

EVALUATION OF THE  
**MAIS** CENT**RO**  
IMPLEMENTATION

Centro Regional Operational Programme  
under the NSRF Strategy  
for 2007-2008

**mais**  
**CENTRO**

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EVALUATION OF THE MAIS CENTRO IMPLEMENTATION  
CENTRO REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME  
UNDER THE NSRF STRATEGY FOR 2007-2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Coordination**

Sérgio Barroso

**Technical Team**

Heitor Gomes  
Sandra Primitivo  
João Telha  
Dalila Farinha  
André Barbado

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## 0. INTRODUCTION

1. This current document constitutes the *Executive Summary of the Final Report of the Mais Centro Implementation Evaluation – Centro Regional Operational Programme*, developed by Centro de Estudos e Desenvolvimento Regional e Urbano, Lda (CEDRU), with the Augusto Mateus & Associados (AMA) technical support, and is structured into four main points.
2. In the first two points the evaluation is placed into context, through the detailing of its scope, its objectives, and the explanation of the 25 key-questions.
3. The third point introduces the methodological programme, explaining the methods used for gathering, analysis, and systematizing of information and identifying the involved actors.
4. The fourth point introduces a systematization of the table of recommendations and conclusions, trying to provide a clear and objective matrix that allows a quick understanding on the evaluation results.
5. The evaluation results entails exclusively the Evaluation Team, who thanks all the entities that, through multiple auscultation mechanisms, contributed to the elaboration of this study, hoping that the recommendations and conclusions table will contribute to improve the implementation and the performance of Mais Centro, in order to effectively and efficiently accomplish its objectives.

## I. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION SUBJECT AND SCOPE

### I.1. Mais Centro – Programa Operacional Regional do Centro (Centro Regional Operational Programme)

6. The evaluation subject is Mais Centro – Centro Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, an instrument from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) with exclusive application for Centro NUTS II, which is formed by 12 NUTS III.
7. It counts on € 1.701.633.124 ERDF endowment, to which is added a national contribution of € 1.179.481.794, leveraging a total investment of € 2.881.114.918 during the seven years of the programme's implementation. The programme was officially formalized on the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2007 by the European Commission (EC) and by the Portuguese Government.
8. Five strategic priorities were defined: a) Competitiveness, Innovation, and Knowledge; b) Cities and Urban Systems Development, c) Consolidation and Qualification of Sub-regional Areas; d) Protection and Environmental Valorisation; e) Governance and Institutional Empowerment. These gave origin to the Programme's structure, organized into five priority axis (besides a sixth one that corresponds to technical assistance), with the respective intervention areas.
9. In terms of specific objectives, the Programme is structured as follows, considering the five defined axis:
  - *Axis I. Competitiveness, Innovation, and Knowledge:* its specific objectives are the promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation, and competitiveness in small-sized companies, the knowledge society development, the gear up of the scientific and technological system, the promotion of planning, and the qualification of entrepreneurial location areas and of technology transference and the promotion of renewable energy. It is the Axis with the biggest financial dimension having an endowment that represents 33% of the total budget.
  - *Axis II. Cities and Urban Systems Development:* its specific objectives are the urban regeneration to improve life quality and the urban environment, the promotion of cities' competitiveness and the urban system consolidation. The overall purpose of this intervention is structuring, whether of the physical space as of the relations among actors and among activities. Three intervention areas are privileged:

partnerships for urban regeneration, urban networks for competitiveness and innovation and urban mobility;

- *Axis III. Consolidation and Qualification of Sub-regional Areas:* two types of interventions are included. On the one hand the conclusion of infrastructure, equipments and collective services networks, in order to ensure the minimum conditions of social welfare. On the other hand, actions for economical valorisation of endogenous resources destined to promote private investment and therefore ensuring conditions for the local creation of employment and income. These interventions follow three specific objectives: the valorisation of the territory's specific resources, the reinforcement of the region's identity and the integrated qualification of sub-regional areas;
- *Axis IV. Protection and Environmental Valorisation:* the protection and management of water resources, the protection of environmentally fragile areas and the prevention and management of technological and natural risks are the specific objectives to follow;
- *Axis V. Governance and Institutional Empowerment:* in order to improve governance and promote institutional empowerment of the Region, this Axis' specific objectives are: to reduce context costs, to ease the relations of companies and citizens with public administration, to promote the Region within the institutional level and to monitor the evolution of its socioeconomic situation.

10. Table 1 introduces a synthesis of the five mentioned strategic priorities, organized by axis, systematizing the main intervention and investment domains as well as the respective financial endowment.

**Table 1. Mais Centro: Priority Axis and Financial Endowment**

Axis	Intervention Areas	Financial Endowment (€)
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Creation of innovative micro and small-sized enterprises;</li> <li>➤ R&amp;D projects, particularly cooperation projects between micro enterprises and entities from the Scientific and Technological System;</li> <li>➤ Productive investment projects for innovation on micro and small-sized enterprises</li> <li>➤ Qualification of micro and small-sized enterprises;</li> <li>➤ Pilot-projects on renewable energy;</li> <li>➤ Development of the Knowledge Society;</li> <li>➤ Projects of infrastructures, equipments and networks for entrepreneurial activity support;</li> <li>➤ Collective actions for entrepreneurial development.</li> </ul>	1.081.859.896
II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Partnerships for urban regeneration;</li> <li>➤ Urban networks for competitiveness and innovation;</li> <li>➤ Urban mobility.</li> </ul>	486.650.793
III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provision of public goods and services in rural areas;</li> <li>➤ Valorisation of the territory's specific resources;</li> <li>➤ Integrated qualification of sub-regional spaces (mobility, equipments and infrastructures for social and territorial cohesion networks)</li> </ul>	668.571.428
IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Urban Water Cycle;</li> <li>➤ Prevention of natural and technological risks;</li> <li>➤ Water resources management;</li> <li>➤ Active management of the Natura Network and Biodiversity;</li> <li>➤ Coastal Zone Valorisation and Management;</li> <li>➤ Protection and valorisation of other fragile areas and landscape qualification;</li> <li>➤ Incentive to recycling and waste reutilization.</li> </ul>	343.834.697
V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Local and regional electronic Government;</li> <li>➤ Ease the relations between enterprises and citizens with the local and decentralized administration;</li> <li>➤ Institutional promotion of the region.</li> </ul>	235.135.662
VI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Management, monitoring, evaluation, control, information and communication of the Regional OP.</li> </ul>	65.062.442

Source: Mais Centro (2007)

## I.2. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

11. In the NRSF evaluation global model framework, the Management Authority of Mais Centro had elaborated the Mais Centro Evaluation Plan that integrates the NRSF Global Evaluation Plan. This Plan provides two exercises that focus on the Programme overall, whose responsibility belongs to the Management Authority: i) the Implementation Evaluation under the NRSF Strategy for 2007-2008; ii) the Mid-term Evaluation (2007-2010).
12. Complementarily, the Mais Centro Evaluation Plan establishes the elaboration of Thematic Evaluations comprising areas such as the "Valorisation of Heritage and Environmental Resources"; the "Entrepreneurial Innovation"; the "Context Public Costs" and the "Regional Development Asymmetries". The NRSF and the OPs Global Evaluation Plan also establishes evaluations on the "Implementation of Urban Networks for Competitiveness and Innovation and Innovative Actions for Urban Development"; the "ERDF Contribution to Support the Actions Covered by the ESF Intervention Scope" and the "Integration of the Gender Perspective".
13. This current evaluation, with Mais Centro as the subject, privileges the operational dimension, aiming at the established and already mentioned objectives from the community regulation, which specification at paragraph b) of the nr. 4 of the Article 14<sup>th</sup> of the Ordinance nr. 312/2007 explicit in the sense of "*analyse the implementation of the Operational Programme interventions (...) and introduce recommendations to improve its performance*". Therefore, it has for a scope the programme's operational implementation throughout all the Centro Region, focusing on matters such as: i) dissemination; ii) the analysis on the admissibility and acceptability from the beneficiaries and actions; iii) the operation selection process; iv) the Programme's internal management; v) the articulation with the Intermediate Entities, with whom the Management Authority agreed the competencies delegation; vi) the articulation with the integrated interventions on the Territory Valorisation Thematic Agenda and on the Competitiveness Factors Thematic Agenda; vii) the achievement monitoring.

