

**De la Evaluación  
Ambiental Estratégica  
a la Evaluación  
de Impacto Territorial:  
Reflexiones acerca  
de la tarea de evaluación**

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# 12 Monitoring and Evaluation of policies – methodological contribution based on the Portuguese case study

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## 1. Introduction

The last three decades have been of affirmation and consolidation of spatial and regional development programmes and policies. This movement was accompanied by a growing importance of the evaluation in the making process of programmes and policies as well as in the management and operation of the public structures that implement them.

The European Union has played a key role in this movement, from the point of view of the elaboration and development of indicators and associated information systems, as well as in the development of concepts and methodologies related to the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

When elaboration the monitoring and evaluation systems three fundamental questions should be considered:

- what to monitor or evaluate (in order to respond to the evolution of contexts/ reality and to the policies implementation levels);
- how to monitor or evaluate (which requires reflection on the structure for collecting and processing information, and consider the management models of the public entities that implement policies);
- whom to monitor or evaluate (to improve the internal performance of institutions, to monitor the management of policies and, in general, to have a better knowledge of macro-structures) (JAEK, 2009, MARQUES DA COSTA, 2011).

On the other hand, the growing need for an efficient intervention in the territory highlights the advantages in developing systems of monitoring and evaluation. These systems allow not only compiling and systematizing the information in a consistent manner, but also producing new information, both, for socioeconomic characterization of territories or sectors where policies interventions took place, and for the development of operational and intervention programmes. Thus, the setting-up of information systems is crucial to support the decision process, since they allow understanding the connection

between the objectives stated, the resources invested, the achievements made and the results obtained (EC, 1999).

In this sense, the monitoring and the evaluation processes allows:

- checking whether the public action meets the needs;
- improving the interventions (identifying the successes and failures);
- identifying responsibilities in the development of actions;
- creating conditions to encourage the engagement in the planning process.

The implementation of the monitoring and evaluation systems uses specific methodologies, whose complexity has been increasing, allowing us getting closer to a socio-territorial approach associated with concepts such as spatial planning, territorial cohesion, development sustainability, social equity, competitiveness and cohesion.

In the case of the programmes co-financed by the European Union, the multiple programming periods have allowed inventorying the difficulties in developing systems for evaluating policies and supporting decision. In the 1994-1999 programming period, it was outlined the inadequacy of the information systems as a support to the evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes. This is why that in the 2000 - 2006 programming period, the new regulations suggested that besides importance to the monitoring of a financial nature, gave greater emphasis on the information and quantification systems, particularly reinforcing the result indicators and their connection with the implemented policies. For 2007-2013, special mention is given to the strategic and flexible approaches, as well as to the reinforce of indicators that reflect the EU guidelines, particularly regarding the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy (goals of economic and employment growth, unemployment decline, innovation and environmental achievements), the European Strategy for Sustainable Development and the Territorial Agenda. More recently, Europe 2020 and Regions 2020 are also considered in the implementation policy systems.

## **2. Key concepts in the monitoring and evaluation process**

In the policies context, monitoring and evaluation are different processes. While the monitoring corresponds to a systematic collection and analysis of information related to territories and actions or policies implementation, the evaluation is defined as a “value judgment in relation to explicit criteria, based on information especially collected and analysed, which allow judging results and impacts of the programmes and projects” (EC, 1999).

The evaluation is complex in the context of planning but there are some basic elements important to remember in order to promote its articulation with the indicators and to develop an evaluative approach.

## 1.1. The policies and programmes and their levels of performance

The first aspect has to do with the spatial planning instruments and it is possible to distinguish three levels that assume three performance levels in monitoring and evaluation process:

- Policies – these can be documents comprising guidelines or go even further and comprise general and specific objectives, sometimes mentioning the goals to be achieved. Therefore, the indicators are diverse and have, in many cases, a more general nature;
- Programmes – these are documents that comprise a set of operational objectives, in addition to the general and specific ones, that are implemented by measures and actions. The implementation of a programme has a schedule and a financial allocation. In this context, the list of indicators is more detailed, namely directly related to effectiveness of measures;
- Projects – these are actions or set of actions with more specific objectives and a detailed schedule and a specific financial allocation.

This typology proposed by EC (1999c) demand different levels of detail of indicators.

## 1.2. The evaluation cycle and its positioning in the planning process

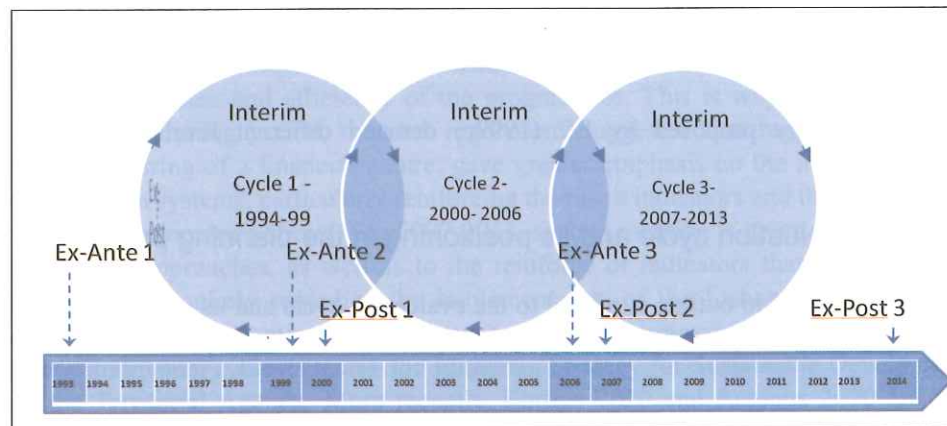
The second aspect to outline is related to the evaluation cycle and its positioning in the planning process. We can find three instances, where the evaluation has a determining role:

