

Ms. Eimear Lavelle,
Committee Secretariat,
Committee of Public Accounts,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.



January 2012

Our Ref: S1109349

Dear Ms Lavelle,

I refer to your letter of 7th December 2011 with regard to the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on Thursday 1st December 2011, requesting information with regard to projects and follow up in respect of the Labour Market Activation Fund as well as a copy of the evaluation conducted by PA Consulting .

All 55 projects that were supported under the Labour Market Activation Fund 2010 were required to capture data on the progression of participants from their programmes and to report these, as part of a self-evaluation of their programmes, to the Department before end August, 2011. Based on these project reports the consultants were able to access progression data in respect of 5,361 participants (53% of the total who completed programmes) with outcomes as follows:

- 42% achieved employment (paid/self-employment)
- 43% continued their education
- 15% remained unemployed

The consultants acknowledge that their evaluation followed shortly after the completion of the majority of funded programmes and that therefore their findings were preliminary, based on the results to hand at the time of their field work. They pointed out that there is often a lag before further education and training or employment opportunities are secured. Another factor influencing the availability of data was the voluntary nature of responses from programme participants which meant that variable response rates on their progression outcomes gave rise to information gaps.

The consultants concluded that future such initiatives should require consistent and sustained recording and reporting of participant destinations post-funding and post-project to ensure that the full value of the public investment is assessed. This finding will be considered in the design and roll-out of the Labour Market Activation Fund for 2012 announced in the recent Budget.

I hope this information will be of assistance to the Committee. A copy of the report is enclosed.

Yours sincerely,

Brigid Mc Manus
Secretary General.