



Malta

National Reform Programme

Annex Table 2

Ministry for Finance
April 2015

Table 2: Reporting table on national Europe 2020 targets

Description of the measures taken and information on their qualitative impact		
Progress on Implementation	List of measures and their state of play that were implemented in response to the commitment	The estimated impacts of the measures (qualitative and/or quantitative)
National 2020 headline targets		
National 2020 employment target (70%)	<p>Free Childcare Centres</p> <p>As from 2014, families who are in work or in employment started to benefit from free childcare centres. 95% of private childcare centres have entered into a public-private partnership with the Government to provide childcare services. As at November 2014, a total of 77 registered childcare centres benefitted from the scheme. Meanwhile, parents will continue to benefit from the successful childcare centre initiative since the Government is committed to maintain this service by continuing the initiative of free childcare.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>It is envisaged that childcare centres will continue creating a continuum of early intervention and educational services and help towards the employability of the parents. Free childcare is expected to encourage Maltese women to enter the labour market or continue working while their children are being taken care of free of charge. Circa 2,750 children are benefitting from free childcare. Until December 2014, a total of 3,816 children benefitted from the scheme. Until mid February 2015, 331 new registrations were processed.</p>
	<p>Afternoon School Programmes in the Community</p> <p>This measure aims at providing an after-school care service within school structures, particularly to bridge the gap between day school and regular working hours of parents in employment. This measure is in line with CSR 3.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Since opening, uptake has continued to increase gradually in all centres. In Summer 2014 10,800 students attended the programme.</p>
	<p>INT Scheme</p> <p>The INT Scheme was an entrepreneurship programme aimed at people of all ages who were interested in starting their own business. The programme aimed to promote an enterprise culture and to assist persons who want to start their own business by providing training, personal advice, mentoring and counselling on how to start a business and successfully make it work. A decision to terminate this scheme was taken as other entrepreneurship initiatives are being offered by other entities mainly being the Youth Entrepreneurship scheme and the Centre for entrepreneurship and business incubation.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>The total number of participants in the INT Scheme between January and December 2013 was of forty-eight persons. Out of the forty-eight persons of which twenty-one were women. Out of the forty-eight persons, there were fifteen participants who requested the mentoring services offered by ETC, of which eight were women.</p>
	<p>Strengthening Employability Prospects</p> <p>The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) operates the following programmes aimed at Strengthening Employability Prospects:</p> <p>Employment Aid Programme (EAP): Following a very successful uptake, In 2013 the EAP was extended till September 2015. In October 2013, EAP applications re-opened for Gozo undertakings and Maltese undertakings with a base in Gozo. The EAP is now at its final stage, whereby the disbursement of grants issued between 2009 and 2012 is almost completed.</p> <p>Training Aid Framework (TAF): The initiative is being called TAF2. Applications were received as from 24th November 2014 and closed on 16th January 2015. TAF2 aims to promote the training of persons actively participating in the Maltese labour market, with a view to increasing productivity and enhancing adaptability.</p> <p>Status: Both On Track</p>	<p>Employment Aid Programme: Increase job opportunities for disadvantaged groups and disabled persons in the labour market thereby reducing economic inactivity, providing the necessary work experience and enhancing the employability of the target groups concerned.</p> <p>Training Aid Framework: The TAF is addressing the challenges faced by Malta in the provision of Lifelong Learning (LLL), while at the same time providing training that is most relevant to the labour market. The objective of this scheme was to promote access to training for persons actively participating in the Maltese labour market.</p>
	<p>Measures to Curtail Abuse of the Unemployment Register and Informal Work</p> <p>Various initiatives are contributing to curb undeclared work and encourage more people to enter the formal economy. These initiatives are coupled by inspections carried out by the Law Compliance Unit within ETC and the Benefit Fraud and Investigation Department (BFID).</p> <p>The Maltese Public Employment Service is one of the players that strive to ensure that persons registering for primary employment and employers engaging local and foreign employees abide by their respective legal obligations. Efforts to enhance effectiveness by the Law Compliance system at ETC are continuous through desk investigations and more targeted inspections. The Law Compliance Unit (LCU) works hand in hand with the Department of Social Security, the Tax Compliance Unit, the VAT Department as well as the Police Force in order to ensure better law enforcement.</p> <p>The public is also encouraged to report cases of abuses through an online reporting system as well as through a Freephone. A plan of action for the promotion of these services is expected to be completed in 2015. The campaign will also present risks and disadvantages of irregular employment in order to encourage people to regularise their employment. The campaign is expected to start once internal issues are addressed.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>Between January 2014 and January 2015, a total of 6,929 inspections were carried out by ETC during which 2,527 law infringements were identified, and therefore a success rate of 36.5%. Between January and December 2014, the Corporation registered 552 strike-offs from its employment register. Most of these cases of law infringement were linked to Maltese workers found working at establishments, without ETC having been notified, by their employer, of their employment and hence, they were deemed as illegal employees. Since most of the inspections are targeted inspections, the success rate is high.</p> <p>During 2014, the BFID conducted, through its Inspectorate, 1,391 on-site inspections. Following investigations 1,022 cases were concluded and resulted in the suspension of a total of 887 social benefits. The estimated annual savings for 2014 totalled to € 3,831,983.</p>
<p>Supported and Sheltered Employment Training for Disadvantaged Groups including RDPs</p> <p>The aim of this measure is to further increase the participants' confidence and practical job-specific skills through 'work exposure opportunities' thus enhancing the financial independence of disadvantaged persons and prevents social exclusion and marginalisation. On the other hand, the sheltered employment training activity aims to provide persons with disability, who cannot work</p>	<p>Enhancing the employability of registered disabled persons through a hands-on approach to training.</p>	

<p>in an open labour market environment, with employability skills in a sheltered one.</p>	
<p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Incentives to Attract More Inactive Women to the Labour Force</p> <p>This fiscal measure was first introduced through Act V of 2012 enacted on 14th May 2012 whereby, parents supporting children who are not gainfully employed up to 18 years of age and extended to 21 years of age if the children are still in tertiary education were eligible. In Budget 2014, the Government decided to go a step further and extend this measure to parents with children under 23 who are still in tertiary education.</p> <p>Furthermore, Government also proposed an adjustment to the 0% tax bracket for parents. The new bracket, applicable from 1st January 2014 was extended from € 9,300 to € 9,800.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>In 2013, being the year during which the parent rates were first applied, 14,583 females availed themselves of the parent rates computation. The extension of the measure to parents with children under 23 who are still in tertiary education will not only ensure more disposable income in the parents' pocket but also encourage children to stay in education.</p> <p>The adjustment in the 0% tax bracket for parents will result in more income at the parents' disposal. In fact, parents earning more than € 9,300 may benefit from a maximum increase in disposable income of € 75 per year. Although the changes in relation to the parent computation were announced in Budget 2014, they are retroactive as from 1st January 2013. During 2014, 87 persons benefitted from this measure.</p>
<p>Childcare Centres</p> <p>Three childcare centres are being constructed by Malta Industrial Parks Ltd. These are located in Kordin, Mosta and Xewkija industrial estates. Pending works at all childcare centres will be complete during early Q2 2015.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>These childcare centres will accommodate approximately 100 children in total.</p>
<p>Enhancing Employability through Training (EET)</p> <p>The programme is available to all actively employed, inactive, early school leavers, and registered unemployed individuals who are eligible to work. It will be sub-divided into four main components: Training Design, Short Courses, Traineeships, and a Training Subsidy Scheme. The programme also provides the opportunity for men and women who have been absent from the formal economy for a relatively long period of time to regain their confidence and develop their skills through a series of training programmes that will ultimately facilitate their re-entry into employment. In addition, it also provides the opportunity for men and women who have been absent from the formal economy for a relatively long period of time to regain their confidence and brush up on their skills through a series of training programmes that will ultimately facilitate their reintegration to employment. Four traineeship programmes have started and completed. The four traineeships were in Cleaning Attendance, Sales Techniques, Office Procedures, and Handymen. The Training Services Division has also started to work on the launching of the Work Exposure Scheme and Traineeship Schemes in eight different callings.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Through training programmes and the provision of assistance to employed persons to secure and advance their position within the labour market, registered unemployed or inactive individuals will be integrated into the labour market.</p> <p>The overall target for the project is to train or support 8,080 persons.</p> <p>Between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2014, a total number of 6,000 persons participated in the training courses, out of which 2,605 (43%) were females, 3,395 (57%) were males, 1,514 were young people (16-24 years), and 611 were older workers (55-64 years).</p>
<p>Development of a new Child and Youth Services Centre</p> <p>Status: Centres nearly completed, small conference and meeting facilities in Gozo currently on hold due to MEPA permit for the conference and meeting facilities</p>	<p>Child services centre in Gozo, youth services centre in Gozo and small conference and meeting facilities in Gozo.</p>
<p>National Apprenticeship Scheme</p> <p>The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) has been responsible for the implementation of the National Apprenticeship Scheme as of 2014. Over the last months, MCAST has been working to enhance this scheme by offering it across a broad range of courses and subject areas. This is coupled by the fact that the scheme is being redesigned to be more flexible and adaptable to the exigencies of the different sectors. Moreover, courses that include an apprenticeship scheme are now more compact in nature since the summer period is being considered as an active period.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>There are now over 40 courses at MQF Levels 3 and 4 that form part of the Apprenticeship Scheme and around 700 apprentices benefitting. Over the next period, MCAST shall be endeavouring to consolidate the Apprenticeship Scheme through feedback from stakeholders and research on how it can be improved.</p>
<p>Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme</p> <p>A plan for the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre (MEC) has been drafted and the MEC has been launched at the Kordin Incubation Business Centre (KBIC). Indeed, a number of alumni have been provided with a space where they can develop their start-up business ideas. The centre is also being utilised to host ad hoc entrepreneurship activities for students and interested individuals.</p> <p>It is also pertinent to note that MCAST is consolidating the entrepreneurship-related tuition that students receive. Indeed, students will not only receive knowledge in relation to the typical operations of an enterprise but they will also be trained to think like an entrepreneur. Subsequently, students will be encouraged to create business proposals. Following the evaluation of these proposals, promising ideas will be identified with the possibility of being allocated a space at the MEC.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>It is envisaged that through the consolidation of this activity young people will be empowered with the optimal skills to operate a successful commercial endeavour thus generating positive social and economic spill-over effects.</p>
<p>Embark for Life Programme</p> <p>Embark for Life was launched in July 2013. Various meetings were held with different stakeholders identified and till the end of December 2014, the service received around 153 referrals of young people who required support in their educational needs and/or to seek employment. A number of young people are already in employment whilst others will soon start receiving support in various areas such as 'O' levels, basic education, hairdressing, ECDL and food handling. A call for tutors has been issued and in the coming days, these young people will receive one-to-one and/or small group tuition.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Between June 2013 and December 2014 the total number of referrals both from adolescents referring themselves and/or from parents or other professionals reached 153 (including 38 new referrals between July and December 2014), out of which 17 were reintegrated in education/skills courses whilst 30 were engaged in employment. Between January and mid-February 2015, the service received another 17 referrals most of them being drop ins. Two basic literacy courses and one make up course are currently being held which attracted a number of young people who were eager to participate in these courses. An ECDL course is scheduled for March 2015.</p>

