Appendix

Table 1.A. and Table 2.A. respectively summarizes the sources used to empirically assess the variables listed in the six theoretical propositions and to categorize each dimension for the four regional OPs analyzed. These sources include the target interviewees and the questions posed.

For methodological correctness, it should be noted that all the in-depth interviews were conducted by the same researcher/evaluator, and that during the field analysis the same dimension had been investigated with at least three of the different public and private actors previously indicated (in accordance with their expert knowledge about the different stages of the OP implementation). In line with Natow (2020), in this way it was possible to obtain a fuller picture of the situation being investigated, and to make the triangulation as accurate as possible. To select interviewees, an "expert interview" methodology (Littig, 2011) was used. For the purposes of this research, "experts" were considered individuals with thorough knowledge of how the four ERDF OPs were implemented in their different stages, and in accordance with the selected dimensions. Different types of public and private actors were included. Namely, interviewees were selected as follows for each OP analyzed: two Commission officials in DG Regio; three national officials; five representatives in total from the MA, Certifying Authority (CA), and PA; four officials working on regional structure; two external evaluators; six representatives of the main stakeholders involved in the OP (two institutional, two socio-economic, two from the tertiary sector). Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Following the recommendations of della Porta and Keating (2008), a low profile was kept, anonymity was guaranteed, and within 24 hours, interviews were manually transcribed and analyzed. Overall impressions regarding the interview and the interviewee were also noted.

Table 1.A: Source(s) used to assess the variables listed in the theoretical propositions

Factor(s)	Proposition(s)	Dimensions	EC reports	National and regional program documents	Evaluation studies	Commission officials in DG Regio	Officials working on national structures	MA	CA	PA	Officials working on regional structures	External evaluators	Representatives of key stakeholders	Exemplary Question(s) Posed during the Interviews
(I) Decentralization	Proposition 1	Prog1	X	X		X	X	X			X			*Which structures/actors participate in the activities related to the programming organization? Were these activities coordinate by a single authority? If so, by whom and how were the activities related to the programming organization arranged among the structures/actors involved?*
		Prog2	X	X		X	X	X			X			*Which structures/actors participate in the activities related to the elaboration of the program documents? Were these activities coordinate by a single authority? If so, by whom and how were the activities related to the elaboration of the program documents organized among the structures/actors involved?*
		PSA1		X	X	X		X			X	X	X	*[Related to the most representative axis of each ERDF OP] Has anything been done to help the final beneficiaries of the projects to improve their programming capacity for project generation? If yes, by whom and which specific actions had been elaborated? Were these actions promptly implemented?*
		Project Man1	X	X		X	X	X	X					*How was the process related to the separation of management and control functions? Which structures/actors participate in this process? Were these activities coordinated by a single authority? If so, by whom and how were the responsibilities of annual controls assigned among the implementation bodies?*
		Monit1		X	X	X	X				X	X		*How was the process related to the establishment and the development of the monitoring structures and systems managed? Which structures/actors participate in this process? Were these activities coordinated by a single authority? If so, by whom? Were common procedures across all the implementation bodies developed?*
(II) Organizational Features	Proposition 2	PSA1			X		X	X			X	X	X	*[Related to the most representative axis of each ERDF OP] Did the final beneficiaries/the MA have staff with adequate technical expertise to generate high-quality projects coherent with the overall programming? Was there a staff turnover during this phase?*
		Project Man2		X	X			X		X			X	*Did the final beneficiaries have staff with adequate technical expertise, and monitoring culture, to manage the project dossier and the relevant expense documentation? Was there staff turnover during this phase?*
		Project Man3	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	*Did the final beneficiaries/the MA have staff with adequate technical expertise, and management capacity, to manage the projects financed within the OP within time constraints? Was there staff turnover during this phase?*
		Monit2			X				X	X			X	*Did the final beneficiaries/the MA have staff with adequate technical expertise, and monitoring culture, to promptly and correctly insert the monitoring data within the online monitoring system? Was there a staff turnover during this phase?*
	Proposition 3	Prog3		X		X	X	X			X			*During the stage of negotiation and the approval of the OP, was there any change in the organizational structures related to the MA? And in the internal reorganization of responsibilities?*
		PSA2		X	X		X	X			X		X	*[Related to the most representative axis of each ERDF OP] During the stage of project selection/approval, was there any change in the organizational structures related to the MA? And in the internal reorganization of responsibilities?*
		Project Man2		X			X			X			X	*During the stage of project payment, was there any change in the organizational structures related to the PA? And in the internal reorganization of responsibilities?*
(III) Political	Proposition 4	Prog1		X	X	X		X			X	X	X	*Which actions had the regional government taken to establish the processes related to the programming organization? Was there a political interest in programming issue throughout the entire programming period?*

