



**EVALUATION OF THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF COHESION
POLICY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS OVER THE LONGER TERM
IN 15 SELECTED REGIONS**

(FROM 1989-1993 PROGRAMMING PERIOD TO THE PRESENT)

(2011.CE.16.B.AT.015)

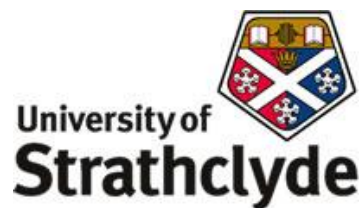
INCEPTION REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION (DG REGIO)

24 December 2011

This Inception Report contains information that may be revised in the Final Report of the study. Please do not quote without contacting the authors.

The report has been written by a team from EPRC and LSE selected by the Evaluation Unit, DG Regional Policy, European Commission, through the call for tenders by open procedure no. 2011.CE.16.B.AT.015. In particular, the report was drafted by the following authors: Professor John Bachtler, Scientific Director, EPRC; Professor Iain Begg, Scientific Director, LSE; Dr Laura Polverari, Project Manager, EPRC; Professor David Charles, member of the core team, EPRC; Dr Riccardo Crescenzi, member of the core team, LSE; Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis, member of the core team, LSE; and Professor Ugo Fratesi, member of the core team, LSE.

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Evaluation of the Main Achievements of Cohesion Policy Programmes and Projects over the Longer Term in 15 Selected Regions (from 1989-1993 programming period to the present)

(2011.CE.16.B.AT.015)

Inception Report to the European Commission (DG Regio)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Inception Report for the ex post evaluation of the main achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes and projects over the longer term in 15 selected regions (from 1989-1993 programming period to the present (2011.CE.16.B.AT.015) submitted by the European Policies Research Centre, University of Strathclyde, in association with the London School of Economics.

The Inception Report, which has been revised in line with the feedback received at the project's First Steering Group and with the written comments received from DG Regio, describes the preliminary methodological approach to all tasks - which will be further specified in the First Interim Report, to be submitted on 16 January 2012 - and provides the final selection of the 15 case study regions, agreed with the European Commission (DG Regio). It also provides a description of the project organisation, day allocations and workplan.

The structure of the Inception Report is as follows. Section 2 describes the evaluation's aims, objectives and research framework. Sections 3 to 5 provide a comprehensive review of the activities that will be undertaken under each task of the evaluation, providing information on task objectives, methodology, outputs and organisation. Section 6 describes the process through the results from the various stages of the research will be brought together in a final set of conclusions and recommendations, whilst Section 7 describes the organisation of the project, specifically: project direction and management responsibilities; roles and composition of Case Study teams, Core Team and Expert Panel; allocation of tasks, responsibilities and days; communication arrangements; and project Share Point. Section 8 provides the project workplan and the list of future deliverables and deadlines, and Section 9 describes the measures in place for quality assurance and project continuity.

The report concludes with a bibliography and a number of annexes: the indicative structure of the literature review (Annex I); the illustrative list of research questions for the case studies (Annex II); and the template for the analysis of programme expenditure (Annex III).

A caveat should be borne in mind: the report includes working definitions of the key concepts of the research (notably relevance, utility and effectiveness). They are not intended to pre-empt the outcomes of the literature review underway and will be developed as appropriate and presented in the First Interim Report.

2. OVERALL AIM, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

2.1 Objectives of the tender

The overall aim of the study is to evaluate the main achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes and projects and their effectiveness and utility over the longer term (from 1989 - 1991 for Eastern Germany and 1995 for regions in Member States which acceded in 1995 - up to present) in 15 selected regions of the EU15.

Specifically, the objectives are twofold:

- to examine the achievements of all programmes co-financed by the ERDF and, where applicable, the Cohesion Fund, which have been implemented in the 15 selected regions from 1989 to date (regional programmes and national programmes implemented in the regions); and,
- to assess the relevance of programmes and the effectiveness and utility of programme achievements.

