



## **Objective 2 Programming in Aquitaine, France**

*IQ-Net Thematic Paper 4(4)*

Sandra Taylor

***IQ-Net  
Improving the Quality of Structural Fund  
Programming through Exchange of  
Experience***

**European Policies Research Centre**

University of Strathclyde

Graham Hills Building

40 George Street

Glasgow G1 1QE

Tel: +44-141-548 3339/3955

Fax: +44-141-548 4898

E-mail: [j.f.bachtler@strath.ac.uk](mailto:j.f.bachtler@strath.ac.uk)

[sandra.taylor@strath.ac.uk](mailto:sandra.taylor@strath.ac.uk)

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## Preface

### *IQ-Net: Networking to improve the quality of Objective 2 programmes*

Launched in early 1996 and managed by the *European Policies Research Centre* (EPRC) at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, the network *IQ-Net* facilitates exchange of experience in the development, implementation and evaluation of Objective 2 programmes. Funded by a consortium of 13 Objective 2 areas and the European Commission (DG XVI), the network meets twice a year to examine issues of practical relevance to programme-makers and share examples of good, innovative and distinctive practice from across the EU. The first four meetings were held in Glasgow, in association with Strathclyde European Partnership (February 1996), in Cardiff, hosted by the Welsh Office and Welsh Development Agency (September 1996), in Gelsenkirchen, Nordrhein Westfalen, hosted by the Land Government of Nordrhein Westfalen (April 1997), and in Fyrstad, hosted by the Fyrstad Objective 2 secretariat. The fifth and most recent meeting was held in Bordeaux and hosted by the Aquitaine SGAR and regional council. Meetings provide the opportunity to discuss the results of a structured programme of applied research and debate, steered by the network's partner regions:

- Steiermark and Niederösterreich, Austria
- Nordjylland, Denmark
- Päijät-Häme and South Karelia, Finland
- Aquitaine and Rhône Alpes, France
- Nordrhein Westfalen and Saarland, Germany
- Ångermanlandskusten and Fyrstad, Sweden
- Industrial South Wales and Western Scotland, UK

### *IQ-Net Thematic Papers*

This document contains the fourth series of thematic papers, produced by EPRC in spring 1998 as part of *IQ-Net*'s applied research programme:

- 4.1: The new Structural Fund Regulations - current Debates
- 4.2: Employment and the Structural Funds: Making a good Job of making Jobs
- 4.3: Thinking strategically - RTD and Objective 2 Programmes
- 4.4: Objective 2 Programming in Aquitaine, France

It supplements the following previous *IQ-Net* papers:

- 1.1: Managing the Structural Funds, Institutionalising Good Practice
- 1.2: RTD/Innovation policies in Objective 2 programmes
- 1.3: Generating Good Projects
- 1.4: Monitoring and Evaluation
- 2.1: Interim Evaluation
- 2.2: Synergy between the ERDF and ESF
- 2.3: The Environment in Objective 2
- 2.4: The Nordrhein Westfalen Objective 2 Programme
- 3.1: The Evolution of Objective 2 Programmes
- 3.2: Integrating Equal Opportunities into Objective 2 Programmes
- 3.3: Meso-Level Partnerships and Structural Fund Implementation
- 3.4: Objective 2 Programming in Fyrstad, Sweden

Focusing on topics selected by the network's partner regions, each paper places issues in their international context, raises questions for debate and highlights distinctive and innovative

practices. For the convenience of readers, executive summaries are included in French, German and English.

Papers are first drafted on the basis of field research (encompassing interviews with Objective 2 programme managers and partners at regional, Member State and Commission levels) and substantial desk research. They are then modified to reflect the discussions of the *IQ-Net* meeting and the comments of network sponsors. The papers are distributed to a wide group of people nominated by the sponsors. The EPRC welcomes comment and feedback on them.

Readers are reminded that the content of the papers does not necessarily represent the official position of either the partner regions or the Commission, and that errors of fact or interpretation are the responsibility of the authors alone.

### *Acknowledgements*

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Professor John Bachtler	Ruth Downes	Patricia Noble
Dr Ross Brown	Rona Fitzgerald	Mary Louise Rooney
Charlotte Damborg	Rona Michie	Sandra Taylor

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Translations were carried out by Ingrid Schumacher (German) and Christelle Promé-McKeegan (French).

### *Further Information*

Additional copies of papers and further information on *IQ-Net* can be obtained from John Bachtler and Sandra Taylor, managers of the network, at EPRC. The December 1996, June 1997, January 1998 and September 1998 editions of '*IQ-Net Bulletin*', a newsletter co-financed by DG XVI and available from EPRC, contain synopses of the papers.

## **Objective 2 Programing in Aquitaine, France**

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*Executive Summaries*

*Objective 2 Programming in Aquitaine, France*

*La Programmation de l'Objectif 2 en Aquitaine, France*

*Ziel 2 Programme in Aquitaine, Frankreich*



## **1. OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMMING IN AQUITAINE, FRANCE**

### **1.1 Introduction**

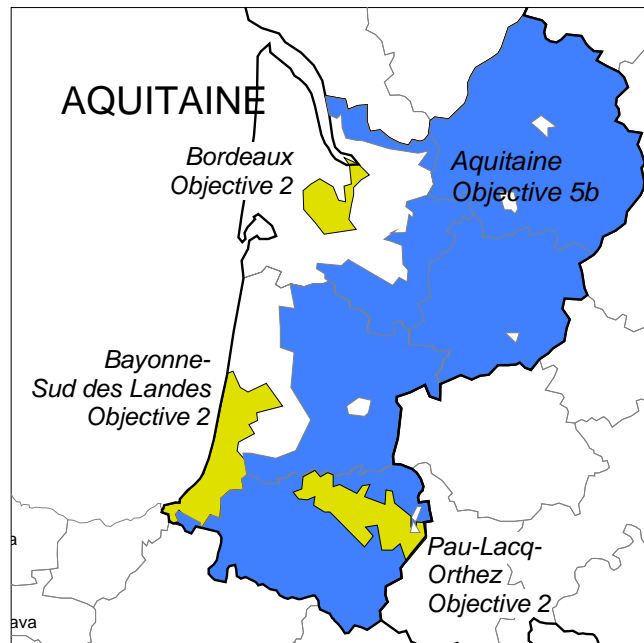
The 19 French Objective 2 programmes - including that for Aquitaine in the French South West - account for a quarter of EU Objective 2 Structural Funds. This paper focuses on the Aquitaine programme, examining the nature of industrial decline in the region, the Objective 2 policies mobilised to address this and the structures through which they are being implemented. Distinctive features of the Aquitaine programme are also highlighted, including the emphasis placed on evaluation and active partnership involvement.

### **1.2 The Regeneration Challenge**

As the employment situation deteriorated, the Aquitaine Objective 2 area, which only comprised part of Pau in 1989-93, was extended in 1994 to three geographically discrete eligible zones: Bordeaux (comprising half the eligible Objective 2 population), Pau-Lacq-Orthez (with 27.7 percent) and Bayonne-Sud des Landes (22 percent). These three areas constitute half the region's industrial employment, 46 percent of unemployment and, with 883,662 inhabitants, almost a third of the regional population. Most of the rest of Aquitaine has Objective 5b status, other Structural Fund programmes underway being Interreg, Konver and Leader.

