 2020 it is 54% • semi and unskilled manual in 2013 it is 45%; in 2020 it is 54%

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>According to the <i>Central Statistics Office's (CSO) Census 2011</i> 595,335 persons, 13.0% of population, had a disability. Of these 289,728 (48.7%) were male while 305,607 (51.3%) were female.</p>
10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	<p>As adult literacy is the Government's top priority in adult education, a target was set that 20% of places on FET programmes be made available to the long-term unemployed.</p> <p>In 2012 in Ireland, 9.7% (EU average rate=12.8%) of those aged 18-24 left school with lower secondary education; Ireland's EU2020 target is 8%.</p> <p>Participation in <u>lifelong learning</u> in Ireland is lower than the EU average; <i>Eurostat</i> figures for employed persons aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning in 2011 showed the % for Ireland was only 6.2% or 18th place out of the 27 Member States.</p> <p>The Back to Education Initiative provides part-time courses for over 16s, aimed principally at those who have not completed Leaving Certificate (or equivalent)</p>

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
		<p>qualification.</p> <p><u>Breakdown % of Participants by Educational Attainment in 2013</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary or lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and 2) = 58.70% • Upper secondary education (ISCED 3) = 33.90% • Post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4) = 7.40% • Tertiary education (ISCED 5 AND 6) = 0

1.2 Justification for the financial allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

1.2. *Justification for the financial Allocation

Justification for the financial allocation (Union support) to each thematic objective and, where appropriate, investment priority, in accordance with the thematic concentration requirements, taking into account the ex-ante evaluation.

Priority 1 (TO 08/IP 8i): 26.66% of the Union support - €162.778m - has been allocated for the following reasons:

- Needs Analysis identified low employment rates, low participation rates, high unemployment, long term unemployment and youth unemployment as significant factors that must be addressed.
- Ireland's target under the Europe 2020 for the employment rate is 69-71%. The current employment rate in Ireland is only 66.6% (Q4 2013).

Priority 2 (TO 09/IP 9i and 9iii): 31.74% of the Union support - €182.949m - has been allocated for the following reasons:

- Needs Analysis identified the investment priority that sought to support the integration of marginalised communities and investment priority that supports combating of discrimination and promotes equal opportunities merited inclusion in Irish ESF OP.
- Irish contribution to the Europe 2020 target is to reduce consistent poverty to 4% by 2016 (interim target) and to 2% or less by 2020, from a baseline rate of 6.3% in 2010. However, the latest (2012) data for Ireland is that the consistent poverty rate has increased to 7.7%.
- Needs Analysis identified low employment rates, low participation rates, high unemployment, long term unemployment and youth unemployment as significant factors that must be addressed.

Priority 3 (TO 10/IP10ii and 10iii): 17.64% of the Union support - €107.699m. – has been allocated for the following reasons:

- *Educational Attainment Thematic Report 2011* - those with primary education had unemployment rate of 24% (aged 25-64) and those with tertiary education had of only 7%.
- The unemployment rate amongst disabled people was 30.8%, compared with 11.5% for the overall population. For people with disabilities, labour force participation rates were 51% males and 40% females (2011); compared to 78.3% and 64.0% in the overall population.
- In 2012 in Ireland, 9.7% (EU average rate=12.8%) of those aged 18-24 left school with, at most, lower secondary education; Ireland's EU2020 target is 8%.
- Participation in lifelong learning in Ireland is lower than the EU average; *Eurostat* figures for employed persons aged 25-64 participating in lifelong learning in 2011 showed the percentage for Ireland was only 6.2% or 18th place out of the 27 MS.

Priority 4 (TO 08 / IP 8ii): 22.32% of the Union support - €68.145m – including €68.145m. YEI, has been allocated for the following reasons:

- The current scale of the youth unemployment stands at 24.2% (Q4 of 2013).
- Needs Analysis identified youth unemployment as one of the significant factors to be addressed
- Commission's Position paper on Ireland (9/11/2012) recommended that funds should be focused on supporting young people not in employment, education and training (NEETS) to participate in education and training programmes, including work experience.

The Ex Ante Evaluation found that the Thematic Objectives, Investment Priorities and Specific Objectives of the Operational Programme respond directly to the challenges and needs identified during the preparation of the OP.

In line with Article of ESF Regulation 1304/2013;

- more than 80% of the ESF was allocated to five of the investment priorities selected for the OP, as set out above in **IP8i** (Priority 1), **IP 9i** (Priority 2) , **10iii** (Priority 3) and **8ii** (Priority 4) and,
- more than 20% of the ESF available to Ireland was allocated to the thematic objective set out under Art 9 (9) of CPR Regulation 1303/2013 as shown above for **IP 9i** and **9iii** (Priority 2).

Table 2: Overview of the investment strategy of the operational programme

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
P1	ESF	162,784,784.00	26.66%	<p>▼ 08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility</p> <p>▼ 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility</p> <p>▼ P1 - To raise the level and market-relevance of job-seekers' skills, in particular for LTU and young, through further/higher education and training opportunities, and by facilitating their labour mobility</p>	[1.1.1, <25yr, LTU]
P2	ESF	193,807,784.00	31.74%	<p>▼ 09 - Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination</p> <p>▼ 9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability</p> <p>▼ 2.1 - To engage unemployed and/or inactive persons, including young people, from disadvantaged groups and in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion in a process of learning and development in order to ultimately increase their employability</p> <p>▼ 9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities</p> <p>▼ 2.2 - To engage with the most disadvantaged groups, including those distant from the labour market, with a view of raising their skills, ultimately increasing their future employment prospects</p>	[2.1.1, 2.1a, 2.2.1]
P3	ESF	107,698,574.00	17.64%	<p>▼ 10 - Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning</p> <p>▼ 10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups</p> <p>▼ 3.1.1 - To enable disadvantaged and disabled persons/students to access and continue/remain in higher education</p> <p>▼ 10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences</p> <p>▼ 3.2.1 - Upgrade the skills and education levels of low skilled adults and/or early school leavers, by providing second chance education and training courses, including literacy, numeracy and language tuition.</p>	[3.2.1, 3.2a, 3g, 3h]

Priority axis	Fund	Union support (€)	Proportion of total Union support for the operational programme	Thematic objective / Investment priority / Specific objective	Common and programme-specific result indicators for which a target has been set
P4	YEI	136,290,838.00	22.32%	▼ 08 - Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility ▼ 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee ▼ 4.1.1 - To Raise the skills and education levels of people eligible for support under YEI, by providing education, training, work experience and/or work opportunities, including support for self-employment	[4.1.1, CR01, CR02, CR03, CR04, CR05, CR06, CR07, CR08, CR09, CR10, CR11, CR12]
PA 5	ESF	10,000,000.00	1.64%	5 - Technical Assistance	[]

2. PRIORITY AXES

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	P1
Title of the priority axis	Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.

- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- ☐ For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	More developed	Total	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	8i
Title of the investment priority	Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	P1
Title of the specific objective	To raise the level and market-relevance of job-seekers' skills, in particular for LTU and young, through further/higher education and training opportunities, and by facilitating their labour mobility
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Unemployed persons or other job-seekers, including long-term and young unemployed persons, obtain employment or progress to education or training

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
1.1.1	Number of participants completing an education /training programme	More developed	Number of participants				21,052.00	Number	2013			105,420.00	Monitoring by SOLAS / ETBs / HEA / DSP	annually
<25yr	Number of youths (<25yrs) participants completing an education/training programme	More developed	Number of participants				2,241.00	Number	2013			13,333.00	Monitoring by SOLAS, ETBs, HEA	annually
LTU	Number of LTU participants completing an education/training programme	More developed	Number of participants				8,373.00	Number	2014			29,839.00	Monitoring by SOLAS, ETBs, HEA,	annually

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
ETB Training for the Unemployed - The activity provides a range of vocational training courses to meet the needs of unemployed persons or other job seekers. Some courses concentrate on generic, foundation skills whilst others provide skills specific to a particular occupation or set of tasks, such as: computer applications and software development; financial services; caring; driving; machine operation; electronics, and; retail.	
Springboard – The activity aims to keep unemployed, or previously self-employed, people close to the labour market by addressing their educational and	

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>training requirements through the provision of part-time flexible higher education opportunities to reskill or upskill in areas where there are identified skills shortages and where sustainable employment opportunities may arise as the economy recovers. It will enhance collaboration and engagement between the enterprise sector and higher education providers in the design and delivery of relevant and responsive higher education programmes to support job creation and expansion in line with the objectives of the Government's Action Plan for Jobs.</p> <p>ICT Skills Conversion Courses – The activity aims to address ICT skills gaps through the successful level 8 conversion of talented graduates from non-computing/IT disciplines to meet identified ICT skills needs through clearly stated collaboration and engagement between the enterprise sector and higher education providers in the design and delivery of higher education programmes, thereby meeting the on-going and future demand for qualified employees.</p> <p>LMETF Momentum - The Fund is targeted to benefit the long term unemployed and those under 25 years of age. It is focused on funding upskilling programmes delivering qualifications up to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or equivalent, and re-skilling programmes providing qualifications up to NFQ Level 6, or equivalent.</p> <p>Intra EU Mobility – The activity aims to improve the employment prospects of young people and assist Job Seekers and Job Changers, Unemployed, Graduates and Migrants to find employment in the wider European Labour Market and assist Employers to source suitable candidates. It will promote EURES as the recruitment organisation of 'choice' for both jobseekers and employers by mainstreaming EURES in the employer and jobseeker actions of the Department of Social Protection. Young [WT1] unemployed people will be offered support in taking up employment, work experience and training in other EU countries by securing work placement/training opportunities in other countries and by preparing participants to relocate (e.g. language training).</p> <p>This Priority Axis will also support the increase of female labour market participation across all ESF co-funded activities, as appropriate</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
<p>The ESF Monitoring Committee will approve the ESF activity/investment priority levels. The selection of types of operations to deliver on these ESF activity/investment priority objectives and goals will be based on a combination of formal skills/labour market research, client needs, feedback from existing or similar operations, and discussions with relevant local stakeholders. The criteria for specific operations will include financial solvency, qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, resources, organisational aspects and value for money. In addition, the project selection criteria will ensure that the projects will be assessed on the basis of their compliance and their promotion of 1) equality between men and women, 2) equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and, 3) social innovation. On this basis a determination of what operations should be selected to best deliver the quality operations needed and the results required.</p> <p>Where the required operations can be delivered through programmes within State funded bodies this is then done. Alternatively, a competitive calls for proposals and tendering processes will be carried out.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
It is not envisaged that financial instruments will be used in this Operational Programme	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility
No major projects are planned for this Operational Programme.	

