

# Interim Evaluation of the Operational Programme for Youth Employment

## 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 with respect to the **operations implemented or partially implemented under Axis 1 at 31 December 2016 in the framework of the Operational Programme for Youth Employment (hereinafter, OPYE)**.

Given the configuration of the Operational Programme, which channels the actions of the Youth Employment Initiative through Axis 5, and given the specific evaluation schedule for this initiative set out in Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013, this evaluation only takes into account the operations included in the framework of Axis 1 of the Programme, which encompasses the actions that are complementary to, or indirectly related to the Youth Employment Initiative. In this regard, as priority has been given to the implementation of Axis 5, there is little actual data available on the implementation of Axis 1.

Based on the data received and within the time frame available to carry it out, the evaluation work was focused, firstly, on **providing information on the degree of implementation of Axis 1 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, and advances in the implementation measured through the analysis of output and result indicators and, finally, the degree of compliance with 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** by which to assess the quality of the Programme's management. The qualitative evaluation of the Programme's implementation sought to assess 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

#### Axis 1. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility

##### • General considerations

As previously mentioned, this evaluation of the Operational Programme for Youth Employment excludes Axis 5 and Axis 8, focusing the analysis exclusively on the implementation of Axis 1. The quantitative data gathered for the evaluation of the OPYE under Axis 1 are few and far between: data have only been recorded in respect of the Axis 1 output and result indicators for Investment Priority 8.2 and, more specifically, only for the category C regions.

This low degree of implementation under Axis 1 is largely due to the complementary nature of this Axis vis-à-vis the implementation of the Youth Employment Initiative. The Axis 1, Investment Priority 8.2 actions must, above all, be carried out as complementary actions to the Youth Employment Initiative. It is therefore logical that at 31 December 2016 there had been virtually no implementation of the Programme under this Investment Priority, given that the Initiative was still being implemented at that date. However, the actions defined as “indirectly” related to Axis 5 have also been programmed under this Investment Priority. These actions are all those aimed at the professionals that work with the young people included in the Youth Employment Initiative, such as training, guidance or awareness-raising actions involving these professionals. Additionally, the necessary actions to start up the Youth Employment Initiative, such as the development of the IT and management systems of the National Youth Guarantee Scheme, or personalised services aimed at young people, are included in the framework of Investment Priority 8.7.

• **Investment Priority 8.2. Sustainable integration into the labour market of young people, in particular those not in employment, education or training, including young people at risk of social exclusion and young people from marginalised communities.**

IP 8.2 encompasses actions which, in theory, represent a continuation of those carried out as part of the Youth Employment Initiative and which must seek to activate those young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), reinforce their employability and skills, promote entrepreneurship among this group and the permanent employment of these young people. The variety of specific goals proposed must be achieved through interventions such as recruitment incentives, advisory measures, guidance, training, mobility programmes, the promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship and intermediation, among others.

Given that it is complementary in nature to the same Investment Priority under Axis 5, it is logical that the level of implementation in 2016 was low. In terms of output, a total of **552 participants** have been recorded under Axis 1, **Investment Priority 8.2**, with a slightly higher representation of women (53%). As regards **the profile of these participants**, in terms of their social and employment situation and age groups, the actions were largely aimed at unemployed young people, with a total of 477 unemployed people representing 86% of the total participants. Of the unemployed participants, 33% were long-term unemployed. 13% of the total participants were inactive people, who also match the target profile. Most of the participants, a total of 429, were under the age of 25, and therefore the recipients of the action matched the stipulations established in the Operational Programme for Youth Employment. The other participants were aged between 25 and 29, which makes sense given that the actions of the Initiative are aimed at young people under the age of 30. The participants included a considerable number of disadvantaged individuals, most of them living in jobless households.

The results are not particularly noteworthy: **the best results relate to the activation of participants, with 31%.**

## 2. Analysis of implementation

### Analysis of implementation: results by Priority Axis and Investment Priority

of the total number of inactive participants engaged in finding employment since their participation. Additionally, it should be noted that of the participants that were unemployed or inactive, 12% have secured a job since their participation. The same figure of 12% reflects the percentage of participants that have continued with their education or pursued a qualification since their participation.

