



1. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. METHODOLOGY APPLIED

The methodology used in this Report combines *quantitative techniques*, using various different indicators, with *qualitative methods*, chiefly based on interviews and thematic workshops. Hence, the current evaluation is mainly founded on the following sources of information:

- Analysis of the *documentary and monitoring information* of SPD Objective 2 2000-2006.
- *Interviews and surveys carried out on the bodies responsible for coordinating the SDP* by the Spanish General State Administration (AGE) and the General Directorate for Economic Programming.
- *In-depth interviews carried out with the executive bodies of the SDP* belonging to the AGE and the department coordinators of the Catalanian Regional Government.
- Three *Working Groups* on Competitiveness and Innovation, Accessibility and Local Development, and the Environment and Energy.

The combined use of these four main sources of information has provided answers to the key assessment issues and factors proposed in the "*Working document No. 9*".

B. COMPLIANCE ANALYSIS OF THE MIDTERM EVALUATION REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the previous MER have helped to reinforce **the joint monitoring of the Managing Authority and Catalonia's Regional Government (*Generalitat*)** as an intermediary. By way of example, full access to the FONDOS 2000 application by the *Generalitat* has led to improvements in the monitoring of actions.

On the whole, the **recommendations have been considered pertinent**, although certain implementation difficulties have been evaluated, especially by the *Generalitat*, owing to the significant economic resources required to put them into practice. A preference has been observed for solutions that yield similar results with a more balanced application of resources.

The indicators have been reviewed in order to adapt them quantitatively and



qualitatively, given the problems of monitoring and quantification detected, so that the results are more reliable and permit better monitoring of the physical effectiveness and efficiency. In this respect, it was decided that, rather than compiling a Manual explaining the different indicators, specific doubts raised by the executive bodies regarding monitoring indicators should be resolved.

The recommendation regarding **reprogramming between ESF measures** was particularly welcomed, which has enabled activities to be relaunched that, until 2003, had been a long way behind schedule in comparison to those of the ERDF. The recommendation regarding the **inclusion of the Barcelona Fairground Extension Project in the SPD** by readjusting certain measures was also highly appreciated.

C. ANALYSIS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS ACCORDING TO SPD FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Financial Performance

The SPD presents a **financial absorption rate of 81.62% of the target for the period 2000-2004 (57.49% of target for the period 2000-2006)**, which can be considered as highly satisfactory, especially bearing in mind that there are still two years remaining to make the payments of the commitments acquired during this period.

In terms of fund types, in global terms, the ERDF absorption rates are higher than those of the ESF: for the period 2000-2004, the ERDF achieved absorption rates of 86.97% in contrast to 57.89% for the ESF. For the total period 2000-2006, these rates are 61.16% for the ERDF and 41.08% for the ESF.

In terms of priorities, in general, the absorption rates are high, the highest being for Priority 3. *Knowledge(-based) society* (96.04%) followed by priority 4. *Development of communication networks* and then Priority 2. *Environment, natural surroundings and water resources* (both with percentages over 80%). In contrast, the lowest rate corresponds to Priority 5. *Local and Urban Development* (68.29%) with a similar percentage to Priority 1. *Improving competitiveness and employment and productive development* (70.77%).

In terms of measures, the most significant problems are focused on three measures. Firstly, in relation to the ERDF, *measure 3.4. "Technology Transfer"* with an absorption rate of zero, in addition to *measure 4.4. "Multimodal transport systems and transport centres"* with a rate of 37.80% for the period 2000-2004. In relation to the ESF, of particular note is the low absorption rate of *measure 5.10. "Support local initiatives that contribute to job creation"*. However, the analysis performed does not seem to indicate that there will be financial performance problems for the total period 2000-2006: measure 3.4 involves guidelines from the Directorate General for Research that will be published shortly and the other two actions that are having problems getting underway in the early stages are expected to pick up in forthcoming certifications with the



inclusion of new projects and additional actions that will speed up the measures.