Investment priority	8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
1.1.1	The number of participants on training and upskilling programmes for the unemployed or jobseekers.	Number of Participants	ESF	More developed			135,090.00	Monitoring by SOLAS / ETBs/ HEA	Annually
1d	Number of Jobs & Advice Fairs and Dialog (EURES) projects taking place	Number of projects	ESF	More developed			24.00	DSP	Annually
<25yr	The number of youth (<25yrs) participants on training and	Number of participants	ESF	More developed			16,894.00	Monitoring by SOLAS, ETBs , HEA	Annually

Investment priority		8i - Access to employment for job seekers and inactive people, including the long term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	upskilling programmes for the unemployed or jobseekers								
LTU	The number of LTU participants on training and upskilling programmes for the unemployed or jobseekers	Number of participants	ESF	More developed			38,721.00	Monitoring by SOLAS, ETBs, HEA	annually

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.
<p>The ESF Regulation requires that the ESF shall promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope (Article 9.1). Such innovation should contribute to making policies more responsive to social change.</p> <p>This Operational Programme will support social innovation activities targeting youth, women, ex-offenders and other socially excluded groups. Examples would include Momentum. In addition, during the implementation of the OP, the Managing Authority will seek to identify further fields for social innovation that correspond to Ireland's specific needs in this regard and to identify suitable activities for ESF support.</p>	
<p>Transnational</p> <p>Since February 2012, the ESF MA has been a member of the Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young</p>	

Priority axis	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.
<p>Adults.</p> <p>The objective of the transnational Learning Network is to prepare a coordinated call for proposals on transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults with the aim to implement transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults more widely across the EU with support from the ESF under the new programming period 2014 to 2020. The Call is likely to be launched in early 2015.</p> <p>Separately, the EU Commission is preparing a Common Framework for TN initiatives which is expected to be ‘launched’ in late 2014. The implications for the Call for Proposals under the TN Network of this Common Framework are not yet clear. Ireland would hope to be involved in transnational co-operation activities, both as part of the common framework and on our own initiative. Themes of potential interest would be employment, inclusion and learning and skills.</p> <p>Thematic Objectives</p> <p>The ICT skills conversion programme was introduced as a means to address concerns by industry and the enterprise development agencies about continuing difficulties in sourcing ICT graduates with the requisite skills in Ireland, not only to fill existing vacancies, but also to support expansion of their activities and potential employment opportunities and thematic objective Article 9 (2) of Regulation 1303/2013. A total of €7.5m (€3.375m ESF) has been allocated to the ICT skills conversion programme.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis			P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.										
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
If	F	Expenditure Certified	€	ESF	More developed			97033740			322,369,568.00	National ESIF Certification IT System	
1.1.1	O	The number of participants on training and upskilling programmes for the unemployed or jobseekers.	Number of Participants	ESF	More developed			98,354			132,890.00	Monitoring by SOLAS / ETBs / HEA	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.										
Fund	Category of region	Code										€ amount
ESF	More developed	102. Access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour										162,784,784.00

Priority axis		P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
		market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility	

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	162,784,784.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	05. Cooperation across national or regional programme areas in national context	162,784,784.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	07. Not applicable	162,784,784.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	
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Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	05. Enhancing the accessibility, use and quality of information and communication technologies	25,000,266.00

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	P2
Title of the priority axis	Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market

- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- ☐ For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	More developed	Total	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	9i
Title of the investment priority	Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	2.1
Title of the specific objective	To engage unemployed and/or inactive persons, including young people, from disadvantaged groups and in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion in a process of learning and development in order to ultimately increase their employability
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Persons from marginalised groups, including young people at risk, persons with disabilities and offenders, participate in social inclusion, re-integration or employability programmes.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
2.1.1	Number of participants from disadvantaged groups that have completed a social inclusion employability programme and/ or are in training/ education/ job search / work related environments upon leaving	More developed	Number of Participants				7,446.00	Number	2013			45,120.00	Monitoring by SOLAS / ETBs / DJE / DCELG	Yearly
2.1a	Number of young (< 25yrs) participants from disadvantaged groups that have completed a social inclusion employability programme and/or are in training/education/job search/work related environments upon leaving	More developed	Number of participants				7,326.00	Number	2013			43,950.00	Monitoring by DCELG, SOLAS, ETBs, DJE, DSP	Annually

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme – The aim of the activity is to support registered unemployed young people, with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged communities, to improve work readiness and access to employment by providing a series of locally delivered activities. It will do so through a range of defined activities including training, job preparing/job search, work placements and mentoring.	
Youthreach – The aim[WT1] of this activity is to address the personal and social development needs of unemployment young school leavers aged	

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p>between 15 and 20. The need to improve self-esteem, promote independence and personal autonomy are common among programme entrants. The programme seeks to instil a pattern of lifelong learning and integrate participants into further education and training opportunities and the labour market. Certification is available relative to the ability and career options of the individual participant. The programme also seeks to address the issue of social inclusion on a broader scale.</p> <p>Garda Youth Diversion Projects – The activity aims to engage with young people (aged 12-17) at risk of/or involved in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour and provide them with targeted supports designed to enable these young people to stop their offending and become positive contributors to society. The purpose of youth crime intervention work is to engage young people in a process of learning and development that enables them to make positive lifestyle choices. Projects are specifically located in areas of social disadvantage and marginalisation, where there are high volumes of youth crime and where there is a history of early school leaving and generational unemployment.</p> <p>Young Persons Probation Projects – The activity aims to add value to the work of the Probation Service in supporting and motivating young persons to address the cause of their offending behaviour and to make positive changes in their lives so as to avoid further offending. The YPPs will work with young people to address their identified needs and support their personal development. Some of the areas of work will include: Educational needs; Self-care living skills; Drug and alcohol misuse, and; Emotional and mental health.</p> <p>Social Inclusion of Prisoners/Ex-offenders through Employability Guidance and Placement – This activity is an active inclusion programme with an objective of labour market access and the prior identification, through guidance, of the personal and social barriers that may stand in the way of achieving such access. Guidance and placement interventions would actively address the issue of social exclusion and prisoner discrimination through advocacy and networking in the community on behalf of individual prisoners with community based services and employers. Stable placement in training, education and employment would directly address the issues of inclusion, discrimination and poverty among prisoners.</p> <p>People with Disabilities Project – This activity aims to take the key learning from the current round of ESF-funded projects and develop an innovative and flexible activation model which is capable of being delivered through a reformed and enhanced supported employment service. It will also aim to deliver a step-change in the rate of labour market participation of people with disabilities.</p> <p>This Priority Axis will also support the increase of female labour market participation across all ESF co-funded activities, as appropriate</p>	

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
<p>The ESF Monitoring Committee will approve the ESF activity/investment priority levels. The selection of types of operations to deliver on these ESF activity/investment priority objectives and goals will be based on a combination of formal skills/labour market research, client needs, feedback from existing or similar operations, and discussions with relevant local stakeholders. The criteria for specific operations will include financial solvency, qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, resources, organisational aspects and value for money. In addition, the project selection criteria will ensure that the projects will be assessed on the basis of their compliance and their promotion of 1) equality between men and women, 2) equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and, 3) social innovation. On this basis a determination of what operations should be selected to best deliver the quality operations needed and the results required.</p> <p>Where the required operations can be delivered through programmes within State funded bodies this is then done. Alternatively, a competitive calls for proposals and tendering processes will be carried out.</p> <p>Some socially innovative activities have already been included in the OP; the Social Inclusion Community and Activation Programme (SICAP), the prisoners/ ex-offenders activity, Tus Nua, Momentum and the Youth Diversion and Probation Projects.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
It is not envisaged that financial instruments will be used in this Operational Programme	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability
No major projects are planned for this Operational Programme.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
2.1.1	The number of participants from disadvantaged groups on social inclusion employability programmes, including personal development towards employability programmes.	Number of Participants	ESF	More developed			71,896.00	Monitoring by SOLAS/ ETBs/ DJE / DCELG	Annually
2.1b	The number of youths (<25 yrs) participants from	Number of participants	ESF	More developed			67,807.00	Monitoring by DCELG, SOLAS,ETBs,	Annually

Investment priority		9i - Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	disadvantaged groups on social inclusion employability programmes, including personal development towards employability programmes							DJE, DSP	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	9iii
Title of the investment priority	Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	2.2
Title of the specific objective	To engage with the most disadvantaged groups, including those distant from the labour market, with a view of raising their skills, ultimately increasing their future employment prospects
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Persons from marginalised groups, including migrants and women, participate in social inclusion, re-integration or employability programmes.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
2.2.1	Number of participants from disadvantaged groups that have completed a social inclusion employability programme and / or are in training/ education/ job search / work related environments upon leaving	More developed	Number of participants				950.00		2013			6,361.00	Monitoring by DJE	Yearly

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
<p>Equality Mainstreaming – This activity will support the effective implementation of Articles 7 and 8 (Council Reg No 1304-2013 ESF) which requires Member States to promote equal opportunities for all, supporting a more effective integration of equality mainstreaming approaches into labour market programmes, further education and training provision and employment services including entrepreneurship supports. An element of activity will focus on supporting workplaces to be planned and systematic in their approaches to workplace equality in order to prevent discrimination at workplace level.</p> <p>Gender Equality – The aim of the activity is to support a cohort of those women who are currently detached from the labour market, in order to assist their return to the labour market. This will be done by offering them a locally delivered development course which will comprise a series of training opportunities focusing self-development and work related skills. The course content is likely to include confidence building, basic work-related IT skills, CV development, interview and self-presentation skills. It is intended that many of those who undertake the course will return to the labour market in a</p>	

Investment priority	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
<p>part time or full time capacity.</p> <p>Integration and Employment of Migrants – The aim is to promote active inclusion, equal opportunities, active participation and to improve employability and the socio economic integration of the most vulnerable of legally resident migrants who are experiencing barriers to participation and employment. The target groups include vulnerable EU and EEA nationals, and non EEA nationals with a right to work (stamp 4). [WT1] A programme will be created to increase the employment possibilities for the participants through a comprehensive employment program embracing all stages of preparation for employment. It will include: language training around the work place; social skills training; CV preparation; interview skills, and; a mentoring programme that will lead to long term placement of the participants in either employment or further training, where appropriate.</p> <p>Tus Nua Project - The aim of the activity is promote independent living and positive reintegration into the community by providing women leaving prison and women referred from the community, with a history of offending, with life-skills and opportunities. Needs assessment and planned support to women offenders will be provided through a structured case management approach, developing skills for independent living and personal development.</p> <p>This Priority Axis will also support the increase of female labour market participation across all ESF co-funded activities, as appropriate</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
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Investment priority	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
<p>The ESF Monitoring Committee will approve the ESF activity/investment priority levels. The selection of types of operations to deliver on these ESF activity/investment priority objectives and goals will be based on a combination of formal skills/labour market research, client needs, feedback from existing or similar operations, and discussions with relevant local stakeholders. The criteria for specific operations will include financial solvency, qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, resources, organisational aspects and value for money. In addition, the project selection criteria will ensure that the projects will be assessed on the basis of their compliance and their promotion of 1) equality between men and women, 2) equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and, 3) social innovation. On this basis a determination of what operations should be selected to best deliver the quality operations needed and the results required.</p> <p>Where the required operations can be delivered through programmes within State funded bodies this is then done. Alternatively, a competitive calls for proposals and tendering processes will be carried out.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
It is not envisaged that financial instruments will be used in this Operational Programme	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities
No major projects are planned for this Operational Programme.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		9iii - Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
2.2.1	The number of participants from disadvantaged groups on social inclusion employability programmes, including personal development towards employability programmes.	Number of Participants	ESF	More developed			8,790.00	Monitoring by DJE	Yearly
2.2b	Number of Equality mainstreaming projects targeting public administrations or public services at national, regional or local level	Number of projects	ESF	More developed			30.00	Equality Authority	Annually

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market
<p>The ESF Regulation requires that the ESF shall promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope (Article 9.1). Such innovation should contribute to making policies more responsive to social change.</p> <p>This Operational Programme will support innovation activities targeting youth, women, ex-offenders and other socially excluded groups. Examples would include the Social Inclusion Community and Activation Programme (SICAP), the Prisoners/ ex-offenders activity, TUS Nua and the Youth Diversion and Probation Projects. These activities are primarily delivered by public sector bodies. In addition, during the implementation of the OP, the Managing Authority will seek to identify further fields for social innovation that correspond to Ireland's specific needs in this regard and to identify suitable activities for ESF support.</p> <p>Transnational</p> <p>Since February 2012, the ESF MA has been a member of the Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults.</p> <p>The objective of the transnational Learning Network is to prepare a coordinated call for proposals on transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults with the aim to implement transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults more widely across the EU with support from the ESF under the new programming period 2014 to 2020. The Call is likely to be launched in early 2015.</p> <p>Separately, the EU Commission is preparing a Common Framework for TN initiatives which is expected to be 'launched' in late 2014. The implications</p>	

Priority axis	P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market
for the Call for Proposals under the TN Network of this Common Framework are not yet clear. Ireland would hope to be involved in transnational co-operation activities, both as part of the common framework and on our own initiative. Themes of potential interest would be employment, inclusion and learning and skills.	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis			P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market										
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
f2	F	Expenditure Certified	€	ESF	More developed			14,368,000			364,072,600.00	National ESIF Certification IT System	
2.2.1	O	The number of participants from disadvantaged groups on social inclusion employability programmes, including personal development towards employability programmes.	Number of Participants	ESF	More developed			43494			72,590.00	Monitoring by SOLAS / ETBs / DJE / DCELG	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	109. Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability	182,948,869.00
ESF	More developed	111. Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting equal opportunities	10,858,915.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	193,807,784.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	05. Cooperation across national or regional programme areas in national context	193,807,784.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

Priority axis		P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	07. Not applicable	193,807,784.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	P3
Title of the priority axis	Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force

- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- ☐ For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
ESF	More developed	Total	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	10ii
Title of the investment priority	Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	3.1.1
Title of the specific objective	To enable disadvantaged and disabled persons/students to access and continue/remain in higher education
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	Disadvantaged and disabled persons/students access and continue/remain in tertiary education.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
3g	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted that gained a third level qualification upon leaving	More developed	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons				7,124.00	Number	2013			61,148.00	Monitoring by HEA and Colleges	Annually
3h	Number of LTU disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted that gained a third level qualification upon leaving	More developed	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons				550.00	Number	2013			3,603.00	Monitoring by HEA and Colleges	Annually

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
Third Level Access – The aim of the activity is to contribute to enhancing attainment of tertiary education qualifications by disadvantaged and disabled persons/students, thereby supporting access to sustainable employment as skilled members of the workforce. The activity also supports the attainment of higher education qualifications and post-secondary non-tertiary education by persons/students with disabilities. [WT1] Supports include financial assistance to those facing economic barriers to participation and the provision of tailored accommodation and services.	