- the moment of conceiving and designing the programme and here fits the ex-ante evaluation. This evaluation aims to ensure that the programme is the most relevant (strong relation between contextual situation and the objectives definition) and coherent as possible with a situation that is intended to be changed. Among its main concerns is the identification and validation of the strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T) associated with a SWOT analysis, which are the basis for defining the strategy and estimating results;
- the moment of implementation of the programme. This is the context where the mid-term evaluation exercises are developed. During this evaluation phase, the verification analysis on the compliance of the objectives (efficiency term) is of particular importance, but we cannot refrain from pointing out the importance of checking whether there were significant changes in the initial situation, fact that could affect the strategy and the initial proposed strategic objectives. This last process implies that the relevance and the coherence of the strategy will be re-verified;
- the moment of winding up the programme, the moment when the ex-post evaluation process may begin. This highlights its concerns on the analysis of the

effects, immediate and long-term, direct and indirect (particular emphasis on the concepts of “utility” and “sustainability”).

Thus, the elaboration of information systems that provide strategic monitoring and evaluation should take into account the overlapping of several evaluation cycles inherent to an instrument or several instruments, simultaneously. This fact is illustrated by the following figure. The overlap and interaction of the various cycles allows highlighting the importance of the mid-term evaluation process for setting up the next programming cycle. For example, the elaboration of the new programme, where goals will be set, the achievements will be proposed and the desired results will be set out, have necessarily to consider the “successes” and “failures” in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency identified in the previous one;

**Figure 1.** The Interaction between the evaluation cycles



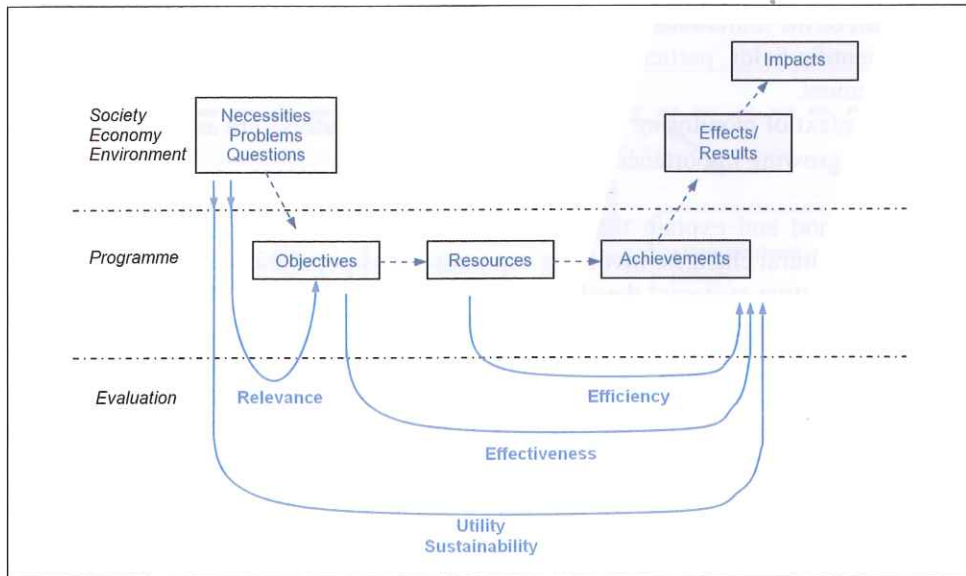
### 1.3. Some key concepts in the evaluation process

The third aspect is related to some key concepts in the evaluation process and to which are connected different types of indicators (EC, 2004, pp. 41). They are:

- Relevance - criterion that checks the adequacy of the programme objectives in relation to the problems and needs of the sector or the territory under analysis in its various scales;
- Effectiveness - criterion that relates to what extent the stated objectives are being achieved and, for that, one has to identify the difficulties and successes in implementing and achieving the measures and actions of the programme as well as to discuss the adequacy of the pathway chosen;
- Efficiency - criterion that seeks to verify the importance of the results obtained, or more specifically the effects obtained in relation to the resources/inputs mobilized;

- Utility - criterion that judges the effects obtained in relation to the initial needs and problems, i.e., it seeks to verify to what extent the effects change the contextual situation;
- Sustainability - criterion that furthers the previous one, as it provides a reflection on the “durability” of the utility.

**Figure 2.** Structure of the Evaluation System



Source: EC (2004), pp. 42.

In addition to these key concepts, there is also the concept of external coherence, which stresses the connection between the structure of the programme and other programmes, plans and policies.

