

Proposal for a Multi-annual Plan for Evaluation and Monitoring (E&M) of the ICT-PSP

MOTIVE

The legal base for the CIP stipulates that the Commission shall regularly monitor the implementation of the Framework Programme and its specific programmes, the EIP, the ICT-PSP and the EIP. In particular there shall be an interim evaluation by 31-12-2009 and a 'final' evaluation by 31-12-2011. Monitoring is an obligation in the SEM framework and sub-delegations. It is a continuing process.

The new evaluation strategy of the Commission, adopted on 21 February 2007¹, requires improved planning of evaluation activities.

OBJECTIVE

The objective is to assure effective and timely evaluation of ICT-PSP interventions within the context of the CIP and the i2010 initiative; based on a sound evidence base, logical mapping of causality links and a core set of indicators for continuous monitoring. Timely evaluations should inform periodic re-orientation of interventions and meet the Commission's legal obligations.

We propose that the evaluation and monitoring strategy should reflect the following contextual frameworks:

- **CIP:** "The interim and final evaluations of the specific programmes shall be arranged in such a way that their results can be taken into account in the interim and final evaluation of the framework programme." (CIP Decision art. 8.4) DG ENTR has the responsibility to coordinate this process.
- **i2010;** the ICT-PSP is one of the main financial instruments of i2010. The mid-term review of the i2010 strategy is to be completed in early 2008 and should ensure that i2010 continues to be a valid reference framework for Europe's information and media policies. The results of the mid-term review will become part of the policy framework in which the ICT-PSP operates and will need to be taken into account in its interim evaluation of the ICT-PSP. Where appropriate, inputs from ICT-PSP could contribute to the i2010 mid-term review, but the latter comes too early for there to be much ICT-PSP experience to draw on.
- **ICT-RTD;** ICT-PSP will complement the Framework Programme(s) for Research and Development, and in particular the ICT-RTD, in that it will extend 'downstream' to deal with the wide deployment of Outcomes and results from research. The ex-post evaluation of IST-RTD in the 6th FP in 2008 and the interim evaluation of IST-RTD in the 7th FP in 2008-9 will also have relevance for the intermediate evaluations of ICT-PSP.
- **ERDF;** the ICT-PSP will build on and strengthen the activities aiming at the best use and wider uptake of ICT at national and regional level and in

¹ "Responding to Strategic Needs: Reinforcing the use of Evaluations" (SEC(2007)213).

particular those supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Some of the instruments used are similar (in particular, both ERDF and CIP fund networks for Cooperation and the exchange of experience and ideas). Coordination will be ensured between ICT in CIP and ERDF in order to maximise the impact of the Community support.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE ICT-PSP IMPLEMENTATION

We propose to carry out monitoring and evaluation at three levels: the individual project level; the intermediate, sub-theme level within the Work Programme and the overall ICT-PSP level.

1. Proposal/Project-Level Monitoring and Evaluation

The purpose is to assess the effectiveness of the Commission's evaluation of proposals and its management of projects, and to monitor the achievements of projects.

1.1 Monitoring the Evaluation of the 1st Call for Proposals

We propose to arrange independent monitoring of the evaluation of the first call for proposals. The monitoring will be carried out by a group of 2-3 independent experienced experts, one of them the 'rapporteur' who will prepare a report for the INFSO management, to be presented to the Management Committee and published. For the first call, this will take place in November 2007. The Terms of Reference will be prepared before 15 September and the exact type of contract to be used will be clarified².

We will only arrange monitoring of subsequent call evaluations if experience with Call 1 shows this is necessary, or if the process changes.

1.2 Monitoring the Implementation –Progress Review of Individual Projects

We propose that each project be subject to an annual review. An external panel of experts should assess the progress of the project against its objectives and their report should be the basis for re-orientation, re-scheduling or termination of the project. This review should be the responsibility of the operational units.

In order to consistently monitor the output and impacts of the projects, C2 and C3 will define a first run of soft (qualitative) and hard (quantitative) indicators, that will be discussed with colleagues from other directorates. We propose that the project officers collect this data as an integral part of the annual reviews and the final reporting from each project. The output and impact indicators will be refined in November 2007 prior to the negotiation process of the first call, in the light of the indicators suggested in the selected proposals. A small set of common indicators will be agreed in a consultative workshop with the DG-INFSO project officers, colleagues from DG Enterprise and – if appropriate - one or two external experts. An obligation for contractors to collect (at least) this common set of indicators should be introduced in the Technical Annexes of all funded projects..

² Similar to the appointment letters used for the experts monitoring the first call of the ICT-RTD under FP 7.

This indicator data will be used in evaluations at portfolio and programme level. This data will therefore serve to link the project-level activities into the portfolio- and programme-level evaluations.

