



Performance Audit

Employment Opportunities for Registered Disabled Persons

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List of Abbreviations

BTG	Bridging the Gap
DSS	Department of Social Security
EAP	Employment Aid Programme
ESF	European Social Fund
ETC	Employment and Training Corporation
EU	European Union
IT	Information Technology
KNPD	National Commission Persons with Disability
MA	Managing Authority
MEA	Malta Employers' Association
MQC	Malta Qualifications Council
NAO	National Audit Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSO	National Statistics Office
PAP	Personal Action Plan
RDP	Registered Disabled Person



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. This performance audit sought to determine the extent to which initiatives being undertaken by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) to enhance the employment opportunities of disabled persons are resulting in an increased, sustainable participation rate in the labour market. This report focused on the period 2006 to 2010.

2. This study evaluated the degree to which:

- i. the ETC's organisational structure is conducive to improve the employment prospects of registered disabled persons (RDPs);
- ii. professional advice is provided to RDPs in order to facilitate access to the labour market;
- iii. the knowledge base of RDPs is increased whilst registering as unemployed;
- iv. job exposure schemes introduce RDPs to the labour market.

3. For the purpose of this report, this audit focused on RDPs who were seeking the ETC's assistance and were listed in the Corporation's Part I Unemployment Register throughout the aforementioned period. The number of RDPs listed therein totalled 1,263 persons.

Employment of RDPs

4. The participation rate of registered disabled persons (RDPs) in the Maltese labour market is lower than that in other European Union Member States. Moreover, the legislative requirement stipulating a minimum employment quota of RDPs with Maltese firms employing more than twenty persons is not being fully complied with. The economic downturn experienced in 2008 and 2009

had a greater effect on the employment opportunities of disabled persons than their mainstream counterparts.

5. The challenges experienced by disabled persons whilst in employment may, to varying degrees, influence RDPs' ability to retain employment. The job retention rate of persons with disabilities, on average, tends to be less than two years (544 days). This statistic is based on the average employment of 578 out of 1,263 RDPs listed in the ETC's Part I Unemployment Register during the period 2006 to 2010.

6. The employment opportunities of disabled persons are also influenced by various other factors which are considered to pertain to the ETC's external environment. A skills gap exists between the educational standards demanded by the labour market and those attained by RDPs, which tend to be lower than that of their mainstream counterparts. Physical accessibility and socio-economic issues, which may arise through ill-founded perceptions on disability, further hinder RDP employment. Additionally, some disabled persons may opt to forego employment due to concerns related to reductions in social benefits received. In this regard, Malta Budget 2012 sought to address the issues brought about by the benefit trap.

7. The ETC's business plan is aimed at empowering, assisting and training job seekers to facilitate their entry or re-entry into the active employment market, promoting workforce development through skills and competency development, as well as assisting employers in their recruitment and training needs. Towards this end, the ETC sets specific objectives and targets which are distributed across the various departments and units within the Corporation. However, the following issues hinder the ETC from optimising its efforts to improve the employment prospects of disabled persons:

- i. The ETC needs comprehensive research which would enable it to better address labour market gaps. Additionally, the Corporation has not studied

potential labour market placement areas suitable for RDPs.

- ii. The availability of research on RDPs is further hindered as the Corporation needs the appropriate automated report generating mechanisms through its Information Technology (IT) systems. As a result, specific analysis, such as employment tracer studies, tend to either involve considerable manual input or requests for information extraction have to be made to the IT unit.
- iii. The ETC is not in a position to fully determine the abilities of RDPs seeking employment. Currently, the ETC collates information related to a person's disability through medical and occupational therapy assessments. However, such assessments do not appropriately define the degree of disability, and consequently, the individual's abilities cannot be accurately determined. Such circumstances arise since to date an ability assessment centre has not yet been established.
- iv. Performance attainments of initiatives undertaken are only formally analysed in cases involving European Union (EU) funded projects. However, recommendations proposed in the relative evaluation reports such as the provision of Job Coaching throughout employment, have not been fully implemented.
- v. Locally funded programmes are monitored by the ETC but are not subject to an in-depth analysis. Such circumstances arise since the Corporation lacks the resources to undertake such exercises.

ETC Initiatives to improve the employability of RDPs

8. The ETC aims to improve the employment opportunities of disabled persons through various initiatives. These services are provided by the RDP Unit within the Supported Employment Section. The Corporation utilises the registration period as a means of control over the receipt of unemployment benefits. More importantly, the ETC seeks to encourage unemployed persons to productively utilise registration periods to enhance their skills and knowledge base. It is to be noted, that on average RDPs spend longer periods registering in the Part I Unemployment Register than their mainstream counterparts.

9. The caseload relating to personal advisory services to RDPs is showing an increasing trend. This is associated with a greater awareness of the ETC's services. However, the audit trail related to RDP advisory services is

generally limited. Such a situation is considered as a risk to business continuity.

10. Despite scheduling courses well in advance, the participation rate by RDPs in ETC courses amounts to around 60 per cent. However, the successful completion rate of courses where RDP attendance was above the stipulated minimum number of sessions stands at around 90 per cent. Nevertheless, only around a quarter of RDPs participating in courses held in 2009 were subsequently listed as employed in ETC records, following one year from course completion.

11. The outcome, in terms of employment, of work exposure and subsidised employment schemes was positive. These schemes were seen as significantly increasing the employability prospects of RDPs. Following the completion of the Bridging the Gap (BTG) Scheme, nearly two thirds of participating RDPs managed to find and retain employment for a six month period, within a year of completion of the work exposure scheme. Although insufficient time has elapsed to comprehensively evaluate the outcome of the Employment Aid Programme (EAP), there are strong indications that the programme targets will be attained. This is based on current participation levels and the average employment period under the scheme.

Overall Conclusions

12. This performance audit determined that generally the initiatives undertaken by the ETC collectively tend to positively influence the employment opportunities of disabled persons. However, when these initiatives are individually analysed, areas for potential improvements emerge.

13. Currently, the ETC's organisation structure provides for a specific unit to deal with issues related to supported employment, including persons with disability. Such a structure was deemed to provide specialised services but it did not fully embrace the 'inclusion' principle. This organisational arrangement was primarily centred on registrants. Consequently, this limited the Corporation's focus on employers to the detriment of further enhancing the link to the labour market.

14. The ETC's organisational structure also led to various logistical problems for RDPs since services were mainly provided through the Corporation's main premises at Hal Far. Moreover, such a structure was not conducive to cater for the RDPs' increased demands and the implementation of further programmes aimed at enhancing employment opportunities. This structure also impinged on the Corporation's management practices whereby reporting, programme evaluations and the sustaining of robust audit trails were not always given due attention.

15. The various initiatives and services provided by the ETC have collectively improved employment opportunities for disabled persons. However, when these initiatives were collectively and individually analysed, areas for potential improvements emerged. Contrary to the situation pertaining to mainstream applicants, training courses provided by the Corporation are not significantly contributing to the employment of RDPs. This is mainly due to the low importance allocated by participants. On the other hand, the impact in terms of employment of work exposure schemes is highly evident. In the circumstances, the question arises as to whether the ETC is allocating the appropriate resources for broadening the participation rate.

16. The ETC is generally aware of its organisational constraints and their implications and is already planning to embark on a new strategic direction. This entails organisational structure changes and business process reengineering. The envisaged changes aim to optimise the Corporation's interface with clients and employers as well as optimising the use of resources at its disposal. These changes, in part, address many of the concerns observed through this performance audit. The envisaged restructuring exercise also provides the opportunity to address the strategic, management and operational concerns raised by this performance audit.

Recommendations

17. On the basis of the findings and conclusions emanating from this performance audit, the National Audit Office proposes the following recommendations.

- i. The ETC is encouraged to secure the resources required to implement its envisaged reorganisation. This reorganisation is seen to enhance the Corporation's efficiency and effectiveness levels to the benefit of its clients and stakeholders.
 - ii. The ETC's restructuring exercise is to consider the establishment of an ability assessment centre. Such facilities will enhance the information derived through occupational therapy assessments by determining the level and extent of disability. This will provide more accurate information relating to an individual's abilities and consequently, the suitability for specific types of jobs.
 - iii. The Corporation is also encouraged to strengthen its research function. This will facilitate labour market information gathering and analysis, while enabling the ETC to further utilise the client information at its disposal. Consequently, the Corporation will be in a better position to identify labour market requirements to address the potential skills and knowledge gaps of its clients accordingly.
- iv. The ETC is to upgrade its management information systems with regards to RDPs, which is a prerequisite for conducting more extensive research. Such an upgrade would entail more comprehensive report generating facilities and the capturing of information related to the labour market. The strengthening of management information systems will increase the potential for studies and evaluations of programmes undertaken.
 - v. A concerted effort to ensure that the education and skills level of registered disabled persons match those required by the labour market. Such an effort requires the input of all relevant stakeholders, namely Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders.
 - vi. Consideration is to be given to fully integrate the disability registers maintained by the ETC, Department of Social Security (DSS) and National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD). At the outset, this entails that a single definition of disability is in place and embraced by all stakeholders. Apart from streamlining information and administration, this will facilitate and better harmonise the services provided by various entities.
 - vii. The ETC and the DSS should continue their efforts to centralise the medical assessments relating to disabled persons. This approach minimises the administrative burden of both organisations in cases where 'fitness for employment' needs to be determined. RDPs would also benefit since they would only be subjected to one assessment, which would be applicable for both DSS and ETC purposes.
 - viii. Cooperation agreements between the ETC and other entities involved with the welfare of disabled persons are to be sustained, and if possible broadened. These agreements ensure that RDPs receive the skills required to enable sustainable participation in the labour market.
 - ix. The ETC is to fine-tune its programme target and objective setting process. Targets and objectives are to increasingly consider prevailing economic scenarios. This approach will render predetermined targets and objectives more realistic.
 - x. The evaluation of programmes and other initiatives, such as courses, should encompass the reasons to justify deviations from predetermined targets. All programmes and initiatives should also be benchmarked against outcomes and impacts, namely in terms of employment. Moreover,

evaluations should be extended to include locally funded measures, such as the BTG.

- xii. The ETC is to review the outcomes of training courses provided to RDPs. Such a review is to

determine the resulting variance between course bookings and actual participation. Moreover, such a review is also to determine the extent to which the courses are optimally addressing labour market and participants' requirements.

Chapter 1



Courtesy of Me2! Project

Audit Focus

Chapter 1 – Audit Focus

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The participation rate of registered disabled persons (RDPs) in the Maltese labour market is lower than that in other European Union Member States. Moreover, the legislative requirement stipulating a minimum employment quota of RDPs with Maltese firms employing more than twenty persons is not being fully complied with.

1.1.2 This performance audit sought to determine the extent to which initiatives being undertaken by the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) to enhance the employment opportunities of RDPs are resulting in an increased, sustainable participation rate in the labour market. The ETC's initiatives in this regard mainly relate to providing employment advice through its RDP Unit within the Supported Employment Section, offering job placements and training opportunities with the ultimate aim of increasing the participation rate of RDPs within the labour market. During 2010 the ETC's expenditure to implement RDPs related initiatives was estimated to total €323,260.

1.2 Audit Objectives

1.2.1 In order to determine the degree of success of the ETC's initiatives in providing employment opportunities to RDPs, various lines of investigations were undertaken. These are reflected in the following audit objectives, which sought to determine the extent to which:

- i. the ETC's organisational structure is conducive to improve the employment prospects of RDPs;
- ii. professional advice is provided to RDPs in order to facilitate access to the labour market;
- iii. the knowledge base of RDPs is increased whilst registering as unemployed; and

- iv. job exposure schemes introduce RDPs to the labour market.

