

# ***Servizio di valutazione dell'Avviso pubblico "Torno Subito", edizioni 2015 e 2016***

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**Abstract**

(English version)

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Exprin Srl



The service aims at evaluating the effectiveness, the efficiency and the impact generated by the projects funded under the 2015 and 2016 calls of the “Torno Subito” initiative, financed by Region of Lazio’s 2014-2020 ESF Operational Programme.

Torno Subito pursues the objectives of strengthening human capital and improving learning through integrated projects that combine out-of-region learning and work experiences in Italy and abroad (phase 1) and in-region traineeships/work experiences (phase 2).

Since the design stage, the evaluation service has been conceived as an incremental process made up of a series of logically connected steps:

- a) **Analysis of the implementation and management processes.** A qualitative analysis of the implementation and management processes of the 2015 and 2016 calls was carried out. This also included an analysis of the organization appointed for the delivery of such processes as well as a comparison between the target values planned for the 2015 and 2016 “Torno Subito” calls and the relevant implementation data provided by the implementing body.
- b) **Analysis of the characteristics of the participants of the 2015 and 2016 calls as well as of the features of their projects.** A descriptive analysis was carried out concerning the universe of subjects whose projects were funded under the 2015 and the 2016 calls, also paying attention to the main features of such projects. The analysis was carried out by using the implementation data collected by the implementing body through the monitoring of the projects.
- c) **Analysis of the occupational outcomes of the subjects whose projects were funded under the 2015 and the 2016 calls and were completed.** The occupational outcomes have been defined in terms of **gross job placement rate** (the share of participants who had an active work/traineeship contract after 6/12/18 months since the completion of the project, according to administrative data) as well as in terms of **gross job activation rate** (the share of participants who started at least one work/traineeship contract within 6/12/18 months since the completion of the project). In order to carry out the analysis, an operational database was developed for each one of the two calls under observation. Each operational database was created by merging the database containing the implementation data provided by the implementing body and the information collected from the Employment Information System’s datawarehouse, that consist of administrative data concerning the beginning and the ceasing of work /traineeship contracts. The Region of Lazio provided such data.
- d) **Analysis of the net occupational effect,** aiming at estimating the net effect that can be ascribed to the participation in the calls in terms of job placement and job activation of the participants, regardless of the influence of factors not pertaining to the “Torno Subito” initiative. The analysis was carried out through a counterfactual approach, by comparing the occupational outcomes of an edition-specific treatment group (consisting of subjects whose projects were financed under the 2015 or the 2016 call and were completed) and an edition-specific control group (consisting of subjects who applied to the 2015 or to the 2016 call but whose projects were not selected for financing). The two groups were put together through the method of the **discontinuity in proximity of a cut-off threshold** in order to even out the initial differences between the two groups so as to reduce as much as possible their distorting influence on the outcome variables (job placement and job activation) and to assess the net effect of the initiative.
- e) **Qualitative analysis.** Qualitative in-depth inquiries were carried out by holding semi-structured individual interviews with the main stakeholders involved in the “Torno Subito” initiative, which is to say: the subjects who participated in the 2015 and in the 2016 calls (including those who interrupted their projects); the partners selected by the participants for the delivery of phase 2 of their projects; the public and private bodies that hired the participants after the completion of their projects according to the administrative data available.

- f) ***In-depth evaluation focus concerning the participants who interrupted their projects.*** The inquiry aimed at describing their characteristics and the features of the projects that had been interrupted, as well as at pointing out their gross job placement rate and their points of view (collected through semi-structured interviews).

These analyses produced some results that are **particularly interesting**.