With regards to performance **in terms of executive bodies**, the Spanish General State Administration presents the highest rate of absorption, with 101.98% of the target for the period 2000-2004, although both the Catalanian Regional Government (*Generalitat*) with 77.54% and Local Corporations with 68.31% present significant percentages.

Physical performance

The level of effectiveness in terms of physical outputs presented by the monitoring indicators **can be considered satisfactory, with an achievement level higher than that the target for 2000-2004**. We can be particularly satisfied with the following measures: *1.5. "Support internationalisation and promotion abroad"*, *2.2. "Integral management of urban and industrial waste"* and Priorities 3 and 5. For priority 3, physical performance corresponds to a high level of financial absorption, as is the case with measure 3.2. *"Research, innovation and technological development projects"*, as well as measure 3.3. *"Science and technology facilities"* and measure 3.5. *"Public Research Centres and technology centres"*.

In contrast, measure *4.5. "Energy distribution networks"* presents a good performance in terms of physical outputs and a physical register of practically zero. In the case of measure *4.6. "Renewable Energy"*, a single indicator is used to monitor all the proposals. These problems with physical efficiency reveal, in certain cases, problems monitoring the respective actions or the choice of indicators used.

Projected achievements and results

In accordance with the projections made, it is estimated that **there will be no difficulties achieving the targets set in the programme** and the current outlook looks better than initial forecasts.

The **most positive effects** include the projected effects on SMEs in *measure 1.5. "Support internationalisation and promotion abroad"*, as well as *measure 1.8. "Reinforce job stability and flexibility"* in relation to beneficiary individuals and SMEs. Priority 2 highlights the number of degraded spaces to be recovered, in *measure 2.6. "Recovery of degraded areas"*. The effects on local development should be highlighted, especially of *measure 5.7. "Social infrastructure and facilities"* and *measure 5.9. "Professional Development Centres and local development agencies"*, owing to their effects on tourist areas and their actions regarding facilities, as well as *measure 5.10. "Support local initiatives that contribute to job creation"*. The following measures will all achieve their projected targets: *measure 3.2. "Research projects, innovation and technological development"*, which promotes the knowledge(-based) society by backing co-funded projects; *measure 3.3. "Science and technology facilities"*, which provides infrastructure and the measures contained within Priority 4 related to road and railways. In contrast, the **measures that will have the greatest difficulties** achieving these targets include *1.2. "Supply, recovery and adaptation of productive spaces and*



services to companies” (25% less than projected), for which the target has been reprogrammed downwards, and 3.1. “*Reinforce human potential in research, science and technology*” where the results are expected to be lower than projected in relation to the effect on SMEs.

Efficiency

Practically all the indicators included in the unit costs analysis have presented lower costs than initially estimated. The most efficient measures include 1.8. “*Reinforce job stability and flexibility*”, in particular those corresponding to beneficiary companies, including SMEs, and groups that are susceptible to social exclusion. Within Priority 2, *measure 2.2* is of particular note: “*Integral management of urban waste and treated industrial waste*” especially the reduction in the average projected cost of tonnes of TIW treated per year. Finally, the measures included in Priority 3 obtained particularly significant ratios, especially the centres that benefited from *measure 3.3*. “*Science technology facilities*”, the unit costs of the centres created in *measure 3.5*. “*Public research centres and technology centres*” and the networks created and improvements made to IT and digital networks in *measure 3.6*. “*Information Society*”.

In contrast, the measures that display the most significant deviations in comparison with the programme are: *measure 2.4*. “*Protection and regeneration of the natural surroundings*” in which the actions to maintain and conserve biodiversity correspond to over twice the projected amount; and *measure 1.5*. “*Support internationalisation and promotion abroad*” in relation to attendance at fairs and exhibition.

SDP Global Assessment

The table below compiles information about financial and physical performance, effectiveness and the possibility of achieving the targets set. Based on the results obtained in the analysis, the **global assessment of the Programme has been satisfactory**, as we can see from the table below, which shows if the evaluation of various different aspects has been highly satisfactory (++) , satisfactory (+), unsatisfactory (-) or not assessable (Na).