There are broad similarities between the three areas eligible for Objective 2, but each also has distinctive strengths and weaknesses. Bordeaux is the regional capital and a communications node, with pockets of urban deprivation. Bayonne, which is facing crisis in traditional sectors, benefits from an attractive environment and strong 'Basque' cultural identity. Pau-Lacq-Orthez has the narrowest industrial base and is threatened by the exhaustion of natural gas supplies, which could lead to a further 3,000 job losses over the next five years. The area's strengths include expertise in industrial environmental management and a developing university.

Due to the contraction of dominant industrial sectors, unemployment in the Aquitaine Objective 2 areas rose to a peak of 13.4 percent in 1994. While employment began to grow during implementation of the 1994-96 Objective 2 programme, this was slower than the Aquitaine average, and largely in the tertiary sector, industrial decline continuing. Further industrial closures and job losses are anticipated over the next five years. All six sectors dominating the region's industrial structure have contracted (energy, aeronautics, electronics, chemicals and traditional industries including food processing, wood and furniture). Decline in the modern, RTD-rich sectors of aeronautics, space, defence and chemicals is of special concern as these involve large firms supporting networks of sub-contracting SMEs.

*The Aquitaine Objective 2 areas***1.3 The Aquitaine 1997-1999 Objective 2 Programme**

Aquitaine's 1997-99 Objective 2 programme is receiving 132.5 MECU for measures entailing total expenditure of 498 MECU (compared with 107.1 MECU of Structural Funds for 1994-96). The new SPD drew on experience to date and the interim evaluation. The policies are also complementary to established regional strategic frameworks, in particular the 1994-99 État/Région Contrat de Plan, and a cluster-based regional technology strategy developed among regional partners with the support of a RITTS study.

The primary objective of the Aquitaine programme is to preserve and create employment by making the economy stronger and more competitive. This is to be achieved through an integrated programme of actions which has businesses as its core focus, as they are the source of economic growth and durable job creation. The programme is summarised by its three priorities:

1. To strengthen the industrial base by anticipating new business opportunities and consolidating, reorienting and diversifying existing companies (44 percent of the Community contribution).
2. To establish a supportive business environment which nurtures innovation and technical excellence (25 percent).
3. To raise the attractiveness of the eligible areas for economic activity (29 percent).

There is strong continuity in policy content between the 1994-96 and 1997-99 programmes (including the emphasis on technology and innovation), although the 1997-99 programme was restructured to give job creation greater prominence. Improvements to the 1997-99 SPD include enhanced and more systematically quantified output and impact indicators. The 1997-99 programme should lead to a net growth in employment of 4,500 jobs, 40 percent of which will be temporary.

## **1.4 Managing and Implementing the Aquitaine Programme**

### *1.4.1 National Responsibilities*

The three main national organisations involved in French Objective 2 management are: DATAR (the Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale) which deals with overall co-ordination of Objective 2 programmes and the ERDF, the Ministry of Employment, whose 'Mission FSE' addresses training issues, and the Treasury which manages finance.

### *1.4.2 Regional Responsibilities*

At regional level, the Préfectures de Région (the deconcentrated offices of the state in the regions) have overall Objective 2 responsibility. The Préfet de Région organises a management structure and partnership for programme implementation. The programme secretariat is usually provided by a unit under the Préfet, in the Secrétariat Général aux Affaires Régionales (SGAR).

Among the horizontal partnership are the other offices of the state at region and sometimes also département level (eg the DRIRE for business development, the DRRT for technology and the DRTEFP for training), the regional council (a main co-financer), local self-government, Chambers of Commerce, the social partners and regional equal opportunities officers.

### *1.4.3 Implementation*

The horizontal partnership is involved in programming through committee structures. At strategic level, each French programme has a Monitoring Committee (MC), bringing together EC, national, regional and local representatives twice a year to discuss programme progress. In Aquitaine, the MC convenes sub-groups to meet more often on specific issues including evaluation. Funding decisions are made at the regional Programming Committee. This committee, in turn, is informed by the opinion of local sub-committees convened for each separate eligible area.

### *1.4.4 Project Selection*

In Aquitaine, there is a two-tier project selection process, involving appraisal at local and specialist committees before final decision-making at a common regional forum. This system, described in full in the main paper, engages local partners more fully than a single tier system might, although it is somewhat complex.<sup>1</sup> Selection is guided by a brief list of selection criteria, as set out in the SPD (including potential for job creation and contribution to the strategy), but also places considerable emphasis on local and thematic expert judgement. Scoring systems are not in use, but may become necessary as demand for available resources increases.

## **1.5 Innovative Practice in Aquitaine**

The Aquitaine programme follows three basic implementation principles: visibility, inclusivity and critical assessment.

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<sup>1</sup>ACT Consultants (1997) *Interim Evaluation*, Report to the Programme Management Committee of the Aquitaine Objective 2 Programme, Aquitaine, France.

- **Visibility:** Because programme success depends on the attraction of good quality projects, the SGAR has taken an open approach, promoting its programmes vigorously to public agencies, potential applicants and a wider public. Channels for programme information have included the press, printed handouts, and PowerPoint presentations.
- **Inclusivity:** Relevant agencies have been involved as actively as possible in programme implementation. Information has been shared and responsibilities devolved. A dedicated monitoring unit in the programme secretariat serves the information needs of the wide partnership. In addition, the programme's computerised monitoring system is freely accessible to key partners, enabling them to participate in the programme 'network' on a day-to-day basis. They input monitoring information directly onto the system and use it to undertake their own analyses.
- **Evaluation:** A 'culture of evaluation' is being built up, making critical reflection an integral part of Structural Fund programming in Aquitaine. Evaluations are steered by a committee of partners, so enabling them to take an active role. Through this 'partnership' approach, the technical concepts of evaluation are becoming better known among key partners, and outputs are being actively exploited.

## **2. LA PROGRAMMATION DE L'OBJECTIF 2 EN AQUITAINE, FRANCE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Les 19 programmes de l'Objectif 2 français - dont celui de la région Aquitaine dans le sud ouest de la France - reçoivent un quart des Fonds Structurels alloués à l'Objectif 2 dans l'Union Européenne. Cet article porte sur le programme Objectif 2 en Aquitaine et examine la nature du déclin industriel dans cette région et les politiques développées pour adresser ce problème ainsi que les structures mises en place pour la mise en oeuvre de ces politiques. Une attention particulière sera portée sur certaines caractéristiques particulières du programme d'Aquitaine comme par exemple l'accent mis sur l'évaluation et sur la participation active au partenariat.