	<p>Development of a Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy including an Action Plan for Malta 2013-2018</p> <p>The success of this Action Plan involves working in collaboration with stakeholders providing educational services to young people to consider entrepreneurship as a means of self employment and eventually for the creation of larger economic activities. The Strategy will encompass the entrepreneurial direction provided by the Ministry of Education and Employment and direct stakeholders. Meetings are being held with educational institutions and bodies related to youth to identify current initiatives related to entrepreneurship and map what is planned for the future. Concurrently, a literature review is being undertaken which eventually will lead to a detailed report including a situational analysis.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The measure will encourage more young people to delve into self employment in order for these start-ups to eventually evolve into larger undertakings.</p>
	<p>Breakfast Club</p> <p>The Breakfast Club is intended to provide care for children attending public schools before the schools' official opening hours, from 07:30am till 08:30am. This initiative is open to every primary Government school in Malta and Gozo. The Breakfast Club has a budget of € 3.6 million for the next five years and has started in April 2014. The daily attendance in scholastic year 2014/2015 is that of 1,050 students.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Parents have the possibility to drop off their children at school before they go to work having the peace of mind that their children are being taken care of. This incentive allows further flexibility to working parents and may also encourage more women to either return or enter into the labour market.</p>
	<p>Extension in tax deduction for parents sending their children to private childcare centres</p> <p>An increase in the tax deduction from € 1,300 to € 2,000 for parents who pay fees for childcare services in respect of their children. This measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.</p>
	<p>Youth Guarantee</p> <p>The Government has allocated funds for a Youth Guarantee project proposed as an ESF co-financed project. On 3rd March 2014, the Jobs+ Committee launched this initiative which addresses 350 young persons who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). Malta's Youth Guarantee will primarily focus on individual empowerment.</p> <p>Through the initiatives listed in the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan, the Maltese Government is committed to provide a second chance education to individuals with a low level of education and to help them enter the labour market with the aim of retaining their employment and further the employment ladder.</p> <p>The 2015 Budget introduced a measure whereby, claimants for social assistance benefits under the age of 23 will be placed on Youth Guarantee. Single parents will be exempted until their youngest child is one year old. Those who fail to enrol in the Youth Guarantee Programme will lose their social assistance entitlement. Furthermore, as announced in the Budget Speech 2015, the Youth Guarantee will be supplemented with additional resources aimed to finance traineeships and more work trials.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The scope of this measure is to increase the number of youths who continue to study after the compulsory age and to improve their capabilities through relevant training. It is envisaged that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at the end of the Youth Guarantee process, 244 NEETs resident in Malta and 36 NEETs resident in Gozo will have improved their skills and competences listed in the Europass CV; - after six months from completion of the scheme, 50% of those youths that will not continue with further study or be in employment and that were not registered with ETC at the time of application, will register for unemployment; - after twelve months from completion of the scheme, 97 young people resident in Malta and 15 young people resident in Gozo will be in employment or further study. <p>The target is that 350 NEETs benefit from the scheme by March 2015.</p>
	<p>Setting up a Skills Bank</p> <p>The Skills Bank will contain information about skills possessed by youths and will therefore facilitate policy formulation as well as matching between job vacancies and young jobseekers. ETC will start keeping information collected from the University of Malta, the MCAST, the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) and other public and private educational institutions, with the aim to gradually build a Skills Bank.</p> <p>The Employment and Training Corporation is entrusted with the setting up of a Skills Bank which will contain information about skills possessed by youths and will facilitate policy formulation as well as matching between job vacancies and young jobseekers. A Legal Notice (LN 19 of 2015) was issued providing a legal framework for the processing of data in the education sector.</p> <p>ETC is currently designing a Forecasting of Labour Market Demands exercise which will include information on occupations, skills, qualifications and competences needed in the labour market. Contact with employers in view of this exercise is expected to initiate in Q3 of 2015.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Through the <i>Skills Bank</i> initiative, it is expected that the ETC will have a comprehensive picture of the future needs of the employers and the skills of young people. The ultimate aim should be to guide young people to areas which are of labour market relevance.</p> <p>Through the <i>Forecasting of Labour Market Demands</i> exercise, it is expected that the ETC will have a comprehensive picture of the future needs of the employers and the skills of young people. The ultimate aim should be to guide jobseekers as well as prospective employees to areas which are of labour market relevance.</p>
	<p>Employability Index</p> <p>The Employability Index will offer more guidance to students on the choices of jobs that are available for the various lines of studies by indicating to the student the potential of finding a job with the line of study being chosen. With respect to labour market developments, the index can provide useful information such as the employability probability of a student after a specified time period, the probability of underemployment and the average income. The measure is expected to start in 2015. The new Legal Notice has been issued: LN 19 of 2015.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The index should indicate the degree of mismatching. This measure will identify which students are at high risk of experiencing underemployment due to significant job mismatching in relation to education attainment. The Employability Index will highlight mismatches between education and the labour market. It is expected to improve the relevance of career guidance.</p>
	<p>Reduction in income tax for unemployed women who are over 40 years of age</p> <p>Principal breadwinners whose wives are over forty years of age and have been inactive for more than five years but are going to start employment earning a tax-exempt wage, will benefit from reductions in income tax as the income of the wives will not be considered when applying the joint tax computation. This measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p>	<p>The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.</p>

	Status: Completed	
	<p>Providing training and/or employment to employees who are between 45 and 65 years of age</p> <p>The 2014 Budget introduced a tax deduction of € 5,800 given to employers to incentivise them to hire persons within this age group who have been unemployed for the previous three years. The deduction applies for the first two years of employment.</p> <p>Furthermore, companies benefitted from a tax deduction on their income or corporate tax of 50% of the training (up to a maximum of € 400) for training undertaken by a training provider officially accredited by the Malta Qualifications Council upon the provision of a VAT receipt.</p> <p>This measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.
	<p>Helping single parents to enrol into education</p> <p>Through this measure, single parents on social assistance who choose to enhance their employability prospects by undergoing intensive training or full-time education will be given credit, ranging from € 200 per annum for vocational basic training to € 1,000 per annum for full-time education. Parents may also benefit from free childcare if needed.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	Encourage single mothers to further their education. Through this measure 30 single parents are benefitting from such credit.
	<p>Long-Term Unemployed persons will be awarded a percentage of Social Assistance benefits for 3 years once employed</p> <p>The social assistance benefits are aimed to encourage unemployed persons to seek employment and join the labour market and not rely on unemployment assistance for their living. It also encourages employers to offer more jobs to the unemployed and be paid 25% of the benefit for three years. The training fund will be used to train these people to retain their jobs. Once employed, unemployed persons who have been on social assistance or unemployed assistance for more than two years in the past three years, will retain 65% of their benefits in the first year, 45% in the second year and 25% in the third year.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	This measure is expected to have positive effects on active labour market participation. As from 2014, social assistance benefits are tapered on a three-year period while previously no benefits were paid once a beneficiary gets employed. Up till December 2014, 461 persons benefitted from this measure.
	<p>Self-employment Transition Scheme</p> <p>The 15% tax rate in respect of part-time income is being extended to apply on the first € 10,000 for part-time employment and the first € 12,000 for part-time self-employment. This measure came into force in January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	The impact of this measure will be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.
	<p>Tax deduction for entrepreneurs who offer apprenticeships placements</p> <p>An incentive for entrepreneurs in the form of a tax deduction of € 1,200 for every apprenticeship placement they accept (capped at 800 placements). This measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.
	<p>Tax deduction for entrepreneurs who offer work placements</p> <p>An incentive for entrepreneurs in the form of a tax deduction of € 600 for every work placement they accept (capped at 400 placements). This measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.
National 2020 R&D target (2% of GDP)	<p>The Setting Up of a Life Sciences Centre/Park</p> <p>The Malta Life Sciences Park, formerly known as the BioMalta Campus, will seek to attract foreign direct investment into Research, Technological Development and Innovation (RTDI) in the bio-technology and life sciences sectors. The centre will also support the development of the local industrial community, helping them to grow and internationalise. Finishing works are at an advanced stage and the project is expected to be complete by Q2 2015.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The Campus is expected to build upon Malta's long-standing tradition in the pharmaceutical industry which has high growth potential.</p> <p>The impact indicators of the project show a 0.44% increase in RTDI expenditure as a percentage of GDP with 138 direct jobs created by the end of the programme period in 2015. Over a 20-year period total employment should reach 688.</p>
	<p>Malta's National R&I Fund 2013</p> <p>The National R&I Fund is defined by two programmes under the FUSION branding: the Commercialisation Voucher Programme and the Technology Development Programme.</p> <p>The R&I Programme for 2013 dealt with 17 shortlisted detailed proposals and 2014 has seen the start of 8 projects as those selected for funding. In the meantime, under FUSION, the Commercialisation Voucher Programme in 2014 funded 10 entities which are at various stages within the Programme and will continue through 2015. The Technology Development Programme will come into force when these projects have completed the commercialisation plans under the Commercialisation Voucher Programme. Thus research projects to this effect are expected to commence in 2015. Following a preliminary evaluation of the programme, its performance and take-up, the R&I Programmes Unit has engaged in a simplification procedure and improvement of the Commercialisation Voucher Programme during the last quarter of 2014. The improved Commercialisation Voucher Programme was launched on the 6th January 2015 and the first call closed on 28th February 2015. Proposals are being collated and then evaluated.</p> <p>The FUSION programme is offering support with the aim of assisting researchers or micro enterprises and small and medium sized</p>	<p>The R&I Programme has a direct impact on the national R&I expenditure (GERD) since it funds R&D performed by both the higher education and the business enterprise sector.</p> <p>While the Commercialisation Voucher Programme will not contribute directly to Malta's R&D expenditure target, it will seek to make best use of R&D investments by helping to determine the commercialisation potential of proposed innovative solutions, thus ensuring that before actually undertaking any research and development, the applicant would already be aware of the possibility of protecting the idea through intellectual property as well as gain awareness about the market potential and the economic wealth it can generate for the good of society at large. The impact of the programme will be quantified in 2015 once the deal flow through the Commercialisation Voucher Programme has paved the way for applied research projects.</p>

