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European Social Fund



Castilla-La Mancha

*Executive Summary – 2019
Midterm Evaluation
ESF ROP 2014-2020 Castilla-La
Mancha*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results evaluation of the ESF Operational Programme 2014-2020 for Castilla-La Mancha, scheduled for 2019, has been performed in accordance with [REGULATION \(EU\) No. 1303/2013](#) of the European Parliament and the Council of December 17, 2013 of Common Provisions. It is the second midterm evaluation and its outcomes may affect the Performance Framework.

The evaluation has been developed with the aim of measuring the levels of effectiveness, efficiency, accuracy and coherence of the measures included in the OP and estimating the preliminary effects and impacts produced by the OP implementation between the 1st January 2014 and the 31st December 2018. The evaluation tasks have considered the operations/projects started and/or selected by the Programme within each thematic Objective.

The evaluation work has been developed in close cooperation with the Intermediate Body and the managing bodies of the co-financed operations that have been interviewed in person.

The most relevant conclusions and recommendations of the OP evaluation grouped by scope of evaluation analysis are summarized below.

INTERVENTION LOGIC

The Operational Programme and, specifically, its programming structure has presented changes that are linked to a positive evolution associated to two main aspects. On the one hand, there have been two reprogramming exercises mainly adjusted to the improvements identified in the first evaluation exercise of 2017; on the other hand, the current OP version has made a significant effort in concentrating the activities thematically and maximizing the efforts to achieve the intended objectives. However, the OP currently presents new possibilities to concentrate thematically to a greater extent and to maximize its intervention.

IMPLEMENTATION

One of the main elements to highlight in the analysis of the OP implementation are the programming and budgetary efforts (around 55%) which are oriented towards measures related to the promotion of employment, whose effectiveness derives from the activity of the [Labour Counselling Services for Women](#) and the [Extraordinary Employment Plan of Castilla-La Mancha](#) (Axis 1). Another important weight is concentrated in the vocational training cycles of middle and higher education (approximately 33%, Axis 3). Also remarkable are the results linked to the impulse produced in Axis 2 by the activity of the Regional Department of Social Welfare.

Other **weaknesses** that have conditioned the implementation of the Programme are:

- The fact that there have been [problems in absorbing the costs](#) that were previously programmed may be showing [some institutional weakness of ESF](#), compared to other organizational structures of the Regional Government on which the budget allocation depends.
- Among the findings of this midterm evaluation are the structural deficit of human and computer resources that continue with two very important consequences. Linked to the

second, [limitations continue to be identified in order to consolidate computer resources in a timely manner](#). On the other hand, the [difficulty of retaining talent](#) in the different Public Administration areas is an important issue in the management of ESF, which, although it may be produced by varied reasons such as the idiosyncrasy of the Spanish public administration or the complexity of European or other funds management, has an impact on the daily management itself.

- Lastly, [operational difficulties are identified to consolidate a good design and application of the horizontal principles](#), especially the principle of gender mainstreaming, since this does not align the implementation with a previous analysis of needs and a deepening on the possible impacts.

However, beyond the difficulties shown, the implementation of the program is noteworthy because it embodies a praxis in the management of European funds in the Administration. Among **other positive issues** and perhaps more linked to the impact of the Programme itself, we can highlight:

- There is a common conviction that without the financing provided to the Region by the ESF OP, [many of the policies developed within the framework of Castilla-La Mancha could not be implemented](#).
- It is observed that the OP has favoured people in two main ways: it has allowed to broaden the scope of the goals, that is, it has produced the OP to have [greater coverage](#). Furthermore, not only has the coverage improved, but it has also [fostered a diversification](#) of the people to whom the program was directed, for example, through addressing lines and policies to disadvantaged groups.
- It seems that there has been some [appropriation by the parties involved in the management of the OP](#) and it has shown different levels of commitment. It is observed how the need for planning has been assumed together with a continuous rethinking of the objectives and the means to reach them. Work has been done to favour a systematized information collection articulating the mechanisms for this (management and control systems of the Programme (2014/2020 Funds Module) and the ESF indicators system of Castilla-La Mancha, known as SIFSE) and, besides, [the evaluative culture has been strengthened both internally and externally](#).
- Also, despite limited human resources, there has been a [professionalization of the technical units](#) with the aim of improving human and technically those services where it has been necessary.