### **2.2 Le Défi de la Redynamisation**

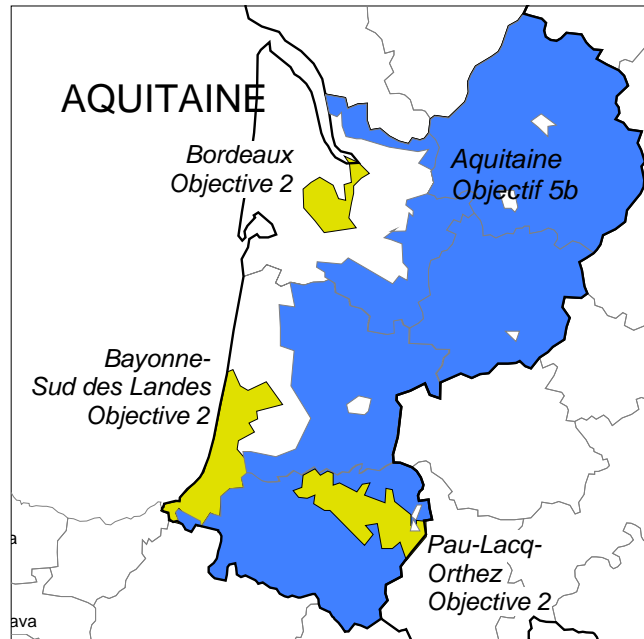
Suite à une détérioration du marché du travail, la zone couverte par l'Objectif 2 - qui ne comprenait qu'une partie de Pau pendant la période 1989-93 - fût étendue, en 1994, à trois zones géographiquement distinctes: Bordeaux (qui comprend la moitié de la population de la zone Objectif 2 éligible), Pau-Lacq-Orthez (27,7 pour cent) et Bayonne-Sud des Landes (22 pour cent). La moitié de l'emploi industriel de la région, 46 pour cent du chômage et presque un tiers de la population régionale (883662 habitants) sont concentrés dans ces trois zones. Le reste du territoire de la région Aquitaine est presque entièrement couvert par l'Objectif 5b. D'autres programmes co-financés par les Fonds Structurels sont également en vigueur tels que Interreg, Konver et Leader.

Si les trois zones éligibles à l'Objectif 2 présentent des similarités, chacune a ses propres points forts et ses faiblesses. Bordeaux est la capitale régionale et est un carrefour de communications comprenant des zones urbaines en déclin. Bayonne, qui doit faire face à une crise des secteurs traditionnels, bénéficie d'un environnement favorable et d'une forte identité culturelle basque. Pau-Lacq-Orthez possède la base industrielle la plus étroite des trois zones et est menacé par l'épuisement des réserves de gaz naturel qui pourrait conduire à une perte de 3000 emplois supplémentaires dans les cinq prochaines années. Les points forts de la zone sont une expertise en terme de gestion de l'environnement industriel et un pôle universitaire en plein développement.

Le chômage dans les zones d'Objectif 2 en Aquitaine a augmenté et atteint un sommet de 13,4 pour cent en 1994 suite au déclin des secteurs industriels dominants. Bien que l'emploi ait commencé à augmenter pendant la mise en oeuvre du programme d'Objectif 2 1994-96, l'augmentation fût moindre que l'augmentation moyenne de l'emploi pour l'ensemble de la région et elle ne concernait pratiquement que le secteur tertiaire ce qui fait que le déclin industriel a continué. Des fermetures et des pertes d'emplois supplémentaires sont attendues pour les cinq prochaines années. Les six secteurs dominants de l'industrie régionale ont décliné (l'énergie, l'aéronautique, l'électronique, la chimie et des industries traditionnelles telles que l'agro-alimentaire, le bois-ameublement). Le déclin dans les secteurs plus modernes et basés sur la RDT tels que l'aéronautique, l'espace, la défense et la chimie est des plus

inquiétants car ces secteurs dépendent de grandes entreprises qui supportent tout un réseau de PME sous-contractantes.

### La zone Objectif 2 en Aquitaine



### 2.3 Le Programme Objectif 2 1997-1999 en Aquitaine

Le programme Objectif 2 1997-99 en Aquitaine bénéficie de 132,5 MECU des Fonds Structurels pour des mesures qui impliquent une dépense totale de 498 MECU (pour la période 1994-96, la région Aquitaine a bénéficié pour l'Objectif 2 de 107,1 MECU des Fonds Structurels). Le nouveau DOCUP est basé sur l'expérience acquise des Fonds Structurels et sur l'évaluation intermédiaire du programme précédent. Les actions qui y sont programmées sont complémentaires aux stratégies développées dans le cadre régional, notamment le contrat de plan État-région et une stratégie régionale centrée sur le pôle technologie développée par les partenaires régionaux sur la base d'une étude RITTS.

L'objectif principal du programme Objectif 2 en Aquitaine est de maintenir et de créer des emplois en renforçant l'économie et en la rendant plus compétitive. C'est pour cette raison que l'entreprise - source de développement économique et de création d'emplois durables - est placée au centre du dispositif d'actions développées dans le programme. Le programme est orienté autour de trois priorités:

1. Développer l'emploi par le soutien direct des activités existantes et la recherche de nouveaux gisements d'emploi (44 pour cent de la contribution communautaire)
2. Favoriser l'innovation par le soutien de l'environnement économique et technologique de l'entreprise (25 pour cent)
3. Renforcer l'attractivité globale des bassins (29 pour cent).

En terme de politiques menées, il existe une forte continuité entre le programme 1994-96 et celui pour la période 1997-99 (y compris l'accent mis

sur la technologie et l'innovation) bien que le programme 1997-99 ait été restructuré afin de donner à la création d'emplois une importance particulière. L'amélioration du programme 1997-99 est également due à la présence accrue d'indicateurs qui permettent de mieux évaluer quantitativement l'impact et le résultat des actions. Le programme 1997-99 devrait permettre un accroissement net de l'emploi de 4.500 emplois, dont 40 pour cent seront des emplois temporaires.

## **2.4 Dispositions de Mise en Oeuvre du Programme en Aquitaine**

### *2.4.1 Responsabilités au Niveau national*

Trois organisations centrales sont concernées par la mise en oeuvre de l'Objectif 2 en France. Ce sont: la DATAR (la Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale) qui est responsable du FEDER et de la coordination générale des programmes en France, le Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi et en son sein la Mission FSE qui s'occupe de toutes les questions liées à la formation et le Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances qui gère toutes les opérations financières.

### *2.4.2 Responsabilités au Niveau régional*

Au niveau régional, ce sont les Préfectures de Région qui ont la responsabilité de la mise en oeuvre de l'Objectif 2. Le Préfet de Région est responsable de la mise en place des structures nécessaires pour la mise en oeuvre du programme et du partenariat. Le secrétariat du programme est généralement assuré par un service du Secrétariat Général aux Affaires Régionales (SGAR).

Au sein du partenariat figurent aussi les services extérieurs régionaux ou départementaux (tels que la DRIRE, la DRRT et la DRTEFP), les collectivités territoriales, les Chambres de Commerce, les partenaires socio-économiques et les responsables régionaux pour la promotion de l'égalité des chances.

### *2.4.3 Mise en Oeuvre*

Le partenariat horizontal est impliqué dans la programmation à travers les comités. Au niveau stratégique, il existe pour chaque programme un Comité de Suivi qui rassemble deux fois par an des représentants de la Commission, des représentants nationaux, régionaux et locaux pour discuter des progrès de la mise en oeuvre du programme. En Aquitaine, le Comité de Suivi se réunit en sous-groupes de manière plus régulière afin de débattre de questions spécifiques telle que l'évaluation. Les décisions concernant l'attribution de subventions sont prises au niveau régional par le Comité de Programmation. Celui-ci se prononce après avoir considéré les avis des sous comités locaux qui ont été créés dans chaque bassin éligible.