The results are not particularly noteworthy: **the best results relate to the activation of participants, with 31% of the total number of inactive participants engaged in finding employment since their participation.** Additionally, it should be noted that of the participants that were unemployed or inactive, 12% have secured a job since their participation. The same figure of 12% reflects the percentage of participants that have continued with their education or pursued a qualification since their participation.

Similarly, it can be seen that for Axis 1, IP 8.2, **a total of 137 disadvantaged participants have been seeking work, pursued education or training, obtained a qualification or secured a job, including self-employment, since their participation.** The data show that of the total number of unemployed young people, only 13% completed the intervention and only 7% of these participants have found work or pursued education or training since the intervention.

In general terms the results relating to Axis 1, Investment Priority 8.2 are not noteworthy as the only actions undertaken thus far have been focused on active job-seeking, career guidance and self-employment in Melilla and Catalonia, the recruitment of counsellors for coordination, technical advisory, data gathering and follow-up services in Murcia, and the development of a new career guidance methodology for young people in Valencia.

• **Investment Priority 8.7. Modernisation of labour market institutions, such as public and private employment services, and improving the matching of labour market needs, including through actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility schemes and better cooperation between institutions and relevant stakeholders.**

This Investment Priority seeks to improve the quality and response of labour market institutions and their national and regional coordination through modernisation, including the creation of the necessary structures for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee schemes. This specific goal must be pursued through the development of IT and management systems for the National Youth Guarantee Scheme. One-stop shops and specialised services may be established with a view to providing personalised services to young people.

Although this Investment Priority is intended to support the Youth Guarantee actions, there is no evidence of any implementation in 2016, and in contrast to IP. 8.2, this shortfall is not justified by its being complementary in nature to Axis 5. Specifically, the only action undertaken under this Investment Priority was the implementation in an autonomous region of a new IT system that serves as a repository for all existing databases to enable the comprehensive management of the employment histories of the Youth Guarantee beneficiaries, allowing for complete user traceability. This type of intervention must be treated as a benchmark for future years by the other Intermediate Bodies.

### Performance framework and degree of implementation

The pace of implementation is very slow and it is foreseeable that the performance framework milestones set for 2018 will not be met if this pace is maintained. The results for Axis 1 obtained in **indicator CO01** are very scant, as implementation data is only available for the category C regions. The causes of this lack of implementation and the consequences thereof for the rest of the period should be analysed.

# 3. Qualitative analysis

The results obtained from the analysis of the qualitative information provided in the surveys conducted among the Intermediate Bodies highlight 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 and the lack of information on the simplified cost system**.

On the other hand, 50% of the Intermediate Bodies reported some degree of improvement in procedures, although the improvements proposed primarily relate to the simplification and speeding up of processes.

## 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 all the OPYE entities.

The Intermediate Bodies also made substantial use of digital communication and information media and email.

## Recruitment channels

The most widely used recruitment channels were the **Intermediate Body's own website**, as well as social networks and other specific media.

## Valuation of the contribution

The operations with the most impact on both men and women were **Training-Employment Actions and Job training and education**.

By contrast, those with least impact on both men and women were Support for local employment initiatives and territorial agreements, Promotion of Equal Opportunities and Technical Assistance.

## Reaching the final recipients

80% of the entities affirmed that the activities carried out reach the final recipients (20% stating that all final recipients are reached, while 60% consider that the majority of final recipients are reached).

## Duplication and measures to avoid it

A third of all the Intermediate Bodies (two out of the six) indicated that there had been some degree of duplication between the activities carried out in the framework of the Operational Programme and other actions.

Two out of three have established measures to avoid duplication. They report both good internal communication (50%) and the implementation of a control procedure (17%).

## Recipient groups

Two thirds of the entities have not identified substantial socio-economic changes in the recipients.

However, those that detected changes consider that the actions continue to be valid.

## Satisfaction survey

Two out of three Intermediate Bodies conduct satisfaction surveys among the recipients.

Only two entities indicated that they consider such surveys to be unnecessary because those in charge of the actions are aware of the degree of satisfaction among recipients.

## Evaluation of impact

None of the organisations of the OPYE have the necessary data to conduct an impact evaluation.

## Promoting innovation

Half of the Intermediate Bodies have carried out some kind of action to provide training in and encourage innovation among the final recipients. It should be noted that the other 50% have not yet done so due to a lack of time.

# 3. Qualitative analysis

## Exchange of good practices

Four of the six organisations have held at least one meeting with beneficiary entities or Intermediate Bodies to exchange good practices.

