



WP1: Synthesis report

*Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes
2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional
Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)*

Task 3 Country Report France

September 2016



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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
Directorate B – Policy
Unit B.2 Evaluation and European Semester

Contact: Violeta PICULESCU

E-mail: Violeta.PICULESCU@ec.europa.eu

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

**WP1: Synthesis report
(contract number 2014CE16BAT016)**

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**Task 3 Country Report
France**

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016

ISBN [number]

doi:[number]

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List of abbreviations

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDFCF	Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Management Committee
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OP	Operational Programme
PPS	Purchasing Power Standard
R&D	Research and Development
RTD	Research and Technological Development
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise



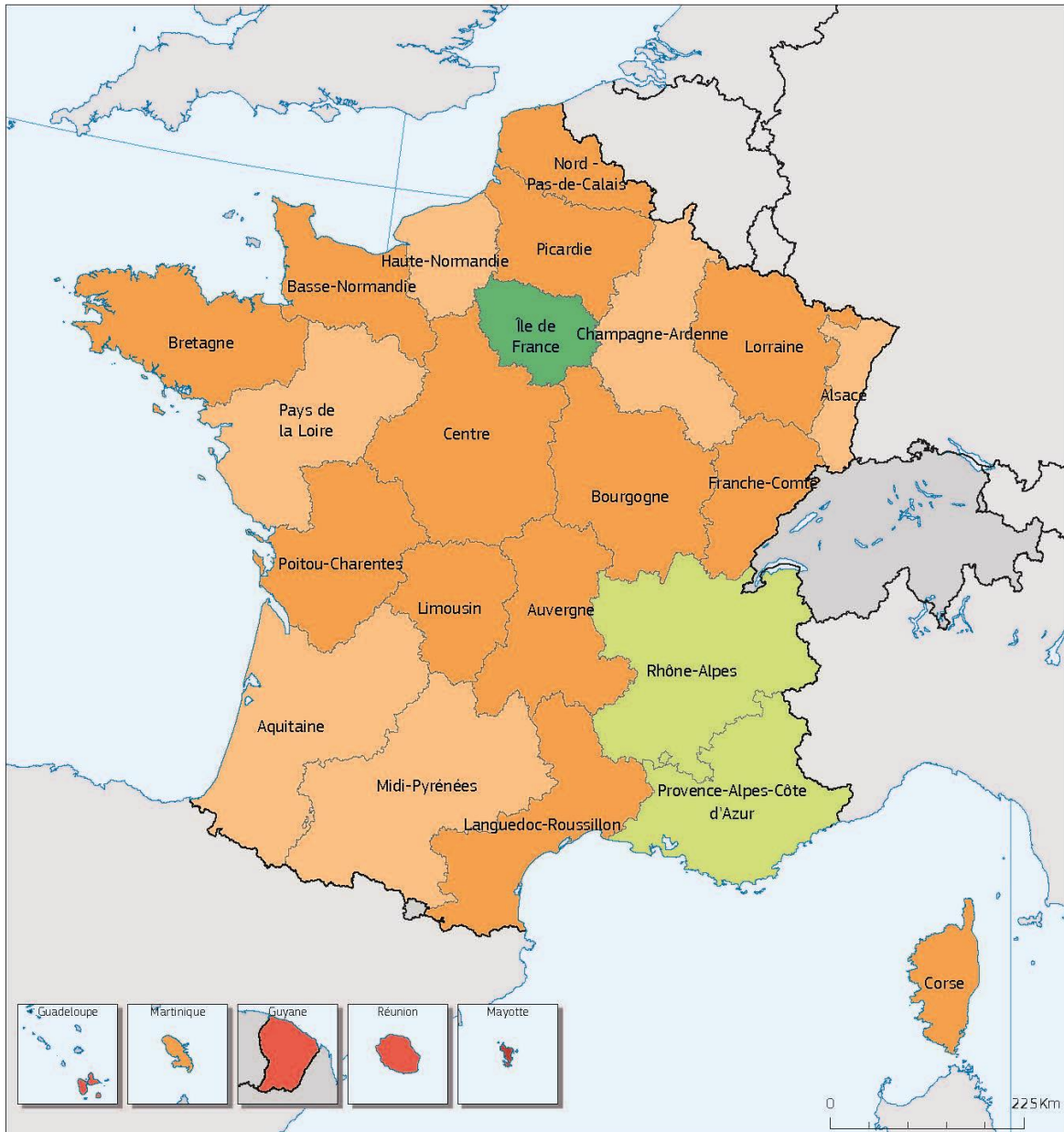
List of programmes and link to beneficiaries of ERDF and Cohesion Fund support

CCI	Name of programmes	Links	N° Projects
2007FR161PO001	OP Guyane	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	643
2007FR161PO002	OP Guadeloupe	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	774
2007FR161PO003	OP Martinique	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 085
2007FR161PO004	OP Réunion	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 932
2007FR162PO001	OP AQUITAINE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 458
2007FR162PO002	OP CENTRE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 136
2007FR162PO003	OP ALSACE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	624
2007FR162PO004	OP AUVERGNE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 130
2007FR162PO005	OP BASSE-NORMANDIE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	871
2007FR162PO006	OP BOURGOGNE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 345
2007FR162PO007	OP BRETAGNE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	886
2007FR162PO008	OP CHAMPAGNE- ARDENNE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 303
2007FR162PO009	OP CORSE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	868
2007FR162PO010	OP FRANCHE-COMTE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	802
2007FR162PO011	OP HAUTE-NORMANDIE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	638
2007FR162PO012	OP ILE-DE-FRANCE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	842
2007FR162PO013	OP LANGUEDOC- ROUSSILLON	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	2 100
2007FR162PO014	OP LIMOUSIN	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 468
2007FR162PO015	OP LORRAINE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 717
2007FR162PO016	OP PAYS DE LA LOIRE OP NORD PAS-DE- CALAIS	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	2 444
2007FR162PO017		http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	2 079
2007FR162PO018	OP PICARDIE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 056
2007FR162PO019	OP POITOU-CHARENTES OP PROVENCE ALPES COTE D'AZUR	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 479
2007FR162PO020		http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 271
2007FR162PO021	OP MIDI-PYRENEES	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	2 528
2007FR162PO022	OP RHONE-ALPES	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	1 610
2007FR162PO023	OP FEDER ALPES	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	438
2007FR162PO024	OP FEDER LOIRE OP FEDER MASSIF CENTRAL	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	613
2007FR162PO025		http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	429
2007FR162PO026	OP FEDER RHONE	http://cartobenef.asp-public.fr/cartobenef/	275
2007FR16UPO001	OP Europact		NA