### *2.4.4 Sélection des Projets*

En Aquitaine, la sélection des projets a lieu en deux temps: des comités locaux et spécialisés sont chargés de procéder à une première évaluation des projets, ensuite la décision est prise en comité régional. Bien que ce système soit complexe (il est décrit dans de plus amples détails dans la version intégrale de cet article), il permet aux partenaires locaux d'être plus actifs dans la sélection des projets que ne le permettrait un système à un seul niveau de

décision.<sup>2</sup> La sélection est basée sur une liste de critères de sélection qui figure dans le DOCUP (y compris création d'emplois et contribution du projet à la réalisation de la stratégie), mais aussi sur l'évaluation d'experts et de spécialistes locaux. Un système de notation n'a pas été mis en place mais il pourrait s'avérer nécessaire à cause de l'augmentation de la demande de financements.

## 2.5 Pratiques Innovante en Aquitaine

Le programme d'Objectif 2 en Aquitaine suit trois principes simples de mise en oeuvre: publicité, ouverture et évaluation.

- **Publicité:** Le succès de tout programme dépend de sa faculté à attirer de bons projets, dès lors le SGAR en Aquitaine a adopté une approche active en assurant la publicité des programmes auprès des organisations publiques, des porteurs de projets potentiels mais aussi du public au sens large. De nombreux moyens d'informations sont utilisés tels que la presse, des prospectus et des présentations assistées par ordinateur.
- **Ouverture:** Les organisations compétentes ont été et sont aussi activement que possible impliquées dans la mise en oeuvre du programme. L'information est partagée et les responsabilités ont été déléguées. Une unité de suivi créée au sein du secrétariat du programme sert de point d'informations pour le partenariat. De plus, les principaux partenaires ont accès à un système informatique de suivi du programme qu'ils peuvent consulter librement. Cela leur permet de contribuer de façon quotidienne au 'réseau' du programme. Ils peuvent entrer directement dans le système leurs données de suivi et effectuer leurs propres analyses.
- **Evaluation:** Une 'culture de l'évaluation' se développe en Aquitaine ce qui permet de réaliser une analyse plus critique de la programmation. Les exercices d'évaluation sont menés par un comité composé de partenaires ce qui leur permet de jouer un rôle actif à ce niveau. A travers cette approche partenariale, les principaux partenaires connaissent mieux les concepts techniques de l'évaluation et les résultats sont plus activement exploités.

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<sup>2</sup> ACT Consultants (1997) *Évaluation intermédiaire*; Rapport au Comité de Programmation Financière de l'Objectif 2 en Aquitaine, France.

### **3. ZIEL 2 PROGRAMME IN AQUITAINE, FRANKREICH**

#### **3.1 Einführung**

Die 19 französischen Ziel 2 Programme - einschließlich dem für Aquitaine im Südwesten Frankreichs - machen ein Viertel der Strukturfonds für EU-Ziel 2 aus. Diese Studie konzentriert sich auf das Aquitaine Programm und untersucht die Art des industriellen Rückgangs in der Region, die Ziel 2 Maßnahmen, die dafür mobilisiert wurden, und die Strukturen, durch die sie umgesetzt wurden. Daneben werden auch besondere Eigenschaften des Aquitaine Programms hervorgehoben, einschließlich der Bedeutung, die der Evaluierung und der aktiven Rolle der Partnerschaft beigemessen wird.

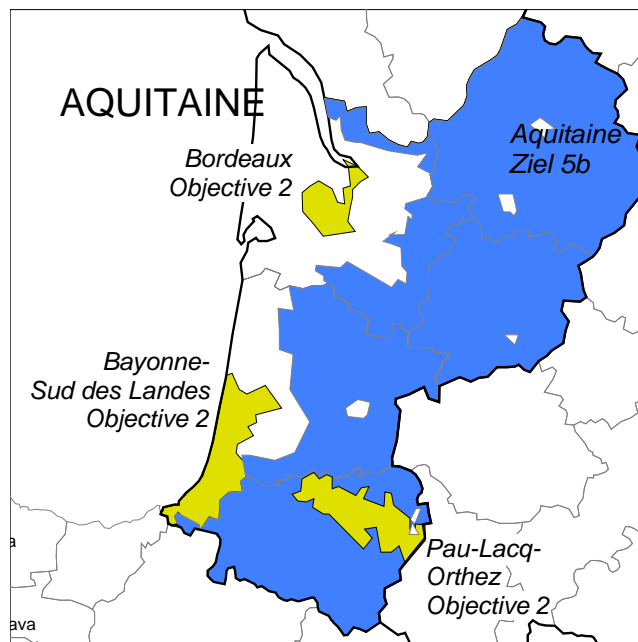
#### **3.2 Die Herausforderung der Regeneration**

Mit zunehmender Verschlechterung der Beschäftigungslage wurde das Ziel 2 Gebiet Aquitaine, das 1989-93 nur einen Teil Paus erfaßte, 1994 auf drei geographisch getrennte förderfähige Zonen ausgedehnt: Bordeaux (mit der Hälfte der förderfähigen Ziel 2 Bevölkerung): Pau-Lacq-Orthez (mit 27,7 Prozent) und Bayonne-Sud des Landes (22 Prozent). Diese drei Gebiete stellen die Hälfte der industriellen Arbeitsplätze der Region, 46 Prozent der Arbeitslosigkeit und mit 883.662 Einwohnern fast ein Drittel der regionalen Bevölkerung. Der größte Teil des übrigen Aquitaine hat Ziel 5b-Status, wobei die anderen Strukturfondsprogramme Interreg, Konver und Leader sind.

Es gibt allgemeine Ähnlichkeiten zwischen den drei für Ziel 2 förderfähigen Gebieten, doch hat jedes auch seine eigenen Stärken und Schwächen. Bordeaux ist die Hauptstadt der Region und ein Verkehrsknotenpunkt, mit städtischen Problemgebieten. Bayonne, dessen traditionelle Sektoren vor einer Krise stehen, profitiert von einer attraktiven Umgebung und stark 'baskischer' kultureller Identität. Pau-Lacq-Orthez hat die kleinste Industriebasis und ist von der Erschöpfung seiner Naturgasvorräte bedroht, was zu einem Verlust von weiteren 3.000 Arbeitsplätzen während der nächsten fünf Jahre führen könnte. Die Stärke des Gebiets liegt u.a. in seiner Expertise in industriellem Umwelt Management und einer wachsenden Universität.

Aufgrund der Schrumpfung der dominierenden Industriesektoren stieg die Arbeitslosigkeit in den Ziel 2 Gebieten Aquitaines 1994 auf einen Höchstwert von 13,4 Prozent. Während die Arbeitsplätze in der Umsetzungsphase des 1994-96 Ziel 2 Programms zuzunehmen begannen, war dies langsamer als der Durchschnitt für Aquitaine, und vor allem in tertiären Sektor setzte sich der industrielle Abbau fort. In den nächsten fünf Jahren werden weitere industrielle Schließungen und Arbeitsplatzverluste erwartet. Alle sechs Branchen, die die Industriestruktur der Region beherrschen, sind geschrumpft (Energie, Aeronautik, Elektronik, Chemie und traditionelle Industrien wie Lebensmittelverarbeitung, Holz und Möbel). Der Rückgang in modernen Branchen, die reichlich Forschung und technologische Entwicklung (FTE) durchführen, wie Aeronautik, Raumfahrt, Verteidigung und Chemie, ist besonders besorgniserregend, da große Firmen beteiligt sind, die ganze Netze von KMU als Zulieferer unterstützen.