Measure	Financial Absorption	Physical Effectiveness	Possibility of achieving targets	Efficiency
1.1	+	+	+	+
1.2.	+	+	+	+
1.5	+	++	++	+
1.7	+	+	+	+
1.8	-	++	++	++
2.1	+	+	+	+
2.2.	+	++	++	++
2.4.	+	+	+	-



Measure	Financial Absorption	Physical Effectiveness	Possibility of achieving targets	Efficiency
2.5.	-	++	Na	+
2.6.	+	+	++	+
3.1.	++	+	+	+
3.2.	++	++	++	+
3.3.	+	++	++	++
3.4.	-	Na	Na	Na
3.5.	+	++	Na	++
3.6.	+	++	Na	++
4.1.	+	+	++	+
4.2.	+	+	++	+
4.4.	-	Na	Na	Na
4.5.	++	Na	Na	Na
4.6.	+	+	Na	+
4.7.	+	+	++	+
5.1.	+	+	++	++
5.4.	+	+	+	+
5.5.	++	++	++	+
5.6.	+	++	++	++
5.7.	+	++	++	+
5.9.	+	++	++	+
5.10	-	+	++	+
6.1.	+	Na	Na	Na
6.2.	+	Na	Na	Na

Selection criteria:

Financial absorption

++(>120%) + (50%-120%)- (<50%),

Physical effectiveness:

++ : most of the indicators used have an effectiveness of close to 100% for the total period.

+ : adequate monitoring in most of the indicators and acceptable effectiveness

Na: indicators not monitored

Possibility of achieving targets

++: Future achievement higher than projected for the selected indicators

+: Future achievement higher than projected for some of the selected indicators

Na: There is no relationship between the financial and physical indicator

Efficiency

++: The selected indicators have systematically lower costs than projected.

+: Some of the selected indicators have lower costs than projected.

- : Indicators with higher costs than projected

Na: The planned methodology does not enable a representative indicator to be obtained.

Hence, in global terms ***we can conclude that the analysis carried out on physical and financial effectiveness and efficiency as well as projection of results at the end of the period will enable the achievement of the strategy originally defined for Catalonia's SDP.***

D. ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACTS ACHIEVED AND PROJECTED TARGET ACHIEVEMENT

Socioeconomic context

Since the beginning of the implementation period, a significant **improvement in the region's economic situation** has been observed, which has taken the form of high growth rates, increased GDP per capita, higher productivity of the Catalanian economy and the reduction of unemployment. Catalonia has made great strides in reducing



unemployment and incorporating workers into the workplace and now has an unemployment rate similar to the EU-25 average and growth rates in employment. **The only area that requires further progress is the full incorporation of women into the workplace and the reduction of unemployment among women**, since this figure is higher than the EU-25 average (differential of between 2 and 3 points), as well as focusing on certain groups that have special difficulties joining the workforce.

Similarly, during this period, **an improvement in the treatment and purification of wastewaters** has been observed, with the achievement in 2004 of the targets for the entire period, as well as in **access for the general public and companies to information and communication technologies**, where the achievements to date vastly exceed the targets in terms of numbers of researchers, projects and research and technology centres.

Impact of intervention

In terms of **productivity**, Catalonia is slightly above the EU-25 average. Thus, taking the EU-25 productivity index as a reference point (EU-25=100), productivity in Catalonia is situated around 108.66. This factor is particularly relevant to avoid the risk of companies relocating to labour intensive markets with much lower salary costs than in Catalonia.

Investment in R+D+i should contribute strongly to this factor. However, comparison with the EU-25 average reveals that Catalonia is well below this figure. Taking as a reference point an index of 100 for EU-25, the value obtained in Catalonia is 70.77. This means that our competitiveness is in serious danger owing to the potential fracturing of technology, despite the growth differential in favour of Catalonia over the last few years.

Improvements in competitiveness and productivity have been particularly significant since they have helped to create an important flow of investment into companies in the region, promoting the modernisation of their activity and fostering their internationalisation.

