



XUNTA DE GALICIA
CONSELLERÍA DE FACENDA
Dirección Xeral de Planificación
e Orzamentos



FONDO SOCIAL EUROPEO
"O FSE inviste no teu futuro"

UNIÓN EUROPEA

**Resumen ejecutivo en inglés de la Evaluación
ex ante del PO FSE Galicia 2014-2020**

Contents

Preliminary note: This executive summary is part of the Ex-ante Evaluation Report of the ESF Operational Programme of Galicia 2014-2020, done by Regio Plus Consulting. Its aim is to answer the fundamental questions regarding evaluation. Therefore, it offers a synthetic, partial view of the valuations contained in the Report.

How has the Ex-ante Evaluation process been organized?

Evaluation is an exercise that is regulated under the general rules of the Structural Funds laid down in Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, which establishes common regulations for the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EAFRD and the EMFF (articles 54, 55, 56 and 57). According to this Regulation, the objectives of the evaluation focus on "improving the quality of the design and implementation of programmes and assessing their effectiveness, efficiency and impact". In particular, article 55, concerning the Ex-ante Evaluation, suggests that the evaluation should allow for "**improving the quality of the design of each Programme**".

Its scope is explained in section 3 of article 55 of the Regulation, and it can be organized into five basic elements, as defined by the "Guidelines on the Ex-ante Evaluation" of the Operational Programmes 2014-2020:

- + Analysis of the Programme's strategy.
- + The study of the quality of the selected indicators and the devices for monitoring and evaluation.
- + The consistency of budgetary allocations.
- + The contribution to the Europe Strategy 2020.
- + The Strategic Environmental Evaluation.

The development of evaluation has efficiently been integrated into the programming process, ensuring the attributes of **iterativity** and **interactivity** which the process must include to effectively contribute to the programming of funds. The conclusions and recommendations obtained therefore provide the basis for its discussion from the perspective of programming, creating a new perspective which defines all the elements to be included in the final version of the Operational Programme.

Is the diagnosis of the region valid?

The ESF OP of Galicia has tackled a wide range of regional socio-economic problems, supported by an extensive set of reliable indicators which cover the main areas of activity within its remit. This has identified the basic features of the region in areas for which the ESF bears responsibility.

The Ex-ante Evaluation has helped to enrich this diagnosis with various contributions that have allowed improvements in the scope of the diagnosis and the quality of the system of indicators which support the analysis of the socio-economic situation of Galicia.

All this has resulted in the document "*Diagnosis of the socio-economic and territorial situation of Galicia for the development of the ERDF and the ESF Operational Programmes of Galicia 2014-2020*", which examines the key factors for territorial development, and properly identifies the relevant needs and challenges. This diagnosis is extensive in its **level of coverage**. The strategy within it provides a useful tool for understanding the basic features of the region. In addition, it is based on statistical information and the revision of documents and reports at regional and state level. Reference is made to the plans and strategic programmes in the region which reflect priorities for action in the coming years and which form a basis for consideration of opportunities in the immediate future.

Consequently, the Ex-ante Evaluation Report endorses the diagnosis in that Report, which is the basis on which to build a **framework of weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities consistent with that diagnosis**.

Is the strategy of the OP correctly developed? What degree of interaction does it have?

The implementation of the ESF in Galicia has adopted an approach consistent with EU strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth towards the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The logic of intervention expresses the strategy of the ESF in Galicia in an articulated model through three Axis of Intervention, regardless of the amount of the Technical Assistance, in accordance with the following chart:

Selected thematic objective	Priorities of selected investment
<p>TO.8. Promoting sustainability and quality in employment and supporting labour mobility</p>	<p>PI.8.1. Facilitating access to employment for job seekers and the unemployed, including long-term unemployed and those away from the labour market as well as local employment initiatives and promoting labour mobility.</p>
	<p>PI.8.3. Promoting self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation, including innovative SMEs and micro-enterprises.</p>
	<p>PI.8.4. Promoting equality between men and women in all areas, including access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of working life with private life and the promotion of equal pay for equal work.</p>
	<p>PI.8.5. Adaptation of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs to change.</p>
<p>TO 9. Promoting social inclusion and fighting against poverty</p>	<p>PI. 9.1. Active inclusion, with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving the chance of finding a job.</p>
	<p>PI.9.3. Fighting against all forms of discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities.</p>
	<p>PI.9.4. Access to affordable, sustainable and quality services, including health and social services.</p>
<p>TO 10. Investing in education, development of skills and permanent learning</p>	<p>10.1. Reducing and preventing school dropout rates and promoting equal access to pre-school, primary and secondary education of quality, including formal, non-formal and informal learning paths, aimed at enabling reintegration into the education process and training.</p>
	<p>10.2. Improving the quality, efficiency and accessibility of higher education and equivalent cycles in order to improve the participation and level of education, especially for disadvantaged groups.</p>
	<p>10.3. Improving equal access to lifelong learning for all age groups in formal, non-formal and informal structures, learning and knowledge and worker skills, and promoting flexible learning pathways through career guidance and validation of skills acquired.</p>
	<p>10.4. Improving the importance of education and training systems for the labour market, facilitating the transition from school to work, strengthening education systems and vocational training and their quality.</p>