Note: The web links above are to websites of the respective Managing Authorities who, under the rules governing the 2007-2013 programmes were required to publish the names of the beneficiaries of the funding allocated. The number of projects supported has been estimated on the basis of the information published on the website at the time when the data were downloaded. In the meantime the data concerned may have been updated. It may also be that the data have been moved to another part of the website, in which case the link may not work. If this is the case, those who wish to locate the data concerned will need to go to main OP website, as indicated by the beginning part of the link and search from there.



Map 1 France and NUTS 2 regions, GDP/head (PPS), 2014



France: GDP/head (PPS) by NUTS-2 region, 2014

- Index, EU-27 = 100
- < 50
 - 50 - 75
 - 75 - 90
 - 90 - 100
 - 100 - 125
 - >= 125
- ∕ NUTS2 boundaries

Source: Eurostat, DG REGIO



Preliminary note

The purpose of the country reports is to provide, for each Member State, a short guide to the findings of the ex post evaluation of Cohesion policy programmes 2007-2013 undertaken by DG Regional and Urban Policy and an overview of the context in which the programmes were carried out. It is based on information produced by Task 1 and Task 2 of WP1 and on the country specific findings from the various WPs that form the ex post evaluation. These are listed below with an indication in brackets of the case studies carried out in the Member State concerned.

WP0 – Data

WP1 – Synthesis

WP2 – SMEs, innovation and ICT (case study OP Ile-de-France)

WP3 – Venture capital, loan funds (case study OP Languedoc-Roussillon)

WP4 – Large enterprises

WP5 – Transport (country case study - France)

WP6 – Environment

WP8 – Energy efficiency (country report France)

WP9 - Culture and tourism (case study OP Rhone-Alpes and two mini case studies Création d'un espace de promotion /communication touristique sur l'Ain sur le site du Parc des Oiseaux - Maison de la Lone in Saint Pierre de Boef leisure park)

WP10 – Urban development and social infrastructure

WP11¹ – European Territorial Cooperation (case studies Interreg IVA France (Channel) – England and Atlantic Area Programme)

WP12 – Delivery system

WP13 – Geography of expenditure

WP14 – Impact modelling

¹ The findings from WP11 – European Territorial Cooperation are summarised in a separate report as part of Task 3 of WP1.



Executive summary

Over the 2007-2013 period, the French economy like others in the EU was hit by the global recession, but compared with many other Member States, especially Italy and Spain, it weathered the economic crisis relatively well maintaining employment and containing the increase in unemployment. Growth, however, was slower than the EU average over the 2011-2015 period. The budget deficit rose to 7% of GDP in 2009, but was then progressively reduced by fiscal consolidation measures to 3.5% in 2015. Nevertheless, government debt rose from 64% of GDP in 2007 to 96% in 2015.

The extent of regional disparities remained broadly unchanged over the period, though the crisis affected individual regions differently; with Ile de France experiencing an increase in GDP per head relative to the national average between 2007 and 2014 and Rhone-Alpes (the region with the second highest GDP per head) a reduction.

In total, support from the ERDF amounted to EUR 8 billion, or just under 0.1% of French GDP, over the period or just over 1% of Government capital expenditure. Funding allocated to Convergence regions in the Outermost Departments more than 13 times higher per head than in the rest of France.

The division of financing between broad policy areas differed in the Convergence regions from that in the Competitiveness ones. In the former a larger share of funding went to social infrastructure, culture, urban development and tourism, as well to transport, energy and ICT, while in the latter more went to enterprise support, RTD and innovation. The division of funding between policy areas changed relatively little over the period priority continuing to be given to long-term development objectives over short-term efforts to counter the downturn in economic activity.

The rate of implementation of programmes, as reflected in payments from the Commission relative to funding available, was slow up to 2012, but in the last three years it increased significantly, reaching 93% of total funding by the end of March 2016. Overall, the measures co-financed over the period led directly to the creation of over 58 000 gross jobs. This was achieved in large part through the support provided to 5 121 RTD projects, 894 projects to help firms finance investment, support to 1 439 new business start-ups and 5 468 projects of cooperation between companies and research institutes.

In addition, though Cohesion policy played a very minor role in funding transport infrastructure, support for investment in this policy area led to the construction of 28 km of new roads and the upgrading of 550 km of railway lines. Moreover, support for investment in environmental infrastructure resulted in an additional 514 000 people being connected to new or improved drinking water supply and 101 000 more to wastewater treatment facilities.

Overall, Cohesion policy and rural development policies are estimated to increase the French GDP in 2023 by 0.2% higher as compared with what it will be without them, even taking account of the French contribution to funding of the investment concerned.



1. The policy context and background

1.1. Macroeconomic situation

During the 2007-2013 period, the French economy was hit by the global recession, with GDP falling by 1.4% a year in the period 2007-2009. This was less than in most other countries because of the lower reliance on external trade and consumption rates remaining broadly unchanged. The economy then recovered over the following two years, GDP growing by an average of 2% a year. However, growth came to a virtual halt in 2011-2014 and in 2015 though the growth rate increased, it was still relatively low (Table 1).

