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*Executive summary of the
Assessment Report of the ESF
Operative Programme of the
Community of Madrid 2014-
2020.*

2014-2016 Period



14 de junio de 2017

The assessment report concerns the **first assessment** of the ESF 2014-2020 OP of the Community of Madrid, following the schedule set forth under the Specific Assessment Plan of such programme for this programming period.

This assessment exercise is a result of the provisions set out under articles 54-57, 111 and 114 of Regulation No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council, of 17 December 2013, concerning and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. This regulation provides that the Managing Authorities should ensure that evaluations are carried in the programming period out to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of a programme. An additional goal is to improve the quality of design and implementation of programmes, and to determine the impact of programmes in relation to the targets under the Union strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth.

The scope of this assessment exercise is based on the logic of assessing if the Programme is working in line with forecasts, if the actions are reaching the recipient collectives and, lastly, if the results are aligned with expectations.

As concerns the methodology, this assessment is an **interim assessment**, i.e. it has been completed following the launch of the Operational Programme, spanning up until 31 December 2016. Therefore, the assessment adopts a formational and comprehensive approach allowing an assessment of the Programme, considering key aspects of the context in which it is set, the structure available to it, its concept or design, the processes generated, and the results attained in respect of the forecasts at the time this assessment was completed.

The assessment has envisaged the **temporal scope** provided in the corresponding Assessment Sheet, including the selected actions from 2014 to 2016 (including both years).

As far as the **territorial scope is concerned**, we note that it relates to the entire autonomous community of Madrid, where the Operational Programme of the European Social Fund is relevant.

The methodology distinguishing this assessment combines different information tools:

- 1- Documentary sources concerning the legal, regulatory, and programming framework.
- 2- Information gathering tools: in-depth interviews (in person and online).

The main **conclusions** of this assessment report are, in general terms, the following:

PROGRAMME STRATEGY AND INTERVENTION LOGIC

Complementarity of the strategy:

The ESF Operational Programme of the Community of Madrid sets out, in an economic crisis scenario impacting the entire territory up until now, to act on three large blocks of objectives intended to offer a response to the needs and challenges faced by the region: *the reinforcement of the social fabric, the investment in human capital and the increase of levels of employment and its quality*. In this connection, considering the programming architecture, it is apparent that there is an appropriate **complementarity of the strategy** of the OP with the National Strategy, tackled through multi-regional programmes. The strategy set out under the OP of the ESF of the Community of Madrid evinces high complementarity with European Policy, which again shows that this is an efficient tool to contribute to offering a response to the challenges of European Policy.

Relevance Analysis:

The programme is true to the thematic area, as provided under Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013. The two requirements set forth under Article 4 have been duly fulfilled, i.e. the consistency and thematic concentration provisions of the regulation.

Analysis of internal coherence:

The alignment of the OP with European regulatory requirements is closely linked. We note an **internal coherence** between the relations of interdependency or mutual reinforcement of the Specific Objectives of the Programme. The strategy is strengthened through greater efficiency and effectiveness of the effects and impacts of the specific objectives selected.

Analysis of external coherence:

In the ex ante assessment, an appraisal of the **external coherence** with the remaining relevant tools on a regional, national and Community level was carried out. This unveiled synergies with other programmes and policies, notably the *European Union's Research and Innovation Programme 2014-2020 (H2020)*, the *SMEs competitiveness programme (COSME)*, the *Social Agenda* or the *Youth Employment Initiative*.

Partnership principle in defining the strategy

The ESF OP of the Community of Madrid reveals a high degree of participation of the stakeholders involved in the preparation of the operating programme, and their role in its implementation, follow-up and assessment. From the initial stages the principle of association and multi-level governance provided under Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 has been borne in mind and it has been incorporated into the development of the programming from the word go.

In general, this participative process has comprised four differentiated stages: defining the partners of the partnership for the design of the OP; defining the action lines; selecting the indicators, and a public consultation published on a website.

Intervention logic:

As regards the intervention logic, we underline that there is a suitable alignment of the intervention logic of each of the axes with the strategy planned, and the results or changes expected. In this connection, we conclude that, in general terms, there is a positive link between the challenges and needs and the strategy defined.

The assessment exercise has revised and compared the current data of the main contextual socio-economic indicators, which were especially relevant in defining the strategy of the Operational Programme. Although these were appraised in a crisis context, they are still valid and bolster the strategy.

As for the **beneficiaries**, in each of the theme axes included in the OP, a special type of recipients is identified to whom the strategy is addressed. Therefore, there is a full alignment between the objectives of the actions and the intended target population.

[EVOLUTION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME](#)

EFFICIENCY OF RESULT INDICATORS

When this assessment was completed, the scope of the implementation of the OP was at an early stage, together with a series of factors leading to the delay in the launch of operations and generally impacting most managing authorities. This first assessment exercise has been completed as a first approach surrounding the progress of the OP. However, firstly, some considerations broken down by axis can be explained:

Axis 1

In general terms, the degree of efficiency of the result indicators linked to this axis is low, and therefore special attention should be paid to the follow-up of progress during 2017.