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
This Priority Axis will also support the increase of female labour market participation across all ESF co-funded activities, as appropriate	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
<p>The ESF Monitoring Committee will approve the ESF activity/investment priority levels. The selection of types of operations to deliver on these ESF activity/investment priority objectives and goals will be based on a combination of formal skills/labour market research, client needs, feedback from existing or similar operations, and discussions with relevant local stakeholders. The criteria for specific operations will include financial solvency, qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, resources, organisational aspects and value for money. In addition, the project selection criteria will ensure that the projects will be assessed on the basis of their compliance and their promotion of 1) equality between men and women, 2) equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and, 3) social innovation. On this basis a determination of what operations should be selected to best deliver the quality operations needed and the results required.</p> <p>Where the required operations can be delivered through programmes within State funded bodies this is then done. Alternatively, a competitive calls for proposals and tendering processes will be carried out.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
It is not envisaged that financial instruments will be used in this Operational Programme	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups
No major projects are planned for this Operational Programme.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
3h	Number of LTU disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted in accessing and continuing/remaining in third level education	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons	ESF	More developed			10,917.00	Monitoring by HEA and Colleges	Annually
3j	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled	ESF	More developed			185,296.00	Monitoring by HEA and	Annually

Investment priority		10ii - Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	persons assisted in accessing and continuing/remaining in third level education	persons						Colleges	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	10iii
Title of the investment priority	Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	3.2.1
Title of the specific objective	Upgrade the skills and education levels of low skilled adults and/or early school leavers, by providing second chance education and training courses, including literacy, numeracy and language tuition.
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons outside the labour force undertake second-chance education and training opportunities • More adults access literacy, numeracy and language tuition programmes.

Table 4: Common result indicators for which a target value has been set and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by investment priority and category of region) (for the ESF)

Investment priority : 10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences														
ID	Indicator	Category of region	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T			M	W	T		
3.2.1	the number of participants with low education levels gaining a qualification or successfully completing the programme.	More developed	Number of Participants				22,500.00		2013			148,500.00	Monitoring by SOLAS / ETBs	Annually
3.2a	The number of LTU participants with low education levels gaining a qualification or successfully completing the programme	More developed	Number of participants				6,380.00	Number	2013			42,087.00	Monitoring by SOLAS, ETBs	Annually

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
<p>BTEI – The aim of this activity is to increase the base of adults with upper second level education and/or qualifications at FETAC Levels 3, 4, 5, and 6 and relevant or updated skills to meet the needs of the economy, This will be achieved through the provision of a range of part-time learning opportunities that enable learners to reconcile participation in education with family and/or employment responsibilities. The part-time provision will be flexible in relation to timing (i.e. mornings, afternoons, evenings, and block) and to facilitate progression to achievement of full awards over time.</p> <p>Adult Literacy – This activity aims to enhance equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading</p>	

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
<p>the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences. Investment is primarily aimed at the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed, disadvantaged groups, those under-35's and those formerly employed in declining sectors such as the construction sector, as well as adults in need of improved basic literacy, language and numeracy skills.</p> <p>This Priority Axis will also support the increase of female labour market participation across all ESF co-funded activities, as appropriate</p>	

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
<p>The ESF Monitoring Committee will approve the ESF activity/investment priority levels. The selection of types of operations to deliver on these ESF activity/investment priority objectives and goals will be based on a combination of formal skills/labour market research, client needs, feedback from existing or similar operations, and discussions with relevant local stakeholders. The criteria for specific operations will include financial solvency, qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, resources, organisational aspects and value for money. In addition, the project selection criteria will ensure that the projects will be assessed on the basis of their compliance and their promotion of 1) equality between men and women, 2) equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and, 3) social innovation. On this basis a determination of what operations should be selected to best deliver the quality operations needed and the results required.</p> <p>Where the required operations can be delivered through programmes within State funded bodies this is then done. Alternatively, a competitive calls for proposals and tendering processes will be carried out.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
It is not envisaged that financial instruments will be used in this Operational Programme	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences
No major projects are planned for this Operational Programme.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
3.2.1	The number of participants with	Number of	ESF	More developed			526,600.00	Monitoring by	Yearly

Investment priority		10iii - Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	low education levels on further education/ training programmes.	Participants						SOLAS / ETBs	
3.2b	The number of LTU participants with low education levels on further education/training programmes	Number participants	ESF	More developed			147,308.00	DES, SOLAS, ETBs	Annually

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force
<p>The ESF Regulation requires that the ESF shall promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope (Article 9.1). Such innovation should contribute to making policies more responsive to social change.</p> <p>This Operational Programme will support social innovation activities targeting youth, women, ex-offenders and other socially excluded groups. In addition, during the implementation of the OP, the Managing Authority will seek to identify further fields for social innovation that correspond to Ireland's specific needs in this regard and to identify suitable activities for ESF support.</p>	

Priority axis	P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force
Transnational	
<p>Since February 2012, the ESF MA has been a member of the Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults.</p>	
<p>The objective of the transnational Learning Network is to prepare a coordinated call for proposals on transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults with the aim to implement transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults more widely across the EU with support from the ESF under the new programming period 2014 to 2020. The Call is likely to be launched in early 2015.</p>	
<p>Separately, the EU Commission is preparing a Common Framework for TN initiatives which is expected to be ‘launched’ in late 2014. The implications for the Call for Proposals under the TN Network of this Common Framework are not yet clear. Ireland would hope to be involved in transnational co-operation activities, both as part of the common framework and on our own initiative. Themes of potential interest would be employment, inclusion and learning and skills.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis			P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force						
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018	Final target (2023)	Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate

Priority axis			P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force										
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
3f	F	Expenditure Certified	€	ESF	More developed			48368580			214,897,149.00	National ESIF Certification IT System	
3d	O	The number of participants with low education levels on further education/training programmes	Number of participants	ESF	More developed			358600			526,600.00	DES, SOLAS, ETBs	
3j	O	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted in accessing and continuing/remaining in third level education	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons	ESF	More developed			132354			185,296.00	Monitoring by HEA and Colleges	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force										
Fund	Category of region	Code										€ amount
ESF	More developed	116. Improving the quality and efficiency of, and access to, tertiary and equivalent education with a view to increasing participation and attainment levels, especially for disadvantaged groups										11,200,000.00

Priority axis		P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	117. Enhancing equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce, and promoting flexible learning pathways including through career guidance and validation of acquired competences	96,498,574.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	107,698,574.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	05. Cooperation across national or regional programme areas in national context	107,698,574.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	07. Not applicable	107,698,574.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
ESF	More developed	04. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	22,400,000.00

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force

2.A.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	P4
Title of the priority axis	Youth Employment Initiative

- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented solely through financial instruments set up at Union level
- ☐ The entire priority axis will be implemented through community-led local development
- ☐ For the ESF: The entire priority axis is dedicated to social innovation or to transnational cooperation, or both

2.A.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region, thematic objective or fund (where applicable)

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and calculation basis for Union support

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)	Category of region for outermost regions and northern sparsely populated regions (where applicable)
YEI		Total	

2.A.4 Investment priority

ID of the investment priority	8ii
Title of the investment priority	Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

ID of the specific objective	4.1.1
Title of the specific objective	To Raise the skills and education levels of people eligible for support under YEI, by providing education, training, work experience and/or work opportunities, including support for self-employment
Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support	More young people, in particular those who are not in employment, education or training, aged under 25 progress to education, training or employment.

Table 4a: YEI result indicators and programme-specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective (by priority axis or by part of a priority axis)

Investment priority : 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee													
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
				M	W	T			M	W	T		
CR01	Unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed			8,431.00	Number	2013			15,868.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 months
CR02	Unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed			3,588.00	Number	2013			6,394.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 months
CR03	Unemployed participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	unemployed, including long-term unemployed			6,216.00	Number	2013			9,238.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 months
CR04	Long-term unemployed participants who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number	long-term unemployed			6,349.00	Number	2013			11,645.00	Monitoring by DSP, DECLG, DES, SOLAS	6 moths
CR05	Long-term unemployed participants who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	Number	long-term unemployed			2,623.00	Number	2013			4,650.00	Monitoring by DSP, DECLG, DES, SOLAS	6 months
CR06	Long-term unemployed participants who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	long-term unemployed			5,011.00	Number	2013			7,254.00	Monitoring by DSP,DECLG, SOLAS	6 months
CR07	Inactive participants not in education or training who complete the YEI supported intervention	Number	inactive, not in education or training			1,540.00	Number	2013			2,757.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 Months
CR08	Inactive participants not in education or training who receive an offer of employment, continued education, apprenticeship or traineeship upon leaving	Number	inactive, not in education or training			484.00	Number	2013			1,517.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 months
CR09	Inactive participants not in education or training who are in education/training, gaining a qualification, or are in employment, including self-employment, upon leaving	Number	inactive, not in education or training			366.00	Number	2013			723.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 months
CR10	Participants in continued education, training programmes leading to a qualification, an apprenticeship or a traineeship six months after leaving	Number	below 25 years of age			1,152.00	Number	2013			1,902.00	Monitoring by DES, DES, SOLAS, ETBs, DJE, DCELG	6 months
CR11	Participants in employment six months after leaving	Number	below 25 years of age			2,850.00	Number	2013			9,414.00	Monitoring by DSP, DES, SOALS, ETBs, DCELG	6 months

Investment priority : 8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEL), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee													
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit for indicator	Common output indicator used as basis for target setting	Baseline value			Measurement unit for baseline and target	Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
				M	W	T			M	W	T		
CR12	Participants in self-employment six months after leaving	Number	below 25 years of age			99.00	Number	2013			293.00	Monitoring by DSP	6 months
4.1.1	The number of YEL eligible participants completing an training/upskilling/personal development towards employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects	Number of Participants				9,971.00	Number	2013			18,623.00	Monitoring by DSP/ SOLAS/ETBs/DCELG/DJ E	6 months

2.A.6 Action to be supported under the investment priority (by investment priority)

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives including, where appropriate, the identification of main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<p>Back To Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme – The priority of this activity is to improve the self -employment prospects of young people aged under 25 who have been on a social welfare payment. It is designed to provide assistance for people who are long term dependent on social welfare payments to make engagement in self-employment financially attractive and viable, while allowing them to retain a reducing proportion of their qualifying social welfare payment over two years.</p> <p>JobsPlus Incentive Scheme – The aim of this activity is to improve the employment prospects of people under 25 who have been on the live register. It is an employer incentive which encourages and rewards employers who offer employment opportunities to the long term unemployed. Regular cash payments are made to qualifying employers to offset wage costs when they engage jobseekers from the Live Register. Eligible employees must have been in receipt of a Jobseekers payment or signing for Jobseekers credits for at least 12 months. Time spent on certain activation programmes may count towards this time. It is proposed to revise the targeting of the JobsPlus recruitment subsidy scheme by reducing the qualifying period those aged under 25 from 12 months to 4 months in respect of young people who are assessed as low-medium PEX (probability of exit from unemployment).</p> <p>Tus – The aim of this activity is to improve the employment prospects of people aged under 25 who have been on the live register through a community</p>	