In the present study, and at this stage in the research the concepts of achievements, relevance, effectiveness and utility are understood as follows (as already mentioned in the introduction, these definitions may be revised in the First Intermediate Report, following the completion of the literature review):

- *Achievements* are intended to be understood as the outcomes and the overall contribution of programmes (individually and jointly considered). They include outcomes and impacts that might not have been originally planned and assessment of whether they contribute to wider societal objectives. A key distinction will be between such outcomes and the more immediate outputs or changes in contextual variables such as GDP or unemployment.
- *Reported achievements* are understood as the outcomes and impacts reported by programmes' monitoring systems and reporting tools, and by evaluation studies and other research, which may be different from the achievements effectively realised. An aim of the evaluation will be to ascertain whether these results and impacts embraced prospective outcomes that correspond to broader objectives.
- *Relevance* is perceived as the "appropriateness of the explicit objectives of an intervention, with regard to the socio-economic problems the intervention is meant to solve". This concept is related to the policy structure and the internal coherence of programmes, i.e. whether the programmes strategies, goals and priorities were responding to the needs of their regions.¹

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/glossary/index_en.htm

- *Effectiveness* is understood as the extent to which programmes achieved the goals stated. This entails two distinct types of goals: on the one hand, the outcomes specified in the programmes; on the other hand, the wider changes which were intended to occur as a result of the policy intervention, in other words the contribution (impact) expected from the intervention.² These two types of effectiveness require different methodological approaches which are described in detail below.
- *Utility* is interpreted as the extent to which programmes led to impacts that are in line with “society’s needs and to the socio-economic problems to be solved” which may differ from the goals explicitly stated in the programmes themselves or which may not have been stated explicitly in the programmes. This requires a reassessment of the needs that the programmes should have addressed, a task that will be carried out with a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, as illustrated in more detail in the methodology.

Past research shows that estimating the actual achievements of Cohesion Policy is not a straightforward task. This is especially true outwith the Convergence areas (formerly Objective 1) and when disentangling these from the effects due to other policies, implemented with domestic resources.

2.2 Research framework

In line with the above summarised objectives, a number of conceptual choices underpin the evaluation’s research framework.

- First, the evaluation aims to gauge **the achievements of the various programmes** that were **implemented in each region**, both national or regional, as well as of the most relevant Cohesion Fund projects implemented in the regions, across the period from 1989 to the present. This requires considering and reassessing the reported achievements, but also gauging unreported and even unintended achievements which might have resulted from the programmes. It also requires acknowledging that other factors than the programmes will have been at play in determining those actual achievements.
- Second, having established, and where possible quantified, the achievements of the programmes throughout the period, the evaluation aims to assess not just the relevance and effectiveness of the programmes, which have been traditional features of the evaluation of Cohesion policy programmes, but also their **utility**. The concept of utility has particular resonance in the context of the present project, given its long time-span. Political priorities and circumstances have

² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/glossary/index_en.htm, and European Commission, Directorate General Regional Policy, Policy Development, Evaluation, *The Programming Period 2014-2020, Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy - European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund: Concepts and Recommendations, Guidance Document*, Draft, November 2011.

changed in the course of the two decades covered by the research and to assess the longer-term impact of evolving Cohesion policy programmes requires taking a step back from the changing programme goals and to assess the achievements of programmes in the selected regions from a ‘fixed’ viewpoint, i.e. goals that can be considered as ‘sensible’/relevant today. This requires first, reconstructing and reappraising the programme’s intervention logic as it was at the time of the programme (expected to be implicit in many cases) and, second, reframing the programme’s intervention logic through the lens of the knowledge base that is available today (including the increased clarity of the factors that, beyond the programmes, influenced the programme’s likelihood of success).

- Third, having appraised relevance, achievements, effectiveness and utility, the evaluation aims to uncover the **causalities for the changes observed**, so as to assess not just what the programmes achieved and whether they delivered the intended effects, but also the reasons underpinning these, in order to be able to formulate recommendations for policymakers on how to improve the programmes and the policy in future. In other words, in contrast with many evaluations undertaken in the past, the present research aims not just to assess whether the programmes can be considered to have ‘worked’, but also **why** and **how** they worked (or struggled), why and how they produced the effects recorded or analysed (intended and unintended), acknowledging the many factors at play (in addition to the programmes). This work will allow, not least via a comparative analysis of the 15 case studies, the team to draw lessons and recommendations on how to improve programme design, implementation, results-based management and programme achievements in future Cohesion policy.