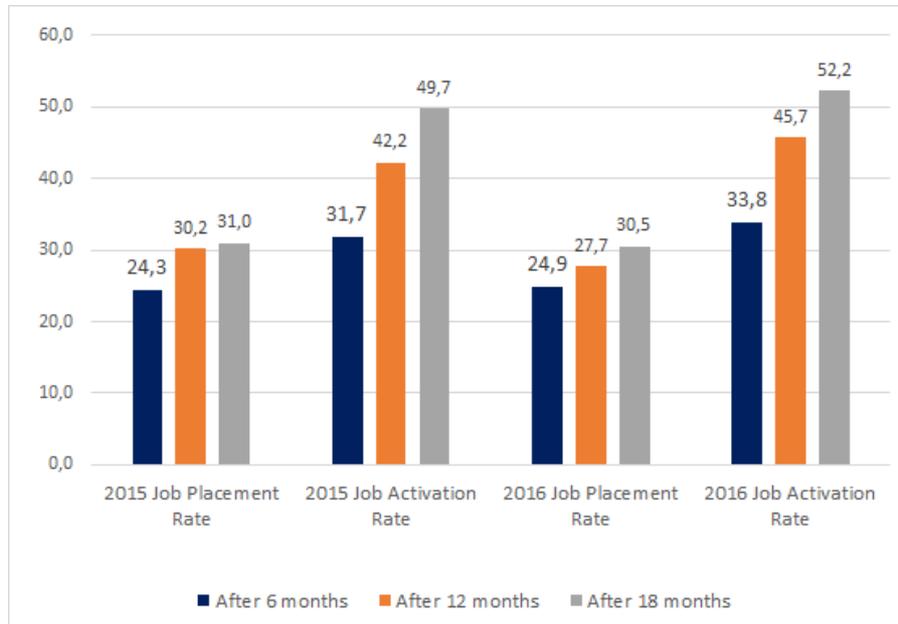
In the first place, both **the 2015 and the 2016 “Torno Subito” calls show a substantial positive impact on the occupational performance of the participants.**

The **gross rates highlight a positive performance that improves over the 18-month time frame** (which is to say after 6/12/18 months since the completion of phase 2 of each project).

In the case of the 2015 call, **the job placement rate** amounts to 24.3% after 6 months since the completion of the projects and it grows over time, reaching the values of 30.2% after 12 months and 31.0% after 18 months. The values of the 2016 call also show a **growth over time**, but in this case the job placement rate after six months is slightly higher (24.9%) while the growth of this value at the 12-month and 18-month time marks is not as strong as it is in 2015 (27.7% and 30.5%, respectively).

The **job activation rate**, that considers the activation of at least one work/traineeship contract within a certain time frame (within 6/12/18 months since the completion of the projects) regardless of its duration over time, shows **values that are significantly higher**. With regards to the 2015 call, this rate is equal to 31.7% after 6 months since the completion of the project, to 42.2% after 12 months and to 49.7% after 18 months. The 2016 call shows even greater values, with the job activation rate amounting to 33.8% after 6 months since the completion of the project, to 45.7% after 12 months and to 52.2% after 18 months.

**Pic.1 – Gross Occupational Outcomes (2015 and 2016 TS calls)**



**With regards to both the calls, the counterfactual analysis confirmed the positive effect of the initiative, both in terms of job placement and job activation.**

However, when applied to the 2015 call, the method used to establish the groups needed for the counterfactual comparison **was not as effective as it was in the case of the 2016 call**. In fact, the latter shows greater homogeneity between the treatment group and the control group, while in the case of the 2015 call significant differences persist, especially as far as it concerns the educational starting level of participants and non-

participants. Such differences could not be mitigated because this would have led to a severe reduction of the number of subjects that could be included in the 2015 control group, thus making the counterfactual comparison unfeasible. Consequently, the above-mentioned differences might have distorted at some degree the counterfactual results concerning the 2015 call.

That said, the counterfactual analysis of the **net job placement rates** of the 2015 call pointed out **a performance of the treatment group (participants who completed their projects) that was significantly better than the one of the control group (non-participants).**