## Die Ziel 2 Gebiete Aquitaines



### 3.3 Aquitaines Ziel 2 Programm für 1997-1999

Aquitaines Ziel 2 Programm für 1997-99 erhält 132,5 MECU für Maßnahmen, die insgesamt Ausgaben in Höhe von 498 MECU enthalten (verglichen mit 107,1 MECU Strukturfondsmittel für 1994-96). Das neue EPPD stütze sich auf bisherige Erfahrungen und die Zwischenevaluierung. Die Maßnahmen ergänzen auch die etablierten regionalen strategischen Rahmen, insbesondere den État/Région Contrat de Plan und eine auf Clustern basierende regionale Technologiestrategie, die zwischen Regionalpartnern mit der Unterstützung einer RITTS Studie entwickelt wurde.

Das primäre Ziel des Aquitaine Programms ist durch Stärkung der Wirtschaft und Verbesserung ihrer Konkurrenzfähigkeit Arbeitsplätze zu erhalten und zu schaffen. Dies soll durch ein integriertes Aktionsprogramm erzielt werden, das sich in erster Linie auf Unternehmen ausrichtet, da sie die Quelle wirtschaftlichen Wachstums und dauerhafter Arbeitsplatzschaffung sind. Das Programm läßt sich durch seine drei Prioritäten zusammenfassen:

1. Stärkung der industriellen Basis, durch Wahrnehmung neuer Tätigkeitsfelder und Konsolidierung, Neuorientierung und Diversifizierung bestehender Unternehmen (44 Prozent des Beitrags der Gemeinschaft).
2. Aufbau eines unterstützenden unternehmerischen Umfelds, das Innovation und technische Exzellenz fördert (25 Prozent).
3. Verbesserung der Attraktivität förderfähiger Gebiete für wirtschaftliche Aktivitäten (29 Prozent).

Es besteht eine starke Kontinuität zwischen den Maßnahmen des 1994-96 Programmes und denen des 1997-99 Programmes (wie u.a. die Betonung von Technologie und Innovation), obwohl das 1997-99 Programm umstrukturiert wurde, um die Arbeitsplatzschaffung stärker in den Vordergrund zu stellen. Zu den Verbesserungen des 1997-99 EPPD gehören verstärkte und systematischer

quantifizierte Output- und Wirkungsindikatoren. Das 1997-99 Programm sollte zu einem Nettowachstum der Beschäftigung von 4.500 Arbeitsplätzen führen, von denen 40 Prozent temporär sein werden.

### **3.4 Das Management und die Umsetzung des Aquitaine-Programms**

#### *3.4.1 Nationale Zuständigkeiten*

Die drei wichtigsten nationalen Organisationen, die am Management des französischen Ziel 2 Programmes mitwirken, sind: DATAR (die Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale), die mit der Gesamtkoordination der Ziel 2 Programme und dem EFRE zu tun hat, das Arbeitsministerium, dessen 'Mission FSE' Ausbildungsfragen anspricht, und das Finanzministerium, das die Finanzen verwaltet.

#### *3.4.2 Regionale Zuständigkeiten*

Auf regionaler Ebene sind die Préfectures de Région (die dezentralisierten staatlichen Büros in den Regionen) insgesamt für Ziel 2 zuständig. Der Préfet de Région organisiert eine Managementstruktur und Partnerschaft für die Umsetzung des Programms. Das Programmsekretariat wird gewöhnlich von einer dem Préfet unterstehenden Einheit im Secrétariat Général aux Affaires Régionales (SGAR) gestellt.

Zur horizontalen Partnerschaft gehören die anderen Staatsbüros auf regionaler und manchmal auch Département-Ebene (z.B. DRIRE für Unternehmensförderung, DRRT für Technologie und DRTEFP für Ausbildung), der regionale Rat (ein wichtiger Kofinanzierer), lokale Selbstverwaltung, Handelskammern, die Sozialpartner und regionale Beamte für Chancengleichheit.

#### *3.4.3 Umsetzung*

Die horizontale Partnerschaft ist durch Ausschußstrukturen an der Programmierung beteiligt. Auf strategischer Ebene hat jedes französische Programm einen Begleitausschuß, der zweimal pro Jahr Repräsentanten der EC, sowie der nationalen, regionalen und lokalen Ebene zusammenruft, um die Programmfortschritte zu diskutieren. In Aquitaine versammelt der Begleitausschuß die Untergruppen häufiger, um über spezifische Themen wie Evaluierung zu diskutieren. Finanzierungsentscheidungen werden im regionalen Programmausschuß getroffen. Dieser Ausschuß wiederum informiert sich an der Meinung lokaler Unterausschüsse, die für jedes getrennte förderfähige Gebiet versammelt sind.

#### *3.4.4 Projektauswahl*

In Aquitaine gibt es ein zweistufiges Verfahren der Projektauswahl, mit einer Bewertung durch lokale Ausschüsse und Ausschüsse von Spezialisten, vor der endgültigen Entscheidung auf einem gemeinsamen regionalen Forum. Dieses System, das ausführlich in der Langfassung beschrieben wird, engagiert lokale Partner stärker als ein einstufiges System dies eventuell tun würde, obwohl es

etwas komplex ist.<sup>3</sup> Die Auswahl richtet sich nach einer kurzen Liste von Auswahlkriterien, die in den EPPD aufgeführt sind (u.a. Potential für Arbeitsplatzschaffung und Beitrag zur Strategie), legt aber auch erheblichen Wert auf das Urteil lokaler und thematischer Experten. Es werden keine Punktesysteme verwendet, doch könnten sie mit wachsender Nachfrage nach den verfügbaren Mitteln notwendig werden.

### 3.5 Innovative Praktiken in Aquitaine

Das Aquitaine Programm folgt drei grundsätzlichen Umsetzungsprinzipien: Sichtbarkeit, Inklusivität und kritischer Bewertung.

- **Sichtbarkeit:** Da der Erfolg eines Programms von der Anziehung qualitativ guter Projekte abhängt, hat die SGAR einen offenen Ansatz gewählt, und wirbt für ihre Programme intensiv bei öffentlichen Agenturen, potentiellen Antragstellern und der allgemeinen Öffentlichkeit. Vermittelt werden die Programminformationen u.a. durch die Presse, gedruckte Handzettel und Powerpoint-Präsentationen.
- **Inklusivität:** Relevante Agenturen sind so aktiv wie möglich an der Umsetzung der Programme beteiligt worden. Informationen wurden verteilt und Zuständigkeiten delegiert. Eine verlässliche Begleitstelle im Programmsekretariat dient den Informationsbedürfnissen der allgemeinen Partnerschaft. Außerdem ist das EDV-Begleitsystem des Programms den wichtigsten Partnern frei zugänglich, so daß sie tagtäglich an dem Programmnetz teilnehmen können. Sie geben Begleitinformationen direkt in das System ein und verwenden es, um ihre eigenen Analysen vorzunehmen.
- **Evaluierung:** Eine 'Evaluierungskultur' wird aufgebaut, wonach kritische Reflexion zum integrierten Teil der Strukturprogramme in Aquitaine wird. Evaluierungen werden durch einen Ausschuß von Partnern geleitet, so daß sie eine aktive Rolle spielen können. Durch diesen 'Partnerschaftsansatz' werden die technischen Begriffe der Evaluierung unter den Hauptpartnern besser bekannt und die Leistungen aktiv genutzt.

