

**MINUTES OF THE EVALUATION NETWORK MEETING
Brussels, 30-31 May 2013**

First day of meeting, 30.05.2013

Veronica Gaffey, Head of the Evaluation and European Semester Unit in Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy, welcomed participants and opened the meeting.

1. AGENDA, MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Veronica Gaffey presented the agenda of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting in March 2013 were approved.

2. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: INTRODUCTION / INNOVATION & ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

Kai Stryczynski from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit introduced the Ex-post evaluation for 2007 – 2013 (ERDF/CF). The deadline for completion is December 2015. The evaluation will be broken down by themes, with the MS being involved throughout the process. There will be coordination with the relevant evaluation for the ESF – there may be one common synthesis report for all three funds (under discussion).

Ex-post evaluations are foreseen in some MS as well: **PT** reported several evaluations under way; some focused on some parts of the OPs, others on the complete OPs; there are also two evaluations at regional level. **PL** plans an ex-post evaluation in 2016/2017 when effects will be measurable.

Kai Stryczynski presented Work Package Zero: Data collection and quality assessment. This study will be launched this year; it will take a closer look at the quality of 20 core indicators and provide an assessment of the quality of monitoring systems in each MS.

Adam Abdulwahab from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit gave a presentation on the main issues which will be raised in Work Package One: Innovation & Research. Several MS can contribute to this evaluation: **PL** has two studies on research, one study on the effects of support to the large enterprises and the other on the evaluation of the financial instruments. **IT** has studies on research & innovation in SMEs, technical clusters & public procurement. **GR** will have studies at regional level, available at the end of the year. **PT** has studies on incentives for enterprises, innovation in SMEs. **SE** has a study on Capturing effects of programmes and projects.

Daniel Mouqué from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit gave a presentation on the main issues that will be raised in Work Package Two: Venture Capital and Work Package Three: Large enterprises. MS that can contribute are: **UK** has a study on venture capital. **PT** has a study on large enterprises. **PL** has a counterfactual study on large enterprises.

3. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT

Adam Abdulwahab from the Evaluation Unit gave a presentation on the main issues that will be raised in Work Package Five: Transport and Environment. MS that can contribute to this evaluation: **HU** has studies on water supply and also waste water. **IT** reviewed municipal water management in 8 southern regions. **ES** has studies on water supply.

4. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Adam Abdulwahab from the Evaluation Unit presented the main issues to be raised in Work Package Seven: Energy Efficiency. MS that can contribute to this evaluation: **IT**: may have a relevant study on the technical chain in renewables and energy efficiency. The Foundation for the Green Economy has a number of relevant studies that could be included in the literature review; **PT** has a study which could feed into the literature review; **ES** has two studies on environment, which will be presented in July.

5. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

Juliet Martinez from the Evaluation Unit gave a presentation on the main issues that will be raised in Work Package Ten: European Territorial Cooperation. MS that can contribute to this evaluation: **IT** may have a relevant ETC evaluation of the Emilia Romagna region, and some suggestions for ETC experts from Italy. The North West Europe Programme is carrying out a capitalisation study.

6. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: CULTURE, SPORT, SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

John Walsh from the Evaluation Unit gave a presentation on the main issues that will be raised in Work Package Eight: Culture and Tourism and part of Work Package Nine: Urban development and Social Infrastructure. ETC programmes will be included, as well as the creative industries. MS that can contribute to these evaluations: **HU** has carried out an evaluation on cultural institutions. An executive summary can be found on the national development agency's website. **HU** has also carried out a study of the regional cohesion dimension of tourism development; **LV** could offer projects for case studies, and can also suggest experts and relevant literature; **IT** has evaluations from the 2000-2006 period on this; **PL** is carrying out an ex-post evaluation of 'supra regional tourist products'; **UK** is carrying out an economic impact evaluation on this in England.

7. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

John Walsh from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit gave a presentation on the main issues that will be raised in Work Package Nine: Urban Development & Social Infrastructure: how to split this evaluation into component parts such as urban regeneration, urban development strategies, and urban territories is still under discussion. MS that can contribute to

this evaluation: **HU** has a lot of evaluations on cities, city networks etc. as well as some evaluations on less developed regions and on integrated urban development strategies; **GR** has 5 regional programmes with some case studies of Jessica projects and integrated urban development. The results will be available at the end of the year; **FI** Oulu city in Northern Finland has been active in urban development; **FR** has evaluations at national level of urban integrated projects; **PT** has an ex-post urban development study this year, an evaluation on financing of social infrastructure in Portugal and an evaluation of education, cultural and sports infrastructure at local level which will submit its final report very shortly. This is a difficult area for indicators and for identifying best practice in the EU; **IT** has some case studies on urban development from 2000-2006, and more recent studies on Sardinia and Naples; **BE** has some relevant evaluations from Wallonia on interactions with other urban centres in Belgium, and also on innovation and entrepreneurs. See www.europe.wallonie.be

8. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: MODELLING

Alida Staicu from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit presented the main issues to be covered in Work Package Twelve: Geography of expenditure. There is no expenditure data transmitted at NUTS 3 level by the MS. This evaluation will seek to retrieve this information and will produce maps and infographics.

In the discussion that followed, some challenges were identified :

- Develop a common methodology for expenditure in national, and transnational projects
- Challenge in having multiple locations for one beneficiary
- Use of multiple intervention categories for one project, but also include data on location

Daniel Mouqué from the Evaluation and European Semester Unit presented the main issues to be covered in Work Package Thirteen: Macromodelling and econometrics. In the discussion that followed, the difficulties of taking account of demographic data were raised – the new Rhomolo model now operates at regional level in MS, and could be adjusted accordingly.

9. EX-POST EVALUATION 2007-2013: DELIVERY SYSTEMS

The crisis has shown the limit of the delivery system, and thus the ex-post evaluation will assess the strengths and weaknesses of the system itself. The following points were raised in the discussion:

PL – Evaluation carried out on delivery system similar to the ex-post evaluation of the previous programming period. The preliminary report is already available (also in EN).

BG – Slower programme implementation may not be related to the function of the delivery system but to MA capacity. Latest available data should be taken into account so as to compare difference. The principle of simplification of the delivery system should be available for all MS, since unnecessary administrative burdens are widespread and it is not just a matter of 3, 4 members.

LV – A Preliminary Study on EU Funding Simplification (2008-2009) is already available. A call for tenders for a similar study is underway, with the preliminary results available from mid-2014.

PT – All OPs have carried out evaluations on this topic, with the syntheses available on the web. (Emerging findings indicate that in PT there may have been problems in implementation, but the main reason for the slowdown was the crisis).

The ex-post evaluation exercise of 2007-2013 is fundamental for the programming period 2021-2027, as the 2000-2006 exercise was for the next period (2014-2020). For the 2021-2027 period, the impact assessment will be concluded by 2017, while the ex-post evaluation of this period by 2016.

As a last point, MS are reminded to upload new documents on YAMMER, so that all members can profit from the information.

10. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES IN MEMBER STATES

HU – International Evaluation Conference, 26/27 September 2013, Budapest. Focus: ex-ante evaluation. Methodological elements: indicators, relevance of the programmes, experience gained

PL – 9th Evaluation Conference, later September 2013. Focus: ex-ante evaluation. English version of study carried out jointly with UNDP: "Study on Disaggregated Human Development Index at local level" to be published shortly.

LT – International Evaluation Conference, 4/5 July 2013. Focus: Future Programming Period, ex-ante evaluation on new programmes and evaluation methods. Standards of Evaluation have been discussed within the Monitoring Committee and they will be presented at the beginning of June 2013.

PT – Workshop: Social Equipment, 10 of June 2013. Focus: OP investments.

UK – An evaluation was carried out on advantages and disadvantages of the decentralization of the delivery system.

The Evaluation unit informed the network of concerns raised regarding Impact Evaluations using both a counterfactual as well as a theory-based approach. The majority of the problems derived from a lack in the Terms of Reference. For this reason A Guide on how to write Terms of Reference has been produced and is currently available on YAMMER; comments are welcome.

11. 2014-2020 PROGRAMMING PERIOD: FEEDBACK ON FIRST OPs RECEIVED.

Veronica Gaffey introduced this item stressing the importance of the specific objectives in the framework of result-based monitoring and evaluation system. The following points were raised in the discussion:

- Specific Objectives should articulate what the expected results are for each priority. Each specific objective must have at least one result indicator. Word of caution: if there

are several result indicators for one specific objective it may imply that this specific objective is not specific enough.

