Nicholas Martyn, Deputy Director General of DG REGIO, welcomed participants and opened the meeting. He introduced the main issues at stake and explained why future Cohesion policy should be more result-oriented by focusing on indicators, monitoring and evaluation.

I. INTRODUCTION, AGENDA, MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Veronica Gaffey introduced the agenda of the meeting. The minutes of two previous meetings were adopted.

II. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN COHESION POLICY 2014+ (EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND AND COHESION FUND)


Key Concepts

Latvia thanked for the improvements made to the Paper. She asked for guidance on the performance framework and suggested keeping the section on evaluation standards.

Lithuania, Hungary, Ireland and the Netherlands supported Latvia's suggestion.

France welcomed the proposal. However, he raised concerns that an excessive attention devoted to indicators could lead to a perverse effect on identifying programme objectives, i.e., programme objectives should not be determined by the existence of indicator data. He also raised certain concerns in relation to the performance framework and conditionalities.

Italy suggested devoting more attention to evaluation of integrated programmes and providing examples of good practices on how to actually carry it out.

The Polish representative welcomed the very good quality of the Paper but he raised some concerns on two specific points in the draft General Regulation. He pointed out that consistent use of the word "result" should be assured. Moreover, he noted that Article 47 (3) would pre-empt evaluation unit to carry out evaluations internally.


Estonia pointed out that the proposal to provide ex ante information on data needed for planned evaluations could hinder the launch of more innovative and exploratory studies.
Portugal welcomed the proposal. He suggested better clarifying the role of common indicators as regards, in particular, the distinction between output and result indicators. Moreover, he pointed out that the selection of good result indicators is a critical issue and asked for more examples.

Lithuania and Germany supported Portugal's request to further develop Annex 2 and suggested including more details on data sources and examples on specific themes (climate change, energy efficiency, …).

The Swedish representative supported by Estonia and Germany suggested not asking for the approval of the evaluation plan in the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee, as a preliminary discussion on it is advisable.

Cyprus, Lithuania and Germany raised doubts on the approval procedure envisaged for evaluation plans and noted that Evaluation Steering Committees should have a clearly identified role in it.

Austria noted that the qualitative nature envisaged in the new evaluation approach and for some result indicators is of particular relevance for small-scale programmes. This has been confirmed by the pilot exercise.

Italy expressed some concerns about having compulsory evaluation plans for each Operational Programme and suggested reviewing provisions of the draft regulation on this issue. Moreover, she stated that the working document should include provisions on publishing monitoring data.

Poland noted that the working document does not provide information on horizontal evaluations that could be carried out at partnership contract level. He also raised doubts on the provision of providing summaries of evaluation findings in 2019, as it would be already partially addressed in previous reporting.

Austria, Czech Republic, Estonia and Poland asked for a specific guidance on ex ante evaluation that should, preferably, cover ESF as well as ERDF and Cohesion Fund.

United Kingdom asked for clarification on the role of SEA in ex ante evaluation.

Common Indicators: Annex 1 of the Concepts and Recommendations Paper

Austria asked whether the list of common indicators could be further modified. In particular, he noted that not enough attention is devoted to tourism interventions. It was suggested by Italy to introduce the Indicator "n. of SMEs in cultural and tourism sector".

Poland raised some concerns on the usefulness and reliability of Common Indicators classified as result indicators and, in particular, on Indicator n. 35. Germany supported Poland's comments.

The Italian representative suggested providing clear guidance on definitions, target setting, and methodology to measure actual values.

Czech Republic pointed out that overlapping may occur in reporting achievements against Indicators n. 44 - 47.
V. Gaffey emphasised that the document is guidance and not mandatory. She asked participants to send any comments in writing by mid November and informed them that an internal discussion will be launched to follow up the request for guidance on ex ante evaluation and performance framework. The new version of the Concepts and Recommendations Paper (with evaluation standards enclosed as annex) and a first draft of the guidance on ex ante evaluation will be presented at the next evaluation network meeting in Brussels.