	<p>enterprises (SMEs) to assess the commercial and market potential of their ideas, be they technological and non-technological.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Setting-up and development of the National Interactive Science Centre</p> <p>The National Interactive Science Centre (NISC) will be developed at the Villa Bighi Complex and will encompass an array of diverse hands-on science exhibits in an engaging setting. The buildings and the outdoor areas will become a hub for science communication and a means to entice students to take up science subjects at school as well as to bring science closer to the general public. The NISC will also serve as a research infrastructure by offering a research base, set up as a live lab, where research could be carried out in the fields of Social Science and Humanities.</p> <p>The project is co-financed by the ERDF.</p> <p>The civil, restoration and finishing work associated with the NISC (now known as Esplora) is ongoing and on track.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Centre to Strengthen Research on Business and the Self-employed</p> <p>The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation (CEBI) was officially set up in the first quarter of 2013. CEBI was set up to promote the development of a knowledge-intensive, entrepreneurial culture in Malta, with the wider aim of fostering the socio-economic development of the Maltese Islands. The centre is currently targeting knowledge-intensive sectors such as science, technology, engineering, and creative media at the University of Malta and in the wider Maltese context.</p> <p>As of end-of-March of this year, CEBI has run two complete cycles of the Masters in Entrepreneurship (M.Ent.) programme. Currently, CEBI is running the third cycle with 26 students following the course.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Setup an ICT Innovation Accelerator</p> <p>Government intends to tap the potential of ICT-driven R&D with the setup of an ICT innovation accelerator in 2014. An innovation centre was established and inaugurated in May 2014.</p> <p>The facility will act as a hub to synergise the effort of various parties aimed towards ICT-themed Research and Technological Development (R&D), idea-generation, incubation and open-innovation. The day-to-day operation of this facility will involve marketing activities, networking, mentorship, training and also the provision of logistical and brokerage support.</p> <p>The Accelerator will also serve as a showcase for locally nurtured innovations and locally developed ICT products and services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two innovation projects were kick-started and completed which have contributed the equivalent of approximately ten Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) of R&I activities in three months. A third project is being supported. • Two conferences and two training boot-camps have been organised jointly with two technology partners of the Innovation Centre. • Based on lessons learned from previous calls, and in preparation for future calls planned in 2015-2016, the Innovation Centre designed an open call to offer a total grant of € 30,000 to start-ups. These will have to submit a proposal on how they intend to demonstrate feasibility of a solution to resolve 'pain points' in two thematic areas within public administration through mobile app technologies and public data. The call was published in December 2014. • A proposal has been submitted jointly with the University of Malta and Fraunhofer Institute at Bonn University for the preparation of a business plan for the establishment of a Centre of Excellence (CoE) focusing on Linked, Open and Big Data. It is planned that the CoE will be an extension of the Innovation Centre at SmartCity. The proposal was in response to a Horizon 2020 call. If the business plan is selected for implementation, the project will translate into a multi-million Euro co-funded CoE. <p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Action Plan for R&I</p> <p>MCST, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, will be developing a rolling R&I Action Plan identifying measures, timelines, owners and budgets to achieve the objectives and targets specified in the National R&I Strategy 2020.</p> <p>The Core Group and Steering Group, part of the Strategy's monitoring mechanism, have been set up and are currently working on updating the measures being put forward by stakeholders in the Action Plan, discussing budgets and also indicators and targets. It is expected that the first rolling Action Plan will be available by mid-2015.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	
	<p>Evaluation of Malta's participation in the 7th Framework Programme (FP7)</p> <p>The aim of this measure is to better understand how Malta fared in FP7 participation, to identify areas where further or better support is needed to inform and better tailor MCST's role as National Contact Organisation for Horizon 2020. An initial collection of statistics concerning Malta's participation in FP7 has been completed. This is being complemented by stakeholder consultation. To this end, a stakeholder questionnaire has been developed and circulated among the researcher community. Feedback has been received and was analysed and recommendations were drawn up. The report is currently being reviewed internally and will soon be presented to the MCST Board for its endorsement. The recommendations emerging from this report will then feed into the R&I Action Plan.</p>	<p>This measure will inform both the R&I Action Plan as well as Malta's National Contact Organisation role.</p>

	Status: On Track	
	<p>Submission of a proposal for a Knowledge and Innovation Community on healthy living and active ageing</p> <p>This measure involves the submission of a proposal for a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) that addresses the societal challenge of a progressively ageing population in Europe and beyond. This proposal is being developed by an international consortium of which Malta is a partner.</p> <p>The international consortium submitted their proposal in September 2014 and this measure is therefore completed.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	In the eventuality that this proposal is accepted, such a measure would increase Malta's visibility and improve prospects for international R&I cooperation in a thematic area of priority for Malta as identified in Malta's National R&I Strategy 2020.
<p><i>Malta's Targets for Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A maximum increase of greenhouse gas emissions not falling within the scope of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme of 5% by 2020 (compared to 2005 levels particularly emissions from transport, (mainly road transport), industrial gases, waste, agriculture and fuel combustion in industry and commercial and residential buildings). - A commitment to achieve by 2020 a share of energy from renewable sources in gross final energy consumption of 10%. - A commitment to achieve by 2020 a target of 10% of energy consumed in all forms of transport from renewable sources. 	<p>Energy Efficiency in Transport</p> <p>Following a turbulent few years, the Government temporarily took over and managed the scheduled public transport service. Concurrently, Transport Malta issued an Expression of Interest for the provision of scheduled public transport service and following the conclusion of the selection process a new contract was awarded in January 2015. The new contract contemplates the introduction of fare incentives aimed at reducing boarding time and thus making journey times shorter and reducing the impact of aligning and boarding passenger on traffic as a whole.</p> <p>During 2015, an optimised route network is expected to be rolled out in phases and will include additional frequencies in certain locations, revised timetables to better reflect travel patterns and better network coverage.</p> <p>Following the acquisition of the public transport service by the new operator, during the first three months of 2015, 32 Euro V standard buses were added to its fleet to bring the total number of scheduled public transport vehicles in operation to 306. This concluded the need to use subcontracted buses which had been in place since 2013. The new operator is expected to introduce 142 Euro VI buses on to the network during 2015, some of which will be replacing part of the existing fleet, while others will supplement the fleet to meet the increased needs of the optimized network.</p> <p>The level of information available to passengers will also be improved with the aim of attracting even more non-bus users to use public transport.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	The optimised transport network and the additional rolling stock to be deployed on the network along with the implementation of the various public transport infrastructure measures are expected to increase utilisation of public transport even further.
	<p>Implementation of Malta's National Strategy for Policy and Abatement Measures relating to the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions</p> <p>Recent national projections, as compiled in the 2013 Policies and Measures and Projections Report, show that Malta will be in a position to meet the current trajectory and targets imposed. The difference in outlook to that presented in the 2011 report is a consequence of improved methodologies in the compilation of the national greenhouse gas inventory. These have led to a downward revision of historic emissions on which the projections are based, whereas the trajectory of Annual Emission Allocations as stipulated in Decision 2013/162/EU is not subject to recalculations corresponding to updates in the inventory.</p> <p>It is recognised that this Strategy requires substantial revisions, not only to expand the scope, but to also bring Malta's mitigation strategy in line with current and future commitments in respect of greenhouse gas emission limitation or reductions.</p> <p>To this end, work is already in hand, particularly in the context of the development of Malta's Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS). At this stage, a number of sectors are undertaking studies that will eventually feed into the LCDS, specifically with the aim of proposing plans and scenarios that would enable the determination of the most cost-effective manner to reach the country's current and future renewable energy, energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emission objectives for the energy sector and the better formulation and assessment of policy.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The various initiatives under this measure will result in a reduction in greenhouse gas emission saving in Ghg CO₂-eq estimate for 2020 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delimara Power Station + Interconnector (1522.8); - promotion of the use of biodiesel (32.86); - transport reform (38.89); - modernisation of agriculture holdings + Nitrates Action Programme (32.63); - gas management at non-hazardous landfills (33.99).
	<p>Promotion of uptake of RES and building envelope insulation</p> <p>This measure aims to promote the uptake of solar water heaters and roof insulation and double glazing by issuing financial grants to households to encourage the purchase of new solar water heaters (maximum € 400 per system installed) and the purchase of roof insulation and double glazing (maximum € 1,000 per dwelling).</p> <p>A similar scheme was first launched in 2006. This particular scheme was however launched in May 2013 and as announced in the budget for 2014, has been extended.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	The total number of grants paid for SWH has now reached 8,698, whereas the number of applications paid to assist installations of roof insulation and double glazing amount to 1,195.
	<p>Switching of Fuel from Liquid Fuel Oils to Natural Gas</p> <p>In October 2013, ElectroGas Malta Consortium was chosen as the preferred bidder, shortlisted in the competitive process for this PPA and GSA. Enemalta is in final detailed discussions with ElectroGas Malta.</p> <p>MEPA permits were issued in March 2014 and works on the ground are in progress.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	Once implemented, the higher plant efficiency together with the lower carbon emission factor of methane is expected to lead to significant cuts in GHG emissions and lower utility bills.

	<p>Feed-in Tariffs for Photovoltaic Systems (PVs) not supported through other funding</p> <p>Feed-in tariffs for PVs not supported through other funding are available for roof mounted systems. Tariffs are valid until 30th April 2015 unless cap is reached earlier.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>The 8MWp allocated capacity under LN155/2014 was fully taken up by the 31st October 2014. New, lower tariffs apply as from 1st November 2014.</p>
	<p>New Scheme for PV Panel Installations in Households</p> <p>A new scheme to promote domestic PVs was launched in May 2013. This provided grants of up to 50% of the capital cost (capped at € 2,500). The scheme was fully subscribed by the end of Q1/2014.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	<p>It is estimated that circa 32MWp of PV systems were installed as a result of this scheme, generating around 48GWh/year. Between 1st January 2013 and 1st March 2015, 8331 households have received a grant offer to install a domestic PV system with an estimated total capacity of 23.046MWp.</p>
	<p>Biofuel Substitution Obligation</p> <p>The biofuel substitution obligation requires that importers and wholesalers of petrol and diesel must place a pre-determined amount of biofuel on the market, which during 2014 had to reach 4.5% (by energy content). This is currently achieved by using biodiesel produced from waste cooking oil.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Measure ensures that country remains on track to meet its 2020 RES-T target and contributes towards meeting Malta's RES interim targets.</p>
	<p>Electric Car Incentive Scheme</p> <p>This measure is designed to encourage the replacement of internal combustion engine vehicles with battery electric vehicles.</p> <p>The scheme has been extended for 2015 as well and is open to registered NGOs and Private Business. The maximum grant for private individuals and NGOs is as follows: € 5,000 (including scrappage scheme), € 4,000 (excluding scrappage scheme), €1,500 Electric Quadricycle.</p> <p>For Private Companies: The same as above for a combination of vehicles not exceeding € 10,000 in total.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>It is expected that this measure will reduce local air pollution and reliance on fossil fuels. Till the end of December 2014, eight electric cars and three all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) benefitted from the scheme.</p>
	<p>Autogas conversion scheme</p> <p>This measure aims to incentivise vehicle owners to convert their vehicle to autogas. Applications are still being received. This measure has been extended for 2015 and has been extended to include commercial vehicles.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>It is expected that this measure will reduce local air pollution. During 2014, 306 vehicles were converted and similar numbers are expected for 2015.</p>
	<p>Scrappage Scheme</p> <p>This measure aimed to incentivise the replacement of older private vehicles with new, smaller and more efficient ones. The scheme is now closed since all funds were exhausted.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>It is expected that this measure will reduce local air pollution and reliance on fossil fuels. Through the first allocation of € 300,000, 395 vehicles were approved. Through the extension of another € 200,000, 261 vehicles were approved.</p>
	<p>Reduction in registration tax on motorcycles</p> <p>Motorcycles that were registered on or after the 5th November 2013 having an engine capacity exceeding 250cc will have their registration tax reduced by 25%. Motorcycles with an engine capacity not exceeding 250cc will remain exempt from registration tax.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>In the case of this Budget 2014 measure, when comparing data from Transport Malta on registered motorcycles exceeding 250cc during the period 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2014 with the corresponding period of 1st January 2013 to 31st December 2013, one can notice an increase of 91% in the number of registered motorcycles in the categories above 250cc. The amount of registered motorcycles exceeding 250cc during the first two months of 2015 where 96. This represents an increase of 6% when comparing this data for the same period last year.</p>
	<p>Increase in Annual Circulation Licence fees</p> <p>As from 1st January 2014, the annual circulation licence fees for category M1 vehicles (passenger carrying vehicles with up to eight seats besides the driver's seat) have increased by € 10 annually except for those vehicles that were registered as from 1st January 2009 and have CO₂ emissions of not more than 100g/km.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>This measure is intended to increase Government revenue by circa € 2.5 million while also incentivising people to buy M1 vehicles with CO₂ emissions of not more than 100g/km.</p> <p>According to data from Transport Malta, when comparing the said data for the period 1st January 2014 till 31st December 2014 with the corresponding period of the previous year, there was an increase of 43% in registrations of M1 motor vehicles (including both new and second hand) with CO₂ emissions of not more than 100g/km.</p> <p>The amount of registered M1 motor vehicles (including both new and second hand) with CO₂ emissions of not more than 100g/km during the first two months of 2015 where 382. This represents an increase of 50% when comparing this data for the same period last year.</p>