## II. OBJECTIVES AND KEY-QUESTIONS OF THE EVALUATION

14. The national and community rules and regulations and guidelines from the NRSF Global Evaluation Plan and the Evaluation Plan of Mais Centro specifies the nature of this current evaluation exercise:
  - It is an operational evaluation that, according to the Global Evaluation Plan, aims at "*analysing the implementation of the OP interventions or sets of OP and introducing recommendations for its performance improvement*";
  - It is an evaluation associated to a very clear objective that, according to the Evaluation Plan, aims at evaluating the Mais Centro implementation on the prosecution of the NRSF strategic priorities, elaborating conclusions and recommendations in order to improve its performance;
  - It is an evaluation that respects the evaluations objective framed by the Ordinance related to the NSRF and the OP Governance defined as follows: "*improve the quality, the efficiency, the effectiveness and the consistency of the operations achieved with the support of community funds of a structural nature*".
15. Therefore, it is not a strategic evaluation "*focused on the analysis of the contributions of the OP and the NRSF operations for the prosecution of the respective objectives and priorities and on the introduction of recommendations to improve the respective performances*", nor a mid-term evaluation that analyses "*the context, the performance and the halfway stage impact*", that might "*lead to reprogramming*".
16. The subject and scope of this evaluation mark out the exercise to perform. However, it matters to define more objectively its contours. The difference established between evaluations of a strategic and operational nature contributes to that same purpose. Both share the same purpose – "*introduce recommendations to improve the performance*" – and both focus on "operations" or "interventions" of OP, sets of OP or the NRSF. Nevertheless, they differ significantly in the adopted perspective – or on the focus – of the evaluations: while

the exercises of a strategic nature favour the analysis on the operations' contributions for the prosecuted objectives and priorities, those of operational character privilege the analysis on the interventions' implementation. Therefore, this evaluation focuses exclusively on the assessment of the ways the Programme is implemented.

17. It also matters to stress that the evaluative exercises forecasted for the mentioned plans and that comprise multiple analysis perspectives, autonomous though complementary, determining the need to frame in the works of the Evaluation of the Mais Centro Implementation under NRSF's Strategy for 2007-2008, the reading and inclusion of those evaluations results, with possible contact points relatively to its subject – depending on its availability – taking into account the synergies, interactions and complementarities established among them.

**Table 2. Main Objectives of the Mais Centro Implementation Evaluation**

Typology	Objectives
<b>Evaluation Global Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Improve the quality, the effectiveness, and the consistency of the funds intervention and the OP strategies and achievement regarding specific structural problems that affect the Member-States and the considered regions, bearing in mind the objective of sustainable development and strategic environmental evaluation.</li> <li>➤ Improve the quality, the effectiveness, and the consistency of the achieved operations with the support from community funds of a structural character.</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives of the Evaluations of an operational nature</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Support the Operational Programme monitoring.</li> <li>➤ Analyse the Operational Programme interventions implementation (...) and suggest recommendations to improve its performance.</li> </ul>
<b>General Objectives of the Mais Centro Implementation Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contribute for the Programme's implementation improvement by analysing its different implementation phases, namely the dissemination, the analysis on the admissibility and acceptability of the beneficiaries and operations, the operations eligibility and selection, the Programme's internal management, the articulation of the interventions included in the Thematic Agendas for Territory Valorisation and Competitiveness Factors, and the implementation monitoring.</li> <li>➤ Elaborate a first comparison between the implementation mechanisms and the approved projects with the expected initially.</li> <li>➤ Present conclusions and recommendations within the scope of the implementation mechanisms considered relevant to ensure the prosecution of the set objectives – ensuring the presentation of outcomes in good time aiming at introducing sustainable improvements in the Mais Centro implementation and allowing increasing the levels of effectiveness and efficiency of the co-financed interventions.</li> <li>➤ Contribute to the Global Evaluation of the NRSF Implementation, namely the systematization of the information related to the good practises and the identification of the dynamics explaining factors for the Mais Centro implementation.</li> <li>➤ Set articulation and develop complementarities with the remaining NRSF evaluation exercises and the ongoing OP.</li> </ul>
<b>Specific Objectives of the Mais Centro Implementation Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Understand the way the implementation prosecutes the strategic priorities and the defined objectives;</li> <li>➤ Find out the relevance of the Mais Centro management and organization model, analyse the institutional empowerment of the actors evolved in its implementation and assess the way the relevant articulation mechanisms are being ensured;</li> <li>➤ Assess the adequacy of the implementation instruments adopted to the prosecution of the Mais Centro strategic priorities;</li> <li>➤ Find out the response level from the IS to the Mais Centro management needs;</li> <li>➤ Analyse the way the suggestions from the Strategic Environmental Evaluation are being accepted and from the <i>Ex-ante</i> Evaluation regarding the implementation.</li> </ul>

Source: Reference Terms of the Mais Centro Implementation Evaluation – Centro Regional Operational Programme under the NRSF Strategy for 2007-2008 (2009); NRSF Global Evaluation Plan (2009)

18. Considering the objectives table, the evaluation results should have a usability that allow:
- The eventual formulation of adjustments on the ruling and strategic framework – General Regulation (GR) ERDF/CF and Specific Regulations (SR) and additional normative instruments according to its strategic priorities and the NRSF's strategic priorities;
  - The eventual formulation of adjustments on the competencies delegation agreements between the Management Authority and the Intermediate Entities and on the articulation procedures with those entities in order to improve its effectiveness and efficiency;
  - The eventual formulation of adjustments on the reviewing and selection criteria for the depuration methodologies for final classifications on the projects selection;

- The eventual formulation of adjustments on the control and management system, namely regarding the *Manual of Beneficiaries Procedures* and the *Manual of Internal Procedures* and management procedures, as well as on the way it is disseminated and on the applications selection and assessment model.
  - The eventual formulation of changes on the expected achievement and outcome indicators framework verifying its relevance and capability for the production of information that mirrors the prosecution level of the Programme's objectives;
  - The eventual formulation of essential adjustments on the Programme's text.
19. Therefore, one may assume that not only the evaluation process must be made with a strong participation and in close interaction with the stakeholders, but also that the results in terms of conclusions and recommendations must meet the current needs and priorities. Consequently this exercise is considered relevant only if it produces dynamics that lead to value creation in terms of information and knowledge, and if it becomes a reinforcement on the organizational empowerment of the Programme's actors.
20. The need for this approach within the scope of the Regional Programme Implementation Evaluation under the NRSF Strategy for 2007-2008 is reinforced by the dimension, diversity and quality of the evolved stakeholders, namely:
- The users of the evaluation conclusions and recommendations: the NRSF Ministerial Steering Committee; the Mainland Regional OP Ministerial Steering Committee; the Centro OP Management Authority;
  - The evaluation works Monitoring Group that integrates elements from the Management Authorities of the Centro OP, the Financial Institute for Regional Development and from the NRSF Observatory;
  - The entities with responsibilities regarding the NRSF governance and the Programme: Mais Centro Monitoring Committee; NRSF Observatory, entity responsible for the ERDF and Cohesion Fund Financial and Operational Monitoring; Financial Institute for Regional Development;
  - The EC in the quality of entity that manages the Funds application together with the Member-State;
  - The Funds beneficiaries, in the usage of the national and community regulations, that legally contextualizes them;
  - The citizens in general, considering the principles of transparency and responsibility.
21. Having for a reference the objectives table of this study, the Technical Specifications had determined a set of evaluation questions that have functioned as a methodological guide. These questions were organized according to the logical sequence General Objective → Specific Objectives → Evaluation Criteria → Evaluation Questions.
22. From this referential and with the purpose of increasing the objectives clarity and the subject of each question, increasing the results utility (in a process-improvement perspective) and reinforcing the evaluation focus on the implementation methods, four main specific sub-objectives were set and the number of the questions, and approach were extended. Thus, the Specific Objectives matrix, Evaluation Criteria, and Evaluation Questions was taken under review and the number of questions changed to 25.