As the criterion of relevance is of particular emphasis on the ex-ante and mid-term evaluation, the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency are critical in the processes of mid-term and ex-post evaluation and in the development of monitoring and follow-up systems.

The utility and sustainability are critical in ex-post evaluations, but they still are in the remaining phases, namely for the ex-ante evaluation, where, in a predictive logic, one can anticipate the effects and the extent to which they contribute to the development process.

It is in this context that the term “goal” comes out, the goal being an objective to be achieved during the implementation of a policy or a programme.

## 2.4. The concept of "indicator"

The fourth set of notes relates to the concept of indicator. An indicator is a measure of synthesis, thus representing an abstraction of a situation. Therefore, the indicators can have different functions, from offering the possibility to describe a situation, to the ability to simplify and measure that same situation being, par excellence, a means of communication (HOERNIG and SEASONS, 2004, quoting Innes, 1990 and Hoernig, 2001). They can be simple data or aggregate indices and synthesis.

Recognized the limitations and conditionings of its use, its utility is clearly evident in various scientific fields, particularly in Geography and areas such as planning and land use management.

In the context of monitoring and evaluation, the "indicators" are assumed as critical elements. Its growing importance is due to the need to:

- understand and explain the main demographic, economic, environmental and socio-cultural changes, involving aspects such as population aging, restructuring of productive systems, development of social networks or the preservation of natural resources;
- discuss issues and concepts of sectoral and multi-scale transversality such as sustainability, competitiveness, territorial cohesion and social equity;
- strengthen the information structures in order to support the various actors and the governance system in the negotiation and decision process (MARQUES DA COSTA, 2011).

According to HOERNIG and SEASONS (2004), we have three distinct approaches that conditionate the selection and the organization of the indicators:

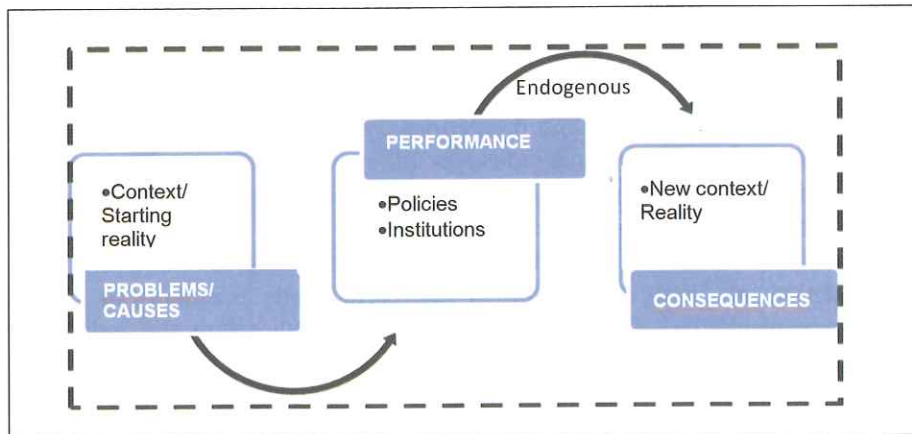
- a traditional approach that associates the indicators with economic, social-cultural and environmental fields;
- an integrated approach that associates the indicators with objectives such as sustainability, cohesion, competitiveness, environmental health and quality of life;
- a performance-centred approach, which includes using effectiveness techniques, benchmarking and other methods and tools that work as a support to the governance and evaluation system.

The differentiated approach requires that the role of each indicator is clearly set out. Thus, the process of formulating an indicator should take steps so that they not only represent a situation, but may also be used as an instrument for evaluating the achievement of the policies objectives. The indicators may be simple data or aggregate indices and synthesis.

A second perspective to classify the indicators is supported in their role in the monitoring and evaluation processes. In this case, the indicators are:

- measures that allow deeming a situation, in this case, they consist of variables or indices of characterization of a territory, a sector or a theme transversal to various sectors. These indicators are generally identified as “context indicators”;
- measures whose extent is mainly associated with the implementation of policies and in this case, they appear as the “measurement of a goal to achieve, a resource that is intended to be mobilized, an effect that is sought to get, a measure of quality” (EC, 2004, pp. 121).

**Figure 3.** Cause-effect Relation in the Contextual Changes



The previous distinction allows us to pointing out at a fundamental question about the organization of information, monitoring and evaluation systems, which is the double role of the indicators: measures connected to contextual evolution and measures connected to policy instruments (policies, plans, and programmes) whether from the point of view of its elaboration, or in terms of its monitoring and evaluation.

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In this context, in the elaboration of monitoring and information systems, two aspects should be taken into account:

- emphasis on the methods of collecting information that should include identifying indicators that record not only the contextual changes but also the processes inherent to these same changes. This requires the inclusion of structural indicators like demographic, employment, income and other;
- address the issue about the diversity of sources and the different scales at which the information is available, therefore conditioning the analysis to be conducted (MARQUES DA COSTA, 2011).

