

Interim Evaluation of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education

Executive summary

July 2017

1. Introduction

Context and objectives of the evaluation

This executive summary presents the results obtained from the interim evaluation carried out in 2017 of the **operations implemented or partially implemented at 31 December 2016 in the framework of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education (hereinafter, OPETE)**.

Given the late approval of the Programme for 2014-20, to all intents and purposes its implementation began in 2016 and this evaluation was started at the beginning of 2017. Consequently, there was little actual data available for the output and result indicators.

Based on the data received and the time frame available to carry it out, the evaluation work was focused, firstly, on **providing information on the degree of implementation of the Operational Programme**, considering certain aspects such as the quality of the implementation, the type of financial implementation, the delays that occurred between the selection of operations and the implementation thereof, advances in the implementation measured through the analysis of output and result indicators and, finally, the degree of achievement of the milestones defined in the performance framework of the Operational Programme.

Secondly, to complement the quantitative analysis, the evaluation was then focused on providing **qualitative information** in order to assess the quality of the Programme's management. The qualitative evaluation of the Programme's implementation sought to analyse certain aspects such as relevance, internal coherence, the analysis of procedures, the application of the horizontal principle governing equal opportunities and the guiding principles on evaluation, innovation, the exchange of information, synergies, complementarity and good practices. Particular

emphasis was placed on the analysis of procedures, as this is of vital importance for the proper implementation of the Programme and the cornerstone for obtaining quality data for a future impact evaluation at the end of the period.

Given the differences in terms of management and the problems faced by both the Public and Business Management Bodies, two different **workshops** were held for each type of body. The preliminary conclusions of the evaluations were discussed at these workshops and suggestions and possible measures were gathered for the optimisation of the management of the Multi-Regional Operational Programmes.

2. Analysis of implementation

Analysis of implementation: results by Priority Axis and Investment Priority

- **General considerations**

The implementation of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education was still at an early stage at the end of 2016. This can be seen from the results obtained from the quantitative questionnaire and from the analysis of the implementation data included in the Annual Implementation Report.

In general terms, Axis 1 presents the highest degree of implementation, in particular under Investment Priorities 8.1 and 8.3. Additionally, it should be stressed that the level of implementation is highest in the category A regions, which are the most developed regions of Spain. According to the Intermediate Bodies, most of the final recipients are concentrated in these regions.

In particular, actions have been implemented under all the Axes and Investment Priorities that comprise the logical framework of the Programme. However, no action of any kind has been carried out under Axis 2, which seeks to promote social inclusion and combat poverty and any discrimination; nor under Axis 7, relating to transnational cooperation. Although actions have already been designed for Axis 2 which it was not possible to implement before December 2016, but that will be implemented over the next few years, the lack of implementation thus far could mean that the objectives set for these Axes for 2018 and 2023 may not be met.

- **Employment**

Axis 1, which promotes job sustainability and quality, presents the highest level of participation and acceptable results as regards the number of participants who have found work since leaving the programme. Nevertheless, only a tiny percentage of them have secured long-term employment, thus the number of participants that have obtained sustainable and quality employment is lower.

most positive results for Axis 1 relate to Investment Priority 8.1, which seeks to facilitate access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, also through local employment initiatives and support for labour mobility. However, the inclusion under this priority of certain actions such as the reductions in Social Security contributions for disabled participants who, for the most part, are not unemployed, is an anomaly, as it distorts the target profile set in the programming stage and therefore the logical framework of the intervention.

Investment Priority 8.3, which seeks to promote self-employment, the entrepreneurial spirit and the creation of companies, including micro-companies and innovative small and medium-sized companies, also presents a high level of participation and acceptable results. However, as with Investment Priority 8.1, the jobs obtained are not stable over time. The poorest results in terms of output and results under Axis 1 relate to Investment Priority 8.5, which promotes the adaptation of workers, companies and business leaders to change.

In general terms, the degree of implementation under Axis 1 is adequate, and it is exceptional in the most developed regions, which demonstrates, as previously mentioned, that results vary widely depending on geographical location. However, due to this disparity it is highly probable that the performance framework milestones will only be satisfactorily achieved in such regions, thus efforts must be made in the actions carried out in future years in order to achieve the goals set for both 2018 and 2023.