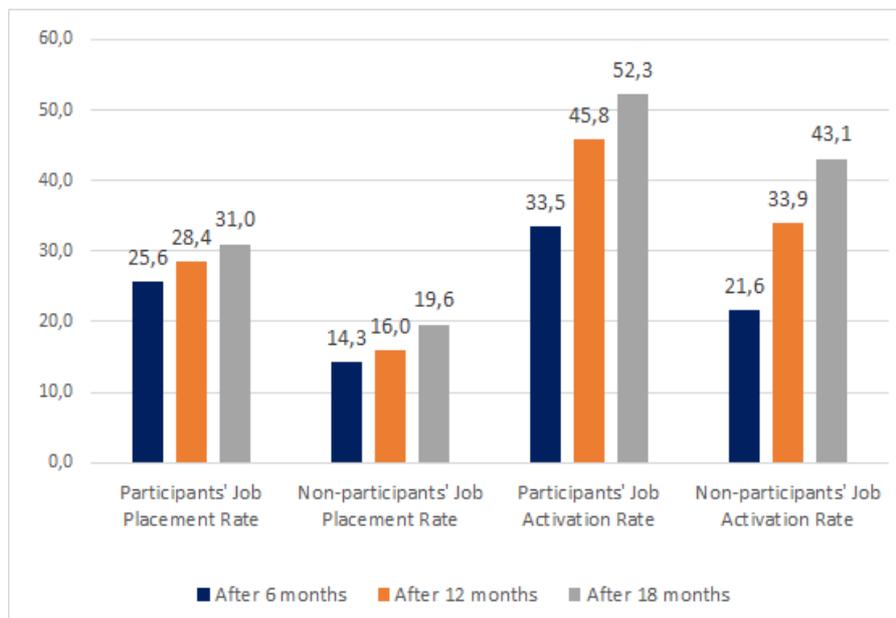
The **net job placement rate** after 6 months since the completion of the projects shows the greatest difference between the two groups (25.0% for participants compared to 15.9% for non-participants). This difference decreases at the 12-month mark (29.1% compared to 23.1%) as well as at the 18-month mark (30.4% compared to 27.2%).

As far as it concerns the **job activation rate** (the share of subjects who start at least one work/traineeship contract within a certain time frame), **the advantage participants got over non-participants is significant after six months since the completion of the projects** (31.7% compared to 24.1%), while it tends to decrease after 12 months (41.9% compared to 39.5%) and it completely disappears after 18 months (at this time mark non-participants show a slight advantage over participants, 49.7% compared to 48.6% respectively).

**The net job placement and job activation rates concerning the 2016 call both highlight a positive impact coming from the participation in “Torno Subito” that is even stronger than the one recorded for the previous call.**

The differences between the job placement rates of the 2016 treatment group and of the 2016 control group after 6, 12 and 18 months since the completion of the projects confirm **the added value connected with participating in the initiative** (this difference is equal to 11.3%, 12.4% and 11.4%, respectively). The same goes for the differences between the job activation rates of the two groups collected at the same time marks (this difference amounts to 11.9% after 6 months, it stands at the same value after 12 months and it decreases to 9.2% after 18 months).

**Pic.2 – Net Occupational Outcomes (2016 TS call)**



Several factors seem to have affected the occupational performances (for example the social and personal characteristics of the subjects, the features of the specific projects, etc.), but it was not possible to point out many common regular patterns affecting the results of the two calls in terms of net and gross rates. The counterfactual results for the 2016 call show that the advantage participants had over non-participants seems

to be greater for men, for young subjects (at least as far as it concerns the job activation rate) and for subjects with a secondary school degree.

**The occupational performances of the participants living in Lazio are significantly better than the ones of the participants coming from other regions who only resided in Lazio when they applied for the call.** This is probably due to the intervention logic of the “Torno Subito” initiative and to the territorial requirement established for phase 2. These aspects might have favoured the participation of those already living in Lazio, as they were more likely to have wider and stronger connections with local businesses than participants from other regions.

The high share of participants who interrupted their projects is another feature that is common to the two calls under observation. This share amounts to 17.2% for the 2015 call and to 18.5% for the 2016 call. However, **in most cases interruptions were due to the fact that participants accepted a job proposal they had received during the delivery of their projects.** Thus, interruptions are not necessarily a symptom of a shortcoming of the initiative, whose main goal consists in favouring job placement. On the contrary, the participants who interrupted their projects had usually completed the learning phase and took advantage from it as they received job proposals that were often consistent with their projects.

