



Portugal

Implementation structure

Portugal's model is highly centralised. The technical and administrative coordination of programmes is ensured by the state Agency for Cohesion and Development (NCA) under the Ministry of Planning and Infrastructure. The Agency was created specifically for the purposes of the ESIF by merging three public entities that have performed its function in the past. The line ministries have several roles in the implementation structure (approving the plan of calls, evaluating the selection criteria etc.), but they do not have directly a role of managing or intermediate bodies. The centralized structure brings knowledge concentration, more efficient use of resources, a more global approach, and avoids duplication of competences, but it faces challenges in fully capturing the diversity of different territories combined with the specific administrative status of the regions in Portugal.

+ Positive aspects	- Negative aspects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continuity and efforts for continuous improvement of the implementation system ▶ Knowledge transfer across funds through a centralised implementation structure ▶ Clear definition of competences of the institutions leading to little overlap of activities ▶ Developed and relatively functioning IT system ▶ Detailed and clear ESIF-related legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Higher complexity, rigidity and sometimes time-consuming coordination due to a centralised structure leading to non-compliance with deadlines towards the beneficiaries ▶ Insufficient reflection of the interests of relevant stakeholders and regional needs in the programming phase

Key aspects of the implementation structure

1

High degree of centralization

The actual coordination of the ESIF is ensured by one sole institution, which also performs tasks of the PA, CA, AA, evaluation and monitoring activities. Political coordination (representation, dialogue with the EC) is carried out by the Interministerial Coordination Committee.

2

Role of regions

In contrast to the Czech Republic, the mainland regions are more of a tool of the centralized government, rather than proper autonomous authorities. Although the implementation of the ESI funds is discussed with relevant stakeholders, discussions may be sometimes formal and regional voices can have less-than desired strength in final decision making.

3

Thematic coordination

The multifund character of the OPs and the combination of thematic OPs across regions poses a challenge for the Agency in terms of coordination. One of the solutions are the Networks of coordination – platforms for cooperation. Members regularly meet and discuss their issues, the Agency coordinates the meetings and invites subject-matter experts.

4

IT system

Each MA has its own IT system from the previous programming period, and the Agency manages a central system collecting information from the MA's and from state administration systems, and has a single entry point for beneficiaries. There is also a system for audit reports and conclusions.