However, only two have met with entities in the framework of the European Union.

## Actions promoting equal opportunities

All the entities have carried out some type of action promoting equal opportunities between men and women.

80% of them have implemented actions transversally, and 20% have implemented a combination of transversal and specific actions.

## Obstacles encountered

Only one entity has identified obstacles impeding the participation of women or men, the rest have not perceived any.

## Synergies

Half of the participant organisations consider that a synergy exists between their actions and those of other Programmes.



## 4. Good practices

### Agencia Valenciana de Turismo (Valencia Tourism Agency)

#### “Training in hospitality and tourism”

The objective is to obtain a professional qualification for working in the hospitality and tourism sector. The certificate awarded is an official document, valid throughout the country. This training is characterised by intensive courses encompassing both practical and theoretical learning. The training includes internships in tourism sector companies. "Turismo, profesión con futuro y éxito en la inserción laboral". ("Tourism, a sector with bright future job prospects")

“Programa Becas IVACE E+E para la formación teórica y práctica en internacionalización en empresas de la CV” (“Valencian Institute of Business Competitiveness Exportation + Employment scholarship programme for theoretical and practical training in internationalisation in companies in the Autonomous Region of Valencia”

Professional training and specialisation in export operations management for young people from the Autonomous Region of Valencia.

“Programa Becas IVACE EXTERIOR para la formación teórica y práctica en internacionalización en empresas o instituciones en el extranjero” (“Valencian Institute of Business Competitiveness EXTERIOR scholarship programme for theoretical and practical training in internationalisation in companies or institutions located abroad”)

Professional training and specialisation of young people, as well as internships focused on the different aspects of the internationalisation process of companies in the Autonomous Region of Valencia. The IVACE EXTERIOR scholarships pursue the improvement of human capital through professional training and specialisation in internationalisation.



## 5. Community added value

### Impacts on institutions

As reflected in the “Analysis of implementation” section of this report, which details a qualitative evaluation of the start-up of the Programme, the problems inherent to the complexity of managing Community Funds appear to constitute the greatest obstacle faced by the Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries responsible for carrying out the actions co-financed by the OPYE.

It can be seen that although the Operational Programme had only been partially implemented at 31 December 2016, many of the potential Intermediate Bodies, to which no functions had been formally attributed, as well as the Direct Beneficiaries, whose operations in the framework of the Programme had only just been formally selected, began to carry out actions, prioritising their prompt implementation as emergency measures in order to be certain of meeting the procedural deadlines established by regulation, primarily with respect to Axis 5 of the Programme.

The Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund, sharing the aforementioned entities' understanding of the urgency of the actions, has used effective management methods and has sought the necessary resources to be able to advance the implementation of the Programme as far as possible.

However, it is essential that the mechanisms for coordination and reporting between the Managing Authority, the Intermediate Bodies and the Direct Beneficiaries, and internally between the entities, continue to be reinforced at an institutional level, above all as regards the implementation of the simplified cost options and the handling and gathering of data to prepare the indicators monitoring the actions.

Guidance measures must be strengthened so that the Intermediate Bodies can effectively adapt their IT tools to the functional requirements of the ESF 2014-20 application and so that the Direct Beneficiaries can collect the microdata from their participants efficiently and correctly. Additionally, it is essential that both the Intermediate Bodies of the Programme and the Beneficiaries that report directly to the Managing

Authority adapt their operating models to the Programme's requirements and that they adapt effectively to the changes represented by the new regulatory framework.

As previously mentioned, this evaluation only takes into account the actions carried out under Axis 1 of the Programme. Specifically, it is under Investment Priority 8.7 of this Axis that measures must be implemented to modernise labour market institutions, such as public and private employment services, and improve the matching of labour market needs, including through actions that enhance transnational labour mobility as well as through mobility schemes and better cooperation between institutions and relevant stakeholders.

However, at 31 December 2016 the actions carried out in relation to this Investment Priority were negligible, and only the development of IT and management systems in Catalonia had been recorded. Nevertheless, as indicated in the Operational Programme for Youth Employment itself, the development of the National Youth Guarantee Scheme requires a number of structural reforms, particularly in the area of labour market institutions, including the adaptation of IT systems for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Youth Guarantee Scheme.



## 5. Community added value

### Impacts on intervention models and active employment policies

The OPYE is aimed at a highly specific group of the population: young people under the age of 30 not in employment, education or training.