Axis 2

For the axis 2, the degree of efficiency of the result indicators is more balanced and in line with the strategy. Even so, like axis 1, attention needs to be paid to the progress of the programme over the forthcoming years to make sure that the compliance with plans is attained.

Axis 3

Axis 3 is the one offering more standardised degrees as concerns efficiency, in line with the Investment Priority strategy in which its operations have taken place.

Having regard for the above, as an approach to the quantitative operation of the programme, in general terms, the progress of the various actions is addressed to the compliance with the targets established under a more qualitative perspective. However, as we said in the foregoing sections, the efficiency values of the result indicators must be taken as provisional ones, as the comparison has been conducted considering the expenditure committed at 31 December 2016. Not all operations had finalised on that date, and this gives rise to some dysfunctions in the data obtained.

EFFICIENCY OF PRODUCTIVITY INDICATORS

Both common and specific performance indicators have been considered. As with result indicators, a series of factors generally conditioning the managing authorities have been registered. We must not lose sight of these facts when interpreting the conclusions of the sections on the progress of the programme:

- ❑ The start of the 2014-2020 has overlapped in time with the closure of the preceding programming period (2007-2013), and this means that part of the programmed operations were postponed to devote efforts to closing the previous period.
- ❑ The delay in the approval of the OP, which is also subject to other directly-related actions, like the approval of the selection criteria of operations or the simplified cost options.
- ❑ The complexity involved in completing level one controls and the scope of the verifications.
- ❑ The late publication of Order ESS 1924/2016, of 13 December, on eligible ESF subsidy expenses.
- ❑ The adjustment in the system of gathering indicators, and the non-availability of the transfer of information tool.
- ❑ Despite the fact that the need to reduce administrative workloads is indicated for all programming periods, the reality is that these have been increased by new regulatory requirements, demanding constant adjustments by the Intermediate Bodies, with limited human teams.

- Many of the intermediate bodies managing the Programme have said that this programming period is characterised by a greater complexity in the methods to compile indicators.

AXIS 1

If a breakdown is made by Investment Priorities, for IP 8.1 and 8.3 the degree of efficiency of the long-term jobseekers indicator is low. Difficulties are observed that can condition its performance and the alignment with its forecasts.

For IP 8.4, the degree of efficiency of productivity indicators is high both for the participant parties receiving actions devoted to improving their situation on a labour and/or personal level, and for the Public or private entities entrusted with implementing equality measures or plans. As concerns this investment priority, we note that the reference of the indicator forecast is below the participation completed, and that it would be advisable to carry out a review of the specific productivity indicator forecast in the 2023 horizon, adjusting more to the reality of the operations carried out and to be completed within this Investment Priority.

AXIS 2

As for IP 9.1 an interpretation exercise is needed, moving the scale down to the collectives to whom the actions performed are addressed. As for the participants with disabilities, the degree of efficiency shown is high, above the value forecast for 2016, and in line with the value expected for 2023. As for people facing a risk of social exclusion, the implementation is below expectations. There is a high risk of failing to comply in matters concerning social exclusion.

Greater contrasts are witnessed for IP 9.3. The actions addressed to people with disabilities and people in a situation of risk or social exclusion (gender equality) have a high level of efficiency. Meanwhile the actions focusing on migrants, foreign participants and marginalised communities, and people in a setting of social exclusion (equal treatment), have a low level of efficiency.

For IP 9.5, the start-up of programmes geared towards fostering labour integration of people at risk of social exclusion with itineraries in collaboration with integration companies and not-for-profit entities reveal a high degree of compliance with the targets set for 2016.

Although the emerging values fail to meet expectations in some cases, this deviation is however mostly due to a series of circumstances shared by axis 2. On the one hand, the level of financial implementation is low in respect of forecasts. Meanwhile, the managing authorities have noted the difficulties to obtain information feeding this indicator, which is mostly of a sensitive nature. Especially relevant is a follow-up of the actions being carried out in the short-term.

AXIS 3

For axis 3, investment priorities 10.2 and 10.4 reveal a high level of efficiency in respect of the plans of the OP, with actions centring on persons with higher or tertiary education (ISCED 5 to 8), who are inactive. Moreover, the progress of the actions in the framework of these priorities allows us to reach the *prima facie* conclusion that no elements of risk of non-compliance with the milestones are found.

EFFICIENCY OF THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The values obtained prove that the implementation indicators of the Performance Framework in Axis 1 are low and are not aligned with their forecasts. In this connection, it is important to heed the progress of the actions contributing to this indicator and to complete another assessment in the short-term to value the adjustment to its objectives.

In axis 2 the values are low as well, and there is a high risk of non-attainment, with a low level of implementation.

As for axis 3, the efficiency degree is high, coming in above the forecasts for 2016, and aligned with the targets for the 2018 milestone.