2. Analysis of implementation

Analysis of implementation: results by Priority Axis and Investment Priority

- **Education and training**

Axis 3, focused on education and training, also presents a high degree of implementation and participation, with a constant pace of implementation which must be maintained if the milestones for 2018 and 2023 are to be met.

As with the Axis 1 actions, the results by regional category are very diverse; regional category B presents the best results, while those for the category C or least developed regions, where implementation has been negligible, fall far short of the objectives.

In terms of participation, Investment Priority 10.1, which aims to reduce and prevent early school-leaving and promote equal access to good quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education presents the most positive results, followed by Investment Priority 10.3, which seeks to enhance equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal settings, upgrading the knowledge, skills and competences of the workforce. At a global level we can see a success rate of 46% of participants who pursue a vocational training qualification following their participation in the Programme and 46% of students who successfully complete the academic year.

The results of the actions related to Investment Priority 10.3 are also positive, as 80% of the participants obtained an accreditation or certificate and most of these participants were women, which is particularly relevant in terms of increasing the employability of this population segment.

- **Social inclusion**

No actions have been carried out under Axis 2 of the Programme, which may be cause for concern as to how the performance framework milestones are to be met. However, while prompt encouragement must be

given to the start-up of actions under this Axis, it is probable that the pace of implementation will increase in the coming year, as the only entity acting under this Axis was hindered from commencing its actions any earlier.

- **Social innovation and transnationality**

While Axes 6 and 7 are not fundamental to the Operational Programme, the implementation under these axes was very slow or practically non-existent in 2016. Axis 6, focused on promoting social innovation, presents the lowest level of participation, while nothing was implemented under Axis 7 in the period evaluated, even though certain actions were initiated.

- **Profile of recipients**

Finally, one positive aspect that should be highlighted is that the actions implemented, bar the few exceptions mentioned previously, have been effectively aimed at the target groups, demonstrating that their design in this regard and the participant recruitment process were appropriate. However, disadvantaged people continue to represent a minority of the participants in the OPETE, and it is therefore recommended that the Intermediate Bodies establish strategies to ensure that their actions have a greater impact on individuals at risk of social exclusion or belonging to disadvantaged groups or minorities.

2. Analysis of implementation

Analysis of implementation: results by Priority Axis and Investment Priority

Performance framework and degree of implementation

• Axis 1: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility

The results obtained in indicator CO01 are very promising, albeit with disparities based on regional category.

Positive results were reported for the category A regions, where the goals established for 2018 and 2023 have been broadly exceeded, with achievement coefficients of 5,325% and 107%, respectively. This result demonstrates that it may be necessary to review the forecast value for 2018 estimated during the programming stage for this regional category.

In the category B regions, the achievement coefficient is 414% with respect to 2018 and 18% with respect to 2023, which reflects a good pace of implementation.

In the category C regions, the achievement coefficient is 31% with respect to 2018 and 8% with respect to 2023. If this pace of implementation is maintained the 2018 targets for this regional category are unlikely to be met.

In the category D regions, the figures reported for 2016 are also at a far remove from the 2018 milestone, with an achievement coefficient of 11% with respect to 2018 and 3% with respect to 2023.

Axis 2. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination

The achievement coefficient with respect to the goals set for 2018 and 2023 is 0% in both cases because no actions yielding results were implemented under this axis in 2016.

Axis 3. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and life-long learning

- The pace of implementation under Axis 3 has been constant. However, a certain amount of ground must still be covered to reach the milestones set for 2018 and 2023.

As regards indicator EO17, relating to participants in the first year of basic vocational training, the results vary considerably from one region to the next. In the category B regions, the achievement coefficient for 2018 has been exceeded, with 112% implementation of the forecast value, and 54% achievement of the milestone set for 2023. As regards the category C regions, at 31 December 2016 the milestone forecast for 2018 had been 50% achieved, while 25% of the target set for 2023 had been met. In the category A regions, 25% and 12%, respectively, of the values set for 2018 and 2023 have been achieved, while in the category D regions the achievement coefficient for both milestones is 0%.