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<p>work placement initiative providing quality work to break the cycle of unemployment and to improve a person's opportunities in returning to the labour market. It will target people who are out of work and on job-seekers' payments for a year or more to improve their employability and work readiness by providing them with the opportunities to put work skills into practice and learn new ones enabling progression to work, further education or skill development opportunities. In addition, participation on Tús will boost the participant's motivation and confidence, while simultaneously providing prospective employers with evidence that a participant has the necessary skills and abilities to do the job.</p> <p>JobBridge – The aim of this activity is to improve the employment prospects of jobseekers under 25. It is a National Internship Scheme to assist individuals to bridge the gap between unemployment and the world of work. It provides those seeking employment with an opportunity to undertake a 6 or 9 month internship in a host organisation. Participation on the scheme will assist in breaking that cycle whereby unemployed people are unable to get a job without experience but are unable to get experience without a job.</p> <p>Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme – The aim of the activity is to support registered unemployed young people, with a particular focus on those from disadvantaged communities, to improve work readiness and access to employment by providing a series of locally delivered activities. It will do so through a range of defined activities including training, job preparing/job search, work placements and mentoring.</p> <p>Youthreach – The aim of this activity is to address the personal and social development needs of unemployment young school leavers aged between 15 and 20. The need to improve self-esteem, promote independence and personal autonomy are common among programme entrants. The programme seeks to instil a pattern of lifelong learning and integrate participants into further education and training opportunities and the labour market. Certification is available relative to the ability and career options of the individual participant. The programme also seeks to address the issue of social inclusion on a broader scale.</p> <p>LMETF Momentum - The Fund is targeted to benefit the long term unemployed and those under 25 years of age. It is focused on funding upskilling programmes delivering qualifications up to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or equivalent, and re-skilling programmes providing qualifications up to NFQ Level 6, or equivalent.</p> <p>This Priority Axis will also support the increase of female labour market participation across all ESF co-funded activities, as appropriate</p>	

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for selection of operations

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
<p>The ESF Monitoring Committee will approve the ESF activity/investment priority levels. The selection of types of operations to deliver on these ESF activity/investment priority objectives and goals will be based on a combination of formal skills/labour market research, client needs, feedback from existing or similar operations, and discussions with relevant local stakeholders. The criteria for specific operations will include financial solvency, qualifications, technical knowledge, experience, resources, organisational aspects and value for money. In addition, the project selection criteria will ensure that the projects will be assessed on the basis of their compliance and their promotion of 1) equality between men and women, 2) equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and, 3) social innovation. On this basis a determination of what operations should be selected to best deliver the quality operations needed and the results required.</p> <p>Where the required operations can be delivered through programmes within State funded bodies this is then done. Alternatively, a competitive calls for proposals and tendering processes will be carried out.</p> <p>Some socially innovative activities have already been included in the OP; the Social Inclusion Community and Activation Programme (SICAP), the prisoners/ ex-offenders, Tus Nua and Momentum activities.</p>	

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
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Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
It is not envisaged that financial instruments will be used in this Operational Programme	

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects (where appropriate)

Investment priority	8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee
No major projects are planned for this Operational Programme.	

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and, where appropriate by category of region

Table 5: Common and programme-specific output indicators (by investment priority, broken down by category of region for the ESF, and where relevant, for the ERDF)

Investment priority		8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
4.1.1	The number of YEI eligible participants on training/upskilling/personal development towards	Number of YEI eligible participants	YEI				32,670.00	Monitoring by DSP / SOLAS / ETBs/ DCELG / DJE	6 months

Investment priority		8ii - Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (YEI), in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee							
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Fund	Category of region (where relevant)	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
					M	W	T		
	employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects.								

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and contribution to thematic objectives 1-7

Priority axis	P4 - Youth Employment Initiative
<p>The ESF Regulation requires that the ESF shall promote social innovation within all areas falling under its scope (Article 9.1). Such innovation should contribute to making policies more responsive to social change.</p> <p>This Operational Programme will support social innovation activities targeting youth, women, ex-offenders and other socially excluded groups. Examples would include the Social Inclusion Community and Activation Programme (SICAP), Momentum and Youth Probation Projects. These activities are primarily delivered by public sector bodies. In addition, during the implementation of the OP, the Managing Authority will seek to identify further fields for social innovation that correspond to Ireland's specific needs in this regard and to identify suitable activities for ESF support.</p>	

2.A.8 Performance framework

Table 6: Performance framework of the priority axis (by fund and, for the ERDF and ESF, category of region)

Priority axis			P4 - Youth Employment Initiative										
ID	Indicator type	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Fund	Category of region	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)			Source of data	Explanation of relevance of indicator, where appropriate
						M	W	T	M	W	T		
4f	F	Expenditure Certified	€	YEI				185941048			185,941,048.00	National ESIF Certification IT System	
4.1.1	O	The number of YEI eligible participants on training/upskilling/personal development towards employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects.	Number of YEI eligible participants	YEI				26330			26,330.00	Monitoring by DSP / SOLAS / ETBs / DCELG / DJE	

Additional qualitative information on the establishment of the performance framework

The final paragraph of Page 21 (under section 2.A.8) of the Commission’s *Guidance for the Content of the OP* document (version 14.3.2014) states “*Table 6 [performance framework of the priority axis table] has to be filled out for YEI (as it includes ESF support). The data to be provided cover the YEI (i.e. the specific allocation and the corresponding ESF support). It is not required that output indicators are broken down by category of region in the case of YEI.*” Therefore, the YEI indicators included in table 6 is with the understanding that they would ultimately be excluded from the performance reserve in line with Article 20(a) of the CPR and footnote 21 to table 6 on page 22 of the same Guidance that states “*Where the YEI is implemented as part of a priority axis, YEI milestones and targets must be distinguished from other milestones and targets for the priority axis in accordance with implementing acts referred to in the fifth subparagraph of Article 22(7) CPR, as YEI resources (specific allocation and matching ESF support) are excluded from the performance reserve*”.

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Categories of intervention corresponding to the content of the priority axis based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and indicative breakdown of Union support.

Tables 7-11: Categories of intervention

Table 7: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
YEI		103. Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities, including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee	136,290,838.00

Table 8: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
YEI		01. Non-repayable grant	136,290,838.00

Table 9: Dimension 3 - Territory type

Priority axis		P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
YEI		05. Cooperation across national or regional programme areas in national context	136,290,838.00

Table 10: Dimension 4 - Territorial delivery mechanisms

Priority axis		P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount
YEI		07. Not applicable	136,290,838.00

Table 11: Dimension 6 - ESF secondary theme (ESF and YEI only)

Priority axis		P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ amount

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance including, where necessary, actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries (where appropriate) (by priority axis)

Priority axis:	P4 - Youth Employment Initiative

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

2.B.1 Priority axis

ID of the priority axis	PA 5
Title of the priority axis	Technical Assistance

2.B.2 Justification for establishing a priority axis covering more than one category of region (where applicable)

2.B.3 Fund and category of region

Fund	Category of region	Calculation basis (total eligible expenditure or eligible public expenditure)
ESF	More developed	Total

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
5	Technical Assistance	<p>Implementation of this Operational Programme and of the ESF will give rise to significant intrinsic administration costs over the next Programme period.</p> <p>The Technical Assistance Priority will cover certain costs in relation to the monitoring committee meetings, activities of the ESF authorities such as management verifications, audit, monitoring, reporting and evaluations of the operations within the Operational Programme, seminars, the continued</p>

ID	Specific objective	Results that the Member States seek to achieve with Union support
		development of computer based integrated data management systems, information and publicity and other costs. It is also envisaged that some of the Technical Assistance Priority will cover expenditure relating to capacity building and reductions in administrative burdens. The staffing costs and expenses of the ESF authorises, as well as the expenses incurred during the delivering of their official functions will be co-funded by Technical Assistance.

2.B.5 Result indicators

Table 12: Programme-specific result indicators (by specific objective) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		5 - Technical Assistance									
ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value			Baseline year	Target value (2023)			Source of data	Frequency of reporting
			M	W	T		M	W	T		

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives (by priority axis)

2.B.6.1 A description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

Priority axis	PA 5 - Technical Assistance
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Priority axis	PA 5 - Technical Assistance
<p>Participation by the ESF authorities in ESF-related fora nationally and at EU level will also come within the remit of Technical Assistance. Funding may be provided under this heading for organisations involved with administering ESF programmes to build appropriate capabilities to enable them to take full advantage of the ESF and to ensure that they have the capability to manage the requirements of the Regulations when utilising ESF in their work. The Technical Assistance priority will also be required to co-fund certain expenses associated with audit and regulatory requirements in relation to items (such as retention and storage of records) relating to this and previous ESF Operational Programme. This Priority will be administered by the Managing Authority under the general control of the Operational Programme Monitoring Committee. The amount of ESF set aside for Technical Assistance in this Operational Programme is €10m (i.e. total expenditure €20m).</p>	

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results

Table 13: Output indicators (by priority axis) (for ERDF/ESF/Cohesion Fund)

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance				
ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) (optional)			Source of data
			M	W	T	
TA1	Audit output indicator	number of audits per annum			270.00	Audit Authority
TA2	Number of employees	Number of employees			6.00	DES
TA3	number of meetings per annum	number of meetings per annum			14.00	DES

2.B.7 Categories of intervention (by priority axis)

Corresponding categories of intervention based on a nomenclature adopted by the Commission, and an indicative breakdown of the Union support

Tables 14-16: Categories of intervention

Table 14: Dimension 1 - Intervention field

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ESF	More developed	121. Preparation, implementation, monitoring and inspection	4,000,000.00
ESF	More developed	122. Evaluation and studies	4,000,000.00
ESF	More developed	123. Information and communication	2,000,000.00

Table 15: Dimension 2 - Form of finance

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ESF	More developed	01. Non-repayable grant	10,000,000.00

Table 16: Dimension 3 – Territory type

Priority axis		PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
Fund	Category of region	Code	€ Amount
ESF	More developed	05. Cooperation across national or regional programme areas in national context	10,000,000.00

3. FINANCING PLAN

3.1 Financial appropriation from each fund and amounts for performance reserve

Table 17

Fund	Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
		Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve
ESF	More developed	70,880,036.00	2,080,602.00	71,747,765.00	2,673,593.00	71,356,442.00	4,554,667.00	72,784,538.00	4,645,822.00	74,241,170.00	4,738,798.00	75,726,905.00	4,833,632.00	77,242,236.00	4,930,355.00	513,979,092.00	28,457,469.00
Total ESF		70,880,036.00	2,080,602.00	71,747,765.00	2,673,593.00	71,356,442.00	4,554,667.00	72,784,538.00	4,645,822.00	74,241,170.00	4,738,798.00	75,726,905.00	4,833,632.00	77,242,236.00	4,930,355.00	513,979,092.00	28,457,469.00
YEI		38,283,943.00	0.00	29,861,476.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	68,145,419.00	0.00
Total		109,163,979.00	2,080,602.00	101,609,241.00	2,673,593.00	71,356,442.00	4,554,667.00	72,784,538.00	4,645,822.00	74,241,170.00	4,738,798.00	75,726,905.00	4,833,632.00	77,242,236.00	4,930,355.00	582,124,511.00	28,457,469.00

3.2 Total financial appropriation by fund and national co-financing (€)

Table 18a: Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a) / (e) (2)	EIB contributions (g)	Main allocation		Performance reserve		Performance reserve amount as proportion of total Union support (l) = (j) / (a) * 100
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)				Union support (h) = (a) - (j)	National Counterpart (i) = (b) – (k)	Union support (j)	National Counterpart (k) = (b) * (j) / (a)	
P1	ESF	More developed	Total	162,784,784.00	162,784,784.00	162,784,784.00	0.00	325,569,568.00	50.000000000000%		152,824,670.00	152,824,670.00	9,960,114.00	9,960,114.00	6.12%
P2	ESF	More developed	Total	193,807,784.00	193,807,784.00	193,807,784.00	0.00	387,615,568.00	50.000000000000%		181,855,647.00	181,855,647.00	11,952,137.00	11,952,137.00	6.17%
P3	ESF	More developed	Total	107,698,574.00	107,698,574.00	107,698,574.00	0.00	215,397,148.00	50.000000000000%		101,153,356.00	101,153,356.00	6,545,218.00	6,545,218.00	6.08%
P4	YEI		Total	136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00	68,145,419.00	0.00	204,436,257.00	66.66666666667%		136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00			
PA 5	ESF	More developed	Total	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	0.00	20,000,000.00	50.000000000000%		10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00			
Total	ESF	More developed		474,291,142.00	474,291,142.00	474,291,142.00	0.00	948,582,284.00	50.000000000000%		445,833,673.00	445,833,673.00	28,457,469.00	28,457,469.00	6.00%
Total	YEI			136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00	68,145,419.00	0.00	204,436,257.00	66.66666666667%		136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00	0.00		
Grand total				610,581,980.00	542,436,561.00	542,436,561.00	0.00	1,153,018,541.00	52.9550877361%	0.00	582,124,511.00	513,979,092.00	28,457,469.00	28,457,469.00	

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

Table 18b: Youth Employment Initiative - ESF and YEI specific allocations (where appropriate)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for calculation of Union support (Total eligible cost or public eligible cost)	Union support (a)	National counterpart (b) = (c) + (d)	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding (e) = (a) + (b)	Co-financing rate (f) = (a)/(e) (2)
						National public funding (c)	National private funding (d) (1)		
P4	ESF	Less developed	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
P4	ESF	Transition	Total	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%
P4	ESF	More developed	Total	68,145,419.00	68,145,419.00	68,145,419.00	0.00	136,290,838.00	50.00%
P4	YEI		Total	68,145,419.00				68,145,419.00	100.00%
P4	Total			136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00	68,145,419.00	0.00	204,436,257.00	66.67%
Total				136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00	68,145,419.00	0.00	204,436,257.00	66.67%

Ratio	%
Ratio of ESF for less developed regions	0.00%
Ratio of ESF for transition regions	0.00%
Ratio of ESF for more developed regions	100.00%

(1) To be completed only when priority axes are expressed in total costs.