	<p>Renovating Public Buildings to Increase Energy Efficiency and Reduce GHG (Phase I)</p> <p>Buildings consume up to 40% of energy generated. The project involves resource efficiency retro-fitting in a number of government buildings. Tenders for pilot renovation projects are now at the adjudication phase. A number of government owned buildings have been identified for renovation. The Building Regulation Board has now been entrusted with the establishment of a long-term strategy for mobilising investment in the renovation of the national stock of residential and commercial buildings, both public and private.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>A number of buildings have been identified for renovation so as to ensure that the targets set by the Energy Efficiency Directive are met. Audits have already been carried out for these buildings.</p>
	<p>Retrofitting Road and Street Lighting by Smart Lighting</p> <p>The project involves the retrofitting of street lighting to energy efficient LED lighting and the adoption of Smart Lighting technology (dimming and lighting network management)</p> <p>Project funding approved and is now at adjudication stage.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Project is expected to lead to 1,888MWh in energy savings and a reduction of 1,663 tonnes of CO₂ annually.</p>
<p>National early school leaving target (Reducing school drop-out rates to 10% by 2020)</p> <p>National target for tertiary education (Increasing the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to 33% by 2020)</p>	<p>Offering more Opportunities for Participation in Vocational Education</p> <p>Introduction of vocational subjects in secondary schools</p> <p>During scholastic year 2013-2014, the BTEC (Business and Technology Education Council qualification) vocational project started its third year of implementation. The first cohort of students graduated in June 2014. The Options Exercise for Form 2 Students recruiting the fourth cohort of students opting to take on one of the four BTEC vocational subjects being piloted in State and non-State schools was completed in Q2 2014. The four subjects being Hospitality, Health and Social Care, Engineering and Information Technology. The two International Standards Verification (ISV) visits in Q1 and in Q2 2013 respectively were carried out as per schedule. The INSET training by subject for teachers participating in the pilot project, led by UK trainers, was held in Q3 2013.</p> <p>A VET Unit has been set up within the Office of the Permanent Secretary MEDE to work with MEDE in overseeing the completion of the BTEC Pilot, the piloting of the home-grown qualifications and the eventual implementation of the planned national roll-out of vocational education in secondary schools in Q3 2015.</p> <p>In Q1 2014 the MCAST and the ITS have organised meetings and workshop sessions with the vocational teachers to finalise the syllabi of these new vocational subjects. These syllabi are now in place.</p> <p>A vocational qualification in Agribusiness was introduced in secondary schools in Q3 2014.</p> <p>In Q4 2013 and Q1 2014, representatives from the University of Malta, the MATSEC Board, the MCAST, the ITS, the DQSE, and the MEDE held regular meetings about the developments in VET provision in Malta and the recognition and certification of VET qualifications being managed and taught at secondary level. Consensus has been reached on the recognition of these vocational qualifications by the MATSEC Board, the MCAST and the ITS as MQF Level 3 Secondary Education Certificates as in the case of all the academic subjects taught in secondary schools. In this regard, implementation is currently being conducted by the MATSEC Board and the MCAST is providing a supporting/advisory role.</p> <p>Plans are being made for the further roll out of these vocational subjects in more secondary schools (state and non-state). An expression of interest for prospective teachers has been issued. Initial training of applicants has taken place in Q1 2015. More training sessions are planned for Q2 2015. Meetings with Heads of Schools have been held by the Matsec Support Unit and the Department of Curriculum Management. A list of resources required by schools to operate the vocational subjects is being formulated in Q1 2015.</p> <p>Introducing other Vocational Pathways</p> <p>MQF Level 1 & 2 vocational qualifications are being taken of by some State secondary schools offering them to Form 4 and 5 students at risk of becoming early school leavers.</p> <p>Introducing other Vocational Pathways – Alternative Learning Programme</p> <p>The MCAST, the ITS, the ETC and Youth.Inc. are offering support learning programmes comprising a range of other vocational pathways and student support services to all the current fifth Formers who are at high risk of becoming early school leavers – in this case, in Q1 2014, the 355 fifth Form students who were habitual absentees and who were not sitting for any SEC examination or were likely to fail to attain SEC standard in any subject. The project will be repeated and extended in 2014-2015 and will run from September 2014 to June 2015. Students are being hosted at the MCAST, Youth.Inc and at the new ALP centre in Paola (former Paola Boys Secondary School).</p> <p>Plans are being made in order to improve this service in the next scholastic year (2015-2016). More collaboration with secondary schools will ensure that students will benefit from this programme.</p> <p>Personal, Social, and Career Development (PSCD)</p> <p>The Personal and Social Development (PSD) programme has been re-written to include Career Education and to be eligible for</p>	<p>Introduction of vocational subjects in secondary schools</p> <p>This measure will set the basis toward reaching the long term objective, namely, the development of a VET qualification delivery model suitable for Malta.</p> <p>Introducing other Vocational Pathways</p> <p>This measure will provide with more options to vocational education, which options can lead to further education at post-secondary level.</p> <p>Introducing other Vocational Pathways – Alternative Learning Programme</p> <p>This measure provided alternative pedagogy to learners who would otherwise end up as early school leavers.</p> <p>Personal, Social, and Career Development (PSCD)</p> <p>This measure is required so as to equip learners with skills and competences related to careers that may be</p>