- Strict definition of activities leading to some not being in line with the specific objective during the implementation: the Regulation is relatively flexible in the section concerning the actions; nevertheless, it clearly states that activities must contribute to the specific objective.
- Concentration seems to be a challenge in many OPs. Lack of concentration leads to a proliferation of indicators and can lead to a very complex performance framework, with a higher risk of failure, the more indicators there are.

Second day of meeting, 31.05.2013

12. UPDATE ON GUIDANCE ON PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK/REVIEW/RESERVE

Jan Marek Ziolkowski from the Evaluation Unit presented the major changes in the Performance Framework (PF) guidance.

- 1) Threshold criteria for success or failure:
 - a. A milestone will be deemed to be achieved at the level of a priority, if all the indicators meet at least 85% of their intermediate targets;
 - b. A priority will fail to achieve the target, if two or more of the indicators related to a priority fail to attain 65% of their target;
- 2) Key implementation steps: In situations where no measurable output is expected by the end of 2018, a key implementation step should be used to set a milestone. The key implementation step is expressed in % and reflects the progress in the achievement of the milestone;
- 3) Representativeness of the output indicators: the selected indicators must represent the majority of the resources allocated to a priority;
- 4) Issues need to be discussed: inclusion of technical assistance in the Performance Framework;
- 5) A Delegated Act will deal with financial correction for the case of serious failure.

The following points were raised in the discussion:

- Multi-fund priority axes – Indicators for the performance framework will need to be broken down by Fund and category of region.
- To set targets and milestones, MS should rely on experience gained so far.
- A PF should be developed only after the intervention logic and the relevant indicators are defined.

Criteria for financial corrections: 1) it must be a serious failure (meaning that two or more of the indicators related to a priority fail to attain 65% of their target); 2) the European Commission must formally communicate with the managing authority to clearly identify the implementation weaknesses in the programme and the MS must have failed to take the corrective actions. In this sequence of steps, the context should also be considered. As a result, there are several steps before entering in the phase of financial corrections.

- Technical Assistance: this issue will be resolved in the negotiations on the legislative package in the Autumn.
- Partnership Agreement: the means to ensure coherence and consistency across the OPs should be outlined in the Partnership Agreement. The performance frameworks are part of the OPs.

13. EXPERT EVALUATION NETWORK: REPORT ON JOB CREATION

Kai Stryczynski raised some concerns about the quality of data on job creation reported by MS, as assessed by the Expert Evaluation Network. MS will be sent their relative Country Report. In case of problem, they are asked to provide comments.

14. ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION REPORTS 2012 GUIDANCE AND 2012 STRATEGIC REPORT

Alida Staicu and John Walsh presented the key quality checks for the 2011 AIRs, and the major conclusions from the 2012 Strategic Report. Core Indicator data should be the same in the AIRs as entered into the SFC2007 system, and there should be some narrative commentary on indicators. Measurement units for core indicators should be verified, as well as the plausibility of reported values. There should be consistency between allocation of funding by category of expenditure, and the reporting against relevant core Indicators. A presentation will be made to the COCOF meeting on AIRs in September/October 2013.

Issues raised from the Evaluation network members:

- Business support definition: use of priority themes (14 codes) which deal with different types of business support, including IT, networking, research, technology, SMEs, start-ups etc.
- Infoview tables: project selection and overall allocation at MS level for each category of business support and by Programme are defined. There is a table in the Strategic Report (Annex) showing the 86 codes for categories of expenditure.
- (issue raised by PT) data on jobs concluded / jobs contracted. In SFC, there are only planned allocations and reported achievements – there may be time lags.
- Difference MW/MWh: The MW value is the amount of power plant capacity available. The MWh is the amount of electricity volume generated by hour.
- Categorisation tables are in the Implementing Regulation (in all official languages). Guidance documents (in EN) will be uploaded on Yammer.

15. CLOSING REMARKS

Kai Stryczynski appreciated the discussions as they were interesting and useful. He set out the conclusions:

- **Ex-post evaluation proposals** – comments welcome from MS on the suggested topics for evaluation, also any relevant evaluations, and proposals for experts. The ex-post evaluation process will continue for at least 2 years.
- **Result orientation** – Challenging, but feasible.
- **Performance Framework** – guidance on this will soon be available.
- **Quality of Core Indicators** – needs to improve.

The next Evaluation Network meeting will likely take place towards the end of 2013. Items on the agenda will include discussion of the performance framework, progress in programming and feedback on AIRs .
