



O.7.3.1 “Final Report: Assessment of Governance”

Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the final report, and includes the results of the assessment of B-MINCOME governance.

Firstly, the report highlights how the project was organised, from the design phase through to the implementation phase. Each active policy is analysed and reviewed in terms of the goals and the actors involved, together with the time frame in which their deployment took place. In addition, there is a general description of who and what was involved in the deployment of the project: partnership members, implementation drivers, suppliers, and coordination and meeting settings.

Secondly, there is a main section, with the results themselves.

These are the main barriers for implementation that were identified:

- During the initial stages of the project, several difficulties arose that were related to spreading and sharing information about the programme. This caused initial feelings of confusion among residents, the social network and the professionals who were working in the area, together with the sensation that the set-up had been rushed. The use of excessively complex and bureaucratic language, as well as not using existing community spaces to share information about the project, seemed to have contributed to these difficulties.
- The perception of a top-down imposition and the low level of involvement of the local actors in defining the project seem to have made it difficult for participants to understand and make the policy their own at first. The idea of a top-down project caused a certain tension with the logic of co-production that was intended to be part of the project. Furthermore, there were actors who were more difficult to involve: the districts and the local authorities.
- Coordination was one of the main issues of implementation. The diversity of actors and the simultaneous deployment of four Active Policies in different thematic fields (employment, housing, social economy and participation) was no easy task, and challenged implementation. Interviews highlighted that, although the actors had developed specific knowledge of the Active Policies in which they had participated, only the actors linked to the Steering Committee had developed a global vision of the programme. This affected the interrelationship between policies in the local area.
- The operational difficulties inherent in such a complex programme, along with the organisational and legal constraints under which public administrations operate, led to difficulties in implementing important aspects of the project and, in some cases, to a rethinking of the initial proposals. The deployment of an innovative policy like B-MINCOME requires an organisational flexibility that the administration does not always have.

- Some of the constraints were also related to an inadequate appraisal of the participants' profiles; this could be linked to the lack of involving the actors who know the local area best in defining of the policy. Two clear examples of the consequences of these design problems were the insubstantial participation in the housing programme and the difficulties in involving the beneficiaries of the basic income in social entrepreneurship projects.
- The pressures of time and the uncertainties regarding the continuity of the project and its policies have weighed heavily on the deployment of B-MINCOME. Implementing the policy turned out to be particularly slow and complicated. The actors interviewed stressed that the programme was shut down at a point in which the most interesting dynamics were beginning to unfold. In this way, continuity appeared to be one of the most important challenges.

Finally, this report also highlighted several important lessons learnt and the successful practices that took place during the project implementation:

- B-MINCOME has shown the suitability of implementing and combining an income policy together with several active policies. According to the interviews conducted, there was a two-fold benefit: receiving an income but also being involved in an active policy were aspects such as the promotion of the social and solidarity economy, the promotion of occupational training and community participation also favoured the beneficiaries.
- The ambitious and complex nature of a project such as B-MINCOME, which has such a high potential impact on the local area, requires particular attention be paid to communications strategies, not only with regard to citizens, but also with regard to the staff that will work in the local area. Communications can be improved by using simpler, more comprehensible language, by diversifying consultation channels (making use of existing community spaces) and by strengthening personalised connections and face-to-face discussions with the beneficiaries.
- Managing expectations is one of the most important aspects of this type of project. Therefore, good communications and solid support given to both technical teams and beneficiaries is needed in order to moderate the negative effects derived from flawed expectations and incorrect interpretations of the policy, which could end up generating frustration and lack of motivation. A good communications strategy can clearly set out key aspects such as the objectives of the project, the goals of each phase and any possible readjustments which are the result of flexible views and adaptation.
- Programs like B-MINCOME require a high level of involvement from many diverse actors with links to the local area (associations, professionals from different services and facilities, districts, etc.). In order to ensure their commitment and solid understanding of the policy it is necessary to involve them all from the very beginning, including the design phase.

- The great diversity and plurality of the actors involved is a major challenge in terms of coordination (of the project as a whole and within each active policy). It is necessary to design a space where information can be exchanged and the programme can be followed. This needs to include involvement of all the necessary professionals to foster coordination and mutual benefit between the active policies and between different local areas.
- Coordination between active policies is key for the successful implementation of a programme like B-MINCOME. This coordination must be allowed for in the design of the policies themselves and must aim at facilitating elements of connection between them, both in terms of coordinating the actors and the actions planned, with emphasis put on shared objectives.
- Flexibility in implementing the project has been one of its great virtues, since it has permitted readjusting its implementation as difficulties were identified and various unforeseen events occurred. The administrative barriers in place can be difficult to overcome, but in all cases, thorough planning that foresees the main legal and administrative difficulties and how to overcome them can be the key to smooth implementation.
- The lottery system used to allocate income and active policies has guaranteed fair results, but has also caused some significant differences between the profile of the users and the goals of each policy. The lesson to be learnt is that, when a beneficiary is assigned to receive the basic income, a more accurate assessment of the user profile is needed in order to decide on the final allocation of the programmes to which they will be assigned.
- The time frame needed to promote change processes such as empowerment, entrepreneurship and stable integration into the labour market is long and must be taken into account when planning. The results of the B-MINCOME programme demonstrate the need to set up processes early and ensure their long-term functioning, so as to be able to achieve the planned transformation objectives.
- The implementation of innovative approaches to care has also made it possible to obtain successful results. This is the case of the “Punts d'Atenció Oberta”: spaces to meet and receive group care without requiring an appointment with Social Services, which have been open to all the beneficiaries. This has created quicker and better help for users. Moreover, the spaces have eased the professionals' workload somewhat, leading to greater emphasis on community care and less on economic issues. “Punts d'Atenció Oberta” are an example of technical and methodological learning that has brought direct benefits to the people concerned.