Over the 2007-2015 period, the employment rate remained broadly unchanged despite the slow growth whereas the unemployment rate increased from 8% to 10.4%, slightly above the EU average as job creation failed to match the increase in labour force participation (Table 1).

Table 1 GDP growth, employment and unemployment, France and the EU, 2000-2015

	2000-07	2007-09	2009-11	2011-13	2013-2014	2014-15
GDP growth	(Annual average % pa)					
France	1.9	-1.4	2.0	0.4	0.2	1.1
EU average	2.3	-2.0	1.9	-0.1	1.4	1.9
	2000	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Employment rate (% 20-64)						
France	67.4	69.5	69.1	68.8	69.1	69.5
EU average	66.5	69.8	68.9	68.6	68.4	70.1
Unemployment rate (% lab force)						
France	10.2	8.0	9.1	9.2	10.3	10.4
EU average	9.2	7.1	8.9	9.6	10.8	9.3

Source: Eurostat, National accounts and Labour Force Survey

As a result of the recession and the measures taken to counter it, the budget deficit increased to over 7% of GDP in 2009. In the following years, the subsequent implementation of fiscal consolidation measures reduced it to 3.5% of GDP by 2015. As a result of the prolonged period of deficit, consolidated government debt rose from 64% of GDP in 2007 to 96% in 2015.

A high level of public expenditure enabled a high level of internal demand to be maintained and partly compensated for the slowdown in global growth. Over the period, public investment relative to GDP remained consistently higher than in the rest of the EU, though it was reduced significantly in 2015.

Table 2 Government budget balance, accumulated debt and investment, France and the EU, 2000-2015

	2000	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
Public sector balance	(% GDP)					
France	-1.3	-2.5	-7.2	-5.1	-4.0	-3.5
EU average	0.0	-0.9	-6.7	-4.5	-3.3	-2.4
Public sector debt						
France	58.7	64.4	79.0	85.2	92.4	95.8
EU average	60.6	57.9	73.1	81.1	85.5	85.2
General Govt investment						
France	3.9	3.9	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.4
EU average	2.9	3.2	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.9

Source: Eurostat Government financial accounts

1.2. Regional Disparities

The only regions eligible under the Convergence Objective in France were the Outermost regions of Guadeloupe, Guyana, Martinique and Reunion (with a combined population of around 1.9 million, and 3% of the national total), the GDP per head of which is a third lower than the national average. In spite of the crisis, the Outermost



regions succeeded in maintaining levels of GDP per head and employment, although the rate of outward migration increased.

The recession affected French regions differently. While the stronger regions were put in a more advantageous position because of their international competitiveness (e.g. Midi-Pyrénées for the aerospace industry and Île-de-France for the agro-food sector), regions with large automotive or steel production, such as Franche-Comte, suffered more.

In the strong regions, both population and productivity growth were higher than the national average and there was a relative increase in their GDP per head the 2007-2014 period. In contrast, in Rhône-Alpes, which had the second highest GDP per head in 2007, the crisis led to a reduction in this relative to the national average although unemployment remained below the national average.

The southern regions² constituted a highly attractive French 'sun belt' for two decades. With the crisis, these regions became less homogeneous, although they continued to benefit from transfers for retired people. Overall, population growth slowed down, in particular in Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, where GDP per head fell during the crisis. By contrast, as noted above, in Midi-Pyrénées GDP increased over the period by more than the national average and unemployment remained lower (the "Airbus effect").

The Western regions³ retained their attractiveness during the crisis, with growth higher than the national average and unemployment lower as a result. Traditional manufacturing regions suffered the most, with the employment rate declining over the period 2007-2015 (by 1 percentage point in Nord-Pas-de-Calais and 3 percentage points in Lorraine) (see Country folder for France).

2. Main features of Cohesion Policy implementation

2.1. Nature and scale of Cohesion Policy in the country

The priorities of the French National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for the 2007-2013 period were: (1) innovation and the knowledge economy through support to SMEs; (2) training, employment for priority groups, management of human resources and social inclusion; (3) development of information and communication technologies; (4) the environment, risk avoidance and energy policy; (5) sustainable development throughout the country. Regional policy was planned in a way that led to close integration between national and EU policy and a relatively high concentration of resources.

The overall ERDF allocation to France during the 2007-2013 period was around EUR 8 billion, equivalent to just 0.1% of French GDP over the period and about 1% of total Government capital expenditure (Table 3). The funding going to the Convergence regions in Outermost departments was more than a quarter of the total, amounting to EUR 172 per head a year over the period, more than 13 times higher than for Competitiveness regions on the mainland.

² PACA -Region Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées, Aquitaine and Corse.

³ I.e. Bretagne and Pays de la Loire.



Table 3 ERDF and national co-financing for the 2007-2013 period in France, initial (2007) and last (April 2016)

	2007				2016			
	EU funding	National public funding	National private funding	Total	EU funding	National public funding	National private funding	Total
EUR million								
Convergence	2 280.5	1 878.3	637.7	4 796.5	2 280.5	1 794.8	495.8	4 571.1
Competitiveness	5 774.2	8 366.5	3 752.9	17 893.6	5 770.5	7 861.8	3 281.6	16 914.0
Total	8 054.7	10 244.8	4 390.6	22 690.1	8 051.0	9 656.6	3 777.5	21 485.1
<i>Change, 2007-2014</i>								
Convergence					-	-83.5	-141.9	-225.4
Competitiveness					-3.7	-504.7	-471.2	-979.6
Total					-3.7	-588.2	-613.1	-1 205.0
% GDP	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.16	0.06	0.07	0.03	0.15
% Govt. capital expend	1.1	1.4	0.6	3.2	1.1	1.3	0.5	3.0
Per head (EUR) pa	17.8	22.6	9.7	50.1	17.8	21.3	8.3	47.5
of which:								
Convergence	172.0	141.7	48.1	361.9	172.0	135.4	37.4	344.8
Competitiveness	13.1	19.0	8.5	40.7	13.1	17.9	7.5	38.5
EU15								
% GDP	0.13	0.09	0.01	0.24	0.13	0.06	0.01	0.21
% Govt. capital expend	3.1	2.0	0.3	5.5	3.1	1.4	0.3	4.8
Per head (EUR) pa	40.7	26.4	4.3	71.4	40.5	18.2	4.3	63.0
of which:								
Convergence	145.3	74.8	9.6	229.7	145.3	41.6	8.7	195.6
Competitiveness	16.1	15.0	3.1	34.1	15.9	12.6	3.2	31.8