Table 3. Objectives, Sub-Objectives, Criteria and Questions for Mais Centro Implementation Evaluation

Specific Objectives (Technical Specifications)	Specific Sub-objectives	Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Questions
Understand in what way the implementation prosecutes the strategic priorities and the defined objectives	1. Contribute for a better achievement of the strategic priorities and objectives	Adequacy and Effectiveness	1.1. Do the applications correspond to the expected profile for each axis and for each intervention typologies?
			1.2. What is the penetration level of the measures, actions, and projects in the different recipients segments?
			1.3. Do the regulations meet the Mais Centro needs and objectives once they were developed after the Programme?
			1.4. In what way is the Programme handling the Environment horizontal theme?
			1.5. In what way is the Programme handling the Equal Opportunities horizontal theme?
Assess the adequacy of the implementation instruments adopted to the prosecution of the Mais Centro strategic priorities  Find out the response level from the Information System to the Mais Centro management needs	2. Contribute for the Programme's implementation improvement	Adequacy Relevance Effectiveness Efficiency	Control and management system
			2.1. Are the solutions adopted to operate with the Mais Centro management adequate, allowing gains from the resources efficiency and from the interventions effectiveness improvement?
			Dissemination and Promotion
			2.2. Does the monitoring and management system guarantee efficiency from the various management circuits and from the control devices?
			2.3. Do the dissemination mechanisms used for the stimulation of applications presentations reveal themselves adequate for the dissemination of supports near the target-groups?
Selection and assessment	2.4. Are the approved selection criteria being the most adequate for the defined objectives and measures?		
	2.5. Are the selection criteria being used uniformly at the densification/implementation level, step by step?		
Find out the response level from the Information System to the Mais Centro management needs	2. Contribute for the Programme's implementation improvement	Adequacy Relevance Effectiveness Efficiency	Monitoring
			2.6. Are the monitoring processes of the projects on-going and <i>ex-post</i> results the most effective? What complementary mechanisms can be triggered to make sure the objectives will be achieved and that the conditions that allowed the approval will be respected?
Find out the response level from the Information System to the Mais Centro management needs	2. Contribute for the Programme's implementation improvement	Adequacy Relevance Effectiveness Efficiency	Information System
			2.7. Have the electronic instruments (for applications submission, payment requests, etc.) been simple and with the requirement level in accordance with the projects dimension?
Assess the relevance of the Mais Centro management and organization model, analyse the institutional empowerment of the actors evolved in its implementation and assess the way the relevant articulation mechanisms are being ensured	3. Contribute for the improvement of the articulation mechanisms management and organization model	Adequacy Relevance Effectiveness Efficiency	2.8. Does the information system ensure, in good time and with quality, the release of the adequate information and necessary to a good management performance?
			2.9. Are the outcome and physical achievement indicators relevant and with quality, namely regarding credibility of data collection gathering?
			3.1. Are the articulation mechanisms between the Mais Centro and the Human Potential OP being adequately implemented on what relates to the inclusion of the four horizontal theme from the cohesion European policy (Training, Equal Opportunities, Social Inclusion and Knowledge Society)?
			3.2. Are the articulation mechanisms between the Mais Centro and the Territory Valorisation OP being adequately implemented on what relates to the implementation of cohesion policies, and territory valorisation, namely the cities policies and the closure of instruments networks for the national urban systems cohesion and consolidation?
			3.3. Are the articulation mechanisms between the Mais Centro and the Competitiveness Factors OP being adequately implemented at a complementary level, and leverage of the co-financed operations?
			3.4. Are the articulation mechanisms between the Mais Centro and the Intermediate Entities being adequately implemented?
			3.5. Are the articulation mechanisms between the Programme's management structure and the reception entity being adequately implemented (e.g. the OP resorts to the Steering Committee for the Centro Regional Development for the analysis on the regional impact criterion of the candidate projects to the Support Scheme)?
3.6. Are the articulation mechanisms between the regional decision-entities and sectoral being adequately implemented?			
3.7. Do the used contract-based model contribute to meet the concerns identified in the <i>ex-ante</i> evaluation, in order to establish strategic contract logics for a sub-regional scale?			
Analyse the way the suggestions from the Strategic Environmental Evaluation is being accepted, and from the <i>ex-ante</i> Evaluation regarding the implementation	4. Analyse the way ruling guidelines and referrals are being included	Adequacy	4.1. Do the programme's implementation solutions ensure the fulfilment of the norms related to marketplaces?
			4.2. Do the programme's implementation solutions ensure the fulfilment of the norms related to competition?
			4.3. Do the programme's implementation solutions ensure the fulfilment of the norms related to environment under the projects selection criteria?
			4.4. To what extent are the <i>ex-ante</i> evaluation recommendations, with impact on the implementation, being implemented?

Source: Evaluation Team (2010)

### III. METHODOLOGIES FOR THE EVALUATION

23. The evaluation exercises on the policy instruments for socioeconomic development require the adoption of multi-dimensional methodological approaches that manage to comprise and understand, in an integrated way, the multiplicity of questions associated to it and the various perspectives under which these may be observed.
24. The methodological approach for the Evaluation of the Mais Centro Implementation has taken this need and is supported by a diverse range of methodologies for collecting and analyzing information.
25. The selection and application of these methodologies have resulted from a careful reading of the technical implications associated with each evaluation question, so that in each one were applied the most adequate instruments.
26. In this sense, it was conceived a Toolbox of methodologies to achieve the Study objectives. In the selection of methodologies to use, it was sought to combine "classical" evaluation techniques for socioeconomic programmes, such as the interviews, or the documents analysis, and information systems information, using "innovative" instruments as is the case of the Beneficiary Web Survey.

Table 4. *Toolbox of Methodologies for Evaluation*

Designation	Description
<b>Documental Gathering and Analysis</b>	The back-office work consisted of the identification, selection and collection of reports, regulations, application forms, technical studies and other documents that report to global strategic guidelines, sectoral and territorial, or relating to the Mais Centro management and to other interventions under the NSRF. Subsequently, the analysis of documentary sources collected took place, trying to filter, summarize, and systematize the most relevant information contained therein.
<b>Information Systems Analysis</b>	The collection of data from the IS of Mais Centro and NRSF's supplemented by statistical information from various official sources, was a basic methodology for the preparation of the Study. Besides the Programme's physical and financial implementation levels, within this evaluation, is also of particular relevance to obtain updated data related to the remaining indicators for monitoring operations, the applications submitted and its respective state, the location of projects and the types of beneficiaries. Several statistical techniques were used allowing them to transform the information gathered from the information systems into indicators.
<b>Semi-Structured individual interviews</b>	These are interviews whose speakers are individuals/representatives of entities, who for their role and their knowledge, appear to be relevant to help explaining to the Evaluation Team the issues that characterize the object of the study. The working model of this methodology consisted of individual interviews, according to a semi-structured model, based on a script of pre-defined questions, but open and flexible enough to incorporate other issues considered relevant.
<b>Focus Group</b>	The Focus Group methodology is referred at EVALSED (Evaluating Socio Economic Development) as a suitable method for conducting evaluations of interventions promoted by the Structural Funds, being widely tested, applied and developed as an instrument of qualitative research, which through processes of careful samples definition and refined drawing of input/output relations of information is obtained volumes of qualitative information that can become a pattern and be used with a high degree of reliability and representation. Using this method of information gathering was essential to have a credible and reliable information source, supplementing the quantitative and qualitative information obtained through the other methodological tools. Given their performance time, it also aimed at validating the reached conclusions.
<b>Beneficiary Web Survey</b>	It consisted of the elaboration, collection and processing of questionnaires to the Programme's recipients. The application of this online questionnaire methodology has many advantages for the evaluation process, particularly in terms of the level of participation of beneficiaries, the increased speed of communication, processing and analyzing the results, saving resources and consequently, the possibility to extend the inquiry to the entire universe of beneficiaries.

Source: Evaluation Team (2010)

27. Interviews were conducted with representatives from several entities considered relevant to the evaluation objectives. These interviews followed a semi-structured model, based on a script set in advance. There were also several follow up meetings with stakeholders responsible for managing and monitoring the Programme.

**Table 5. Interviews and Work Meetings performed by the Evaluation Team**

Entities	
Management Authority	Steering Committee
	Operative Unit 1
	Operative Unit 2
	Operative Unit 3
	Operative Unit 4
	Operative Unit 5
	Project Team for the Intermunicipal Communities Relations Coordination
	Project Team for the Documental and Physical On-Site Verification
	Communication
	Project, Computing and Information System Team
Regional Coordination and Development Commission	
Centre for Regional Dynamics Observation	
NRSF Observatory	
Financial Institute for Regional Development	
Inspectorate-General for Finances	
Institute for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Assistance	
Portugal's Tourism Institute	
Portuguese Investment and External Trade Agency	
Innovation Agency	
Management Authority of the Human Potential Operational Programme	
Management Authority of the Territory Valorisation Operational Programme	
Management Authority of the Competitiveness Factors Operational Programme	
Ministry for Public Works, Transport and Communications	
Ministry for Culture	
Ministry for Environment and Land Use Management	

Source: Evaluation Team (2010)

28. There were also two Focus Group sessions, both held at the Centro Regional Coordination and Development Commission facilities: on June 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, which was attended by all the Intermunicipal Communities (CIM) of the Centro Region with the exception of the Dão-Lafões CIM; on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2011, which was attended by the various agencies that make up the Management Authority (Steering Committee, Organic Unit, Project Team for the Coordination of Relations with the CIM, Project Team for Physical and Documental On-Site Verification, Project, Computing and Information System Team).
29. As stipulated on the work schedule and according to the guidelines agreed with the Monitoring Group (GA) during the Study third phase, the methodological steps related to the Beneficiary Web Survey were fulfilled.
30. The following table presents by major types of beneficiaries, the size of the inquiry universe (number of surveys sent) and the number of answers. Taking into account the total number of valid answers (421), the margin of error associated with the results obtained is less than 5% for a confidence level of 95%