The qualitative analysis confirmed the positive performance of the 2015 and 2016 TS calls as it pointed out **a high degree of appreciation for the initiative** expressed by all the categories of stakeholders interviewed (participants, phase-1 partners, phase-2 partners), especially as far as it concerns **the intervention logic of Torno Subito, which is deemed to be a winning model.**

The idea of strengthening participants’ skills and competences through out-of-region experiences and then to convey such strengthened expertise to the regional production system has resulted in a **win-win logic** both for participants and phase-2 partners. The former could improve the appeal of their profiles for the labour market through significant learning and work experiences (in many cases they were hired by the phase-2 partner right after the completion of the project). The latter took advantage of the strengthened skills participants had acquired through phase 1 to improve the competitiveness and the efficiency of their business (in fact, as stated above, many phase-2 partners hired the participants after the completion of phase 2).

However, the evaluation research also pointed out some **aspects that could be improved.**

First, it is necessary to **strengthen the appeal and the exposure of the initiative toward private businesses.** The analyses concerning the different kinds of phase-2 partners and of the employers highlighted the central role Lazio entrepreneurial system plays in order to achieve Torno Subito intervention logic’s goals. In fact, with regards to both the calls, private businesses account for the largest share of phase-2 partners and of employers who hired the participants after the completion of the projects. This is mainly because Torno Subito provides private businesses with the opportunity to strengthen their competitiveness and efficiency at zero cost. However, the analyses also revealed that private businesses often deemed Torno Subito less convenient than other kinds of incentive to hiring. Thus, Torno Subito intervention logic should be adapted by combining it with some form of incentive to hiring (not necessarily of the financial kind) to draw more interest from private businesses (as well as from no-profit organizations, universities, research centres, public bodies) in applying for the role of phase-2 partner.

It is also important to **strengthen public interventions aimed at supporting the exposure and the appeal of the initiative** by addressing them not only to potential beneficiaries but also to local organizations that might be potentially interested in hosting a participant for the phase 2 of the project (and, perhaps, even in hiring the participant after its completion). Such interventions should include actions aimed at easing the first contact between the potential beneficiary and the businesses potentially interested in hosting him/her in order to

improve matching between the demand and the supply of expertise as well as to verify in advance the substantial interest of both the subjects.

Moreover, the information acquired through the in-depth qualitative inquiries revealed the risk of “**competition among participants**”, which is strictly connected with the same intervention logic that determined the positive impact of Torno Subito. With the succession of yearly Torno Subito calls, some phase-2 partners might be more interested in acquiring free workforce by hosting new phase-2 trainees each year rather than hiring the participant of the previous edition they hosted. From the participants’ point of view, not only this may undermine the possibility to establish a sound and effective path of personal improvement, but it may also generate an insane competition among participants from different editions. To mitigate such a risk, it is important to set up mechanisms aimed at assessing in advance (at the promotion stage) the substantial interest of the organizations applying for the role of phase-2 partner in hosting the participant and possibly hiring him/her after the completion of the project. These mechanisms should duplicate the actions that some private businesses dealing with HR recruitment and training have carried out at least as of the 2016 call, consisting in delivering opportunities for first contact and matching between potential beneficiaries and private businesses potentially interested in hosting them during the phase 2 of the project as well as in hiring them at the end of it.

These mechanisms should be combined with follow-up actions addressed to those participants who were not hired by the phase-2 hosting partners right after the completion of the projects, because of a lack of real interest in hiring or due to specific features of the organizations involved (for example in the case of public bodies or non-profit organizations). These follow-ups should consist in creating a network of local subjects to support the participants who did not get a job after the completion of phase 2 in promoting the expertise they gained through the project with respect to other local businesses potentially interested in hiring them.

Moreover, specific follow-up actions should also be addressed to those participants who (as of the 2016 call) successfully attended the course for self-entrepreneurship at a local co-working hub. Such follow-ups should focus on creating a network involving those participants to support synergies and collaborations between entrepreneurial projects. They should also include measures to support them in finding potential financial sources to deliver their entrepreneurial ideas (for example support to the search for potential investors, training concerning the access to public soft financing).