Note: EU funding relates to decided amounts as agreed in 2007 and as at 14 April 2016. The figures for % GDP and % Govt. capital expenditure relate to funding for the period as % of GDP and Govt. capital expenditure aggregated over the years 2007-2013. Govt. capital expend is the sum of General Government gross fixed capital formation and capital transfers. The EU15 figures are the total for the EU15 countries for comparison.

Source: DG Regional and Urban Policy, Inforegio database and Eurostat, national accounts and Government statistics

The five priorities set out above were pursued through 31 Operational Programmes: 26 regional programmes (22 in Metropolitan France and 4 in the Convergence regions), 4 multi-regional programmes (two mountain-range programmes, Massif Central and Alpes, and two river basin programmes, Rhone and Loire) and one multi-Objective national technical assistance programme. Around 28% of the funding went to the 4 OPs under the Convergence Objective, less than 0.01% went to the National programme for technical assistance, while the remaining funding went to the other 26 OPs.

2.2. Division of funding between policy areas and changes over the period

The division of ERDF financing between broad policy areas differed between the Convergence and the Competitiveness regions (Table 4). In particular, a larger share of funding in the former went to culture and social infrastructure and urban development and tourism (the 'territorial dimension' in the table). Conversely, in the Competitiveness regions, a larger share of funding went to enterprise support, RTD and innovation. While in these regions a larger proportion of funding went to policy areas aimed mainly at economic objectives (items 1, 2 and 5 in Table 4), in Convergence regions the major share went to areas aimed at social and sustainability objectives (items 3 and 4).



Table 4 Division of ERDF financing for the 2007-2013 period in France by broad category

	Convergence		Competiveness		Multi-objective	
	EUR mn	% total	EUR mn	% total	EUR mn	% total
1. Enterprise support, innovation	405.6	17.8	2 527.3	44.1	-	-
2. Transport, energy, ICT	553.0	24.3	1 835.2	32.0	-	-
3. Environmental	547.2	24.0	599.0	10.4	-	-
4. Social, culture+territorial dimension	718.8	31.5	563.5	9.8	-	-
5. Human capital - Labour market	1.6	0.1	36.0	0.6	-	-
6. Technical assistance, capacity building	53.2	2.3	172.3	3.0	39.2	100.0
Total	2 279.3	100.0	5 733.3	100.0	39.2	100.0

Note: Division of decided amounts of funding as at 14 April 2016. Territorial dimension' includes support for urban and rural regeneration and tourist services and measures to compensate for climate conditions. Source: DG Regional and Urban Policy, Inforegio database

Over the programming period, there were only small shifts of funding for most policy areas (except energy and rail, as discussed below), so that the underlying pattern of priorities remained much the same. Accordingly, funding continued to concentrate on long-term objectives and there was little diversion of funding to offset the short-term effects of the crisis.

The main changes occurred in the energy and transport policy areas (see Table 5)⁴. Overall, the amount of funding going to railways and innovation and RTD declined significantly, while funding was increased for investment in energy supply, especially in Competitiveness regions, and in transport other than road and rail, especially in Convergence regions.

Table 5 Division of financial resources in France for 2007-2013 by category, initial (2007) and last (April 2016) and shift between categories

Category	EUR mn					% Total	
	2007	2016	Added	Deducted	Net shift	2007	2016
1. Innovation & RTD	2 230.2	2 165.6	346.2	- 410.8	- 64.6	27.7	26.9
2. Entrepreneurship	389.2	377.0	45.2	-57.3	-12.2	4.8	4.7
3. Other investment in enterprises	391.3	390.4	46.4	- 47.2	-0.9	4.9	4.8
4. ICT for citizens & business	519.1	476.3	83.6	- 126.5	- 42.8	6.4	5.9
5. Environment	1 174.9	1 140.8	152.0	- 186.1	- 34.1	14.6	14.2
6. Energy	557.5	669.8	193.1	- 80.8	112.3	6.9	8.3
7. Broadband	107.9	152.7	55.0	-10.1	44.9	1.3	1.9
8. Road	140.4	171.8	31.4	-	31.4	1.7	2.1
9. Rail	321.3	202.3	31.6	- 150.6	-119.0	4.0	2.5
10. Other transport	644.5	718.6	169.2	- 95.1	74.1	8.0	8.9
11. Human capital	18.8	15.7	3.3	- 6.4	-3.1	0.2	0.2
12. Labour market	26.4	21.9	6.2	-10.7	-4.5	0.3	0.3
13. Culture & social infrastructure	405.8	462.4	93.0	-36.4	56.7	5.0	5.7
14. Social Inclusion	8.7	7.2	3.2	-4.7	-1.5	0.1	0.1
15. Territorial Dimension	856.1	812.9	61.0	-104.2	- 43.2	10.6	10.1
16. Capacity Building	16.8	12.9	2.6	- 6.5	-3.9	0.2	0.2
17. Technical Assistance	245.8	252.5	21.3	-14.6	6.7	3.1	3.1
Total	8 054.7	8 051.0	1 344.3	- 1 348.0	- 3.7	100.0	100.0

Note: 'Added' is the sum of additions made to resources in OPs where there was a net increase in the funding going to the category. 'Deducted' is the sum of deductions made to resources in OPs where there was a net reduction in funding. 'Social inclusion' includes measures to assist disadvantaged groups and migrants. 'Territorial dimension' includes support for urban and rural regeneration and tourist services and measures to compensate for climate conditions.

