



Consejería de Presidencia y Acción Exterior
Gobierno de La Rioja

“UPDATE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF SPD OBJECTIVE 2 OF LA RIOJA 2000-2006”

*Summary of conclusions and
recommendations*



Enc: 10.848 cd:5.1 Report nº 7

19th November 2005



SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present *“Update of the mid-term evaluation of SPD Objective 2 of La Rioja 2000-2006”* report is to determine the degree of attainment of the targets established at the beginning of the programming period, as well as to detect possible difficulties which are preventing the attainment of these targets, establishing the correcting measures which may be necessary to achieve greater efficacy, if appropriate. Besides, this evaluation must contribute to lay the foundations for interventions with a view to the future programming period 2007-2013.

The preparation of this report has been based on the methodological guidelines presented by the European Commission in *“Working Document No 9. Update of the mid-term evaluation of structural interventions”*, as well as on the directions established in the *“Common framework for updating the mid-term evaluation of SPD Objective 2 2000-2006”* drawn up by the Subdirector General of Territorial Programming and Community Programme Evaluation of the Directorate General of Community Funds of the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

1.2. KEY EVALUATION FACTORS ANALYZED

The *“Update of the mid-term evaluation of SPD Objective 2 of La Rioja 2000-2006”*, developed by IDOM, complies with community provisions on evaluation matters, as well as with the contents specified in the Common Framework.

Below are the key evaluation factors analysed in the present report.

KEY EVALUATION FACTORS ANALYSED IN THE UPDATE OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

Key evaluation factors	Analyzed
Relevance of the recommendations	✓
Implementation of the recommendations	✓
Assessment of financial performance and efficacy results	✓
Assessment of physical performance and efficacy results	✓
Projection of results and evaluation of SPD objectives achievement	✓
Assessment of the efficiency of the SPD	✓
Analysis of the impact and effects achieved by the SPD	✓
Real convergence of the economy of La Rioja with the European Union	✓
Achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy	✓
Integration of the environmental principle	✓
Integration of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men	✓

1.3. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.3.1. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions drawn from the “Update of the mid-term evaluation of SPD Objective 2 of La Rioja 2000-2006” are shown in the following chart:

Evaluated aspects	Conclusions
Implementation of the recommendations made in the mid-term evaluation	<p>Most of the recommendations made in the mid-term evaluation have been implemented by the different institutions involved in the SPD. The main results achieved as a direct consequence of the implementation of these recommendations have been the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improving the quality of the monitoring information provided by the implementing bodies.▪ Introducing greater rigor in the compliance with community regulations by the institutions involved in the intervention.▪ Increasing the financial absorption capacity of the intervention <p>A number of recommendations have not been implemented. These are mainly related to the introduction of additional monitoring indicators in the SPD.</p> <p>The main reason which prevented their implementation was that the management authority and the intermediate body at a regional level considered that it was more advisable to simplify the monitoring system and chose to eliminate those which were not being used, rather than incorporating additional indicators.</p>
Financial efficacy	<p>The SPD presents a level of financial performance of 94.8% of what was programmed for the period 2000-2004 (66.8% of what was estimated for the period 2000-2006), due to which the financial efficacy is considered to be very satisfactory.</p> <p>The only significant problems were noticed in measure 3.1. <i>Strengthening human capital in research, science and technology</i>, the only measure corresponding to the FSE where the inability to execute all the programmed expenditure for the period 2000-2002 has generated an automatic decommitment in compliance with n+2 rule.</p> <p>The Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX) and the Research Directorate General are the implementing bodies which have presented greater implementation problems. In any case, correcting measures have been applied to ensure the achievement of the targets.</p> <p>The allocation of the efficacy reserve must be assessed positively, since the measures which were granted additional funds present an adequate level of financial performance.</p>
Physical efficacy	<p>The level of physical efficacy shown by the intervention monitoring indicators must be considered satisfactory, as the performance level was above the predictions for the period 2000-2004.</p> <p>However, the results achieved in measures 3.1. <i>Strengthening human capital in research, science and technology</i>, 3.2. <i>Research, innovation and technological development projects</i> and 3.5. <i>Public Research Centres and Technology Centres</i> is not being specially satisfactory. The failure to incorporate performance values in the monitoring indicators during the years 2003 and 2004 by some implementing bodies, together with their not being clearly defined have determined the results achieved in these measures.</p>