<p>certification as an MQF Level 3, 2, 1, qualification. The programme is now called Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD).</p>	<p>available on the market.</p>
<p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Introducing Lifelong Learning into the Community through a Pilot Out-Reach Programme</p> <p>During 2014, the Early School Leavers (ESL) Unit was integrated with the Directorate for Lifelong Learning (DLL) to create better synergy in the two complementary areas. The latter, together with the Department for Local Government (DLG) continued to collaborate on the scheme called 'Lifelong Learning in the Community' which was first launched in 2010. Besides the Adult Literacy (Maltese & English) and Numeracy (Maths) courses hosted by Local Councils, the DLL offered other courses amongst which: Spanish, Italian, French, German as well as English and Maltese as a Foreign Language.</p> <p>In 2014, the Directorate received a total of 16,913 applications for adult learning and visual and performing arts courses to be held throughout the scholastic year 2014-2015. At least 50% of applications were submitted online and the website www.lifelonglearning.gov.mt attracted 69,698 users and 1,639,964 page views.</p> <p>The Directorate has the mission to increase participation in adult learning and to address the imbalances in participation to achieve a more equitable state of affairs. It is responsible for the selection, recruitment and placement of adult educators within its different centres, namely the 8 evening class centres, the Lifelong Learning Centre in Msida (LLC) and courses offered at community level.</p> <p>The DLL ESL employs 17 part-time 'adult educator centre and subject' coordinators and 300 part-time adult educators for the teaching and support of adult learning classes. The Directorate trains and recruits adult educators who are specialised in various fields including digital competence; family learning; languages; maths, science and technology; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; social health and civic competences; vocational and educational training. Throughout the learning year 2014, the DLL ESL received 12,128 applications for adult learning courses. Of these applicants 66% were female and 34% were male.</p> <p>The Directorate works with the Department for Local Government (DLG) to implement the scheme called <i>Lifelong Learning in the Community</i> which was first launched in 2010. In 2014, 40 local councils and 17 NGOs and Community Centres participated. Through this scheme the DLL ESL reached 3,107 learners this is an increase of over 1,000 learners when compared to the previous learning year 2013.</p> <p>Besides courses offered at the Local Councils, the DLL offers lifelong learning courses to a number of organisations, enterprises and NGOs.</p> <p>Professional Staff Development, Training and Quality Assurance for Adult Educators in the Community</p> <p>In order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching personnel within the DLL ESL, during 2014 a number of in-service training and staff development sessions were conducted.</p> <p>The training for adult educators, that is, the National Diploma in Teaching Adults (Level 5) focused on the Andragogy, Science Courses: teaching and learning practices, the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) and its impact on the adult learning sector, the drafting of course descriptions and the assessment procedures of the learning outcomes for new subjects (MQF and VET).</p> <p>In March 2014, the Directorate launched the <i>National Diploma in Teaching Adults</i> which was accredited by NCHFE at level 5. The aim of this diploma is to improve the quality of adult education in Malta. The National Diploma in Teaching Adults consists of thirteen modules including the practicum taken from the eighteen modules offered. The part-time Diploma can be completed over 3 years.</p> <p>In 2014, the first 5 modules were developed on the following subjects: principles of adult education, theory and practice, lesson planning and preparation, lifelong learning guidance and assessment for learning. Approximately 141 students applied for each module.</p> <p>The National Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning</p> <p><i>European Agenda for Adult Learning</i></p> <p>The EU Agenda project 2012-2014 was implemented and finalised in 2014 and the dissemination took place through various channels including, Print media (adverts, brochures, leaflets, learning guides), Social media (Facebook), TV and online videos, Launch/Open Day in Valletta and in Mosta Evening Classes Centre, Conferences/Peer Learning Activity, Presentations during Working Group/network meetings.</p> <p>In 2014, the DLL ESL successfully applied for funding for the next EU Agenda programme for National Coordinators (2015) and was awarded €94,470 by European Agency for Culture, Education and Audiovisual (EACEA) under the Call for Proposals EACEA 12/2014.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p> <p>Making VET Education More Relevant and Attractive</p> <p>The aim of this project is that of conducting a substantial upgrading exercise within the context of vocational education between Levels 4 and 5. While these courses have very often fulfilled an important ad hoc role, they are no longer sufficient to meet the increased need for learning.</p> <p>The principal project milestones are:</p>	<p>This measure will continue to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a different experience to previous learning paths in the education of particular adult learners; - the adequate level and type of learning (whether general or vocational); - the appropriate style of learning (tailor-made to the needs and strengths of individual adult learners); - the most convenient place for learning, close to one's place of residence; - an increase in the quality of learning to adults.
<p>The principal project milestones are:</p>	<p>MCAST's offerings will become more attractive to a larger cohort. As a result, the project will improve the quality of VET to make it more economically relevant and attract more students into further and higher education.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The launching and management of the Training Subsidy Scheme MCAST (TSSM):</i> A number of scholarships have been awarded, their implementation is well underway and a number of students have obtained certification. • <i>The re-design and re-formulation for accreditation purposes of existing courses:</i> The tender in relation to this milestone has been awarded, implemented and concluded. • <i>The design of new courses and accreditation of the same:</i> The tender in relation to this milestone has been awarded, implemented and concluded. • <i>The implementation of a new tender for the redesign of more courses:</i> The tender in relation to the new design/re-design activity was published in November 2013 and has been awarded on 25th February 2014. It is currently being implemented. <p>Status: On Track</p>	
	<p>Get Qualified</p> <p>A new version of this scheme was launched in 2014 and will cover the period 2014-2018. 'Get Qualified' is an initiative that supports the personal development of individuals for the achievement of qualifications and certifications required by industry. The incentive is applicable to individuals following a course of studies leading to certification, diploma, degree or post-graduate degree courses. Upon successful completion, the student will benefit from a tax credit thus recovering part of the costs incurred.</p> <p>Students following courses approved by Malta Enterprise are granted tax credits on fees paid by the individual to the university, institution or other entity recognised by Malta Enterprise for the training and educational services leading to the approved qualification and fees for sitting for examinations required to achieve the approved qualification.</p> <p>Further details can be found on http://www.maltaenterprise.com/en/support/get-qualified.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>During 2014, there were 824 beneficiaries with the value of tax credits amounting to € 3,710,562.</p>
	<p>Pilot project for Tablets in Primary Schools for Teachers and Students</p> <p>In the process of implementing the 'One Tablet Per Child' Initiative, a pilot project is currently being held to assess the introduction of tablet computing devices in all primary schools. The scope of the pilot project is to carry out an assessment on a small scale in view of the national implementation of the 'One Tablet Per Child' Initiative as from 2015-2016. The pilot project involves 22 classes in State, Church and Independent schools in Malta and Gozo amounting to a total of around 400 students, including students with special needs.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The research and evaluation done during the pilot project will lead to the selection of the best hardware/software tablet solution to introduce in the primary classroom. It will also reveal the possible challenges that educators, education managers and educational services providers will face in the national implementation, and suggest ways to meet and overcome these challenges.</p>
	<p>Alternative Learning Programme</p> <p>The ALP has been designed to offer students who are exiting the compulsory school cycle without formal qualifications an alternative pathway to access accredited learning pathways in various VET areas. These courses ran between January and September of this year and about 245 Form 5 students who were not going to sit for any formal examinations in May 2014 benefitted from the programme. These students were also offered on-the-job experience.</p> <p>In October 2014, a further ALP commenced and 272 students are currently participating. Participants in the ALP are expected to obtain one or more partial qualifications at MQF levels 1 and 2, while a number of participants may also obtain a full MQF level 1 qualification. Participating students would be expected to continue with their education after the summer recess in a full-time higher education institution or in other lifelong learning institutions on a part-time basis. Furthermore, the ALP is implementing the following short courses: Civil protection, Motherwell bridge (welding), Malta Communication Authority (IT), Food Handling Course, and Community work</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>It is envisaged that a good number of these students will obtain certification accredited at MQF level 1 in one or more subjects and will eventually be able to further their education beyond compulsory schooling. This programme will also consolidate and improve their skills thus leading them towards more working opportunities and overall self-empowerment.</p>
	<p>Design of Learning Outcomes Framework</p> <p>The Learning Outcomes Framework for the six main learning areas identified in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) document will be developed through an international tender and in collaboration with local curriculum development experts. Learning and assessment programmes for all the subjects in compulsory education will also be developed through this work. The tender has been published and evaluated in Q2 2014. Work is being done and is expected to be completed by Q4 2015.</p> <p>Presently the contractor, together with the local experts, is working to provide the learning outcomes of the Learning Areas, the Cross-Curricular Themes and the Learning and Assessment programmes.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>This will help in achieving a paradigm shift away from a prescriptive curriculum towards a framework based on learning outcomes which allows for internal flexibility and attractiveness to lifelong learning. It will also facilitate a move away from standalone subjects to learning areas that form the entitlement for all learners towards inclusivity, citizenship and employability.</p>
	<p>Higher Priority to Mathematics, Science and ICT</p> <p>This measure involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a review of primary level learning programmes in Mathematics and Science; - an increase in the frequency of Science lessons in primary schools; - the introduction of digital Science in primary sector; - the organisation of science popularisation events at both primary and secondary levels; 	<p>This measure aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decrease the percentage of students considered as low ability in the areas of Science and Mathematics; - enhance exposure to Science and Digital Science at primary level; - enhance scientific literacy among the young student generation in secondary level; - increase the number of students studying science subjects at secondary and post-secondary levels.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the training of primary class teachers in both Mathematics, Science and Digital Science teaching and learning; - the participation in the Little Scientists Project in collaboration with the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST) (including the training of a team of peripatetic teachers). <p>A hands-on seminar in science education for primary school teachers is being organized in Q1 2015, in collaboration with Scientix, an international organisation funded by the EU, and the Malta Council for Science and Technology (MCST).</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	
	<p>Stipends for Repeaters</p> <p>Students are always encouraged to further their education as Government believes that whoever has a problem should be encouraged and not discouraged. For this reason, students who are repeating one year in their course are receiving their stipend. This measure came into effect on 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	In 2014, a total number of 1,181 students have benefitted from this measure with a total cost of € 548,209.
	<p>New Courses on Aviation</p> <p>MCAST continuously strives to provide training programmes that meet current and future aviation needs. This enables students to acquire the necessary skills and training to work in the aviation industry and as result creates more high value-added jobs in the Maltese economy.</p> <p>Within this context, it is pertinent to highlight the fact that the two year course MCAST Advanced Diploma in Aviation Operations (MQF Level 4) has been launched in Q3 2014 and is currently ongoing. The short course Piston Engines was offered during Q2 2014 and is currently being offered again (the current run commenced in January 2015 and shall be concluded by mid-March 2015). Moreover, it is envisaged that a course related to Composite Repairs (with the financial support of Malta Enterprise) will be initiated during Q3 2015.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>	It is envisaged that through the implementation of these courses, Malta shall be consolidating further the aviation maintenance industry. This will result in an even more dynamic industry that can generate employment and economic well-being.
	<p>Providing stipends for students undertaking veterinary courses</p> <p>In order to encourage more students to undertake a veterinary career, Government is providing additional financial support. The new rate for applicants under the Malta Government Undergraduate Scholarship Scheme (MGSS-UG) now stands at € 3,698.81 per annum (plus a one-time grant of € 698.81). This rate applies to both new applicants under the MGSS-UG scheme as from October 2013 and past awardees who are still in training as from 2014. Since the VET course is not offered by a local institution, all these students are benefitting from this measure through the MGSS-UG. As from October 2014, the MGSS-UG has been renamed to Malta Government Undergraduate Scheme (MGUS) which is now managed by the Stipends and Maintenance Grant Board. This measure falls under this scheme.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>The VET course is not offered by a local institution as yet. Since such courses have very high tuition fees and are organised abroad, many students find it difficult to cope with the expenses involved. Through this measure, more students are likely to opt to undergo studies in this area and pursue a career in this field.</p> <p>For the scholastic year 2013-2014, 33 students, out of which 3 repeaters, have benefitted from this measure with a total amount of € 108,120.</p> <p>For the scholastic year 2014/2015, 10 students have applied for such a stipend.</p>
	<p>Further and Higher Education Quality Assurance Framework</p> <p>In line with obligations arising from LN 296/2012, a Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has been set up with the remit of reviewing level 7 and 8 qualifications prior to accreditation. The QAC acts as an independent review mechanism for quality assurance-related measures arising from accreditation processes.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Impact is expected in terms of CPD development of Quality Assurance (QA) professionals within the education sector through the setting up of Net-QAPE. Circa 30 trained Net-QAPE members are also following an MQF-pegged QA CPD Award. A manual of external quality assurance (EQA) procedures and tools as well as dedicated software will be developed. The QA professionals within the three local public higher institutions, as well as staff members within private education providers have received training on various aspects of internal quality assurance (IQA) and EQA. The first three pilot IQA audits and the three pilot EQA audits will also be undertaken in the first half of 2015 with the expectation of a closure conference for all documentation to be presented in July 2015.</p> <p>On a longer term, the QA framework will create a culture of quality within education provision in Malta, leading in turn to more value added in the obtaining and holding of Maltese qualifications.</p>
National poverty target (To lift around 6,560 people out of risk of poverty and exclusion)	<p>Combating Child Poverty</p> <p>This measure consists of two initiatives: one is the provision of training to lone parents, and the other is the change in the provision of benefits which are to be implemented by the ETC in conjunction with the input of the Department of Social Security (DSS). As it stands both DSS and ETC are already taking an active part; the latter in providing training opportunities through the 'Enhancing Employability through Training Programme' and the former in continuously reviewing social security entitlements. A new measure was announced in Budget 2014, 'Helping Single Parents to find Employment' whereby single parents who are on social assistance and who choose to enhance their employability prospects by undergoing intensive training or full-time education, will be given credit, ranging from € 200 per annum for vocational basic training to € 1,000 per annum for full-time education. Parents may also benefit from free childcare if needed.</p> <p>A research study was conducted by the Centre for Family Studies at the University of Malta. During March 2014 a questionnaire was launched. Between March and September 2014, fieldwork was carried out after which data analysis and drafting started in September and the results were presented in a conference by the University of Malta on 24th January 2015.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>Research will give a better understanding of the challenges faced by these households and enable policy makers to devise the appropriate strategies to deal with such challenges. The resulting future policies will aim to reduce the percentage of lone parents households that are at risk of poverty, which in 2010 stood at 56%.</p> <p>While the research study is not expected to have an immediate impact in terms of poverty reduction, it will lead to a better understanding of how complex the problem of child poverty is, as well as to identify the measures needed to bring about a sustained reduction in child poverty. Thus, this study is expected to provide a significant contribution to child poverty reduction in the long term.</p>
	<p>Pensions Reform</p> <p>The new administration setup a Pensions Strategy Group to continue with the reforms of pensions in Malta in order to continue strengthening the sustainability of the system and also to maintain adequacy, especially for future generations. To this effect the mentioned Group has been meeting and discussing ways to improve on the current system primarily by a continued strengthening of the first pillar and also by the introduction of incentives pertaining to third pillar pensions. A report by the Group has been delivered to</p>	As a result of the pension reform of 2007, the pension age for persons born between 1952 and 1955 went up to 62 for both genders and the accumulation of contributions for a full pension entitlement increased from 30 to 35 years. As a result, the increase in number of new claims was lower than the year on year increases from previous years.

<p>the Minister for the Family and Social Solidarity and a presentation with the proposals is expected to be delivered to the Cabinet, following which the strategy is expected to be made public for consultation purposes.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	
<p>Supplementary Allowance</p> <p>Proposals to improve the system in order to assist pensioners aged over 65 years, and who are at risk of poverty, were drawn up and submitted for political and financial approval.</p> <p>In Budget 2013, Government has proposed that persons over 65 years of age and whose household income falls under the national at-risk-of-poverty level will be given an increase of € 100 per annum in their supplementary allowance rate.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>22% of the 65+ cohort of the population are considered at risk of poverty. Providing for additional financial assistance should contribute in reducing this percentage.</p> <p>Data for 2014 shows that 2,925 single persons and 185 married couples benefitted from this measure during 2014.</p>
<p>Strengthening Support Services to Jobless Households</p> <p>The objective of this measure is to provide more accessible and holistic services to persons living at risk of poverty or in poverty and those who are facing social exclusion; the measure will support families and other persons in the community identified as requiring assistance so as to enhance their possibility of social integration. It has been the Government's strategy to promote and expand community-based services as a way of reaching out to those mostly in need. This not only provides a more accessible service, but one which is more holistic and which focuses on the most vulnerable in a particular community.</p> <p>Various projects are being planned and implemented, targeting mostly women, young people and children – these projects offer informal training in social skills, which are necessary in everyday life, but also extremely useful in job searching (where adults are concerned), and help young people and children integrate better. Such projects include women's groups in each community providing skills training, including budgeting skills, parenting skills, literacy skills for children (with the aid of FES when possible), summer recreational/educational activities (children – e.g. Klabbisajf (now Kidspoint) and Sajf Flimkien).</p> <p>Work with pre-teens and teens is also being carried out – providing space for young people to socialise, use their creativity and gain skills in a safe and informal setting.</p> <p>The Cottonera team is working on project to reach out to male members of the community, particularly those receiving benefits and/or seeking a job.</p> <p>The fostering service continued to be involved in the ongoing media campaigning together with training courses. A Positive Parenting Policy was drafted and launched for Public Consultation by the Ministry through the Family Studies Department of the University of Malta and in collaboration with the Foundation for Social Welfare Standards. This consultation will be finalised in 2015.</p> <p>The running of specific projects addressing the needs within the particular communities and the delivering of skills training programmes to enhance the skills of a person being encountered within the communities with particular focus on children, young persons and those at risk of social exclusion, has been made possible through the establishment of new community centres. These centres are offering various community services in Valletta (which caters for Floriana as well), in Cottonera, in Qawra, in Msida and also in Birkirkara.</p> <p>Project plans are also being discussed for 2015. They are focused on skills training (formal and non-formal) and mentoring – targeting mainly adults and young people to increase confidence, take more control of their situation, and, when possible, enter the labour market. A pilot project working with troubled families in Qawra and Birkirkara was launched. A family therapist was recruited and families from Qawra were identified to use her services. Only cases in Qawra are being considered as the amount of cases is sufficient.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Through these projects, residents are receiving skills training through a friendly and informal environment; this helps them increase their worth, helps them to take control of certain situations in their lives (e.g. intra-familial communication), to be more active in their community, and even have healthy ways of seeing leisure and recreation (strong element of prevention).</p>
<p>Training for Average Wage Earners</p> <p>This initiative followed the 'Training Allowance for Minimum Wage Earners' and was targeted towards employees who earn less than the national average wage of € 300 per week from their full-time or part-time work. It aimed to provide a grant to low wage earners when they participate in further training through which they can develop their skills and thus improve their job and career prospects. (The training allowance is that of € 25 per week).</p> <p>Between January and December 2014, 30 persons benefitted from this scheme and the total sum of claimed and paid grants amounted to € 1,725. Following the National Employment Policy that was launched in 2014, it was decided that this measure will be replaced by another measure 'Training Pays' which is expected to start in 2016.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>Encouraging average wage earners to engage in training and improve their skills can contribute to a better trained workforce and allow such persons to seek better employment.</p>
<p>Subsidised Rental Schemes – Rent Subsidy in Private Rented Residences</p> <p>This is a scheme which provides subsidies to tenants on rents paid for their ordinary residence leased from the private sector. This scheme has been revised and changed from 'Scheme R' to 'Rent Subsidy in Private Rented Residences' in March 2012. This scheme is still means-tested but a few conditions have been altered to support the beneficiaries in a more holistic way.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>In 2014, the HA paid € 390,477 on 'Scheme R' and € 573,463 on Rent Subsidy in Private Rented Residences (RSS). HA is still paying subsidies under 'Scheme R' since beneficiaries under this scheme are entitled to a five year subsidy from date of their application as per agreement signed and the conditions of this scheme. Therefore, those who applied in 2011 will be paid till 2016. Once the five years elapse, tenants will have to reapply under the new scheme RSS. In addition, there were 1,029 applicants that benefitted from this measure between 1st January 2015 and 24th January 2015.</p>