Source: DG Regional and Urban Policy, Inforegio database, April 2016

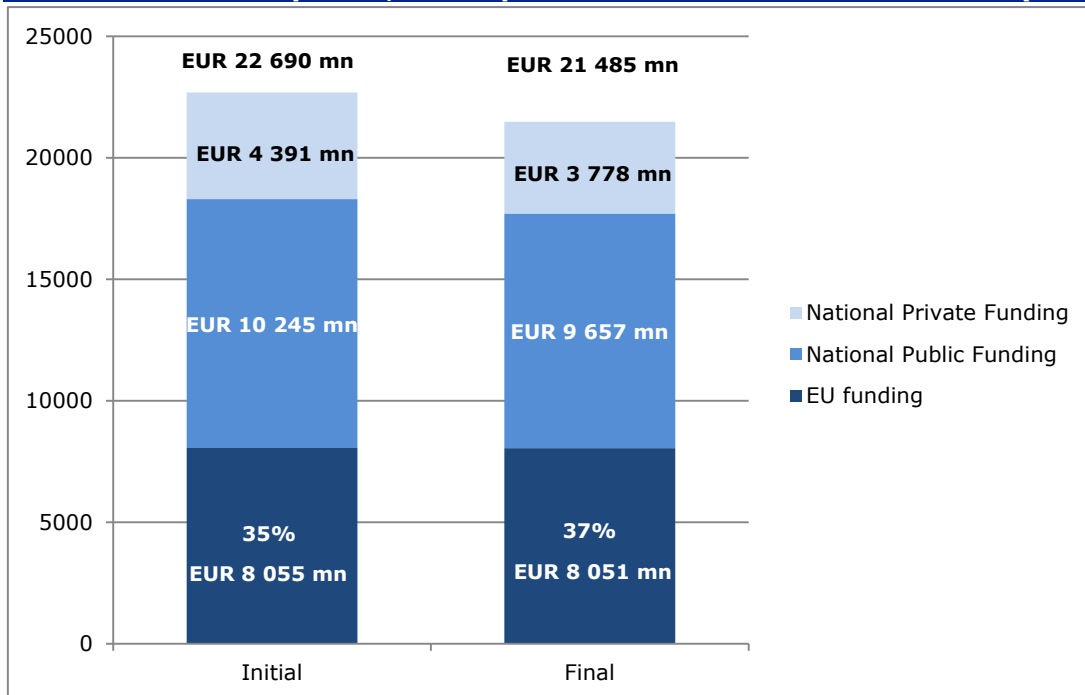
⁴ The 17 categories shown in the table are aggregations of the more detailed 87 categories into which expenditure was divided in the period for reporting purposes.



2.3. Policy implementation

Over the period, the average EU co-financing rate increased from 35% to 37%, so reducing the national co-financing rate to help the country meet its part of the funding needed to carry out the programmes. The cut in the national co-financing rate led to a reduction of around EUR 588 million in national public funding. This was accompanied by a reduction of about EUR 613 million in private funding compared to the initial estimate. At the same time the amount of EU funding was reduced marginally (by about EUR 4 million) due to de-commitments (i.e. MAs failing to comply with the n+2 rule, which stipulates that tranches of funding have to be spent within two-years). Overall, therefore, total funding was reduced by around 5% relative to the initial budget (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Total funding going to expenditure on Cohesion policy programmes for the 2007-2013 period, initial planned amount and final amount (EUR mn)



Source: DG Regional and Urban Policy, Inforegio database, 14 April 2016

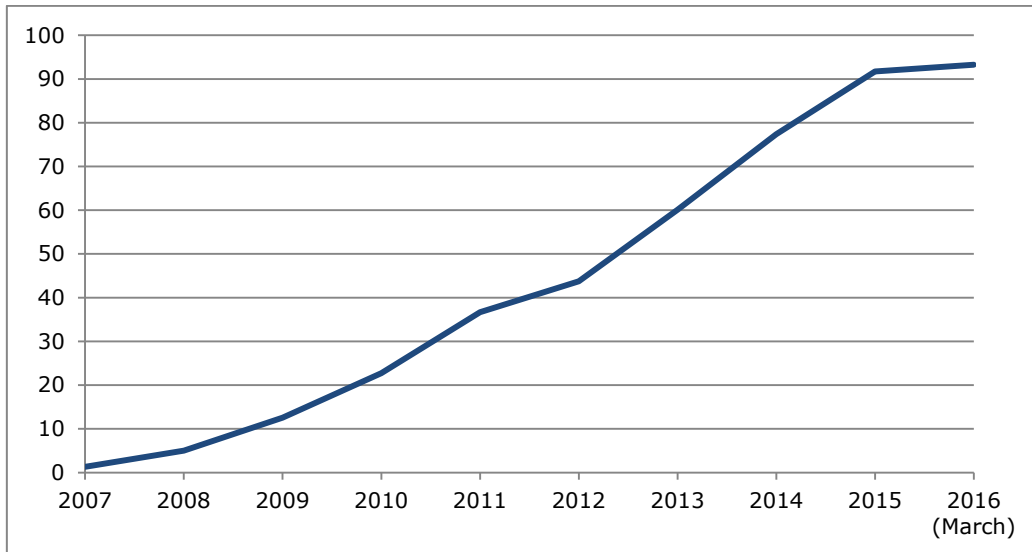
A slow start to the implementation of programmes, as reflected in payments from the Commission to reimburse the expenditure undertaken, was followed by an increase from 2012 on and at the end of March 2016, 93% of the amount of funding available had been paid out (Figure 2). This suggests that all the funding available was spent by the end of 2015, as required, given the lag between expenditure and payments and the 5% of funding held back until expenditure is approved.