Fondos 2000 Indicators	Value	Impact Indicator	Value (A)	Context Indicator	Value (B)	Impact (A/B)
Beneficiary Companies	62,742	Beneficiary Companies	62,742	Companies ⁽³⁾	314,802	19.93%
Beneficiary Companies (SMEs)	63,678	Beneficiary SMEs	63,678	SMEs ⁽¹⁾	313,834	20.29%



Fondos 2000 Indicators	Value	Impact Indicator	Value (A)	Context Indicator	Value (B)	Impact (A/B)
SMEs that are exporting for the first time	932	SMEs that are exporting for the first time	932	SMEs that have not exported ⁽⁴⁾	2,037	45.74%
Private Investment stimulated	318,005,935.6	Private Investment stimulated	318,005,935.6	ΔGAV ⁽²⁾	7,937,430,000	4.01%
				ΔGFCF ⁽²⁾	71,151,000,000	0.45%

Source: Fondos 2000, DIRCE (INE), Idescat and our own compilation

⁽¹⁾ Companies that have over 200 employees are not considered SMEs.

⁽²⁾ As context indicators, the regional GAV has been used along with the Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) at a national level, since there is no information about GFCF at a regional level

⁽³⁾ Companies without salaried staff have been excluded

⁽⁴⁾ Source: IDESCAT. Methodological note from Idescat: the data are taken from the survey of industrial companies that have a minimum of one salaried worker. It does not include companies that do not have salaried staff; the number of people employed in the companies is expressed in intervals that do not coincide exactly with the group of 250 corresponding to SMEs. Hence, Idescat has estimated that the number of establishments with less than 250 workers belong to companies of 20 workers or more with a minimum of one salaried worker that do not export (do not sell anything to foreign countries). Information about SMEs for other sectors is not available

Furthermore, the SDP helps to encourage the **Knowledge(-based) Society** by reinforcing research, technological development and innovation. Private investment in R+D+i has been encouraged by supporting the collaboration of companies in the development of innovation-based projects, which has meant that the results obtained have a high degree of applicability in Catalonia's business industry. The SDP is helping to improve investment in R+D+i in the region that, according to data that reflect the evolution of the socioeconomic context, has been increasing progressively over the last few years. The collaboration between the AGE and the *Generalitat* of Catalonia is having a significant impact on this Priority, and the complementariness of their actions is generating a positive impact in the region, largely owing to the significant participation of companies and institutions in R+D+i projects

IMPACT OF THE SDP ON THE KNOWLEDGE(-BASED) SOCIETY

Fondos 2000 Indicators	Value	Impact Indicator	Value (A)	Context Indicator	Value (B)	Impact (A/B)
Investment in companies that collaborate in co-funded projects	1,414,669,361.75	Investment in companies that collaborate in co-funded projects	1,414,669,361.75	Business investment in R+D+i ⁽¹⁾	3,853,684,000	36.71%
Researchers who benefit/year	254.5	Researchers who benefit/year	6,065	Staff employed in R+D+i (Full Time)	29,161	20.8%
Researchers involved/year	5,810.5					

Source: Fondos 2000, INE and our own compilation

⁽¹⁾ Business investment accumulated in the period 2000-2003

⁽¹⁾ 2000-2003, since there is no information available for 2004 for Staff employed in R+D+i (Full Time) for Catalonia

However, **even more progress must be made in this area in the next programming period in order to achieve the targets set in the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategy**, since in terms of employment, they will undoubtedly be achieved by 2010.

Furthermore, the actions carried out are having an effect on the **social welfare** of the population, not only through the generation of economic activities, but also via the **modernisation of infrastructures** (improvements to the water purification and



treatment network, repairing the roadways, restoration of leisure and recreation areas, etc.) aimed at improving people's quality of life. The following actions are of particular significance, because of their social and environmental impact: the construction of by-passes, which improve the welfare of the municipalities and reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gases; and the construction and extension of wastewater treatment plants, particularly in municipalities dotted throughout Catalonia as well as Barcelona's urban sprawl.