<p>Service Pensions</p> <p>As a result of budget 2015, with effect from January 2015 the amount of service pension being ignored from the service pension during the assessment of a social security pension has increased by another €200 from € 1,466 to € 1,666.</p> <p>Status: This is an ongoing measure and is on track.</p>	<p>Measure to assist the Spouses of Residents in State-Financed Residential Services</p> <p>During 2013, work started so that the apportionment of pension between a pensioner who is resident in a State-financed institution and his/her spouse who still resides at home is amended from 40/60 to 30/70 so that the amount paid to the spouse is not less than the single rate of the Old-Age Non-Contributory Pension.</p> <p>Status: This measure has been implemented and is ongoing.</p>	<p>Circa 5,650 pensioners have been positively affected through this measure.</p> <p>Spouses of residents in State-financed residential services will have more income at their disposal given that due to the measure, such spouses who remain at home will at least have an additional 10% of the pension of their spouse who is in residential care.</p>
<p>Regeneration and Maintenance of Housing Estates</p> <p>Through this project, embellishment works are carried out in the surrounding areas of Government Housing Estates and maintenance works are carried out in these blocks' common parts. During the past couple of years, the HA worked with a number of Local Councils for maintenance works of the common parts in a project which was spread over a period of six years.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Schemes to support home adaptation works - (A) Schemes for Persons with Disability</p> <p>This scheme provides financial aid and technical assistance to persons with disability to carry out the necessary adaptations to their place of residence. In March 2012 this scheme changed the name from 'Scheme L' to 'Scheme for Persons with Disability'. The conditions were also revised and grants were raised to reflect applicants' demands.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>These projects are intended to promote community regeneration and the fight against poverty. Consequently, they will continue to improve the environment of families, children and elderly, by providing a safe and clean environment and increase social inclusion</p> <p><i>Scheme 1 – Embellishment and upgrading of Housing Estate:</i> Up till the end of 2014, thirteen embellishment projects in thirteen different Local Councils were in majority completed. The scheme was reactivated during the second semester of 2014 following which another three projects in Hamrun, Pembroke and Mtarfa were approved. During 2015 there are two part projects in the localities of Ta' Xbiex and Floriana and another project in Santa Venera which are currently in progress.</p> <p><i>Scheme 2 – Upgrading of Common Parts of Government Residential Blocks:</i> Up till the beginning of 2013, 290 blocks were completed and upgraded. The scheme was reactivated during the second semester of 2014 following which, agreements were drawn up with six Local Councils for the upgrading of 50 blocks.</p> <p>For the year 2015 another 102 blocks in fourteen different localities have been approved to be carried out and agreements with these Councils should be signed in the coming weeks.</p>
<p>Schemes to support home adaptation works - (B) Schemes for Repairs and Improvements</p> <p>The HA is continuously seeking ways how to mitigate the effects of several bureaucratic procedures which hinder the progress of this service in order to be more efficient.</p> <p>In view of an increase in demand, the maximum amount of grant that an applicant can benefit from in schemes for adaptation works was increased by € 3,000. Besides, in October 2013, this grant was made available to a new category of tenants, who previously could not benefit. Also, the grant on certain items/works was also increased to reflect a higher percentage of the actual cost being paid by applicants. The subsidy given under these schemes is not intended to cover the full cost of works carried out or the rent paid, but rather should be considered an assistance to support low income earners.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Residential Home for Youth</p> <p>Various discussions were held with NGOs to try to establish residential facilities for adolescent girls and boys who do not fit into the currently available structures. A day programme will be offered and to this end.</p> <p>Status (facility for adolescent girls): Back on Track</p>	<p>This measure aspires to improve the social inclusion prospects of individuals by encouraging independent living for disabled persons. In 2014, the HA paid € 315,285 on the 'Scheme for Persons with Disability'. In 2014, 164 new applications were received with some still awaiting approval.</p> <p>In 2015, 11 new applications were received.</p>
<p>Independent Living</p> <p>The main objective of this measure is to provide for an independent environment which will sustain a person's ability to live as independently as possible, either in their own home or in accommodation with carers on site.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>Expansion of Fostering Services to Gozo</p> <p>The first support group for foster carers convened in March 2014.</p> <p>Through this measure, the fostering services will be more accessible for the benefit of Gozitan foster carers and children in foster care who encounter difficulties travelling to Malta to benefit from such services. So far, no initial training courses were conducted in Gozo as there were not enough Prospective Foster Carers from Gozo to hold an initial training course there. The one Prospective Foster Carer attended the course in Malta.</p>	<p>This scheme is designed to help those who cannot afford to pay for repairs and maintenance for their residences. This assistance helps to render premises habitable and up to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>In 2014, 264 new applications were received.</p> <p>Once the agreements are in place, the adolescent home for girls will cater for six to eight residents, two of which will be emergency beds.</p> <p>In 2014, the HA effected payments that amounted to € 132,747 to YMCA, Agenzija Sapport and Dar Merħba Bik.</p>
<p>Expansion of Fostering Services to Gozo</p> <p>The first support group for foster carers convened in March 2014.</p> <p>Through this measure, the fostering services will be more accessible for the benefit of Gozitan foster carers and children in foster care who encounter difficulties travelling to Malta to benefit from such services. So far, no initial training courses were conducted in Gozo as there were not enough Prospective Foster Carers from Gozo to hold an initial training course there. The one Prospective Foster Carer attended the course in Malta.</p>	<p>Six support groups were held for the foster carers in Gozo, meaning that foster carers will feel even more supported in discussing and sharing issues they face in the foster placements that they have. These support groups will also contribute to their ongoing development and attributes as foster carers.</p>	

	<p>Another support group was held in January 2015 and an initial kin training session will be held in March 2015.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	
	<p>A Holistic Strategy for Social Security Reform</p> <p>The aim of this measure is to submit recommendations to Government for the drawing up of such a strategy in order to reform the social security provision and delivery in Malta.</p> <p>Up till May 2014 there were a series of meetings with stakeholders out of which a report was presented to the Hon. Prime Minister on 27th May 2014 dealing with reforms in the social security reform.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>As part of Budget 2015, the Government announced major changes in the reform of social security that emanated from this Strategy.</p> <p>These reforms focus on young people under the age of 23 years, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for new entrants under the age of 23 unemployment assistance will no longer be available; instead all young people will be enrolled in the Youth Guarantee with conditionalities on training and education; - single parents with children under 12 months will be enrolled in the Youth Guarantee once their child is one year old; - existing claimants under age 23 will also be shifted to the Youth Guarantee. <p>The Government also announced that existing claimants will be given the possibility to review their claims until February 2015. All those found in breach after this period will be suspended from benefits for a period of 12 weeks.</p> <p>For new entrants, benefits will be paid in arrears to avoid future overpayments of benefits.</p>
	<p>Eliminating Tax on transfer “causa mortis” for disabled persons</p> <p>This measure is related to the elimination of tax on transfer “causa mortis” for property inherited by disabled persons. This measure only applies if disabled person/s live/s in the same property and it only applies to the first residence.</p> <p>The said measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.</p>
	<p>Full pension for employed widows</p> <p>Widows will continue to receive their full pension, irrespective if they have children (including those aged 16 to 21) or not, and the amount of salary/wage earned from their employment.</p> <p>Status: Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>More widows will be encouraged to seek employment with higher wages and salaries. A total of 155 widows benefitted from this measure during 2014.</p>
	<p>Pensioners whose pension does not exceed the national minimum wage will not be taxable</p> <p>Pensioners will be receiving their pension in full without any tax deductions in their pension if it does not exceed the National Minimum Wage.</p> <p>Status: Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>This will lead to an increase in the net amount of pension. Circa 15,000 pensioners will benefit from this measure.</p>
	<p>Tax-exempt Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) on minimum wage and pensions which are currently not taxed</p> <p>Persons on the minimum wage who receive the COLA will be exempt from paying tax on the increase. This will apply equally to pensioners who at present are not paying tax.</p> <p>This measure came into force as of 1st January 2014.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>The impact of this measure can only be effectively gauged in the last quarter of 2015 when the relative tax returns for the year 2014 are processed.</p>
	<p>Grant of € 300 to elderly persons over the age of 75 years</p> <p>The € 300 grant is given to those people over the age of 75 and who are still living in the community.</p> <p>Status: Completed and ongoing</p>	<p>This will encourage elderly people over the age of 75 to continue to live in their homes and in the community. During 2014, a total of 28,270 senior citizens benefitted from this measure.</p>
	<p>Introduction of Social Support Workers within Aġenzija Appoġġ</p> <p>The measure aims to support social workers in tasks not requiring social work intervention or to accompany social workers where and when required to have more manageable caseloads and increase contact with service users aiming for a more holistic service to its clients.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>The increase in workforce will help through the increase in referrals and will ease ongoing burden on workers and waiting lists which ultimately affect the quality and effectiveness of the service users. The introduction of social support workers and the increase of one social worker with the team led to the waiting list being decreased from 66 to around 28. The target to reduce the waiting list of CPS by an average of 60% has been superseded.</p>
	<p>Extension of the Home Help Service Scheme</p> <p>The Home Help Service is a domiciliary service which supports older persons or persons with a disability to continue living in the community.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>This scheme will address the current waiting lists due to the high demand for this service.</p> <p>In view of this increased demand, during September 2014 a direct order for an extra 600 weekly service hours has been issued till the end of December 2014. The formulation of a new tender for the provision of Home Help Service is in progress.</p>