The level of achievement in indicator EO18 is less than in indicator EO17. The achievement coefficient with respect to 2018 is 30% for the category B regions, 22% for the category C regions and 12% for the category A regions, with negligible implementation for the category D regions in 2016.

The results are more positive for indicator EO19, which relates to participants in the third year of mandatory secondary education (ESO). In the category B regions, the achievement coefficient is 552%, also exceeding the value forecast for 2023. In the category A regions, the achievement coefficient is 157% for 2018 and 31% for 2023, which reflects a good pace of implementation.

Axis 6. Social innovation / Axis 7. Transnational cooperation

Under Axis 6, indicator CO01 presents negligible results as regards implementation. The figures recorded only reflect participants in category A regions, which represents an achievement coefficient of 44% for 2018 and 1% for 2023.

As yet no participants have been recorded under Axis 7 and it is therefore not possible to conduct an analysis of its implementation.

3. Qualitative analysis

The results obtained from the analysis of the qualitative information included in the surveys highlights the following:

- **Identification of difficulties**

Eight out of 10 Intermediate Bodies encountered difficulties in implementing the Operational Programme.

The main difficulties identified were the delay in the designation of Intermediate Body, the lack of information on the simplified cost system and the treatment and understanding of the indicators.

On the other hand, 80% of the Intermediate Bodies reported some degree of improvement in procedures, although the proposed improvements primarily related to the establishment of clear guidelines by the Managing Authority.

It should also be mentioned that 33% of the Public Management Bodies consider that the programme has not been improved in any way, whereas 100% of the Business Management Bodies indicated that they had observed improvements but that optimisation was needed.

- **Communication channels**

With respect to communication channels, the surveys show that the usual channel for the communication of actions was the organisation's own website, used by over 80%, followed by digital information and communication media (45%).

The Business Management Entities also make substantial use of social networks as a means of communication. It should also be noted that the Business Management Bodies make greater use of communication channels, specifically social networks and email.

- **Recruitment channels**

The most widely used recruitment channels were each Intermediate Body's own website and digital information and communication media. The Public Management Entities made greater use of their own websites.

The Business Management Bodies use a greater number of recruitment channels, including social networks and email.

- **Valuation of the contribution**

The operations with the greatest impact on both men and women were those focused on job training and education, reductions in Social Security contributions, and subsidies for employment, self-employment and the creation of companies.

By contrast, those with least impact on both men and women were those focused on: Promotion of equal opportunities, technical assistance, updating and modernisation of the Spanish National Vocational Qualification System, promotion of evaluation of professional skills and improvement of the quality of the vocational training system.

- **Reaching the final recipients**

All the entities affirmed that the activities carried out reached the final recipients.

- **Duplication and measures to avoid it**

40% indicated that there had been some degree of duplication between the activities carried out in the framework of the Operational Programme and other actions. This duplication primarily relates to activities in the same area focused on other beneficiaries.

80% do not establish measures to avoid duplication because it never arises in their sphere of action.

Those entities (Business Management Entities) that do establish such measures report both good internal communication and the implementation of a control procedure.

3. Qualitative analysis

- **Target groups**

75% have not identified substantial socio-economic changes in the target groups. Only the Public Management Entities have perceived changes.

- **Satisfaction survey**

Almost seven out of 10 carry out satisfaction surveys among recipients, primarily focused on the suitability of the space and the speakers. The Public Management Entities make the least use of surveys.

While 60% of Public Management Entities indicate that satisfaction surveys are not needed, only 14% of Business Management Bodies are of the same opinion.

- **Evaluation of impact**

Only 13% of all the Intermediate Bodies (all of them Business Management Entities) have performed some kind of evaluation of the impact of the Programme actions. Half have not done so because they do not have the necessary tools or applications and 25% due to a lack of data.

33% of the Business Management Entities conduct evaluations and take them into account when making decisions.

- **Promoting innovation**

66% have carried out some kind of action to provide training in and encourage innovation among the final recipients. This is more common among the Business Management Entities.

Innovation is a usual component of the actions carried out by 50% of the Business Management Entities, compared with 20% in the case of the Public Management Entities.

- **Exchange of good practices**

80% have held at least one meeting with beneficiary entities or Intermediate Bodies to exchange good practices. Only the Public Management Entities have not held meetings for this purpose.