Evaluated aspects	Conclusions
Physical efficacy	In view of the projections performed, it is considered that it will not be difficult to reach the results stated in the programming. The actions which will have greater problems to reach these objectives are those included in axis 3. <i>Society of knowledge (innovation, R&D, information society)</i> . However, the implementing bodies have indicated that the actions developed will achieve the results stated in the estimates.
	Measure 3.1. <i>Strengthening human capital in research, science and technology</i> is the only one which will not achieve the expected targets, since as of 2004 it is not possible to certify payments against this measure and therefore, to impute indicators.
Efficiency	The efficiency of the SPD must be assessed as very satisfactory, since nearly all the indicators considered in the analysis of unit costs have shown costs below those estimated through the programming.
Evolution of the socioeconomic context	The examination of the socioeconomic context has made it possible to detect that from the beginning of the SPD implementation period there has been a remarkable improvement in the economic situation, which can be seen in the high rates of growth, the increase in GDP per capita and employment and the reduction in unemployment. In the same way, in this period there has been an improvement in sewage treatment and purification, as well as in the access of population and companies to information and communication technologies.
Impact	The analysis carried out has made it possible to establish that the SPD has had an important impact on the different intervention areas established in the methodology, and the results achieved in connection with the improvement of competitiveness and productivity, the development of the Society of knowledge and the creation of employment are specially relevant. Also, the impact generated by the SPD in the promotion of the social welfare of the population and the preservation of the natural environment has been remarkable.
	The promotion of equal opportunities between women and men is the area on which the contribution of the SPD has been less significant. In this regard, the lack of specific actions aimed at reaching this objective and the small number of mechanisms adopted to incorporate this principle into the different measures are the reasons for the lack of relevant results on this area.
Contribution of the SPD to the economic and social cohesion of La Rioja	During the period 2000-2004 La Rioja made important progress in matters of convergence with the European Union and in the achievement of the objectives set by the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy. The main progress made on economic and social cohesion has been the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continuous growth of the regional economy. ▪ Progressive incorporation of the population into the labour market. ▪ Existence of low rates of unemployment at a regional level. ▪ Gradual incorporation of the region into the economy of knowledge.
	The SPD has made an important contribution to reach this progress. In this regard, the aspects in which the contribution of the SPD has been more significant have been the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generating an increase in the domestic demand of the region, in business investment and in private consumption. ▪ Acting as a catalysing instrument for the generation of employment. ▪ Stimulating the economic activity of the region. ▪ Promoting the development of R&D&I in the region. ▪ Favouring the incorporation of the sustainable development concept into public policies.

Evaluated aspects	Conclusions
Contribution of the SPD to the economic and social cohesion of La Rioja	<p>There are a number of aspects in which the region still shows a comparative disadvantage with regard to the European Union. In this regard, the main insufficiencies detected are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower level of competitiveness of the regional economy compared to the community average. ▪ Little specific weight of investment on R&D&I matters in the regional economic framework. ▪ Existence of accessibility difficulties favoured by the territorial structure and the regional orography which limit both the productivity of the companies and the access of the rural population to services. ▪ Little degree of incorporation of the female population into the labour market ▪ Reduced interiorization of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in the definition of the public policies co-financed through the SPD.
The environment	<p>The environmental principle has been interiorized in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all the actions carried out through the SPD, which has favoured the satisfactory integration of this principle in the programming. There are two aspects which must be pointed out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The important number of projects developed in relation to environmental integration factors which are contributing to improving the situation of the environment in the Autonomous Community. ▪ The "Environmental implementation report. Environmental indicators of the Autonomous Community of La Rioja", which facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the intervention on the environment, which is considered a good practice which can be incorporated in other regions and/or horizontal principles.
Equal opportunities between women and men	<p>The integration of the principle of equal opportunities into the SPD has not been especially significant. The lack of measures directed at the needs of the women in the region or aimed at reducing or eliminating discrimination factors has prevented the intervention from generating a real impact on this principle.</p> <p>In this regard, although the analysis of the socioeconomic context has allowed to determine that there have been advances which have contributed to improving the situation of women, the direct achievements reached by the SPD in this area have been few.</p>

As a general conclusion, the results achieved by the SPD must be considered to be satisfactory, as they are responding to the expectations established in the programming. In this regard, the actions carried out are contributing to the economy of La Rioja showing a greater degree of convergence with the European Union and achieving the objectives established in the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy. In any case, it has been noticed that there are a number of aspects in which it is still necessary to keep working, and they are the basis for the future programming period. Finally, it is necessary to keep making an effort to foster the integration of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in the interventions co-financed by the ERDF.

1.3.2. OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the main operational recommendations made by the evaluating team. In this regard, most of these recommendations are related to the future programming period 2007-2013.