**Table 6. Resume of the Surveys Sent and Answers Obtained by Typology of Beneficiaries**

Typology of Beneficiaries	Universe	Answers
	(n.º)	(n.º)
A. Central Administration + public enterprises, joint capital and concessionaires of public services/State	56	36
B. Regional Development Associations + entrepreneurial associations, trade associative structures, cooperatives, business innovation centres	123	46
C. Foundations, associations and other non-profitable collective associations (public or private) + other non-profitable entities, public or private	195	67
D. Enterprises and enterprises clusters	1.606	159
E. Municipalities, municipalities associations or intermunicipal associations + municipal/services enterprises and concessionaires of municipal services, intermunicipal or multi-municipal	247	94
F. Institutions, entities, laboratories, organisms, public and private, higher education and R&D	46	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.273</b>	<b>421</b>

Source: Evaluation Team (2010)

## IV. SYNTHESIS OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### IV.1. Main and Specific Conclusions of the Evaluation Process

31. This current chapter highlights the conclusions and the recommendations considered the most relevant from the whole evaluation process.
32. The density and the specificity of the Study's 25 evaluation questions – focusing on areas such as dissemination, of information analysis of the beneficiaries and operations admissibility and acceptability, operation selection process, the Programme's internal management, the articulation with the intermediate entities with whom the Management Authority agreed the delegation of competencies, the articulation with the interventions integrated in the Thematic Agenda for Territory Valorisation (ATVT) and in the Thematic Agenda for Competitiveness Factors (ATFC), and the implementation monitoring – led to a vast number of specific conclusions in the answers introduced by the Evaluation Team, as described in Table 8.
33. In this context, the following table highlights the six main conclusions of the Study, structured according to the specific objectives of this Evaluation.

**Table 7. Main Conclusions of the Evaluation Study**

Conclusion	Description
<b>Adequate integration of the context changes</b>	➤ The Mais Centro management integrated, in an adequate way, the changes that occurred from the new ruling referential and from the Programme's new intervention scope that now includes a vaster territory and a wider range of beneficiaries.
<b>Applications correspond to the expected profile for each axis and typology</b>	➤ The dynamics of demand seen at Mais Centro during the first phase of the Programme's implementation allow saying that the profile of the presented and approved applications correspond to what was expected.
<b>Programme's implementation match the expectations</b>	➤ The implementation of Mais Centro alongside the operations and projects life cycle phases show that they have occurred with relative regularity and in accordance to the expectations.
<b>Management System and Monitoring with efficiency gains and effectiveness improvement</b>	➤ The solutions adopted to implement Mais Centro management and monitoring allowed, in overall terms, resources efficiency gains and interventions effectiveness improvement.
<b>Implementation of the articulation mechanisms with inadequacies</b>	➤ Overall, the established articulation mechanisms between Mais Centro and other entities/institutions have been implemented and are working though with some inadequacies related with the Management Authority of the Thematic OP (share of information, articulation of the competitions schedules) and with the intermediate entities and the sectoral regional decision entities (information sharing, slowness of the processes).
<b>Integration of the horizontal themes can be improved</b>	➤ From the formal obligations stand point, Mais Centro incorporated the provisions imposed by the European and Portuguese legislation in the management and monitoring procedures. But the contribution of the Programme for the Environment and Equal Opportunities horizontal themes has not come up to its full potentialities, particularly regarding the compliance of the Strategic Environmental Assessment objectives, the collection of desegregated indicators by gender, and the communication with the discriminated targets.

34. Next, it is introduced the synthesis of the main conclusions of the Evaluation Study, with reference to the specific conclusions related to each evaluation question that was in its origin<sup>1</sup>, as well as the recommendations associated to it and that are mentioned in the following chapter (IV.2), presented in detail in table 9.

### GLOBAL CONCLUSION 1. Adequate Inclusion of Context Changes

35. Mais Centro Management adequately included the changes resultant from the new ruling referential, from the new scope of the Programme's intervention – that now comprises a wider territory and a wider range of beneficiaries – and from the fragile economic-financial context observed at the NRSF starting phase. The solutions adopted for implementing the Programme's management allowed, in global terms, resources efficiency gains and the interventions effectiveness improvement. [21A](#) [21B](#) [21C](#) [21D](#) [21E](#) [21F](#) [21G](#) [21H](#) [21I](#)
36. Although it was verified a time gap between the Programme's conception and the specific regulations' elaboration, there are not many relevant gaps, which lead to the conclusion that the specific regulations'

<sup>1</sup> For example, [21C](#) refers to the specific conclusion "C" associated to the Evaluation Question 2.1. Table 8 introduces the specific conclusions.

objectives are consistent with the Mais Centro objectives and that the typologies of investment predicted contribute to the prosecution of the major guidelines. [13A](#) [13B](#) [13C](#) [13D](#)

37. There are different complexity levels between the specific regulations. The situations highlighted are those, whose associated objectives and typologies contribute for the prosecution of the Programme's objectives, assumed by various axels. The situations of higher "complexity" relate to the typologies that correspond to the Cities Policy (Urban Networks for Competitiveness and Innovation and Partnerships for Urban Regeneration) and Territorial Mobility, as well as to Cultural Heritage and Cultural Facilities Network. There is also a higher complexity associated to some specific regulations and to its field implementation and, at the same time, an increase of the application quality and the adaptation ability to new intervention paradigms by the beneficiaries. [13A](#) [13B](#)
38. The Mais Centro ruling structure has also revealed capacity to adapt itself to the evolution of the contextual circumstances, namely when faced with the need to stimulate the implementation in an adverse economic and financial context. [13D](#)

**Recommendations:** [01](#) [02](#) [06](#)

## GLOBAL CONCLUSION 2. Applications Correspond to the Expected Profile for each Axis and Typology

39. Broadly, the dynamics of demand for Mais Centro during the first phase of the Programme's implementation allow saying that the profile of the presented and approved applications meet the expectations and, at the same time, the feedback from the various groups of beneficiaries was extremely positive. This situation is highlighted by the intensity of applied investment throughout the totality of the Call for Proposals that, in some cases, went beyond the amount of expected investment for the period 2007-2013. [11A](#) [11C](#)
40. On what concerns the profile of the beneficiaries that had applied, there are also no surprises, as they mirror the admissibility conditions. The demand was mostly by enterprises that applied to the Support Schemes. For the remaining cases, Local Administration appears as the main promoter and the only one covering the totality of the specific regulations. [12A](#) [12C](#)
41. In fact, Local Administrations – more used to organize application procedures and with great ability to respond the greater levels of demand and selectivity of the current programming cycle – are clearly highlighted within the beneficiaries' universe, being associated to high admissibility rates in the scope of diverse specific regulations. [11B](#)
42. Another conclusion is that the demand for support under the Support Schemes presents some characteristics that seem to indicate a potential contribution for the renewal of the productive specialization profile and for the internationalization of the economy. [12B](#)

**Recommendations:** [12](#)

## GLOBAL CONCLUSION 3. Programme's Implementation in Accordance with the Expectations

43. The implementation of Mais Centro in the period 2007-2008, throughout the projects and operations different life cycle phases showed that those had occurred with relative regularity and in accordance to the expectations. [22A](#) [22B](#) [22C](#) [22D](#) [22E](#) [22F](#) [22G](#) [22H](#) [22I](#)
44. It stands out that the selection criteria adopted for the implementation of the analysis on the applied projects merit, comprehensively cover the established objectives and the quantified measures for the Axels results indicators, aiming likewise at achieving the most global objectives of the Programme and the NRSF's guiding principles. [24A](#) [24B](#) [24C](#)
45. At the same time, the standardization of the merit analysis in the specific regulations, which has criteria with subjective analysis references or without a scoring scale, has been ensured by the Technical Secretariats through the definition of internal references to be used by the technicians that analyse the applications. It is possible to say that the changes that occurred within the merit references, with impacts on the standardization of applying the selection criteria in each specific regulation during the evaluation period, result from the need

to adapt the criteria to different typologies of the same specific regulation and from the adjustment of the respective weighting, in order to privilege its contribution for the specific regulation objectives or to adjust the regional scope to the characteristics of sub-regional areas, revealing themselves globally relevant. [25A](#) [25B](#)

46. Regarding the Communication Plan, this has been implemented as expected, presenting highly positive monitoring indicators, and the dissemination mechanisms that are being used are considered adequate to the objective of attracting more applications. [23A](#) [23B](#) [23C](#) [23D](#) [23E](#) [23F](#)