Meetings with entities in the framework of the European Union are less frequent: Four out of 10 Intermediate Bodies (all of them Business Management Entities) have held a meeting of this nature.

- **Actions promoting equal opportunities**

All of the entities have carried out some type of action promoting equal opportunities between men and women. Half of them have implemented actions transversally, and 40% have implemented a combination of transversal and specific actions (more among the Business Management Entities).

75% of the Business Management Entities have carried out transversal and specific actions compared with 17% in the case of the Public Management Entities.

- **Obstacles encountered**

Around 10% of the Intermediate Bodies surveyed have detected obstacles hindering the participation of women or men. The greatest difficulties were encountered by the Business Management Entities. 25% of them have identified some type of obstacle to participation.

- **Synergies**

30% of the participant organisations consider that a synergy exists between their actions and those of other programmes. These synergies have mainly been identified in the actions carried out by Business Management Entities. The Public Management Entities did not report identifying any synergies, while 75% of the Business Management Entities did detect synergies.

4. Best Practices

EOI

“Co-working spaces”

The EOI Foundation creates work spaces intended for innovative entrepreneurs to facilitate the rapid start-up of their projects. In addition to the physical space, the Foundation provides tutoring and mentoring and membership of an extensive network of 50 co-working spaces located throughout Spain.

“The actions of the OPETE aimed at providing training to entrepreneurs have achieved a business start-up rate of 70%. This success is due to the design of the actions, which provide comprehensive support encompassing training, tutoring and work spaces”.

Quality system

As regards good practices relating to evaluation, it should be noted that the quality system of EOI requires all its training actions to be evaluated and to that the suggested improvements be incorporated into subsequent actions.

Fundación Biodiversidad

“Tercer Foro de Inversión Verde”

The objective of the third "Foro de Inversión Verde" (Green Investment Forum), the first aimed exclusively at female entrepreneurs, was to channel investment towards companies related to the environment and led by women.

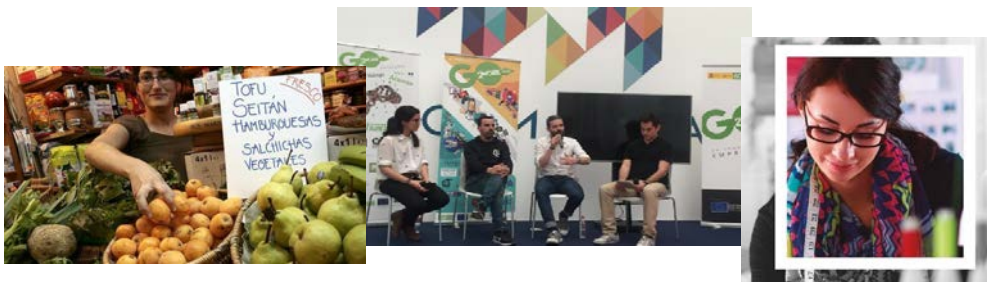
During the event, a selection of eight entrepreneurs presented their projects to investors. These projects relate to companies or new lines of business that are already generating revenues or are at the marketing stage, and which seek private capital funding of between one hundred thousand and five hundred thousand Euros.

Spanish Chamber of Commerce

Programa de Apoyo Empresarial a las Mujeres (PAEM)

The Business Support Programme for Women (PAEM) is a national programme encompassing a network promoting and supporting business initiatives undertaken by women. This programme, which was started up 15 years ago, has become a benchmark in the business advisory sphere. It receives financial support from the European Social Fund, the Institute for Women and for Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality and the Chamber of Commerce.

The programme's objective is to raise awareness among women and those around them about self-employment and business activity, acting as an effective instrument for the creation and consolidation of companies led by women.



5. Community added value

Impacts on institutions

The problems inherent to the complexity of managing Community Funds appear to be the greatest obstacle faced by the bodies responsible for carrying out the actions co-financed by the OPETE.