The National Youth Guarantee Scheme channelled through the OPYE has enormous potential as regards activating the target population. The associated budget allocation represented a substantial increase in the investment in active policies aimed at young people in Spain, taking into account that historically there has been a significant imbalance between passive and active policies, with employment policy expenditure largely having been allocated to the funding of benefits.

In this respect, the battery of measures of the Operational Programme for Youth Employment can largely be categorised as active employment policies, the combined effects of which will have to be measured after the implementation period has ended and must aim to achieve the Programme's strategic goals:

- Reduce the youth unemployment rate in Spain by helping young people improve their qualifications and by promoting recruitment and self-employment, focusing on compliance with the objectives and priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In accordance with this strategy and the results of the Programme's implementation, it can be seen that the Axis 1 results for the first few years of implementation are not notable, as most of the activation actions have been included under Axis 5.

### Impacts on individuals

Above all, the Programme proposes actions in the area of employment and the target recipient group comprises young people under the age of 30 who are not in employment, education or training. In this regard, it should be noted that even though participation is still very low, the analysis of the implementation of the Axis 1 Programme actions reveals that they have been effectively designed to reach their intended final recipients, whose profile usually matches the target profile defined 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 8.2, 86% of participants were unemployed, with a slightly higher percentage of women than men and a large component of long-term unemployed. There was also a high number of inactive participants. The vast majority of participants were aged under 25 and presented low levels of education (ISCED 1-ISCED 2). There was also a large component of disadvantaged participants, therefore, in general terms, the actions carried out under this Investment Priority have been effectively aimed at the intended recipient group.

The results at 31 December 2016 show that the Programme, as regards Axis 1, is on the right tracks in terms of reaching the target groups, in particular in the actions carried out under Investment Priority 8.2, which represent a continuation from the Axis 5 actions, an effort that must be maintained in the future years of the Programming period, even more so when the financial allowance of the Youth Employment Initiative and its time frame come to an end.

## 6. Impact analysis

### Recommendations

As previously mentioned, the implementation of the Operational Programme for Youth Employment 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, even more so in terms of Axis 1, the only Axis studied in this evaluation, which encompasses the actions that are complementary to, or indirectly related to Axis 5 (Youth Employment Initiative).

However, 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. The existence of a national register of participants such as the National Youth Guarantee File could facilitate the composition and design of a treatment and a control group, as the treatment group will comprise individuals entered on the register and the control will comprise individuals with similar characteristics that are not on the register.

Therefore, firstly, it would be essential to select a number of specific actions within the Operational Programme that can be evaluated. Taking into account the logical framework of the OPYE, it is recommended that the design of impact evaluations be commenced for the following types of operation:

- **Incentives for the recruitment of young people**
- **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.

The aforementioned operations must **promote the creation of stable and quality jobs for young**

**people requiring job placements or seeking to increase their employability.**

The future impact evaluations of both types of measure must assess three types of effect:

- **Reduction of unemployment:** Has participation in the action increased the individual's possibilities of getting a job?
- **Participants' income:** What is the negative or positive effect of the action on the participant's income?
- **Stable and quality employment:** How stable are the jobs secured? Do the contracts last longer than one year? What is the participants' salary/working day ratio? Are the jobs secured of sufficient quality? What type of work is being co-financed and in which sectors? What is the average salary? What type of contracts are being used to formalise labour relations?

To this end, it would be necessary to observe the participants' behaviour six months after leaving the programme, to measure the effects in the short and medium term, and their situation after 24 (or 36) months, in order to measure the long-term effects and whether they are sustained or diminish over time.

The aforementioned operations (employment subsidies, self-employment incentives) must **promote the creation of stable and quality jobs for young people 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 such as young people who are not unemployed at the time that they apply for the incentives. 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, distorts and hinders the achievement of the European funds' objectives.

## 6. Impact analysis

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 Intermediate Bodies that channel this type of action must be a priority in their evaluations because the creation of conspiracies among companies to access this type of financing, the voluntary abandonment of previous employment by those workers whose recruitment will give rise to the awarding of a subsidy, and fictitious job creation must be clamped down on to minimise the risk of its materialisation.