**Recommendations:** [07](#) [10](#) [11](#) [12](#) [13](#) [14](#) [25](#) [26](#)

#### GLOBAL CONCLUSION 4. Management and Monitoring System with Efficiency Gains and Effectiveness Improvement

47. The solutions adopted to implement Mais Centro management and monitoring allowed obtaining resources efficiency gains and the interventions effectiveness improvement.
48. The majority of those responsible for Mais Centro and the intermediate entities that act in the scope of the Support Schemes consider that the mechanisms and procedures expected for the monitoring of projects results are adequate and sufficient. The adopted procedures for verifying the results in the projects closure phase are developed under physical and documental verification *in loco*. The actions developed to date correspond to the accorded regulations. The *ex-post* verification assumes a higher complexity, considering that the real impact of the project is to be measured during its exploration phase. [26A](#) [26B](#) [26C](#) [26D](#)
49. The electronic tools are adequate and demanding and in accordance with the norms in force. There was a huge progress by the information system that supports Mais Centro management when comparing it to the previous programming period, but one can conclude that this does not yet ensure the production on time and with the information quality necessary to any good management performance. [27A](#) [27B](#) [28A](#) [28B](#) [28C](#) [28D](#) [28E](#)
50. As regarding the specific and general objectives of each Axcel, the battery of indicators set in the programming document presents a strong consistency level. Nevertheless, the inadequacy level of the Axis indicators battery seems to be evident, estimating that half of the typologies do not match any indicator. There are also some indicators that apparently will not have any relevance for the monitoring of any typology, when confronted with the specific regulation and respective operations typologies. [29A](#) [29B](#) [29C](#) [29D](#)
51. The solutions for Mais Centro implementation guarantee the norms compliance relatively to the Marketplaces and competition. The established procedures are adequate in terms of objectivity and applicability, during the various phases of the candidature/project life cycle. [41A](#) [41B](#) [41C](#) [41D](#) [42A](#) [42B](#) [42C](#)
52. The Mais Centro governance model was structured respecting the normative guidelines – community and national -, incorporating the established guidelines and, that way, the innovations on the governance that did not exist in the management model held at CSF III. It is now completely implemented. However, from the monitoring and strategic counselling point of view, the *ex-ante* evaluation recommendations are not being followed. [44A](#) [44B](#)

**Recommendations:** [06](#) [15](#) [17](#) [18](#) [19](#) [20](#) [21](#)

#### GLOBAL CONCLUSION 5. Implementation of the Articulation Mechanisms with Inadequacies

53. Globally, the articulation mechanisms established between Mais Centro and other entities/bodies have been implemented and are resulting, though some inadequacies can be observed.
54. From the analysis of the expected articulation mechanisms between Mais Centro and the Operational Programme for Human Potential (POPH) has resulted the conclusion that the results achieved are not meaningful enough. As for the expected mechanisms of articulation with the Operational Programme for Territory Enhancement (POVT), these have been implemented and doing well despite some one or other case of problematic situations. The articulation between the Mais Centro and the Factors of Competitiveness OP (COMPETE) happens mainly at the level of the Support Schemes and Collective Efficiency Strategies, but it is

in the first case that the articulation reveals itself more intense and globally with results that are more positive. However, there is still scope for improvement on what concerns the annual programming for the launch of the call for proposals. [31A](#) [32A](#) [32B](#) [32C](#) [32D](#) [33A](#) [33B](#) [33C](#)

55. The articulation mechanisms established between the Management Authority and the Intermediate Entities are being developed in order to respond the defined procedures and identified in the documents elaborated by the Management Authority in the delegated competencies scheme, though some shortages can be seen. In turn, the articulation areas and domains between the Mais Centro and the Steering Committee for the Centro's Regional Development assume a multiplicity of aspects, but the current articulation and implementation mechanisms between the two entities are adequate, being respected the functions segregation principle. [34A](#) [34B](#) [34C](#) [34D](#) [34E](#) [34F](#) [34G](#) [34H](#) [34I](#) [34J](#) [35A](#)
56. The articulation mechanisms established between the Management Authority and the ministries have adequately responded to the procedures established by the specific regulations as well as to the cooperation protocol accorded with the Directorate-General for Economic Activities, though some shortages considering the articulation were identified, resultant from compulsory procedures established by the specific regulations during the proposals appreciation phase. [36A](#) [36B](#) [36C](#) [36D](#) [36E](#)
57. Lastly, the contract-based model set for Mais Centro followed the normative scheme and the established guidelines. Therefore, from the point of view of its conception, it contributes to respond the main concerns identified in the *ex-ante* evaluation by setting strategic contract logics at the Centre's sub-regions scale. One can identify some aspects there were not successfully achieved using that model formatting and in the way it is being implemented. Those are specially related to the strategic dimension and to the territorial extent of the approved investments during this evaluation reference period [37A](#) [37B](#) [37C](#) [37D](#) [37E](#)

**Recommendations:** [03](#) [04](#) [05](#) [08](#) [09](#) [10](#) [22](#) [23](#) [24](#)

## GLOBAL CONCLUSION 6. Integration of the Horizontal Themes with Scope for Improvement

58. From the formal obligations standpoint, the Mais Centro incorporated the dispositions imposed by the community and national legislation in the management and control procedures. However, the Programme's contribution for the Environment and Equal Opportunities horizontal themes is behind its potentialities, namely on what regards the achievement of the Strategic Environmental Assessment objectives, the collection of desegregated indicators by gender and the communication with the discriminated targets.
59. It was established the mechanisms necessary to the Mais Centro management for the norms achievement related to the environment within the context of the projects selection criteria, being concluded that these mechanisms were implemented and have been working adequately. However, from the critical analysis undertaken to the sustainability and environmental monitoring indicators seems evident that the Mais Centro contribution for the Environment Horizontal Priority was not very significant by the end of 2009, considering the overall low levels of contracted performance. [14A](#) [14B](#) [43A](#)
60. On what concerns Equal Opportunities, the Mais Centro incorporated the dispositions requested by the community and national legislation in the control and management procedures. However, though it is not a major objective in the Thematic Agenda for the Territory's Valorisation – in which the Mais Centro OP is integrated – it is estimated that the Programme's contribution for this priority is behind its potentialities. [15A](#) [15B](#) [15C](#)

**Recommendations:** [06](#) [14](#) [15](#) [16](#)

**Table 1. Evaluation Study Specific Conclusions**

Evaluation Questions	Ref.	Specific Conclusions
<b>QA1.1: Do the applications meet the expected profile for each axis and for each intervention typology?</b>	11A	The investment amount competed for the various Calls for Proposals exceeded in four Axels out the five, the investment amount foreseen for the period 2007-2010.
	11B	The existence of high admissibility rates (over 80%) in the Specific Regulations for Territorial Mobility, Cultural Heritage, SAMA, Equipments, and School Network Re-qualification is tributary because the autarchies are well prepared in the organization of the application processes and have shown great ability in responding the high requirement and selectivity levels that characterize the current programming cycle.
	11C	The Specific Regulations for Water Urban Cycle and Active Management of Protected and Classified Areas reveal admissibility problems.
<b>QA 1.2: What was the measures, actions, and projects penetration level into the recipients' different relevant sectors?</b>	12A	The investment candidate to the Programme headed mainly to Axels 1 and 3.
	12B	The search for support under the Support Schemes has some characteristics that indicate a potential contribution for the productive specialization profile renewal and for the economy's internationalization.
	12C	The applications structure presented by promoter typology does not differ significantly from the approved operations structures, specially when it is taken into account the total investment.
<b>QA 1.3: Do the regulations meet the Mais Centro's needs and objectives?</b>	13A	One can verify different complexity levels among the Specific Regulations, particularly the situations whose objectives and typologies contribute for the Programme's objectives prosecution assumed by various axels. The situations with greater "complexity" regard the typologies correspondent to the Cities Policy – RUCI and PRU – and Territorial Mobility and to the Cultural Equipments Network.
	13B	There is a bigger complexity associated to some Specific Regulations and implementation on field and, simultaneously, an increase on the applications quality and the adaptation ability by the beneficiaries to new intervention paradigms.
	13C	The general objective from Axel 4 related to " <i>minoring the existing pollution effects</i> " does not match any of the four correspondent specific objectives.
	13D	The Mais Centro ruling structure revealed a learning ability in adapting itself to the evolution of the involving circumstances, especially when confronted with the need of fostering the implementation in a period in which the financial and socioeconomic context has revealed itself disadvantageous.
<b>QA 1.4: How is the programme dealing with the environment horizontal theme?</b>	14A	Mais Centro has been trying to follow all the recommendations by NRSF's Strategic Environmental Assessment.
	14B	There are several recommendations that have no available information at all and some others that their monitoring indicators still have considerable scope for progress.
<b>QA 1.5: How is the programme dealing with the equal opportunities horizontal theme?</b>	15A	There are positive aspects, formal in nature, that in practical terms are being difficult to implement, namely on what regards the collection of desegregated performance indicators by gender or the applications criteria validation.
	15B	Lack of communication actions headed to the discriminated targets.
	15C	Practically there are null complementarities in this domain between the Mais Centro and the POPH due to a lack of articulation between the respective Management Authorities.
<b>QA 2.1: Are the undertaken solutions to implement Mais Centro management adequate, allowing resources efficiency gains, and the interventions effectiveness improvement?</b>	21A	The Mais Centro governance model reproduces the regulations in force defined, particularly on what regards the functions segregation between the MAs Operative Units. This requirement, which is in the NRSF's governance model, limits the flexibility in the attribution of resources during the Programme's life cycle, with consequences in the efficiency reduction in its implementation.
	21B	The Mais Centro governance model stresses a scope of flexibility for promoting the Programme's management efficiency, as well as the management effectiveness of the community funds..
	21C	The competencies delegation model in the Intermediate Entities seems to be adequate, inclusively by the competencies and resources exchange that it allows among the various involved entities, but it still has scope for improvement.
	21D	The main actors have seen the NRSF's ruling universe as an extra complexity.
	21E	The change in the economic context implied ruling changes with effect on the co-financing rates increase, in 2009, and in certain Specific Regulations and promoters typologies, in 2010, in order to increase the commitment and the implementation. These changes impose new challenges regarding the upkeep of the co-financed medium rates associated to the Axels and to the output and outcome goals achievement.
	21F	The competition modality with a limited period for the presentations of applications has been the one privileged by the Mais Centro, seeming adequate for intervention typologies that evolve the innovation fostering, a multiplicity of recipients and that has a high demand. However, it is not adequate for all intervention typologies.

