First day of meeting, 21.11.2012

Veronica Gaffey, Head of the Evaluation and European Semester Unit in DG REGIO, welcomed participants and opened the meeting. She presented the state of play of negotiations on the legislative package for future Cohesion policy in the Council and in the European Parliament. She also presented the new set of tasks for the Unit and the new colleagues who recently joined it. The new representatives for France and the South West of England introduced themselves.

1. INTRODUCTION, AGENDA, MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Veronica Gaffey presented the agenda of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting in June 2012 were adopted.

2. PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2014-2020: COMMON INDICATORS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Veronica Gaffey started this session pointing out how the part in the proposed Regulation referring to indicators is now almost agreed with the Council - the discussion during the meeting would therefore focus on aspects of definition.

Adam Abdulwahab presented and discussed the list of common indicators for infrastructure. He specified that the attempt was to find a balance between the specificity of the definition of these indicators and the application to different contexts.

On additional households with broadband access of at least 30 Mbps, PT and IT commented on the partial difference between the description in the Presidency text and the Annex under discussion. There will be a clarification in the new version of the definitions. For information, it is the opportunity to connect that is counted in this indicator.

There were no major comments on the new and reconstructed rail indicators.

On the new roads, the following remarks were made: is the reconstruction of the road to upgrade quality or classification a major factor (LV); the method for the calculation of the roads (EE) and measuring of the local roads, improved to national (IT). The EC confirmed that the reconstruction of a road would have to result in increased capacity, not just a change in classification to qualify as new road; to adopt the simplest way of calculation (1Km = 1 Km straight line from point A to point B) and to avoid double-counting.

No observations were raised on reconstructed or upgraded roads.

On new or improved tram and metro lines, LV asked whether responsibility for monitoring in this case lies only with MAs. The EC replied that each MA can decide on this.
The indicators on improved or created inland waterway, additional waste recycling capacity, additional population served by improved water supply, additional population served by improved wastewater treatment and total surface area of rehabilitated land were presented with no major remarks.

With regard to area benefiting from flood protection measures, area benefiting from forest fire protection measures and surface of habitats supported to attain a better conservation status, IT pointed out how the Presidency compromised text refers to “persons” and not “hectares” in the definition. After double checking, the EC confirmed the point and the text in the Annex will be modified accordingly.

3. PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2014-2020: COMMON INDICATORS FOR ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Adam Abdulwahab presented the state of play on the descriptions of the specific common indicators for energy and climate change.

On the number of households with improved energy consumption classification, questions were asked about the choice of “household” as unit of measurement (AT) and the methodology to count the number of households (SK). On the decrease of primary energy consumption of public buildings, PT and LT expressed doubts about the measurement unit. LV asked about the time period for calculation. The EC replied that the choice of measurement unit and the surface area for calculation (250m² and 500m²) is set by the Directive, even though MS can include smaller units if they so wish.

No comments were made on additional energy users connected to smart grids.

For estimated decrease of GHG, the following remarks were made: IT raised the point of “comparability” of data and values and the necessity to clarify the methodology (together with PT and LV). The EC replied that common indicators are not meant to compare MS performance but to aggregate values at EU level so they can afterwards be communicated. UK asked for some examples to be provided.
4. PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2014-2020: COMMON INDICATORS FOR SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, URBAN AND ETC

Adam Abdulwahab presented the state of play on the descriptions of the common indicators for social infrastructure, URBAN and ETC.

On capacity of supported childcare or education infrastructure, LV asked for a clarification on the measurement unit and PT for some examples of childcare and education facilities to be provided. For population expected to use improved health services, the EC stressed the possible problem of double-counting, following comments by LT, SE and SK delegates. The EC will provide some examples to clarify the issue.

No major remark was made on population living in areas with integrated urban development strategies, new open space in urban areas, new public or commercial buildings in urban areas and new housing in urban areas.

On ETC-specific indicators, the EC specified that these indicators do not appear in the ERDF regulation.