In this area, the contribution of the SDP to **improving access** between rural populations and urban centres, where most of the population's services are concentrated (education, health, etc.), has been particularly significant. It has helped to improve their quality of life noticeably, especially via the links to by-passes and Catalonia's main communication link networks.

Finally, the contribution of the SDP to the **preservation of the environment** is particularly important in terms of the treatment and purification of wastewaters, which has helped, along with other actions co-financed by other initiatives (chiefly the Cohesion Fund), to guarantee that practically all the water collected is then treated.

In this respect, the recently approved **Strategic Agreement for Internationalisation, quality of employment and competitiveness of the Catalanian economy**, which is the result of an extensive process of coordination and social dialogue, agrees with the requirements detected via the SDP impact analysis and with the need to intervene in areas in which Catalonia is starting out from a good position, such as employment, but also in areas such as R+D+i, where Catalonia is starting out from a disadvantaged position and therefore has to provide even more impetus than other European regions.

E. ANALYSIS OF ISSUES RELATING TO HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The **principle of the environment has been internalised in the planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment** of the actions carried out through the SDP, which means that **the integration of this principle in the programming is satisfactory**.

Thus, the **positive evolution both in the context indicators** and the monitoring indicators is a prime indicator of the concern felt in Catalonia for environmental issues. In this respect, the reprogramming carried out has helped us to go further in the area of waste treatment and to increase the number of protected areas throughout the region. Furthermore, the significant number of projects developed in relation to the incorporation of environmental integration factors is helping to improve of the situation of the environment; hence particularly important examples of good practice can be identified.

In contrast, the **integration of the principle of equal opportunities in the SDP has**



not been particularly significant, and its impact could be assessed as moderate. Nevertheless, of particular note are the working meetings initiated with the Institut Català de les Dones, which will allow a more effective application in future programmes for the measures included in the **“Action and development plan of women’s policies in Catalonia (2005-2007)”** which has been passed recently.

In this respect, although **analysis of the socioeconomic context has enabled us to determine if progress has been made** to improve the situation of women, the direct achievements of the SDP in this area have been limited. In the case of the ERDF, projects in the area of social infrastructure and facilities are indirectly important. On the other hand, in the area of the ESF, the application has been more effective, in particular the measure 5.10. *“Support local initiatives that contribute to job creation”* in which high priority measures in favour of women in the development of the Regional Employment Agreements should be highlighted.

F. SUMMARY OF THE OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the current situation of the SDP and the progress made in the current programme period, recommendations have been made with a view to improving the intervention management in the next programming period 2007-2013

In the area of programming and reprogramming

In order to avoid certain implementation problems that have arisen in this current period, in the event that funding areas are defined, the location of the health research centres and the business centres are taken into consideration in order to avoid the aid given to these entities being excluded from the EU funding on the basis of location.

In the area of reprogramming

The impact analysis performed throughout implementation reflects the **need to invest in R+D+i activities in Catalonia and improve the competitiveness of the productive industry.** Hence, **the possibility is proposed that reprogrammings should be focus on increasing** grants for Priorities 1 and 3, chiefly with the aim of intensifying efforts in these areas.

In the area of management, monitoring and assessment

Emphasis is made on the need to carry out **periodic controls** to assure that the certifications are correct.

As regards monitoring, work is recommended on the **prior definition of indicators** in



order to avoid monitoring problems as is the quantification of targets, not only for the end of the period, but also half way through in order to facilitate assessment. At the same time, it is recommended that the monitoring indicators be chosen with a view to being assimilated into the context indicators, so that the impact analysis of the projects can be more tailored.

One of the main problems detected in the assessments carried out in this period is the **lack of sufficient information to assess the efficiency** of intervention. In this respect, in order to solve this problem, it is suggested that unit performance costs linked to the monitoring indicators should be assessed in order to be able to analyse efficiency.