We have several typologies of indicators defined according to the role that the objectives may have. From the set of typologies presented in the “Guia Means” (EC, 1999) and the “Guia Elvased” (EC, 2004), we highlight the following:

- as regards the information scope we get “context” and “programme” indicators. As the first ones correspond to indicators of characterization, the programme ones are indicators connected to the objectives and to the implementation of the programme;
- regarding the need for comparability of information we get “generic, specific and core” indicators. For this typology, it matters to outline what is known as core indicators, which correspond to a set of financial and non-financial (physical) indicators that allow comparing programmes and intervention areas in several countries and regions. These indicators allow comparison between different socio-economic contexts and among the various dynamics of policy implementation. Thus, context and programme indicators fall into this group;
- in relation to the implementation stages of the programme we got indicators of “input or resources, output, result and impact”;
- in relation to the mode of quantifying and using the information: monitoring and evaluation indicators. As the former one corresponds essentially to indicators of implementation of policies and programmes (therefore the indicators of achievement and result become more relevant), the latter one corresponds to a complex structure of explanation of the effects (in this case, the result and impact indicators are highlighted).

Thus, the process of monitoring and evaluation of the policies totally depends on the fact that the indicators have to be necessarily connected to the objectives of the policies and the programmes. This means that at each level of objectives (operational, specific and strategic objectives) are associated different types of indicators (achievement, result and impact), and it is this structure that underlies the configuration of the systems of information and evaluation of the programmes and policies.

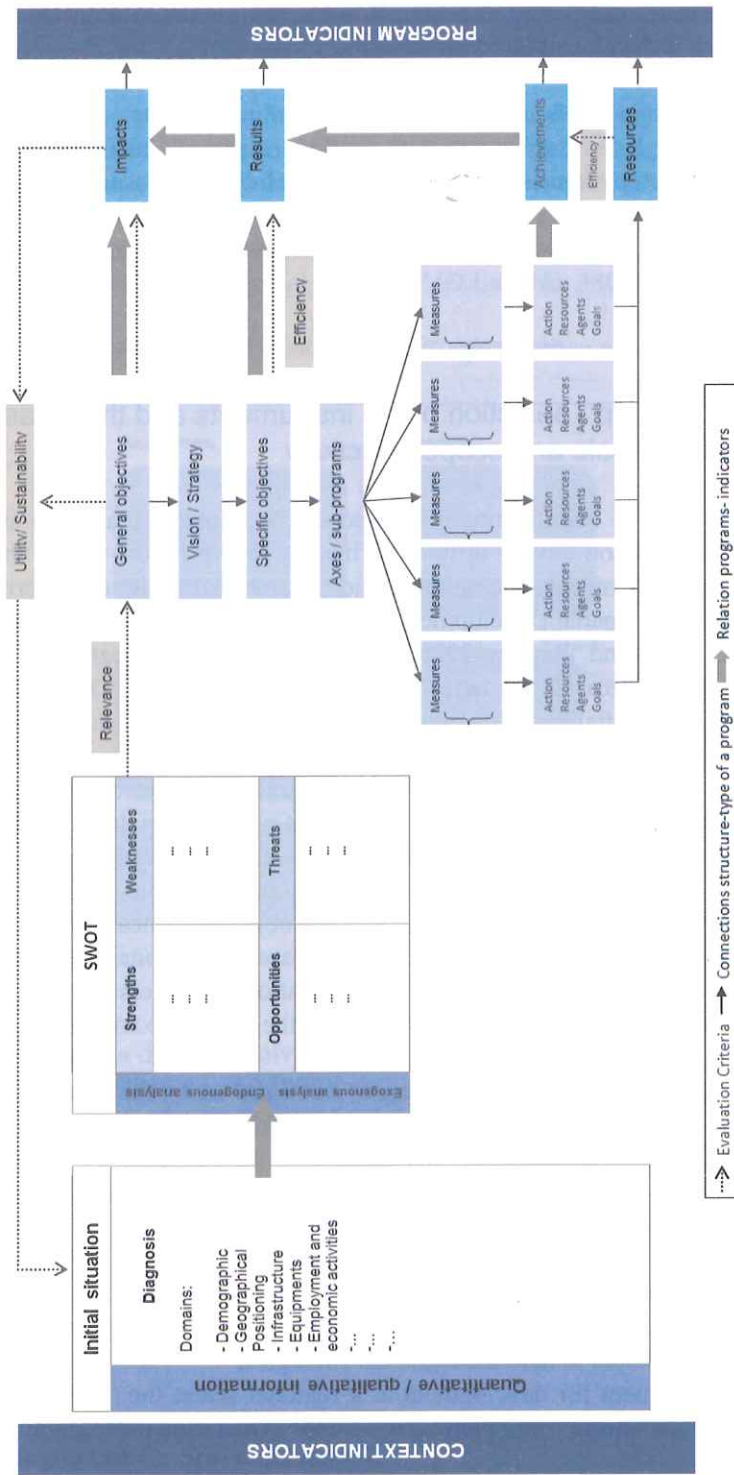
### **3. Policy coherence within the Portuguese context – a methodological essay**

In Portugal, the planning structure is based on a large number of documents that require great coordination both at the scales level (from European to local) and at the domains level (some are more sectoral, others have a more transversal approach).