Evaluation Questions	Ref.	Specific Conclusions
<b>QA 2.1: Are the undertaken solutions to implement Mais Centro management adequate, allowing resources efficiency gains, and the interventions effectiveness improvement?</b>	21G	In the scope of the support schemes, the AAC constitutes a powerful ruling instrument for registered intense demand but, as they are set in national terms, are not reflecting in the selectivity conditions the adequate incorporation of the regional objectives and priorities.
	21H	On what relates to the documental and procedural requirements, the formalities associated to the contract fulfilment "absorb" the time sparing, and the resources achieved during the candidature phase, allowed by the softness of the requirements in this stage. Nevertheless, the contracts formalisation contributes to strengthen the Programme's efficiency conditions and performance.
	21I	Recognized as an added value for the information transparency and operations, the dematerialisation of processes and procedures do not mean less effort and less work for the technical structure and for the promoters.
<b>Qa 2.2: Has the management and monitoring system ensured the efficiency of the various management circuits and control tools?</b>	22A	The applications presentations and submission are simpler that in past programming periods.
	22B	The analysis on the applications merit is based on score tables connected to the relevant selection criteria. There are still some difficulties when the criteria are more qualitative in nature, situations in which general guidelines are made available in order to provide a homogeneous analysis by the technicians.
	22C	The financing contract celebration is the phase that apparently reveals an added complexity and documental requirements comparing to previous programming periods. The supports formal agreement allow, however, clarifying the obligations by the beneficiaries and contributes to ensure the programme's efficiency and performance.
	22D	During the expenses authorizations and payment requests procedures, the compliance of the norms related to the Marketplaces consumes a substantial part of the effort developed by the support technical teams.
	22E	The provision of the various information system modules has been progressive, though not always on time, and has facilitated the tasks to it associated, ensuring progresses in the management processes efficiency.
	22F	The average decision time on the applications has been significantly higher to the expected in the call for proposals though the majority of the interviewees find it too short, whether from the Intermediate Entities' side, as from the Management Authority.
	22G	As regards the adequacy of the resources related to the Programme's technical support structure, there is some pressure on them at some stages of the implementation.
	22H	The new requirements for the collection and compilation of the base information related to the OP performances implied the output standardization produced by the autonomous information systems. The information compilation for the report has burden the technical structure.
22I	In some areas, it was identified a lack of human resources (Communication and the Projects Team for Documental and Physical Verification <i>in loco</i> ), as well as legal support specialized in Internal Control.	
<b>QA 2.3: Are the dissemination mechanisms used to foster the applications presentation adequate for the supports dissemination near the target?</b>	23A	Privilege for electronic media for the dissemination near the target audiences and for accessing the information by the beneficiaries.
	23B	Financial resources are enough for the communication strategy implementation.
	23C	The absence of a newsletter for too long after the Programme to be in force – due to delays in the implementation – constitutes a communication strategy weakness for many beneficiaries, who still do not know that it exists.
	23D	The Communication Plan exceeded already a significant part of the goals initially proposed.
	23E	Lack of human resources for the communication area.
	23F	Demand (applications) not adequate for the operations typologies eligible at Mais Centro.
<b>QA 2.4: Are the approved selection criteria the most adequate for the set goals and objectives?</b>	24A	Co-existence of too different situations in the structure and in the selection criteria nature. In parallel with transversal criteria and without direct association with the objectives and goals of the Axel/Programme coexist globally well defined criteria focusing and comprising defined objectives and goals, in wide raging aspects.
	24B	Predominance, in each Specific Regulation, of criteria headed for some specific objectives of an Axel and corresponding quantified goals for criteria that contribute for a multiplicity of objectives/indicators, globally enhancing a criteria focus.

Evaluation Questions	Ref.	Specific Conclusions
<b>QA 2.4: Are the approved selection criteria the most adequate for the set goals and objectives?</b>	24C	Existence of criteria that converge to the Axle's general objectives, though without quantitative correspondence for the associated indicators. The connection to the indicators happens more often, in these cases, through the investment typologies and eligibility conditions of the projects present in the call for proposals than through the criteria (this is specifically the case of the Support Schemes).
<b>QA2.5: Are the selection criteria being uniformly applied at the level of densification/ implementation, regulation by regulation?</b>	25A	Preponderance of criteria, subjective in nature, in most of the Specific Regulations and a lower presence of more objective criteria, despite the adopted solutions in the scope of some calls to provide more objectivity to the criteria. As set in the regulations and the calls, the criteria reveal scope for progress concerning its specification and require an important effort for harmonisation by the teams that analyse the applications.
	25B	In the SAMA Specific Regulation, the statistical analysis evidenced a high level of correlation among criteria in the two calls for the typologies associated to operations for streamlining Public Administration management and organization models. Criteria A and B integrate analysis components that, among others, are also affected by the C criterion, providing a transferability effect that reduces the capacity of the individual criteria discrimination in the merit analysis.
<b>QA 2.6: Are the processes set for the projects' <i>ex-post</i> and on-going results monitoring the most effective?</b>	26A	The results benchmarking through the monitoring indicators quantification is the most efficient and objective way to check the projects effectiveness, once guaranteed the cover of its objectives by such indicators. It was admitted the difficulty of selecting some indicators, validate the merit, and check the real impact of the projects at their exploration stage.
	26B	The representatives from the Intermediate Entities performing on the Support Schemes consider that the procedures are globally adequate but they also recognize that the monitoring function still has potential for evolution in the relevant structures.
	26C	At the Collective Efficiency Strategies, the results monitoring is quite incipient and the strategies framework Regulation does not include a precise specification on the procedures to be adopted in this area.
	26D	The Programme does not have an implemented mechanism to quantify in a regular (on going) basis the projects results.
<b>QA 2.7: Are the electronic tools simple and with a demanding level in accordance with the projects dimension?</b>	27A	The undertaken inquiry allowed checking that in the scope of the applications' elaboration and submission, the majority of the promoters assess positively the electronic application forms, whether considering the easiness of filing in the forms, whether considering the information relevance and requested documentation. They also assess positively the utility of the support guides to the beneficiaries.
	27B	The beneficiaries that presented projects of lower dimension assess positively the application forms though less favourable than the remaining. This is more evident in the case of non-entrepreneurs promoters.
<b>QA 2.8: Does the Information System ensure a prompt and with quality production of the information adequate and needed to a good management performance?</b>	28A	Positive evolution registered by the information system that support the management of the NRSF's financial instruments allowing the development using internal resources from complex systems and the harmonisation of the conceptual projects and the different systems implementation.
	28B	The Mais Centro information system was conceived in order to collect all the information that might be necessary for the Programme's management and control system functioning, making that information available as soon as possible to all the system users' network, independently of its location thus enclosing numerous potentialities.
	28C	Development of an information system with inner resources from the Management Authority, which allowed a permanent monitoring of its implementation, training closer to the users and a greater response adaptability and ability.
	28D	Difficulties by the management modules users accessing the information they need, fact that requires the use of contingency plans in place.
	28E	Obstacles to the Programme's external monitoring due to instability of the inter-operability with the national systems and impossibility of access to the Mais Centro information system – or to some global management modules of the Programme – by the other entities.
<b>QA 2.9: Are the result and physical indicators performance relevant and with quality namely regarding the data collection procedures reliability?</b>	29A	Strong consistency of the Axis indicators battery defined in the programming document relatively to the general and specific objectives of each Axis.
	29B	Inadequacy of Axis indicators battery concerning the Specific Regulations and respective operations typologies.
	29C	Procedures for indicators collection and verification and information system well defined (conceptual plan).
	29D	The Management Authority does not have now the information with relevance and quality and the levels of updating necessary for the Programme's physical performance monitoring.

