

REVIEW OF THE INTERIM ASSESSMENT REPORT
ON THE INTEGRATED OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR
CANTABRIA

-2000-2006-

-UPDATED INTERIM ASSESSMENT REPORT-

Final Report.Summary. Chapter I

October 2005

1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The aim of an executive overview is to summarise the main issues addressed in the body of the document, dealing especially with the main conclusions and recommendations put forward in each one of the chapters analysed.

ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED IN THE INTERIM ASSESSMENT

An overall analysis of the sum of recommendations will lead to the conclusion that almost all the proposals drafted in the Interim Assessment have been studied and dealt with by the bodies involved. Regarding those that have been deemed pertinent, they have been considered as a whole, with the adoption of specific measures for their implementation and giving rise to the progress foreseen in the different spheres addressed.

Likewise, inclusion has also been made of those recommendations that are still deemed to be applicable or worthy of consideration in the forthcoming programming period.

- Improving the capacity for financial absorption -

1. *Increase the financial allocation for measure 1.8:* recommendation applied successfully.
2. *Elimination of measure 6.8:* full application of the recommendation.
3. *Low efficiency of measures 2.3, 2.7 and 7.4:* the possibility of reprogramming them has been addressed and this has finally been deemed appropriate in the case of measures 2.3 and 2.7 (approved by Monitoring Committee Annual Report 2004).

- Operational Management-

1. *To articulate mechanisms that will streamline the meetings of the Monitoring Committee:* measures have been taken to improve them but the outcome has yet to be verified as the Monitoring Committee was not convened during the period subject to analysis.

Recommendation still applicable: To continue advancing towards the goal of **streamlining Monitoring Committee meetings**, whereby these become as practical and as effective as possible. The implementation of the enhancement proposals put forward within the actual Committee itself by its members should lead to improvement in this sense. Thus:

- 1.1. Continue improving in the provision of prepared and comprehensive documentary information that will allow for lively debate and progress to be made in the furtherance of issues of interest regarding the POIC.
- 1.2. Convening of prior meetings to discuss especially complex points and those which require special treatment in terms of time, whereby the Monitoring Committee meeting is reserved for addressing conclusions, proposals and decision-making.
- 1.3. A special effort to reduce the time the European Commission takes to approve the decisions taken by the Committee, with a view to enabling the content of those decisions to be put into practice.
2. *Greater exchange of information in the IA process:* The necessary tools have been introduced to permit access to the information once the assessment has been completed. Nonetheless, it would be advisable to arrange a greater number of activities (meeting, working parties) that pave the way for the exchange of information between the managers of different programmes.
3. *Improvement in the allocations of the human resources attached to the management of the POIC:* measures have been taken to reinforce human resources in the majority of the levels involved. There are still certain needs in personnel that have yet to be covered.

Recommendation regarding the future: once experience has been acquired in terms of the human resources required for managing the POIC, it would be convenient to pay attention to this point when undertaking the deployment of personnel attached to the management, monitoring and coordination of the POIC at the different levels of management and coordination involved in the forthcoming period, given that their limitation has been seen as one of the core problems in the management of the POIC.

4. *Simplification of the IT monitoring systems (F2000 and the UMS - Monitoring System of the Administrative Unit of the ESF (UMS)):* The feeling exists that measures have been taken to facilitate the use of the application, yet the prevailing view is that in practical terms no improvements have been forthcoming.

Recommendation regarding the future: the problems involved in working with the IT monitoring programs for the POIC (F2000 and UMS) have been seen as one of the major obstacles facing the management and organisation of the POIC, whereby it is suggested that there should be a review of the following aspects, regarding the approach to a future monitoring tool or to the improvement of those currently in existence:

- a) A need for the system to be technically fine-tuned, as there are frequent software problems.
 - b) Inflexibility of the system
5. *Stressing the need for giving greater exposure to the development of the schemes, their monitoring and the targets achieved through them:* full application of the recommendation.
 6. *Effort to adjust the schemes to their corresponding typology:* application of the recommendation.
- *Improvement of programming processes* -
1. *Reinforcing the involvement of socio-economic partners at the programming stage:* a recommendation that should be addressed over the coming programming period. Concerning current improvements, an interesting step forward has been taken accordingly which will have a bearing on the new programming, with official recognition given to the involvement of the socio-economic partners (unions and CEOE)) at the meeting of the POIC's Monitoring Committee as of this year, 2005, as members of the same.
 2. *Initial effort in the choice of indicators: greater involvement of final beneficiaries and executors:* a recommendation that should be addressed over the coming programming period, in its initial stage, whereby a study of current improvements is not appropriate.

Future recommendation: The experience gained from this programming period has revealed the difficulty in choosing representative indicators from the start and the difficulty in quantifying many of these. With regard to the new 2007-2013 programme, it is considered necessary to make an initial effort to select a fewer number of indicators than those established initially in the 2000-2006 programme for the POIC, whose quantification and prediction will be rendered more accessible in accordance with the experience acquired. This means that the subsequent collation of data will be swifter and more accurate, thereby minimising the need to eliminate or modify indicators or target values.

Regarding this process of selecting and predicting indicators, it would be advisable to increase the involvement of the final beneficiaries or executors of the schemes, as they may make extremely valuable and constructive contributions through their knowledge and experience in each one of the thematic areas.

The need to start off from the very beginning with a standardised and common definition and content for each one of the indicators chosen, so as to remove any doubts regarding their meaning and scope, allowing for the comparative analysis of standardised elements.

3. *Review the appropriateness of the monitoring indicators that are being used and the initial forecasts of physical performance:* Full application of the recommendation.
4. *Excessive demand for information and for indicators on the part of the Monitoring System of the Administrative Unit of the ESF (UMS) as well as difficulties for quantifying it:* it has not been deemed appropriate, given that the information is indeed considered challenging, albeit necessary for verifying the true impact of the schemes and providing quality information.

- *Horizontal priorities* -

1. *Greater information on how to incorporate the principle of equal opportunities and sustainable development within specific schemes: Greater coordination between supervisory bodies and bodies safeguarding the principle at regional level:* it is generally considered that the information available has improved, yet the degree of knowledge on its practical integration is insufficient.

Future recommendation: Greater involvement of the safeguarding bodies at regional level in the programming of horizontal principles (equal opportunities, sustainable development) in the more accurate and detailed definition of the means for integrating said principles within specific schemes, which serve as a reference for managers and executors of the schemes in the part they play in the process of integrating said principles.

Likewise, the practical workings of the channels recently established in the monitoring of projects between executing bodies and the body safeguarding said principles at regional level. (Environmental Advisory Board and the Gender Equality Unit of Cantabria).

PHYSICAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

1. **The financial performance** over the period 2000-2004 has been highly satisfactory, having certified 119% with regard to the amount programmed in the POIC for the same period and 91% regarding that programmed for the end of the period. These percentages highlight a high degree of financial performance, ratifying the positive rate of performance in the first three-year period (2000-2002).
- The degree of **financial efficiency** achieved overall, both for the period 2000-2004 and with regard to 2006, is very high for all the Funds, in terms of both priorities and measures. It should be noted that only 9 of the 50 measures distributed throughout all the Funds record a financial efficiency that is low or very low. These measures are the following: 2.3, 2.7, 3.3, 3.4., 43.2, 6.10, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6.
- Likewise, special mention should be made of the **financial over-performance** registered by certain measures with regard to the programming for the end of the period, which by 31-12-2004 has exhausted the sum total of the financial resources allocated to them for the entire period: 1.1, 1.10, 2.2, 3.1, 3.6, 41.1, 5.1, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 6.1, 6.4, 6.6 and 7.8.
- Concerning the performance data related to **rule N+2**, it should be noted that the commitments associated with the 2000-2002 annuities have been fully met in terms of the performance available in the Funds 2000 database at 31/12/2004. Regarding the horizon defined by 31-12-2005 as the date for the automatic release of commitments for 2000-2003 annuities, according to information available, the commitments to said annuities have likewise been met, as amounts have already been certified in excess of those programmed for 2000-2003.
- By **spheres of intervention**, in the period **2000-2004**, as in the period 2000-2002, around 50% of the financial performance is focused on the spheres 121, 344, 1309, 315, 36 and 312. Sphere 121 “Investments in forestry” is the one registering the lowest performance and is the only one that differs from those for the periods 2000-2002.
- Insofar as recommendations are concerned, regarding the measures whose **financial efficiency** has been low or very low (<20%) (measures 2.3, 2.7, 3.3, 3.4, 43.2, 6.10, 7.4, 7.5 and 7.6), there is no need to re-programme them as according to their managers their performance will be undertaken

without any problems during the remainder of the programme. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to study the convenience of financially re-programming these measures, applying the principle of financial efficiency in their management with a view to transferring the financial allocations from the measures with low financial performance to the measures registering an over-performance regarding 2006 (1.1, 1.10, 2.2, 3.1, 3.6, 41.1, 5.1, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 6.1, 6.4, 6.6 and 7.8). Approval was forthcoming at the last Monitoring Committee for the re-programming of part of those measures.

- Regarding **physical performance**, it may be considered extremely good for the sum of indicators, with special mention made of the fact that only 8 indicators out of a total of 210, just 4%, record no performance during this period 2000-2004.
- Insofar as **physical efficiency** is concerned with regard to targets for 2006, it is satisfactory for the sum of indicators. It should be noted that 61% of the indicators record a degree of physical performance exceeding 80% of the target value for 2006; in other words, a very high efficiency. Ten percent of the indicators have recorded medium-low efficiency. Accordingly, it may be considered that with the odd exception, the target values for 2006 have been achieved.
- A review is **recommended** of the appropriateness of re-programming both those indicators that present zero performance and those that have an excessive performance with regard to the target values for 2006. This re-programming has been undertaken, following its approval at the last Monitoring Committee (10 June 2005).
- Regarding the **recommendations for the new re-programming**, and on the basis of the experience acquired during the 2000-2006 programming period, stress should be placed on the importance of a suitable initial choice of indicators, on keeping their number down and rendering them readily quantifiable.

Accordingly, mention should be made of the need to introduce a standardised methodology for quantifying the indicators, above all regarding result and impact indicators, where the greatest problems have been detected in terms of their quantification.

Likewise, it would be convenient to draw up a reference guide for consulting all the information about the indicators, not only regarding their name or typology or their classification by measures, but also including a definition of the indicator and guidance on the methodology to be applied in its quantification. This will make quantification easier and provide standardised data.

2. Regarding the **projection of results and assessment of the fulfilment of the targets** of the POIC, a large number of the measures have over-performed financially with regard to 2006, whereby they have not been studied (18/51 measures). The study as a whole concludes that the forecasts for physical performance for the whole of the period have already been surpassed for a significant number of measures (1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.8, 2.2, 2.3, 3.9, 3.10, 41.1, 43.3, 43.4, 45.17, 5.7, 5.9, 5.10, 6.6, 7.4, 7.7, 9.3) in a large number of their indicators, whereby it is deduced that in certain cases the forecasts have been exceeded due to major demand or success of the measure but in many cases due to the lack of accuracy or quality in the initial calculation of the physical programming. This suggests that a special effort should be made in the drafting of physical targets following the valuable experience acquired in this 2000-2006 period.
- Regarding the feasibility of reaching the 2006 targets, generally speaking the measures studied, above all those corresponding to ERDF and ESF record a highly favourable rate of physical performance, and the targets are expected to be achieved, with only the odd indicator under-performing. It would be advisable to review this in order to verify whether the forecast was overly ambitious and unrealistic or whether expectations have not been met (346, 906, 175, 954, 955, 958, 413, 772 of measure 1.3, 1104, 768 of measure 7.3, 1025 of 7.4 and 1029 of 7.5). In view of this, the last Monitoring Committee (June 2005) approved the modification of a number of these indicators.
- Regarding actions within the EAGGF, the analysis sheds light on the fact that conclusions have only been drawn from a very small number of indicators, which recommends the re-programming of forecasts in many cases and the review of the selected indicators in others.

3. Concerning the study carried out on **unitary costs, efficiency** selection has been made of all those measures in which it was possible to calculate unitary costs in response to the characteristics of the measure or because the required information was available (48% of the measures). This has resulted in the selection of measures from all the Funds, and all the Priorities, except for Priority 2 which has 3 measures. Once these have been studied, it has been very complicated to return reasonable results given that the measures encompass actions of a widely varying nature.

The following table shows the final assessment of efficiency:

FINAL ASSESSMENT OF EFFICIENCY	SELECTED MEASURES OF STUDY																											
	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.2	3.1	3.4	4.1	41.15	43.2	43.3	43.4	42.6	42.7	42.8	44.10	45.16	45.17	45.18	5.5	5.7	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.10	7.2	7.3	7.4
NON-RATEABLE					X																	X		X				
INSUFFICIENT																												
ACCEPTABLE	X					X										X		X						X		X	X	
SATISFACTORY		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X				X		

- Regarding the **efficiency study's limitations and determinants**, there follows a detail of the main common features that have impeded the study of the measures that have not been selected:
 - ✓ The nature of the schemes constituting the measures is widely varying and it is extremely complex to represent them through a reasonable number of monitoring indicators.
 - ✓ The non-availability of unitary costs for the measure's projects due to the wide range of schemes involved.
 - ✓ In certain projects it has been difficult to relate financial performance to physical performance so that the costs truly correspond to the physical units considered.
 - ✓ Limitations regarding the possibility of taking the unitary costs programmed for 2006 as a true reference unitary cost given that the programming does not allow for differentiating between actions in those measures that involve several schemes.
 - ✓ The physical performance programming is not accurate regarding numerous measures, which means it has not been possible to take it as a reference value for unitary costs, having to resort to other sources to obtain a more reliable programmed value.
- The **measures** that have been **chosen** have the following **common denominators**:
 - ✓ The sample of selected projects corresponds to completed and standardised projects, which in the majority of cases account for a percentage of at least 30% of the total financial performance of the measure.
 - ✓ The measures selected are relevant from various perspectives.
 - ✓ The information available is sufficiently reliable in terms of both effective unitary costs and monitoring indicators.
 - ✓ Reliable information has been forthcoming regarding reference unitary costs either through the programming or, as appropriate, through data provided by the actual managers.
 - ✓ These measures have been suitably represented through a reduced number of indicators.