As for the financial indicator, here we must highlight that the value used has been the expenditure committed up until 31 December 2016, and that the degree of efficiency of the financial indicator of axes 1 and 3 is high, and that of axis 2 is low. These values demonstrate that, in general, there is appropriate planning in this connection. However, the scope of the final financial implementation is subject to the need for the committed expenditure to materialise in settled, executed, and verified spending.

EFFICIENCY

Although the calculation tables of programme efficiency have been completed these are still in an early implementation stage and are thus not an accurate benchmark to measure efficiency. Although they are presented as an estimate at the current time, to reach conclusions it is necessary to have proceeded to certify expenses, controls, and the verification of operations.

The general conclusion is that both the effectiveness and the efficiency values obtained in connection with productivity indicators have to be considered on a provisional basis, as the comparison is not homogeneous, given that it is based on committed expenditure (and, therefore, not entirely implemented spending), using the data of the indicators of finalised projects. This, in some cases, leads to a distortion of the “unit cost” of the actions. All this means that the potential effectiveness and efficiency is not fully reflected, insofar as committed expenditure has not totally materialised as expenditure effectively implemented and the corresponding indicators arising thereout are not reflected.

HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

Partnership and multi-level governance

As concerns the principle of partnership and multi-level governance, as reflected in the OP, in the course of the programming process, the stakeholders involved in the various fields of action of the OP took part, and the experience provided by such stakeholders was a good practice in its entirety. This placed value on the particularities and needs of the various social sectors, together with the challenges faced by the region.

Equality between men and women and non-discrimination

The integration of the gender perspective and fostering equality of men and women has been a guiding principle during the programming, selection and implementation of operations of the ESF 2014-2020 OP of the Community of Madrid.

Meanwhile, in the framework of the OP of the Community of Madrid, operations specifically devoted to the theme of this principle have been carried out and are being carried out and it can therefore be concluded that the strategy proposed is aligned with the inclusion of the equality principle of men and women and non-discrimination.

Sustainable development

The type of actions of the OP of the Community of Madrid in the framework of the ESF do not incorporate actions directly linked to sustainable development, as most actions are focused on people. The principle of sustainable development, as evinced by the analysis completed, is considered a cross-cutting theme, although the operations completed in their framework must attempt to minimise environmental impact, prioritising the actions supporting sustainable development. As far as the results are concerned, it is still too soon to make an assessment of the repercussion of the principle.

Meanwhile, a set of **recommendations** dealing with the conclusions reached have been issued:

RECOMMENDATION 1.

It is important, with a view to future assessments, to review and update the socio-economic and contextual situation of the region to undertake a continuous assessment of the strategy set out under the ESF 2014-2020 OP of the Community of Madrid.

RECOMMENDATION 2.

Continuing in the current direction, as far as the compiling of indicators is concerned, fostering their collection using follow-up systems as a fundamental tool to identify potential inconsistencies in compiling done by the Intermediate Managing Bodies, and the identification in early stages of the deviations that may occur in terms of physical, financial and result implementation.

It is also important to undertake a review of the forecasts of the indicators identified throughout the assessment exercise and the scope of the current context of expected results.

RECOMMENDATION 3.

In connection with the recommendation above, in the 2014-2020 period, the use of computing tools is prioritised as a tool for the simplification and standardisation for the follow-up of Operating Programmes. Therefore, we recommend that the managers continue their use, as the proper use of tools facilitates management and operativity in the follow-up of the actions planned.

RECOMMENDATION 4.

In terms of efficiency, we deem it fit to pay special attention to the progress of the various actions set out under the programme and to value their progress, given the risk of a deviation of forecasts made in respect of the reality of their implementation. This specifically relates to the operations concerning axis 1 and 2, with a very low level of implementation in respect of the planning, where stark deviations can be seen.

In this regard, we recommend the completion of a “state of the question” analysis for each of the actions forecast, considering the current data and the prospects of attaining the milestones.

In the actions with levels of participation and contribution to the productivity and result indicators that clearly deviate from the objectives, even though the assessment has been completed in an early stage of the implementation of the OP, we recommend that the Intermediate Managing Bodies plan actions addressed to complying with the OP objectives, as well as a more customised follow-up of the progress attained towards an alignment with the strategy.

Meanwhile, it is also necessary to review those productivity and result indicators which may be consistent with the intervention strategy and act on the needs of the region, but which are however not representative of their context, given that the initial stage of the programme has already exceeded forecasts for 2023.

RECOMMENDATION 5

We recommend that specific actions in connection with horizontal principles of equality between men and women and non-discrimination continue to be identified and developed.

As for sustainable development, we believe a good practice could be the motivation of managers towards undertaking actions in the framework of this principle. A further point would be identifying the operations in which the principle is considered a cross-cutting principle, such as a module of a training course,

awareness of the environment, or the importance of conservation of the natural medium and actions for recycling and good environmental practices.

RECOMMENDATION 6

In connection with the above, we recommend the identification, as far as possible, of the relationship between the content of certain operations and the contribution that they may make to social innovation and the mitigation and adjustment of climate change. For instance, through science publications, the development of innovative methodologies or specific thematic content.