Thus, besides the implementation issue of policies and programmes individually, there is a very important aspect that is related to the coherence and coordination between the various types of instruments.

Let us separate these two key issues from the described ones (relevance and coherence) and try to answer in terms of methodology to develop them. The essay presented here corresponds to the methodology developed in the “SPOTIA Project – Guidelines of

Figure 4. Synthesis: System of Indicators and Evaluation



sustainable territorial policy and impact evaluation - contributions to the Portuguese case”, which is developed into four steps:

- the first step corresponds to the selection of instruments;
- the second step corresponds to the validation of each instrument relevance;
- the third step consists of the selection of the indicators associated with the previous analyses.
- the fourth step corresponds to the coherence analysis between the various instruments;

Let us look at the various steps.

### 3.1. The first step - selection of the instruments and their classification regarding the scale and scope of activity

When selecting the instruments, it is important to consider that there are documents, whose scale of action is very different. Thus, as shown by the figure, three scales are considered: the European, the national and the regional scale, considering documents such as European Spatial Development Perspective (EC, 1999) or the Strategies “Europe 2020” (EC, 2008) and “Regions 2020” (EC, 2008) for the European scale, the “Programa Nacional da Política de Ordenamento do Território - PNPOT” (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning) and the multiple “Plano Regional de Ordenamento do Território - PROT” (Regional Spatial Planning Plans) plans for regional scale.

On the other hand, different types of instruments should be considered: we have instruments that correspond to sets of guidelines of a territorial nature characterized by groups of general and specific objectives (as is the case of the Territorial Agenda, the ESDP or the National Strategy for Sustainable Development) and the operational instruments, characterized by groups of general and specific objectives, measures and a budget. The latter have a more thematic or sectoral nature (cases of National Action Programme for Growth and Employment, Programme for Education and others related).

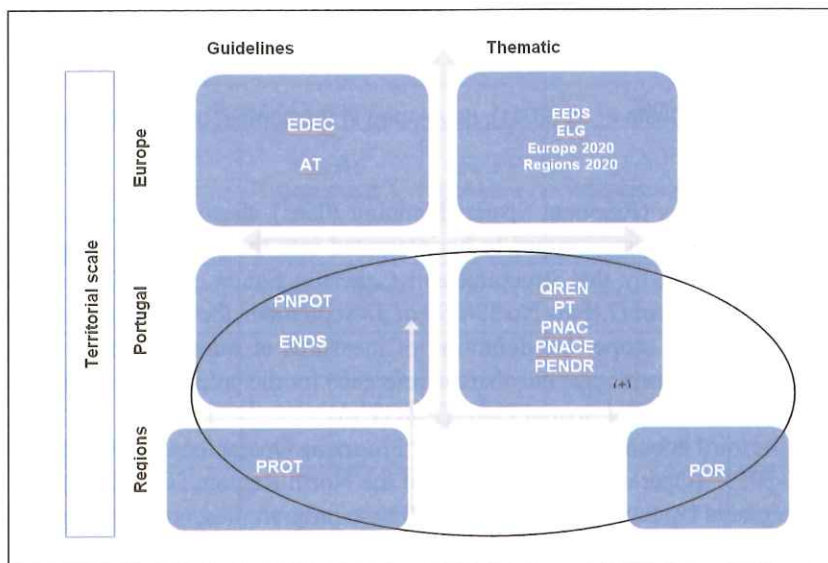
Three different instruments were chosen for the present example:

- an instrument for spatial planning at a national scale: the “Programa Nacional da Política de Ordenamento do Território – PNPOT” (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning). In this document, the concept of spatial planning is related to land management strategies and to the implementation of a territorial perspective;
- an instrument for spatial planning at a regional scale: the “Plano Regional de Ordenamento da Região Norte – PROT Norte” (Regional Spatial Planning Plan for the Northern Region). Also in this document, the concept of spatial planning is more related to land management strategies;
- an instrument for development at a regional scale: the “Programa Operacional da Região Norte – PO Norte 2007-2013” (Operational Programme of the North

Region, 2007-2013). Different from the previous ones, the Operational Programme is more focused in a regional development perspective.

The PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning) is a national instrument of territorial development, strategic in nature, which takes precedence over the other Instruments of Territorial Management. This document “sets out the broad options relevant to the planning of the national territory, and it constitutes the reference framework to be considered when elaborating other instruments of territorial management [in particular, the regional and municipal level (...)]” (D.Law No. 380/ 99, art. 26).

**Figure 5.** Reference framework of Policies and Programmes



**European Level:**

EDEC – Esquema de Desenvolvimento do Espaço Comunitário (European Spatial Development Perspective, 1999)

AT – Agenda Territorial (Territorial Agenda, 2007)

Europe 2020

Regions 2020

ELG – Estratégia de Lisboa e Gotemburgo (Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategy)

EEDS – Estratégia Europeia de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (European Strategy for Sustainable Development)

**National Level:**

PT - Plano Tecnológico – Portugal a Inovar (Technology Plan - Portugal Innovating)

PNPOT - Programa Nacional da Política de Ordenamento do Território (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning)

ENDS – Estratégia Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (National Strategy for Sustainable Development)

PNAC - Programa Nacional para as Alterações Climáticas (National Programme for Climate Change)

PNACE - Programa Nacional de Acção para o Crescimento e o Emprego, 2005/2008) (National Action Programme for Growth and Employment)

PENDR - Plano Estratégico Nacional de Desenvolvimento Rural (2009) (National Strategic Plan for Rural Development)

QREN – Quadro de Referência Estratégico Nacional (National Strategic Reference Framework)

Regional Level:

POR – Programa Operacional Regional (Regional Operational Programmes)

PROT – Plano Regional de Ordenamento do Território (Regional Spatial Planning Plans)

*Source:* Marques da Costa et al. (2011), developed in the context of the 1st Implementation Report - SPOTIA.