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<sup>3</sup> 1 ACT Consultants (1997) *Zwischenevaluierung*, Bericht an den Programmleitungs-Ausschuß des Ziel 2 Programms für Aquitaine, Aquitaine, Frankreich.

*Thematic Paper*

*Objective 2 Programming in  
Aquitaine, France*



# Objective 2 Programming in Aquitaine, France

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There are more Objective 2 programmes in France than in any other single European Union country (19 compared with 13 in the UK, 11 in Italy and 9 in Germany). In the 1997-99 programming period, these 19 programmes once again account for approximately a quarter of the total Objective 2 Structural Fund allocation to the EU15 (the proportion only being higher in the UK at c30 percent). This paper focuses on France's eighth largest Objective 2 programme in Structural Fund terms, Aquitaine, in the French South West. It examines the region's need for industrial regeneration, and the policies mobilised to address this. It goes on to describe the structures through which the programme is implemented. Finally, distinctive features of Aquitaine's approach to programming are highlighted, primarily its strong programme marketing, and approach to monitoring and evaluation.

## 2. THE AQUITAINE ELIGIBLE AREA

### 2.1 Geographic and Demographic Characteristics

Aquitaine's Objective 2 programme applies to three geographically discrete employment areas: Bordeaux in the département of Gironde (from which the programme is administered, and which contains 50.3 percent of the eligible Objective 2 population), and two zones in the département of Pyrénées Atlantiques: Pau-Lacq-Orthez (27.7 percent) and Bayonne-Sud des Landes (22 percent). These three areas account for half the region's industrial employment, and 46 percent of unemployment. With 883,662 inhabitants, they also comprise almost a third of the regional population.

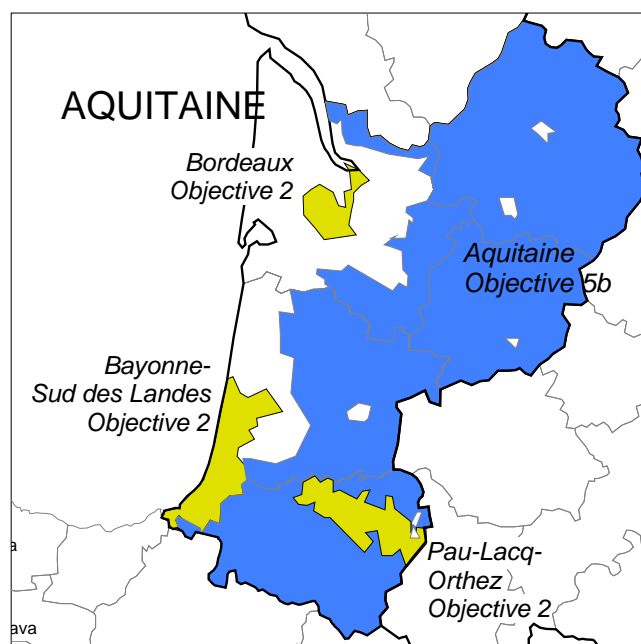
### 2.2 Economic Development Challenges

In the Objective 2 areas of Aquitaine, unemployment rose as a result of contraction in dominant industrial sectors, reaching a peak of 13.4 percent in 1994 (rates varying between 10.8 percent in Pau-Lacq-Orthez and 15.5 percent in Bordeaux). While employment did begin to grow after 1994 when the 1994-96 Objective 2 programme was underway, this was still at a slower rate than the Aquitaine average, and was largely due to expansion in the tertiary sector, industrial employment continuing to decline. The need for intervention to support industrial restructuring is still present and likely to continue some time into the future, as the process of reconversion is not yet complete, further industrial closures and job losses being anticipated over the next five years.

All six sectors which dominate the region's industrial structure (energy, traditional industries including food processing, wood and furniture, and more recent activities in aeronautics, electronics and chemicals) have undergone some form of contraction. Decline in the aeronautics, space, defence and chemical sectors has been of particular concern, first because these are

modern, RTD-rich sectors and second, because many of the region's large firms active in these areas support a large number of sub-contracting SMEs which are also threatened by the decline. Among SMEs which sub-contract, the most vulnerable are those which are reliant on single narrow sectors for their activity, and which are not internally equipped and structured to adapt by reorganising, developing new products, diversifying or entering new export markets.

*The Aquitaine Objective 2 areas*



While there are broad similarities between the three eligible areas, each also has distinctive strengths and weaknesses, which have been incorporated into the regeneration strategy. These are highlighted in the table below. Bordeaux is distinguished by its position as the regional capital and a communications node (including port facilities), and by concentrated areas of urban deprivation. Bayonne, in turn, is facing crisis in traditional sectors but has an attractive environment and strong cultural identity, bordering the Basque country. Pau-Lacq-Orthez has the narrowest industrial base and the economy most threatened by large scale closures. Exhaustion of natural gas supplies could cause the closure of petrochemicals firms, affect the profitability of chemical companies in the area and threaten sub-contractors and service providers. This could lead to a further 3,000 job losses over the next five years. In addressing this threat, the area's strengths include its special expertise in oil-related industries and environmental management of industrial activities, a university which is under development, and the agricultural dynamism of the Adour valley.

*Strengths and weaknesses of the three eligible areas*

	Weaknesses	Strengths
Bordeaux	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative effect on the port of the halt to fossil fuel related activities</li> <li>Concentrated zones of urban decline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University</li> <li>Development of centres of excellence in new technologies (materials, biotechnologies)</li> <li>Fifth city in France and an important node on communications networks</li> <li>Rich 18<sup>th</sup> century architectural heritage</li> </ul>
Bayonne-Sud des Landes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crisis in traditional sectors (eg shoes) and fishing</li> <li>Effect on the port of exhausting the Lacq natural gas supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing services and industries linked to electronics and IT</li> <li>Attractive coastal zone</li> <li>Gateway to Spain</li> <li>Strong cultural identity with the Basque country</li> </ul>
Pau-Lacq-Orthez	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three thousand jobs threatened over the next five years by the exhaustion of Lacq natural gas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special expertise in oil-related industries and industrial environment</li> <li>University under development</li> <li>A gateway to the Pyrénées</li> <li>Agricultural dynamism in the Adour valley</li> </ul>

### 3. THE AQUITAINE 1997-1999 OBJECTIVE 2 PROGRAMME

In the 1989-93 programming period, only part of the Pau area was eligible for Objective 2 funding. This was increased to the three zones described above in 1994, when the employment situation deteriorated. As such, developing and implementing the 1994-96 programme involved a considerable learning process across most of the eligible area. This was accelerated by the experience most agencies had previously had of implementing Objective 5b in other parts of their territory. Most of Aquitaine remains eligible for 5b, other Structural Fund programmes underway in the region being the Community Initiatives *Konver* (for military reconversion), *Leader* (for local rural development) and *Interreg* (for border regions).

Aquitaine was among the first group of regions in Europe to have its 1997-99 Objective 2 programme approved, on 24 March 1997. The programme will receive 132.5 MECU for measures entailing total expenditure of 498 MECU. This compares with 107.1 MECU of Structural Funds for the previous programming period.