Concerning **the overall evaluation of the efficiency** of the POIC,

- ✓ It may be deemed acceptable, even satisfactory, given that the unitary costs that exceed the reference average do so only by between 0 and 21 percentage points.
 - ✓ The contribution of the funds regarding the development of the action has been seen as a determining factor for the development of the actions, according to interviews held with managers, given that in many cases all the schemes of a similar nature are financed jointly, or the sum of the aid is rated as significant, or it has enabled the scope of the action to be expanded.
 - ✓ The managers have provided clear information and have resolved doubts regarding management, although at times and despite their collaboration it has been difficult to calculate unitary costs and it has been impossible to reach satisfactory conclusions with the information available.
 - ✓ The monitoring information is reliable and it has been verified that the systematic monitoring of project performance is undertaken in a significant number of measures.
 - ✓ The cost of jointly financed projects is deemed to be par for the course for each type of scheme, with no differences within the same type of schemes.
 - ✓ It has been verified that the aid approved has indeed been paid out, except for certain cases such as measure 43.2 (lifelong training-ESF), Priority 42 (occupational training for the unemployed), measure 44.10 (training for the disabled), measure 45.16 (occupational training for women) and measure 45.18 (45.18.3: lifelong training for women) in which it has been noted that the aid approved exceeds that paid out because the beneficiary organisers of the training have submitted receipts for lower amounts than those programmed.
 - ✓ Regarding a significant number of measures, surveys or interviews have been carried out on the beneficiaries which have revealed that for these the final beneficiaries register a high demand regarding the scheme and are highly valued (measures 1.2, 1.8, 43.2, Priority 42, Priority 44, Measures 45.17, 45.18, 7.3 y 7.4).
- Concerning the **recommendations with respect to the new programming**, no major problems of efficiency have been detected. The greatest difficulty lies in the programming's limitations in terms of reference unitary costs. We understand it is difficult to set both financial and physical performance targets at the beginning of the programming period, but in view of the experience gained in the current 2000-2006 period, they will logically be more accurate in the next period. The same may be

said regarding the accuracy of the monitoring indicators used: it is understood that once indicator quantification methodologies have been introduced in this period and the difficulty in quantifying certain indicators has been verified, the selection and quantification of the same in the forthcoming period should be more efficient and accurate from the start.

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS FORTHCOMING

By fields of action:

- Concerning the **evolution of the socio-economic environment in Cantabria** over these years and the contribution made to it by the POIC, according to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, INE, the regional economy of Cantabria recorded above-average growth between the years 1995 and 2004. Whereas the country as a whole grew at an average of 3.38% over this period, the region's economy grew by 3.47%, standing in sixth place in the regional ranking. Together with other indicators of an economic nature related to **business activity**, the result has been a positive one in this period. Although full confirmation requires a longer timeframe, emphasis may already be placed on the fact that the trend in Cantabria's economy points to ongoing improvement in its productivity and business competitiveness. In spite of this trend, and looking to the future, it should not be forgotten that a large proportion of the region's productive base is still at the consolidation stage in its lifecycle, whereby industrial incentives continue to be essential in view of the threat of business relocation and the weakening of the industrial fabric.
- Within this sphere of business development, the number of companies benefiting from the **POIC** has amounted to 31.66% of the total number of companies registered with the Social Security in the Autonomous Community during the period 2000-2004. Induced private investment has recorded a figure of around 252.4 million euros, which has meant the creation and preservation of 18,768 jobs.
- Regarding the Autonomous Community's evolution within the sphere or field of **R+D and Information Society**, the development of the Information Society in Cantabria has experienced significant growth in recent years, as revealed by the context indicators on the deployment of information and communications technologies that continue to spread to more companies and homes in Cantabria from one year to the next. Although these data are positive, in the latter case they remain below the national average.

In terms of domestic expenditure in R+D, the Autonomous Community of Cantabria is fourth from bottom in terms of resources allocated to R+D, with 0.47% of its Gross Domestic Product, which is well below the national average. These data highlight the fact that although the trend at regional level has been positive in recent years, there is still a need to make an increased effort to attain the national average.

- Regarding **the POIC's contribution** to this evolution, the number of homes in Cantabria that have benefited from subsidies jointly financed through the POIC for internet access has involved 16% of the overall number of households in Cantabria with internet access in 2004. The project "Cantabria en red" (measure 2.7) (year 2004) has been seen as an extremely important project at regional level and one that has played a major part over the years 2003 and 2004 in increasing by 9.8% the deployment of new communications technologies throughout the region, making it the 5th in Spain in terms of this indicator and bucking the prior modest trend. This year it has thus become the second Autonomous Community in the increase of internet use amongst its inhabitants.

Furthermore, the number of researchers involved in R+D projects included within the POIC in 2003 (the year for which there is a context indicator at regional level) accounts for 20% of the overall number of R+D researchers in Cantabria.

- **Infrastructures** constitute the basis of the social and economic development of a Community. In this sense, Cantabria has lagged far behind, although it has been gaining ground steadily, making considerable progress over this period. The most noticeable improvements in infrastructure involve transport, water, the environment (natural resources and waste management), as well as other social infrastructures such as education, healthcare and culture.

- **The POIC has contributed to the development of infrastructures** described in a significant manner, albeit with widely varying percentages of involvement. The quantitative contribution has to be appraised with care, given that, on the one hand, the context data available within this field are limited and, on the other, in certain cases it has been deemed more appropriate and representative to compare the part played by the Operational Programme with the overall performance of a specific type of schemes on the part of the Government of Cantabria over this same period 2000-2004.

Within the sphere of action of “Infrastructures” the kilometres of regional and municipal roads refurbished within the POIC, in the 2000-2004 period, have accounted 12% of the total kilometres of regional and municipal roads in Cantabria.

The total metres of dockland constructed or refurbished through the POIC, in the 2000-2004 period, has amounted to 97% of the overall number of metres constructed or refurbished in the ports of Cantabria over the same period. Furthermore, the dredging carried out in the 2000-2004 period through the POIC accounts for 93% of the overall dredging performed in the region’s various ports in the same period.

Likewise, the number of bus-stops created within the POIC between 2000 and 2004 accounts for 65% of the total number of bus-stops created over the same period by the Government of Cantabria, and the number of bus stations built or refurbished within the POIC, in the 2000-2004 period, represents 89% of the total number of bus-stations in Cantabria.

In addition, the number of water tanks built or improved within the POIC between 2000 and 2004 accounts for 14% of the overall number of water tanks holding a minimum of 2,000 m3.

Regarding the number of recycling points created within the POIC in the 2000-2004 period, they have accounted for 48% of the overall number of recycling points in Cantabria.

The number of educational centres built or refurbished within the POIC, in the 2000-2004 period, account for 17% of the total number of public education centres for academic year 2004-2005 in Cantabria.

Regarding the number of health centres built within the POIC in the 2000-2004 period, they account for 16% of the total number of health centres existing in Cantabria in 2004.