As for the PROT's (Regional Spatial Planning Plans), those are "key documents for the definition of action programmes to be integrated into the programming period of the operations co-financed by the Structural and Cohesion Funds of the European Union". According to Article 52 of D.-Law No 380/99 of 22 September, the following, among others, are goals of territorial scope: the definition of measures or interventions to mitigate the intra-regional development gaps but also the reference for the preparation of Intermunicipal Spatial Plans and Municipal Spatial Plans (PMOT's).

Finally, the third document analysed is the "Programa Operacional da Região Norte - PO Norte 2007-2013" (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013), which falls under the Regional Operational Programmes. These programmes, considered as a financial instrument of regional policy, operationally structure the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for 2007-2013. The NSRF corresponds to an instrument that frames all programmes and funding related to the financial achievement of structural Funds.

While the first two instruments comprise guidelines and standards for spatial planning, the third one corresponds to a regional programme of measures and actions within the NSRF. The PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013) links a financing plan with an implementation programme.

The distinction of the nature of these instruments is very important, as the way they have different natures and roles. The first two are the main support to implement other policies as they represent the "territorial model". The third one, because it has financing, is the support for the implementation and execution of sectorial and regional actions. Its role is highlighted due to the fact that we don't have regional political structures (but national and municipal ones) and they constitute interfaces for the regional development policy implementation.

### 3.2. The second step corresponds to the validation of the relevance of each instrument;

This step builds up a matrix of relevance to each instrument. This matrix allows checking to what extent the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are in relation to the general or strategic objectives, specific objectives and to the measures these frame.

Taking as example the instruments previously chosen, three matrices come up. The first matrix corresponds to the PNPOT's matrix of relevance. This has no SWOT analysis, but shows a set of problems that underpin the further development of objectives and measures, that are the support of the matrix.

**Table 1.** Relevance in PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning) – Relation between problems and objectives

PNPOT	Strategic Objective 1					Strategic Objective 2			
	Specific Objective 1		Specific Objective 2		Specific Objective 3	Specific Objective 4		Specific Objective 5	
	Measure 1.1	Measure 1.2	Measure 2.1	Measure 2.1	Measure 3.1	Measure 4.1	Measure 4.2	Measure 5.1	Measure 2.1
Problem 1	X						X		
Problem 2				X	X	X			
Problem 3	X		X				X		X
Problem 4		X		X				X	
....									
...									

X – Relation

Source: elaborated from PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning)

In the case of the PROT-Norte (Regional Spatial Plan) and PO-Norte (the Regional Operational Programme for North Region), the relevance matrix is a little different. It considers the relation between the SWOT (summarizing the framework of needs and opportunities) with the priorities of intervention.

**Table 2.** Checking Relevance of PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013) – Relations between SWOT and Strategic Axes

PO Norte - Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013		Priority Axes		
		Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
SWOT	Strengths			
	Strengths 1		X	
	Strengths 2	X		
	Strengths 3			X
	...			
	Weaknesses			
	Weaknesses 1	X		
	Weaknesses 2		X	
	Weaknesses 3			X
	....			
	Opportunities			
	Opportunities 1		X	
	Opportunities 2	X		
	Opportunities 3			X
	...			
	Threats			
Threats 1	X			
Threats 2		X		
Threats 3			X	
....				

X – Relation

*Source:* elaborated from PO Norte.

### 3.3. The third step consists on the selection of the indicators associated with the previous analysis

The indicators selection is the third step. These indicators are related to the main and the strategic objectives, which are represented by contextual, output and result indicators.

In addition to the previous matrix described in 2.2, it is crucial to elaborate another, which not only identifies the objectives, but also the indicators (indicators of achievement and results, as well as the target for 2015).

**Table 3.** Relevance of PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013) – Relations between SWOT and Objectives/Priorities

		Priority Axes	
		General Objective 1	
		Specific Objective 1	Specific Objective 2
		PO Norte - Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013	Output indicator Indicator 1 - Achievement 2015 Indicator 2 - Achievement 2015 Indicator 3 - Achievement 2015 ...
	Result Indicators Indicator 1 - Achievement 2015 Indicator 2 - Achievement 2015 Indicator 3 - Achievement 2015 ...	Result Indicator Indicator 1 - Achievement 2015 Indicator 2 - Achievement 2015 Indicator 3 - Achievement 2015 ...	
SWOT - PO Norte	Strengths		
	Strengths 1 Strengths 2 Strengths 3 ...	X	X
	Weaknesses		
	Weaknesses 1 Weaknesses 2 Weaknesses 3 ....		X
Opportunities			
Opportunities 1 Opportunities 2 Opportunities 3 ...	X X		
Threats			
Threats 1 Threats 2 Threats 3 ....		X	

List of indicators related to Specific Objectives  
X – Relation

Source: elaborated from PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013).