1.2.2 In order to attain the above objectives, this audit was concerned with the review of ETC initiatives relating to RDPs undertaken during the period 2006 to 2010. These include training courses, the job exposure and placement schemes Bridging the Gap (BTG) and the Employment Aid Programme (EAP) respectively.

1.2.3 For the purpose of this report, this audit focused on RDPs who were seeking the ETC's assistance and were listed in the Corporation's Part I Unemployment Register throughout the aforementioned period. The number of RDPs listed therein totalled 1,263 persons.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The National Audit Office (NAO) adopted various methodologies in the conduct of this audit. This included a literature review of various reports related to the subject matter. For this purpose, the NAO mainly reviewed various ETC annual reports, statistics compiled by the National Statistics Office (NSO) and the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD). These reports enabled the NAO to collate information regarding the number of RDPs seeking employment and initiatives undertaken by the ETC to enhance the employment opportunities. Additionally the literature review highlighted various constraints limiting the participation rate of these persons in the labour market. A selected bibliography is found in Appendix IV.

1.3.2 This audit entailed reviewing the data collated and maintained by the ETC regarding the registration and employment of RDPs. This data included information relating to any training as well as job exposure and placement schemes undertaken by disabled persons throughout the period under review.

1.3.3 Interviews were held with key stakeholders. These included the ETC’s senior and line management involved in RDP related initiatives. Moreover various interviews were held with the KNPD, the Malta Employers Association (MEA) and the Department of Social Security (DSS). These interviews enabled the NAO to supplement the information derived through the literature review and data analysis.

1.4 Structure of the report

1.4.1 Following this introductory Chapter which outlined this audit’s focus and objectives, the ensuing Chapters will deal with the issues indicated hereunder.

1.4.2 Chapter 2 portrays a situation analysis of RDP employment. Through various statistics, this Chapter

aims to highlight the labour market trends and challenges relating to the employment of RDPs.

1.4.3 Chapter 3 discusses the role and organisational structure of the ETC. This Chapter evaluates the effectiveness of the ETC’s management practices with regards improving the employment opportunities of RDPs.

1.4.4 Chapter 4 evaluates the initiatives undertaken by the ETC during the Registration period. Such initiatives include the guidance offered to job seekers as well as the provision of various training courses and job exposure and placement schemes.

1.4.5 The report’s conclusions and recommendations are included in pages 7 to 9 of the Executive Summary.

Chapter 2

Disabled Persons and Employment



Chapter 2 – Disabled Persons and Employment

2.1 Background

2.1.1 The employment of persons with a disability is one of the realities faced by the labour market nowadays in Europe, where one out of every six European citizens of working age has a disability.¹

2.1.2 Participation of registered disabled persons (RDPs) in the local labour market is considerably lower at 14.6 per cent when compared to 48.0 per cent in the non-disabled population.² During the period 2006 to 2010, the number of jobs taken up by persons registered as disabled with the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) was significantly less than the employment opportunities successfully exploited by mainstream counterparts, Table 1 refers.

2.1.3 Malta is one of many European countries that maintain some form of employment quota obligation, in relation to disabled persons through the Persons with Disability (Employment) Act. This entails that companies employing 20 or more individuals are required to have two per cent of their workforce who are registered as disabled persons. However, this employment quota has not yet been attained in the public service.³ Following discussions with various stakeholders, including the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD), Malta Employers Association (MEA) and ETC officials, it emerges that this quota is also not being realised in the private sector. Efforts made in the past by ETC to enforce this quota were hampered by issues of definition of disability. Moreover, individuals may opt to not register as disabled persons, rendering the imposition of the quota more problematic to implement.

Table 1 : Take-up of new jobs (2006 to 2010)

Year	RDPs	Mainstream
2006	443	4,285
2007	482	3,931
2008	516	3,216
2009	328	3,549
2010	373	3,549

Source: ETC.

¹ The Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) 2009. *The labour market situation of disabled people in European countries and implementation of employment policies: a summary of evidence from country reports and research studies* [Online] page 12. Available at: <http://www.disability-europe.net/content/aned/media/ANED%20Task%206%20final%20report%20-%20final%20version%2017-04-09.pdf> [Accessed 18 August 2011].

² The Academic Network of European Disability experts (ANED) 2009. *Report on the employment of disabled people in European countries (Malta)* [Online] page 2. Available at: <http://www.disability-europe.net/content/aned/media/Malta%20-%20ANED%20country%20profile.pdf> [Accessed 18 August 2011].

³ Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Persuni b' Dizabilita', 2010, *National Policy on Disabled Persons and Employment*, [online] Available at: <http://www.knpd.org/pubs/pdf/Employment%20Policy%20EN.pdf> [Accessed 15 July 2011].

Various EU policies aim to increase the participation of RDPs in the labour market

2.1.4 Through a number of European Union (EU) and locally funded programmes, awareness campaigns are informing RDPs of potential routes available to facilitate participation in the labour market. It is to be noted that disabled persons are almost twice as likely to be inactive when compared to non-disabled persons.⁴

2.1.5 In view of the Europe 2020 strategy, a number of measures are being undertaken locally, aiming to increase the overall number of employed people between the age of 20 to 64 to 62.9 per cent.⁵ In this regard, disabled persons are benefiting from financial assistance and support from the EU. Such funding aims to encourage the participation of disabled persons in the labour market. Assistance is offered, with the intent of encouraging many disabled individuals to enter or re-enter the local job market.

2.1.6 Moreover, the EU has various other policies intended to improve the employment opportunities of disabled persons. One such initiative relates to the EU Disability Action Plan 2003 to 2010⁶, which has been developed to ensure that equal opportunities are presented to disabled persons. This plan aims to ensure that disability issues are addressed and integrated within all relevant European policies. In its Disability Action Plan, the EU contends that the disparity in RDP employment amongst Member States is due to various barriers present in everyday life that may prevent disabled persons from economic and social participation. Such barriers include: accessibility, inclusion, education and employment opportunities.

Disability Registers in Malta are not integrated

2.1.7 The 2005 census revealed that out of a total Maltese population of 404,962, the number of disabled persons stood at 23,848 (six per cent). In Malta, multiple registers are maintained by different entities holding various data pertaining to disabled persons, namely: KNPD, Department of Social Security (DSS) and the ETC.

2.1.8 KNPD is the local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) that offers its services to disabled individuals who opt to register within the Commission's list. KNPD collect statistics that are then used for the generation of policies relating to RDPs, whilst offering support to individuals and their families through the various services and activities organised to promote equal

opportunities and a better quality of life for disabled persons in Malta. As at end of 2010, 11,940 individuals were registered with the KNPD as disabled persons.

2.1.9 The DSS maintains a list of individuals that receive assistance through disability benefits due to the nature of their impairment. The assistance offered by the DSS in the form of disability benefits depends on the individual's level of disability, as tested by control measures within the department. Financial assistance is provided in the form of disability pensions to those persons who satisfy the Department's definition of disability, whilst individuals who do not meet this definition are provided social assistance following control checks such as Means Testing and Medical Assessments.

2.1.10 The ETC is the governmental entity entrusted with the task of providing employment and training services to individuals seeking employment in Malta and Gozo. The Supported Employment Section exists within the ETC to offer additional support to disadvantaged groups, such as former substance abusers, long term unemployed and registered disabled persons. Within this section a Registered Disabled Persons Unit exists to cater for the specific needs of disabled persons who are seeking employment. The ETC maintains a register of individuals who have identified themselves as having a disability and have undergone medical assessments within the ETC to certify their impairment levels. Such persons may be employed, seeking employment or inactive. Individuals voluntarily seek to register with the ETC as RDPs. Such registration is only approved following medical assessments carried out by medical professionals, who offer their services to the ETC's Supported Employment Section. As at end 2010, this register comprised 3,157 individuals.

2.1.11 The number of RDPs listed with the ETC gradually increased from 2006 to 2010. This phenomenon, however, could, in part, be also attributed to greater awareness by disabled persons of the ETC's RDP Register and the potential ensuing benefits – in the form of support and training schemes provided through the Corporation's RDP Unit within the Supported Employment Section.

2.1.12 Whilst each register or list is distinct from the other, individuals may be present in more than one of such registers. Such circumstances arise due to the different purposes of the registers. Consequently, statistics relating to RDPs are dispersed and relevant information may not

⁴ *People with disabilities* [Online]. Available at: European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/index_en.htm [Accessed 16 August 2011].

⁵ *Europe 2020 Targets* [Online]. Available at: European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/targets_en.pdf [Accessed 16 August 2011].

⁶ Commission Communication COM(2003) 650 of 30.10.2003, *'Equal opportunities for people with disabilities: A European Action Plan'* [Online]. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2003:0650:FIN:EN:PDF> [Accessed 17 August 2011].



be readily available to stakeholders and decision makers. In view of this situation, an exercise is currently being undertaken to merge the constituents of such lists into a single register, whereby the various data can be shared amongst the three entities (referred to in paragraph 2.1.7) to further assist in the collation of data in a centralised manner.

2.1.13 Conversely, individuals may opt not to form part of any of these registers. Unless a person with disability opts to be enlisted in the ETC’s RDP Register and seek the assistance of the RDP Unit within the Supported Employment Section of the ETC, the Corporation’s records would not identify such an individual as being disabled. Consequently, the ETC’s employment related statistics may understate the number of disabled persons seeking or presently in employment. Likewise, ETC contends that it has assisted much more persons with disability to find employment through job matching and training services than official figures show.

2.1.14 In the absence of the availability of comprehensive employment data, the National Audit Office (NAO) study bases its findings and conclusions on the RDP register maintained by the ETC. Thus the main limitation of this study is that it excludes individuals who opted not to disclose their disability to the ETC.

The ETC enters into cooperation agreements with other entities for the provision of specialised services

2.1.15 Not all disabled persons find employment by participating in a work exposure scheme or through the

ETC. Disabled persons are also offered support through other entities such as KNPD, Agenzija Sapport, Inspire and Richmond Foundation.

2.1.16 The ETC is the main body responsible for the provision of training and employment services to disabled persons. The other entities often collaborate with the ETC to offer employment and other training opportunities. Throughout the period 2006 to 2010, a collaboration agreement was in place with Inspire. However, such collaboration was terminated in 2008, due to funding and performance issues, but re-instated in 2011.

2.1.17 Agenzija Sapport is currently operating a ME2 programme financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), under Operational Programme II, whereby ETC is one of the operating partners. However, this programme commenced in the late stages of 2009. The first work placements were only made in December of the following year. Since this audit is focusing on the period 2006 to 2010, it would have been premature to measure the success or failure of such programme as the initial placements were being made in December 2010.

Employment levels of RDPs has generally declined in recent years

2.1.18 According to ETC records, the number of jobs held by RDPs, as at end 2010 totalled 1,693. This employment level constitutes a decline of 14 per cent over RDP employment in 2008, Figure 1 refers.