(2) This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

Table 18c: Breakdown of the financial plan by priority axis, fund, category of region and thematic objective

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	ESF	More developed	Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	162,784,784.00	162,784,784.00	325,569,568.00
Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	ESF	More developed	Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination	193,807,784.00	193,807,784.00	387,615,568.00
Investing in Education , Training and Life Long Learning with a	ESF	More developed	Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning	107,698,574.00	107,698,574.00	215,397,148.00

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Thematic objective	Union support	National counterpart	Total funding
view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force						
Youth Employment Initiative	YEI		Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility	136,290,838.00	68,145,419.00	204,436,257.00
Total				600,581,980.00	532,436,561.00	1,133,018,541.00

Table 19: Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives

Priority axis	Indicative amount of support to be used for climate change objectives (€)	Proportion of the total allocation to the operational programme (%)
Total	0.00	0.00%

4. INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Description of the integrated approach to territorial development taking into account the content and objectives of the operational programme having regard to the Partnership Agreement and showing how it the operational programme contributes to the accomplishment of the objectives of the operational programme and expected results

The Partnership Agreement contains a comprehensive Integrated Approach to Territorial Development and this ESF Operational Programme does not have a material or specific territorial considerations. Therefore, this section is not considered applicable for inclusion in this Operational Programme.

4.1 Community-led local development (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of community-led local development instruments and the principles for identifying the areas in where they will be implemented

The Partnership Agreement established that the Community-led local development model was not directly relevant to the ESF Operational Programme at this point in the 2014-2020 round. However, it may be re-considered at a future point during the period.

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development (where appropriate)

Where appropriate the indicative amount of ERDF support for integrated actions for sustainable urban development to be implemented in accordance with the provisions under Article 7(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 and the indicative allocation of ESF support for integrated action.

Not applicable to this operational programme.

Table 20: Integrated actions for sustainable urban development – indicative amounts of ERDF and ESF support

Fund	ERDF and ESF support (indicative) (€)	Proportion of fund's total allocation to programme
Total ESF	0.00	0.00%
TOTAL ERDF+ESF	0.00	0.00%

4.3 Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (where appropriate)

The approach to the use of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) (as defined in Article 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) other than in cases covered by 4.2, and their indicative financial allocation from each priority axis.

Not applicable to this operational programme.

Table 21: Indicative financial allocation to ITI other than those mentioned under point 4.2 (aggregate amount)

Priority axis	Fund	Indicative financial allocation (Union support) (€)
Total		0.00

4.4 The arrangements for interregional and transnational actions, within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State (where appropriate)

Since February 2012, the ESF Managing Authority has been a member of the Learning Network on Transnational Mobility Measures for Disadvantaged Youth and Young Adults. The objective of the transnational Learning Network is to prepare a coordinated call for proposals on transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults with the aim to implement transnational mobility measures for disadvantaged youth and young adults more widely across the EU with support from the ESF under the new programming period 2014 to 2020. The Call is likely to be launched in early 2015.

Separately, the EU Commission is preparing a Common Framework for transnational network initiatives which is expected to be launched in late 2014. The implications for the Call for Proposals under the transnational network of this Common Framework are not yet clear.

Once the implications of above are clarified a decision on the specific transitional actions planned for this operational programme will be made.

4.5 Contribution of the planned actions under the programme to macro-regional and sea basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State (where appropriate)

(Where the Member State and regions participate in macro-regional strategies and sea basin strategies).

The joint ERDF/ESF Needs Analysis identified some possible benefits for beneficiaries from the Atlantic Area, whereby the ESF programmes might contribute towards the strategy objective. While some of the training under the ESF OP might be availed of by Atlantic Area residents, it is not intended to have specific measures for the relevant areas that support that strategy.

5. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

This Operational Programme is a national programme that will support the priorities and target groups identified in the NRP and other national strategies identified in Section 1. This will ensure that areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion are covered. Therefore, it is considered appropriate that these issues are not addressed specifically in the draft OP given the national approach outlined above.

5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, and where relevant, the contribution to the integrated approach set out in the Partnership Agreement

See Section 5.1 above.

Table 22: Actions to address specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty/target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

Target group/geographical area	Main types of planned action as part of integrated approach	Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Investment priority
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6. SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WHICH SUFFER FROM SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS (WHERE APPROPRIATE)

The ESF OP is a national programme in which both identified regions are defined as 'more developed' and, therefore, are not comprehended by the above categorisation.

7. AUTHORITIES AND BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND AUDIT AND THE ROLE OF RELEVANT PARTNERS

7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

Table 23: Relevant authorities and bodies

Authority/body	Name of authority/body and department or unit	Head of authority/body (position or post)
Managing authority	ESF Managing Authority, ESF Policy and Operations Unit , Department of Education and Skills	Mr. William McIntosh
Certifying authority	ESF Certifying Authority, ESF Policy and Operations Unit, Department of Education & Skills	Mr. Tom Whelan
Audit authority	Internal Audit Unit / Audit Authority, ESF policy and Operations Unit, Department of Education and Skills	Mr. David Salter
Body to which Commission will make payments	ESF Certifying Authority, ESF Policy and Operations Unit, Department of Education & Skills	Mr. Tom Whelan

7.2 Involvement of relevant partners

7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of those partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

The Managing Authority identified the relevant partners among the following,

- education, training and advisory services providers in view of the planned use of the ESF;
- public authorities responsible for the application of horizontal principles referred to in Articles 4 to 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 in view of the planned use of the ESF contributing to the programme and, in particular, the bodies for the promotion of equal treatment established in accordance with Council Directive 2000/43/EC, Council 2004/113/EC and Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;

Economic and social partners, including:

- nationally recognised social partners' organisations whose sectors are related to the planned use of the ESF Funds;
- bodies representing civil society such as non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination, including:
- bodies working in the areas related to the planned use of the ESF contributing to the programme and to the application of horizontal principles, referred to in Articles 4 to 8 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
- bodies representing the local action groups referred to in Article 34(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013
- other organisations or groups which are significantly affected or likely to be significantly affected by the implementation of the ESF; in particular, groups considered to be at risk of discrimination and social exclusion.

The Managing Authority consulted the partners on the process and timetable of the preparation of the Operational Programmes. We have kept them informed of their content and any changes thereof, in order to ensure transparent and effective involvement.

The Managing Authority has also taken account of the need for:

- (a) timely disclosure of and easy access to relevant information;
- (b) sufficient time for partners to analyse and comment on key preparatory documents
- (c) available channels through which partners may ask questions or provide contributions;

The Managing Authority involved relevant partners in the preparation of the programmes, in particular concerning

- (a) the analysis and identification of needs;
- (b) the definition or selection of priorities and related specific objectives;
- (c) the allocation of funding;
- (d) the definition of programmes' specific indicators;
- (e) the implementation of the horizontal principles as defined in Articles 7 and 8 of the CPR;
- (f) the composition of the monitoring committee.

Specifically, a consultation process on the ESF Operational Programme 2014-2020 was launched formally and submissions from interested parties were invited on both the proposed content and structure of the Operational Programme, together with proposed implementation arrangements. In addition, a consultation forum was held in the Department's headquarters on 14th October, 2013 which was attended by a large number of potential ESF recipient bodies and where an exchange of views on the likely structure and content of the new Operational Programme was held.

The consultations were predominantly focused on the membership of the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) for the current (2007-2013) OP with contributions from other organisations filtered through the appropriate members of the PMC. Following detailed consideration of the submissions received and a subsequent series of bi-lateral engagements with interested bodies, taking into account the focus in IE of the OP a number of partners was selected to receive ESF assistance for their proposed activities. In addition, the Partnership Agreement consultation process involved in excess of 90 Governmental and non-Governmental organisations and the proposed focus of the ESF Operational Programme would have been outlined during that process.

The consultation process enabled the IE ESF authorities to accumulate a detailed understanding of the various programmes and initiatives proposed for ESF assistance. This facilitated the compilation of a more effective and targeted draft ESF Programme with complementarity between proposals emerging as a result. The detailed consultations also enabled the IE ESF authorities to advise potential recipients on how they might better focus their initiatives to reflect the ESF Priorities as identified by the Commission and IE. A common concern which emerged during the consultation process was the need to address social exclusion and, of course, the unemployment situation. We have sought to address these concerns across a broad range of activities in the draft OP. On a practical level, the ability of potential recipients to fulfil the reporting requirements under Regulation together with the revised claim timetables inherent in same were also raised

and we expect to engage further with the proposed IBs on these and other practical issues in the coming weeks.

The role of the relevant partners in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the OP shall be as indicated at EU 1303/2013 Article 110 CPR, with the exception of sections 1 (d), (e), (g) and (i).

7.2.2 *Global grants* (for the ESF, where appropriate)

Not applicable

7.2.3 *Allocation of an amount for capacity building* (for the ESF, where appropriate)

Not applicable

8. COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FUNDS, THE EAFRD, THE EMFF AND OTHER UNION AND NATIONAL FUNDING INSTRUMENTS, AND WITH THE EIB

The mechanisms to ensure coordination between the Funds, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the European Investment Bank (EIB), taking into account the relevant provisions laid down in the Common Strategic Framework.

The LEADER measure of the EAFRD will aim to promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and the economic development of rural areas, supported through a framework of Local Development Strategies (LDS) under priority 6 of that programme. Activities in priority 1 of the PEIL OP 2014-2020 will complement indicative theme 1 (Rural Economic Development/Enterprise Development and Job Creation) of the LEADER measure by training, re-skilling and up-skilling unemployed persons and preparing them for employment. Activities in priority 2 of the PEIL OP 2014-2020 will complement indicative theme 2 (Social inclusion through building community capacity, training and animation) of the LEADER measure by promoting social inclusion and combating discrimination through social inclusion, re-integration and employability programmes targeted at persons from marginalised groups, including young people at risk, persons with disabilities and offenders.

The National Co-ordinating Committee of the ESI Funds involving representatives of each OP MA will be continue, as before, to provide an oversight function in respect of avoidance of duplication of support. The potential for synergies/complementarity/duplication have been considered and addressed in the development of the PA and OPs. We are confident that these arrangements are appropriate. They are in line with the general principles (including proportionality) set out in article 4 of the CPR and in line with long established institutional, administrative and financial frameworks. Part of the verification process undertaken during the programming period includes a check that there has been no overlapping of EU aid for recipients of the project/operation. 6.4

The two Regional Operational Programmes under the ERDF 2014-2020 funding period will include support for small enterprises and for extended broadband networks. The support for the increased and enhanced broadband network, particularly outside of the cities, should also have benefits for beneficiaries and participants under Priority 1 of the ESF PEIL OP 2014-2020, through the use of internet links for ICT and other courses funded by the ESF under this Priority, thus ensuring synergy and complementarity of both the ESF and ERDF investments in Ireland. There may also be cross benefits for those participants of Activities under the Training for the Unemployed, Springboard, Momentum and ICT Skills Conversion Courses through further supports by the Regional OPs for SMEs with direct financial assistance or other support measures such as mentoring, management training and advisory services.