### 3.4. The fourth step corresponds to the coherence analysis between the several instruments

One way to analyse the coherence of policies is the verification of correspondence between the objectives and measures/actions of the different policy instruments. In this context, the next step consists in the classification of the instruments, both objectives (general and specific), the measures and the elements of the SWOT analysis in “key-words” that are classified as “descriptors”. This process is done in the three documents (PNPOT, PROT Norte, PO Norte) in two types. The first type, presented in Table 4, is the classification of SWOT analysis by domain and sub-domains. These domains and sub-domains are described by “descriptors” of the programmes.

**Table 4.** Example of classification of SWOT analysis by domains and sub-domains

Code_ Instrument	Code_SWOT	Code_ domain	Descriptor of domain	Code_sub-domain	Descriptor of sub-domain	SWOT elements
PO Norte	Strengths	SWOT2	Economy and Economic Activities	SWOT21	Productive structure	Potential market of North Region and Galicia and potential industrial production and exports to EU
PO Norte	Opportunities	SWOT 3	Territory	SWOT34	Environment, resources and natural patrimony	Valorization of maritime resources and port activities
PO Norte	Opportunities	SWOT2	Economy and Economic Activities	SWOT21	Productive structure	Restructuring traditional industries integrating technologies (clothing industries)
PO Norte	Weakness	SWOT1	Society	SWOT13	Employment and labour market	Delay in the construction and conclusion of transportation infrastructures
PO Norte	Weakness	SWOT1	Society	SWOT16	Culture and identity	Insufficient valorisation of the cultural patrimony
PO Norte	Weakness	SWOT 3	Territory	SWOT34	Environment, resources and natural patrimony	Low levels of attainment of water services

Code_ Instrument	Code_ SWOT	Code_ domain	Descriptor of domain	Code_ sub-domain	Descriptor of sub-domain	SWOT elements
PO Norte	Threats	SWOT2	Economy and Economic Activities	SWOT21	Productive structure	Growing difficulties to capture qualified human resources, namely young qualified high educated people.
...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: elaborated from PO Norte (North Regional Operational Programme).

**Table 5.** Example of classification of Objectives (generic and specific) and measures by domain and sub-domain

Code_ Instrument	Code_ Objective	Code_ Specific Objective	Code_ Measures	Code_ Domain	Code_ Sub-Domain
PNPOT	PNPOT01	PNPOT0101	PNPOT010101	Territory	Environment, resources and natural patrimony
PNPOT	PNPOT01	PNPOT0101	PNPOT010102	Society	Culture and identity
PNPOT	PNPOT01	PNPOT0101	PNPOT010103	Territory	Equipments
PNPOT	PNPOT02	PNPOT0201	PNPOT010201	Economy and Economic Activities	Productive structure
PNPOT	PNPOT02	PNPOT0202	PNPOT020202	Economy and Economic Activities	Science, Technology and Innovation
...	...	...	...	...	...

Source: elaborated from PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning).

A second perspective is the classification by QREN (National Strategic Reference Framework, NSFR) priority themes. The list of “descriptors” is linked to the “key domains of policy and sectorial intervention”, which will be the central element in the organization of all plans and programmes. This second classification is essential to develop the monitoring system and the process of indicators selection.

**Table 6.** National Strategic Reference Framework Priority Themes

NSRF Priority Themes	
1. Research and Technological Development (RTD) Innovation and Entrepreneurship	9. Increasing Adaptability of Workers, Companies and Entrepreneurs
2. Information Society	10. Improving Access to Employment and Sustainability
3. Transport	11. Improving Social Inclusion of Disadvantaged Groups
4. Energy	12. Improving Human Capital
5. Environment Protection and Risk Prevention	13. Mobilisation for Reforms in the Areas of Employment and Inclusion
6. Tourism	14. Investment in Social Infrastructure
7. Cultural activities	15. Strengthening Institutional Capacity at the National, Regional and Local Levels\
8. Urban and Rural Rehabilitation	16. Reduction of the Additional Costs hindering the Development of the Outermost Regions

Source: NSRF, pp. 87-90.

While the first classification of descriptors is linked to sectors the second one is more strategic.

The results for the classification of the three documents (PNPOT, PROT Norte and PO Norte) by NSRF Priority domains have these results.

**Table 7.** Un example of classification of Objectives (generic and specific) and measures by NSRF Priority domains

Code_Instrument	Code_Objective	Code_Specific Objective	Code_Measures	Code_Domain
...	...	...	...	...
PNPOT	PNPOT07	PNPOT0701	PNPOT070101	Research and Technological Development (RTD) Innovation and Entrepreneurship
PNPOT	PNPOT07	PNPOT0701	PNPOT070102	Information Society
PNPOT	PNPOT07	PNPOT0701	PNPOT070103	Energy
PNPOT	PNPOT08	PNPOT0801	PNPOT080201	Tourism
PNPOT	PNPOT08	PNPOT0802	PNPOT080202	Cultural activities
...	...	...	...	...