	<p>Increase the number of clients attending Day Centres by 200</p> <p>Day Centres provide respite and support to persons with intellectual disabilities. These persons with intellectual disabilities are provided with structured programmes focusing on independent living, therapeutic methods and teaching employability skills.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>There are currently 200 persons waiting to be housed in these day centres. Through this measure these persons will be given the possibility attend these day centres.</p> <p>At the end of December 2014, the waiting list has been reduced to 68.</p>
	<p>Financial support to first time buyers</p> <p>A one-time exemption from the payment of duty on the first € 150,000 of the price of immovable property will be granted to first time buyers acquiring immovable property in 2014. This measure started on 1st January 2014 and is expected to run up till December 2014.</p> <p>As announced in Budget 2015, this measure has been extended to 30th June 2015.</p> <p>Status: Completed</p>	<p>During the year 2014, 3,964 persons availed themselves of this measure.</p>
	<p>CURE Programme to upgrade housing estates</p> <p>The Catch-Up Repairs and Embellishment (CURE) Programme is aimed at upgrading a number of older housing blocks and their surrounding areas in various localities.</p> <p>Status: On Track</p>	<p>This measure will enhance the current reactive maintenance and repairs programme and will result in the upgrading of whole blocks and their surrounding areas. Tenders have already been issued for the upgrading of Corradino Flats in Paola, Blocks A, B and C, Dar ir-Risq in Senglea and four blocks in Triq Erba' Mwieżeb in St. Paul's Bay. The latter has also been awarded.</p>
New/updated commitments in relation to the 2020 targets (per target)		
Employment Target	<p>Access to Employment</p> <p>Persons who are at a distance from the labour market, namely the long-term unemployed, inactive persons, unskilled youths and persons with a disability, tend to be regarded by employers as having serious productive shortcomings that do not justify the full wage linked to the job. Older workers looking for work tend to experience the same fate. In order to compensate for any productivity shortcomings, employers would receive wage subsidies which make up for the productivity lost. Wage subsidies are usually a percentage of the wage bill and last for a number of months.</p> <p>The measure was announced in Budget 2015, and implementation is planned to start in March 2015.</p>	<p>This Programme will facilitate the integration of disadvantaged, severely disadvantaged and disabled persons in the labour market.</p> <p>It is estimated that circa 317 individuals will benefit from this scheme on an annual basis.</p>
	<p>In-Work Benefit</p> <p>The In-Work Benefit scheme will provide additional income to families who are in employment and are on low income. In addition, this scheme is an integral part of the 'Make Work Pay' principle, which encourages inactive or social benefit beneficiaries to enter into the labour market.</p>	<p>This measure will lessen dependency and will attract more social benefit beneficiaries into employment, thus reducing the at-risk-of-poverty rate by 0.9 percentage points.</p>
	<p>Tapering of social security benefits for Single Parents</p> <p>Single parents on social assistance used to retain their benefits if earning less than € 56.94 a week. This was leading to some abuse and also precarious employment. Therefore, as from 1st January 2015, this system was replaced with tapering of benefits. In this way, single parents who become employed either on a part-time basis but working not less than 10 hours per week, or on a full-time basis paid according to the National Minimum Hourly Rate, will retain 65% of social assistance for the first year, 45% for the second year and 25% for the third year. Their employers will also benefit from 25% of the benefit for the first three years.</p>	<p>This measure is expected to encourage more single parents to seek employment in order to substantially improve their income and not become dependent on social benefits. This in turn will increase the overall active labour force participation.</p>
	<p>Increasing the maternity leave benefit rate</p> <p>As from 1st January 2015, women in employment will benefit from an increase in the rate of the maternity leave benefit for the four weeks of maternity leave covering from the 15th to the 18th week. This rate will increase from € 160 a week to a rate equivalent to the National Minimum Wage.</p>	<p>This measure will provide a further incentive for women to enter and stay in the labour market.</p>
	<p>Increasing the maternity benefit rate for self-occupied women</p> <p>Women who are self-employed used to receive the same maternity benefit as women who are not employed. This is no longer the case as from 1st January 2015, women who are self-employed will have their maternity benefit rate for their 14 weeks of maternity leave increased to the National Minimum Wage.</p>	<p>This measure will encourage more women to engage in the labour market as self-employed.</p>
	<p>Extending Maternity Leave Benefit in cases of Adoption of Children</p> <p>As part of the family friendly policies, the leave benefit given in cases of adoption of children will be extended to be of the same length as that granted to cases of maternity.</p>	<p>Parents who adopt children will enjoy the same family friendly measures as those who utilise maternity leave. This will provide a further incentive for women adopting children to enter the labour market.</p>
	<p>Fiscal Incentives for employers employing disabled persons</p> <p>Through this measure, employers who employ disabled persons will be exempted from paying social security contributions on behalf of the disabled employees. The employer can also be eligible to claim a tax deduction on profits equivalent to the disabled person's wage. The maximum credit cannot exceed € 4,500 for each disabled employee.</p>	<p>Since through this measure, employers will be more encouraged to give opportunities to disabled persons, it is expected that there will be an increase in the number of disabled persons in the labour market.</p>
	<p>Revision of the law regulating Industrial and Employment Relations</p> <p>Additions and amendments are being proposed to the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (EIRA) to improve the rights of workers. This process will be carried out in conjunction with social partners and the Malta Council for Economic and Social</p>	<p>Better and effective regulations governing the rights of workers.</p>

	<p>Development (MCESD). The objective for this measure is to avoid any equivocations in respect of basic employment rights, obligations and procedures.</p> <p>Implementing the 2% law</p> <p>The aim of this measure is to encourage the employment of persons with disability. The Government will be enforcing the law whereby 2% of employees in a company (employing more than 20 employees) are persons with disability. Those companies, who will not employ the legal minimum of persons with disability, will be asked to make an annual contribution of €2,400 for each disabled person he or she should be employing.</p> <p>Changes to the ETC Register</p> <p>Through the use of new IT tools, a Virtual Labour Market will be created where employers and those seeking employment will have a virtual meeting place. Matching will no longer be done solely on the basis of individual preferences but will start to take into consideration individual skills and aptitudes. This measure will contribute towards having a more efficient public employment services and a more effective system of matching.</p> <p>Work Programme</p> <p>Making work pay is one of the flagships of the National Employment Policy and the National Budget for 2015. It is recognised that support services for the inactive and the long-term unemployed (particularly those who are dependent on social benefits) to find employment need to be strengthened. A targeted intervention through a Programme focusing specifically on the long-term unemployed and the inactive will be offered to ensure that those people who are furthest away from the labour market receive the skills and competences needed to participate actively in the formal economy. To this effect, five private providers will be made responsible for the training and placements of participants.</p>	<p>It is expected that there will be an increase in the number of persons with a disability to be in employment.</p> <p>Both jobseeker and employer can fulfil their requirements online without the need for ETC's intervention (except when it comes to vetting of job seeker profiles and employer vacancies). ETC will be providing a platform where the jobseeker and employer can meet, thus allowing ETC to spare its human resources on more meaningful activities such as assisting persons requiring more targeted intervention and persons who for some reason do not manage to access this system.</p> <p>Through this measure, it is expected that the inactive and long-term unemployed, in particular women over the age of 40 become more employable and are placed in the labour market.</p>
Energy	<p>New Legal Framework for the grid integration of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Units</p> <p>A New Legal Notice establishing a tariff for the grid integration of CHP Unit has been enacted. This will not have any budget impact and electricity sold to the grid shall be paid at the marginal cost of electricity (for Enemalta).</p>	<p>This measure is expected to incentivise the deployment of CHP units, in line with Malta's National Energy Efficiency Action Plan.</p>
	<p>Updating of Current Feed-In Tariff legislation to allow for installations of different RES/CHP technologies within the same site</p> <p>Current feed-in tariff legislation has been updated to allow for multiple RES/CHP installations at the same site and covered by different support contracts.</p>	<p>Consumers are now to be paid a feed-in tariff for the different RES/CHP technologies, thus making investment in such technologies more attractive.</p>
	<p>Grant Scheme on the Purchase of New Environment-Friendly Vehicles</p> <p>The objective of this measure is to reduce the number of old M1 motor vehicles aged ten years or over from the road thus reducing pollution.</p>	<p>It is expected that this measure will reduce local air pollution and reliance on fossil fuels. Around 600 people will benefit from the scheme and will be given a grant of between € 700 and € 900.</p>
	<p>Incentive for use of school transport</p> <p>Parents whose children attend private or church schools will be eligible for a tax rebate of up to a maximum of € 150 on the cost of the transport if they make use of school transport. This should encourage more parents to make use of school transport for their children rather than taking their children to school themselves.</p>	<p>It is envisaged that with this measure more parents will make use of school transport for their children thus reducing road-traffic.</p>
	<p>Energy Audits for Enterprises</p> <p>Energy efficiency is one of the three pillars of EU 2020 targets, that is, the achievement of 20% energy savings by 2020. To achieve such target the EU Council and Parliament approved Directive 27/2012 - The Energy Efficiency Directive (EED). Energy Audits are a tool specifically mentioned in Article 8 of this Directive. The EED is transposed through LN 196 of 2014. The main elements to this legislation related to Article 8 are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obligation for Non-SMEs to carry out energy audits by the end of 2015; • Encouragement for SMEs to carry out energy audits; • Obligation for the country to bring to the attention of SMEs, including through their respective representative intermediary organisations, concrete examples of how energy management systems could help their businesses; • Obligation for the country to promote certified energy auditors. 	<p>It is expected that this measure will contribute towards the setting up of a framework for Energy Auditor Certification, guidance for the implementation of Energy Audits by non-SMEs and a quality verification system for Energy Audits by non-SMEs. It will also contribute towards the promotion of Energy Audits in SMEs. Thus, it is expected that all enterprises will carry out quality energy audits.</p>
	<p>Grant on purchases of bicycles and pedelec bicycles</p> <p>The aim of this measure is to encourage the use of bicycles as these are a healthier option and are a means of transport that reduces both pollution and traffic. Eligible applicants may apply for this once-only grant of 15.25% on the purchase price of the bicycle subject to a maximum grant of € 70 in the case of a non- mechanised bicycle and a maximum grant of € 150 in the case of a pedelec bicycle.</p>	<p>It is expected that this measure will contribute towards the reduction of road traffic, a decrease in pollution and an increase in physical exercise.</p>
	<p>Implementation of CCTV cameras along the road network</p> <p>The objective of this measure is to implement twenty-seven Intelligent Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Cameras and five Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Cameras across critical road section. The aim is to build a link between the CCTV cameras deployed across the network and the Traffic Control Centre for real time monitoring of passenger vehicles, heavy vehicles and public transportation vehicles.</p>	<p>In conjunction with other intelligent traffic management systems, the expected outcome is to improve internal mobility across the road network.</p>
Education	<p>Reduction in VAT when buying digital books</p> <p>The Government will be introducing a reduced VAT rate on e-books sold on magnetic media.</p>	<p>This measure will reduce the costs for the purchaser of e-books on magnetic media, thus making such books more accessible.</p>