However, various conditioning factors of a regional nature make it advisable to continue focusing on the improvement of infrastructures as the basis for regional development:

- *Underestimation of the population figure for Cantabria:* the result of a growing population living in the Autonomous Community but registered in adjacent Communities and requiring basic services with the consequent further investment effort required.
 - The problem of the *demand for water* forthcoming from both industrial and livestock activities and from specific towns and villages, due to the growing population in certain municipalities and above all to the fact that the demand for water in the summer months is focused on seaside resorts.
 - *Terrain that conditions regional growth:* an uneven distribution of the population and economic activity, which means extensive remote areas, numerous municipalities located in mountainous regions with difficult communications with the region’s main business centres, thereby compounding their remoteness and giving rise to significant differences in income.
 - *Communications infrastructures:* an aspect of the utmost importance with implications in the make-up of the productive fabric and in tourist activity that has improved, but needs to be completed in order to keep regional development on track.
 - Within the sphere of *environmental protection* Cantabria has undertaken a major commitment over these years, as revealed by the indicators. Nonetheless, the region has an important natural heritage and ecosystems that are vulnerable and need to be protected and conserved. Further efforts must be made across the board to limit the environmental impact of human actions.
- Concerning the field of action of **Human Resources**, the regional labour market has upheld its dynamism in 2004, continuing the growth in activity and employment recorded over the past five years, above all insofar as women are concerned.

Mirroring the case of activity, employment has also increased in 2004 at a more moderate pace than in prior years (1.57%).

Unemployment has recorded a slight upturn (1.18%) in 2004, as opposed to the 2% reduction nationwide, although a very different trend is observed between the case of men, 5.5% growth, and women, with a drop of 2.06%.

This positive trend should not conceal the problems that continue to exist, such as an unemployment rate of 10.5%, which highlights the need to continue generating employment, an activity rate that is still low, despite the progress made. Not only is there a need to create more jobs, but it would also be necessary to improve the quality of those already existing, given that there is a considerable degree of temporality (30% of those in paid employment).

Likewise, new challenges are there to be addressed: one of the more far-reaching changes in the labour market in Cantabria is the significant increase in the number of non-EU migrant workers. However, there are no specific measures in place to help them access the labour market.

So, too, have new needs been detected, requiring innovative policies, regarding the group of people at risk of social exclusion.

Furthermore, there is a need to increase lifelong learning, regardless of the employment status of those receiving it, whether they are working or unemployed, given that there are many jobs of a seasonal nature and, therefore, hindering access to training on a continuous basis. Combine the funding for Occupational Training with that of Lifelong Training.

- Through the ESF, the **POIC** has **provided** backing for 9,606 companies in the form of aid for 28,754 people in employment and training actions.

Regarding the quantitative data of results of the actions financed jointly by the ESF, the results show that between 2000 and 2002 (years for which information is available) there was a steady increase in the number of people employed after six months and in companies that continued trading after 12 months, attaining values of between 83.6% and 97% in aid for self-employment, employment and training.

Regarding the contribution of the POIC in percentage terms, the number of **participants in active measures** within the framework of the POIC has accounted for 18% with regard to the sum total for the Autonomous Community in the period 2002-2003 (for which full aggregate data are available). The number of **beneficiary companies** through the POIC has represented 55% of the total number of companies registered with the Social Security (2000-2004). The number of beneficiaries of **lifelong training** within the framework of the POIC has accounted for 8.33% of the total beneficiaries throughout the entire Autonomous Community in the period 2000-2003 (for which full information is available). The number of **temporary contracts restated as indefinite ones** through the POIC over the period 2000-2004 has accounted for 10% with regard to the total number of temporary contracts restated as indefinite ones in Cantabria (2000-2004). The number of **unemployed women beneficiaries** of measures of the POIC over the 2003-2004 period represents 16% of the overall number of women involved in Employment Plan schemes in the Autonomous Community. The number of **Social Guarantee students** in the POIC has accounted for 29% of the total for the Autonomous Community in the 2001-2003 period and the number of **students in Occupational Training** in the 2001-2003 period within the framework of the POIC has amounted to 4.8% of the total number of beneficiaries at regional level.

Conclusions on the observations assessing the POIC measures financed jointly by the FSE that have been dealt with in a detailed manner:

- ✓ **Aids to self-employment (measure 1.8)** are highly successful (their demand has doubled over these years) and convenient, for their capacity for direct integration within the labour market, for the creation of wealth involved, the expansion of the business fabric and their capacity for

motivation and the promotion of an enterprising spirit. As recommendations for improvement, it is deemed convenient to attain a higher degree of customisation in the aids whereby they adapt to the specific circumstances of potential applicants, as may be the case of migrant workers. Likewise, these aids are designed as aid for self-employment, in other words the creation of a job, namely that of the entrepreneur. The Order that governs the Aids for 2005 contemplates a new line of aids fostering self-employment, complementing existing aids through subsidies for the hiring of the first employee, which is viewed as an interesting scheme.

- ✓ Regarding the **Social Guarantee Programmes (measure 41.15)**, these Programmes attend to a social need by catering for groups with a very specific set of problems that do not fit within the organisational structures of formal education. The Order on aids adapts to existing needs despite requiring a great deal of management, as the aids are in considerable demand. There is intense coordination and communication between the Department of Education and the training centres. The main demands for improvements may be summed up by the following points:
 - Improvement in the Training-Employment relationship-nexus in terms of the Administration. Greater awareness of the business sector.
 - Updating of subsidies and modulation according to professional profile.
 - Official recognition of the certificates awarded by the centres.
 - Review of the duration of the courses, which may turn out to be too short in certain profiles for acquiring a minimum level.
 - In certain schemes and with certain students with special education needs, the upper age limit (21) is far too young in terms of the maturity of these groups with regard to their job integration.
 - Need to provide recycling and refresher courses for the teaching staff in these partner training centres.
- ✓ One of the great successes of the actions of **professional occupational training for the unemployed (Priority 42)** has been the reintegration within the training system of those groups who are virtually devoid of it and which in some cases will enable them to improve their chances of entering the labour market and in others to change their attitude towards training and return to formal education.

To conclude regarding the shortcomings detected in the system and the changes to be addressed, it is deemed necessary to undertake greater planning in order to improve the service provided to candidates applying for a scheme (a broad and comprehensive training offer spread out throughout the entire year), to continue working towards a better selection of candidates for the courses and, therefore, greater efficiency and effectiveness. This planning should adopt a fresh approach to training that is compatible with the employment status (employed or unemployed) of the candidate deciding to undertake the lifelong training. In addition, there is a need to further the awareness of society and business regarding the appropriateness of training as a factor of competitiveness.

- ✓ **Lifelong training** through the POIC (**measure 43.2**) is jointly financing training schemes of a general and mainstream nature; training that affects several positions of employment in different companies in a sector or trade. This approach is considered to be the right one given that it makes people more employable, more competitive.