Despite the notable efforts made by both the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Bodies to implement actions as promptly as possible, it is essential that the coordination and reporting mechanisms between the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Bodies, and internally between the Intermediate Bodies themselves, continue to be reinforced at an institutional level as regards the implementation of the simplified cost options and the handling and collection of data to prepare the indicators monitoring the actions. The guidance measures must be reinforced to ensure that the Intermediate Bodies adapt their operating models effectively to the Programme requirements. At the same time, the Intermediate Bodies are required to adapt effectively to the changes represented by the new regulatory framework.

Impacts on intervention models and active employment policies

The OPETE covers a range of measures and recipients and all of its actions have great potential in terms of the job market activation of their target groups.

The Programme's strategy combines actions with immediate impacts, such as recruitment incentives, with actions whose impacts arise in the long term, such as those related to the creation of companies or to R&D&i.

The strategic objectives of the OPETE are summarised below:

- Increase employment, among other means, by promoting actions that incentivise recruitment, concentrating efforts on activities and sectors that generate employment and promoting inclusive entrepreneurship.
- Contribute to improving employability through the acquisition of qualifications and their accreditation, focusing particularly on the most vulnerable groups and those individuals with the lowest levels of qualification.
- Introduce measures to reduce early school-leaving and improve education, reinforcing links between education and the job market and adapting education to the needs of the job market.
- Contribute to R&D&i, in a firm commitment to knowledge and its transfer to the productive sector.

In accordance with this strategy and with the Programme's results, we can see that progress has been made during the first few years of its implementation, above all as regards the objectives of improving employability and increasing employment levels through the application of traditional measures such as reductions in Social Security contributions to motivate recruitment or grants for recruitment in the area of R&D&i. However, actions with an innovative component, such as the creation of co-working spaces and the promotion of entrepreneurship among women, are also being implemented.

Other measures such as the reinforcement of basic vocational training and the accreditation of professional skills have been consolidated as effective measures.

5. Community added value

Impacts on individuals

The Programme encompasses actions in a range of areas. Of those aimed at a **wide variety of recipients**, the most notable actions relate to employment, training and education.

The analysis of the implementation of the Programme actions reveals that they have been properly designed to reach their intended final recipients, whose characteristics match those of the target profiles established during the programming stage.

In line with the target profile, the typical profile of the participants of the **Axis 1** actions was as follows:

Under **Investment Priority 8.1**, which seeks to facilitate access to employment for job-seekers and inactive people, including the long-term unemployed and people far from the labour market, the recipients were largely unemployed, except for employed disabled people benefiting from reductions in Social Security contributions whose inclusion under the Investment Priority should be reviewed, most were women aged between 25 and 54 with relatively low levels of training and education, and in many cases they were in situations of risk or social exclusion.

Under Investment Priority 8.3, aimed at promoting self-employment and innovation, the participants were largely unemployed or inactive women aged between 25 and 54, with low levels of training. A high number of the participants were also disadvantaged people.

Investment Priority 8.4, aimed at promoting equality between men and women in all areas, including in access to employment, all the participants were unemployed women, many of them long-term unemployed, aged between 25 and 54 and with high levels of training: higher or tertiary education (ISCED 5-ISCED 8).

Under Investment Priority 8.5, aimed at promoting the adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change, the vast majority of participants were employed men, aged between 25 and 54 and with primary or secondary school education.

In line with the target profile, the typical profile of the participants of the **Axis 3** actions was as follows:

Under Investment Priority 10.1, which aims to reduce and prevent early school-leaving, the participants were inactive people (99%), of whom 42% were women and 58%, men. These participants were under the age of 25 and had completed primary school education (ISCED 1) or the first year of mandatory secondary education (ISCED 2). In general, the recipients of these actions are pursuing studies that will enable them to attain higher levels of education.

Under **Investment Priority 10.2**, aimed at accrediting professional skills, most participants were employed women, aged between 25 and 54, with low levels of training (ISCED 1-ISCED 2), many of whom were from rural areas.

The results at 31 December 2016 show that the Programme is advancing at a good pace, an effort that must be continued in future years, placing particular **emphasis on increasing the Programme's impact on the most disadvantaged groups**.

6. Impact analysis

Recommendations

The implementation of the Operational Programme for Employment, Training and Education was still at an early stage at the end of 2016. This makes it impossible to perform an impact evaluation that measures the actual effects of the co-financed actions of the Programme, due to a lack of information and critical mass.