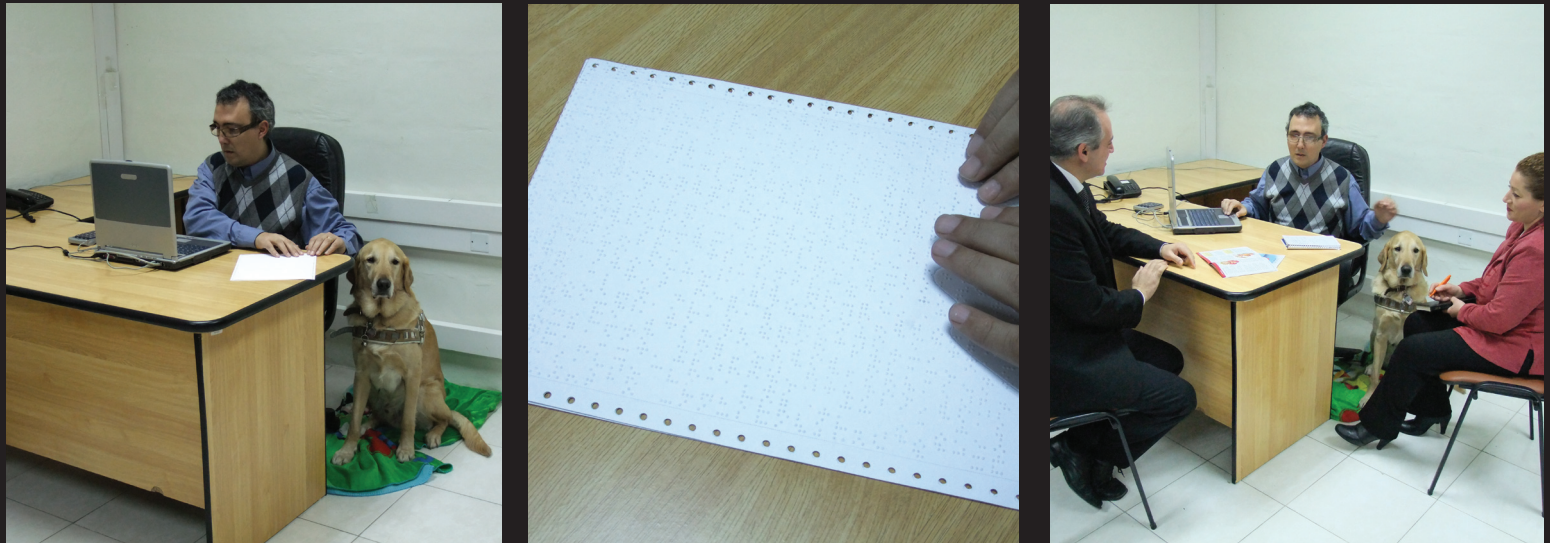
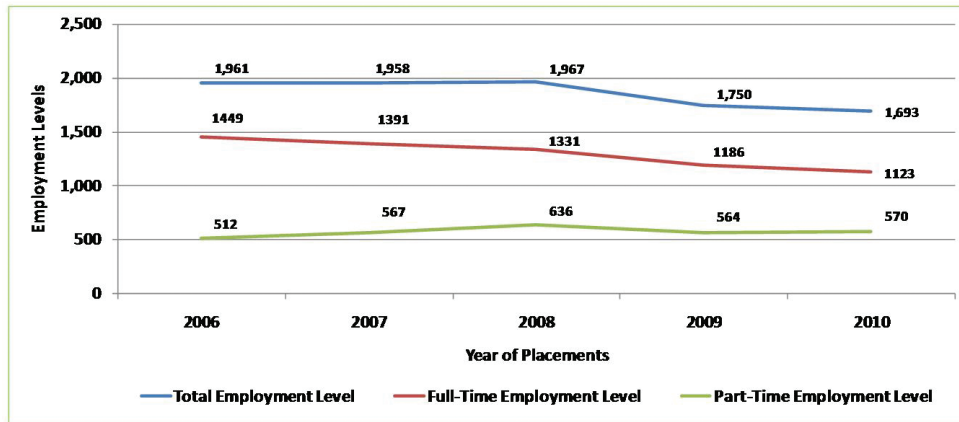


Figure 1 : RDP Employment levels: Full-Time and Part-Time (2006 to 2010)



Source: ETC.

2.1.19 During the period 2006 to 2010, the number of RDPs in full-time employment decreased by 22 per cent, whilst the number of part-time jobs increased by 11 per cent. This trend has also been reflected in the uptake of new job opportunities by persons with disability, Table 2 refers.

2.1.20 Table 2 shows that new employment opportunities for disabled persons increased in 2010 over the previous year. However, the ensuing RDP employment level was not sufficient to counter the decline experienced between 2008 and 2009.

Table 2 : Uptake of new jobs by RDPs (2006 to 2010)

Year	Full-Time		Part-Time	
	New job uptake	Percentage of total new job uptake	New job uptake	Percentage of total new job uptake
2006	266	60.05	177	39.95
2007	263	54.56	219	45.44
2008	254	49.22	262	50.78
2009	173	52.74	155	47.26
2010	182	48.79	191	51.21

Source: ETC.

Table 3 : Unemployment levels of RDP and mainstream persons registered under the Part I Unemployment Register (2006 to 2010)

Year ending	RDP – Unemployment		Mainstream - Unemployment	
	Number of persons	Annual Variance	Number of persons	Annual Variance
2006	349	-0.85%	6,446	-3.73%
2007	274	-21.49%	5,469	-15.16%
2008	299	9.12%	5,785	5.78%
2009	449	50.17%	6,952	20.17%
2010	417	-7.13%	5,986	-13.90%

Source: NSO.

RDPs were more affected by the recent economic downturn than their mainstream counterparts

2.1.21 The ETC's Part I Mainstream Unemployment Register shows that unemployment levels increased by around 20 per cent from the end of 2008 to the same period in 2009. During the same period, the unemployment levels for disabled persons increased by 50 per cent, as illustrated in Table 3.

2.1.22 The foregoing highlights the fact that disabled persons have been greatly affected by the negative downturn in the employment market when compared to their mainstream counterparts. In addition to employment seeking challenges, RDPs then face a number of practical issues, such as accessibility, which impinge on their ability to retain employment for longer periods.

54 per cent of RDPs have never been in employment throughout the period 2006 to 2010

2.1.23 During the period 2006 to 2010, 1,263 RDPs⁷ were at some point requesting the ETC's assistance to find employment by registering under the Part I Unemployment Register. An analysis of this Register showed that 685 RDPs (54 per cent) have not been in employment during the aforementioned period under review. On average, these persons had been listed in this Register for 661 days.

2.1.24 Such statistics highlight that the employment of RDPs is a problematic endeavour. In order to elicit issues contributing to the challenges of RDP employment, the NAO sought to compare the profiles of the 685 persons who were not in employment with the 578 RDPs who were employed at some point during the period 2006 to 2010. Since, generally, an individual's employability is considered to be a function of disability type, education

levels, gender and age, the NAO evaluation was primarily based on these variables.

2.1.25 The NAO's review showed that the employability of RDPs with mental disability or an education standard below Ordinary Level or aged above 40 years posed greater challenges. Conversely, the employment probability improved for persons with intellectual disabilities or an education standard higher than Ordinary Level or aged between 21 and 40, Appendix I refers.

2.1.26 Appendix I also illustrates that the ratio of males to females listed in the ETC's Part I Unemployment Register is 80:20. Despite such a ratio, females having a disability appear to have a marginally better employment probability than their male counterparts.

On average a disabled person was employed for 544 days during the period 2006 to 2010

2.1.27 The challenges experienced by disabled persons whilst in employment may, to varying degrees, influence RDPs' ability to retain employment. The job retention rate of persons with disabilities, on average, tends to be less than two years (544 days). This statistic, based on the average employment of 578 out of 1,263 RDPs listed in the ETC's Part I Unemployment Register during the period 2006 to 2010.

2.2 Factors considered as external to ETC significantly influence employment opportunities for disabled persons

2.2.1 RDPs' employment opportunities are, to varying degrees, also influenced through factors which are external to the ETC. These factors mainly relate to education levels, employers' perspective of RDPs and accessibility concerns

⁷ This figure represents the number of individuals forming part of the Register of Disabled Persons (3,157) who sought the Corporation's assistance by enlisting in the ETC Part I Unemployment Register during the period 2006 to 2010.

Table 4 : Attainment levels of education (2005)

Education level	Disabled (Percentage)	Non-Disabled (Percentage)
No schooling	9.8	1.9
Special school	4.1	0.0
Pre-primary	1.7	0.3
Primary level	42.3	24.3
Secondary level	31.2	46.3
Post-secondary level	5.6	14.4
Non-tertiary level	0.9	2.8
Tertiary level	4.4	10.0

Source: NSO as cited by KNPD.

at the work place. Moreover, RDPs may deem it more opportune to forego employment opportunities in instances where the gap between social benefits entitlement and potential employment income is considered to be marginal.

Educational levels held by disabled persons are lower than non-disabled counterparts

2.2.2 The 2005 Population Census carried out by the National Statistics Office (NSO) revealed that the levels of education held by disabled persons are lower when compared to non-disabled persons, Table 4 refers.

2.2.3 Table 4 shows that RDPs generally completed primary and secondary education. Around 10 per cent did not receive any formal schooling.

2.2.4 ETC records relating to RDPs' educational qualifications reflect these statistics since around 86.4 per cent have an education standard which is classified below Ordinary Level, Appendix I refers. This reality results in a skills gap between the educational standards demanded by the labour market and those attained by RDPs.

Employer participation in ETC initiatives to promote RDP employment is insufficient

2.2.5 ETC organises various activities aiming to inform potential employers about various schemes operated by the Corporation and other issues concerning RDP employment. However, ETC officials claimed that employer participation in these activities is noticeably low. The Corporation noted that some employers may be reluctant to employ disabled persons due to various reasons, namely related to a lack of knowledge on disability issues. Moreover, employers also perceive the employment of disabled persons as an added expense to their operational costs.

2.2.6 In response to these concerns, the KNPD remarked that assistance in various forms is potentially available to support the employment of disabled persons. However, many employers may be unaware of the ensuing benefits of employing disabled persons.

Physical accessibility issues are a potential barrier to RDP employment

2.2.7 Accessibility concerns relating to RDP employment are not limited to issues concerning the physical environment at the work place. Accessibility concerns may also relate to issues of transportation to and from the place of work. Presently, neither KNPD nor ETC maintain any data relating to access issues whereby accessibility to the employment market was restrained due to any of the abovementioned factors. Data held by KNPD relates to general physical accessibility concerns and does not provide detailed information with regards to employment issues.

Various socio-economic issues limit a greater RDP participation in the labour market

2.2.8 Various socio-economic factors may impede RDP participation in the labour market. KNPD noted that family members of disabled persons may not always encourage RDPs to join the labour market in fear of stigma and/or discrimination. However, statistically representative studies related to disability in Malta are limited.

2.3 Conclusion

2.3.1 This Chapter aimed to illustrate the challenges relating to the employment of RDPs. The statistics presented herein show that the RDP participation rate in the labour market is lower than the EU's average. Moreover,

the economic downturn appeared to have a greater impact on RDPs than their mainstream counterparts.

2.3.2 The employment opportunities of certain categories tend to be lower than that of other RDPs. Additionally, the employment retention rate of RDPs emphasise the challenges faced by disabled persons whilst in employment.

2.3.3 The employment opportunities of disabled persons are also influenced by various other factors which

are considered to pertain to the external environment. Such factors relate to the educational levels, physical accessibility related to employment and socio-economic concerns.

2.3.4 The next Chapter of this report discusses the role and organisational structure of the ETC in relation to RDPs. Towards this end, the Corporation's relative management practices are also evaluated.

Chapter 3



The role of the ETC

Chapter 3 – The role of the ETC

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The role of the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) in the operation of a number of employment and training schemes highlights the importance of the Corporation's strategy to pursue its overall objective of enhancing employment in Malta. The outcomes of such projects and schemes contribute towards the achievement of national employment objectives. Such objectives are set at the strategic level and do not make reference to specific target groups.