In writing the new SPD to a very tight schedule, a range of resources were used including experience to date, the findings of the interim evaluation and an internal *ex ante* evaluation addressing specific issues including equal opportunities and employment monitoring. The strategy is also complementary to established regional strategic frameworks, in particular the 1994-99 État/Région Contrat de Plan (an agreed five-year regional spending plan drawn up between regional councils and the French state), and draws

strongly upon a cluster-based regional technology strategy developed among regional partners with the support of a RITTS study<sup>4</sup> co-financed by the EC.

### 3.1 Strategy, Priorities and Measures

The primary objective of the Aquitaine programme, whose strategic orientation was strengthened in the current round, is to enable the preservation and creation of employment over the long term, by making the economy stronger and more competitive. This is to be achieved through an integrated programme of actions: (a) strengthening the industrial base by anticipating new business opportunities and consolidating, reorienting and diversifying existing businesses, (b) establishing a supportive business environment which nurtures innovation and technical excellence, and (c) raising the attractiveness of the eligible areas for economic activity.

Reflecting its objectives, the 1997-99 pro/gramme has a 'nested' structure, with firms at its heart. Priority 1 focuses on firms, as these are central to employment creation. Priority 2 addresses the environment in which business operates (through technology-related services, research centres and other collective actions), while Priority 3 is more broadly defined, enhancing the attractiveness of the whole area as a business location.

#### *The Aquitaine programme*

##### **Priority 1: Boosting employment through existing activities and new employment initiatives (44 percent of the Community contribution)**

- 1.1 Raising competitiveness through direct support to tangible and intangible investments
- 1.2 Organising and diversifying the tourism sector
- 1.3 Support for craft-based industries and commerce (also in association with urban regeneration)
- 1.4 Training measures to support expanding enterprises

##### **Priority 2 - Encouraging innovation in the economic and technological environment of enterprises (25 percent)**

- 2.1 Support for promotion of R&D and technology transfer
- 2.2 Encouraging bilateral and joint R&D efforts between companies
- 2.3 Support for business services and industrial zones
- 2.4 Training measures to improve the economic and technological environment

##### **Priority 3 - Improving the attractiveness of the eligible employment areas (29 percent)**

- 3.1 Developing centres of excellence and redeveloping sites
- 3.2 Modernising ports and logistical platforms for high performance economic activities
- 3.3 Quality of life: urban, economic and social development of vulnerable neighbourhoods, cultural programmes and facilities, upgrading the historical and cultural heritage and protecting the urban and natural environment
- 3.4 Improving the quality of training and the operation of the labour market

##### **Priority 4 - Technical Assistance (2 percent)**

In terms of policy content, there is strong continuity between the 1994-96 and 1997-99 programmes, although the 1997-99 programme was restructured to make it more user-friendly to potential applicants and to give greater prominence to job creation. In line with a wish to strengthen Aquitaine's industrial economy over the medium and long term, a continuing distinctive feature of the programme is its strong emphasis on raising the regional

<sup>4</sup>See Paper 3 in this volume for more details.

technology and innovation capacity through a cluster based strategy. (This aspect of the programme is discussed in more detail in IQ-Net Thematic Paper 4 (3) – Thinking Strategically: RTD and the Objective 2 programmes.)

In revising the SPD, a number of policy reorientations took place. For example, to help encourage latent demand for ‘soft’ business development schemes, these were given greater visibility in the SPD. In addition, in common with many French programmes, funds were made available to supplement the Prime d’Aménagement du Territoire, the main national regional business incentive, in specific circumstances where it would make a material difference to incoming investment decisions.

A further change was to enhance the appropriateness of the programme’s measure-level output and impact indicators, and to set more systematic quantified targets for them. This was achieved through an *ex ante* evaluation which was led by the programme’s monitoring officer, but implemented through a series of specialised working groups, each addressing specific issues. The exercise not only improved physical output targets, but also enabled gross and net employment targets to be derived for each measure, using a Commission methodology.<sup>5</sup> According to current targets, the 1997-99 programme as a whole is expected to lead to a net growth in employment of 4,500 jobs, forty percent of which will be ‘temporary’ employment generated by implementing the actions funded.

## **4. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AQUITAINE PROGRAMME**

### **4.1 National Level Responsibilities**

At the national level, there are three main agencies involved in Objective 2 management in France: DATAR (the Délégation à l’Aménagement du Territoire et à l’Action Régionale) which, on behalf of the Ministry of Interior, deals with overall co-ordination of Objective 2 programmes and with the ERDF, the ‘Mission FSE’ (ESF) at the Ministry of Employment, which addresses matters relating to training and funded under the ESF, and the Treasury which manages financial issues.

The French system of public administration is currently undergoing profound modernisation, which includes the provisions for Structural Fund management. The process will also influence how France will deal with the reformed Structural Funds in 2000. There are two primary current concerns being pursued at national level.

- **Establishing a unified national approach to programme monitoring.** This objective, which has a deadline of June 1998, is being funded by the Ministry of the Interior and by Objective 2 technical assistance funds. In order to build on experience and investments to date, systems are being identified which are mutually compatible and already operating successfully in some regions. One of these will be the system currently in use in Aquitaine.

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<sup>5</sup>See Paper 2 in this volume for further details.

- **Improving financial systems**, so that the Funds can be used more smoothly and a more accurate picture of the state of progress compiled. A study into the weaknesses of the current system will help define options for domestic reform.

## 4.2 Regional Responsibilities

At the regional level, the main agencies responsible for Objective 2 programmes are the Préfectures de Région (the deconcentrated offices of the state in the regions). The Préfet de Région has overall legal responsibility for the decisions taken and organises an appropriate management structure within the Préfecture and a partnership at the regional and local level for programme implementation. To provide the programme secretariat, a unit is generally established under the Préfet, and housed within the Secrétariat Général aux Affaires Régionales (the SGAR), known as a 'Mission/Cellule Europe'.

The Aquitaine Objective 2 programme is structured and administered as a single programme, although it targets three discrete eligible areas. This approach is in contrast with that taken in Rhône Alpes, Basse Normandie and Midi Pyrénées, for example, which devolve much of the implementation of programmes which apply to discrete eligible areas to the relevant agencies at département level.

Among the wider horizontal partnership involved in the programme are the other offices of the state at region and département level: eg the DRIRE (business development), DRRT (technology), DIREN (environment), the DRTEFP (training, support for employment and the ESF), the DRT (tourism). A further significant partner, especially in co-financing terms, is the regional council. In addition, local self-government plays an active role, as do Chambers of Commerce, and social partners. A recent addition to the partnership has been regional equal opportunities officers.

## 4.3 Implementation Structures

There are several main committee structures through which the horizontal partnership is involved in programming. At the strategic level, each French programme has its own Monitoring Committee (MC). These meet every six months and bring together representatives from EC, national, regional and local level to discuss programme progress. Generally, the MC is preceded by a meeting between a smaller range of key partners, at which contentious or technical issues are discussed. Each MC is presented with a comprehensive report which provides a statistical and qualitative appraisal of programme progress.

In Aquitaine, the MC convenes sub-groups to pursue specific issues on a more continuous basis. The main example is the Evaluation sub-group, which was responsible for designing the terms of reference for, and then supervising, the 1994-96 interim evaluation.

