

ANDALUCÍA

GENERAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

€37.4 billion have been allocated to Spain from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for the period 2014-2020 through 64 national and regional programmes. With a national contribution of €15.88 billion, Spain has a total budget of €53.28 billion to invest in areas closely linked to the Europe 2020 objectives.

Andalucía is one of the two Spanish case study regions of COHESIFY. It is the most populous autonomous community in Spain (8,411,207 inhabitants on 1 January 2016) and the second largest (87,268 km²). It is made up of 8 provinces with the administrative capital located in Sevilla.

Fig. 1 Andalucía region



In summary, two factors have marked the contribution of Cohesion Policy from 2007 to the present. One of them was the economic crisis that considerably affected the regional situation in Andalusia (unemployment, difficulty in absorbing funds, etc.) and therefore the implementation of the 2007-2013 Operational Programmes. The other has been the transition from a convergence region in the 2007 – 2013 period to a transition region in the 2014 – 2020 period, which has led to a lower volume of European funds, and an increase in private investment.

On the other hand, as explained below, in the 2014 – 2020 Operational Programme there has been greater public participation in its design, opting for greater involvement of beneficiaries in the management and communication of funds. The objectives of the operational



programmes are broadly similar for both periods, focusing on infrastructure, the environment, small businesses, job creation and integration.

From 2007, and as in the rest of Spanish regions, two programming periods of the Cohesion Policy have been implemented in Andalucía that have led us to its current development:

1. 2007-2013 period. With the aim of ensuring the coherence of the Community interventions within the framework of the "Convergence" Objective, Andalucía, a region therefore identified as convergence, designed a different strategy and therefore an operational programme, for each one of the structural interventions, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF). The ERDF budget for this period was €6,843,929,341 and €1,444,695,612 for the ESF.

Efforts have been focused on the creation and improvement of infrastructures considered to be of great importance. Work has therefore been undertaken in reforming the structures of transport and their quality, as well as in ensuring the energy supply and promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies.

In the environmental field, the actions undertaken have contributed positively to improving the management of water resources and the water cycle through investments. Likewise, work has been carried out in improving the management of waste, the protection and preservation of the natural heritage and biodiversity, and the prevention of environmental risks.

The main recipient of investments in business development and innovation have been SMEs in so far as this has worked to stimulate entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial spirit, promoting innovation and competitiveness of the business fabric and at the same time boosting the international projection of these Andalusian companies.

Regarding the ESF, education and training has been oriented towards employability and the market demands in order to improve the human capital, in addition to improving their quality and boosting research and innovation. At employability and inclusion level, the OP has worked to help obtaining jobs and the labour integration of the unemployed as well as to encourage the social and labour integration of people with disabilities and the groups at risk of social exclusion.

2. 2014-2020 period. In the same way as in the previous period, but with Andalucía as a region in transition, two regional operational programmes of the ERDF and ESF were put into place taking into account the lessons learned from the 2007 - 2013 period.

The EU budget has been considerably reduced compared to the previous period for the ERDF, with €3,597,639,141, but there has been an increase for the ESF with €1,193,223,001.



The objectives of this period are to boost research, technological development and innovation, conserve and promote resource efficiency, investment in education, training and improvement of professional skills and lifelong learning.

During this period, Andalucía also participates in 7 multi-regional programmes and 5 cross-border cooperation programmes.

The economic crisis has had a major impact on the region of Andalucía, which reached unemployment rates close to 30% of the population. The contribution of the European Funds helped to alleviate the effects of the crisis by supporting investments in employment and public infrastructure. For every euro of Community aid, there was a leverage effect in the period 2007-2013 leading to a 1.4-fold increase.

The communication of funds has been articulated through a joint communication strategy for both funds in the two programming periods. The budget allocated for this strategy has been reduced in the period 2014-2020.

The governance model for communication in Andalucía was supported at national level by the communication network GERIP composed of persons responsible in the field of communication of the Regional Communication Plans. The National Managing Authority has also set up GRECO-AGE, a network made up of the communication officers of the managing bodies of the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund of the General State Administration, which serves as a channel for informing and taking decisions on matters relating to information and publicity within the scope of its competences within each Operational Programme.

In addition, the Technical Network of Representatives of Information and Publicity of Andalucía (RETINA) was set up at regional level to coordinate and standardise the tasks of information and publicity measures taken by managers and the beneficiaries of the Structural Funds for the promotion and exchange of experiences and best practices in the field of the Government of Andalucía.

For all these reasons, the communication networks created at both national and regional levels provide a fundamental common framework for structuring more efficient communication.

In general, the perception of the stakeholders interviewed is that the effort in communication has been increasingly growing. The strategy has been increasingly elaborate, it is noted that more resources and more activities are dedicated to make the funds visible. This also contributes to a positive public perception of the contribution of European funds to their regional development, thereby fostering a sense of ownership of Europe and its institutions.