3.1.2 The ETC, in its role of enhancing employability of individuals, and in line with the national employment objectives, draws up its business plan. Such a plan is aimed at empowering, assisting and training job seekers to facilitate their entry or re-entry into the active employment market, promoting workforce development through skills and competency development; and assisting employers in their recruitment and training needs. Towards this end, the ETC sets specific objectives and targets which are distributed across the various departments and units within the Corporation.

3.1.3 The ETC is currently following its Business Plan covering the period 2009 to 2011, whereby measures are being taken to ensure that disadvantaged job seekers are put on active measures. This includes registered disabled persons (RDPs) who are referred to other entities collaborating with the ETC through cooperation agreements (refer to paragraph 2.1.16).

3.1.4 Various departments and units within the ETC are involved in implementing initiatives relating to enhancing the employment opportunities of RDPs. The Corporation's organisational structure for the provision of services to RDPs, which has largely been in place since 1996, was

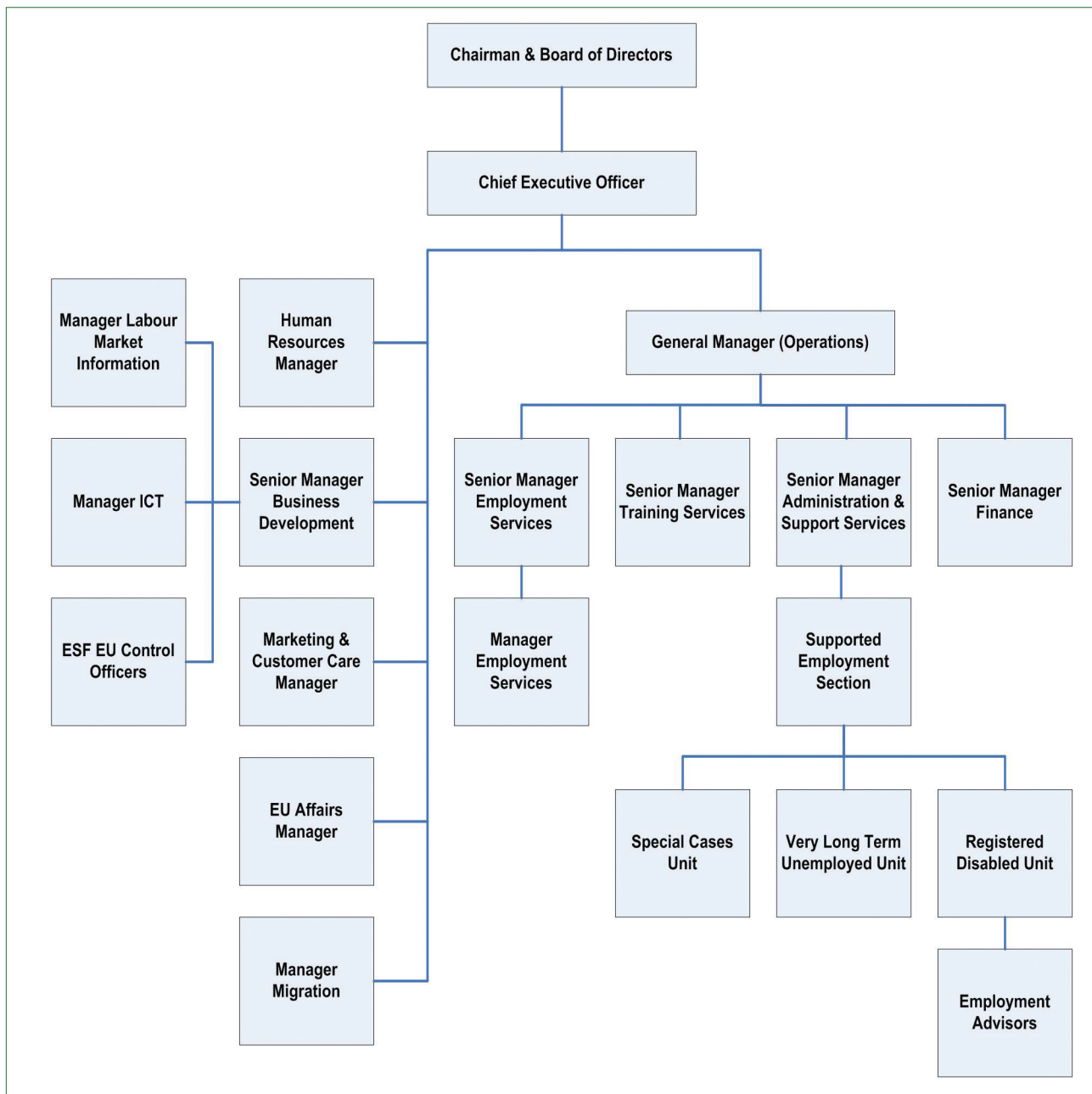
designed to facilitate registration related processes and systems.

3.1.5 Each department and unit within the ETC has set targets that contribute towards the achievement of the Corporation's overall objectives. In view of the Corporation's declared commitment to assist disadvantaged groups seeking employment, the ETC operates a Supported Employment Section, which coordinates three distinct units catering for: Former Substance Abusers and Corradino Corrective Facility residents within the Special Cases Unit, Very Long Term Unemployed Individuals and Registered Disabled Persons. Each of these units employs two employment advisors, Figure 2 refers.

3.1.6 It is pertinent to note that the ETC is currently undergoing organisational restructuring which is due to be implemented during 2012. The need for such restructuring emanated from the necessity to further synergise initiatives focusing on both job seekers and potential employers, as well as to enhance labour and skill shortages forecasting.

3.2 ETC needs comprehensive research which would enable it to better address labour market gaps

3.2.1 Research undertaken by the ETC is generally performed on an *ad hoc* basis by the relevant department or unit. Such circumstances have led to a scenario where the Corporation does not have comprehensive projections on the current and future skills requirements of the labour market. The ETC also lacks thorough information about the degree of disability of RDPs. Consequently, the Corporation is not in a position to fully determine the abilities of these job seekers.

Figure 2 : ETC Organisation Chart

Source: ETC.

ETC has not studied potential labour market placement areas suited for disabled persons

3.2.2 The ETC conducts various labour market scanning initiatives to identify the skills which will be required by various economic sectors. However, such initiatives are mainly mainstream-oriented.

3.2.3 The ETC commissioned labour market studies through research barometers. However, the research barometers were discontinued after 2006. The latest information available through these studies is considered outdated for the Corporation's planning and decision

making purposes. Such circumstances arise since the latest data available through such research does not appropriately reflect the dynamics of the labour market, and consequently, does not readily lend itself to project future labour market scenarios.

3.2.4 The Corporation also derives future labour market trends through formal discussions with the Malta Enterprise. The latter is responsible for attracting new business entities to Malta. The discussions between the two entities focus on labour requirements to sustain new investments. These discussions are generally held at the corporate level.



3.2.5 Labour market information is also available to the Corporation through its Board of Directors. The Board is composed of members representing various sectors of the economy, including the Malta Employers' Association (MEA). Such information is generally reflected in the minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings.

3.2.6 The ETC channels the labour market information derived through its various sources to the relevant departments and units within the Corporation, including the Supported Employment Section. However, such communications can be considered as informative rather than a means to kick-start further research in the area. This is, in part, emphasised by the fact that the Supported Employment Section has never studied potential labour market placement areas suited for disabled persons.

3.2.7 Other factors leading to such circumstances include the fact that the labour market information available to the ETC is not compiled into formal reports. This situation does not appropriately facilitate its distribution and access across the Corporation. Moreover, the current format of labour market information does not lend itself to induce further research focusing on specific groups, such as disabled persons.

The Corporation is not in a position to fully determine the abilities of RDPs seeking employment

3.2.8 To optimally address potential labour market demands, the ETC must be in a position to appropriately utilise the full potential of persons seeking the Corporation's services. This task is rendered more complex when dealing with disadvantaged groups, such as disabled persons. Such complexities tend to revolve around the fact that not all employment is suitable for all categories and degrees of disability.

3.2.9 The ETC does maintain broad information relating to individuals' disability. However, such information does not define the degree of disability and consequently, the individuals' abilities. The ETC collates disability information through a medical assessment, carried out by the Corporation's Medical Officer, as required by law.

3.2.10 The scope of this assessment is limited to confirm whether a person is deemed to be disabled or otherwise. In addition, the ETC carries out occupational therapy reviews to determine the ability levels that can be performed by an individual. However, these reviews are mainly conducted through interviews, and therefore, do not appropriately determine the extent to which certain processes or tasks can be carried out by the individual. Such circumstances mainly arise since locally, ability assessments centres, which can determine the levels of functional abilities and the type of tasks which an individual can perform, have not been established.

3.2.11 Such a situation results in the non-availability of comprehensive data relating to RDPs' abilities and their potential application in the labour market. This hinders the ETC's strategic perspective for RDPs particularly with regards the strategic design of training courses, work exposure schemes and job placement decisions.

Customised RDP related report generating mechanisms are not currently available to end-users

3.2.12 The ETC has various databases relating to individuals' training and employability history. However, the Information Technology (IT) systems in use by the ETC lack the facility to permit end-users to generate customised reports, dealing with multi-variable queries on various aspects related to RDPs. An example in this regard relates to tracer studies to determine the outcome, in terms of employment trends, of individuals participating

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in various schemes, such as Bridging the Gap (BTG). Current mechanisms do not allow end-users to generate tailor-made reports that will better assist the relevant units throughout the operation of ETC programmes or schemes. Such mechanisms would ensure that data is more readily available to end users, thus facilitating and rendering research more efficient.

3.3 The unavailability of comprehensive research prohibits the formulation of more realistic performance targets

3.3.1 The lack of detailed RDP research inhibits the realistic formulation of quantitative targets related to job interview referrals and employment. Additionally the unavailability of comprehensive data also impinges on the Corporation's ability to formulate targets to initiatives leading to employment opportunities.

3.3.2 The Corporation adopts an incremental approach to devise annual performance targets. In this respect, previous year results form the basis for the ensuing year's performance targets. Such an input to target formulation is also complemented through the experience of the Corporation's senior officials. Targets set are then cascaded to the RDP Unit, following the Chief Executive Officer's approval.

3.4 Comprehensive studies of ETC initiatives are only formally undertaken with regards to EU funded programmes

3.4.1 The monitoring of performance is a critical management function. It provides the opportunity to assess the extent to which predetermined targets and

objectives have been attained. The ETC adopts various approaches to monitor the performance of its RDP Unit within the Supported Employment Section. However, such mechanisms do not always entail in-depth analysis and documentation.

Evaluation exercises are carried out when these are mandatory requests relating to EU co-financed projects

3.4.2 Evaluation exercises have been carried out in the past with reference to the Supported Employment Scheme.⁸ Such exercises were mandatory requirements of the European Social Fund (ESF) co-financed programmes. The ETC commissioned exercise proposed various recommendations and was referred to the Managing Authority (MA) in 2007.

3.4.3 Similarly to evaluation exercises discussed in the preceding paragraph, the ETC is obliged to monitor and report to the MA the ongoing progress and outcomes of the Employment Aid Programme (EAP). This is another ESF co-financed programme under Operational Programme II, intended to enhance employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups including RDPs.

The outcomes of RDP related locally financed measures are not formally analysed

3.4.4 The Corporation's management monitors the RDP Unit's performance through monthly reviews that indicate the Unit's achievements. However, locally financed initiatives, such as the BTG scheme, have never been formally evaluated by the ETC.

⁸ The Supported Employment Scheme was an ESF co-financed project under Operational Programme I (2004 to 2007). This scheme related to support to RDPs throughout their employment. Such support included the provision of job coaches and personal assistants.