It is estimated that a budget of €50,000 will be needed to cover the expenses for the external experts needed for the monitoring of the first call (1.1) and the "indicator" workshop (1.2). The compilation of indicator data from the annual project-reviews will be managed within C3.

2. Intermediate - Level Evaluation and Impact Assessment

The sub-theme-level in the ICT-PSP work programme (i.e. "1.1 Enabling EU-Wide Public eProcurement") is the level at which objectives are set. As recommended by RAND Europe, it is therefore the most appropriate level at which to evaluate the performance of the funded projects against the objectives and in particular to evaluate their capacity of mobilising stakeholders beyond the projects themselves. Evidence for the mobilisation around (sub) themes by regions or other stakeholders can be facilitated by complementary instruments such as ERDF.

We propose to assess whether the sub-theme is fully covered by the initiatives that are being financed; whether the objectives are achieved; whether there is a significant mobilisation and/or whether market failure still persists. This information will be used to inform revisions on the work-programme and to support the evaluation of the programme.

We propose to address these aims in a single contract for analysis and an impact observatory, covering: scope, participation, following the first 3 calls for proposals, and market evolution. The methodology for portfolio analysis developed in ICT-RTD will be used as input, however the system proposed for the ICT-PSP will be lighter. The relevance of actions in favour of SME and the coherence of the EU actions with respect to national and regional actions for innovation will be assessed against the work programme objectives and the market evolution within each sub-theme.

This observatory will feed the interim evaluation in 2009 and the "final" evaluation in 2011. We propose that this impact observatory be operational in 2009 and 2010 (€200,000 to be allocated in 2008 and in 2009), when projects are sufficiently advanced.

3. Programme Level Evaluation

The aim of the programme level evaluation is to identify the overall effectiveness of the interventions and their synergies with other activities in the i2010 initiative and with ICT-RTD. Programme-level evaluations will build on the mid-term review of the eTEN programme (December 2004) and the final eTEN evaluation in 2006-7. The programme level evaluation will cover the contribution of the ICT-PSP to the CIP (at framework level)

3.1. The Interim Evaluation

The CIP interim evaluation is due to be completed by 31-12-2009, therefore requiring that the results of the interim CIP-PSP evaluation are ready by September 2009. (The final evaluation of eContent+ is due in early 2009).

We propose to launch a study in late 2007 to support the Interim Evaluation and Panel, focused on the effectiveness of the intervention instruments; the synergies with other parts of the CIP; the contribution to the i2010 framework and the links to ICT-RTD and with structural funds and where appropriate with other Community or Member States funding.

We propose a "network analysis"³ to look at the links between CIP measures, actions in similar areas at the regional level, notably with the support of the ERDF, and the national procurement actions. It will include quantitative analysis of the structure of ICT-PSP networks and qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention instruments (Type A + B pilots and thematic networks) and of cross-cutting themes. We believe this study will require an estimated budget of €200,000 and we have already made a provision for this amount in the 2007 "studies" plan.

In late 2008, we propose to engage the first phase of an integrated intermediate level analysis and impact assessment, which can collect evidence for the interim evaluation to September 2009.

We propose a panel-led evaluation with five experts in September 2008. The cost for such a panel will be € 100,000 (all costs included). It will take place at a time when only a limited number of results and outputs are available. We therefore propose that the interim evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the new intervention instruments – the type A and B pilots and the thematic network actions, and consider whether they:

- have been relevant to the needs and problems identified by the programme;
- have been efficient in their operation and in their use of resources;
- have been effective in engaging organisations which can meet the objectives of the programme, or show reasonable likelihood of being so at the time of evaluation; and
- show good likelihood of generating the broader impacts on society looked for by the programme.

3.2 The Final Evaluation

A final evaluation will be completed by 31-12-2011 for which an independent panel will produce a report by middle 2011 using the inputs of a second programme-level study in 2010/11, building on the 2nd phase of intermediate-level analysis and impact observatory and returning to a new network analysis of links into national procurement and regional innovation measures. The final evaluation should place emphasis on later stage elements of activities and outputs and outcomes and broader impacts.

3.3 Collecting Evidence for the "Impact Assessment" of Future CIP Measures (2014-20) and the ex-Post Evaluation in 2015

³ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society/evaluation/studies/index_en.htm

The evaluation of the later years of the current programme must inform the preparation of an ex-ante impact assessment of options for a follow-up to the CIP measures in the next financial perspectives (2014-2020). This will need to be completed in 2012.

There will also be a need, in 2013, to collect and assess evidence for the ex-post evaluation of the CIP interventions – a formal requirement of the Financial Regulations.