5. PROGRAMMING PERIOD 2014-2020: COMMON INDICATORS FOR INNOVATION AND PRODUCTIVE INVESTMENT

Adam Abdulwahab presented the state of play on the descriptions of the common indicators for innovation and productive investment.

For enterprises receiving support, enterprises receiving grants, enterprises receiving financial support other than grants and enterprises receiving non-financial support, the following observations were made: LV and AT asked about the appropriate level at which counting is carried out; SE asked about the role of State Aid rules in this specific domain. The EC said that the enterprises to be considered and counted are those based in the region, not only those legally established there.

On number of new enterprises supported, questions about the difference between start-ups and new enterprises and the meaning of “new enterprises” were asked by FI, PT, AT and FR. As a general rule, the upper limit of 3 years of existence was agreed on.

On private investment matching public support to enterprises (grants) and private investment matching public support to enterprises (non-grants), questions were asked as to clarify the concept of “eligibility” (PT).

For Employment increase in supported enterprises questions were asked concerning the meaning of “increase in the total number of jobs” (PL), “durability” (PT) and more general remarks on the indicator (RO and IRL).

IT and LV expressed some concern on the current formulation of Expected number of visits at supported sites of cultural or natural heritage and attraction. SE, PT and IT commented on the definition of Number of new researchers in supported entities. PT, SK and LV asked for some clarification on the definition of researchers working in improved research infrastructure facilities. The EC provided further clarification on the definition of Private investment matching public support in innovation or R&D projects and Number of
enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products. On **Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the firm products**, IT stressed the difficulties in measurement and asked for further clarification. AT and PL commented on the current definition of this indicator.

The EC will carry on further the reflection on some of the indicators presented following the comments made during the meeting; this is especially the case for indicators concerning health, GHG, and number of enterprises supported.

6. **CLOSING REMARKS**

The meeting continued with an exchange of information on monitoring and evaluation activities in Member States. PL and RO presented the final report of a recently concluded programme of exchange aimed at building evaluation capacity and RO presented the upgraded version of the website for the categorization and search of projects financed by Structural Funds. SE has completed an evaluation on the impact and effectiveness of Structural Funds interventions in the country. LV informed that the public procedure for the ex-ante evaluation of OPs for the next programming period has been launched, capacity building activities are planned and a study of the cohesion policy added value will be carried out. CY updated on its monitoring and evaluation activities, including a planned evaluation of innovation activities and the preparation of ToR for ex-ante evaluation of the OPs for the next programming period. PT reported on the pilot exercise on result orientation carried out in October and on a set of evaluations planned for the months to come (including evaluation of gender equality, national policy for economic clusters, investments in social equipment, early school leaving and innovation). MT informed that the procurement procedure for ex-ante evaluation has reached the final stage. UK stated that a business survey for ERDF has been conducted and two evaluation of the ESF have just been published. Two additional studies on transnational cooperation and the effectiveness of the LEADER approach have been contracted. PL reported on the V4 evaluation meeting held in October and the 8th evaluation conference organised in Warsaw in November. HU informed of the evaluations currently underway and of the public procurement procedure for the ex-ante evaluation of new OPs. LT reported on the finalisation of the ex-ante evaluation procedure and informed that a study on capacity building is planned. An evaluation on statistical quality is under way and 3 impact evaluations are planned (on life quality, cohesion and competitive economy). IT stated that the survey on completed evaluation in the Country has been further released, a study on monitoring data has been published and a project to support evaluation activities as finalised.

_Second day of meeting, 23.11.2012_

Rudolf Niessler opened the meeting, highlighting the issues of result orientation, monitoring and evaluation in the next programming period and performance framework.

7. **CONCEPTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS PAPER**

Kai Stryczynski presented the updates to the paper.

LV asked for some clarifications about the output and results indicators. IT wondered why the participatory evaluation method was no longer included. Concerning transparency, IT also
wanted to know why the "public availability of data" was eliminated from page 10 of the paper. PL suggested that the paper includes a remark on the evaluation plan's deadline, no later than one year after the OP approval. This could be prepared even more in advance, at about the same time when the programmes are prepared. SE asked about the qualitative methods and the learning process.

