

Evaluation of the operationalisation of Alentejo Regional Programme 2021–2027



GENERAL OBJETIVE

Verify that the Programme is being implemented as planned and that the pace of implementation is contributing to achieve the expected results, identifying difficulties in the application of support mechanisms and anticipating possible deviations that may compromise these results

OE1.

Analyze the capacity of ALENTEJO 2030 to respond to the initially foreseen needs, considering the changes in the regional context

OE2.

Assess the degree of coherence between the implementation of ALENTEJO 2030 and other public policies and support instruments with converging objectives

OE3.

Examine the adequacy of the strategic and operational management of ALENTEJO 2030, as well as the instruments used to ensure effective and efficient implementation

OE4.

Verify if the pace of implementation and operations supported by ALENTEJO 2030 are creating favourable conditions to achieve objectives and targets

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

METHODOLOGY

Multi-method approach, in order to incorporate a wide range of sensitivities, opinions and key stakeholders with diverse information-gathering techniques applied.



DATA COLLECTION



DESK ANALYSIS



2 SURVEYS

197 business entities
 45 non business entities
 (mostly public entities)



2 FOCUS GROUPS

31 entities



12 INTERVIEWS



3 CASE STUDIES

EVALUATION CRITERIA

RECOMMENDATIONS

Operational efficiency



Effectiveness



Notoriety



CONCLUSÕES

- C1.** Access to application forms and payment requests is available through the **Funds Desk**, and **constraints have been identified related to both the forms and the available documentation to support its use**.
- C2.** The Programme has been able to mobilise the expected demand, ensuring that candidate operations are aligned with the objectives and support instruments. However, **demand remains below the desired level due to several constraints** (late closure of 2014-2020 MFF, constraints in the information system, etc.).
- C3.** The implementation of the FTJ has been marked by **significant delays**, low execution rates and timing issues in relation to the immediate needs resulting from the closure of the Sines Thermal Power Plant. Several limitations have been identified in the practical application of the specific Fund.
- C4.** Procedural aspects/information systems did not play an inhibiting role in mobilising and achieving the desired demand. However, constraints were identified, such as technical and operational failures, system slowness, repetition of fields, etc.
- C5.** The Programme is having the capacity to select operations that contribute to achieve its objectives. However, it was not possible to assess this conclusion in the desired detail since, of the **1,507 operations submitted by 31 May, 905 are still under analysis**. As for the analysis, selection and decision-making process, although there is a need for improvement in the eligibility criteria and conditions and in the merit analysis criteria, **the overall process was identified as adequate for selecting projects of interest that align and contribute to the objectives of Alentejo 2030**.
- C6.** The analysis identified a set of eligibility and merit criteria that enable the selection of operations aligned with Programme's objectives. However, although the types of operation are appropriate to the beneficiaries' needs and objectives, significant areas for improvement were identified.
- C7.** With regard to the efficiency of the selection process in terms of **decision-making deadlines**, this is a critical matter, highlighting the lack of human resources of the teams and the need for training, including for Intermediate Bodies (OI).
- C8.** Concerning the Programme's management structures, weaknesses were noted regarding the lack / scarcity of human resources, with direct impact on the performance of functions and responsibilities and the compliance with deadlines.
- C9.** The proximity of the Intermediate Bodies to beneficiary entities has resulted in the mobilisation of the desired demand and the selection of operations with highest potential to contribute to the objectives of the Programme, as well as in operational management gains related to deadlines. It was also possible to identify weaknesses such as the lack of resources and training of the Intermediate Bodies for the delegated competences.
- C10.** Need to review the decision-making process and **reinforce the role of the Monitoring Committee as a body with the capacity to effectively intervene in the programme implementation process**, and not just to validate documents, highlighting the importance of analysing new formats for boosting the Monitoring Committee.
- C11.** Although there may be a short-term acceleration in the implementation rate with the validation of the approved Fund, **the pace of implementation shows a delay compared to planned implementation**, with direct consequences in achieving the established goals (financial and performance and result indicators).
- C12.** The communication effort, although positive, should be reviewed regarding the consultation results, given that participation rate in Alentejo 2030 communication/dissemination activities was low and its usefulness was characterised as limited.

R1. Maintain the commitment on simplifying and improving information systems and supporting documentation

R2. Strengthen dynamics for mobilizing the desired demand and the selection of operations with the greatest contribution to the objectives of the Programme.

R3. Introduce adjustments to the JTF to ensure its effectiveness and equity and enhance its alignment with the current regional context.

R4. Ensure compliance with the financial implementation targets (including n+3) and the targets set at the level of each of the Programme's specific objectives.

R5. Strengthen the management structure of the Programme, including Intermediate Bodies in terms of resources and capacity building.

R6. Evaluate the Governance Model, namely through new ways of boosting and enhancing the role of the Monitoring Committee.

R7. Strengthen the communication and dissemination strategy of Alentejo 2030 Programme.