	<p>This measure came into force as of 1st January 2015.</p> <p>Malta Book Fund</p> <p>This measure will create the incentives to ensure that the publication of books of a literary, historical and artistic nature in Maltese and about Malta continues to increase in a sustainable manner. It aims to ensure that the quantity of these publications keeps increasing. It will also aim to increase participation in foreign book fairs and to promote Maltese Books in the global market via foreign book fairs. The National Book Council defined eligibility of books for the consideration of book subsidies from the Malta Book Fund on the same definition adopted via the term 'Melitensia' which is also the same definition adopted by the Malta Libraries Act, Chapter 511, Article 7 (2b). Thus, eligible books for funding are books, electronic or not, published in Malta, or by Maltese authors, or about Malta, or in the Maltese language, or about any aspect of Maltese studies by any author.</p> <p>The measure is expected to start in April 2015.</p>	<p>By means of this measure, more people will be encouraged to read. Readership will also increase.</p>
	<p>Construction and Modernisation of Schools</p> <p>From an educational perspective it is imperative that all colleges have educational buildings that respond to today's needs, both from an educational and social point of view. In this regard, during Budget 2015, Government announced that, through the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools, work will be starting on the construction of two new schools in Dingli and Kirkop. These are expected to receive their intake of secondary school students by September 2016, that is, the scholastic year 2016/2017.</p> <p>There are various other projects planned and include new primary schools in Marsascula, Mosta and St. Paul's Bay, amongst others.</p>	<p>With the creation and introduction of the college and co-ed systems, the Education Directorates analysed the current school building stock so as to ensure that all school children are provided with modern, well-equipped and challenging school environments that will facilitate their learning processes and help them develop to their full potential. Hence why the Government is undertaking these projects.</p>
	<p>The introduction of the provision of Sabbatical Leave</p> <p>This measure will provide a paid study leave scheme for officers within the teaching class who would like to pursue professional development opportunities.</p> <p>Officers within the teaching class regularly request leave of absence to further their studies in the field of education. Only a very small number had the possibility of benefitting from long paid study leave and the granting of the paid leave was demand driven due to lack of educational psychologists. A considerable number of officers benefitted from short periods of paid study leave (two to six days) in a scholastic year to be able to attend study weekends in connection with part-time distance courses they were reading. A similar provision is in place for officers benefitting from ERASMUS+/Council of Europe grants to attend short (usually three to five days) in-service courses, seminars, workshops or conferences.</p>	<p>During its first year of implementation it is expected that around 20 officers will benefit from the long term paid study leave.</p>
	<p>Stipends exempt from income tax</p> <p>Financial benefits paid to full time post secondary, vocational and tertiary students as outlined in Subsidiary Legislation 327.178 will have no tax deductions and this irrespective of other income.</p>	<p>It is expected that there will be a marginal increase in the amount of students who work on a part time basis whilst studying.</p>
	<p>Stipends increased yearly with a percentage rate of the established COLA increase</p> <p>The objective of this measure is of increasing the amount of stipends payable to students so as to reflect the established cost of living index on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>Students will benefit from this increase to the cost of living like any other citizen.</p>
	<p>Youth Village at Umberto Colosso, Santa Venera</p> <p>Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ (AŻ) has published a Draft National Youth Policy Framework (2015-2020) with a view to publishing and implementing a new National youth Policy as of January 2015. AŻ assumed responsibility for Youth. Inc and is in the process of relocating to Umberto Colosso and developing a Youth Village. Currently, the Administration of Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ has moved to the administration block in the new premises of Umberto Colosso. Workshops have been assigned to Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, the work on the yard shall commence in the next few weeks. The concept of the Youth Village shall start operating from September of this year. The aim and purpose of the youth village is to create a physical, administrative and learning environment and culture that will attract both young people and those who work with and for them in meeting their needs and fulfilling their aspirations.</p>	<p>This measure will give a more focused, coordinated and cost effective approach to meeting the needs and aspirations of young people.</p>
<p>POVERTY</p>	<p>Relief from Income Tax on Minimum Wage and for Pensioners</p> <p>The Government is committed not to tax minimum wage earners. Thus, the present tax ceiling will be raised to take the COLA into consideration. Furthermore, pensioners whose pension does not exceed the minimum wage will also be exempted from paying income tax.</p> <p>This measure came into force as of 1st January 2015.</p> <p>Fiscal Incentives for Trusts and Foundations set up to Help Disabled Persons</p> <p>A number of fiscal incentives for Trusts and Foundations will be introduced, with the aim of helping disabled persons. Some of these incentives will include exemption of capital gains taxes as well as the elimination of stamp duty on documents and transfer of residential property which is the residence of the parents and is initially transferred to the Trust or Foundation for disabled children, and which is then inherited by siblings or heirs on the decease of the disabled person.</p> <p>This measure came into force as of 1st January 2015.</p> <p>Donations to Malta Community Chest Fund</p> <p>Companies donating not less than € 2,000 to the Malta Community Chest Fund (MCCF) will get 50% of the amount donated deducted from their 2015 taxable income.</p> <p>This measure came into force as of 1st January 2015.</p>	<p>Persons within the minimum wage income threshold as well as pensioners whose pension does not exceed the minimum wage will incur no income tax.</p> <p>This measure will support, through the tax regime, those Trusts and Foundations set up to help disabled persons.</p> <p>This measure will increase the amounts collected by the Malta Community Chest Fund.</p>

<p>Setting Up of a Commission for Human Rights and Equality</p> <p>A Commission for Human Rights and Equality will be replacing the existing National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE). The Government will be launching a White Paper that will serve as the basis of this Commission in 2015. This Commission would address identified gaps in the field of human rights in a bid to ensure that Malta has an internationally accredited Human Rights and Equality Commission. It is this Government's belief that both the current legislative and infrastructural frameworks require reinforcement as they fall short of providing Malta with the human rights and equality mechanism that it deserves.</p>	<p>The establishment of the Human Rights Commission.</p>
<p>NGO North Hub</p> <p>The project on the construction of a new hub for voluntary organisations shall be launched during 2015. In accordance with Government policy this will improve the efficiency of the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector in support of the voluntary sector which complements the work carried out by the Office of the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations.</p>	<p>The NGO North Hub will serve as a meeting base for various voluntary organisations as well as provide them with various training programmes. The Hub will also cooperate with the Qawra Leap Centre in providing services to the community.</p>
<p>Tapering of social benefits after marriage</p> <p>As from 1st January 2015, a single parent who is receiving social benefits and gets married, or forms a civil union, with a person in employment, will no longer lose entitlement to social benefits immediately after the union. Instead, the social assistance will be reduced gradually over a period of three years. During the first year, the parent will receive 65% of the social assistance, in the second year 45% and in the third year 25%.</p>	<p>This ongoing measure will encourage more social security beneficiaries to form a family either through marriage or a civil union. Furthermore, since single parents who get married with an employed person will only be entitled to social benefits for three years, this will in turn decrease the amount of paid social benefits.</p>
<p>Paying of missing social security contributions</p> <p>As from 1st January 2015, persons born between 1950 and 1956 and who are still in employment but by the time they reach their retirement age would not have made enough contributions to reach the National Minimum Pension, will be given the opportunity to pay back a maximum of five years contributions so that they will qualify for a minimum pensions once they retire. These years do not need to be the five years preceding the claim.</p>	<p>Better pension rates on retirement that will lead to a better living.</p>
<p>Compensation for Paid National Insurance Contributions</p> <p>The objective behind this measure is to compensate a number of workers, in particular women, who worked for a number of years during which they paid their contributions, but due to various reasons and circumstances, they did not pay enough to qualify for the minimum pension. Therefore, as from 1st January 2015, those persons born between 1941 and 1953 and who do not have a pension will receive a yearly lump sum of money. In fact, an annual fixed amount of € 100 will be paid to those who had paid contributions for one year or more but less than five years, and € 200 to those who had paid contributions for five years or more.</p>	<p>It is expected that 11,000 persons will benefit from this measure.</p>
<p>Child Supplement</p> <p>This new benefit is intended as an income supplement to families whose household income is less than € 11,000 yearly, to help them against child poverty. € 400 will be paid for every child up to the third child and € 200 from the fourth child onwards. The award of this child supplement will be paid against the condition that children have at least 95% of school attendance, regular medical check-ups and the child's participation in sport and cultural activities, with the aim of improving the children's education and psychosocial health.</p>	<p>It is estimated that 22,000 children in 9,000 families will benefit from this measure. It is expected that school attendance will also increase. The effect of this supplement is envisaged to be analysed at the end of the year 2015.</p>
<p>Full disability pension</p> <p>As from 1st January 2015, disabled persons in employment who earn more than the National Minimum Wage will still receive a full disability pension. This was not the case before, whereby for a disabled person to continue earning the full pension, his/her wage did not have to exceed the minimum wage. This restriction was removed because one's disability does not vanish according to the wage.</p>	<p>This measure will upgrade the social benefits of disabled persons. Furthermore, it is expected that there will be an increase in the number of disabled persons entering the labour market.</p>
<p>Housing for Persons with disability</p> <p>The primary aim of this project is to provide peace of mind to the parents of persons with disability by ensuring that after their decease, the State and society will care for their children should they be unable to lead an independent life. Through this project, the first ten residential homes in the community for disabled persons will be developed. This project will be spread over a period of three years ending 30th May of the year 2018.</p>	<p>It is envisaged that approximately three homes per year will be developed. In 2015, it is expected that infrastructural works will be concluded in three homes, one in Siġġiewi, one in Zabbar and another one in Victoria, Gozo.</p>
<p>Appointment of Persons with a Disability on Government Boards/Committees/Commissions</p> <p>Government has adopted the concept of user involvement. Every public institution and in particular those that provide direct services to persons with a disability, need to have a structure in place that engages the users of the respective services in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation of the programmes provided. Through this measure, the voice of disabled persons in the country's governance will be strengthened while at the same time concrete activism is promoted among disabled persons. This measure is to be implemented across all Ministries.</p>	<p>This measure will make certain that persons with a disability contribute to the policy direction of these Government structures and that the best interests of persons with a disability and their families are safeguarded in the development of policy and of organisational direction. This measure will also guarantee that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) implementation phase following this country's ratification is being adhered to and at the same time provide a satellite of information to the Focal Point Committee. Lastly, this measure will put forward a clear message within these Government structures that development in the respective sectors needs to ensure social inclusion and bring about change and transformation.</p>
<p>Repair and Embellishment works on the residences of Aġenzija Sapport</p> <p>Through this measure, seven residences for persons with disabilities of Aġenzija Sapport will be upgraded and improved. These residences are in constant need of repair and upkeep to offer the best quality of life possible to the residents. This measure will run from March till December 2015 and has an allocated budget of € 100,000.</p>	<p>These repair and embellishment works aim to decrease the health and safety risks inside the premises; increase the well-being of the residents; bring the residences in conformity with UNCRPD; and lead to better/practical use of space.</p>
<p>Embellishment Works in three Housing Estates</p> <p>This project involves the upgrade and enhancement of the common parts and surrounding areas of three Government/Housing Authority blocks in St Paul's Bay, Paola and Senglea. This project has an allocated budget of € 600,000. It is envisaged that works will end at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Through this project, 83 units will be embellished. The enhancement of these blocks will have a positive social effect on the communities living in these Housing Estates and will also provide a better standard of living and a healthier environment to the residents living in these Housing Estates.</p>

	<p>Policy on Integration</p> <p>The Government is working on an integration policy which should lead to a reduction in the difficulties posed by social exclusion and to improve the relationship between Maltese and foreign communities. Moreover, a Directorate for Integration will be set up to develop strategies to achieve the objectives of the Government in respect of civil liberties and equality, anti-discrimination policy and integration of immigrants.</p>	<p>This Strategy will help in the successful integration of third country nationals (TCNs) in Malta. Another milestone will be to have a Director for Integration who answers to the Permanent Secretary and to have the rest of the employees within the Directorate in place to work on the mandate proposed.</p>
	<p>Retirement Home in Gozo</p> <p>Statistical trends (similar to Malta) indicate that Gozo is shifting towards an ageing population. Hence, a need is being felt for caring facilities within the community or long term residence in order to provide for those instances where family members are not living in the community and/or have other commitments. Therefore, this service will provide residential care consisting of a physically and emotionally safe and secure environment to elderly persons with a disability who can no longer cope with living in their own homes. The addition of a special unit for dementia needs is currently being considered.</p>	<p>This measure will improve the quality of life of the elderly persons with a disability and will cater for the demand for residential care facilities. It will have indirect benefits to the economy such as more people being able to work since they would not be constrained anymore to give up their jobs in order to take care of these persons.</p>