These conceptual choices mean that the evaluation research framework has necessarily to be framed as a combination of more traditional quantitative research, including the econometric assessment of the effects of programmes, and more qualitative, theory-based evaluation. The latter, more so than traditional quantitative evaluation of programme effectiveness and impacts, allows the development of a narrative to shed light on ‘why things work’, by reconstructing the programme’s logic of intervention, of ‘theory of change’ (Barca 2009; Casavola 2009; Olejniczak 2009), as summarised in the diagram below. This task will be a central aspect of the case study research that will be carried out in the selected 15 regions.

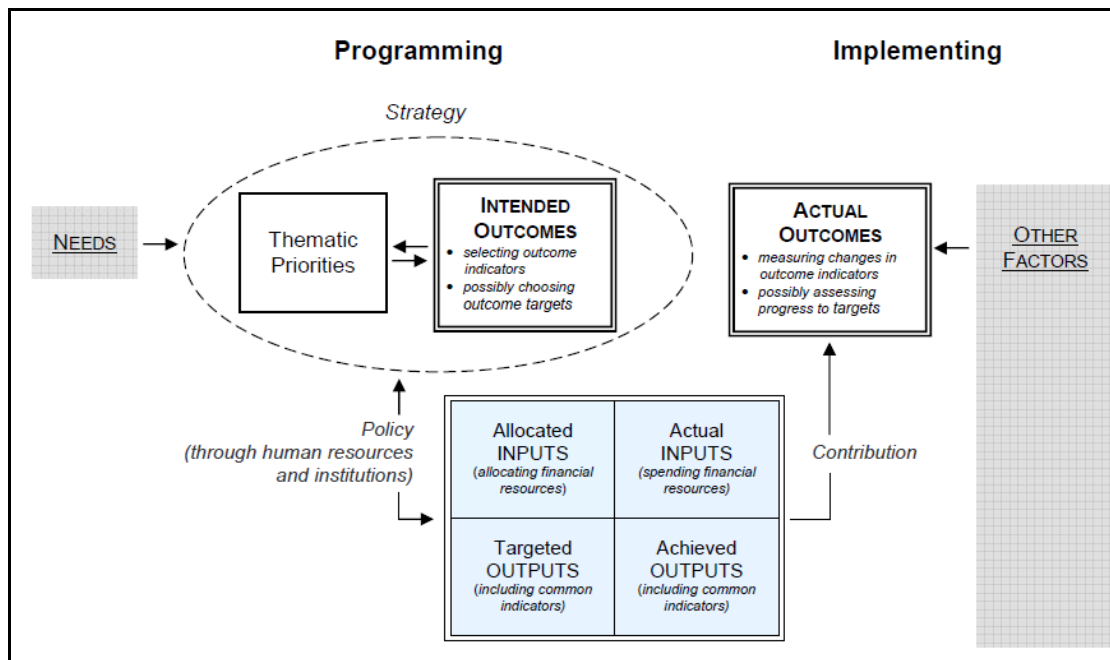
To achieve the above summarised goals and implement the outlined research framework, the case studies will:

- summarise the programmes’ **intended financial allocations** (as per original financial plans, including, for national programmes, the amounts intended to reach the observed regions, where this information is available) and reconstruct the programmes’ **intervention logic**;
- reconstruct, measure-by-measure, the **actual financial allocations**, i.e. the expenditure effectively realised (including, for the national programmes and

Cohesion fund projects, the estimation of the portion expenditure realised specifically in the selected regions);

- build a comprehensive picture of the programmes' **reported achievements**, as above defined (including, for the national programmes and Cohesion fund projects, the indication, where available, of the achievements realised specifically in the regions observed);
- establish the **actual achievements** obtained, defined as above described (including, for the national programmes and Cohesion fund projects, the estimation of achievements realised specifically in the regions observed);
- assess the programmes **overall (joint) contribution throughout the period** (cumulative impact), taking into account the factors external to the programmes which have played a part in determining this, including the interplay with of other policies;
- through the above steps, build a narrative to gauge the reasons leading to the discussed achievements and overall contribution, i.e. the why and how questions above illustrated, so as to **draw out suggestions** to improve ERDF programmes (and Cohesion policy more generally) in future.

Figure 1: Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes - A Framework for Cohesion policy programmes design, monitoring and evaluation



Source: Barca and McCann (2011) p. 4.³

³ An adapted version of this same diagram is included in the draft guidance document by DG Regio for the monitoring and evaluation of European Cohesion policy in 2014-2020 (European Commission 2011, p. 5). DG Regio's guidance note uses the word 'results' instead of 'outcomes'.