All elements of the programming chain are interrelated. All Investment Priorities have at least one specific goal associated with them, and these, in turn, are the logical consequence of the actions envisaged in the Investment Priorities listed in each area of the OP.

Are the objectives regarding socio-economic diagnosis relevant?

The analysis of the relevance of programming examines the degree of scope and complementarities between the synthesis of weaknesses and strengths on the one hand, and the objectives defined on the other. The Ex-ante Evaluation shows that, overall, the weaknesses are served by, at least, one specific objective and that specific objectives are useful to leverage the strengths.

It determines that there is **appropriate on-track planning**, with potential for acting on the various weaknesses identified in the framework of selected Thematic Objectives, which in this case are those established by the European Regulation. This is a fairly comprehensive approach by the ESF OP, which is in line with the socio-economic diagnosis of Galicia that precedes it and the Agreement of Association of Spain.

How coherent is the internal structure of the ERDF OP of Galicia?

The Programme shows a **high internal coherence** for strength and consistency. The articulation of the lines of intervention proposed and the types of proceedings covered by each Investment Priority contribute to the achievement of specific objectives.

The strategy of the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 is implemented through the programming of assistance in 11 Investment Priorities and 14 specific goals. This structure is largely conditioned by the regulatory requirements of thematic concentration and orientation to the Europe Strategy 2020.

There is a notable reduction in the number of specific objectives introduced in the latest version of the ESF OP of Galicia over previous versions. The most obvious consequence of this reduction is a greater concentration of aid and, therefore, the impact of the OP, a fact that is positively assessed by the evaluation team.

A deeper analysis of the investment priorities in the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 relates to the study of the capacity of their synergy, in order to assess the extent to which the development or achievement of a goal facilitates or favours the success or fulfillment of other objectives, so that the final effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects. In addition, it is possible to analyse the degree of dependency or to what extent the success of the objectives pursued by an investment priority depends on the achievement of others.

In conclusion, these synergies are interpreted as the ability each Investment Priority (IP) has to interact with the others and contribute to the strategy of the ESF OP of Galicia.

This analysis concludes that **all Investment Priorities have relationships of interdependence or mutual reinforcement of varying intensity, which reinforces the strategy of the ESF OP through greater efficiency of the effects and impacts of the selected Investment Priorities.**

The main conclusion is that there is considerable **consistency of the internal structure of the Operational Programme, which defines Investment Priorities by a significant interaction, favouring the overall fulfillment of the goals of the ESF** in the Autonomous Community of Galicia, through the empowerment and the development of synergies between Investment Priorities.

From all the investment priorities, three show a clear strategic nature. Priority 10.1, regarding the reduction of school dropout rates and the promotion of quality education, has a clear degree of influence on improving employability and social integration. The promotion of self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation (IP 8.3), will not only produce remarkably positive effects on those priorities aimed at increasing employment, but also will feed on those others directed to education and improving skills and human capital. Finally, the integration pathways, accompanying measures, training and support for social inclusion and incentives for job placement form positive influences towards employment and in the fight against exclusion. Coinciding with these purposes are the many priorities of the PO.

Furthermore, **the concentration of most of the aid in influential and strategic priorities ensures a high level of synergies and strengthens the overall strategy of the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020.** This argument will be developed later in the section on analysis of the financial coherence of this evaluation.

Moreover, further analysis shows some of **the investment priorities of independent nature strongly complementing certain priorities selected by the ERDF OP of Galicia 2014-2020.** Specifically, the IP 10.2, through its support for the pre-doctoral training, shows a clear commitment to enhancing the Galician R+D+i and, consequently, regional competitiveness. Priority 8.5, aimed at the adaptation of workers and companies to change and labour market needs, includes actions to enhance and strengthen business competitiveness through the training of entrepreneurs, managers and workers, including new approaches to advanced production or immersion in ICT in order to increase competitiveness. Thus, both priorities are related to those included in TO 1, 2 and 3 of ERDF OP of Galicia 2014-2020.