Source: elaborated from PNPOT.

In the context of the Northern region, let us see how the analysis is developed, the one that seeks to relate the PNPOT, the PROT Norte and the matching PO Norte. This

classification was carried out in a MAXDA 10 environment, which allowed to the elaboration of Table 8. This shows the quantification of the classification, by NSRF priority domains, of six aspects related to the three documents now analyzed: specific objectives and measures of PNPOT, strategic options and indicators of the PROT Norte, and general objectives and measures of the PO Norte.

It should be noted that each of the points, regardless of the document, is classified only by a single domain.

**Table 8.** Classification of the objectives of PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning), PROT Norte (Regional Spatial Planning Plan for the Northern Region) and the PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013) according to the NSRF priority domains

NSRF Domains	PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning)		PROT Norte (Regional Spatial Planning Plan for the North Region)		PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013)	
	Specific Objectives	Measures	Strategic Options	Measures	General Objectives	Measures
	%					
1. Research and Technological Development (RTD) Innovation and Entrepreneurship	1,0	2,6	5,3	0,0	23,8	22,2
2. Information Society	4,4	8,7	4,3	5,2	9,5	3,2
3. Transport	8,1	11,7	26,3	24,1	9,5	12,7
4. Energy	2,7	2,6	10,5	5,2	4,8	3,2
5. Environment Protection and Risk Prevention	27,0	33,2	26,3	20,7	9,5	19,0
6. Tourism	2,7	1,5	5,3	6,9	4,8	12,7
7. Cultural activities	5,4	3,1	0,0	0,0	4,8	0,0
8. Urban and Rural Rehabilitation	2,7	12,2	0,0	17,2	9,5	9,5
9. Increasing Adaptability of Workers, Companies and Entrepreneurs	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
10. Improving Access to Employment and Sustainability	1,7	1,0	1,0	1,7	0,0	0,0
11. Improving Social Inclusion of Disadvantaged Groups	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
12. Improving Human Capital	1,0	2,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0

NSRF Domains	PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning)		PROT Norte (Regional Spatial Planning Plan for the North Region)		PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013)	
	Specific Objectives	Measures	Strategic Options	Measures	General Objectives	Measures
	%					
13. Mobilisation for Reforms in the Areas of Employment and Inclusion	16,2	11,3	0,0	3,4	4,8	12,7
14. Investment in Social Infrastructure	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
15. Strengthening Institutional Capacity at the National, Regional and Local Levels\	2,7	3,1	0,0	0,0	4,8	3,2
16. Reduction of the Additional Costs hindering the Development of the Outermost Regions	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
17. Others	24,3	7,1	21,1	15,5	14,3	1,6
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Own elaboration. SPOTIA team.

We observe immediately that, in each document, predominate only a few areas. Given the specific objectives of PNPOT (National Policy Programme for Spatial Planning), one can emphasize the predominance of the 5th domain - Protection of Environment and Risk Prevention (27%), which highlights issues relating to natural resources, biodiversity, integrated management of geological resources, or national strategies to protect the soil or the Sea. The 14th domain - Investment in social infrastructure is the second most recorded (16%) as it considers the redevelopment, renewal, new construction of school infrastructure, health, or others (social, sports, etc.). However, some relevant issues have been classified in the 17th domain - Others (with 24%), especially associated with the planning and territorial development, structuring urban centres or rural areas. Other areas also stand out, such as areas 2 - Information Society, 3 - Transport, and 7 - Cultural Activities.

There are some differences between the key areas of PNPOT and PROT Norte and PO Norte. Looking at the PROT Norte (Regional Spatial Planning Plan for the North Region), two main areas stand out regarding the Strategic Options defined: domain 3 - Transport and domain 5 - Environment Protection and Risk Prevention. Domain 17 - Others, the last one, also shows some weight mentioning (for example, the development of a polycentric matrix for the urban network).

The PO Norte (Operational Programme of the North Region, 2007-2013), that corresponds to the more generic and transversal instrument, we can mainly underline domain 1 - Research and Technological Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (24%), where several other areas emerge. However, when analyzing the Programme's system of measures and indicators, fewer domains are represented but with nearest relative weight related to the Environment, Protection and Risk Prevention (domain 5), Transport (domain 3), Tourism (domain 6) and Investment in Social Infrastructure (domain 14).

#### 4. Final comments

This methodology, presented here in a linear manner, allows highlighting the importance of analysing the coherence of policies by examining their general and specific objectives. Presently, we have a set of national instruments of a sectoral and territorial nature, that serve as a reference to other instruments of a regional nature, some with a guiding character, others working as implementation programmes. The reading introduced made possible to check what objectives have the highest degree of representation among the various instruments, always considering the NSRF priority groups (which mirror the needs for national implementation). However, the results need for further analysis taking into account not only the measures and financial allocations, as well as the starting framework (associated with the SWOT analysis) and the set of programmatic goals (represented by indicators) contained in these documents.

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