In line with the objectives of the ToR, the above research framework will be implemented through a methodology articulated in the following main Tasks and Sub-Tasks.

Task 1: Preparation of a theoretical and methodological approach for the research - literature review and stock-take on programme performance and development of methodology to evaluate achievements from various programmes;

Task 2: Undertaking 15 regional case studies

- **Task 2a:** Case Study Selection
- **Task 2b:** Case Study Research
 - **Sub-Task 2.1:** Context analysis and regional features
 - **Sub-task 2.2:** Programme analysis
 - **Sub-task 2.3:** Achievements
 - **Sub-task 2.4:** Assessing achievements against objectives and needs

Task 3: Cross-case study assessment of programme achievements - assessment of relevance, effectiveness and utility, and formulation of policy recommendations

- **Sub-Task 3.1:** Comparative analysis of the 15 case studies
- **Sub-Task 3.2:** - Comparative statistical and econometric analysis

Task 4: Production of the Final Report.

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the various Tasks and the evaluation questions specified in the study's ToR.

The main aspects and overall approaches of the methodology proposed for each of the Tasks and Sub-Tasks is described in more detail in the subsequent sections, indicating the evaluation questions that each Task addresses and Task objectives, outputs and organisation. They should be considered indicative at this stage, as such elements will be further specified in the period leading to the First Intermediate Report, as part of the activities planned under Task 1.

Table 1: Correspondence between evaluation questions and Tasks

Questions	Tasks	Sub-Task (for Task 2)
1. To what extent the programmes addressed regional needs and problems over time?	2	
1.a. What were the initial regional needs and problems and what has been their evolution	2	2.1, 2.2
1.b. What was the strategy of ERDF programmes of each programming period? What has been their evolution?	2	2.2
1.c. What were the priorities and objectives of ERDF programmes of each programming period? What has been their evolution? Were the objectives SMART?	2	2.2
1.d. What has ERDF support been spent on in each programming period? Have there been significant transfers from initial allocations of ERDF resources to other priorities in any period?	2	2.2
2. To what extent do ERDF achievements meet regional objectives and needs in each programming period and across all periods?	2 and 3	
2.a. What are the reported achievements of each programming period?	2	2.2, 2.3
2.b. To what extent were objectives achieved in each programming period?	2, 3	2.2, 2.3, 2.4
2.c. To what extent were needs met in each programming period? To what extent can observed changes in regional needs and problems be imputed to ERDF programmes over time?	2, 3	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
2.d. What have been the complementarities and synergies of ERDF interventions with ESF; EAGGF Guarantee Section and Guidance Section until 2006 and for 2007-2013 programming period EAFRD; and FIG interventions (where relevant) in these regions and with domestic regional policy interventions? 2.e. What has been the overall contribution of ERDF programmes to regional development?	2, 3	2.2, 2.4
3. What are the main lessons learnt on the effectiveness and utility of ERDF interventions in each region?	1, 2, 3	
3.a. What are the main good/bad practices?	2	2.2, 2.3, 2.4
3.b. What conclusions can be drawn for improving ERDF programme design, implementation, results based management, achievements?	1, 2, 3	2.2, 2.3, 2.4

Overall, the study will employ a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods which together are intended to allow for a triangulation of findings, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings and analyses. These methods include a number of tools that are commonly used as part of theory-based evaluation:

- Desk research of primary and secondary sources, including the monitoring data available from the regions' monitoring systems (and related completeness and reliability assessment for each case study, so that gaps and shortcomings in the quality of such data, and alternative methodologies put in place to overcome these, are clearly stated at the outset);
- Fieldwork interviews: face-to-face semi-structured, in depth interviews with senior civil servants and programme managers (current and, where available, past),

beneficiary organisations, socio-economic stakeholders, evaluators, selected project beneficiaries and the likes, according to a typology of interviewees based on a distinction between strategic, operational, external, recipients and project stakeholders groups (discussed in detail in Sub-section 4.3.1);

- Online surveys of beneficiary organisations (e.g. association of entrepreneurs and of local authorities, firms samples) and local stakeholder groups (as described in detail in Sub-section 4.3.2).
- Regional workshops (formerly termed focus group discussions): these will be undertaken to validate and refine preliminary case study findings, based on the case study draft final reports (see detailed description in Sub-section 4.3.3).
- Quantitative analyses to identify patterns of effects that can provide insights into how policy has ‘performed’.