The priority 10.3, addressed to the improvement of professional skills and adaptation to the labour market, also contributes to achieving the objectives of the priorities related to employment, hence its influential nature. This characteristic is shared by

investment priority 9.3, which is aimed at fighting against all forms of discrimination and promoting equality, impacting positively on the priorities of employment and inclusion.

Finally, priorities 8.1 and 8.4, concerning the promotion of sustainability and quality of employment, are of a sensitive nature. This means that the results will be favoured by the evolution of the rest of the OP.

In conclusion of this section, it is to be noted that IP 8.2 has been removed from the final version of the ESF OP of Galicia. The evaluation team welcomes such removal because it was a priority of a sensitive nature. Moreover, the evaluation team believes that the inclusion of the new investment priority 10.4, aimed at enhancing the importance of education and training systems in the labour market, is of a highly strategic nature. Therefore, the elimination of priority 8.2 and the inclusion of 10.4 with a significant budget only increase the positive synergies of the ESF OP of Galicia, contributing to increasing the quality of the programme and offering a greater potential impact.

Have measures been taken to integrate the horizontal principles?

The appropriate strategic approach described has been favoured by the **principle of partnership** throughout the planning stage, with a high degree of collaboration in the final definition of the Programme strategy. There have also been open consultation procedures with all stakeholders.

The integration of the **gender perspective** has been successfully introduced in the stage of needs and diagnosis analysis, by providing information disaggregated by sex and by identifying, therefore, the existing gender gaps. However, selected priorities and objectives for the ESF OP of Galicia do not respond directly to the promotion of equal opportunities between men and women, although they may indirectly impact positively on it. In addition, the programme includes adequate implementation criteria for proper observation of this horizontal principle. Finally, the proposed monitoring indicators are, where appropriate, disaggregated by sex, allowing quantifying of the incidence and impact of actions on gender equality.

Regarding the principle of **equal opportunities and non-discrimination**, the diagnosis carried out contains a section on the situation concerning social inclusion and the fight against poverty in Galicia. With respect to the strategy of the OP, it should be noted that all Thematic Objectives selected will affect the promotion of equal opportunities in Galicia, although the intensity of each differs. Each funded project will obviously be considered according to the design and implementation of gender gaps existing in its scope of intervention.

For its areas of intervention, the ESF OP of Galicia does not include those thematic objectives of the programming 2014-2020 which are of purely environmental nature.

These objectives themselves have been selected by the ERDF OP of Galicia 2014-2020. However, the potential contribution of the ESF to **sustainable development** in Galicia must come from improving education and training systems that are required for the adaptation of abilities and qualifications, the improvement of professional skills and the creation of new jobs in sectors related to the environment and energy.

What is the degree of external coherence of the Programme?

The analysis of external coherence weighs the adaptation between the OP and other European and national programmes. Therefore, the relationship between the OP and the general guidelines of the European Commission, established in the MEC, and the main objectives, strategies and lines of action from the point of view of socio-economic development presented by the Association Agreement of Spain, is comprehensively set out.

The coherence of the ESF OP of Galicia regarding the Association Agreement of Spain is high, due to the application of the principle of partnership and multilevel governance. The Thematic Objectives defined in the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 overlap with proper consistency in the priority areas defined in the National Reform Programme 2014 whose ultimate aim is to "*allow the change of cycle that seems to be starting to consolidate and enable a strong and sustainable growth which decisively favours job creation*". In particular, subjects related to job creation and employment, social inclusion and education stand out (particularly employment-oriented training).

Therefore, the programming of the ESF in Galicia is properly inserted into the framework of the national strategy, so that the actions contained in the OP complement a broader development strategy in the national context in general and of Galicia in particular.

Similarly, programming is also consistent with those strategic policy approaches of the Government of Galicia. So **there is a high degree of coherence between the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 and the major Galician policies on social issues**.

In addition, complementarity and coordination with multi-regional Operational Programmes cofinanced by the ESF has been guaranteed thanks to meetings (both bilateral with the Managing Authority and general with all agencies involved) in which the regional administration has been present, ensuring alignment of objectives and avoidance of duplication.