III. **CORE INDICATORS IN THE PERIOD 2007-13**

A. Abdulwahab presented main results from the Annual Reporting Exercise. He pointed out that reporting against Core Indicators still needs improvements and opened the discussion on how to ensure better reporting of achievements in next years.

**Hungary** suggested simplifying procedures to modify data in SFC2007 and allowing Member States to create summary table on achievements aggregated at national level. **Austria** and **Portugal** supported Hungary's proposal.

**Italy** noted that clear guidance on definitions and strong coordination at regional, national and European level are two essential factors to ensure better quality reporting.

IV. **DG REGIO ex Post evaluation of Cohesion Fund and ISPA (2000-2006)**

J. Vaznelyte and A. Abdulwahab from the Evaluation Unit informed participants about the state of play of the evaluation and presented final results from the work packages B "Cost-benefit analysis of selected transport projects" and C "Cost-benefit analysis of environment projects".


C. Yocheva (Evaluation Unit) presented the main results from the policy analysis on renewable energy and energy efficiency in housing carried out by the Network this year. She informed participants on the state of play and future activities of the Network.

The **Polish representative** thanked for the interesting presentation and informed participants that they carried out an evaluation on this theme.
VI. DG REGIO EVALUATIONS: STATE OF PLAY

V. Gaffey presented evaluations underway and planned.

Marielle Riché presented first findings from the study on "Evaluating Innovation in Cohesion Policy Programmes" and Daniel Mouqué (Evaluation Unit) informed participants on on-going and planned activities in the field of "Counterfactual Impact Evaluation", including an Impact Evaluation Seminar in Warsaw on 12 December 2011.

The Italian representative said that Italy would like to launch a study aiming to aggregate findings from evaluations by specific themes (R&D, energy, education) and draw up policy conclusions and recommendations for the next programming period. She asked for information on and references to similar studies already carried out by other Member States.

Second day of meeting, 21.10.2011

VII. PILOT PROJECTS ON FUTURE OUTCOME/RESULT INDICATORS

V. Gaffey informed participants that in the last months, regions from different Member States tested, with the support of DG REGIO Evaluation Unit, a new approach towards result indicators in their current programmes. The first outcomes of this pilot exercise in Austria, Italy, Netherlands, Poland and Sweden have been discussed with a team of international experts lead by Philip McCann and Fabrizio Barca, advisors to Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner for Regional Policy.

Poland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Hungary, Sweden, Denmark presented their experience in piloting the new approach.

The following issues were discussed:
- need for concentration;
- data availability and selection of good results indicators;
- capacity of indicators to be responsive to policy (key questions: what do you want to change, why do you think that spending money in specific sectors will bring towards the desired change?, are target values realistic taking into account expected allocations of resources? and, at the same time, meaningful for citizens and politicians?);
- nature of baselines (quantified statistics / qualitative assessment);
- role of evaluation in assessing the actual contribution to changes in result indicators.

V. Gaffey pointed out that DG REGIO Evaluation unit is at disposal for continuing working with regions in testing the new approach and suggested coordinating this exercise at national level.
VIII. CLOSING REMARKS

MS reported on recent and/or upcoming capacity building activities:

- **Hungary** invites the members of the Evaluation Network to a conference on monitoring that will take place on 10/11 November 2011.
- **Romania** is organising an international conference that will take place in April 2012 and a training course on counterfactual evaluation.
- **Sweden** is carrying out different capacity building activities regarding on-going evaluation (academic courses launched by six universities, seminars for teachers, publication of books in Swedish and English).
- **Italy (Sardinia Region)** has just finalised four evaluations (main topics: R&D, education, urban development).
- **Lithuania** has participated to a Conference in Prague on "Strategic Environmental Assessment" to present the results of a study on environmental requirements implemented in Lithuania.
- **Latvia** is organising an international Conference on mid-term evaluation and a seminar on counterfactual evaluation that will take place respectively in November and December 2011.

V. Gaffey concluded the meeting by thanking Member States for their presentations and active participation.

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