



TENDERING AND CONTRACTING THE EX ANTE EVALUATION 2014-2020 IN SLOVENIA

FACTSHEET OF THE EUROPEAN EVALUATION HELPSDESK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT - FEBRUARY 2019



EX ANTE EVALUATION OF THE RDP 2014-2020

The ex ante evaluation is a process which supports the preparation and management of an intervention strategy. Its purpose is to gather information and carry out analysis, which helps to define objectives and make sure they can be effectively met. This is achieved through various activities including the appraisal of the SWOT analysis, assessment of needs, the intervention logic and targets and appraisal of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements and implementation. These activities need to be diligently planned and therefore require a careful planning of resources and the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities. An important step to achieve this is to effectively tender and contract the ex ante evaluator, which serves as a precursor to all other activities.

This factsheet provides an overview of the tendering and contracting procedures for the ex ante evaluation in Slovenia of the rural development programme (RDP) 2014–2020.



OVERVIEW OF THE TENDERING AND CONTRACTING OF THE EX ANTE EVALUATION IN SLOVENIA

Contracting a skilled evaluator

The skills and competences of the evaluator are crucial for the final quality of the ex ante evaluation. Contracting a skilled evaluator is often one of the biggest challenges for the RDP Managing Authority.

Based on the previous ex ante evaluation, the Slovenian RDP Managing Authority has learned that, in addition to strong methodological skills, evaluators with specific knowledge of the territory or of the situation in a country/region can bring added value to the analysis and the recommendations which follow. Furthermore, the diversity of the composition of the team of contracted evaluators should also be considered because it allows for a wider range of territorial and sectorial knowledge and facilitates the highest level of results.

Dealing with uncertainties

The tendering and contracting of the ex ante evaluation is often faced with several uncertainties. This could include



FURTHER INFORMATION

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia
Dunajska cesta 22
SI – 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija
www.mkgp.gov.si
www.program-podezelja.si



uncertainty for the future approval of the legislative proposals between the EU co-legislators, a lack of final guidance for the ex ante evaluation, or even possible delays in the approval process of the programme (including the ex ante evaluation). For all of these reasons it is important to build in provisions to account for these uncertainties.

In the ex ante evaluation of the Slovenian RDP 2014-2020, the contract signed between the evaluators and Managing Authority did not include specific provisions or safeguards to address these kinds of uncertainties. Consequently, additional contracts had to be prepared for the evaluators to take into account the observations raised by the European Commission on the RDP.

Based on this lesson, the Slovenian RDP Managing Authority has decided to contract the evaluator for the ex ante evaluation of the CAP Strategic Plan until its final approval by the European Commission. This will ensure that the evaluator is available and capable to respond and provide analysis unhindered throughout the process. Moreover, the future payments for the evaluator will be divided into two parts to further ensure the commitment of the evaluator (i.e. after the first submission to the RDP Managing Authority and after the European Commission's final approval).

Defining criteria in the tender to ensure the quality of the final report

It is a good practice in tendering to ensure the quality of the final report of the ex ante evaluation to make certain results are of high quality and provide transparency to the evaluators of what is expected and how the report will be judged. The Slovenian RDP Managing Authority had the following quality assurance criteria for the final report, which was made explicit to the evaluator:

1. Relevance of scope (have the programme, its outputs, results and impacts, including also the planned and unexpected interactions and policy implications been fully examined?);
2. Appropriateness of the applied methodological approach;
3. Data reliability;
4. Efficiency of analysis (have the collection and systematic analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to the extent that they allow one to answer the evaluation questions been achieved?);
5. Credibility of the findings (has the consistency with the logical structure of the ex ante evaluation and the analysis of the data collected, as well as their final interpretation been based on a precise description of the assumptions and methodological principles?);
6. Impartiality of conclusions;
7. Clarity of the final report;
8. Stylistic, design and linguist relevance of the final report.

This list of specifications allowed the Evaluation Steering Group to assess and validate the final report against a transparent and explicit criterion.

Table 1. Overview of the tendering and contracting of the ex ante evaluation in Slovenia

Elements	Slovenia
Type of public procurement procedure	Open procedure
Scope of the tender	Ex ante evaluation and SEA
Length of the tender	40 days
Allocated budget	Total: 152.400 EUR (Ex ante evaluation: 93.600 EUR and SEA: 58.800 EUR)
Contractor	2 separate evaluators
Type of contractor	2 private organisations
Involvement of the same evaluators in other RDP evaluation milestones	Ex-post evaluation of RDP 2007 – 2013

Coordinating the ex ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the ex ante evaluation can be conducted as one integrated exercise or as two separate exercises, which are linked. Deciding on the coordination of these two tasks can be challenging, especially because it involves multiple stakeholders.

In the case of Slovenia, the Managing Authority prepared a single Terms of Reference addressing the two tasks: ex ante evaluation and SEA. Two separate evaluators were contracted, each carrying out one of these tasks under the responsibility of the Managing Authority. Two distinct reports were delivered to the Managing Authority, which were used for the design of the RDP 2014-2020. In order to coordinate the ex ante evaluation and SEA, the RDP Managing Authority had a close cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and environmental stakeholders (e.g. Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation) from the very beginning of the preparation of the programme.

Due to a lack of time, it was very important that the preparation of the programme's ex ante evaluation and SEA all took place in a coordinated and cooperative manner in order to create mutual trust between the Managing Authority and stakeholders.



LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAJOR CHALLENGES:

Uncertainties can arise from several factors and are often hard to plan for.



Ensuring a high quality for the ex ante evaluation can be difficult to achieve.



Coordination of the SEA and ex ante evaluation can become difficult between different ministries.



Availability and capacity of the evaluators and personnel.



SOLUTIONS TAKEN:

Ensure that your evaluator is contracted in a way to meet these unforeseen challenges and define a timeframe in the tender for contracting the ex ante evaluator which covers the period until the Commission's final approval.

Provide precise technical specifications and quality assurance criteria in the tender for the ex ante evaluation, especially in relation to the methods. Include the Evaluation Steering Group in the process from the preparation of the ToR to the final report. Select evaluator(s) with high methodological skills and high levels of knowledge on the territory and sectors covered by the programme.

Establish cooperation with the environmental institutions involved in the SEA (e.g. Ministry of Environment) and make sure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. Coordination can also be facilitated by a competent person from the Managing Authority possessing a wide range of horizontal knowledge and the ability to coordinate both projects.

Make sure when coordinating multiple evaluators that they have enough capacities to carry out the evaluations and have enough flexibility to adapt to possible changes in the schedule.



Send your questions to:

info@ruralevaluation.eu



¹ More information are available on https://europa.eu/youreurope/business/selling-in-eu/public-contracts/rules-procedures/index_en.htm

EUROPEAN
EVALUATION
HELPSDESK
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



T +32 2 737 51 30
info@ruralevaluation.eu
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/>

The Evaluation Helpdesk works under the supervision of Unit C.4 (Monitoring and Evaluation) of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The contents of this fact sheet do not necessarily express the official views of the European Commission.

EVALUATION WORKS!



European Network for
Rural Development