ANALYSIS OF EFFECTIVENESS IN PRODUCTS (IIPP)

In [Axis 1](#), there are only two types of actions with a satisfactory degree of effectiveness and that are aligned with the objectives:

- [Orientation and labour counselling actions aimed at women \(SO 8.1.1\)](#). This activity was already implemented both co-financed and without co-financing and its development has led to an expansion of target centres.

- Measures to [improve employability through the acquisition of work experience \(SO 8.1.5\). Employment Plan](#). In addition, participation has greatly increased.

This shows that the Axis execution within the framework of the Programme has strengthened two [important strategic policy lines](#) that work with [groups of people in situation of vulnerability](#) achieving an adequate degree of effectiveness. On the other hand, it seemed that promoting actions in favour of [stable hiring](#) made sense, however, actions have only been directed towards already employed people, therefore not showing the expected behaviour.

It seems that the main causes that are hampering the correct execution of this axis and, in general, the OP as a whole, is the existing deficit of budgetary disposition in the responsible bodies, therefore it would be advisable that they made an impulse in favour of execution.

On the other hand, there are identified actions that have not been selected (beyond those that have been recently programmed), this fact showing some structural weakness on the part of the agencies to start what was planned.

In the case of [Axis 2](#), there has been a [considerable delay](#) in the selection of operations together with the difficulty of anticipating the necessary funds for several years. This has had a negative impact on reaching the level of financial execution envisaged. However, this reflection is not observed in the productivity indicators. Their values achieved up to now show that [if there is no greater mobilization of internal financial resources, the expected objectives will not be achieved](#).

The launching of new actions, which incorporate [more innovative solutions](#), has been very well received by the target groups, and has led to an [improvement in the effectiveness and efficiency of the social measures](#) implemented previously. In this sense, this situation is mainly due to the co-financing of ESF.

As already underlined in the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming, it is observed that the [line aimed at people with disabilities and people at risk of exclusion](#) have larger participation of women than men, however, the degree of comparative effectiveness is very superior in the latter. These values show that [the design of these actions has not addressed a holistic integration of the gender perspective](#) and even it has supported the maintenance of gender stereotypes. Finally, the CREA Program seems to have a greater possibility of absorbing funds in the future.

The objectives of [Axis 3](#) have been reconfigured recently in the framework of the 2018 reprogramming, identifying new lines that have not yet been launched. The [fight against early school leaving](#) has been a [regional commitment](#) to reduce the high values that the region has in this area and it has been [directly transferred to the OP](#).

This Axis also presents an [atomized implementation](#) with small interventions that globally present a very small degree of success and that also serve to finance structural policies already developed showing budgetary limitations of advance financing (for example, support for multilingualism).

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The achievement of the expected milestones of the Performance Framework [does not present deviations](#) from the predicted values. The estimations made have been aligned with the values that

were expected to be reached mainly because, in general terms, the [setting of objectives responded to a conservative estimation](#).

EFFICIENCY

The analysis of the efficiency reveals that [actions implementation has not meant a change of paradigm in the costs 'management](#), since, as it was appreciated in the past evaluation, each competent Authority determined a unit cost for each one of the actions in the programming process, in order to calculate the objective values in the selected productivity indicators. These values and the calculation method are included in the *ad hoc* methodology for calculating the Programme's target values. [Therefore, there is a compliance aligned with the forecasts made in the matter](#).

EFFICACY IN THE RESULTS (RESULT INDICATORS) -ADVANCE IN ACHIEVING THE RESULTS OF THE OP

In the case of [Axis 1](#), it is concluded that the OP is being an [investment instrument to support labour insertion and activation in the labour market, particularly in two groups](#), which in turn have been recognized as priorities in the OP: [women](#) and [unemployed people](#). However, although there is a greater participation of women than men, the degree of progress in this area is better in men than in women. Men are the ones that show better behaviour in the labour market than women do.