The SEUPB has coordinated the development of the PEACE programme in close consultation with the relevant authorities in Ireland who are responsible for the development of other programmes. The SEUPB is a member of the National Strategic Reference Framework Monitoring Committee that co-ordinates the development of all ESI funded programmes, including the Border Midlands and West Regional Programme. The aim of this coordination mechanism is to ensure maximum complementarity between programmes. All ESI funded programmes have a requirement to demonstrate focus and concentration. All ESIF programmes are based on a common list of thematic objectives; however, the distinctive nature of the investment priority for the PEACE Programme, in particular, and the EAFRD, ERDF and EMFF programmes ensures there is limited potential for duplication of activity.

The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (OPMI) is the Responsible Authority for both the European Integration Fund for Third Country Nationals (EIF) and the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and will be the Responsible Authority in respect of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund; the same cadre of staff is involved in the administration of these funds as well as migrant integration measures under the ESI Funds. This will ensure that no overlap between Funds takes place. Furthermore, OPMI is also a public beneficiary body in relation to integration activities in Ireland funded under the European Social Fund (ESF) and accordingly, is in a position to ensure appropriate demarcation between the various EU Funds. The OPMI is also represented on the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform's National Committee for the co-ordination of EU Funds. The OPMI has set up a "partnership" under the AMIF and it envisages requesting the ESF authorities in Ireland to participate in the AMIF partnership.

9. EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES

9.1 Ex-ante conditionalities

Information on the assessment of the applicability and the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (optional).

Table 24: Applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	Yes
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	Yes
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	Yes
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	Yes
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	Yes
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	<p>P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.</p> <p>P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market</p> <p>P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force</p>	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
	P4 - Youth Employment Initiative PA 5 - Technical Assistance	
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility. P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force P4 - Youth Employment Initiative PA 5 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility. P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force P4 - Youth Employment Initiative PA 5 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility. P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force P4 - Youth Employment Initiative PA 5 - Technical Assistance	Yes
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility. P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour	Yes

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axes to which conditionality applies	Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (Yes/No/Partially)
	<p>market</p> <p>P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force</p> <p>P4 - Youth Employment Initiative</p> <p>PA 5 - Technical Assistance</p>	
G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	<p>P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.</p> <p>P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market</p> <p>P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force</p> <p>P4 - Youth Employment Initiative</p> <p>PA 5 - Technical Assistance</p>	Yes
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	<p>P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.</p> <p>P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market</p> <p>P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force</p> <p>P4 - Youth Employment Initiative</p> <p>PA 5 - Technical Assistance</p>	Partially

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: personalised services and active and preventive labour market measures at an early stage, which are open to all jobseekers while focusing on people at highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Pathways-to-Work-2013.pdf http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Work_Of_The_Department/Economic_International_Northern_Ireland/Economic/NRP/National_Reform_Programme_2014.pdf http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf Action Plan for SOLAS http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/An-Action-Plan-for-SOLAS.pdf Jobseekers information pack http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Jobseeker-Pack.aspx	This Government Policy Document sets out the activation strategy. National Reform Programme for Ireland - See Chapter 4, Target 1 Employment, pages 20-29 and Use of ESIF on pages 57-58. Further Education and Training Strategy SOLAS plays a key role in the creation of a world class further education and training sector for Ireland. The Action Plan for SOLAS sets out its key role and the roles of others to enable the reforms needed to the Further Education and Training sector A jobseekers pack developed by the PES that explains in plain English the services and supports available when searching for work.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	2 - Employment services have the capacity to, and do, deliver: comprehensive and transparent information on new job vacancies and employment opportunities taking into account the changing needs of the labour market.	Yes	See 8.1 above	See 8.1 above
T.08.1 - Active labour market policies are designed and delivered in the light of the Employment guidelines.	3 - Employment services have set up formal or informal cooperation arrangements with relevant stakeholders.	Yes	<p>National Action Plan for SocialInclusion 2007-2016- The National Policy Framework for Poverty Reduction. Social Inclusion Forum detailed in section 7.2-7.3, pages 77-78.</p> <p>http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReport PDF.pdf</p> <p>Social Inclusion Forum Report</p> <p>http://www.socialinclusion.iedocuments/2013-10-03SocialInclusionForum Report Final.pdf</p>	<p>The Department of Social Protection has been given the responsibility by the Government to convene the Social Inclusion Forum (SIF). SIF was established by the Government as part of the structures to monitor and evaluate Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007- 2016. The SIF is a key element of the government's commitment to consult with all relevant stakeholders, including people experiencing poverty and the groups that represent them in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The Forum provides an opportunity for engagement between officials from government departments, community and voluntary organisations and people experiencing poverty in relation to the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	1 - A strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment is in place that:	Yes	<p>Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014)</p> <p>http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf</p> <p>Central Statistics Office Quarterly National Household Survey Quarter 4 2013.- Page 18-21, tables 7 and 8 provides up-to-date details of employed/unemployed by age group</p> <p>http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/labourmarket/2013/qnhs_q42013.pdf</p> <p>See all references under 8.1 above also</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	2 - is based on evidence that measures the results for young people not in employment, education or training and that represents a base to develop targeted policies and monitor developments;	Yes	See all references under 8.1 above also	
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	3 - identifies the relevant public authority in charge of managing youth employment measures and coordinating partnerships across all levels and sectors;	Yes	Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014) http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf	
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	4 - involves stakeholders that are relevant for addressing youth unemployment;	Yes	Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014) http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	5 - allows early intervention and activation;	Yes	<p>Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014)</p> <p>http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf</p> <p>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – The National Policy for Children and Young People 2014-2020</p> <p>http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf</p>	The focus of this document is on investing in young people to reach their potential, towards reducing inequality within society and to break cycles of intergenerational disadvantage.
T.08.6 - YEI: The existence of a strategic policy framework for promoting youth employment including through the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.	6 - comprises supportive measures for access to employment, enhancing skills, labour mobility and sustainable integration of young people not in employment, education or training into the labour market.	Yes	<p>Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014)</p> <p>http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf</p> <p>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures – The National Policy</p>	The focus of this document is on investing in young people to reach their potential, towards reducing inequality within society and to break cycles of intergenerational disadvantage.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			for Children and Young People 2014-2020 http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf	
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	1 - A national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction, aiming at active inclusion, is in place that:	Yes	http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf http://www.socialinclusion.ie/NPT.html http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/2013SIM2011FinalWeb_001.pdf http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Work_Of_The_Department/Economic_International_Northern_Ireland/Economic/NRP/National_Reform_Programme_2014.pdf	National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 - The National Policy Framework for Poverty Reduction. National Reform Programme for Ireland 2014 - Chapter 4, Target 5 'Poverty' pages 45-52 and Use of Structural Funds / ESIF on pages 57-58. National Social Target for Poverty Reduction - Review of the National Poverty Target. Social Inclusion Monitor - monitoring of the National Poverty Target

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	2 - provides a sufficient evidence base to develop policies for poverty reduction and monitor developments;	Yes	www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Pathways-to-Work-2013.pdf Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014) http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf http://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/cypp_framework/BetterOutcomesBetterFutureReport.pdf http://www.iyjs.ie/en/IYJS/Tackling%20Youth%20Crime%200-%20Youth%20Justice%20Action%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf	Pathways to Work 2013. Further Education & Training Better Outcomes, Better Futures - The National Policy for Children and Young People 2014-2020. The focus of this document is on investing in young people to reach their potential, towards reducing inequality within society and to break cycles of intergenerational disadvantage Tackling Youth Crime 2014-2018 - High Level Goal 5- to provide a safe, secure environment and necessary support for detained young people to assist their re-integration into the community.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	3 - contains measures supporting the achievement of the national poverty and social exclusion target (as defined in the National Reform Programme), which includes the promotion of sustainable and quality employment opportunities for people at the highest risk of social exclusion, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	<p>National Action Plan - see above.</p> <p>http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Work_Of_The_Department/Economic_International_Northern_Ireland/Economic/NRP/National_Reform_Programme_2014.pdf</p> <p>www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Pathways-to-Work-2013.pdf</p> <p>Joint Irish Prison Service Strategic Plan 2013-2015</p> <p>http://www.environ.ie/en/Publications/DevelopmentandHousing/Housing/FileDownload,18192,en.pdf</p> <p>http://justice.ie/en/JELR/National%20Womens%20Strategy%20PDF.pdf/Files/National%20Womens%20Strategy%20PDF.pdf</p>	<p>National Action Plan - see above.</p> <p>National Reform Programme - see above</p> <p>Pathways to Work 2013 - Government Policy Statement on Labour Market Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020- refers to "the building of a fairer Ireland by helping to reduce inequality and improve poverty outcomes across society"</p> <p>Joint Irish Prison Service Strategic Plan 2013-2015</p> <p>The Way Home - A Strategy to address Adult Homelessness in Ireland 2008-2013.</p> <p>National Women's Strategy 2007-2016</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	4 - involves relevant stakeholders in combating poverty;	Yes	<p>National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016- The National Policy Framework for Poverty Reduction. Social Inclusion Forum detailed in section 7.2-7.3, pages 77-78.</p> <p>http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf</p> <p>Social Inclusion Forum Report</p> <p>http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/2013-10-03SocialInclusionForumReportFinal.pdf</p>	<p>The Department of Social Protection has been given the responsibility by the Government to convene the Social Inclusion Forum (SIF). SIF was established by the Government as part of the structures to monitor and evaluate Ireland's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007- 2016. The SIF is a key element of the government's commitment to consult with all relevant stakeholders, including people experiencing poverty and the groups that represent them in the fight against poverty and social exclusion. The Forum provides an opportunity for engagement between officials from government departments, community and voluntary organisations and people experiencing poverty in relation to the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.</p>
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the	5 - depending on the identified needs, includes measures for the shift from institutional to community based care;	Yes	<p>National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016- The National Policy Framework for Poverty Reduction. Chapter 4 Older People, page 52</p>	<p>Reference is made in the Nation Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 to community based programmes and to the importance of community care services to enable older people to maintain their health and wellbeing, in</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Employment guidelines.			Community Intervention Teams http://www.socialinclusion.ie/documents/NAPinclusionReportPDF.pdf	order to live active, full independent lives, at home for as long as possible.
T.09.1 - The existence and the implementation of a national strategic policy framework for poverty reduction aiming at the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market in the light of the Employment guidelines.	6 - Upon request and where justified, relevant stakeholders will be provided with support for submitting project applications and for implementing and managing the selected projects.	Yes	Reference made in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion to social inclusion initiatives and investment across a wide range of government departments aimed at improving quality of life, providing options to remove people from poverty and in particular, the outcome of these initiatives. A variety of grants/funding is also referenced in the plan e.g. family literacy projects, special projects to support personal development, intensive training, counselling for those who are most marginalised.	Relevant stakeholders are familiar with application procedures. Many have gained experience by participating successfully in such calls in the past. In any event, intermediary bodies provide information on funding possibilities as a matter of course.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework for tertiary education is in place with the following elements:	Yes	http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_plan_for_equity_of_access_to_higher_ed.pdf Chapter 4	Ireland develops and implements national access plans. Current plan is at the end of its implementation period (2008-2013). A plan for 2014-2016 is currently being drafted and in that regard a consultation document was issued in late summer 2014 with submissions due by 30/09/2014. In addition, the Higher Education Authority has commenced a rolling process of 'strategic dialogue' with higher education institutions. A key output of this process is a compact which is agreed by the HEA with each higher education institution and which sets out how that institution will contribute to the achievement of Ireland's national higher education priorities, both as individual institutions and within collaborative clusters. Access, participation and lifelong learning is one of these priorities.
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	2 - where necessary, measures to increase participation and attainment that:	Yes	http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_plan_for_equity_of_access_to_higher_ed.pdf Chapter 3	As Above

