

th CONFERENCE on the Evaluation of EU Cohesion Policy

16-17 September 2021 Porto, Portugal

Shaping Transitions with Evidence



Evaluation of the implementation of the Incentive Schemes of the PT2020

Cohesion and Development Agency



FUND(S) COVERED

► ERDF, ESF

PROGRAMMING PERIOD

► 2014-2020

PROGRAMMES COVERED

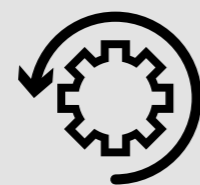
- Competitiveness and Internationalization Operational Programme
- All 5 mainland Portugal Regional Operational Programmes – Norte OP, Centro OP, Lisboa OP, Alentejo OP and Algarve OP

THEMATIC OBJECTIVES

- TO1. Research and innovation
- TO3. SME competitiveness
- TO8. Employment and labour market

TYPE OF EVALUATION

- Process/Implementation evaluation



YEAR OF COMPLETION

► 2019

MAIN OBJECTIVES

Assess the Incentive Schemes – Research & Technology Development, Innovation and Qualification and Internationalization of SMEs – relevance in supporting business investment and whether they've been implemented in the most effective and efficient way to achieve the desired outcomes of the Competitiveness and Innovation agenda.

Project distribution by scheme and companies age group

	RTD	Entrepreneurship	Simplified projects	Innovation	SME Qualification	SME Internationalization	Total
Number of projects							
Startup	0,7%	1,4%	8,6%	3,6%	2,0%	8,2%	24,5%
Young	1,1%	0,0%	3,8%	3,1%	1,7%	7,4%	17,2%
Established	1,5%	0,0%	4,3%	4,2%	2,3%	6,9%	19,2%
Mature	3,3%	0,0%	8,0%	9,9%	5,6%	12,3%	39,1%
Total	6,6%	1,4%	24,8%	20,7%	11,6%	34,8%	100,0%
Eligible Investment							
Startup	0,6%	1,3%	0,2%	18,6%	0,6%	3,7%	25,0%
Young	1,3%	0,0%	0,1%	9,0%	0,6%	3,3%	14,3%
Established	1,8%	0,0%	0,1%	8,2%	0,7%	3,0%	13,8%
Mature	6,5%	0,0%	0,2%	30,0%	2,4%	7,8%	46,9%
Total	10,2%	1,3%	0,5%	65,9%	4,3%	17,8%	100,0%

Companies age group: Startup: 0 - 2 years; Young 3 - 7 years; Established: 8 - 15 years; Mature > 15 years

METHODOLOGY USED

Theory of change approach, focusing on the first elements of the results chain and their assumptions.

DATA SOURCES

Quantitative and qualitative data from desk research (mainly managing authorities' information systems), interviews, beneficiary surveys and focus groups.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Carrying the main features from previous programming period, the IS have shown a high degree of maturity, with instruments widely known and well accepted to the targeted public
- A survey showed eligibilities, calls and forms were considered clear and well suited for their needs by the majority of beneficiaries (though further simplification is still needed), but the low admission rates of applications seem to suggest some inability to deter unqualified demand
- The economic recovery context translated into a high-demand, where by the end of 2017 the number of applications had doubled compared to the same timeframe of previous programming period, even if with imbalances between regions and types of intervention. The high demand put stress over the administrative

capacity of managing bodies, with significant delays in decision and payment procedures

- Though benchmarks for the selection criteria were challenging enough considering the national reality, the high demand and the decision to approve all applications that ranked above a certain threshold rendered the selection criteria less relevant in the fund allocation process
- Project alignment with the smart specialization strategies seemed to favour a higher degree of added value.

CONCLUSIONS

- The wide range of instruments and the governance model of the Incentive Systems (SI) proved to be adequate to the objectives pursued by the competitiveness and internationalization agenda
- The role of the selection criteria should be enhanced, conferring a higher relevance to regional specificity and merit. A combination of grants and financial instruments enables a better allocation of funds
- Further simplification is still needed, improving guidelines, automating processes and creating tools for applicants' self-assessment. Communication with beneficiaries and consultants should also improve, to deter unqualified demand.

Supported projects, by the end of 2017

Incentive Schemes	All Projects			ESF projects				Vouchers		As % of total projects
	Number of Projects	Eligible Investment	Fund	Number of Projects		Fund		Number of Projects	As % of total projects	
				Nº	%	ME	%			
RTD	1.023	652	396	0	0,0%	0,0	0,0%	411	18,0%	40%
Innovation	2.626	4.903	2.625	555	33,8%	13,4	56,5%	589	25,8%	22%
SME Qualification	1.972	260	126	316	19,2%	3,2	13,7%	904	39,5%	46%
SME Internationalization	3.589	1.281	595	771	47,0%	7,0	29,8%	382	16,7%	11%
Total	9 210	7.096	3 741	1.642	100%	23,6	100%	2.286	100%	25%

Degree of coverage along the investment cycle of companies

Incentive Schemes	Phases of the Investment Cycle				
	Research & Technologic Development	Scale Up and industrialization companies	Scale Up e industrialization [existing companies]	National and / or international markets penetration [new companies]	National and / or international markets penetration [existing companies]
RTD	○○○○○	○○	○○	○	○
Innovation	○○	○○○○	○○○○○	○○	○○
SME Qualification	○○○	○○	○○○	○	○
SME Internationalization	○○	○	○	○○○○	○○○○
All Incentive Schemes	○○○○○	○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○	○○○○

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LINK

<https://www.portugal2020.pt/content/avaliacao>