



Mid-Term Evaluation of the Algarve 2020 Operational Program Summary

The main goal of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Algarve 2020 OP is to “identify and explain the contribution of the OP to the expected results in the Specific Objectives of each Investment Priority (IP) mobilized in each of its Priority Axes”,

This evaluation assumed as methodological reference the Theory Based Evaluation and involved the structuring of the logical framework of the intervention of the Algarve OP and the respective Theory of Change. The evaluation process involved a wide range of methods and techniques for information collection and information analysis, including documentary and statistical collection, 10 interviews, 8 focus groups and 5 case studies, as well as 2 surveys (1 to business promoters and 1 to public entities).

Overall, the evaluation revealed an adequacy of the instruments and forms of support mobilized by the Program to the needs of the target groups and the region and a positive performance in meeting the achievement and result goals. The effect of the pandemic on the pace and capacity of execution of the OP is evident, having impacted the delay in launching tenders, the procedures for analyzing applications and monitoring operations, but also on the deadlines for the execution of investments, contributing to an average rate of completion of projects around 20% and a still inconclusive picture of the Program's ability to achieve its main objectives.

The analysis of the effectiveness at the level of the strategic intervention vectors of the program shows that:

- in terms of strengthening business competitiveness, most of the support instruments are adjusted, having been able to induce qualified demand (financial instruments and qualified entrepreneurship are the exceptions), but the deviation from the expected contribution of projects to the increase in employment, reflecting a general effect of retraction of companies in the period. The difficulty in mobilizing tourism companies to support Technological Research and Development is pointed out as the main conditioning factor for the difficulties in promoting innovation in the business sector.
- encouraging employment through support for internships and support for hiring proved to be effective. While the qualification of the unemployed showed strong support, the training modalities aimed at companies reflect the difficulty in mobilizing companies for this type of support.
- regarding the territorial enhancement, the objectives of improving energy efficiency are largely penalized by the incipient adhesion of companies but compensated by the side of public operators who show a good pace of execution and the achievement of the contracted targets.
- the interventions in school facilities allowed an adequate response to the territory's needs, but support for skills training and the promotion of educational success were not enough to achieve the objective of reducing the early dropout rate in education and training in the region.

The Program's action was not enough to induce the desired change in the pattern of productive specialization in the region, but its ability to react to the adverse effects of the economic situation is recognized, allowing the maintenance of jobs and the continuation of investments that would not have been carried out without the support.

The intervention logic and the themes that frame the Algarve OP programmatic architecture continue to be globally relevant, enabling processes of continuity and strengthening of the regional political strategy in the next period of community supports.