Evaluation Questions	Ref.	Specific Conclusions
QA 3.1: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented, for the articulation between the Mais Centro and the POPH considering the inclusion of the four horizontal themes of the cohesion European policy (training, equal opportunities, social inclusion, and knowledge society)?	31A	Little articulation actions between the two Programmes, focused mainly on vocational training and with low relevant results.
QA 3.2: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the Mais Centro and the POVT considering the implementation of the cohesion policies and territory valorisation, namely the cities policy and the closure of the equipments networks for the cohesion and for the consolidation of the urban systems?	32A	Mais Centro and POVT Management Authorities effort at streamlining their relation by articulation mechanisms of informal character.
	32B	Some disintegration in the scheduling for the opening of the calls for proposals and in redirecting the applications between the thematic and regional OP (Water Urban Cycle, Structuring Equipments of the National Urban System).
	32C	Compliance of the assessing function of the complements and synergies among the operations by the GAT.
	32E	Impossible access from the Management Authorities to other Programme's information systems, being limited to general information coming from the NRSF.
QA 3.3: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the Mais Centro and the POFC at a complementarily level and co-financed operations leverage?	33A	The complementarily/ articulation is shown, mainly, in the aspects with articulation formal mechanisms (usually those more operational in nature) and it is incipient when such mechanisms are not formalised (in this case, if the articulation happens, it will be based on an informality that was found out but which depends on the volunteering level of the actors evolved).
	33B	The annual programmes for the launch of the call for proposals have been not made available on time (in 2010 has not been announced yet).
	33C	In the EEC, the articulation needs more dynamics during the implementation phase of the defined strategies.
QA 3.4: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the Mais Centro and the intermediate entities?	34A	The competencies delegation in intermediate entities, seen as specialised entities and with competencies within the Support Schemes, is a practise that has been contributing for the efficiency and for the effectiveness of the Mais Centro management in these typologies.
	34B	Procedures have not been done yet for periodic evaluations on the activities of the intermediate entities – Support Schemes through self-assessment report.
	34C	Need to reduce the medium time of analysis and communication of the decision to the beneficiary (Intermediate Entities – CIM).
	34D	Long time-frames for decision associated to the approval of the projects' financial and physical adjustments/ reprogramming. (Intermediate Entities-Support Schemes).
	34E	There is a straight articulation from the Mais Centro and the OI-CIM with all the Operative Units that integrate the technical secretariat being facilitated by the Projects Team Coordinator for the Intermunicipal Communities Relations.
	34F	The monitoring activity and conformity supervision by the technical secretariat for the delegated functions means a strong articulation with the OI-CIM and ensures the established procedures compliance, what is facilitated by using a common electronic platform.
QA 3.4: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the Mais Centro and the intermediate entities?	34G	Insufficient available training for the EAT for the OI-CIM attributions.
	34H	Information System with problems in the access and in the information loading in various modules, requiring procedures repetitions by the OI-CIM.
	34I	There is not a new version of the <i>Compliance Assessment</i> of the Description of the Management System and Mais Centro Control to allow a greater clarification of the functions and tasks to be performed by the EAT of the intermediate entities-CIM resultant from the new Addendum to the contract.
	34J	The " <i>Addendum to the Contract for Competencies Delegation with Global Subvention</i> " did not work out – during the short period since its entry into force -, in relevant differences in the procedures to be followed by the AG and by the OI-CIM, though a smaller interaction is observed due to the competencies avocation by the AG.
QA 3.5: : Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the programme's management structure and the host institution?	35A	The Steering Group for the Centre's Regional Development assesses the regional merit of the submitted projects by all companies that act in the Centre Region – including big companies – for all the Support Schemes in which the criterion can be applied.
QA 3.6: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the regional and sectoral decision-makers?	36A	It is consensual that the established articulation has contributed to validate the applications conformity and projects/operations implementation with the ruling scheme, which also results as a benefit for the decision and monitoring process.

Evaluation Questions	Ref.	Specific Conclusions
<b>QA 3.6: Are the mechanisms being adequately implemented for the articulation between the regional and sectoral decision-makers?</b>	36B	Slowness by some Ministries entities in issuing technical opinions.
	36C	Necessity of sectoral opinion issuing as admissibility condition in more than a third of the Specific Regulations (11), with no reference to the ministry's entity that should emit it, forwarding this matter for the MA, through proper norms or procedures.
	36D	There are no support guidelines for the elaboration of defined opinions, what has resulted in non-harmonised procedures by the involved sectoral that are particularly evident when it is about the same Specific Regulation.
	36E	There is no coordination between the Lisbon and Centro plan-regions in the technical opinions elaboration and issuing for the same thematic (in the case of the Oeste and Médio Tejo beneficiaries that are still connected to the Lisbon's plan-region).
<b>QA 3.7: Did the defined contract-based model contribute to respond the worries identified in the <i>ex-ante</i> evaluation in order to establish sub-regional strategic contract logics?</b>	37A	The PTD result from a late conformity of the sub-regional planning processes done by the CIM to the Mais Centro ruling specifications, not being ensured that they constitute synergetic and integrated projects.
	37B	It is not clear the achievement of an investment logic with inter and/or supramunicipal extent given the "municipalized" character from the approved operations profile by 2009.12.31 (predominant investment patterns obey to municipal logics).
	37C	Despite the established contract-based model has included a global investment pack for a NUTS III territory – identified in the PTD - , the developed listening consultation exercise allowed saying that those investments are seen as municipal in nature, to which correspond a municipalised financial envelope considered as defined since the beginning of the process and, therefore, not likely to suffer any change. Complementarily, those investments present a conventional profile.
	37D	The contract-based model has a strategic dimension, configured in a PTD that identifies the typologies and the operation to be contracted so it is not clear the adoption of competition logic, competitive in nature, for the achievement of those investments.
	37E	The applications evaluation process (merit analysis and evaluation criteria associated to that procedure) seems raising a formality not ensuring the investments minimum quality.
<b>QA 4.1: Do the programme's implementation solutions ensure the compliance with the norms related to the marketplaces?</b>	41A	The <i>Compliance</i> and other support documents produced by the AG from Mais Centro and the POFC (Support Schemes) ensure the access to detailed and clear information on the proceedings needed for the compliance with the national and community norms in force, by the involved interlocutors in the checking process on the Marketplaces rules.
	41B	The difficulties felt during the procedures implementation were gradually overcome with on going solutions that sought to meet the needs of the interlocutors involved in the process.
	41C	The various information system functionalities at the Programme's global management and the applications management phases ensure the procedures associated to public procurement; the information system also has two specific modules for verifying the compliance on the norms related to the Marketplaces.
	41D	The training provided to the CIM's EAT is insufficient in the delegated and reviewed competencies scheme by the <i>Addendum to the Contract for Competencies Delegation with Global Subvention</i> .
<b>QA 4.2: Do the programme's implementation solutions ensure the compliance with the norms related to the competition?</b>	42A	Complementarily to the national and community normative scheme in force, the Compliance produced by the AG from Mais Centro and POFC (Support Schemes) ensure the access to detailed and clear information on the proceedings needed for the respective compliance by the interlocutors involved in the process of verifying the competition rules.
	42B	The financial supports central register within the <i>minimis</i> is in charge of the IFDR and constitutes the main means for making the co-financed expenses compatible with the community rules.
	42C	The information system's multiple functionalities in the applications management and in the programme's global management ensure the procedures related to the competition policy.
<b>QA 4.3: Do the programme's implementation solutions ensure the compliance with the norms related to the environment in the context of the projects selection criteria?</b>	43A	There are the necessary mechanisms working adequately at the Mais Centro management for the compliance of the norms related to the environment under the projects selection criteria context.
<b>QA 4.4: To what extent the <i>ex-ante</i> evaluation recommendations with repercussion on the implementation are being implemented?</b>	44A	About the management model, it is clear that there are some difficulties resultant from the NRSF's implementation policy option, which favoured a top down approach logic and of orientation determined by the CMC and by its political tutelage entities.
	44B	Being visible CAE's and CODR's importance within Mais Centro context, it is clear that they do not ensure the totality of their support functions to the Programme's strategic monitoring process.