3.4.5 The only evaluation undertaken in this regard is carried out on an *ad hoc* basis by the RDP Unit. Such research is generally carried out on the initiative of the officials deployed in the Supported Employment Section. Due to time constraints, these assessments are not undertaken regularly. Moreover, the ensuing findings and conclusions are only informally reported.

3.4.6 Despite the lack of formal reporting, ETC officials within the RDP Unit discuss with management measures to eliminate variances in operational targets. The lack of formal reporting on operational performance potentially hinders the follow-up of corrective measures to address operational concerns. Moreover, the lack of formal reporting restricts the identification of internal or external factors impinging on the Unit's operations, which consequently could serve as inputs when devising future objectives and targets. This implies that good practices leading to positive results or variables inhibiting the attainment of objectives are not formally recognised and documented.

3.5 Past report recommendations have not all been implemented due to budgetary constraints

3.5.1 This Chapter has already noted the evaluation report compiled with respect to various initiatives undertaken by the ETC. These evaluations mainly related to the Supported Employment Scheme (paragraph 3.4.2 refers). These evaluations led to a number of important recommendations proposed therein to be implemented by the Corporation. An example in this regard relates to the introduction of occupational therapy assessments to newly registered RDPs.

3.5.2 This recommendation was implemented by the RDP Unit in 2009, whereby all registered disabled persons seeking employment underwent such an assessment. Such information was used by the relative employment advisors when devising training and work exposure opportunity plans for disabled registrants.

3.5.3 However, some recommendations from past evaluations remain outstanding. The RDP Unit contends that the non-implementation of recommendations was mainly attributable to budgetary constraints. Examples of outstanding proposals include the deployment of a job coach or personal assistant to facilitate the employment of RDPs. It is pertinent to point out that job coaching is made available to RDPs while participating in work exposure schemes, however not extended when RDPs are formally engaged in employment. ETC is seeking to extend this service upon employment through participation in a project funded through ESF assistance.

3.6 Conclusion

3.6.1 This Chapter discussed various issues which hinder the management of initiatives related to enhancing the employment opportunities of disabled persons. In part, such constraints relate to human resources limitations within the Corporation. Other concerns relate to weaknesses in reporting, reviewing and the monitoring of programmes.

3.6.2 To varying degrees, the ETC has recognised these concerns and is aiming to address them through its new strategic direction which is being embarked upon in 2012. The ETC's business process reengineering aims also to optimise the use of human resources at its disposal whilst facilitating access to its services for RDPs. This will be achieved by adopting a mainstream approach, whilst centralising RDP expertise. The ETC reorganisation will include a specific unit responsible for labour market analysis to provide a more valuable insight to the labour market.

3.6.3 The next Chapter of this report discusses the outcome of ETC efforts to improve the employment opportunities of RDPs. In this context, the following Chapter analyses the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken by the Corporation to provide assistance and support to RDPs seeking employment.

Chapter 4



ETC Initiatives to Improve the employability of RDPs

Chapter 4 – ETC Initiatives to Improve the employability of RDPs

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) aims to improve the employment opportunities of disabled persons through various initiatives. Such measures include services in the form of employment vacancy notifications, as well as training and work exposure opportunities. These services are provided by the registered disabled persons (RDP) Unit within the Supported Employment Section. This Unit offers a number of related services, including registration, personal advisory, training courses, opportunities for work exposure and other assistance which is provided by ETC's partners through several cooperation agreements in place with other entities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The RDP Unit was established in 1996.

4.1.2 This Chapter focuses on the initiatives undertaken by the RDP Unit. It discusses the extent to which the registration period is utilised to enhance the RDPs' knowledge and skills base to facilitate entry into the employment market.

4.2 The unemployment registration period is utilised to facilitate participation in the labour market and as a means of control over the receipt of unemployment benefits

4.2.1 Any individual, who is offered assistance or support from the RDP Unit, must be registered within the ETC disability register following a medical assessment. Officials within the RDP Unit, provide support to individuals who are registered under the various unemployment registers that are held by the ETC, however, this audit ought to focus on those individuals who have registered under the ETC Part I Unemployment Register. This approach was adopted since the number of disabled individuals forming part of other unemployment registers was deemed to be negligible.

4.2.2 During the period 2006 to 2010, 1,263 individuals have registered under the ETC Part I Unemployment Register. More than 61 per cent (776) of these persons had a physical disability, 22 per cent (276) had intellectual disabilities, whilst 17 per cent (211) had some form of mental disabilities, Table 5 refers.

Table 5 : Average Registration Period of RDPs - Employed and Unemployed (2006 to 2010)

Disability Group	Employed		Unemployed		Total	
	Number of RDPs	Average Days Registering	Number of RDPs	Average Days Registering	Number of RDPs	Average Days Registering
Intellectual Disabilities	138	439	138	686	276	563
Mental Disabilities	88	481	123	473	211	476
Physical Disabilities	352	437	424	593	776	522
Total	578	444	685	590	1,263	523

Source: ETC.

4.2.3 The average days spent by disabled persons on the Part I Unemployment Register during the period 2006 to 2010, who were subsequently employed, is 444 days, contrasting with the 152 days of their mainstream counterparts. This result indicates that disabled persons are faced with greater challenges whilst seeking employment, thus additional efforts and resources are utilised by ETC to help unemployed individuals join the labour market, to narrow such a gap.

4.2.4 Registration is a form of control procedure used by the ETC to ensure that its clients are still willing to seek employment and adhere to unemployment registration procedures. This necessitates a weekly sign-up in a nearby civic centre where registration is confirmed through ETC mechanisms. Failure to attend this weekly registration procedure will automatically remove the individual from the Part I Unemployment Register. Persons attending training or work exposure are exempt from the sign-up during their tuition or work exposure period. In cases where persons fail to sign up due to sickness, a medical certificate is presented to ETC officials to ensure re-instatement in such a list. Failure to sign up leads to the termination of ETC assistance. This might also influence any eligibility for unemployment allowances disbursed through social security. During the period 2006 to 2010, the 1,263 individuals who registered under the Part I Unemployment Register, have sought the Corporation's services in 2,601 instances, Table 6 refers.

A significant number of terminations occur since individuals fail to sign up for their weekly registration commitment

4.2.5 Whilst some individuals may terminate their registration on the Part I Unemployment Register due to successfully finding employment, a significant number of registrants fail to sign up for their weekly registration commitments in a timely manner. Termination from registration, resulting in removal from the Register, signals unwillingness to seek ETC's assistance in order to find employment. This would lead to the cancellation of any appointments with employment advisors and any pre-booked training courses that were due to be held.

4.2.6 When an individual fails to sign up for the weekly registration procedure, registration is terminated, thus ETC assistance and support are no longer provided. Termination can be voluntarily caused by the registrant or imposed on such registrant through ETC regulations. In the latter case, a person has the right to appeal such termination by appearing before a board specially set up by ETC to review any absences from registration procedures due to justified reasons. Justified absences may include, court appearances, medical appointments or certified sickness.

4.2.7 Some disabled persons may be unable to maintain their weekly registration commitments due to the nature of their disability. Some individuals are exempted from

Table 6 : Termination Reasons (2006 to 2010)

Termination Reasons	Quantity	Percentage
Strike off ⁹	265	10.19
Employed	103	3.96
Failure to sign up without providing sufficient cause	1,640	63.05
No Longer interested in Employment	4	0.15
Not Eligible to Register	7	0.27
Referred to DSS	148	5.69
Retired	8	0.31
Self-employment	6	0.23
Temporary unfit for Employment	3	0.12
Still Registering (unemployed as at 31/12/10)	417	16.03
Total	2,601	100

Source: ETC.

⁹ This represents removal from the Part I Unemployment Register due to non-compliance with registration conditions set by ETC.

registering, if their impairment makes it difficult for such persons to be physically present at the required place of registration in a timely manner. Individuals may miss the registration procedure due to justified sickness. In these cases the ETC registration mechanism would reinstate the individual back into the Part I Unemployment Register, allocating a prioritised form of registration. This would signify that the individual would not be penalised in terms of unemployment benefits and/or unemployment registration priority.

The effective utilisation of the registration process is at times hindered by registrants submitting unfit for work claims

4.2.8 This study highlighted that several individuals may be unable to sustain employment on a regular basis due to the extent of their impairment. Registered disabled persons may refer to professionals of their choice to certify or otherwise one's ability to be in employment. In cases where unfit for work claims are submitted, individuals are then referred to the Department of Social Security (DSS) by the RDP Unit. In these instances, the DSS verifies such claims. If a person is not deemed to be fit for work, 'Boarding Out' procedures would be initiated by the DSS. The individual would then be from any unemployment register maintained by the ETC. In such circumstances, an invalidity pension will replace any unemployment benefits and assistance, which had been received up to the 'Boarding Out' decision.

Over 40 per cent of unfit for work claims were rejected by the DSS medical board

4.2.9 During the period 2006 to 2010, 123 out of the 1,263 RDPs listed in the Part I Unemployment Register were referred to the DSS to determine whether their current level of disability is sufficient to prevent them from being in employment. These individuals were referred to the DSS on 148 occasions.

4.2.10 When a person is deemed to be fit for work by the DSS following referral from the ETC, the individual would have to re-enlist within the ETC Part I Unemployment Register, thus becoming eligible for ETC assistance and support in finding employment.

4.2.11 Around 40 per cent (48 individuals) of the individuals referred to the DSS were deemed to be 'fit for work' by the DSS. However, only 29 persons sought the ETC's assistance in seeking employment by re-joining the Part I Unemployment Register. Such circumstances highlight the differences in medical classifications of a person's condition by private practitioners as opposed to the medical classifications provided by the DSS. It is to be noted that following agreement between the ETC and the

DSS, a centralised medical board is to be established. Prior to registration with the ETC as an RDP, the central medical board will determine fitness for work and unemployment registering eligibility.

4.3 Fourteen per cent of registrants have registered for over three years during the period 2006 to 2010

4.3.1 In addition to the control mechanisms invoked, the registration period also provides the opportunity to upgrade the knowledge and skills base of applicants. The registration period readily lends itself to such a purpose.

4.3.2 The average registration period for the 1,263 individuals listed in the Part I Unemployment Register during the period 2006 to 2010 was of 523 days. It is to be noted that this average period relates to individuals who were successfully employed or never employed. However, a number of persons have been registering for a greater time period.

4.3.3 This study profiled the 171 RDPs from the total population under review that have been registering for more than three years. Two out of every three of these persons have a physical disability, whilst over 90 per cent (154 persons) have an educational level which is below Ordinary Level standard.

4.3.4 The registration period can be a lengthy and a problematic experience for both RDPs and the Corporation. Nevertheless, the ETC has recognised that this period presents an opportunity to enhance the employment of persons seeking employment. For this purpose, the ETC advises job seekers on how they can exploit labour market opportunities and targets educational and skills gaps that may exist. The outcomes of such initiatives are discussed in the forthcoming sections of this Chapter.

4.4 Insufficient information on the degree of disability and audit trail weaknesses hinder the optimisation of employment advisory services

4.4.1 Employment advisors are required to meet their clients on a regular basis, providing necessary job seeking advice and referrals to adequate training courses that will assist unemployed clients in finding employment. Assistance is provided by employment advisors, who regularly review actions taken by the registrant with regards the personal action plans (PAP Review).

4.4.2 Follow-ups are carried out in pre-set appointments. In these reviews, each disabled person can confidentially discuss with the employment advisor any specific actions taken by the job seeker in order to join the labour market. Employment advisors aim to meet their clients on a monthly basis during the first

six months of registration. Meetings are set every three months. The frequency of meetings is generally dependant on the level of assistance required by the disabled person and the extent of family support.