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 that channel this type of measure, including not only the action and final recipients but also the companies and entities which channel the assistance or, to put it another way, which recruit people, which facilitates the use of the information considered as a whole through analytical techniques, obtaining clear advantages with respect to the current situation of the impact analyses, such as:

- The obtainment of information in real time.
- The analysis of integrated information between the different Intermediate Bodies that have 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.

In this way, an in-depth **study** should be carried out **of all the microdata needed to perform the impact evaluation, in addition to the data required for the construction of the output and result indicators.**

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 Intermediate Bodies on how to provide this information. One possible channel could be the ESF 2014-20 application itself, introducing the necessary functionalities.
- The establishment of **agreements with the Social Security Treasury (TGSS) and the State Employment Office (SEPE)**. The former is a common service of the Social Security department, under the supervision of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, and the latter is an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. These bodies report to the Secretariat of State for Social Security and the Secretariat of State for Employment, respectively. Both of these bodies have highly relevant information for the purposes of evaluating the impact of the actions aimed at boosting recruitment and employment: on the one hand, data on Social Security registrations and, on the other hand, the information on the contracts reported. Were the Social Security Treasury, the SEPE and the Managing Authority all to report to a single Ministry, this would facilitate this collaboration and enable information to be obtained in real time on the job stability of the individuals whose employers have received assistance from the Social Fund in relation to their recruitment, in the short, medium and long term. It would also allow, through the use of algorithms, for the inference of possible causal relationships between the action undertaken and job stability.
- Conduct **surveys upon completion of the programme and in the medium and long-term** among participants whose results, and the use thereof, can be compared with the results obtained through the application of analytical techniques on the microdata database.

## 6. Impact analysis

Furthermore, and in relation to the next evaluation of Axis 5, a number of reflections in relation to the **National Youth Guarantee Scheme** are detailed below:

- Currently, **the Youth Guarantee Scheme does not offer direct access to companies** that allows them to do anything other than verify whether or not a specific young person is entered on the register; there is no means of searching for candidates through predetermined fields, which hinders recruitment.
- It has been detected that the regulatory reform of the Youth Guarantee introduced through Royal Decree-Law 6/2016, of 23 December 2016, on urgent measures to promote the National Youth Guarantee Scheme, which provides that young people registering or re-registering as job-seekers with a public employment service shall be registered with the National Youth Guarantee Scheme, if the requirements set out in article 97 of Law 18/2014 are met, **is not being carried out in a uniform manner by the public employment services, representing a barrier to entry for young people that register or re-register as job-seekers within the deadline.** Pursuant to the aforementioned regulatory reform, young people should be registered with the YG Scheme on the same date that they register or re-register as job-seekers. The **difficulty of converging the information systems** is having a direct impact on young people who might be eligible for some kind of assistance associated with their recruitment, in addition to representing a problem for employers, who have no means of recording these young people as having registered retroactively, other than filing an appeal after the Youth Guarantee has refused the registration because the young person was already working under the contract that might have been eligible for a subsidy, due to the registration with the public employment service not giving rise to their registration with the Youth Guarantee Scheme.
- In light of this situation, it is recommended that the National Youth Guarantee Scheme be configured as a **sub database of the public employment services**, due to the difficulty involved and the lack of awareness thereof in society, thereby avoiding the duplication of systems. As a transitional measure, it is recommended that a channel be activated **for retroactive registration through the Youth Guarantee website**, minimising the vulnerable situation in which certain young people have been placed since the entry into force of Royal Decree-Law 6/2016, whereby their registration or re-registration as job-seekers in the public employment services has not been reflected in the Youth Guarantee Scheme.
- Another of the regulatory reforms introduced through Royal Decree-Law 6/2016, of 23 December 2016, on urgent measures to promote the National Youth Guarantee Scheme regulated by Law 18/2014 of 15 October 2014, is the requirement that applicants not have worked the calendar day before the date of submitting their application to register, whereas previously the requirement had been 30 calendar days. This reform has facilitated the access to subsidies for those employers and young people who, being aware of the subsidies available, have been able to process their registration in the Youth Guarantee Scheme in due time and manner, giving rise to **situations in which young people have voluntarily left their previous employment two days before registering and, therefore, were not in a precarious situation or in need of work.** This is not a true situation of unemployment, above all taking into account that a person is only entitled to unemployment benefits when they did not voluntarily leave their last job. The Youth Guarantee Scheme does not currently include any restrictions in this regard, and it is recommended that only those young people who are legally entitled to unemployment benefits be allowed to register with the Youth Guarantee Scheme, thereby minimising the heterogeneity that could arise if the Intermediate Bodies themselves introduce restrictions to access to the subsidies in their corresponding regulatory bases.