Within [Axis 2](#), despite the lack of definitive data linked to the achievements of all actions that should be considered, the progress made so far has allowed the development of [new work methods with vulnerable people or at risk of exclusion](#) that could not otherwise have been implemented. Although insertion values are not significant, the effects are shown in other areas such as the improvement of living conditions and access to basic services, or the prevention of early school leaving among the most marginalized communities.

In [Axis 3](#), it seems that women are trained to a lesser extent in the [vocational training cycles of intermediate and higher grade, associated with the RIS3](#), however, they manage to promote to the next course or obtain the degree in a greater proportion than men.

Labour insertion or the improvement in employment does not seem to be a relevant indicator in this Axis, since the data are not significant, however, although the values do not stand out quantitatively, this Axis is boosting professionalized employment and especially linked to the emerging sectors of R + D + i.

Finally, in global terms, although it is true that the Programme shows a high degree of atomization, in practice it is observed that the main [financial efforts are concentrated in those measures that contribute directly to the results](#) that have been indicated in each one of the axes.

IMPACT

The OP has been a [territorial dynamization instrument](#) where it has been applied under different points of view. It has allowed to promote management models that in practice are more operational and therefore they modernize and innovate the management of this policy. On the other hand, internally, it has impacted the work models and the training of the personnel that leads them.

It is not less important to highlight the effects among the target population as the OP can serve a larger number of people and provide coverage to groups that, without the incidence of ESF, would not be treated in the same terms as the Programme does.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

The Operational Programme shows a [clear alignment with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy](#), although the overall contribution of the OP is small in comparison to the regional public policies articulated in favour of these areas. Therefore, the OP design and implementation are [a very useful tool to favour this approach](#). It can be highlighted that the contribution to the Strategy presents [better results in the areas of employment and education](#), where the implementation of the different lines has been strongly linked to the progress of the OP.

Regarding the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), the contribution of the OP is more clearly [linked to equal opportunities and access to the labour market](#). Actions also show alignment with other axes of this Pillar, but in a reduced way and with a limited direct contribution.

ANALYSIS OF THE HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES

Concerning [Multilevel Governance](#), the OP has tried to foster and consolidate the [participation of the different partners](#) by articulating different mechanisms that allow taking into account different opinions, participations and consultations in the matter. The leadership in this area by the Intermediate Body and its interest in responding to this principle stands out.

Regarding [Equality of opportunities between men and women](#), the OP foresees a series of direct actions aimed at improving the conditions of women in a situation of vulnerability and it articulates the necessary resources for this purpose. This fact constitutes an [effective instrument](#) to contribute to this principle. On the other hand, an [equal access between men and women](#) to the rest of actions is considered a priority, however, [the OP misses a concrete plan to do it in practice](#).

Furthermore, it is important to highlight how the [ESF has been a clear and positive influence to plan for the future and systematize information collection](#) allowing the identification of milestones and achievements [disaggregated by sex](#). It is possible that without the influence of the ESF there would not be information of this nature. However, it is observed that the main [handicap](#) in planning is to [deepen the true differences between men and women](#) that would allow planning accordingly. The data show that, beyond respecting a proportional balance of participations, they are not subject to a gender impact assessment that allowed planning and execution from a gender perspective. This situation is common to all OP Axes.

This situation is due to the lack of sufficient trained resources to ensure the correct implementation of this principle. Likewise, during these years of Programme implementation, [no real mobilization of the competent regional equality body has actually been achieved](#) to support the existing challenges in this area.

Regarding [Non-discrimination](#) actions with [direct contribution to non-discrimination](#) are implemented, mainly in [Axis 2](#) and also in Axis 1. Efforts are made in the promotion of actions which objective is the creation of employment based on different factors of inclusion, that is, through the development of social and labour improvement measures aimed at disadvantaged groups. In short,

it seems that the OP ensures that concrete measures aimed at mitigating the possible inequalities that exist among the recipients of ESF aid are implemented.

In the case of [Sustainable Development](#), this OP does not have an orientation aimed at deploying concrete actions that contribute to this horizontal principle, however, there is a certain sensitivity among the parties involved in the Programme management to respect it. Conclusions about incidence on climate change follow the same line.