4.4.3 The ‘Reasonable Accommodation’ clause included in the Equal Opportunities Act obliges the Corporation to give due consideration and to forward the name of suitable candidates for a job interview even though they do not possess all the requisites. In order to comply with such provisions, employment advisors have to manually review and match job vacancies with potentially suitable job seekers. Such an exercise entails that the job advisors have a sound knowledge of the skills and aptitudes of RDPs seeking employment.

4.4.4 Employment advisors report on a monthly basis whereby management is updated with progress of the work done in relation to registrants. ETC officials have reported that this is done informally within the Unit, due to insufficient human resources that restrict the amount of time that can be allocated to monthly reporting. The performance of employment advisors is monitored and assessed by senior officials within the RDP Unit, in terms of various tasks, which include the number of job applications submitted by registrants, job placements made and training referrals.

The caseload being managed by the RDP Unit is increasing across the years

4.4.5 Through more effective promotion, disabled persons are becoming more aware of the benefits of participation in the labour market. This has, in turn, resulted in an increase in the workload being handled by the RDP Unit within ETC during the years 2006 to 2010, Table 7 refers.

4.4.6 The figures quoted in Table 7 highlight that the caseload increased by 31 per cent over a period of five years. Client turnover depends on the number of new registrations and the number of registration terminations that occur throughout the period.

4.4.7 It is to be noted that during this period there were no significant changes in staff levels at the RDP Unit. The RDP caseload is equally distributed between the two employment advisors deployed at the RDP Unit.

Various practicalities constrain the ETC’s verification of registrant’s job seeking efforts

4.4.8 The PAPs devised by employment advisors together with job seekers include that registrants actively seek employment by submitting vacancies for suitable posts. The ETC also assists job seekers by informing them of potentially suitable vacancies.

4.4.9 Additionally, as mentioned earlier, unemployment registration is considered as a control mechanism against benefit fraud. In fact, the Corporation can strike off individuals who are deemed not to be actively seeking employment – thus forfeiting their claim to unemployment benefit.

4.4.10 The foregoing emphasises the importance that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to ascertain that job seekers are actually applying for the vacancies recommended to them by the Corporation. However, various practicalities constrain the ETC’s verification of job seeking efforts by registrants. Such constraints include the following:

- The ETC contends that employers are generally unwilling to provide feedback pertaining to job applications and persons interviewed for specific posts;
- Information relating to job applications submitted and interviews attended by registrants is only available to the ETC through the ‘Job Leads Diary’. This document is maintained by the registrant and reviewed by employment advisors when meeting registrants. These documents provide information relating to the business entity having a vacancy, the job applied for and any employer feedback. In many cases, employers’ feedback is claimed to be not forthcoming.

Table 7 : RDP Unit Caseload (2006 to 2010)

Year	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Unemployed as at start of year	352	349	274	299	449
New Registrations	367	411	439	538	489
Workload	719	760	713	837	938
Terminated registrations	370	486	414	388	521
Unemployed as at end of year	349	274	299	449	417

Source: ETC.

4.4.11 The above circumstances indicate that due to these constraints the ETC monitoring of job applications submitted by registrants is limited. The lack of such information from employers hinders the ETC from providing the appropriate advice to applicants in their job seeking efforts. The ETC is not in a position to effectively evaluate the outcome of the employment advisors' work with regards to referring potential job vacancies to registrants.

4.5 A weak correlation exists between courses offered by the ETC and RDP employment

4.5.1 The ETC encourages its clients to enhance their employment opportunities through participation in various courses. Towards this end, the Corporation offers various courses to all individuals seeking employment. These courses are in line with the ETC's practices to meaningfully utilise periods of unemployment to enhance employment opportunities of registrants through the upgrading of skills.

4.5.2 These courses are delivered by the ETC for both mainstream and disabled clients. The courses delivered range from basic literacy to more advanced subjects, such as Information Technology (IT) related courses. Such a diverse range is intended to assist individuals having limited educational levels to make up for this shortfall.

4.5.3 Training courses are devised in line with labour market requirements. This ensures that potential candidates are adequately equipped for prospective labour market challenges. The ETC is presently seeking the accreditation of the Malta Qualifications Council (MQC) with respect to the certification of some of the courses offered.¹⁰ Accreditation is seen to enhance the value of ETC courses, particularly from the employers' perspective.

4.5.4 As is the case for all individuals, RDPs are obliged to participate in three mandatory courses, namely: Job Search Seminar, Job Skills and Job Club. These courses are intended to aid jobseekers in their quest to improve their employment opportunities. This is done through the introduction of those fundamental requirements that enable successful participation in the labour market.

4.5.5 The three mandatory courses are to be undertaken by persons seeking employment through the services offered by the ETC within six months, in this respective order, since one course builds upon the foundations of the other. The ETC may strike off any applicant from the unemployment register when failing to attend or complete any of these courses without providing valid justification. A brief outline of these courses is presented in Appendix II.

4.5.6 During 2010, 328 RDPs enrolled for these three mandatory courses. During 2010, the ETC incurred an

expenditure of €23,511 in conjunction with the delivery of these courses, which were attended by a total of 294 persons.

4.5.7 Since 2010, the ETC has been organising *ad hoc* courses for disabled persons, to further address the specific difficulties that these persons might face during training. Following discussions held by the training coordinators within ETC and the employment advisors within the RDP Unit, it was agreed that a tailor-made course can be of greater benefit to participants. Such benefits are derived through the opportunity to allocate additional hours for content delivery which may be necessary.

4.5.8 In order to encourage the participation of disabled persons in courses, the ETC provides the following support services throughout training:

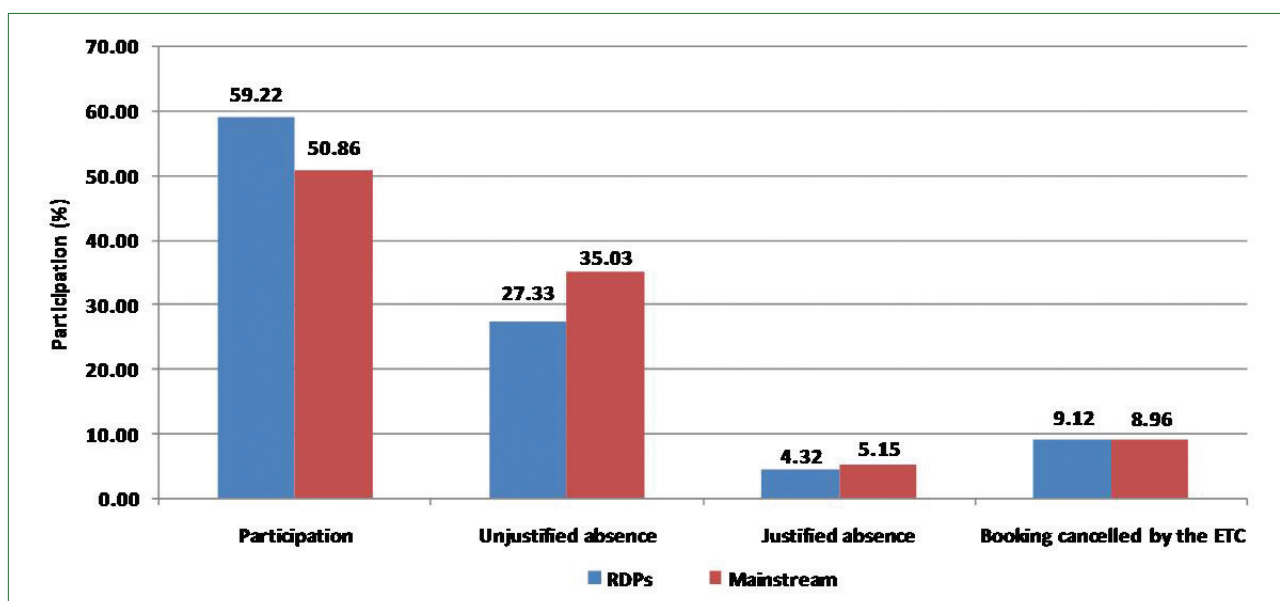
- Training centre equipped with lifts and ramps for ease of access for disabled clients;
- Learning Support Assistants;
- Free transport services for clients with mobility problems.

4.5.9 Although courses are usually organised in the Corporation's premises at Hal Far, on request ETC also delivers courses in the premises of NGOs. This is done since participants may benefit from receiving training in a familiar setting and for logistical purposes.

4.5.10 The National Audit Office (NAO) sought to evaluate the effectiveness of courses operated by ETC. This entailed the review of the various categories of training courses offered by ETC throughout the period 2006 to 2010 to registrants and non-registrants who are seeking to enhance their skills in order to improve their employment opportunities. Such a review analysed the outcomes of those courses where RDPs were due to attend throughout their registration period, during the audit period under review.

4.5.11 This audit sought to analyse the participation and outcome of courses with respect to RDPs. The outcome of courses was assessed on the basis of their contribution towards subsequent employment. For the purpose of this audit, employment is defined as any engagement registered with the ETC within one year of successful conclusion of the course. Consequently, the audit utilised 2009 ETC courses' related data. This enabled at least a one year period to elapse following completion of course. Additionally, the NAO reviewed the effectiveness of ETC courses on the basis of participation and successful conclusion.

¹⁰ The MQC is the official national body that certifies the recognition and comparability of academic and vocational qualifications.

Figure 3 : Outcome of RDP and Mainstream courses bookings (2006 to 2010)

Source: ETC.

Although marginally better than their mainstream counterparts, RDP participation in courses is below 60 per cent

4.5.12 RDP participation rate in ETC courses was one of the criteria adopted by the NAO to determine their success rate. Towards this end, course bookings were analysed in terms of actual attendance, justified and unjustified absences as well as booking cancellations by the ETC itself. Such cancellations are generally made when individuals are deemed not to possess the required qualifications to participate after the course booking would have been made, Figure 3 refers.

4.5.13 The percentages illustrated in Figure 3 are based on 2,960 course bookings related to 975 registered disabled persons during the period 2006 to 2010. Mainstream data is based on 47,487 course bookings relating to 19,262 persons registered in the Part I Unemployment Register for the same period. Figure 3 raises the following concerns:

- i. At around 60 per cent, the participation rate in courses of RDPs is higher than their mainstream counterparts. The ETC attributes such a situation to the input of employment advisors when devising and reviewing RDPs' personal action plans. Although the ETC does not have specific predetermined targets for RDP course attendance, it considers such a participation rate as positive since it compares favourably with respect to mainstream registrants. However, such an argument does not appropriately consider the extent to which the mainstream participation rate is deemed satisfactory.
- ii. The RDPs unjustified absence rate is also more positive than their mainstream counterparts. However, at around 27 per cent it is still considered significant. A major contributory factor to this situation relates to the initiative undertaken by the Corporation to encourage and facilitate RDP participation in training courses (as discussed in paragraph 4.5.4). During the course of PAP reviews, employment advisors seek justifications for non-

Table 8 : ETC Courses outcome (2006 to 2010)

	RDPs		Mainstream	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Attendance was less than minimum requirements (drop outs)	129	7.4	1,981	8.2
Successful completion of courses	1,575	89.9	21,741	90.0
Unsuccessful completion of courses	49	2.7	430	1.8
Total	1,753	100	24,152	100

Source: ETC.



Courtesy of Me21 Project

Courtesy of ETC

attendance. However, it is to be noted that the ETC have not embarked on any exercise to analyse such information.