Between 2008 and 2010, the crisis adversely affected the rate of implementation, leading to delays because of difficulties in co-financing expenditure due to budgetary constraints on local authorities and non-profit organisations⁵. From 2009 on, various measures were taken to accelerate implementation, including improving administrative procedures and shifting funding to energy efficiency measures, which were quick to implement, and financial instruments (where funding did not need to reach final recipients until the end of 2015).

⁵ Expert evaluation network, France country report, 2011.



Figure 2 Time profile of payments from the ERDF to France for the 2007-2013 period (% of total funding available)



Source: DG Regional and Urban Policy, Inforegio database, end-March 2016

3. The outcome of Cohesion Policy programmes – main findings from the ex post evaluation

The main findings summarised here come from the evaluations carried out under the Work Packages (WPs) of the ex-post evaluation exercise. These covered in detail the following policy areas:

- Support to SMEs – increasing research and innovation in SMEs and SME development (WP2);
- Financial instruments for enterprises (WP3);
- Support to large enterprises (WP4);
- Transport (WP5);
- Environment (WP6);
- Energy efficiency in public and residential buildings (WP8);
- Culture and tourism (WP9);
- Urban development and social infrastructure (WP10);
- European Territorial Cooperation (WP11);
- Delivery system (WP12);
- Geography of expenditure (WP13);
- The impact of cohesion policy 2007-2013: model simulations with Quest III and Rhomolo (WP14).

All of these are relevant for France except the evaluation on support to large enterprises, which did not cover the country. The evaluation of ETC (WP11), it should be noted, is the subject of a separate report. No relevant findings of WP12 which evaluated the delivery system concerned France, while the estimates produced by WP13 on the allocation of funding and of expenditure between regions are not considered here⁶.

⁶ They are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/ec/2007-2013/#1.



3.1. Enterprise support and innovation (WP2, WP3 and WP4)

The funding going to this broad area amounted to around EUR 2.9 billion, or just over 36% of the total allocation for France. Of this, around 14% was invested in the Convergence regions. The larger part of the funding (almost 75%) went to RTD and innovation projects.

Overall, up to the end of 2014, 5 121 RTD projects had been supported, along with 5 468 projects relating to cooperation between companies and research institutes. The support provided helped to start up 1 439 new businesses and co-financed 894 investment projects in SMEs. In total, over the country as a whole, an estimated 7 937 full-time equivalent jobs in SMEs, in gross terms, were directly created as a result of the funding together with 4 179 research jobs (see Table 6 at the end of this section).

SME support, R&D and innovation (WP2)

According to the European Innovation Scoreboard (2015), France is among the 'innovator-follower' countries. Much of the RTD and innovation was concentrated in Ile-de-France, which had a better innovation performance than the rest of the country (see Box).

In the 2007-2013, period the share of funding allocated to SME support, whether directly or indirectly, amounted to around 14% of the total ERDF available. National state support was much larger⁷, illustrating both the emphasis on business support in development policy and the relatively small role played by the ERDF in this respect.

OP Ile-de-France case study⁸

The Ile-de-France received an overall amount of EUR 152 million from the ERDF for the 2007-2013 period. Support to SMEs amounted to EUR 60 million of this or 42% of the total.

The Priority Axes I and II of the OP were aimed, respectively, at supporting territorial cohesion, with the promotion of innovation, including in SMEs, as one of the means of achieving this.

Overall, around 200 SMEs received direct support for capital investment, while an estimated 4 000 SMEs took advantage of indirect support. In general, recipients were innovative SMEs in high tech or high growth sectors.

Overall, the OP shows only modest achievements, partly because the number of SMEs supported seems to have been relatively small, but also because the monitoring system represented only a partial basis for assessing the results of the support provided. This is mainly because of two weaknesses: the monitoring system does not record the SMEs receiving indirect support (such as through the provision of specialist services) and the indicators on jobs created rely on the declaration of beneficiaries without checks being made.

Financial Instruments for enterprises (WP3)

The ERDF in France has been used to support Financial Instruments (FIs) since the 2000-2006 programming period. In the 2007-2013 period, 16 out of the 31 OPs put funding into FIs. In total, some EUR 230 million, or around 8% of the overall funding going to enterprise support, was allocated to FIs. (This is much less than in similar countries such as Germany and the UK, where FIs accounted for 8.5% and 12% of the ERDF total as opposed to just 2% in France). By the end of 2014, all funding allocated had been paid into FIs and just under half (46%) had reached final recipients.

FIs were set up principally to provide financial support to innovative firms, either to start up or to expand, or to encourage the transfer of innovation. Overall, a total of 120 funds (two Holding Funds and 118 specific funds, of which 17 with a Holding Fund) were co-financed. The FIs provided loans in over half of cases, as well as

⁷ While ERDF support to enterprise is less than 0.02% of GDP, the National support is around 0.8% of GDP.

⁸ The full case study report can be consulted here:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp2_case_study_fr.pdf.



venture capital (18%) and guarantees (15%). Each OP co-financed 5 funds on average and around half of them offered all three products.

Prêts d'honneurs (soft loans with a zero interest rate) were the most common loan instrument. Guarantee schemes were managed at the regional level mostly through agreements with *OSEO-Régions* (National Innovation Agency). Venture capital was used mainly to support the creation and expansion of innovative firms and sectors that were identified as having a "structuring role" in the regional economy.

Languedoc-Roussillon case study⁹

Languedoc-Roussillon received overall support of some EUR 817 million, of which EUR 270 million came from the ERDF. Some EUR 30 million, half from the ERDF, was allocated to FIs. Three FIs were set-up to provide a better coverage of funding to innovative enterprises and help them grow, supplementing the traditional approach of grants and non-financial support. The three FIs - an equity fund, a seed loan fund and a guarantee fund - were set up under the umbrella of a holding fund, JEREMIE LR, with the support of the European Investment Fund (EIF).