At a more operational level, the main partnership committee structure is the regional Programming Committee, at which funding decisions are made. This committee, in turn, is informed by the opinion of sub-committees convened for each separate eligible area.

#### **4.4 The Project Selection Process**

The programme is implemented through projects, selected in partnership. The project submission and selection process in Aquitaine is somewhat complex. Projects are first presented to the relevant authority, which may be the préfecture de département, or one of the co-financers of the relevant measure (eg. decentralised state agencies, the region, the municipalities). These agencies check that applications are complete and conform with the demands of the programme. If so, they are passed on to the relevant committee for appraisal.

Specialist committees are involved in appraising some types of project, most notably those relating to technology and business development. Otherwise, unless projects are training-related or of regional significance (and so assessed directly at regional level), applications are first examined in the relevant Comité de Bassin (economic area committee). There are three such committees in Aquitaine, one for each of the discrete eligible zones. Two are presided over by the Préfet des Pyrénées Atlantiques and the third by the Préfet de la Gironde. These committees consist of representatives of the state and the relevant elected councils. They do not have the power to make final project decisions in Aquitaine, but give an opinion, informed by local knowledge. The SGAR at regional level is informed of the opinion, and the project - whether it was appraised negatively or positively - is passed on to the relevant co-financing regional service of state which checks how well it matches their own criteria. The relevant agency gives a formal appraisal of the project and the level of public (and European) funding which should be awarded.

Projects then go on to the regional programming committee, which meets once every three months, for discussion and a final decision by the Préfet de Région. Projects at the regional meeting are divided into two categories - those which can be approved without discussion, and those which are large or pose difficulties, and need to be debated before a decision can be taken. In practice, for both types of project, the indicative opinions of the départemental committees have never been overturned at the regional programming committee - although this could in theory happen. Applicants whose projects are rejected, but show promise, are invited to rework and resubmit them.

The Aquitaine appraisal engages partners at a more local level more fully than might a single tier system. However, it is somewhat complex and possibly insufficiently transparent, leading to some confusion and unnecessary delays.<sup>6</sup> A second criticism is that the regional services of the state are involved too late to have a meaningful input, and also find it politically difficult to intervene after the départemental committees have made their provisional judgement.

#### **4.5 Project Appraisal Methods**

Scoring systems are not used in Aquitaine to appraise projects, although the introduction of more structured decision-making systems is being considered.

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<sup>6</sup>ACT Consultants (1997) *Interim evaluation*, Report to the Programme Management Committee of the Aquitaine Objective 2 Programme, Aquitaine, France.

A brief list of selection principles or criteria is included in the SPD, but in practice, these are only the starting point of a selection process which relies on specialist judgement.

A universal criteria for project selection is the potential for job creation. This is interpreted broadly, however, taking into account not only direct and short term impacts, but also indirect and longer term ones. The projects selected are also required to contribute demonstrably and coherently to the strategy, and to have received a positive appraisal from the specialist agencies assessing them.

Scoring systems could become more applicable to the Aquitaine situation when they begin having to reject otherwise good proposals because of lack of resources. Overbidding is not currently the norm, however, in part because the phasing of large projects is carefully managed. Proposers of large projects are encouraged to phase them so that they draw funds from more than one programming year. In this way, smaller projects are not squeezed out.

## **5. INNOVATIVE PRACTICE IN AQUITAINE**

The Aquitaine programme is implemented by following three basic principles: partnership, networking and evaluation.

### **5.1 Partnership: Collaborative Approaches**

The success of the programme depends on the active participation of the wider partnership. In order to mobilise this partnership around the programme, the SGAR has placed considerable emphasis on inclusive and open methods of implementation. In particular, it has promoted its Structural Fund programmes vigorously to public agencies, potential applicants and a wider public. They aim to 'faire feu de tout bois', capitalising on opportunities for positive publicity and profile, on the basis that the better known and understood the programme is, and the more openly it is implemented, the easier it will be to attract and pursue good projects.

A variety of means are used to promote the activities of the Objective 2 programme. Substantial use is made of the press as a tool for publicity. After each major programme meeting, a press release is issued and interviews are given. In addition, the press is monitored for other articles relating to projects implemented in the region with the support of the Funds. At each Monitoring Committee, the articles which have appeared in the press over the previous six months are distributed to the partners, providing a record of coverage. Press attention helps to maintain the profile of the programme and build up familiarity with it. At the same time, it also provides the partners - including the *Mission Europe* in the SGAR with a sense of satisfaction which helps to keep motivation levels high.

In order to inform potential project applicants of the activities being supported by European Funds under Objective 2, a promotional folder is produced describing each measure, its aims and its project selection criteria, and giving details of the main agency which should be contacted for further information. The same format is used for Objective 2, Objective 5b and Konver to avoid an impression of fragmentation and complexity among European programmes.

The folders are freely available in the partner organisations, and are distributed when an enquiry is made.

A PowerPoint presentation has also been set up in Aquitaine, which gives the key information about European funding available in the region. This runs constantly in the lobby of the Mission Europe and has been requested by other partners to help them in their promotional activities.

## **5.2 Working in Networks**

In order to mobilise the partnership around programme implementation, one of the important steps has been to involve relevant agencies as much as possible in programme implementation, sharing information with them and devolving responsibility to them. One important mechanism for the necessary exchange are the programme's committee structures (described above). Another has been the innovative approach taken to programme monitoring.

First, a dedicated monitoring unit (CIDERI) has been established in the programme secretariat, to monitor programme progress and serve the information needs of the wide partnership. Second, the programme's effective, purpose-built computerised management information system, which is used for monitoring, has been configured so that it is freely accessible to partners. Specified agencies responsible for projects input monitoring information onto the system directly, and can use the system to undertake their own analyses. In this way, partners participate in the programme 'network' on a day to day basis.

## **5.3 Evaluation**

The final principle which guides the implementation of the Aquitaine programme is critical reflection. There is demand for information on the impact of the resources deployed to date, and a concern to ensure the best use of remaining resources. In consequence, the programme partnership is progressively developing a 'culture of evaluation'. In order to undertake evaluations 'in partnership' rather than imposing them on programme participants, an evaluation committee was established of selected partners, which is subordinate to and reports to the Monitoring Committee. This committee, co-ordinated by the programme's dedicated monitoring office, CIDERI, manages the internal evaluation programme, discussing what studies are required, commissioning them and steering their implementation. As a result of the approach to evaluation, the technical concepts are becoming better known among key partners, and outputs actively exploited to support specific programming demands.

The most recent programme-wide or 'global' evaluation study completed in Aquitaine was the 1994-96 interim evaluation, undertaken by ACT Consultants (Paris) and EREA (Bordeaux). The study, which appraised the relevance of the programme's strategy, the effectiveness of actions to date, and the quality of programme management, was significant for two things. First, its findings, which were predominantly positive, have been used to improve several aspects of programming. Second, the sensitive, practical, responsive and inclusive way in which it was implemented has enabled it to play a role in strengthening not only the evaluation culture, but also partners' commitment

to the programme and to each other. More recently, a thematic evaluation has been undertaken of the programme's contribution to developing the region's technology and innovation capacity and its cluster-based development strategy. This evaluation was undertaken in a similar way to the interim.