For future evaluations, it would be advisable to select certain Programme actions that can be evaluated in terms of impact. Given that a **counterfactual** impact evaluation requires the creation of a treatment group and a control group, the design of the two groups should be commenced as **soon as** possible.

Taking into account the logical framework of the OPETE, and the results as regards implementation, it is recommended that the design of impact evaluations be commenced for the following types of operation:

- **Employment subsidies**
- **Reductions in Social Security contributions**
- **Incentives for self-employment or entrepreneurship**

For all these measures, the impact evaluation should focus not only on the causal relationship between participating in a European Social Fund action and securing a job, but above all on the **quality and stability** of the job obtained.

It is recommended that **Data Analytics models be applied** to the **ESF 2014-20 management tool** itself,

which would enable the rapid extraction of valuable and pre-processed information on the implementation and results of the actions cross-referenced with the results of other programmes encompassing similar actions.

The aforementioned operations (reductions in Social Security contributions, employment subsidies, self-employment incentives) must **promote the creation of stable and quality jobs for individuals requiring job placements or seeking to improve their employability**. The difficulty as regards monitoring this result relates to a highly specific problem: the creation of employment for individuals who do not match the target profile for the aforementioned measures. The definition of the means of access or barriers to entry for this type of action should be highly regulated and aimed at identifying their intended recipients. The risk of possible fraud by employers, and by the individuals recruited themselves, distort and hinder the achievement of the European funds' objectives.

The current indicators of the Operational Programme do not allow for the detection of such fraud or of the illicit use of European funds. The circumstances of unemployment measured through the indicators do not consider, by way of example, questions such as the origin of legal situations of unemployment, i.e. those in which the worker did not voluntarily leave a previously held job. The monitoring of possible fraud by each of the Bodies that channel this type of action must be a priority in their evaluations.

For this type of analysis, in addition to the counterfactual evaluation, it is crucial to have access to all of the **microdata relating to the actions and their final recipients** of all the Intermediate Bodies,

including the companies and entities which channel the assistance or, to put it another way, which recruit people.

6. Impact analysis

This would facilitate the use of all the information gathered through analytical techniques, obtaining clear advantages as compared with the current impact analyses, such as:

- The obtainment of information in real time.
- The analysis of integrated information between the different Bodies that carried out similar actions.
- The improvement of the information provided by the result indicators.
- The anticipation of future actions and initiatives to improve employability as a result of these analyses.
- The minimisation of duplications of final grant recipients.
- The evaluation of the actual impact of the actions on the job market.
- The reduction of the possibility of fraud.

To this end, the implementation of two **measures** which, in the evaluator's opinion, are **key pillars** for undertaking an impact evaluation, is recommended:

- The construction, by the Managing Authority, of a single **micro database** of the beneficiaries and final recipients of the grants, guiding the different Bodies on how to provide this information.
- The establishment of **agreements with the Social Security Treasury (TGSS) and the State Employment Office (SEPE)**. These agreements would provide data on Social Security registrations and on the contracts reported and would allow for the inference, through the use of algorithms, of possible causal relationships between the action and job stability.

Additionally, **emphasis should be placed on the undertaking of evaluations within each Intermediate Body**. In this regard, the following actions are proposed:

- **Training of the Intermediate Bodies and their technical personnel on evaluation techniques.**
- **Dissemination of evaluations** carried out by the European Social Fund throughout Europe in relation to similar actions (AUESF portal). **Communication of results** of the evaluations carried out by the AUESF to all the agents involved in the management and implementation of the European Social Fund.
- **Inclusion in the working groups and quarterly meetings** of the Directorate-Generals or Divisions that carry out the evaluation within the organisation. This recommendation is particularly relevant in the case of public entities, as each Ministry has a newly created Directorate-General of Evaluation, which would benefit considerably from receiving feedback on the activities of the ESF.
- **Establish the compulsory nature of the periodic evaluations to be performed by the Bodies.** It is essential that the Bodies themselves understand and internalise the importance of self-evaluation and not only of monitoring the actions to comply with the requirements of the Annual Implementation Reports

7. Evaluator's recommendations

Implementation

Listed below are certain recommendations **aimed at all of the agents involved** in the management of the Programme on how to improve its implementation:

1. Individual monitoring of each Intermediate Body. Thematic errors have been identified in the inclusion of operations under certain axes and it is therefore recommended that a more individualised management be carried out by the Managing Authority.