Regarding the main weaknesses or shortcomings and proposals for improving the system, these would be as follows:

- The lack of strategic planning of the training: there are tools for diagnosing and updating companies' training requirements, and considerable improvement has been made along these lines. Strategic planning is required that pre-empts through training, acting as a preventive instrument regarding recessions in sectors, etc.
 - Greater planning in order to provide training throughout the whole year, within the widest possible regional geographic sphere, by sectors, by workers. Better organisation of existing resources.
 - Better co-ordination between those involved in lifelong training both within the region itself and nationwide. The bodies involved are currently excessively dispersed.
 - Advisability of official recognition of the training provided.
 - Greater effort has to be made amongst businesses and workers to further the attitude, awareness and dissemination of the culture of lifelong training as a competitive factor, and not just another expense. Likewise, people have to be made aware of training so that they look upon it as a resource for combating the scourge of unemployment.
- ✓ Regarding the actions of **integration within the labour market of groups at risk of exclusion (measure 44.11)**, there is agreement between the centres that the itineraries are an extremely efficient tool but they cannot currently embark upon true itineraries due to a lack of funds for the stages that do not involve training, to a shortage of hours devoted to these stages and to the lack of professional resources for catering for them.

The underlying demand of small partner organisations within this sphere is the need to organise and exploit the resources that are available. Financial aid is significant and important yet in terms of programming it does not adapt to the true needs of organisations and the work they perform. A greater contribution is required from all the partners involved (above all regarding the greater length of the courses, arrangement of schemes during the academic year and not during the summer season which does not suit these groups, the tailoring of the schemes to suit the groups' needs of a personal and cultural nature and not strictly training-focused instruction, as they require specialised personal means). Regardless of the size of organisations, they call for greater focus in the drafting of true insertion itineraries for these groups.

- ✓ Regarding those actions for **improving the employability of women (measure 45.16)**, major resources are being used to improve the employability of women by addressing their specific difficulties, and a great deal has been achieved accordingly. Moreover, training has improved considerably in terms of quality. Partner centres are actively contributing to changing social attitudes, in job brokering. However, there is still a need to focus on the following points:
- Enhancing the programming of training to bridge the gap between training and employment (timeframes, arrangement of courses, inflexibility).
 - Greater dissemination amongst jobseekers of the centres and organisations that provide guidance and advice for the unemployed.
 - Stronger ties between training-job brokering, whereby a link is forged between students who have completed their training and specific job offers forthcoming in the market.
 - Paying greater attention in the business environment to publicising the success of hiring women, with a view to raising awareness amongst employers.

- Concerning the trend within the sphere of **rural development**, Cantabria has undergone the same evolution experienced by the rural milieu in other developed countries. The region's terrain has in all probability accentuated the phenomenon of population loss and the decrease in economic activity and it has more acutely experienced the ageing of the population that affects the territory as a whole. This is reflected in the employment figures for the region's agricultural sector, with a fall in those active and employed.

Regarding the Livestock sub-sector, which is the one of greatest importance in Cantabria, in terms of cattle trade, the annual volume of transactions at the main cattle-fair in Torrelavega has decreased in 2004 in terms of both sales and the presence of cattle, following a period of growth in 2002-2003.

Regarding the dairy sub-sector, Cantabria, the fifth largest producer in Spain, produced 3,994,000 litres more in 2004 than in 2003, 0.8%, as opposed to the decrease recorded in 2003. This increase stems from the rising trend in the marketable product, a use that accounts for 94.36% of total production, with the remaining 5.64% being used for farm consumption, which records a decrease.

There has been a reduction in Spain's total dairy quota assigned to Cantabria, as occurred the previous year. Finally, and despite this drop, the quota per farm has increased by 10.7%. The number of farm holdings benefiting from the quotas has fallen by 9.7%.

Regarding Forestry Management, the Autonomous Community of Cantabria is largely forested, with a major potential for growth in the forestry sub-sector. Nonetheless, it has not taken off or grown with the intensity expected. Approximately 30% of the region's surface area may be classified as wooded, with a further 30% approximately of pastures for livestock use and around another 30% that is non-productive or low-yield pasturelands, whereby there is scope for reforestation and increasing the amount of arable land. The remaining 10% of the region's land area is urban or used for services and infrastructures.

Only 11.5% of the forest tracts are managed, 90% of their tree expanses are already mature, and they should be subject to forest husbandry in order to permit their regeneration and ensure their survival (92.8% of the forest expanses receive no husbandry or crop management and 88.9% have not been subject to any form of regeneration felling). The yields of the main autochthonous deciduous species are below their possibilities.

Regarding forest fires during the past two years, 2003 and 2004, the results have been good.

Regarding the Agrofood Industry, the turnover for this sub-sector in Cantabria in 2003, according to the latest data provided by the Statistics Section of the Department of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries of the Government of Cantabria, amounted to around one billion euros. Furthermore, this type of industry provides jobs for around 10,000 people and there are 336 companies in this sub-sector.

Between 1995 and 2003, the food sector invested over 189 million euros, generating 1,180 new jobs.

Cantabria has three Labels of Origin for cheeses: "Queso de Cantabria", "Quesucos de Liébana" and "Picón Bejes-Tresviso". The trend over these past two years regarding member businesses and associated farming concerns has not been one of increase, although there has been a rise in the production of labelled cheese, increasing from 394,560 kg in 2003 to 454,347 in 2004. The Protected Geographical Indication for meat "Carne de Cantabria" has likewise grown from 67 to 143 member concerns from 2003 to 2004 and from 3,997 breeding females to 10,901.

Regarding ecological farming and livestock husbandry, there has been a significant increase in recent years, although there is still room for much greater development.

- Regarding **the POIC's impact** on the strategy of regional rural development, the main conclusions are provided as forthcoming from the answers to the common assessment questions required by EU regulations.

Table 34. Answers to Common Assessment Questions

To what extent has the Programme helped		NP	NV	I	E	M	S
CHAP I	INVESTMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS						
I.1	To improve the income of farmers benefiting from improvement schemes for the holding?			X			
I.2	To improve the use of production factors on the holdings?						X
I.3	To redirect farming activities on the holdings?				X		
I.4	To improve the quality of the agricultural products produced on the holdings?						X
I.5	To uphold employment through activities other than agricultural ones on the holdings?			X			
I.6	To the pursuit of best agricultural practices on the holdings?					X	
I.7	To improve working conditions and animal welfare on the holdings?						X
CHAP II	HELP YOUNG FARMERS TO START UP						
II.1	To cover the start-up costs for young farmers?						X
II.2	In the early conveyance by farmers in order to help young farmers start up?	X					
II.3	In the incorporation of new farm hands of both sexes?						X
II.4	To uphold employment through the installation of young farmers?					X	
CHAP III	TRAINING IN AGRICULTURE	X					
III.1	With training needs and keep them in line with other training schemes?	X					
III.2	To improve the situation of the recipients of training and those in the agricultural sector?	X					
CHAP VII	ENHANCING THE PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS						
VII.1	To increase the competitiveness of agricultural products by improving efficiency in processing and marketing?					X	
VII.2	To increase the value added and the competitiveness of agricultural products? Through the enhancement of quality in processing and marketing procedures?				X		
VII.3	To improve the productive sector for raw materials processed and marketed by Agricultural Industries?						X
VII.4	To improve health and general wellbeing through food safety?					X	
VII.5	To protect the environment in food processing and marketing procedures?					X	
CHAP VIII	FOREST HUSBANDRY						
VIII.1.1	To improve the conditions of hydrological-forestry protection?						X
VIII.1.2	To increase the storage capacity of CO2 in forest expanses?		X				
VIII.2	To uphold and generate rural employment associated with forestry?					X	
VIII.3	To boost the ecological role of forests?					X	
CHAP IX	FOSTERING THE ADAPTATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS						
IX.1	To increase farming income?			X			
IX.2	To uphold and maintain the quality of rural life?						X
IX.3	To uphold rural employment?					X	
IX.4	To improve the rural economic structure?					X	
IX.5	To improve and protect the rural environment?						X
	MAINSTREAM QUESTIONS						
Main. 1	To stabilise the rural population?				X		
Main. 2	To safeguard rural employment?			X			
Main. 3	To maintain and uphold income levels in the rural community?				X		
Main. 4	To improve agricultural markets?		X				
Main. 5	To protect and enhance the environment?					X	
Main. 6	To maximise the expected effects of the programming?		X				