In total, over EUR 169 million was invested in SMEs (OP and Regional Council contributions together). Some 81 innovative SMEs had been financed through seed loans by the end of 2014 and 26 SMEs of high development potential had received support from the co-investment fund and 1 228 SMEs from the guarantee fund. The main sectors financed through seed loans and venture capital were ICT, biotechnology, robotics and green businesses, while wholesalers and rental services were the ones most supported by the guarantee fund.

3.2. Transport (WP5)

Total funding going to investment in transport in the 2007-2013 period amounted to EUR 1.1 billion, or around 14% of the overall ERDF budget. Around a third of funding (34%) was earmarked for roads and rail, while most (66%) went to other transport. Funding, however, was only around 1% of total national investment in transport over the period 2007-2013.

Nevertheless, funding helped to construct 28 km of new roads in Reunion. It also co-financed the construction or upgrading of 57 km of railway lines on the TEN-T on the French mainland and the modernisation or upgrading of 550 km of other railway lines (see Table 6 at the end of this section).

Country case study – France¹⁰

Although Cohesion policy had only a minor role in funding transport in France over the period, the investment financed was in line with the national strategy (French Transport Plan, 2010), which had shifted its focus to inter-urban rail and multi-modal urban transport systems.

The ERDF was distributed as follows: 15% to roads (concentrated on two projects to construct motorways in Guadeloupe and Reunion), 19% to rail and 66% to other transport, urban transport and multimodal projects in particular, especially in smaller French cities (e.g. the tram system in Clermont Ferrand). High priority was also given to investment in Outermost regions, with significant funding going to urban transport in Martinique, Reunion and Guadeloupe.

3.3. Environmental infrastructure (WP6)

Some EUR 1 billion of ERDF went to environmental projects in the 2007-2013 period, or 13% of the total budget. Of this, EUR 484 million was allocated to water supply, wastewater treatment and waste management, which were the focus of WP6.

At the end of 2014, the rate of expenditure was relatively low, amounting to only 43% of the amount budgeted for waste management and 63% for water supply and wastewater treatment. Nevertheless, by then, co-financed investment had resulted in

⁹ The full case study report can be consulted here:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp3_final_en.pdf.

¹⁰ The full case study report can be consulted here:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp5_task5_en.pdf.



an additional 514 thousand people being connected to new or improved main water supply and 101 thousand more people served to wastewater treatment (see Table 6 at the end of this section).

3.4. Energy efficiency in public and residential buildings (WP8)

The ERDF going to energy efficiency, co-generation, and energy management amounted to EUR 296 million in the period, 4% of the total funding available (most of it under the Competitiveness Objective)¹¹. Over half of this is estimated to have gone to support of energy efficiency measures for public and residential buildings, the focus of the evaluation carried out under WP8. This undertook case studies on French OPs, Nord-Pas-De-Calais, Picardie, Lorraine and Aquitaine (see box).

France country case study¹²

The 4 OPs analysed in France (Nord-Pas-De-Calais, Picardie, Lorraine, Aquitaine) were in very different situations regarding energy efficiency. While Aquitaine had energy consumption which was similar to the national average in relation to its GDP, though greenhouse gas emissions from transport and housing were relatively high, Nord-Pas-de-Calais had one of the highest energy consumption rates in France because of the importance of heavy industry in the region.

In all four regions, the change in the regulations in 2009 making housing eligible for ERDF support, led to funding being shifted to this area, with a relatively large amount being allocated in Nord-Pas-de-Calais (EUR 56 million).

In Nord-Pas-de-Calais, greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 51 kilotonnes by the end of 2013 and 60% of the initial energy saving target (30 000 tonnes of oil equivalent) had been achieved by then. In Lorraine measures for energy efficiency were included in a major project for constructing the Jean Lamour Institute research centre, a low energy consumption building, and the target of reducing 80 kilotonnes of CO₂ emissions a year was achieved. In Aquitaine, 2 091 apartments had been renewed by the end of 2013, half of the initial target. (No data were available for Picardie.)

3.5. Culture and tourism (WP9)

Over the programming period, EUR 417 million, or 5% of the total ERDF, went to culture and tourism in France. Most of the funding (63%), or some EUR 261 million was earmarked for tourism, and EUR 156 million went to culture. Another EUR 31 million went to direct support of hotels and restaurants. Funding for tourism was mostly directed at improving tourist services, primarily in the Outermost regions, though some was also allocated to this rural and mountainous areas. On the other hand, most interventions for culture were aimed at developing or renovating cultural infrastructure in urban areas (56%). Support took the form predominantly of non-repayable grants, though also of FIs in some cases.

According to the Managing Authorities surveyed, the focus of the interventions for culture was on economic diversification, either alone (as in Bourgogne) or combined with strengthening social cohesion (as in Rhone-Alpes). In the case of tourism, innovation combined with either economic diversification or sustainability were the most frequent objectives.

Rhône-Alpes case study¹³

ERDF support for culture and tourism went to two regional tourism development plans (i.e. *Schéma Régional de Développement du Tourisme et des Loisirs* – SRDTL and the *Plan Rhône*). The objectives were to diversify the economy in areas with underdeveloped tourism potential and to promote culture and tourism along the River Rhône. These were pursued through three

¹¹ The amount increased by EUR 100 million between 2007 and 2015.

¹² The full case study can be consulted here as separate annex to the final report: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/ec/2007-2013/#1.

¹³ The full case study report can be consulted here: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp9_case_study_rhone-alps_en.pdf.



separate measures: fostering tourism by developing tourist assets, innovation and sustainable development (EUR 19.6 million of ERDF support); promoting the cultural heritage and identity of the River Rhône (EUR 4 million of ERDF support); and developing high-quality tourism along the River Rhône and its banks (EUR 3.5 Million of ERDF support).