2. Creation of a register with a list of all the operations with a breakdown by body and by operational programme. This register or map of actions would prevent duplications and boost synergies and complementarity, as all the bodies would be able to see the actions being implemented in their area of work, treatment group and geographical area.

3. Thematic meetings on the terminology and concepts considered in the Social Fund's strategy. In particular, on issues such as indicators, simplification (with participation of the General Intervention Board of the State Administration (IGAE)) and evaluation. The creation of working groups between Bodies that address these issues.

4. Access of all the Intermediate Bodies to frequently asked questions and their answers on a website.

5. Table of indications and requirements for the implementation of IT tools.

6. Working group on gender equality. It is proposed that a specific working group be created.

7. Inclusion of documentation on the AUESF's

website (in a specific section), encompassing all types of up-to-date documentation and illustrative or didactic videos on equal opportunities for men and women that can be used by the Bodies.

8. Dissemination of the documentation generated by the Equality Network (guides, manuals, etc.) or by any other entity that has expert knowledge in this area.

9. Training of the Intermediate Bodies and their technical personnel on different didactic methodologies for implementing Equal Opportunities in all areas.

10. Compliance with reporting deadlines by the Intermediate Bodies. Although the administrative burden of starting up the Programme is high and the effort made by the Intermediate Bodies to comply with regulatory obligations must be taken into account, it is vital that the Intermediate Bodies remain firmly committed to meeting certain deadlines for the reporting of information to the Managing Authority, such as the Annual Implementation Reports and periodic financial reporting obligations. This commitment would make it easier for the Managing Authority to carry out sufficient monitoring and facilitate the handling of unexpected events.

7. Evaluator's recommendations

11. Commitment to evaluation by the Intermediate Bodies. Although it is not established as a regulatory requirement, it is essential that the Intermediate Bodies begin to evaluate the impact and results of their own actions, in addition to conducting satisfaction surveys and reporting indicators to the Managing Authority. The undertaking of evaluations within each Intermediate Body itself would facilitate the identification of possible negative effects that have not yet been identified or corrected. Additionally, the results of such evaluations may reveal that certain traditional actions are not appropriate or do not achieve the desired effects, thus allowing for strategies and interventions to be redirected in accordance with the logical framework of the intervention. Furthermore, this may motivate other bodies to perform evaluations, due to the group effect.

Implementation and results

Listed below are certain recommendations based on the quantitative analysis of the implementation of the OPETE to **ensure the Programme's objectives are met**:

1. Increase the pace of implementation of the Programme actions. In general terms, the pace of implementation of the Programme is slow and if it is not hastened the performance framework objectives are unlikely to be met. Therefore, it is essential that, prior to providing the implementation data for 2017 and 2018 in the mandatory Annual Implementation Reports, the implementation of the Programme be monitored by both the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Bodies, identifying those areas which

present a lower level of implementation to establish solutions or action or improvement plans in their regard.

2. Application of Data Analytics to monitoring and evaluation. To carry out effective monitoring that also allows for the evaluation of efficiency and effectiveness, it is recommended that Data Analytics models be applied to the management tools of both the Managing Authority and the Intermediate Bodies. The use of these tools would make it possible to link management information to information derived from the risk, irregularities, verifications, certification and results of the implementation, obtaining an overview of the implementation of the Programme that would facilitate decision-making and the evaluation of results.

3. Focus on reaching the most disadvantaged groups. Communicate to the Intermediate Bodies the importance of aiming the actions not only at the recipient groups, but also at the most disadvantaged groups, and secure the Bodies' commitment to directing their actions effectively.

4. Increase the implementation of operations with a component focused on innovation. In order to redress the shortfall in the implementation of Axis 6 of the Programme, and for the purposes of testing non-traditional actions that might have a greater impact on participants, it would be advisable for the Intermediate Bodies to incorporate innovative aspects in the operations selected under all the axes and not only Axis 6 regarding social innovation.



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