Areas of intervention	Recommendations
Improvement of the financial capacity absorption	<p>In order to improve the financial absorption of the SPD, the possibility of incorporating the Directorate General of Industrial Development of the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade as an implementing body for measure 3.2. <i>Research, innovation and technological development projects</i> should be considered.</p> <p>The call for research projects managed until 2004 by the Directorate General of Technological Policy has been divided as of 2005 into two lines of assistance; one directed at public research centres (managed by the Directorate General of Technological Policy) and one directed at private centres (Directorate General of Industrial Development). In this regard, as most of the projects approved in La Rioja are presented by the private sector, this body should be included to facilitate the implementation of this measure.</p>
Programming	<p>In order to avoid certain implementation problems which have been noticed in the present programming period, the location of research health centres and business settlements should be taken into account in the definition of transitional and non-eligible areas so that the assistance to these entities is not excluded from community co-financing.</p> <p>In the same way, with regard to actions with a multi-regional character, managed by bodies of the General Administration of the State, included in regional Operational Programmes, the peculiarities of the productive framework of the region should be taken into account in the next programming period so that there are no underutilized community resources.</p>
Monitoring and evaluation	<p>In order to perform an adequate monitoring of the intervention, there should be a revision of the programmed value of certain indicators which are over-implemented or badly quantified.</p> <p>So as to avoid the problems which have occurred in the present programming period regarding the quantification of indicators, as well as their homogeneity, there should be a study on the monitoring indicators, in such a way that the indicators and the mechanisms to be used for their measuring are defined before the implementation.</p> <p>Target values should be established for the monitoring indicators both for the end of the implementation period and for the middle of the programming period. In this way, the efficacy analysis to be carried out in the corresponding mid-term evaluations would more easily adjust to the reality of the intervention. In the same way, these target values could be used by the different bodies involved in the intervention to detect possible deviations and implement correcting measures, if appropriate.</p> <p>Performance unit costs linked to monitoring indicators should be established in order to make it easier to perform an efficiency analysis, thus avoiding the measuring difficulties which have characterised the present programming period.</p> <p>The monitoring indicators for the intervention should be linked to context statistical indicators, since this relation would make it possible to determine the impact of the co-financed actions.</p>

Intervention areas	Recommendations
Integration of the environmental principle	<p>In spite of the adequate degree of integration of the environment into the programming, it is necessary to keep working on this area, due to the fact that the generation of sustainable economic growth must be a commitment that the Public Administrations must not avoid.</p> <p>In this regard, it is advisable to extend, on developing Directive 2001/42/CE, the Strategic Environmental Evaluation of public plans and programmes, which will become an adequate mechanism to integrate the environment from the planning stage of public interventions.</p>
Integration of equal opportunities between women and men	<p>The horizontal principle of equal opportunities between women and men has been barely integrated in the present programming period. As a consequence, it is necessary to establish a number of mechanisms which facilitate its interiorization in the different life cycles of the Programme (programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).</p> <p>Some actions which are recommended to facilitate the integration of this principle are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Promoting the participation of the Women's Department of the Directorate General of Social Services of the Health and Social Services Department in the planning of the future Operational Programme.▪ Performing a prior analysis of the differential situation which must be faced by women and men in the different intervention areas, so that the actions performed contribute to reducing these differences.▪ Performing a prior analysis of the impact of the projects which takes into account the gender perspective to predict potential positive or negative effects which the projects to be developed may generate on equal opportunities between women and men and implement, if appropriate, correcting measures.▪ Preparing an "Implementation report on equal opportunities. Equality indicators" in the line of the one which is currently being developed on environmental matters, which may be appropriate to guarantee the monitoring and evaluation of the integration of this principle.▪ Defining projects directed at fulfilling this principle▪ A publicity of the intervention which takes into account the gender policy, fostering the dissemination of the Programme through the Women's Department of the Directorate General of Social Services of the Health and Social Services Department, Women's Associations, etc.

1.3.3. BASIS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMMING PERIOD

The starting point to establish the basis for the future programming period has been the Proposal for a Regulation by the European Parliament and the Council regarding the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) presented by the Commission (Communication from the COM (2004) 495 final).

This Proposal for a Regulation determines, amongst other things, the priority intervention areas by which the different interventions corresponding to the Objective "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" will abide such as the case of La Rioja.

On the other hand, the examination of the evolution of the socioeconomic context, the assessment of the actual convergence of the economy of La Rioja with the European Union and the evaluation of the achievement of the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy carried out in the impact analysis of the intervention have made it possible to identify a number of needs on which the action was a greater priority.