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - increase higher education participation among low income groups and other under-represented groups with special regard to disadvantaged people, including people from marginalised communities;	Yes	http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_plan_for_equity_of_access_to_higher_ed.pdf Chapter 3	As Above
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	4 - reduce drop-out rates/improve completion rates;	Yes	www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_higher_education_2030.pdf	As above. Strategic Dialogue and institutional compacts address objectives and targets for retention and completion. In addition, Ireland has a national overarching strategic framework for higher education for the period 2010-2030. It is entitled the National Strategy for Higher Education
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	5 - encourage innovative content and programme design;	Yes	www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/national_strategy_for_higher_education_2030.pdf	A key theme of the National Strategy is the development of a higher education system which produces outputs and outcomes aligned with the needs of the economy and wider society.
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education	6 - measures to increase employability and entrepreneurship that:	Yes	Action in this area is guided within the broad framework of the National Strategy for Higher	The Higher Education Authority is currently finalising an Engagement Strategy, which will provide a specific formal framework for engagement and

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.			Education. www.heai.ie/content/enterpriseengagement	collaboration between Irish higher education institutions and enterprise/industry. The engagement strategy will build on the broad framework set out in the national strategy for higher education. In addition, Ireland is implementing a range of measures designed to enhance the pipeline of job-ready graduates for industry and enterprise and enhance competencies in areas such as entrepreneurship within graduates' skills sets. Measures include Springboard ICT Skills Conversion. A national internship programme is under development.
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	7 - encourage the development of "transversal skills", including entrepreneurship in relevant higher education programmes;	Yes	Action in this area is guided within the broad framework of the National Strategy for Higher Education. www.heai.ie/content/enterpriseengagement	As Above.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.2 - Higher education: the existence of a national or regional strategic policy framework for increasing tertiary education attainment, quality and efficiency within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	8 - reduce gender differences in terms of academic and vocational choices.	Yes	The HEA gathers and publishes gender data for the higher education system on an ongoing basis.	The HEA gathers and publishes gender data for the higher education system on an ongoing basis.
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	1 - A national or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning is in place that contains measures:	Yes	www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Pathways-to-Work-2013.pdf http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf Further Education and Training Bill 2013 – Section 7 Function of SOLAS http://www.solas.ie/docs/FurtherEducationTrainingBill_2013.pdf Action plan for SOLAS http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/An-	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			Action-Plan-for-SOLAS.pdf	
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	2 - to support the developing and linking services for LL, including their implementation and skills upgrading (i.e. validation, guidance, education and training) and providing for the involvement of, and partnership with relevant stakeholders ;	Yes	<p>Government policy document Pathways to Work 2013</p> <p>www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/Pathways-to-Work-2013.pdf</p> <p>http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf</p> <p>Further Education and Training Bill 2013 – Section 7 Function of SOLAS</p> <p>http://www.solas.ie/docs/FurtherEducationTrainingBill_2013.pdf</p> <p>Action plan for SOLAS</p> <p>http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/An-Action-Plan-for-SOLAS.pdf</p>	<p>Government policy document Pathways to work 2013</p> <p>Further Education and Training Strategy - Section 5 details Lifelong Learning a key issue for the strategy and pages 27-28 includes information on the Adult Literacy and numeracy Strategy.</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	3 - for the provision of skills development for various target groups where these are identified as priorities in national or regional strategic policy frameworks (for example young people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities);	Yes	<p>Priority target groups identified for the provision of FET are identified in the Further Education and Training Strategy</p> <p>http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf</p> <p>Ireland's Youth Guarantee Implementation plan (Jan 2014)</p> <p>http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/youth-guaranteeimplementation-plan.pdf</p>	
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	4 - to widen access to LL including through efforts to effectively implement transparency tools (for example the European Qualifications Framework, National Qualifications Framework, European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training, European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training);	Yes	<p>Further Education and Training Bill 2013 – Section 7 Function of SOLAS</p> <p>http://www.solas.ie/docs/FurtherEducationTrainingBill_2013.pdf</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			<p>Action plan for SOLAS</p> <p>http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/An-Action-Plan-for-SOLAS.pdf</p> <p>Quality and Qualification Ireland – National Qualifications Framework</p> <p>http://www.qqi.ie/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx</p>	
T.10.3 - Lifelong learning (LL): The existence of a national and/or regional strategic policy framework for lifelong learning within the limits of Article 165 TFEU.	5 - to improve the labour market relevance of education and training and to adapt it to the needs of identified target groups (for example young people in vocational training, adults, parents returning to the labour market, low-skilled and older workers, migrants and other disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities).	Yes	<p>SOLAS Legislation (S7, 2013Act),</p> <p>Further Education and Training Strategy – Section 5 details Lifelong Learning as a key issue and important role for the strategy</p> <p>http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Further-</p>	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			Education-and-Training-Strategy-2014-2019.pdf	
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund related activities.	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/E-learning-course-on-Equality.html	Horizontal Principle Bodies consulted at all stages during preparation of PA and OPs. Community and Voluntary Pillar consulted on contents of draft PA. Horizontal Principle Bodies will be represented on OP Monitoring committees once established.
G.1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti discrimination law and policy.	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/E-learning-course-on-Equality.html www.ihrec.ie	Equality Authority is proposing a programme to enhance capacity and capability to meet the horizontal and anti-discrimination objectives in the ESF regulation.
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/E-learning-course-on-Equality.html	Gender Equality Division in the Department of Justice and Equality and the Equality Authority were consulted at all stages during preparation of the PA. Community and Voluntary Pillar

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
	gender equality in ESI Fund-related activities.		http://www.equality.ie/en/	consulted on contents of draft PA. Horizontal Principle Bodies including Gender Equality Division and/or the Equality Authority will be represented on OP Monitoring committees once established.
G.2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming.	Yes	http://www.equality.ie/en/E-learning-course-on-Equality.html http://www.equality.ie/en/ www.ihrec.ie www.genderequality.ie	Equality Authority is proposing a programme to enhance capacity and capability to meet the horizontal and anti-discrimination objectives in the ESF regulation
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with	1 - Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative	Yes	http://www.universaldesign.ie/buildingforeveryone http://accessibility.ie	Ireland has signed but not yet ratified the UNCRPD. National Disability Authority has developed detailed guidance on accessibility for people with

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes.		http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Publications/services/Disability/timetomoveonpdf.html http://deinstitutionalisationguide.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/2012-12-07-Guidelines-11-123-2012-FINAL-WEB-VERSION.pdf http://deinstitutionalisationguide.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Toolkit-11-02-2012-final-WEB.pdf www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/accessibilityhomepage?OpenPage	disabilities for use by staff preparing and implementing OPs. National Disability Strategy in place. Government Guidelines published on conducting a Disability Impact Assessment.

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.	2 - Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and national legislation, as appropriate.	Yes	http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/NDS_ImplementationPlan_FINAL.pdf/Files/NDS_ImplementationPlan_FINAL.pdf http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/20120305%20DIA%20Guidelines.pdf/Files/20120305%20DIA%20Guidelines.pdf	<p>Ireland has signed but not yet ratified the UNCRPD.</p> <p>National Disability Authority has developed detailed guidance on accessibility for people with disabilities for use by staff preparing and implementing OPs.</p>
G.3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with	3 - Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and the implementation of the programmes.	Yes	http://www.ombudsman.gov.ie/en/about-us/legislation/the-disability-act/making-a-complaint-to-the-ombudsman-under-the-disability-act/	<p>Ireland has signed but not yet ratified the UNCRPD.</p> <p>National Disability Authority has developed detailed guidance on accessibility for people with</p>

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
Council Decision 2010/48/EC.				disabilities for use by staff preparing and implementing OPs.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms.	Yes	www.etenders.ie www.procurement.ie	Guidelines are available online for all staff involved in the implementation of ESI Funds.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures.	Yes	www.etenders.ie www.procurement.ie	Public sector contracts are advertised centrally online.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	3 - Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	www.etenders.ie www.procurement.ie	Guidelines are available online for all staff involved in the implementation of ESI Funds. Office of Government Procurement and National Procurement Service available to disseminate expertise in procurement.
G.4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	4 - Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	Yes	www.etenders.ie	Guidelines and external links available online for all staff involved in the implementation of ESI Funds. Office of Government Procurement and

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			www.procurement.ie	National Procurement Service available to disseminate expertise in procurement.
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules.	Yes	http://djei.ie/enterprise/stateaid	As Below
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	2 - Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Yes	djei.ie/enterprise/stateaid	There is a dedicated State Aid Section in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to ensure compliance with EU State Aid rules and advise and assist other Departments to achieve the same in relation to their schemes. A guide to State Aid published by the Irish Authorities is available online.
G.5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds.	3 - Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union State aid rules.	Yes	http://djei.ie/enterprise/stateaid	As above
G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	1 - Arrangements for the effective application of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council (EIA) and of Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (SEA).	Yes	Please find an unofficial consolidation of the regulations at the following link: http://www.lawreform.ie/fileup	In line with Article 2 of The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. A screening report

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
			load/RevisedActs/WithAn notations/EN_ACT_2000_0030.PDF http://www.environ.ie/en/Legislation/DevelopmentandHousing/Planning/FileDownload,32879,en.pdf	commissioned as part of the Ex-Ante evaluation of the OP established that a SEA was not required.
G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	2 - Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the EIA and SEA Directives.	Yes	See Above	SEA not required - see above.
G.6 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA.	3 - Arrangements to ensure sufficient administrative capacity.	Yes	See above	Explanation above covers all of G 6
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions,	1 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical	No	An action plan is in place and is attached for the fulfilment of this ex-ante conditionality before commencement of the specific co-financed activities or by the	Arrangements/procedures for data collection to comply with Annex 1 and Annex 2 of ESF Regulation 1034/2013 will be put in place by the end of 2016. The bodies responsible for the implementation of the action plan in

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	validation.		end of 2016.	place are DES, DSP, DJE, DECLG, SOLAS, ETB's, HEA and colleges.
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	2 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data.	Yes	Arrangements for Publication and Public availability of aggregated data on the www.esf.ie website is in place.	
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	3 - An effective system of result indicators including: the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme.	Yes	A note on the intervention logic and appended methodology for the selection of the result indicators has being completed.	
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions,	4 - An effective system of result indicators including: the establishment of targets for these indicators.	Yes	A note on the intervention logic and appended methodology for the selection of result indicators has being completed.	

Ex-ante conditionality	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled (Yes/No)	Reference	Explanations
which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.				
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	5 - An effective system of result indicators including: the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data.	No	See GEAC 7.1 above	
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	6 - Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.	No	See GEAC 7.1 above.	

9.2 Description of actions to fulfil ex-ante conditionalities, responsible bodies and timetable

Table 25: Actions to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	1 - Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation.	An action plan is in place and is attached for the fulfilment of this ex-ante conditionality before commencement of the specific co-financed activities or by the end of 2016.	31-Dec-2016	DES, DSP, DJE, DECLG, SOLAS, ETB'S, HEA and colleges.
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	5 - An effective system of result indicators including: the consistency of each indicator with the following requisites: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data.	An action plan is in place and is attached for the fulfilment of this ex-ante conditionality before commencement of the specific co-financed activities or by the end of 2016.	31-Dec-2016	DES, DSP, DJE, DECLG, SOLAS, ETB'S, HEA and colleges.
G.7 - The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the	6 - Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an	An action plan is in place and is attached for the fulfilment of this ex-ante conditionality before commencement of the specific co-financed activities or by the end of 2016.	31-Dec-2016	DES, DSP, DJE, DECLG, SOLAS, ETB's, HEA and colleges.

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible
programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.	effective system of indicators.			

Table 26: Actions to fulfil applicable thematic ex-ante conditionalities

Thematic ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadline (date)	Bodies responsible

10. REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES

Summary of the assessment of the administrative burden for beneficiaries and, where necessary, the actions planned accompanied by an indicative timeframe to reduce administrative burden.

The first consultation process on the Partnership Agreement resulted in suggestions being received from stakeholders regarding ways to reduce the administrative burden associated with of EU funding whilst conforming to EU management control requirements. Suggestions received included

- Simplification of the audit and reporting regime and adopting a principle of proportionality
- More targeted funding including increasing flexibility to redirect funding
- Use of IT and streamlining / integration of reporting and data requirements including use of reporting templates.

The ESF authorities in Ireland did seek to implement a form of Simplified Cost Option (SCO) in the HCI OP 2007-2013 but with limited success. Nevertheless, the ESF authorities in Ireland are actively considering the use in the successor OP of a SCO in line with Article 14 of the ESF Regulations. In this regard, a seminar on SCO was held in Dublin on January 27th 2014 at which the various options were presented and discussed. The seminar was attended by the Head of Unit H1 (DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion), Deputy Head of Unit E5, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion, Head of Unit H1, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion), Head of Unit - Employment and social affairs - Financial audit, European Court of Auditors, other DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion representatives, Managing Authority representatives from Lombardy (Italy) Wales and Northern Ireland, and national ESF and Audit Authorities in Ireland, together with ESF Intermediate bodies and DPER.