Moreover, the strategic formulation and the approach of the OP are in line with the Europe Strategy 2020, contributing directly to the objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 also maintains a remarkable complementarity and capacity to generate synergies with the most relevant European funding

programmes whose fields of action are developed in the fields of employment, social inclusion and training and education, to ensure clear external coherence of the OP in the community dimension.

What is the degree of financial consistency of the Programme?

The Internal Consistency of the OP must find continuity in financial consistency that allows realization of the potential synergies designed for strategic programming.

The ESF aid programmed for the whole period under the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 amounts to a total of **313,142,974** euros. This aid is distributed in four priority axes, including Technical Assistance and three Thematic Objectives, in the terms included in the following table.

Priority axis	Thematic Objective	EU aid	National counterpart	Total funding
<u>Priority axis 1</u>	TO 8: Promoting sustainability and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.	97,001,292.00	24,250,323.00	121,251,615.00
<u>Priority axis 2</u>	TO 9: Promoting social inclusion and fighting against poverty and all forms of discrimination.	83,258,868.00	20,814,717.00	104,073,585.00
<u>Priority axis 3</u>	TO 10: Investing in education, training and vocational training in order to acquire skills and lifelong learning.	124,378,765.00	31,094,691.25	155,473,456.25
<u>Priority axis 8: Technical assistance</u>		8,504,047.00	2,126,011.75	313,142,972.00
TOTAL		78,285,743.00	10,630,058.75	391,428,715.00

Source: ESF OP of Galicia

The annual programming shows a slightly upward trend until 2016, when it stabilizes, showing only a very small progression until 2020, when there is a slight increase again. However, the delay in approving the OP has led the originally planned expenses for 2014 and 2015 to be included in the year period 2015.

The lowest concentration of expenses in the early years of implementation guarantees the existence of the time required for the implementation of the enforcement mechanisms of the funds and a regular pace of implementation of assistance, facilitating compliance with the N + 3 rule.

In this framework, the analysis of the consistency of financial allocations intends to address these basic questions:

- + Compliance with the regulatory requirements of thematic concentration.
- + Consistency of financial distribution in order to meet the needs of the region.

What assessment does the Quality of the Coordination, Monitoring and Dissemination Systems merit?

The System of Indicators developed for monitoring and the evaluation is the result of a thorough study that has benefited from the active participation of the various entities involved.

The appreciation of the relevance of **Implementation Indicators**, from the assessment of the degree of compliance to the criteria of relevance, significance, quantifiability, reliability and usefulness, confirms that the quality level of these is satisfactory and suitable for monitoring the types of actions envisaged by the OP. The evaluation team believes that the final proposal of indicators of the ESF OP of Galicia responds to a greater extent to the aforementioned criteria.

The indicators in fact cover all Investment Priorities, allowing a realistic quantification of the developments (which is directly linked to the direct or immediate effect of the investment), and they properly reflect the scope of the Investment Priorities chosen, so that they are relevant in expressing the degree of success in achieving them.

With regard to the **results indicators**, they need to reflect and be related to the result to be achieved in the specific objective. Because the advance in the objective implies a change from the baseline, it is important to establish reference values. To this end, in accordance with Article 5.1 of the Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013, "the latest available data or other relevant sources of information" will be used.

The established definition of the results indicators allows determination of the effects on people and institutions supported by the Programme, thanks to the contribution of co-financed actions significant in relation to the anticipated result in the corresponding Investment Priorities. However, it is noted that they are not suitable to measure overall effects on the region. In this regard, the financial capacity of the Programme to boost a substantially measurable change is limited. Proof of this is that the total financial allocation of the ESF OP of Galicia (including the national counterpart) for the entire period 2014-2020 only represents 0.71% of regional GDP in 2013. From the point of view of the main recipients of the Programme, the budget per unemployed person amounts to 199 euros per year.

Consequently, it is clear that the financial dimension of the Programme does not reach the critical mass necessary to influence the key socio-economic variables. In any case, although the resources available are insufficient to boost the growth of employment, and the intervention is not the most important element in changing the direction of the regional economy, the implementation of the ESF in the region is a positive factor that contributes to leveraging additional funds for improving employability, social inclusion and human capital.

To this we must add the microeconomic and qualitative effects which outweigh the limited financial importance of co-financed actions, although such effects are difficult to quantify through indicators such as those postulated by the European Commission. Table 20 shows the selection of the results indicators. As it is clear from this table, the study of the relationship between the Results Indicators and the specific objectives of the various Axes shows that the definition of the indicators allows knowledge of the degree of approximation to the specific objectives of the Programme. In particular, an appropriate coverage of all the specific objectives for the proposed indicators is observed.

