



LESSONS LEARNED FROM TENDERING AND CONTRACTING THE EX ANTE EVALUATION 2014-2020 EVALUATION IN GREECE

FACTSHEET OF THE EUROPEAN EVALUATION HELPDESK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT - May 2019



EX ANTE EVALUATION OF THE RDP 2014-2020

The tendering and contracting of any evaluation is a critical first step in the evaluation process, which serves to provide a framework for ensuring the quality and robustness of findings. The activities involved need to be carefully planned and therefore require a careful planning of resources and the establishment of clear roles and responsibilities. The tendering and contracting of the ex ante evaluation can serve as an important mirror to reflect vital lessons learned for upcoming and future evaluations.

This factsheet provides an overview of the tendering and contracting process for the ex ante evaluation in Greece of the rural development programme (RDP) 2014–2020 and lessons learned for future evaluations.



TENDERING AND CONTRACTING OF THE EX ANTE EVALUATION IN GREECE

Dealing with uncertainties

The tendering and contracting of the ex ante evaluation is often faced with several uncertainties. This could include uncertainty for the adoption 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 these reasons, it is important to build in provisions to account for these uncertainties.

To account for these uncertainties, the tender published by the Greek RDP Managing Authority added important provisions for the evaluator to address possible observations raised by the European Commission in its contract. In addition, the duration of the contract signed with the evaluator was important, which stipulated that it should cover the period until the final approval of the RDP 2014–2020 in order to ensure the stability of the ex ante process.

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, as it often involves achieving an understanding of what is expected, or because it is difficult to



FURTHER INFORMATION

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contract one single qualified evaluator with both general and specific skills for the evaluation of the EAFRD.

To overcome this challenge, the Managing Authority of Greece contracted a consortium of private evaluators and public universities in order to obtain as much thematic expertise on specific themes (e.g. water, soil, climate change, biodiversity) and skills in different methodological econometric models in order to have the most robust possible findings. In this way, the evaluation could benefit from the methodological expertise of universities and institutes as well as the additional data that these organisations collect, which the Managing Authority does not. Furthermore, expert knowledge on specific themes (water, soil, etc.) can be better attained through this type of consortium arrangement.

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

The Strategic Environmental Assessment and the ex ante evaluation can be conducted as one integral exercise or as two separate but linked tasks. Deciding on the coordination of these two tasks can be challenging, especially because it involves multiple stakeholders.

The Greek Managing Authority tendered the ex ante evaluation and SEA as one single contract which resulted in two specific reports. It was then required that the ex ante evaluator should, through close collaboration with the SEA expert, review these separate reports and report one final report to the European Commission.

The Ministry of the Environment was further involved concerning the SEA as it was responsible for the public consultation of the SEA report. The Ministry of the Environment published recommendations based these public consultations and the SEA expert further improved the report in order to feed into the final report made by the ex ante evaluator.

Defining specifications on dissemination activities

In tendering and contracting any evaluation it is typically considered a good practice to also include specific criteria on critical activities related to the dissemination of findings from the evaluator in order to ensure that these activities are completed in a competent and effective manner.

The terms of reference, in Greece, followed a template suggested in the technical guidelines² published by the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development in 2014, which ensures a minimum standard if followed correctly. However, in Greece a lack of additional specifications in relation to the dissemination of findings has been acknowledged as an important area for further improvement since the last ex ante and for the next programming period. In the tenders released for the Annual Implementation Report 2019 and upcoming Terms of Reference for the ex ante evaluation for the coming programming period, Greece has decided to specify that three factsheets must be produced and disseminated.

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

Elements	Greece
Types of public procurement procedure ¹	Open procedure
Scope of the tender	Ex ante evaluation and SEA
Time length of the tender	25 days
Allocated budget	98.400,00 € without VAT
Contractor	Consortium of 4 partners
Type of contractor	2 private organisations 2 universities
Involvement of the same evaluator in other RDP evaluation milestones	Ex-post evaluation of RDP 2007 – 2013, Enhanced Annual Implementation Report (AIR) in 2017 and 2019

Each factsheet targets an important stakeholder group:

1. policy makers,
2. the general public,
3. Service Units of the Managing Authority and Implementation Bodies.

These factsheets provide basic evaluation findings and other key information in a user-friendly way, primarily through the use of infographics and pictures. Additionally, a presentation must be given by the evaluators to the Monitoring Committee.



Send your questions to:

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LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAJOR CHALLENGES:

Uncertainties can arise from several factors and are often hard to plan for (adoption of the legislative proposals, etc.).



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 of the programme proposal.

Organising the ex ante evaluation and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) can be challenging and therefore care should be given to its coordination.



It is important to have a clear working relationship between evaluators and authorities who are dealing with the evaluations.

Ensure the communication of results by planning sufficient dissemination activities



Provide specifications in the tender for the ex ante evaluation, especially in relation to the dissemination of evaluation findings and the role of the evaluator in these activities.

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

² European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (2014) Getting the most from your RDP: Guidelines for the ex ante evaluation of 2014-2020 RDPs. Brussels, Belgium

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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.

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