## 6. Impact analysis

- The difficulty that companies have had in understanding the following requirement of the Youth Guarantee Scheme, which is repeated on its website: *“Be aged over 16 and under 25, or under 30, in the case of individuals with a disability rating of 33 percent or higher, at the time of submitting their application to register with the National Youth Guarantee Scheme. Additionally, those over the age of 25 and under the age of 30 when, at the time of applying to be registered on the National Youth Guarantee Scheme file, the unemployment rate of this group is 20 per cent or higher, according to the Active Population Survey for the last quarter of the year”*. This point was ratified by the Resolution of 29 July 2015 of the Directorate-General for Self-Employment, the Social Economy and Corporate Social Responsibility, which extended the maximum age for registering with the National Youth Guarantee Scheme to include people over the age of 25 and under the age of 30 who meet the requirements set out in Law 18/2014, of 15 October 2014, approving urgent measures for growth, competitiveness and efficiency, thereby enabling them to benefit from actions derived from the National Youth Guarantee Scheme, as the data from the Economically Active Population Survey for the fourth quarter of 2014 show the unemployment rate for this group standing at 29.77%, thus exceeding 20 per cent. However, the text is not entirely clear to employers or young people, who could understand that the maximum age is 24. It might be sufficient to include the aforementioned Resolution on the website for information purposes.
  - **Dissemination of evaluations** carried out by the European Social Fund throughout Europe in relation to similar actions (AUESF website). Dissemination of the evaluations performed at the sector conferences for the Public Management Bodies and at the annual board meetings of the Business Management Bodies to inform the sector experts of the work and actual results obtained and so that these results can be taken into account in the making of decisions and subsequent development of strategies.
  - **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 Intermediate Bodies.** It is essential that the Intermediate 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.
- Additionally, emphasis should be placed on the undertaking of evaluations. In this regard, the following actions are recommended:
- **Training of the Intermediate Bodies and their technical personnel** It is recommended that seminars be held to discuss the different evaluation techniques, the results that can be

# 7. Evaluator's recommendations

## Implementation

Listed below are certain recommendations based on the results of the workshops for improving the implementation of the Programme:

### 1. Individual monitoring of each Intermediate Body.

Thematic errors have been identified in the inclusion of operations under certain axes, both in Intermediate Bodies that have experience from prior periods and in those that do not, 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.

It is recommended that a map or register be prepared and published with all the operations under implementation and planned. This should be updated continually and accessible to all the Intermediate Bodies. This register or map of actions would prevent duplications and boost synergies and complementarity, as all the Intermediate 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, it is recommended that more meetings be held on issues such as indicators, simplification (with participation of the General Intervention Board of the State Administration (IGAE)) and evaluation. Creating working groups among the Intermediate Bodies that address these issues would also be constructive.

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

All the questions and queries answered should be included in an online forum or website, accessible to all the Intermediate Bodies. The written answers, which should be binding, should be grouped together by issue, and the area of application should be indicated.

**5. Table of indications and requirements** for the implementation of IT tools. Given that 50% of the Intermediate Bodies are still in the process of implementing the IT tools necessary for the management and gathering of data for the indicators, it is recommended that they be provided with the necessary indications and the minimal requirements for these tools, a fundamental process for obtaining quality data for future evaluations.

**6. Working group on gender equality.** It is proposed that a specific working group be created, or that better use be made of the existing Equality Network, giving all of the Intermediate Bodies the opportunity to participate.

### 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 Intermediate 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

## Implementation and results.

Listed below are certain recommendations based on the quantitative analysis of the implementation of the OPYE 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 under Axis 1 of the Programme is slow and if it is not hastened the performance framework objectives are unlikely to be met. Consequently, it is essential to reinforce the actions related to Investment Priority 8.2 and analyse the reasons why there has been no implementation of the Programme to date under Investment Priority 8.7 aimed at reinforcing the implementation of the National Youth Guarantee Scheme.

**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 application of Data Analytics should enable the integration, use and analysis of the information contained in the Managing Authority's management systems, the information systems of the Intermediate Bodies and the information included in the National Youth Guarantee File. 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. 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.



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