Despite the high successful completion rate, only around a quarter of participants are employed following course completion

4.5.14 Out of the 2,960 course bookings by RDPs during 2006 to 2010, only 1,753 individuals (59 per cent) attended at least one training session. Nearly all the participants who actually attended the minimum number of training sessions required for certification, completed the training courses successfully. Table 8 compares the outcome of courses attended by RDPs and their mainstream counterparts.

4.5.15 Table 8 illustrates that there are no significant variations between the performance of RDPs and mainstream participants in ETC courses. This implies that concerns relating to course participation, completion and actual performance are not generally influenced by

disability. Thus, the issues relating to courses are more attributable to Corporation’s strategic direction rather than the input of the RDP Unit within the Supported Employment Section.

4.5.16 Despite the fact that nearly all the RDPs completing the ETC courses are successful, only around 26 per cent have subsequently been employed following one year from course completion. In this context, employment is defined as being listed as employed in ETC records. Consequently, the duration and engagement conditions of employment were not considered.

4.5.17 Throughout 2009, 133 RDPs registered as unemployed, participated in courses organised by the ETC. Table 9 shows the extent of influence that the ETC courses may have had on the employment opportunities of RDPs.

4.5.18 Table 9 indicates that only 26 per cent of the individuals who successfully completed one or more courses held by ETC in 2009 (34 individuals), were

Table 9 : RDP Employment following the successful completion of ETC Courses held in 2009

Employment outcome following successful completion of course	RDPs	Average duration from successful completion of course to employment (days)
Employment following successful completion of 1 course	26	255
Employment following successful completion of 2 courses	7	151
Employment following successful completion of 3 courses	1	211
Still unemployed after successful completion of 1 course	82	446
Still unemployed after successful completion of 2 courses	15	400
Still unemployed after successful completion of 3 courses	2	410
Total	133	

Source: ETC.



employed. The remaining 74 per cent (99 individuals) did not feature in the ETC’s Employment Register for at least twelve months following successful course completion.

4.5.19 The foregoing implies that the contribution of the ETC’s training courses is limited when considered as a stand alone initiative. Undoubtedly, such courses make a contribution towards enhancing employment opportunities when considered together with other ETC initiatives, such as work exposure schemes.

4.6 Successful completion of on the job training through the BTG programme significantly increases an individual’s employability prospects

4.6.1 The ETC, through the RDP Unit in the Supported Employment Section, offers the opportunity to its clients to gain on the job work experience through work exposure programmes. Disabled persons have the opportunity to gain work exposure by making use of the Work Trial Scheme and the Bridging the Gap (BTG) Scheme. Participation in these initiatives allows individuals to benefit from weeks of work experience that will strengthen individuals’ exposure to the employment market. Work

exposure allows individuals to successfully find and retain employment with the same employer. Alternatively, if such employment does not prove to be possible, the acquired experience is seen to improve participants’ prospects to find alternative employment with other entities.

4.6.2 The Scheme offers potential benefits to both RDPs who gain on-the-job experience and employers who can determine whether potential candidates are suited for particular employment at no added cost. ETC officials discuss the ongoing progress of RDPs throughout work exposure schemes, by maintaining open communication channels with employers to promote the engagement of RDPs within the same business entity following successful termination of work exposure.

4.6.3 This audit mainly focused on the BTG Scheme, since it specifically targets disadvantaged groups, including disabled persons. The focus on the BTG Scheme also materialised since, the Work Trial Scheme is also open to mainstream clients. Furthermore, over the five year period reviewed by this audit, there were only 20 RDPs who participated in this programme.

Table 10 : Participation in BTG (2006 to 2010)

Eligible categories	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	%
RDPs	39	30	26	25	30	150	44
Former Inmates	14	16	29	16	21	96	28
Former Substance Abusers	6	10	11	18	18	63	18
Social Cases	2	2	9	10	11	34	10
Total	61	58	75	69	80	343	100

Source: ETC.

Between 2006 and 2010, only around ten per cent of unemployed disabled persons participated in the Bridging the Gap scheme

4.6.4 During the period 2006 to 2010, 135 RDPs were granted the opportunity to participate in the BTG Scheme. A total of 150 work exposures were granted. This implies that a small number of individuals attended more than one placement, Table 10 refers.

4.6.5 Table 10 shows that RDPs constituted 44 per cent of all the participants in the BTG Scheme. Moreover, this level of participation is the highest amongst the eligible categories. However, this level of RDP participation implies that only ten per cent of the 1,263 unemployed disabled persons during 2006 to 2010 benefited from participation in this Scheme, Figure 4 refers.

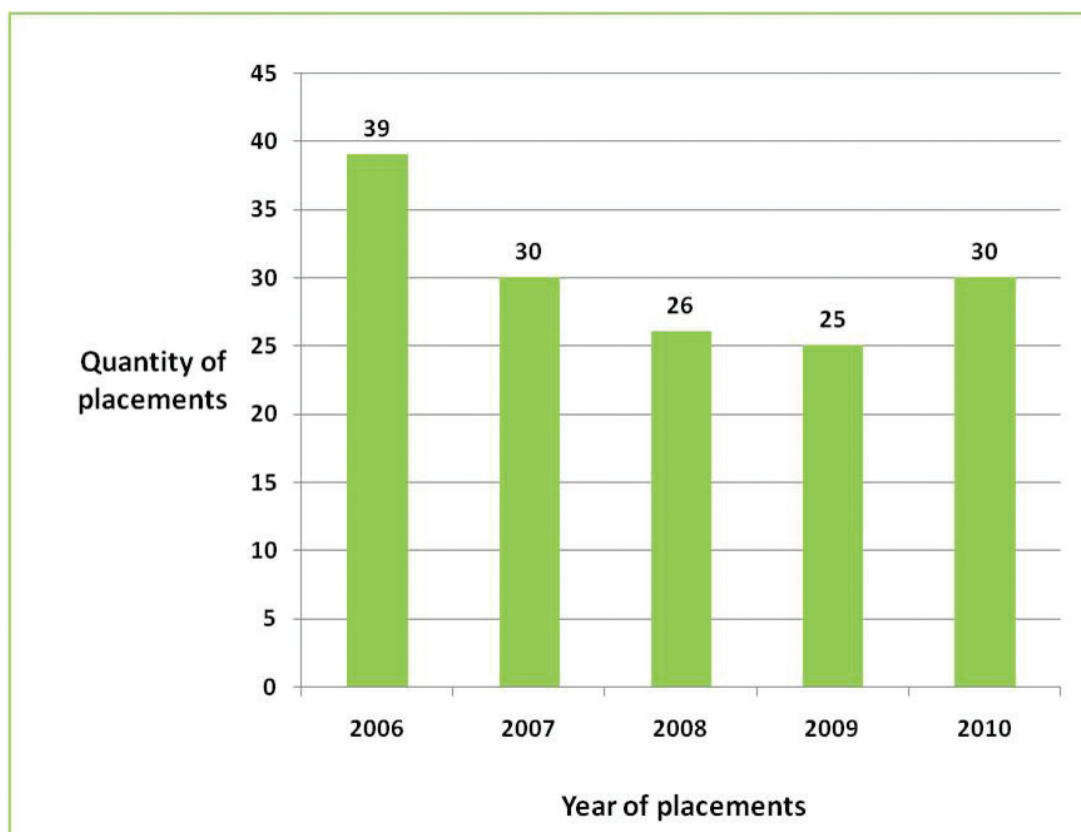
4.6.6 The statistics presented in Figure 4 highlights that the number of RDPs participating in the BTG Scheme has declined between 2007 and 2009. Although the number of participants increased in 2010, this is still short of 2006 levels. Most of the participants (55 per cent) are aged between 21 and 30. Moreover, the majority of participants (85 per cent) have an educational standard below Ordinary Level.

4.6.7 Participation in the BTG Scheme is usually initiated by employment advisors from the RDP Unit. Employment advisors utilise the BTG Scheme as a tool that facilitates entry for disabled persons into the employment market. In some cases, it is potential participants themselves who request participation in the Scheme. In both instances, employment advisors hold discussions with employers about the possibility of filling potential vacancies with unemployed disabled persons. These discussions also extend to the possibilities of offering work exposure opportunities to RDPs through the BTG Scheme. The ETC maintains that whoever requests participation through the BTG, is generally accepted, after ensuring that eligibility guidelines are satisfied. Currently there are no outstanding BTG applications.

The BTG Scheme has contributed significantly towards improving the employment opportunities of RDPs

4.6.8 Approximately two out of every three individuals who have attended some form of work placement under this scheme, have managed to find and retain employment for a six month period, within a year of the completion of the work exposure, Appendix III refers.

Figure 4 : RDP placements in Bridging the Gap (2006 to 2010)



Source: ETC.

4.6.9 The positive results emerging from the participation of RDPs in work exposure schemes highlights the significant impact of the work exposure period on subsequent employment. The work exposure period allows participants to experience the employment market and acquire job skills that can only be obtained through on-the-job training. The success rate of work exposure schemes highlights the vital work experience obtained by the participants that is successfully converted into employment upon termination or soon after.

4.6.10 The positive success rate of the BTG Scheme raises concern as to whether the benefits of this programme are appropriately acknowledged by RDPs and employers. This issue emanates in view of the ten per cent participation rate out of the 1,263 unemployed disabled persons who were registering through the period 2006 to 2010. Moreover, such an issue is emphasised by the fact that the ETC contends that there are no outstanding applications for participation in BTG.

4.6.11 Although a small percentage of registrants have benefited from work exposure schemes, it must be noted that ETC refers registrants to programmes operated by strategic partners, who collaborate with the ETC to provide specialised services to disabled persons as referred in Chapter 2. However, such agreements have been reinstated in 2011 following their termination in 2008.

4.7 The Employment Aid Programme has generally encouraged employers to engage RDPs

4.7.1 The ETC is currently operating the Employment Aid Programme (EAP). The EAP provides financial support to enterprises in Malta and Gozo to promote the recruitment of disadvantaged and disabled persons. The aim of such a programme is to increase the employment rate by facilitating the employment of such individuals in the shortest possible time and increasing the employment opportunities. The EAP is co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), under Operational Programme II. Malta's share of the funding amounts to 15 per cent of the total fund allocation of €8 million, of which around €234,000 were utilised to fund RDP employment in the years 2009 and 2010.

4.7.2 This programme aims to:

- Enhance the employability and productivity of vulnerable groups with low employment rates;

- Facilitate access to employment and upgrade the skills of those furthest away from the labour market; and
- Contribute to increase the country's labour supply and achieve greater social cohesion.

4.7.3 It is intended that the objectives of the EAP are to be attained through the wage subsidies¹¹ offered to participating employers engaging disadvantaged individuals, including disabled persons.

During 2009 to 2010 only 37 unemployed disabled persons participated in the Employment Aid Programme

4.7.4 During 2009 to 2010, 37 disabled persons registered under the Part I Unemployment Register participated in 38 EAP placements.¹² Twenty three and 15 placements were effected in 2009 and 2010 respectively. In the case of 13 participants (34 per cent), employment through EAP was the first exposure to the labour market.

Placement through the EAP resulted in an average employment period of 372 days up to the end of the period under review

4.7.5 Since its initiation in 2009, the subsidisation period granted to employers engaging RDPs was for a one year period. This subsidisation period was extended to three years as from 2010.

4.7.6 Since this audit was concerned with employment outcomes up to 2010, insufficient time elapsed to enable a comprehensive analysis on the outcomes of the EAP. The effectiveness related targets set for this programme entailed that participants are retained in employment for at least one year following termination of employment subsidisation in terms of the Programme. However, targets do not stipulate the specific number of persons pertaining to any particular disadvantaged group that are envisaged to participate in the EAP.

