



Unión Europea
Fondo Social Europeo
"El FSE invierte en tu futuro"

Cofinanciado por el
FSE. Programa
Operativo 2014-2020
DE ASISTENCIA
TECNICA



Second Evaluation of the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ) 2014-2020

Executive summary,
june 2019



SECOND EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME (POEJ) 2014-2020
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
MINISTRY FOR LABOUR, MIGRATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY
SUBDIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR PROGRAMMING AND EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND (ESF)

Technical team:
Arenal Grupo Consultor, S.L.

José Belis Marcos
Eva Herrera Picón
Juan Requejo Liberal
Natividad Albert de los Santos
José Ignacio Macías Vivero

Introduction

This executive summary forms part of the assessment process "Second Evaluation of the Youth Employment Operational Programme (POEJ) 2014-2020" conducted by Arenal Grupo Consultor S.L. for the Ministry for Labour, Migration and Social Security's Subdirector General for Programming and Evaluation of the European Social Fund (ESF), in applying the provisions of the Specific Evaluation Plan of the POEJ 2014-2020.

It is structured around 4 blocks of content:

- The evaluation process
- Evaluation of sub-axes 1A; 1B; 1C; 1D and 1E (hereinafter Axis 1) and sub-axes 8A; 8B; 8C; 8D and 8E (hereinafter Axis 8) of the POEJ
- Overall assessment of the POEJ
- Recommendations

1. The Evaluation Process

Methodology

Adhering to the provisions of Article 114 of Regulation (EU) No1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013, which governs evaluation activities to be carried out during the period 2014-2020, the Specific Evaluation Plan of the POEJ 2014-2020 included the forecast of the evaluations to be carried out by the Subdirector General for Programming and Evaluation of the ESF on the interventions under the POEJ.

During the first half of 2019, the Second Evaluation of the POEJ was to be carried out, the main purpose of which would be to analyse and evaluate Axes 1 and 8 of the POEJ. However, Axis 5 findings and conclusions were also to be included in applying the Technical Specifications Document, which stated that *"an overall analysis of the entire POEJ was to be carried out on the basis of the results from evaluating Axis 5 obtained during the Second Evaluation of the YEI which was completed in December 2018"*.

The evaluation covered the time period given in the corresponding Evaluation Form included in the Specific Evaluation Plan (initiatives selected between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2018). However, due to the comprehensive nature of this evaluation process, a retrospective analysis has been carried out from the start of the execution period.

The design of the evaluation adhered to the instructions set out in the Technical Specifications and in the "Guidance for Carrying out the 2019 Evaluation of the Objectives/Results of ESF Operational Programmes".

A mixed methodological approach has been used, combining both a quantitative and qualitative perspective.

Where the information collected or generated has referred to people, the data have been disaggregated by gender so that the same analysis can be conducted based on a gender perspective - that is, to understand and assess to what extent there are differences between women and men.

With regard to the sources of information used, a distinction is made between primary and secondary information sources. Primary information is understood as that which has been generated during the evaluation process (fieldwork), and secondary information as that which has been generated during other processes (statistical initiatives, management of the POEJ and so on).

The primary information has been obtained using the following tools:

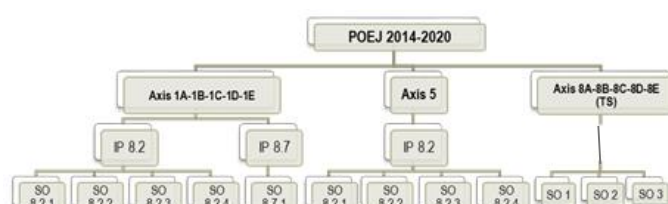
- Interviews with representatives of the IBs and DBs running initiatives under Axis 1 and/or Axis 8 during the period 2017-2018.
- Surveys of the IBs and DBs with running initiatives under Axis 1 and/or Axis 8 during the period 2017-2018.
- Survey of the IBs and DBs that have not started initiatives under Axis 1 and/or Axis 8 despite having a financial allocation.
- Survey of the people to whom the initiatives are addressed.
- Panel discussion with IBs and DBs representatives and other social agents.

Description of the purpose of the Evaluation:

The POEJ was approved via Implementing Decision of the Commission on 12 December 2014, as amended by Implementing Decisions taken on 18 July 2016, 18 December 2017, 17 September 2018 and 4 December 2018.

It is structured around five Axis 1, five Axis 8 (which integrate the different categories of region in Spain during the programming period 2014-20) and Axis 5, which relates to the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) with a part of ESF.