In the application of Environmental and Equal Opportunities principles

In relation to the **environment principle**, the environmental modules included in courses on ESF actions must be further adapted so that they are useful for students and better suited to each type of course. The establishment is also unanimous in its insistence, in view of the new framework created by the incorporation of new actions, on the **definition of a minimum number of indicators that enable priorities in various different projects to be monitored adequately** without this meaning any additional workload. In order to do this, the indicators must be linked to the context indicators so that the impact of the programme can be assessed.

Regarding the **principle of Equal Opportunities**, given the characteristics of the SDP itself, there are very few measures in which the principle could have wide repercussions. In this respect, consideration should be given to possible new indicators for these measures and more transversal actions are recommended for the other measures. These proposed actions include the inclusion of an Equal Opportunities module in training courses, similar to the environment, or that information about the programme be publicised by the ICD (Institute for Communication and Development) and associations with similar aims so that the Principle can be identified with the Programme. The establishment of new measures to internalise the principle can be publicised as examples of good practice, giving priority to its dissemination.

In the area of Information and Publicity

The monitoring of this principle has been considered adequate in the SDP projects, especially in relation to graphic and informative materials created in all formats, construction projects and the implementation of the Action and Publicity Plan by the Catalanian Regional Government (*Generalitat*). **The need to provide EU-wide publicity** of co-funded actions **has already been internalised**. The only area that still needs work is in the encouragement of the different executive bodies to include information about co-funded actions on their web pages so that EU-wide co-funding is clearly perceived.



G. CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE NEXT PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2007-2013

Identification of pending needs and challenges

The achievement of important targets in Catalonia does not imply the strategy included in the SDP can be abandoned. Quite the contrary; it proves that there are **problems that need to be faced in order to continue on this positive path and which represent the key challenges, both current and future, of Catalonia's economy.** The SWOT analysis carried out detected the following critical points:

- Lack of adequate infrastructure to offer broadband to companies in areas where access is difficult
- Low levels of investment in R+D
- Little employment mobility
- Levels of unemployment are still high for women and groups with difficulties joining the workforce.
- Problems of electricity supply that could hamper growth
- Risk of stagnation of the productivity levels without sufficient and incentivised investment in R+D+i
- Possible loss of absolute competitiveness in relation with other markets with much lower salary costs.
- Scant development of regional and transregional excellence clusters.
- Growth model too dependent on internal demand and the construction sector, which has resulted in inflation tension and high levels of family debt.

Proposals for measures to be incorporated in the next Operational Programme

Once the **analysis** has been carried out **based on the Thematic Areas selected and the EU Strategic Directives** proposed by the Commission for the next programming period, on the one hand, **and based on the present impact analyses and the strategies necessary for Catalonia in the future**, this Evaluation Report provides an additional reflection that refers to establishment of certain **basic priorities with the view to the next Operational Programme for Catalonia, 2007-2013, within the Objective of Competitiveness and Employment.**

Thus, the main intervention needs detected in the analysis undertaken are as follows:

- Continue to **improve the competitiveness and productivity** of Catalonia's economy, which has displayed higher growth rates than the EU-25 average over the last few years. The need to back intensive production in technology in order to avoid companies' relocating because of labour cost issues.



- **Increase specific investment in R+D+i in regional industry and incentivise the Knowledge(-based) Society.** This is a crucial step in order to improve the competitiveness and productivity of the region's productive industry, bringing it up to European Union standards. Catalonia, even though it is experiencing positive growth, has still not reached acceptable levels of investment in R+D+i in relation to the EU average.
- **Improve regional accessibility by improving road and transport networks.** This action is vital importance, given that, because of the region's structure, geographical features and population distribution, there are accessibility difficulties that limit the productivity of companies and especially the access of the rural population to services, which has a significant effect on their quality of life.
- Continue on the path of **incorporating women and immigrant populations into the employment market and reducing unemployment rates among groups with special difficulties**, which are still slightly above the EU average.
- **To encourage the employment of women** by developing alternative economic activities to traditional ones, supporting the presence of women in activities of a technical nature and adopting measures aimed at harmonising family and working life.
- **To promote SME access**, especially microcompanies, **to the Knowledge(-based) and Innovation Society**, implementing the widespread use of new technologies and access to technology transfer processes from Research Centres to SMEs.
- **To promote energy efficiency** in manufacturing, domestic and service industries, encouraging the use of clean and eco-efficient energies, making the most of Spain's capacity to produce renewable energy, especially solar and wind-powered energy, as well as the treatment of forest biomass.
- **To develop the Environment and Risk Prevention measures**, for the protection and sustainable use of land and natural resources, as well as the conservation of the environment. To organise in the region the management of Natura 2000 Network areas.