NP: The question has been deemed **not pertinent** as per tables 26 and 27NV: The question **cannot be answered** on the basis of the information available.I: The contribution is deemed **Irrelevant**.E: The contribution is deemed **Scant**.

M: The contribution is deemed **Moderate**.

S: The contribution is deemed **Satisfactory**.

The **conclusions, recommendations and challenges pending** are summarised in relation to the 4 main priority areas into which the strategy of rural development pursued within the framework of the POIC can be divided:

<p style="text-align: center;">A. FOOD COMPLEX B. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION C. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT D. AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURES</p>

A. FOOD COMPLEX

- Regarding investments in **agricultural holdings**, the POIC is meeting its targets (cost reduction, increased quality, environmental enhancement, animal welfare, working conditions) in a satisfactory manner. However, in some of its goals, such as increasing the income of farmers, external issues have a bearing that is blocking their fulfilment and progress, to such an extent that in view of this trend the aids only permit the sector's subsistence. For its part, the creation of employment in these kinds of holdings is almost non-existent and non-viable in the light of current trends. Concerning agricultural diversification into other product, there is no initiative on the part of farmers under the burden of outside elements, such as doubt regarding demand or consumer response and the commercial channels in the face of existing competition, or the lack of initiative due to the advanced age of the rural population.
- It is understood that insofar as outside factors weigh down so heavily, the aids continue to be a necessity with regard to the future, as they will allow for the survival of the larger holdings in which scale economies are in operation.
- Regarding the new surveys performed 2 years after the Interim Assessment held with the same farmers (5%), in which attention has been focused on the evolution experienced in this period, the same conclusions as two years ago have been reached, although there are a greater number of beneficiaries who declare that their income has increased over this period, as well as stating that their holding has grown in this time. With respect to the need for the aids, the majority replied that given the situation currently prevailing in the sector (price of milk mainly) they rely on them for their survival or for carrying out necessary improvements on the holdings.
- Regarding **the incorporation of new farmers**, EAGGF-guidance section plays a key role, generating employment, and furthering and catering for the demands of those young people interested. However, present social and economic trends once again discourage young people from investing in the continuance of agricultural holdings. The demand for these aids has remained stable and linear throughout the entire period, although the opinion the beneficiaries have on the state of their holding is a negative one, remaining stable in terms of size or even decreasing.
- Special mention should be made of the increase in women owners of holdings, accounting in this period for 50%.
- Regarding the contribution made by the aids to **agrofood industries**, the OP's targets are being met, above all in terms of finding new market outlets for products, improving processing procedures, eliminating waste and modernising processes. Regarding product quality enhancement, there has been a widespread improvement and the products are gradually becoming integrated within standardised quality systems.
- The great success of these aids has involved creating a competitive industry thank to the installation of new factories in the first years, and the beginning of the process of modernisation and fine-tuning

in these later years and the updating of obsolescent sectors. The growth of the industrial sector in Cantabria allows for the increasingly competitive marketing of agricultural products within the actual region itself, which is a fundamental advantage for agricultural holdings. Likewise, the installation of new industries has led to the generation of local employment and in mountainous area it has to a certain extent helped to maintain employment and activity in this kind of more disadvantaged area I.

- These aids are in great demand amongst industries. The investments they have covered have been deemed highly important by their beneficiaries.
- Regarding conclusions and recommendations with a view to the new programming period, backing for agricultural products continues to be seen as a key line of support. Now that the major process of introducing new industries has concluded, the process is underway for their modernisation and fine-tuning, which is to be consolidated in the new programming period, encouraging large and medium-sized industries to undertake new investments in fine-tuning and expansion. Furthermore, the perception is that these aids have above all reached medium-to-large industries and to a lesser extent traditional micro industries (fewer than 10 employees) located in rural areas. Setting specific targets for encouraging investment in the latter would lead to the creation of new business opportunities for the actual farmers themselves as a supplementary activity and to the development of a new business in the countryside.

B. AGRICULTURAL DIVERSIFICATION:

- Regarding **the fostering of adaptation and development in rural areas**, several measures converge on this target, but perhaps measure 7.5 does so more directly. Its main contribution through local Action Groups has been of a socio-economic nature, such as the creation of a district spirit, the introduction of mechanisms for co-operation between social entities within the district and greater planning for the detection of needs. Its greatest impact has been seen in the improvement of the quality of life for the rural population through the implementation of different kinds of services and the valorisation of the environment, contributing in a more moderate way to stabilising rural employment and to strengthening the rural economic structure due to an unfavourable contextual climate. However, there are indeed productive sectors that have been specifically revitalised, such as rural tourism, arts and crafts and small agrofood industries.
- Regarding the shortcomings detected and requirements for the new period, there is a need for productive investment to outweigh non-productive investment, thereby subsidising investments that have been left out in this period, giving precedence to investment in SME's and microbusinesses.

C. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Regarding schemes in Forestry, the agreement on hydrological-forestry restoration subscribed between the Government of Cantabria and the Ministry of the Environment, providing a framework for the actions of the POIC, has a protective and reservist nature that would not be viable outside this framework in which more productive actions prevail. The success of these actions has involved this protective and regenerating approach to the soil and to the plant and ecological covering, although the timeframe for appreciating its impact is as yet too short. The key to its success is revealed by the fact that the neighbourhood committees adjacent to those of the recipients apply for actions of this nature through osmosis. This conveyance of experiences is important, given that a crucial outside factor in the success of this action depends on the beneficiaries having the will and initiative to make such use of the land they own. Concerning the programming, it is deemed to be adequate and that it is moving towards its target of favouring more disadvantaged and fragile areas. It is noted that there could be more areas liable to subsidies within the Agreement, as these have filed requests accordingly.
- However, it is necessary to continue insisting on the major development potential of forestry and its processing industry as further support for other agricultural uses, favouring the development of forest ecosystems.
- Regarding environmental schemes stemming from the preservation of the landscape and the farming economy, actions of various kinds have been undertaken accordingly, with highlights being those involving protected areas. In this period, the Government of Cantabria has assumed the Management

of the all the nature parks in the region. It should be stressed that all the actions in these protected areas, especially their being declared as such, have the noteworthy consequence of limiting the population and the creation of service companies linked to them in the form of rural tourism. The greatest impact on the environment involves the environmental factors for protecting biodiversity and nature areas.

D. AGRICULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURES

- Regarding the improvement in support infrastructures, the building of rural tracks and the delimitation of plots of land, the main impact has been the organisation of the territory and the development of necessary infrastructures for any subsequent economic development. Furthermore, it has led to an improvement in living and working conditions for those affected, and above all for farmers. Moreover, it has helped to protect the environment through the prevention of forest fires and soil erosion.
- Regarding the next programming period, the development of these infrastructures plays a key role in territorial equilibrium, even though there has been a substantial improvement in recent years, thanks to the investment made. On the one hand, they need to be maintained and, on the other, they need to be improved and extended in those areas that still register a shortfall.
- The following is a summary of the challenges outstanding and the weaknesses in this primary sector:
 - Constant drain of assets and jobs in the regional agricultural sector
 - Deficient quality of life for those employed in the dairy sector, given that they are family holdings and no back-up services are available
 - The active deployment of ICT's in the countryside
 - Need for supplementary measures of rural development in areas at risk of depopulation
 - The breaking up and loss of the best farming land due to encroaching urban expansion
 - Livestock farming, with the greatest relative weight in the primary sector, is dependent on the evolution of its respective quotas assigned at European level.
 - In general, an excessive number of small agricultural holdings
 - Regarding the hygienic quality of milk, although the percentages of milk endorsed as per Community criteria have improved significantly, they continue to be below the average for EU Member States.
 - Backing for the modernisation of a competitive agrofood industry that will provide an outlet for farm produce within the region.
 - Forest husbandry, and its processing industry, is becoming a complementary support for other agricultural uses, a means of diversification, an alternative source of income and it is compatible with a balanced environment.
 - To continue fostering ecological livestock farming to respond to an ever-growing consumer demand.
 - There have been synergies and complementarities with all the other schemes involving other POIC funds (mainly measures 1.10, 2.7, 3.1, 5.9, 6.1 and Priority 4) and they need to continue receiving support.
- Regarding the **POIC's contribution to the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies** that define future strategic policies, it has been verified that the POIC has contributed to these targets and significantly so through a high percentage of its measures (66%). This conclusion has been reached by evaluating different non-systematic elements (specific indicators, studies and data on impacts or field work), as generally speaking there are no explicit methodologies in many measures for impact monitoring and control.

These impact areas are as follows:

Net creation of quality employment.

Competitiveness and productivity.

Knowledge society.

Human capital and social cohesion.

Social welfare.

Environment.

Equal opportunities.

The POIC's contribution to the achievement of these goals is unquestionable, yet it is clear that there remains substantial room for improvement in all those that are to be developed in the future.

In methodological terms, and looking to the future:

- ✓ It would be advisable to address the need **to articulate measures and procedures** for the systematic monitoring of the impact of actions by project managers. This recommendation is largely applicable to those measures jointly financed by the ERDF and EAGGF. There is a prior need to assess each case individually, to see whether the cost for implementing such tasks can be assumed.
 - ✓ In those cases in which specific quantification methodologies have already been put in place, there is a need to further their improvement, providing managers with the necessary measures that facilitate and increase the efficiency of said methodologies. This would apply mainly to schemes corresponding to the ESF.
 - ✓ Regarding the **reliability of current impact indicators**, it is concluded that although the reliability of physical indicators has been suitably verified in the majority of cases once the projects have concluded, regarding those indicators linked to the impact of schemes, it is harder to attain a high degree of reliability.
 - ✓ Cantabria has recorded a significant shortfall in statistical data due to the absence of a regional statistics body, whereby access to this type of information has been very limited. This situation is expected to change over the coming years following the creation in 2005 of a public statistics body (Instituto Cántabro de Estadística).
 - ✓ Following the experience acquired in this programming period, identification has been made of those result and impact indicators that have turned out to be more suitable and more readily quantifiable, so it would be a good idea to make the most of this experience and give project managers, who are the ones who know the most about them and the ones charged with their monitoring and quantification, the greatest possible say in their selection and the forecasting of target indicators.
 - ✓ Integration of **environmental and equal opportunities indicators** in the programming at the level of measures, as a way of quantifying their impact.
 - ✓ No **management shortcomings** have been detected that have had a negative bearing on impact.
 - ✓ Regarding the **weight of outside elements** that counteract the impacts expected, it might be concluded that they do indeed exist, and they do go some way to impeding the full potential of the schemes programmed within the POIC. However, in accordance with the analysis made, these schemes adapt to real needs and they are much in demand with society at large. It may be affirmed that the right approach is taken in the design of the schemes, whereby these will be more efficient and the results will be verified by the evolution of certain specific external determinants. Perhaps the most extreme case involves certain spheres (e.g. agricultural holdings) in which external factors have a determining influence, whereby the part played by the community is necessary for their survival.
 - ✓ **Furthering positive impacts:** in general, it is noted that the right approach has been taken in terms of prioritising schemes in relation to existing needs, with major progress being seen in the majority of community action areas. Nevertheless, concern has been noted regarding the need to consolidate the results forthcoming in future programming, allowing impacts requiring a long timeframe to emerge, giving rise however to the possibility of fresh lines of action that could not be tackled before due to the existence of more pressing needs. It has also been noted that in certain spheres (above all those related to schemes jointly financed by EAGGF) that the more dynamic sectors or which start off from a more favourable initial state, are also those that have greater possibilities for benefiting from the funds, whereby it would be necessary to intensify the work carried out by the Administration to identify the more specific shortcomings and focus resources on them accordingly.
 - ✓ In addition, regarding the new programming it is deemed necessary and pertinent to achieve a **greater level of efficiency and effectiveness**, concentrating resources on the period's more successful schemes and catering for more pressing needs, addressing the rest from new perspectives that adapt to new socio-economic needs.
- Regarding **the new Strategy on Employment 2003-2006** the POIC has contributed through the three funds in the 2003-2004 period, mainly to the following **Guidelines**:

1. Active and preventive measures in favour of the unemployed and jobless.
 2. Creation of jobs and an enterprising spirit.
 4. Promoting the development of human capital and lifelong learning.
 6. Equal opportunities between men and women.
 7. Promoting the integration within the labour market of disadvantaged people and combating the discrimination they suffer...
 8. Make working profitable by means of incentives that render employment attractive.
- ✓ A considerable number of jobs have been created largely thanks to the business development policies that have absorbed 88% of the certified expenditure in the 2003-2004 period, a target that has involved the contribution of all the Funds.
 - ✓ Regarding the degree of financial efficiency achieved in this 2003-2004 period, it may be deemed highly satisfactory, having amounted to over 90% in all the Guidelines.
 - ✓ Regarding the achievements made through the POIC, 4,380 people in 2003-2004 and 10,342 in the 2000-2004 period have benefited from active measures for the unemployed. 4,564 jobs have been created in 2003-2004 and 10,802 throughout the entire period, with 7,906 jobs upheld in the 2003-2004 period and 14,004 in 2000-2004. Furthermore, 1,215 women have benefited from direct actions in specific equal opportunities measures in 2003-2004 and 2,059 in 2000-2004. In addition, 297 disadvantaged people or at risk of exclusion have benefited from direct actions in 2003-2004 and 1,853 in 2000-2004. Finally 1,074 people have benefited from schemes for improving the quality of work in 2003-2004 and 2,716 in 2000-2004.

HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES

- Regarding the review of the integration of the principle of **equal opportunities** between men and women:
 - ✓ Concerning the **incidence of the changes undertaken in the programming** in the 2003-2004 period, in the integration of this principle, there has been no change whatsoever in the measures jointly financed by the ERDF and EAGGF – except for where the new measures incorporated in the Supplement have foreseen the potential impact in this field. In the measures jointly financed by the ESF, the same gender-focus criteria have been adopted, but they are given greater support, in the sense that greater sums of aid are provided, and they have been more widely publicised. However, the greater change has involved the constitution of an Equal Opportunities Unit within the Cantabria Employment Service, which manages the POIC's measures and ensures that from this moment on there is even more effective integration. Despite the absence of changes in the programming, the POIC's monitoring indicators (Funds 2000 and UMS) indicate a clearly positive upward trend in terms of women's involvement in employment and training schemes.
 - ✓ Despite the difficulty in obtaining **statistical context indicators** broken down by gender, the trend in participation has been favourable in such spheres as employment or women's involvement within the sphere of the public administration or education, although they continue to be low percentages that point to the need for more work to be carried out.
 - ✓ Regarding the degree of **efficiency attained by the monitoring criteria** with a gender focus, 57% of the indicators have recorded high or very high efficiency (+80%) or even over-performance, and regarding all the others, no accurate analysis has been possible given that the indicators corresponding to schemes in 2004 have not been loaded into the software (F2000). A review of the target indicators for 2006 is therefore recommended, with a view to a possible reprogramming.
 - ✓ Regarding **the new period of programming**, as revealed by the impact study in chapter 5, the POIC has contributed to the goal set in the Lisbon Agenda regarding the improvement of women's access to the labour market, thereby pre-empting the new priorities established for the new period. However, it is considered that horizontal integration has not been as effective in those areas not jointly financed by the ESF. This means that the recently created Equal Opportunities Unit of the Government of Cantabria will have to play a major integrating role in the programming period and in monitoring the performance of the measures. Within the specific sphere of the measures jointly financed by the ESF, the recent creation of the Equal Opportunities Unit within the Cantabria Employment Service is called upon to play the part of guarantor of the effective integration of the gender perspective in the competencies of the Cantabria Employment Service managing such measures.
- Regarding the review of the integration of the principle of **environment and sustainable development**:
 - ✓ The integration of the horizontal Principle in the POIC is considered to be acceptable.
 - ✓ Concerning the **changes introduced in the programming** in the 2003-2004 period, there have been no significant changes in environmental matters. New measures have been introduced in which a prior analysis has been made of their environmental impact, with the result being that they are not considered to have a potentially significant negative impact on sustainable development.
 - ✓ Regarding **the system of indicators on environmental integration** present in the POIC (context, performance, result and impact), the information available suggests the POIC has made a satisfactory contribution to the positive evolution of the different environmental spheres represented by said indicators.
 - ✓ The **current choice of environmental indicators** is deemed adequate, in terms of their adaptation to the projects they represent, the information available, their relative ease for quantification, the current system for their management and monitoring and their use with regard to assessment.
 - ✓ It is considered appropriate from the outset to try and identify new environmental monitoring indicators for those measures that have a significant impact on the environment and which have in some way already included that contribution in the programming (measures

1.2/1.10/6.10/7.3/7.4 and 7.5) outside the Environmental Priority in its strictest sense, if the aim is to obtain an overall quantified view of the integration of said principle in the POIC.

- ✓ The greatest problem detected involves **the present deficit in statistical data** referring not to the monitoring indicators but rather to the overall context ones for the Autonomous Community, whereby the greatest difficulty lies in crosschecking performance data for the POIC against statistical information for the Autonomous Community. This problem will presumably be gradually overcome with the recent creation of the region's statistical institute, the Instituto Cántabro de Estadística.
- ✓ Identification has been made of **examples of environmental integration**, which have been transformed into specific projects for all the Priorities with the exception of Priorities 2, 6 and 9.
- ✓ A **positive impact** has been detected in a significant number of environmental measures, with greater or lesser intensity, with no measures detected having a negative impact in practice given that corrective measures are in place.
- ✓ It is noted that **impact monitoring** is made of the schemes involving environmental measures, but such is not the case in the rest of the measures, in which the managers do not carry out specific systematic studies on monitoring the impact of the schemes on the environment, although verification is made of the performance of said subsidised investments and the fulfilment of the requirements in compliance with environmental regulations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINALISING THE PROGRAMMING AND THE NEW PROGRAMMING PERIOD

To conclude this section, certain general conclusions expressed in the Report have been summarised, final conclusions propounded on the possible need for adjustments for completing the programming and final recommendations likewise propounded on the strategic lines to be taken into account regarding the definition of priorities for the 2007-2013 period.

- It may be concluded that the review of the Interim Assessment has highlighted the fact that the POIC's performance is proceeding at a steady pace and rate of development.

A great many of the shortcomings detected in the Interim Assessment, and which were expressed in the form of recommendations, have been addressed and implemented and solutions have been provided or measures foreseen that are expected to redress these weaknesses.

Concerning physical and financial performance, there is a satisfactory degree of efficiency and effectiveness, and the study on the projection of results has made it clear that there will be no substantial problems in achieving the goals set out.

Concerning the impacts obtained by the POIC overall, it is noted that the right policy has been followed in terms of existing needs, detecting major progress in the majority of the priority spheres of action. However, concern has been noted regarding the need to consolidate the results forthcoming in upcoming programming, allowing for the emergence of impacts that require a longer timeframe.

- Regarding the **conclusions for the completion** of the current programming period, it may be affirmed that no major adjustments have been seen as outstanding given that the progress made by the POIC is deemed to be satisfactory and recent reprogramming has been made of finances and indicators in order to perform the necessary adjustments.

Nonetheless, the experience acquired in the process of programming, management, monitoring and the very progress itself of the POIC have provided extremely valuable conclusions that need to be taken into account from the start of the next programming period.

- With regard to **a new programming**, it is concluded that the POIC has contributed to the attainment of the goals of the "Lisbon Agenda and Gothenburg Strategy" although there is still substantial room for improvement that will have to be addressed by this programming.

Generally speaking, there is a need to pursue specific new lines of action that could not be tackled previously due to the existence of more pressing needs: it will be necessary for the administration to

delve deeper into the identification of more specific shortcomings and focus resources on them accordingly. In addition, the need and advisability is noted of attaining a greater degree of efficiency and effectiveness, focusing resources on this period's more successful schemes and catering for needs that are still outstanding, addressing the rest from fresh perspectives that adapt to new socio-economic needs.

From the perspective of management, this programming period has highlighted the need to pay special attention from the start to such aspects as the importance of allocating the necessary human resources for monitoring and management tasks, the correct operation of common software management tools, the initial choice of monitoring indicators, the arrangement of common definitions on the content of the same and the provision of accurate forecasts. There is also a need for the greater involvement of those agents safeguarding horizontal principles at the initial stage of integration within the programme of said principles and the monitoring of the schemes.