Chart 1. Structure of the POEJ 2014-2020



The POEJ's Managing Authority (MA) is the Subdirectorate General for Management of the UAFSE (Spain's Administrative Unit for the European Social Fund). The MA has appointed 29 entities as Intermediate Bodies (IBs), 25 of which are public and 4 of which are private non-profit entities (10 are state level IBs, 19 are regional), to which it has delegated a range of functions, including the selection and implementation of the initiatives.

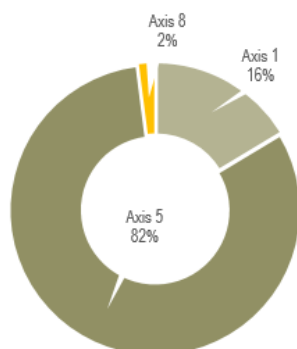
Through competitive bidding, the MA has also selected 15 non-profit entities as direct beneficiaries (DBs), whose main function is to implement projects that contribute to the POEJ's objectives.

The POEJ was initially aimed at people over 16 and under 25, or under 30 in the case of people with a degree of disability equal to or greater than 33%, who were not employed or integrated into the education or training systems.

Under Resolution dated 29 July 2015 by the Directorate General for Self-Employment, Social Economy and Corporate Social Responsibility, the scope of application was extended to those over 25 and under 30 meeting the requirements set out under Act 18/2014.

The total programmed aid for implementing the POEJ, following reprogramming approved in December 2018, amounts to 3208.8 million euros, mainly from the YEI and the ESF equivalent (2723.3 million euros, 85% of total EU aid) and the remainder corresponding to the ESF not associated with the YEI.

Chart 2. Distribution of the total financial allocation by axis



2. Evaluation of the POEJ's Axes 1 and 8

The evaluation of Axes 1 and 8 analysed and assessed the design, execution and effects of initiatives under these axes, by applying a number of evaluation criteria (relevance, implementation, effectiveness, efficiency and impact).

¹ Calls for applications made via Resolution of 15 July 2015 by the Directorate General for Self-Employment, Social Economy and Corporate Social Responsibility, and Resolution of 4 July 2018 by the Secretary of State for Employment.

Other specific analyses have also been conducted in relation to the achievement of the 2018 Milestones of the Performance Framework (PF); contribution to progress in regard to the Europe 2020 Strategy goals; progress in integrating horizontal principles (gender equality, non-discrimination and sustainable development); community added value from the initiatives implemented and identifying best practice.

The most relevant conclusions from this part of the evaluation can be seen in the following block of overall assessment of the POEJ.

3. Overall assessment of the POEJ

Pertinence of the intervention logic

The analysis carried out under the framework of this evaluation of the situation of young people in Spain in 2018 has shown that some of the problems have been reduced and that some progress has been made in the challenges set in 2014.

In spite of these advances, the needs to be met and the challenges to be faced remain very significant, given that the situation in 2018 was characterised by the following:

- Unemployment rate: 26.2% (10.9 percentage points more than the average for Spain's population).
- Duration of unemployment: 21.1% of young people have been out of work for more than 2 years.
- Training level: 40.4% with low levels of training.
- Entrepreneurship: 7.4% of young people are self-employed (3.1 percentage points fewer than in 2013).
- Contracts: 56.3% with temporary contracts.
- Working hours: 33.4% of young women work part-time.

Therefore, a high level of relevance is confirmed of the POEJ's Axes 1 and 5, as youth employment problems and needs continue to exist despite the improvements achieved since 2014. Axis 8 is also relevant to ensure proper implementation and dissemination of the POEJ.

It is also considered that the logic of the intervention is correct, bearing in mind that the initiatives should generate the desired results (getting young people into work, improving their employability, and so on) and these influence the desired impacts (higher rates of employment, better quality jobs, etc.).

Implementation

The pace of execution of initiatives under Axes 5 and 8 has been adequate, but not so under Axis 1, which has been strongly determined by the priority that the IBs have given to Axis 5 initiatives and by the difficulty of carrying out indirect initiatives.

There is a high likelihood that some IBs will not use all the funds allocated to Axis 1, as they have so far (May 2019) neither started nor defined any initiatives for it. This has resulted in a small number of initiatives completed under Axis 1, which has meant that results and impacts have been lower than could have been achieved with a higher rate of implementation.

With regard to Axis 8, up until 2018 there have been a limited number of initiatives to inform youth and society about the POEJ, as well as studies and evaluations to improve the design of initiatives.

Other general findings relating to implementing the POEJ are, on the one hand, problems in applying simplified costs and, on the other hand, insufficient coordination between the IBs and DBs operating in the same regions which may lead to overlaps in regard to initiatives' objectives and intended recipients.