Although the actions of the ERDF, in accordance with the Proposal for a Regulation, cannot act on all the intervention needs defined, it can be noticed that there is a high degree of interrelation amongst the priority areas defined in the Proposal for a Regulation and the needs identified in the analysis of the socioeconomic context.

The following table shows the relation amongst those needs and the priority action themes laid down in the Proposal for a Regulation of the ERDF.

RELATION BETWEEN THE PRIORITY AREAS AND THEMES ESTABLISHED IN THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE ERDF AND THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT OF LA RIOJA

Priority areas	Innovation and the knowledge economy				The environment and risk prevention				Access to transport and telecommunication services	
Priority themes	Enhancing regional R&D and innovation capacities	Stimulating innovation in SMEs	Promoting entrepreneurship and fostering the creation of new companies	Creating new financial instruments and incubation facilities conducive to intensive knowledge	Stimulating investment for the rehabilitation of contaminated sites and land and promoting the development of infrastructure linked to biodiversity and Natura 2000	Stimulating energy efficiency and renewable energy production	Developing plans and measures to prevent and cope with natural or technological risks	Promoting clean urban transport systems	Strengthening secondary networks	Promoting access to and efficient use of ICTs by SMEs
Needs										
Improving the competitiveness of the regional economy										
Increasing the specific weight of investment on R&D&I matters in the regional framework and stimulating the Society of Knowledge										
Improving regional accessibility through the improvement of the road and transport network										
Promoting the incorporation of the population into the labour market										
Fostering female employment by carrying out economic activities which are an alternative to the traditional ones										
Guaranteeing the preservation and protection of biodiversity										
Reducing the emission of greenhouse effect gases										
Promoting the access of SMEs to the Information Society										

 Direct influence on the needs for action
 Indirect influence on the needs for action

Finally, following consultation with the different bodies involved in the SPD, a number of projects and action lines have been identified in relation to priority action areas and themes, as well as the needs identified in the socioeconomic context of La Rioja. The following chart shows the relation between the projects and lines of action identified, the needs detected in the socioeconomic context and the priority action themes.

RELATION OF THE IDENTIFIED PROJECTS RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF LA RIOJA AND THE PRIORITY AREAS OF THE ERDF PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION

Priority areas	Innovation and the knowledge economy				The environment and risk prevention				Access to transport and telecommunication services	
Priority themes	Enhancing regional R&D and innovation capacities	Stimulating innovation in SMEs	Promoting entrepreneurship and fostering the creation of new companies	Creating new financial instruments and incubation facilities conducive to intensive knowledge	Stimulating investment for the rehabilitation of contaminated sites and land and promoting the development of infrastructure linked to biodiversity and Natura 2000	Stimulating energy efficiency and renewable energy production	Developing plans and measures to prevent and cope with natural or technological risks	Promoting clean urban transport systems	Strengthening secondary networks	Promoting access to and efficient use of ICTs by SMEs
Needs										
Improving the competitiveness of the regional economy		Business design fostering programme						Development of the transport logistics centre		
Increasing the specific weight of investment on R&D&I matters in the regional framework and stimulating the Society of Knowledge	Support to the existing research centres in the region Development of the health research	R&D&I promotion programmes in SMEs in the region		Creating the Technology and Innovation Centre of La Rioja						
Improving regional accessibility through the improvement of the road and transport network								Improving the railway network. Multimodal transport systems. Railway burying	Improvement of the access road network from rural settlements to urban areas	
Promoting the incorporation of the population into the labour market										
Fostering female employment by carrying out economic activities which are an alternative to the traditional ones					Fostering the development of alternative economic activities in rural areas (rural tourism, craftwork, etc.)					
Guaranteeing the preservation and protection of biodiversity					Development of infrastructures related to the implementation of Natura network Projects linked to the development of the Territorial Strategy of La Rioja 2004-2007		Infrastructures linked to the Waste Management Plan 2006-2012			
Reducing the emission of greenhouse effect gases						Programme for environmental investment in SMEs in the region				
Promoting the access of SMEs to the Information Society										Support programmes for the development of the Information Society in companies

Although it is just a rough list of projects, whose possible inclusion in a future programming period would depend on the volume of assistance available and the existing financial plan, as well as the co-financing percentage of the different actions; it has been noticed that there is a large list of projects, on the planning stage at present, aimed at dealing with existing needs in La Rioja which could have community co-financing, since they show an important degree of relation with the priority themes and areas stated in the ERDF Proposal for a Regulation.