The notion of a result indicator and its use was clarified; the available literature suggests that the participatory method is indeed a method than an approach and it is up to the MS to use it; the proposal by the PL delegates on the evaluation plan was welcomed; a short discussion on the use of the qualitative methods and its data availability followed. An updated version of the paper will be uploaded on the website after the meeting.

8. CATEGORISATION OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2014-2020

Veronica Gaffey introduced the subject. The categorisation system is an information system used to improve transparency on the use ("priority themes", form of finance) and context (territorial, economic, location) of the investments made in the period 2007-2013. It allows reporting and analysis of the EU financial input in terms of programming (reprogramming) and project selection.

John Walsh presented the categorisation of EU interventions in view of the new programming period. The presentation focused on the key changes to the categories system for 2014 – 2020, coverage, changes to codes, climate tracking.

IE asked about the verification method EC uses to ensure that the right codes are selected. SK asked if encoding was requested for each expenditure category. IT remarked that common work is needed in order to obtain better data for both the EC and the national categorisation systems.

John Walsh noted that this was an information system rather than a control one. The codes have to be used consistently, in a common-sense way. The encoding will have to be done for each type of expenditure. Understanding of categorisations will need to be improved.

9. STRATEGIC REPORTS

Veronica Gaffey opened the discussion highlighting the importance of the synthesis of the strategic reports which will be submitted to the Council and the EP in spring. The state of project selection data from the AIR 2011 was presented. John Walsh presented the main concerns about the categorisation data and Adam Abdulwahab introduced the core indicator data. Veronica Gaffey emphasized the importance of the reports' quality and the need to include examples of the policy success. LT asked about the cumulative data provided in the report and noted that the report would be delivered by the end of December 2012. Will the EC come back to the MS with a feedback on reports? BG asked if the core indicators had to be reported in the annex of the report.

The data requested are cumulative. The core indicators can be presented in the annex. The EC will not go back to the MS on the reports subject.

Veronica Gaffey said that the MS should be able to show what they have achieved and some evidence – not only on what the money was spent.
10. EVALUATION OF THE 1994-99 INVESTMENT PROJECTS

Silvia Vignetti of CSIL presented the report on the long term contribution of 10 selected major investment projects co-financed by the ERDF/CF to economic development as well as the quality of life and well-being of society.

11. Open Coesione: PRESENTATION FROM THE ITALIAN AUTHORITIES

Simona de Luca of UVAL, Italy, presented “OpenCoesione” - transparency and civic monitoring on cohesion policy. OpenCoesione is Italy’s first national web portal on the implementation of investments programmed in the 2007-2013 programming cycle by Regions and State Central Administrations via cohesion policy resources. Publication of data from now on allows Italian citizens to evaluate if and how both implementation projects meet their needs and whether financial resources are allocated effectively.

12. FIRST RESULTS OF THE JASPERS EVALUATION

Juliet Martinez presented the draft final results of the study which evaluated the impact of Jaspers on the timing and quality of the preparation and submission of projects to the DG for Regional Policy and on the more effective implementation of Cohesion Policy.

13. OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE EVALUATION UNIT

Veronica Gaffey informed on the activities of the Evaluation and European Semester unit. Evaluations under way are: a report on the achievements of the cohesion policy for the period 2007 – 2011 delivered by the Expert Network, the evaluation reports on Jaspers and ESPON which are almost finalised, and the evaluation of long term achievements of the cohesion policy for 15 regions in 1994 – 1999, which is finalised. The theme for the first part of the experts' network work in 2013 will be "jobs created". The unit will not carry out new evaluations in 2013; as it will focus on the negotiations process and plan the ex-post evaluations. Guidance on drafting terms of reference is under way.

14. CLOSING REMARKS

Veronica Gaffey appreciated the discussions as they were interesting and useful. The next meeting will likely take place in March 2013. There, more information will be provided on the common indicators and the Guidance on Performance Framework.