Effectiveness

There is a high degree of financial effectiveness with which all axes are being implemented in relation to the eligible cost of initiatives. Effectiveness in relation to the declared cost is also high under Axis 5, but not in the other axes (low in Axis 1 and medium in Axis 8).

There is a range of results by SO, given that initiatives have been mainly aimed at increasing the hiring of young people on a permanent or stable basis (SO 8.2.4) and strengthening their employability and professional skills (SO 8.2.1). Thus, the results are focused on improving the employability level of those who have participated in the initiatives. These results will be affected by changes in regard to requirements for performing jobs and by advances in the digitisation of the economy.

In regard to IP 8.2. productivity indicators, the level of effectiveness achieved shows relevant differences between the axes, given that, in five of the six Axis 5 indicators, the levels achieved are high whilst under Axis 1 all the indicators reflect a low level of progress.

For IP 8.7, a level of overall effectiveness has been reached versus the productivity indicator, as it relates to the launch of the SNGJ.

The compliance with PF across all Axes 1 is total, given that the SNGJ is fully implemented and under development across all regions of Spain.

Under Axis 5, the PF has not been met because the financial indicator has not reached 85% of the milestone value for 2018. This is not considered a serious shortfall, and as this Axis does not have an associated effective reserve, there is no financial impact. In addition, it should be noted that the POEJ's N+3 as a whole has been met.

The reason for the shortfall is due to a certain delay in IBs and DBs reporting expenditure to the MA, as the cost of approved initiatives is considerably higher, bearing in mind that 2018 is in the middle of the implementation period (87% of the total forecast for 2023).

Table 1. Performance framework (PF). Axes 1 / Axis 5

ID	PF Indicator	Compliance (%)			Degree of compliance		
		Total	M	W	Total	M	W
Axes 1A, 1B,1C,1D,1E							
HI1	Implementation of the SNGJ	100%			High		
PF compliance. Axes 1					Yes		
Axis 5 (YEI)							
CO01	Unemployed, including long-term	90.8%	88.8%	92.8%	High	High	High
F1	Certified expenditure (€)	71.8%			Low		
PF compliance. Axis 5					No		
Serious non-compliance. Axis 5					No		
Compliance N+3 POEJ (2018)					Yes		

The overall assessment of progress towards the targets set for 2023 is that they are attaining a moderate level, as the degree of effectiveness achieved across the 24 output indicators on which this calculation could be made was high among 8 indicators, average among 5 indicators and low among the remaining (7).

The output indicators under Axis 5 that show greatest progress are those which quantify the percentage of long-term unemployed participants completing the intervention funded by the YEI; the percentage of unemployed participants completing the intervention funded by the YEI; and the percentage of inactive participants not following any education or training and completing the intervention funded by the YEI, showing a degree of effectiveness of 78%, 75% and 74%, respectively, versus the percentage forecast for 2023.

An average degree of effectiveness is being achieved under the indicator that measures the percentage of inactive participants pursuing a qualification or with a job following their participation (51% versus the percentage forecast for 2023).

For the remaining Axis 5 performance indicators, the level of effectiveness is low, ranging from 38% to 48% of the value forecast for 2023.

Among the five Axis 1, the degree of effectiveness in achieving the forecast results by 2023 has been very uneven, with Axis 1A standing out positively as in the two performance indicators "Percentage of unemployed participants who complete the subsidised intervention" and "Percentage of unemployed participants who join training systems, obtain a qualification, or get a job after their participation", 80% of the forecast value has been exceeded, which implies a high degree of effectiveness.

In Axis 1C, the degree of effectiveness has been high in the case of the percentage of participants who complete the subsidised intervention and low in the other indicator.

In the Axis 1D, only the percentage of unemployed participants who join training systems, obtain a qualification, or get a job after their participation, for which an average level of effectiveness has been achieved, was quantified.

The degree of progress for the indicator quantifying the percentage of expenditure covered by on-site verifications has reached a high level among the five Axis 8.

In regard to the percentage of recommendations proposed during evaluations that have been addressed, the degree of progress is average (67%) under Axis 1A, which is the only area for which a value has been collected up until 2018.

Table 2. Summary of the degree of effectiveness achieved for output indicators					
Axis	Output indicators (n°)		Degree of effectiveness		
	With 2023 Goals	With quantification until 2018	High	Medium	Low
1A	2	2	2	-	-
1B	2	0	-	-	-
1C	2	2	1	-	1
1D	1	1	-	1	-
1E	1	0	-	-	-
5	12	12 ²	-	3	6
8A	3	2	1	1	-
8B	3	1	1	-	-
8C	3	1	1	-	-
8D	3	1	1	-	-
8E	3	1	1	-	-

² En el Eje 5 (IEJ), de los 12 indicadores de resultados comunes seleccionados, en 3 casos no ha podido calcularse el grado de eficiencia con el que se están ejecutando al no establecerse el indicador de productividad base (CR10, CR11 y CR12).