The analysis of the relevance of the Results Indicators, from assessing the degree of compliance with the quality criteria described, reveals adequate levels of quality. They measure anticipated changes by the implementation of actions, which makes them highly relevant. Quantifying them is ensured by the procedures for obtaining information. Such elements guarantee, in turn, reliability and usefulness of the information provided. However, provision should be made, where appropriate, for conducting an evaluation plan, which may be common to all ESF OP in Spain, and for the provision of resources necessary for the development of these tasks. In order to respond optimally to the requirements of information, indicators are required.

What is the expected contribution of the ESF to the objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe 2020?

For the planning of Galicia ESF aid for the period 2014-2020, targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy have been taken into account, leveraging additional resources to advance in the direction set forth therein.

Specifically, the contribution of the strategy defined in the OP of Galicia 2014-2020 focuses on the goals related to employment, education and combating poverty and social exclusion which are natural areas of the ESF. It therefore reaffirms what was already stated in the analysis of external coherence of the ESF OP of Galicia concerning the **relationship of complementarity and positive synergies with Youth Initiatives on the Move and the Agenda for New Top-Level Skills and Jobs**.

If we delve into the strategy of the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020, we see that it has been designed from the pooled analysis of the objectives of the Europe 2020 objectives, specifically those linked more to the field of ESF action: employment, poverty, education and training. The analysis prior to drawing up the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 diagnosis has identified the main needs and challenges addressed in Galicia in these fields of activity. Specifically, **the analysis of the socio-economic diagnosis of Galicia devotes separate chapters to analyzing the situation of human capital and the labour market, poverty and social exclusion as well as education and training in Galicia**. The weaknesses identified in these areas have been the basis for the design of the strategy of the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020.

The different chapters of this assessment have shown that the selected thematic objectives (TO 8, 9 and 10) as well as investment priorities ensure a progression in the AC of Galicia in promoting sustainability, quality employment and social inclusion, combating poverty and, finally, giving investment in education and training. Therefore, the impact on the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy on inclusive growth is guaranteed.

To conclude with the programme's contribution to the Europe 2020 objectives, it can be stated that:

- ✦ **All investment priorities of the ESF OP of Galicia contribute to at least one objective of the Europe 2020 Strategy**, which highlights the full alignment of the programme with this Strategy.
- ✦ **A number of investment priorities contribute to more than one of the objectives** under the Europe 2020 Strategy, which highlights the synergies between priorities and which has already been highlighted throughout this ex-ante evaluation.
- ✦ The objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy related to the main areas of activity of the ESF (Employment, Education, Poverty and social inclusion) are dealt with by the ESF OP of Galicia.
- ✦ The impact of the ESF OP of Galicia is not limited to those objectives strongly linked to the performance of the ESF but also influences the aim of R&D&I, which shows the **interrelationship of the intervention areas of the ESF, and especially educational research and innovation**. The potential of the ESF to contribute to the Galician R&D&I system through the training of research and innovation personnel involved in activities is considerable. The impact of the ESF on R&D&I evidences the **complementarity with the ERDF OP of Galicia 2014-2020** which includes the Thematic Objective 1 in its intervention strategy.
- ✦ The objectives of the 2020 Strategy related to climate and energy are not directly addressed by the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 even though it includes sustainable development as a horizontal principle in its strategy. While it is true that some of the interventions to be financed by the ESF can contribute to the objectives in this field, no direct relationship to the impact of the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 on combating climate change or the energy transition is identified.

Specifically, only axis 1 contributes secondarily with about 0.2 million euros, which should foster the transition to an economy with low carbon and resource-efficiency.

From all the above it follows that the ESF OP of Galicia 2014-2020 and its Investment Priorities for achieving the specific objectives through lines of action that might be developed are intended, in their entirety, to contribute to the objectives laid down by the Europe 2020 strategy.

RegioPlus
Consulting 

www.regioplus.eu

**C/ San Diego, 15
28801 Madrid**

**T. +34 91 883 80 08
F. +34 91 879 88 19**

**Gta. Fernando Quiñones s/n
41940 Sevilla**

T. +34 95 415 42 68

**Rue Louis Scutenaire 7/8
B - 1030 Bruselas**

T. +32 (0) 2 742 25 80