The OP supported a range of interventions, including both small and large scale investment, diagnostic studies and counselling activities. All projects completed were reported to have delivered the expected outputs with no particular implementation problems.

Assessment of results is difficult because of the weakness of the monitoring system (e.g. the indicator for the number of direct jobs created included temporary jobs involved in the implementation of projects while at the same time failing to include the jobs that had been created among the ultimate beneficiaries of the interventions). Nonetheless, the ERDF proved to be a vital source of financing for many interventions. It also encouraged recipients to improve their project design and project management capacity.

Espace de promotion sur l'Ain sur le site du Parc des Oiseaux mini-case study¹⁴

This intervention consisted of establishing a permanent tourist showcase facility in the Ornithological Park of Dombes, one of the most visited natural sites in the Department. The facility was developed as a stand-alone tourist attraction and uses creative scenic and audio-visual techniques to enhance the experience of visitors. A survey reported an 80% level of visitor satisfaction.

Maison de la Lone mini-case study¹⁵

The project involved the renovation of the leisure and sports centre in Saint Pierre de Boeuf (*Maison de la Lone*) which was part of the long-term development plan for the inter-municipal community of Pilat Rhodanien. It consisted of establishing a link between the white-water sports centre and the Via Rhona cycle route, providing services (e.g. bike and skate rental and tourist information) and diversifying the range of outdoor activities available. The modernisation of the centre has increased its use and improved its regional and national visibility.

3.6. Urban development and social infrastructure (WP10)

Some EUR 707 million of ERDF went to investment in urban development and social infrastructure, 9% of the total available. Only 8 out of 31 OPs¹⁶ set aside more than EUR 460 million to in these areas (and were therefore among the OPs covered by the WP10 evaluation).

Around half of the funding (EUR 233 million) in these OPs went to integrated urban regeneration projects (some EUR 55 million in the Nord-Pas-De-Calais). The rest of the funding (EUR 237 million) went to investment in social infrastructure, mainly on education facilities, Reunion accounting for almost half (EUR 109 million) of this.

The Lorraine OP provides an interesting example of an integrated approach to supporting urban development: the programme co-financed projects combining ERDF and ESF support and concerned with combating discrimination, reducing school dropouts and improving access to employment for people with difficulties.

3.7. ETC (WP11)

France was involved in 9 INTERREG programmes financed under the Cross-border Cooperation strand of the ETC Objective. These were, respectively, with Italy, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Spain and Andorra, the UK, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The ETC-funded programmes are the subject of a separate report.

¹⁴ The full mini-case study report can be consulted here: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp9_mini_case_rhone-alps_espace_promotion_en.pdf.

¹⁵ The full mini-case study report can be consulted here: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp9_mini_case_rhone-alps_maison_lone_en.pdf.

¹⁶ Regional OPs: Guyane, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion (Convergence regions); Aquitaine, Lorraine, Nord Pas-De-Calais, Rhone-Alpes (Competitiveness regions).



3.8. Impact on GDP (WP14)

Cohesion and rural development policies are together estimated to have increased GDP in France in 2015 by around 0.1% above the level it would have been without them, taking explicit account of the French contribution to the financing of these policies as well as the investment carried out in both France and other countries.¹⁷ In 2023, GDP will be an estimated 0.2% higher than it otherwise would be in the absence of the investment concerned.

3.9. Overview of achievements

Up to the end of 2014, the investment undertaken with support from the ERDF for the 2007-2013 period in France resulted in the direct creation of 58 552 gross jobs (Table 6). In addition to the achievements reported above under the different WPs, ERDF support resulted in an additional 836 000 people being connected to broadband and the rehabilitation of 1 square km of polluted land. It also added 218 Megawatts to the overall capacity to produce electricity from renewable energy.

It should be emphasised that since not all MAs report all of the core indicators, and in some cases, only a minority, the figures tend to understate achievements, perhaps substantially. In addition, the data reported relate to the situation at the end of 2014, one year before the official end of the period in terms of the expenditure which can be financed, so that they also understate achievements over the programming period because of this.

Table 6 Values of core indicators for ERDF co-financed programmes in France for 2007-2013 period, as at end-2014

Core Indicator Code	Core and common indicators official name	Value up to end-2014
0	Aggregated Jobs	58 552
1	Jobs created	32 085
4	Number of RTD projects	5 121
5	Number of cooperation project enterprises-research institutions	5 468
6	Research jobs created	4 179
7	Number of direct investment aid projects to SME	894
8	Number of start-ups supported	1 439
9	Jobs created in SME (gross, full time equivalent)	7 937
12	Number of additional population covered by broadband access	835 608
14	km of new roads	28
18	km of TEN railroads	57
19	km of reconstructed railroads	550
24	Additional capacity of renewable energy production	218
25	Additional population served by water projects	514 576
26	Additional population served by waste water projects	101 445
29	Area rehabilitated (km ²)	1
35	Number of jobs created in tourism	48

Note: The figures in the table are those reported by MAs in Annual Implementation Reports. Core indicators for which no data were reported by the Member State are not included. The aggregate jobs indicator is based on an examination by the Commission of all gross job creation reported for each priority axis and is regarded as the most accurate figure for the total number of gross jobs directly created as a result of funding. It tends to be higher than the sum of the figures reported by MAs for the core indicators relating to jobs created because in many cases MAs fail to report anything for these indicators.

Source: Annual Implementation Reports, 2014 and DG Regional Policy post-processing of these, August 2016

¹⁷ Estimates by the Quest model, a new-Keynesian dynamic general equilibrium model in kind widely used in economic policy research, developed by DG Economic and Financial Affairs to assess the effects of policies. See The impact of Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: model simulations with Quest III, WP14a, final report, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp14a_final_report_en.pdf.