4.7.7 Programme outcomes up to the period under review provide a strong indication that targets associated with this Programme will be attained. Table 11 shows the status and outcomes, as at end 2010, with regards the 38 EAP placements.

¹¹ In the case of RDPs, wage subsidies are as follows: 75 per cent, 60 per cent and 60 per cent for the first, second and third years of employment respectively or until 2013, whichever occurs first. Employers can claim reimbursement of their part of the National Insurance contribution in respect of disabled persons for the first three years of employment, following measures introduced in The Budget 2008.

¹² One participant benefited from EAP assistance in two occasions, with different employers.

Table 11 : Status and outcomes of engagements through EAP (2009 to 2010)

Status and outcomes of engagements through EAP	Participants	Average Days in EAP scheme	Average days in employment till end year 2010 after EAP scheme
Placement in the EAP scheme was not completed	6	198	n/a
Placement in the EAP scheme was still active till end year 2010	30	372	n/a
Placement in the EAP scheme was completed and person continued to be employed with same EAP employer ¹³	2	359	97
Total	38		

Source: ETC.

4.7.8 Up to end of the period under review, 16 per cent (six individuals) of the EAP placements were not completed, resulting in an average of 198 days in employment. Reasons attributable for lack of completion of EAP placements include: dismissal, resignation and termination effected throughout probation periods.

4.7.9 Another two (five per cent) disabled persons had completed EAP placements, but had not originally registered to participate in the EAP under the disabled persons category. The latter had completed their EAP subsidised employment period (one year), subsequently retaining their post with the same employer.

4.7.10 The other EAP placements (30 individuals) were still in effect at end 2010. Such engagements result in an average employment period of 372 days. Such results, although not fully conclusive, indicate the positive potential outcomes being yielded by RDPs from the EAP.

Participation of RDPs in EAP is at 5 per cent out of total EAP population

4.7.11 Regardless of the incentives in place to encourage employers to engage RDPs for employment within their business entities, participation of RDPs in subsidised employment schemes is only five per cent of the total participants in the EAP. This demonstrates that disabled persons still face a substantial number of obstacles prior to joining the labour market, despite the incentives offered to employers to employ RDPs.

4.8 Costs

4.8.1 The total costs incurred by the ETC to enhance the employment opportunities of RDPs have increased throughout the period 2006 to 2008, however declining in the following years 2009 and 2010. The costs incurred in 2010 are around 24 per cent less than the relative 2006 expenditure, Table 12 refers.

Table 12 : Costs in relation to the RDP Unit (2006 to 2010)

Description of cost	2006 (€)	2007 (€)	2008 (€)	2009 (€)	2010 (€)
Salaries	47,677	45,395	47,047	49,637	52,481
Administrative and overheads	38,287	39,938	38,026	35,192	35,485
Cooperation agreements and other expenses	102,354	108,791	130,151	3,903	2,944
ETC courses	134,351	152,954	159,762	125,941	125,595
Bridging the Gap (BTG)	2,909	7,951	19,469	21,347	22,668
Work Trial Scheme	-	-	-	3,956	6,605
Supported Employment Scheme	101,302	147,145	148,228	-	-
Employment Aid Programme (EAP)	-	-	-	156,551	77,482
Total	426,880	502,174	542,683	396,527	323,260

Source: ETC.

¹³ In these two cases the persons were eligible to participate in the EAP as one had wished to enter or re-enter working life and had been absent both from work and from education for at least two years (category EAP2). The other had not attained upper secondary level qualifications or equivalent and was redundant/applied for voluntary redundancy scheme for six months or had been served with a redundancy notice of termination of employment (category EAP4). For these reasons their EAP placement period was of one year.

4.8.2 The increase throughout the period 2006 to 2008 may be attributed to the larger variety of courses offered by the ETC, the co-operation agreements that were in place throughout the same period with other NGOs as well as the number of work exposure opportunities offered to registrants through the Supported Employment Scheme and BTG Scheme. Conversely in 2009 and 2010 the co-operation agreements were terminated, thus expenditure declined significantly.

4.8.3 It is to be noted that the course provided by the ETC, the Supported Employment Scheme and the EAP were co-financed by the ESF.

4.9 Conclusion

4.9.1 This Chapter analysed the ETC's initiatives to improve the employment opportunities of disabled persons. The ETC encourages unemployed persons to productively utilise registration periods. Towards this end the Corporation offers employment advisory services, training courses and work exposure schemes. Although these initiatives are generally implemented separately, they are collectively interrelated.

4.9.2 Collectively, these initiatives contribute towards improving employment opportunities for disabled persons.

This is evidenced by the annual average of around four hundred full and part-time vacancies which are filled by RDPs. However, when these initiatives were collectively and individually analysed, areas for potential improvements emerged.

4.9.3 In some instances, the ETC does not maintain a full audit trail of its activities. Such circumstances may impinge on business continuity and performance evaluations. The management information systems available are not always conducive to stimulate further research of the ETC's activities. In fact some evaluations are carried out through laborious manual processes. The efficiency and effectiveness of ETC initiatives is also hindered through the lack of facilities which enable the Corporation to determine the abilities of disabled persons, and consequently their suitability for particular employment.

4.9.4 On an individual basis, it is evident that the employment opportunities for disabled persons improve significantly through work exposure and subsidised employment schemes. The outcomes of training courses on employment prospects are less apparent. One factor which negatively influenced the courses' outcome was the low participation rate.



Appendices

Appendix I – Profiles of the 1,263 disabled persons listed in the ETC Part I Unemployment Register (2006 to 2010)

	Unemployed	Employed	Total	Percentage unemployed	Percentage employed
Gender					
Male	536	423	959	55.9	44.1
Female	149	155	304	49.0	51.0
Total	685	578	1,263	54.2	45.8
Age¹⁴					
61 to 65	17	8	25	68.0	32.0
51 to 60	191	85	276	69.2	30.8
41 to 50	163	97	260	62.7	37.3
31 to 40	129	141	270	47.8	52.2
21 to 30	143	216	359	39.8	60.2
16 to 20	42	31	73	57.5	42.5
Total	685	578	1,263	54.2	45.8
Disability					
Intellectual disability	138	138	276	50.0	50.0
Mental disability	123	88	211	58.3	41.7
Physical disability	424	352	776	54.6	45.4
Total	685	578	1,263	54.2	45.8
Education					
Graduate	2	8	10	20.0	80.0
Diploma	8	11	19	42.1	57.9
A-Level	14	22	36	38.9	61.1
Intermediate	4	2	6	66.7	33.3
O-Level	37	63	100	37.0	63.0
In possession of a School leaving certificate	438	361	799	54.8	45.2
Not in possession of a School leaving certificate	182	111	293	62.1	37.9
Total	685	578	1,263	54.2	45.8
Computer skills¹⁵					
Yes	248	290	538	46.1	53.9
No	437	288	725	60.3	39.7
Total	685	578	1,263	54.2	45.8

Source: ETC.

¹⁴ Age is calculated as at end year 2010.¹⁵ Computer skills refers to those who have knowledge of any IT application but do not have the related qualification such as the ECDL (European Computer Driving License).

Appendix II – Information about the three obligatory courses

	Job Search Seminar (1st course)	Job Skills (2nd course)	Job Club (3rd course)
Course Aim	This is a one day seminar to provide first time clients with basic skills and information related to job searching. Labour market trends and employment regulations are introduced at an early stage in order to ensure participants are better equipped to search for employment, thus facilitating movement into the labour market in the shortest possible time period.	This is a course in Life Skills and Job-Seeking Skills, primarily aimed to assist registrants whilst searching for employment, by ensuring that the basic skills to find employment are attained.	This programme aims to assist participants who have been registering for a number of months to acquire a number of soft skills that will facilitate job search and enhance their employment opportunities.
Course Contents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction using an ice-breaking exercise 2. ETC services including job centres, schemes etc 3. ETC courses and apprenticeship 4. European Employment Services 5. Job searching skills 6. Preparing a <i>Curriculum Vitae</i> 7. The interview 8. Seminar conclusion and time allocated for questions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-awareness 2. Communication skills: verbal and non-verbal 3. Decision-making skills 4. Problem-solving skills 5. Assertiveness 6. Teamwork 7. Preparing a <i>Curriculum Vitae</i> 8. Job-seeking 9. Interviews 10. ETC Services 11. Employment laws 12. Tourism Awareness 13. Making a Positive First Impression 14. Personal Hygiene and Grooming 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-Assessment 2. Job Searching Skills/CV formulation and Letter of Application 3. Telephone Skills 4. Communication Skills/Public Speaking Skills 5. Interview Skills 6. Mock Interviews 7. Leadership & Teamwork Building 8. Gender Issues 9. Lifelong Learning
Duration	5.5 hours	40 hours	42 hours
Eligibility	This course is offered to all first time clients one week following first registration. Registrant would usually attend course within four to six weeks. Clients are grouped according to age.	All those registering for work are obliged to attend this course. Clients are grouped according to age and qualifications. Registrants would usually attend this course within the next 12 weeks following completion of Job Search Seminar.	All those registering for work are obliged to attend this course. Clients are grouped according to age and qualifications. Registrants would usually attend this course within the next 12 weeks following completion of Job Skills course.

Source: ETC.

Appendix III – Outcomes of the 135 disabled persons who have participated in the ‘Bridging the Gap Scheme’ (2006 to 2010)

Outcomes		Intellectual Disabilities	Mental Disabilities	Physical Disabilities	Overall Total	
Found employment after BTG Scheme	Total	47	17	43	107	
	<i>Previously employed prior to BTG Scheme</i>	11	8	18	37	
	<i>Not previously employed prior to BTG Scheme</i>	36	9	25	70	
	Lead time taken to find employment after completing BTG Scheme:-	<i>1 to 90 days</i>	44	14	37	95
		<i>91 to 180 days</i>	1	0	4	5
		<i>181 to 270 days</i>	0	1	2	3
		<i>271 to 360 days</i>	1	2	0	3
		<i>361 to 450 days</i>	1	0	0	1
	Still in employment till end year 2010		35	11	29	75
	Number of days in employment after BTG Scheme was completed up to end year 2010 (Still in employment till end year 2010):-	<i>1 to 180 days</i>	4	0	4	8
		<i>181 to 360 days</i>	2	1	8	11
		<i>361 to 540 days</i>	0	0	3	3
		<i>541 to 720 days</i>	1	1	0	2
		<i>721 to 900 days</i>	2	1	1	4
		<i>901 to 1,080 days</i>	5	3	3	11
		<i>over 1,081 days</i>	21	5	10	36
	Not in employment at end year 2010		12	6	14	32
Number of days in employment after BTG Scheme was completed up to end year 2010 (Not in employment at end year 2010):-	<i>1 to 180 days</i>	3	3	6	12	
	<i>181 to 360 days</i>	1	2	3	6	
	<i>361 to 540 days</i>	1	1	3	5	
	<i>541 to 720 days</i>	2	0	1	3	
	<i>721 to 900 days</i>	1	0	0	1	
	<i>901 to 1,080 days</i>	4	0	1	5	
	<i>over 1,081 days</i>	0	0	0	0	
Employed with same employer after BTG Scheme		40	12	32	84	
Not employed with same employer after BTG Scheme		7	5	11	23	
Did not find employment after BTG Scheme	Total	5	8	15	28	
	<i>Previously employed prior to BTG Scheme</i>	1	3	10	14	
	<i>Not previously employed prior to BTG Scheme</i>	4	5	5	14	
Overall Total	Overall Total	52	25	58	135	

Source: ETC.

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