Efficiency

There is a diversity of views among IBs and DBs in regard to the degree of efficiency with which Axes 1 and 8 initiatives have been implemented, although more consider that the implementation has been efficient - mainly under Axis 8. With regard to Axis 5, the most efficient initiatives according to the IBs and DBs are contract bonuses, workshop schools, individualised advice and career guidance.

Impact

In regard to the impact of the initiatives up until 2018, it has been noted that this continues to be limited, in spite of the fact that the rate at which beneficiaries have got into work 12 months after their participation ended is above 70% for "Employment" types of activity, and that the average is 55.5%.

However, the number of days that people benefiting from the POEJ spend affiliated with the Social Security scheme is greater than that recorded for young people who have not participated in the initiatives, both at the 18-month and 24-month points after the end of their involvement.

The durability of impacts will be reduced, given that the jobs secured by beneficiaries of the initiatives are largely of a temporary nature.

Horizontal principles and community added value

The community added value of initiatives implemented under the POEJ is highly relevant, given that EU aid has led to initiatives that would not have been run without this funding and many of those that would have been carried out without this aid have enjoyed a greater scope of action.

The application of the horizontal principles of gender equality was very much a part of the design and programming phase of the POEJ, and measures have been put in place to ensure that it remains active throughout the implementation period.

Measures that include these principles have been applied to the selection of initiatives and participants, tasks to monitor and evaluate the POEJ, and to communication and publicity activities (mainly through the use of inclusive language and non-sexist images).

These measures are reflected in the participation of women in initiatives run under the POEJ, which as a whole is slightly higher than that of men (50.3%).

There is also a high level of participation in initiatives by people from vulnerable groups, with a notable number of disabled people (79,364, 44% women).

The POEJ's contribution to sustainable development is considered positive, although it is limited to the inclusion of environmental criteria when selecting projects, the application of environmental management measures by IBs and DBs, training on environmental issues and incentivising jobs in sectors related to the environment.

Best practice

Among the activities run by the IBs and DBs under the POEJ, best practice has been identified that contribute to improvements in getting people into work, and whose contents, procedures and forms of intervention of which can be transferred to other IBs and DBs so that they can incorporate them into their initiatives.

This transfer of knowledge could be very positive, as there is currently insufficient knowledge among the IBs and DBs about successful best practice in regard to getting young people into jobs and incorporating them could have a significant effect on other projects planned or underway.

4. Recommendations

POEJ implementation

R1. It is recommended that the financial routes for Axes 1 and 5 be linked in such a way as to ensure a good rate of implementation under Axis 1 and thus ensure that all allocated financial resources are used.

R2. It is recommended that funds be increased to inform young people and society about the POEJ, disseminate its results, and achieve a greater participation of young people in its initiatives.

R3. It is recommended that the number of studies and evaluations on young people getting into work be increased, in order to obtain evidence with which to improve the design and implementation of the POEJ.

R4. It is recommended that a coordination mechanism for initiatives in each region be created, in order to avoid overlaps between the IBs and DBs and to achieve maximum synergies across activities carried out.

R5. It is recommended that the UAFSE continue to inform and advise the IBs and DBs on simplified costs, via the existing expert group, and review any cases that prove problematic for some of the IBs and DBs when using them, with a view to eliminating existing uncertainties in this respect, increasing the rate of certification, and reducing administrative burdens.

Effectiveness

R6. It is recommended that the IBs and DBs speed up the pace of certification of eligible costs and thus enable the financial targets set for 2023 to be achieved.

R7. It is recommended that as soon as possible IBs define initiatives under Axis 1 of a financial dimension commensurate with unused funds, in particular IBs that have not begun initiatives under that Axis.

Impact

R8. It is recommended to direct funds mainly to self-employment and work experience initiatives, due to their greater impact on helping young people get into work.

Integration of horizontal principles

R9. It is recommended that the number and scope of initiatives aimed particularly at vulnerable groups at risk of social exclusion be increased with a view to improving the employability of young people who have the most difficulty in finding employment.

Best practice

R10. The UAFSE is recommended to intensify the dissemination of best practice in the field of employability and helping young people get into work, whether through activities run under the POEJ or other Active Employment Policy programmes.