														Questions
Factors		Monit 1		X		X	X	X							*Which actions had the regional government taken to establish and consolidate the monitoring system? Was there a political interest in the monitoring issue throughout the entire programming period?*
		Monit 3		X	X		X	X			X		X		*Which actions had the regional government taken to use monitoring as supportive of the general programming? Was there a political interest in this issue throughout the entire programming period?*
		Eval1		X	X		X				X	X			*Which actions had the regional govenrment taken to establish the Evaluation Unit and to consolidate its evaluation activities? Was there a political interest in the evaluation issue throughout the entire programming period?*
		Eval2		X	X		X				X	X	X		*Which actions had the regional government taken to use evaluation for management purposes? Was there a political interest in this issue throughout the entire programming period?*
(IV) Stakeholder Participation	Proposition 5	Prog1		X				X			X		X		*Were the stakeholders able to actively contribute to the discussion about the programming organization? Did they come up with any concrete proposals?*
		Prog2		X				X			X		X		*Were the stakeholders able to actively contribute to the discussion about the elaboration of the program documents? Did they come up with any concrete proposals?*
	Proposition 6	Monit 3		X		X		X			X		X		*Were the stakeholders actively involved within the MC's activities? Has anything been done to help them actively participate in MC's activities and decisions?*
		Eval2		X	X		X	X			X	X	X		*Were the stakeholders actively involved in the evaluation activities? And in the discussion of the evaluation results? Has anything been done to help them to increase their evaluation skills?*

Table 2.A: Source(s) used to assess the implementation process

| Phase | Dimension | EC reports | National and regional program documents | Evaluation studies | Data related to (de)commitment, expenditure, and system effectiveness | Sources used to evaluate the OP implementation performance — Interviews with: | | | | | | | | Exemplary questions posed during the interviews: |
						Commission officials in DG Regio	Officials working on national structures	Representatives from: MA	CA	PA	Officials working on regional structures	External evaluators	Representatives of key stakeholders	
Programming	Prog1		X	X		X	X	X			X	X		*Were the processes related to the programming organization clearly defined? Was there any re-programming? If yes, how is the original programming organization changed?*
	Prog2		X	X		X	X	X			X	X		*Did the program documents clearly identify the targets to be reached? Were they integrated within a clear strategic development strategy?*
	Prog3	X	X			X	X	X						*Were there any problems encountered during the negotiation and approval phase of the OP? If yes, what kind of problems? Was the process completed on schedule?*
Project selection/approval	PSA1		X	X		X		X				X	X	*[Related to the most representative axis of each ERDF OP] How was the quality of the competitive/non-competitive projects presented? Were they integrated within a single idea of development?*
	PSA2		X		X	X		X			X	X	X	*[Related to the most representative axis of each ERDF OP] Which were the criteria used for project appraisal and selection? Please, explain their main technical characteristics. Were these criteria clearly defined? How long did these procedures last?*
Project management	ProjectMan1	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X			*Please, reconstruct the events relating to the formal separation of power between management and control, as required by the EU regulations. After this formal separation of power occured, were the processes related to the financial control and management systems clearly defined and operational? Were there any processing problems?*
	ProjectMan2		X		X	X	X			X	X		X	*Were the systems of commitments and payments operational, and within time constraints? Was there any problem at this stage?*
	ProjectMan3	X	X		X	X		X		X	X		X	*Was there any commitment of funds? If yes, please quantify it.*
Monitoring	Monit1	X	X			X	X				X	X		*Was the system of indicators of monitoring procedures complete and adequate? Was this monitoring system in line with the European standards? Were its procedures operational throughout the entire programming period?*

	Monit2			X	X			X		X		X	Were all physical, procedural, and financial monitoring data available at all times? If no, please specify which monitoring data were always available and which were not.
	Monit3		X	X		X		X			X	X	Were the monitoring activities used as supportive of the general programming during the OP implementation process? If yes, when and how monitoring was used for management purposes?
Evaluation	Eval1	X	X	X		X	X			X	X		Please, indicate all the evaluation activities carried out in relation to the ERDF OP 2007-2013. By whom were these assessments made? How was the quality of the evaluation produced?
	Eval2		X	X		X		X		X	X	X	Were the evaluation activities used as supportive of general programming during the OP implementation process? If yes, when and how were evaluation results used for management purposes?

References

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