The development of programmes and measures aimed at preventing natural and technological risks, particularly in relation to the prevention of forest fires, erosion, the risk of flooding, prevention of atmospheric pollution and the contamination of the soil and land.

The actions that are co-funded by the ERDF, according to the guidelines established in the Regulations Proposal, cannot cover all the intervention needs, chiefly those that



refer to employment, which the ESF is mainly responsible for. In any case, the actions of the ERDF can make a positive contribution, at least indirectly, regarding the needs detected.

Finally, a proposal of basic priorities has been drawn up for Catalonia in the face of the new programming period so that these priorities can be assessed and analysed and used as a foundation for future work:

Priority proposal 1. **Improve competitiveness and the knowledge-based economy: R+D+i, information society, emphasising:**

- **Services for companies**, especially SMEs, which promote their internationalisation
- Promotion of **financial instruments** for SMEs, on their path towards internationalisation and access to innovation projects.
- Continue to be the **driving force behind large public research centres**.
- **Science and technology infrastructures**, such as Technology Parks.
- Access for end consumers and companies to **the benefits of the Information Society**, especially in municipalities with poor infrastructures.
- Promote the extension of **fibre optic networks and broadband technology** for companies in municipalities with poor transport systems.

Priority Proposal 2. **Environment, sustainable energy and transport.**

- **Recovery of degraded and contaminated areas** by intervening in specific areas where degradation is a result of former industrial facilities.
- Push for and develop **renewable energy sources**, efficiency and energy savings in line with Energy Plan targets.
- Develop new **models of clean transport**, especially for public transport services in large urban centres, which also enables further job creation in public transport.
- Prevention of **natural risks**, by drawing up risk Plans either at district level or for the whole of Catalonia, by co-funding material, equipment and investments that either avoid erosion and fires or help to control them once they have started; actions to improve drainage systems to avoid flooding during the rainy seasons.



- **Protection of natural surroundings and promoting the sustainable use of land and conservation of biodiversity**
- ☑ Priority Proposal 3. **Improve the access network to urban centres and interconnections between areas**, which is a consequence of the unique geographical layout of Catalonia.
 - **Subsidiary networks and interconnections between them and the main networks.**
 - Actions to improve social welfare by constructing **by-passes**
 - Promote **intermodal transport** (roads – railways – boats) in centres of logistical development, in areas of Catalonia with high levels of goods trading activity.
- ☑ Priority Proposal 4. **Promotion of Local and Urban Development.**
 - **Renovation of important and exceptional buildings and complexes.** Social Facilities
 - Development of **social infrastructures and facilities**, intervening in specific neighbourhoods in urban areas, and in towns and villages that lack social infrastructure, thus avoiding social tension hotspots.
 - Actions to preserve **unique facilities** that are of **cultural and tourist interest.**
 - Actions to **improve access to rural municipalities** to facilitate the population's mobility, increase knowledge about these municipalities and improve their appeal. In particular, improving access to **mountainous areas**, which are suffering from depopulation caused by the remoteness and inaccessibility of the area.

These proposals, based on the current situation analysed in the Evaluation Report, on the needs detected in the economic system and the possible actions to choose from in the new programming period 2007-2013, **could be used to help design Catalonia's next programming period, 2007-2013.** Their development would allow a coherent action plan to be drawn up that would focus on persistent or priority issues in specific areas.