The SCO available under Article 14(2) of the 1304/2013 ESF Regulation and Article 67(1)(b) are to be applied to a range of activities in the PEIL OP. This allows a flat rate of up to 1) 40% of the eligible staff costs to be used to cover the remaining eligible costs of an operation, or, 2) 15% of eligible direct staff costs, without there being a requirement to perform a calculation to determine the applicable rate. The current activities that are to avail of such SCOs include;

- **Intra EU Mobility**
- **Youthreach**
- **Garda Youth Diversion**
- **Young Persons Probation**
- **Equality Mainstreaming**
- **Integration and employment of migrants**
- **Social Inclusion of prisoners/ex-offenders through employability guidance and placement**
- **Tus Nua**
- **Adult Literacy**
- **Back to Education Initiative**
- **Third Level Access**

The continuing development of e-governance and e-cohesion is being actively pursued to achieve further simplification and reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries. All ESF OP participants and other interested stakeholders who attended consultation events have been made aware of the provisions in the regulations in respect of e-cohesion. The cost of e-cohesion in Ireland as envisaged is likely to be significant and all options for funding this are being considered at present. The table below outlines the actions planned to date to reduce the administrative burden in the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

Admin Area - Use of Simplified Cost Options

The SCOs being availed of by activities will be stipulated in their Activity Implementation Plans (AIPs) approved by the PEIL OP Monitoring Committee. This Monitoring Committee will be set up within 3 months of the OP being adopted by Commission Decision.

Admin Area - Reducing the audit burden

Action Planned - Principle of proportionality is applied to level of audit activity, including the sampling methodologies applied during the audit of operations.

Indicative Timeframe - December 2014

Admin Area - Electronic Data Systems

Action Planned

1. Introduction of IT system for the recording and storing of data required under Article 125(d) of Regulation 1303/2013.

Indicative Timeframe - Nov 2014 (Phase 1) June 2015 (Phase 2)

2. Introduction of IT system to allow for the possibility of all information exchange to take place electronically.

Indicative Timeframe - Dec 2015

11. HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

11.1 Sustainable development

Description of specific actions to take into account environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster resilience and risk prevention and management, in the selection of operations.

As set out in the Partnership Agreement, the principle of sustainable development requires that the needs of the present be met without compromising the ability of future generations. This requires support for environmental protection requirements, resource efficiency, sustainable management of natural resources, risk prevention and management are addressed through both dedicated funding streams and through their horizontal integration across the Operational Programmes

The Government sustainable development framework document is intended to provide a platform for the integration of sustainable development principles into policies across all sectors. The framework broadly follows the thematic approach of the *EU Sustainable Development Strategy* and sets out a wide range of measures that seek to ensure an improvement in Ireland's quality of life into the future. Among the areas listed are sustainability of public finances and economic resilience, sustainable consumption and production, conservation and management of natural resources, climate change and clean energy, social inclusion, sustainable communities and spatial planning, education, communication and behaviour change, innovation, research and development, skills and training and global poverty and sustainable development

The framework identifies the green economy as a central plank to Ireland's economic recovery, consistent with the Action Plan for Jobs 2012. The framework aims to address policy conflicts and trade-offs as part of a coherent, joined-up approach to policy making on sustainable development and is set to make Ireland a leader in sustainable development.

Implementation in Ireland of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which the EU adopted in 2010 as its successor to the Lisbon Strategy on Growth and Competitiveness, should assist in responding to our economic challenges by contributing to the creation of employment and smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, driven by an accelerated national effort to ensure that Ireland becomes a low-carbon, competitive, resource-efficient and climate-resilient country.

At the EU level, a long list of activities is envisaged for the short term, covering the formulation of new visions and strategies (e.g. on biodiversity), the review of existing policies, use of financial instruments, structures and monitoring provisions, amongst others. In the medium term, the establishment of concrete tools is addressed (e.g. Life Cycle Assessment, eco-labelling, Green Public Procurement and others), leading to long-term support for research, the introduction of market-based instruments and the abolition of counter-productive subsidies. The extent to which these tools will be used will be further considered when the OPs have been finalised.

11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Description of specific actions to promote equal opportunities and prevent discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the preparation, design and implementation of the operational programme and in particular in relation to access to funding, taking account of the needs of the various target groups at risk of such discrimination and in particular the requirements for ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities.

The CSF states that Member States should take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientations as well as to ensure accessibility during the preparation and implementation of programmes and operations co-financed by the CSF Funds and describe explicitly the actions to take into account this principle in the programmes.

It is worth noting that the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Bill published on the 19 March 2014, includes a human rights and equality duty for public bodies. It provides that: -

A public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to: -

- eliminate discrimination,
- promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services, and
- protect the human rights of its members, staff and persons to whom it provides services.

A public body shall set out in a manner that is accessible to the public in its strategic plan an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the function and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address these issues, and report in a manner that is accessible to the public on developments and achievements in that regard in its annual report.

In assisting public bodies to meet their obligations, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission may give guidance / training to and encourage public bodies in developing policies of, and exercising good practice and operational standards in relation to human rights and equality. The Commission may issue guidelines or prepare codes of practice in respect of the development by public bodies of performance measures, operational standards and written preventative strategies for the purpose of reducing discrimination and promoting human rights and equality in the public sector workplace and in the provision of services.

This mandate would improve the achievement of all ESF thematic objectives in an Irish context and will also strongly contribute to the way the Horizontal Principles on gender equality and equal opportunities and non-discrimination are implemented and monitored in the next ESF Operational Programme.

The social and economic context has also changed significantly. There have been, for example, major organisational restructuring in the vocational education, training (VET) and labour market services sector in Ireland.

These changes are driven by a need for better efficiencies across providers, the elimination of poverty traps and increasing policy responsiveness to changing labour market needs. The National Training Authority FAS has been merged with the Vocational Educational Committees (VECs), which in turn have been reduced in number. The aim is to streamline and integrate training, making it more relevant to the needs of the productive sector.

In line with the commitments set out in the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020, the Managing and Intermediary bodies for the ESF co-financed Programme 2014-2020 will do the following:

- Involve bodies in charge of equality at all stages (preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation), including the provision of advice on equality and non-discrimination in fund-related activities
- take account of the potential contribution of the Operational Programmes to equality and equal opportunities with reference to the specific challenges in the priority investment areas chosen, where relevant
- monitor and evaluate the application of the principle and have regard to the results of such monitoring and evaluation actions.

The Managing Authority for the ESF Operational Programme will address the impact on the Equal Opportunities Horizontal Principle at implementation level. The annual implementation reports submitted in 2017 and 2019 may, depending on the content and objectives of operational programmes, set out information and assess the specific actions taken to promote equality between men and women and to prevent discrimination, in particular accessibility for persons with disabilities, and the arrangements implemented to ensure the integration of the gender perspective in the operational programme and operations.

11.3 Equality between men and women

Description of contribution of the operational programme to the promotion of equality between men and women and, where appropriate, the arrangements to ensure the integration of the gender perspective at operational programme and operation level.

The Common Strategic Framework 2014-2020 (CSF) specifies that Member States should pursue the objective of equality between men and women and ensure its mainstreaming in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions under all the Funds. This may be done through specific actions to promote equality or to combat discrimination, as well as by taking careful account of how other projects and the management of the funds may affect the different target groups.

The EU's economic policy "Europe 2020" requires Member States to increase their employment rate for men and women aged 20 to 64 years to 75 per cent by 2020. Ireland has been permitted to achieve a lower target (69 per cent) but this remains challenging at a time when the Europe 2020 male employment rate in Ireland is at 68.1 per cent and the corresponding female rate is at 59.4 per cent.

The ESF Operational Programme will support the principle of equality for women and men as set out in the Regulations and, in particular, will

- pursue the objective of equality between men and women and ensure its mainstreaming through the integration of a gender perspective at all stages of the implementation of the funds, including preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation,
- include specific actions to promote gender equality including engagement with structures with a function to lead on gender-equality issues,
- take careful account of how the implementation of projects may affect women and men (gender mainstreaming),
- make arrangements for training of relevant staff in the fields of gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming related to the implementation of the funds, in accordance with the general ex-ante conditionality
- promote gender balance on the monitoring committees

12. SEPARATE ELEMENTS

12.1 Major projects to be implemented during programming period

Table 27: List of major projects

Project	Planned notification/submission date (year, quarter)	Planned start of implementation (year, quarter)	Planned completion date (year, quarter)	Priority Axes / Investment Priorities
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12.2 Performance framework of operational programme

Table 28: Performance framework by fund and category of region (summary table)

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)		
					M	W	T	M	W	T
P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	ESF	More developed	Expenditure Certified	€			97033740			322,369,568.00
P1 - Promoting the attainment of sustainable and quality employment through relevant upskilling measures and supporting labour mobility.	ESF	More developed	The number of participants on training and upskilling programmes for the unemployed or jobseekers.	Number of Participants			98,354			132,890.00
P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	ESF	More developed	Expenditure Certified	€			14,368,000			364,072,600.00
P2 - Promoting Social Inclusion and combating discrimination in the labour market	ESF	More developed	The number of participants from disadvantaged groups on	Number of Participants			43494			72,590.00

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Indicator or key implementation step	Measurement unit, where appropriate	Milestone for 2018			Final target (2023)		
					M	W	T	M	W	T
			social inclusion employability programmes, including personal development towards employability programmes.							
P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	ESF	More developed	Expenditure Certified	€			48368580			214,897,149.00
P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	ESF	More developed	The number of participants with low education levels on further education/training programmes	Number of participants			358600			526,600.00
P3 - Investing in Education, Training and Life Long Learning with a view to upskilling and re-skilling the labour force	ESF	More developed	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons assisted in accessing and continuing/remaining in third level education	Number of disadvantaged and/or disabled persons			132354			185,296.00
P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	YEI		Expenditure Certified	€			185941048			185,941,048.00
P4 - Youth Employment Initiative	YEI		The number of YEI eligible participants on training/ upskilling/personal development towards employability and work environment (including supports for self-employed) programmes/projects.	Number of YEI eligible participants			26330			26,330.00

12.3 Relevant partners involved in preparation of programme

The following is the list of partners involved in the preparation of the ESF Operational programme for Ireland:

Departments of: -

Education & Skills,

Public Expenditure & Reform

Social Protection

- JobBridge
- Tús
- BTWEA
- International work experience and training

Children & Youth Affairs

Justice and Equality

- Irish Youth Justice Service
- Gender Equality Division
- Equality Authority
- Office for the promotion of Migrant Integration

Environment, Community & Local Government

- POBAL
- Irish Local Development Network

Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation

Other bodies: -

FÁS/SOLAS

Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Focus Ireland

Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

- National Youth Council of Ireland
- Social Justice Ireland
- Community Platform / European Anti-Poverty Network
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- One Family

ANNEXES (uploaded to electronic data exchange system as separate files):

- Draft report of ex-ante evaluation with executive summary (mandatory) (Reference: Article 55(2) CPR)

Documents

Document title	Document type	Document date	Local reference	Commission reference	Files	Sent date	Sent By
SEA Screening Decision	Supplementary information	10-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	SEA - Screening Decision	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Technical Advice to SEA	Supplementary information	10-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Technical Advice to SEA	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Data Collection - Summary Action Plan	Supplementary information	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Data Collection - Summary Action Plan	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Section 1 - B4 - Adult literacy	Supplementary information	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Section 1 - B 4 - Adult Literacy	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Section 1 Part D - Aligning NRP and Relevant Strategies with ESF Thematic Objectives	Supplementary information	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Section 1 - Part D	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Table 1 to 10 (ii) TLA	Supplementary information	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Table 1 to 10 (ii) TLA	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Table 1 to 10 (iii)	Supplementary information	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Table 1 to 10 (iii)	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Ex-Ante Evaluation Report	Report of the ex-ante evaluation	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Ex-Ante Evaluation Report	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi
Section 1 B 1 Employment - Skills Shortages and Future Skills Needs Table 9	Supplementary information	09-Feb-2015		Ares(2015)555600	Section 1 B1 Employment - Table 9	10-Feb-2015	nintoswi