## IV.2. Synthesis of Recommendations

61. Despite the fact that the Study had essentially focused on questions related to the Mais Centro implementation – fulfilling the national and community normative provisions and the guidelines from the NRSF Global Evaluation Plan - , the results achieved allow for a wider, strategic in nature, approach.
62. This way, and in order to increase the utility of the results – in a process improvement perspective - , the recommendations were structured into two intervention typologies, according to criteria of objectivity , relevance and effectiveness/efficiency:
- **1. Of a Strategic Nature**
    - 1A. To Improve the Global Effectiveness of the Implementation (External to the Management Authority);
    - 1B. To Review the Programming Documents
  - **2. Of an Operational Nature**
    - 2A. To Improve the articulation with other Programmes/Entities;
    - 2B. To Improve the Communication Efficacy;
    - 2C. To Increase the Efficiency and the Efficacy in the Selection and Assessment of Applications;
    - 2D. To Improve the Performance in the Monitoring Phase;
    - 2E. To Improve the Performance of the Information System;
    - 2F. To Improve the Management Model;
    - 2G. To Improve the Distribution of Human Resources.
63. For each one of the 26 recommendations, introduced in the following table, one identifies the entity/body responsible for its achievement and respective priority level, where 3 is the highest.

**Table 9. Recommendations Synthesis, Entity Responsible for the Achievement and Priority Level**

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority Level
<b>1. Of a Strategic Nature</b>			
<b>1A. To Improve the Implementation Global Effectiveness (External to the Management Authority)</b>			
01	To review the existing regulation framework according to three topics: (i) to define a framework containing the conditions common to all the Specific Regulations; (ii) to simplify the contents and requirements of the Specific Regulations; (iii) to define a framework of management provisions possible to be adequate to regional realities.	Steering Ministerial Committee of the NSRF and IFDR (Regional Development Financial Institute)	3
02	To enlarge the powers of the executive members of the Steering Committee giving them more autonomy in relation to the non-executive members for the decisions related to the Programme's current management.	Steering Ministerial Committee of the NSRF and IFDR	3
03	To define feedback deadlines to the entities responsible for issuing reports.	Steering Ministerial Committee of the NSRF and IFDR	2
04	To define the ministerial bodies responsible for issuing reports that follow with the applications in order to ease the average length of procedures and, therefore, to decrease the average decision time.	Steering Ministerial Committee of the NSRF and IFDR	2
05	To define the support guidelines for the elaboration of reports, especially when the Specific Regulations involve multiple entities.	Steering Ministerial Committee of the NSRF and IFDR	2
<b>1B. To Review the Programming Documents</b>			
06	To proceed with a review of the Programming document considering the following aspects: ➤ To adjust the financing programming and the medium co-financing rates for the Axis, adapting them to the Programme's current financial reality and to the recent guidelines of rates increase for some typologies of promoters;	Mais Centro Steering Committee	3

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority Level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To evaluate the achievement and results goals and/or indicators considering the achieved levels of commitment and the financial changes occurred from the new medium rates for co-financing, the reprogramming and the registered losses;</li> <li>➤ To review Axis indicators, adapting them to the actions typologies exposed in the Specific Regulations in order to cover each typology at least by one achievement indicator;</li> <li>➤ To include a new specific objective that contributes for the global objective of "reducing the existing pollution effects".</li> </ul>		
<b>1B. To Review the Programming Documents</b>			
07	To review the Communication Plan, namely the goals that achieved or exceeded 50%.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	1
<b>2. Of a Operational Nature</b>			
<b>2A. To Improve the articulation with other Programmes/Entities</b>			
08	<p>To promote/reinforce the implementation of the articulation between Mais Centro and the Thematic Operational Programmes on what relates to: the timing of the call for proposals; the directing of applications between the OP; the monitoring of financed actions so they are not overlapped; the specification of the conditions the monitoring is done on the outcomes of the programmes/plans associated to Collective Efficiency Strategies (EEC) (POFC – Competitiveness Factors Operational Programme) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Making regular contacts among the OP's technical secretariat, naming for each entity the technician(s) they shall contact according to each issue (to disseminate the contact list among the OP);</li> <li>➤ To institute semester meetings between the Mais Centro and the POFC Management Authorities, in order to agree the planning of monitoring actions and EEC evaluation and to debate its respective results;</li> <li>➤ To establish a regular exchange of lists with the operations financed in the Programmes by typology/region and of monitoring reports of the Programme's situation.</li> </ul>	Mais Centro Steering Committee, Thematic OP Steering Committees	3
09	To harmonize the procedures between sectoral entities of a decentralised character of the Centro and Lisbon regions-plan: (e.g.: Social Security Institute and Regional Health Administration).	Mais Centro Steering Committee	2
<b>2B. To Improve the Communication Efficacy</b>			
10	To perform communication actions headed to discriminated target-groups and communication actions of greater impact to disseminate the achievements and the results reached by the Mais Centro.	Communication Office	2
11	To extend the list of newsletter subscribers to all entities registered in Mais Centro.	Communication Office	1
<b>2C. To Increase the Efficacy and the Efficiency on the Selection and Applications Assessment</b>			
12	To reduce the selectivity of the Notices for the Opening of Call for Proposals of Support Schemes (in sectoral terms, location in sub-regional areas or in the eligibility conditions and merit evaluation), favouring the support to the projects that contribute more for the OP' objectives in terms of regional competitiveness.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	3
13	To reinforce, in the Specific Regulations where a high number of criteria of a transversal character exist, the weighing of the selection criteria headed for reaching the Axis/OP objectives, in order to increase the programme's efficacy and performance.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	3

#	Recommendation	Responsibility	Priority Level
14	To acquire the evaluation model/methodology of the contribution of the different projects typologies eligible for the promotion of energy efficiency and for the reduction of the emission of greenhouse gases, allowing the inclusion of this aspect to be taken into consideration during the applications selection process.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	2
<b>2D. To Improve the Performance during the Monitoring Phase</b>			
15	To hold training courses about the calculation of achievement and results indicators, for the technicians that analyse the applications and the On-Site Verification Team.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	3
16	To hold training courses for the Intermediate Entities – Intermunicipal Communities to respond adequately to the attributed procedures, namely on what regards Marketplace.	Coordinator of the Steering Project Team for the Relations with the CIM (Intermunicipal Communities)	3
<b>2E. To Improve the Performance of the Information System</b>			
17	To make training available to the technical structures (Technical Secretariats and Intermediate Entities) from the various models that integrate the Information System as well as its automation level and inter-operability for OP monitoring and reporting effects aiming at maximizing the efficiency gains provided by the system.	Project, Computing and Information System Team	3
18	To give priority to the implementation/conclusion of the Mais Centro Information System modules that will allow closing the operations and the global management of the OP physical accomplishment.	Project, Computing and Information System Team	3
19	To increase the number of internal training courses targeted to identify and solve problems accessing the Information System and extracting management support information.	Project, Computing and Information System Team	2
20	To adopt inter-operability processes with the Information Systems of other OPs.	Project, Computing and Information System Team	2
21	To introduce adaptations on the interfaces and outputs of the Information System destined to management, making them more "user friendly".	Project, Computing and Information System Team	1
<b>2F. To Improve the Management Model</b>			
22	To clarify the delegation of competencies according to the tasks and functions of the Intermediate Entities – Intermunicipal Communities as well as to create conditions to ease the implementation mechanisms taking the established on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Agreement Memorandum between the Ministry for the Economy, Innovation and Development and the National Municipalities Association (ANMP) for a reference.	Coordinator of the Steering Project Team for the Relations with the CIM (Intermunicipal Communities)	3
23	To hold periodic evaluation procedures on the Support Schemes / Intermediate Entities activity based on the self-evaluation reports.	Internal Control	2
24	To strengthen the strategic advisory functions of the Strategic Monitoring Committee, in close connection with the Centre for Regional Dynamics Observation by identifying challenges and structuring projects for the Centro regional development.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	1
<b>2G. To Improve the Distribution of Human Resources</b>			
25	To promote a higher flexibility and mobility on the distribution of human resources, in the sense of adapting the technical structure to the Programme's life cycle and facing the hard work periods in some specific areas (ensuring at the same time the principle of functions segregation).	Mais Centro Steering Committee	3
26	To strengthen the number of human resources connected to the communication strategy implementation.	Mais Centro Steering Committee	1