The detailed methodologies under each Task and Sub-Task are currently being developed and will be outlined in detail in the First Interim Report (development of the research methodology is the primary concern of Task 1). Nevertheless, the main elements of the methodology are described for each Task in the following Chapters 3 to 5 of this report.

The methodological framework is complex and relies on the integration of different steps and data sources. The triangulation of the various sources, both secondary and primary, from different levels (from EU-wide datasets to the programme specific monitoring data) and of the outcomes from different methodological components of the study will be a fundamental aspect of the research, and one which will ultimately allow the research team to build sound but also clear-cut answers to the evaluation questions investigated. When the findings reported under the various outputs foreseen for this research - i.e. the deliverables listed in Chapter 8 - emerge from the triangulation of different methodologies and sources, this will be highlighted in the reports.

3. TASK 1: PREPARATION OF A THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR THE RESEARCH

3.1 Objective

The aim of Task 1 is to develop a theoretical and methodological approach to be used for two sub-tasks: a review and stock-take of existing literature on measuring programme performance (achievements, expected and unexpected effects of Structural Funds programmes in the short, medium and long-term); and the development of a methodology to evaluate achievements from several programmes (ERDF regional programmes, ERDF national programmes, Cohesion Fund projects - as appropriate) in order to obtain a comprehensive view of all. The task will be undertaken jointly by EPRC and LSE, with research inputs from the external experts.

3.2 Methodology

(i) Literature review

The starting point for the study is a structured review and stock-take of existing literature on measuring programme performance, using the kind of breakdown provided in Annex I, and discussed by type of programme and period. This will develop the review begun in the Technical Offer for this project (Section 3).

The review will cover the multi-national academic, policy and evaluation literatures, including the 'grey literature'. As noted previously, EPRC has a database of academic literature and a dedicated Cohesion Policy library with material for all EU countries and regions dating back to 1989. This includes the ex post evaluation reports for the 1989-93 period, the ex ante, interim and ex post evaluations of the 1994-99 periods (and of course later periods), including those commissioned by DGXVI and the ad hoc evaluations commissioned by Member States.

The aim of this review is: first, to produce a synthesis of what is known and not known from previous research in terms of relevance, effectiveness, utility and impact of Cohesion Policy programmes - by types of effects, variation by country/period and the different approaches taken to evaluate these. Second, the review will draw lessons - assessing the strengths and weaknesses of previous research, identifying research/evaluation gaps, the limitations of different methods and data sources (by country/region and period), and identifying lessons for this study.

(ii) Development of the evaluation methodology

This Task will develop the preliminary outline of the methodology to evaluate the achievements from several programmes set out in the technical offer, the main elements of which are described in detail in Sections 4 to 5 below.

As outlined in the preceding chapter, this methodology relies principally on theory-based evaluation, at case study and cross-case study levels, supplemented by comparative quantitative (statistical and econometric) analyses of expenditure and achievements.

A key feature of the methodology to evaluate the achievements of several programmes is that **thematic axes** will be adopted as a means of organising the analysis and evaluating impacts. Throughout, the analysis of the case study regions will study development needs and challenges, allocate expenditure within each of the regions to a limited number of thematic axes, in order to see the aggregate effects on areas of need within the regions and on the priorities identified for Cohesion Policy by the Commission.

Eight thematic axes are proposed as an underlying focus for the programmes and which can be related to particular regional needs, such as low levels of new enterprise formation, high levels of long term unemployment, etc. Key indicators for these will be identified as part of the regional context and perceived regional needs analyses.

The thematic axes will be elaborated and developed by the core team and structured under the headings of economic cohesion (possibly, four themes), social cohesion (two themes) and territorial cohesion (two themes).

Box 1: Indicative list of thematic axes*

<p>Economic cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enterprise• structural adjustment (sectoral development)• innovation• environmental sustainability <p>Social cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• labour market/social inclusion• community development <p>Territorial cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• spatial distribution of economic activity within the region• infra-regional infrastructural endowment
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* This list, and the allocation of themes under each heading, may evolve in the First Intermediate Report, as the methodology of the study is finalised.

It is recognised that the theme relating to labour market inclusion is not a main focus of ERDF, however it is included to permit the assignment of measures with this focus so as to ensure 100% coverage of expenditure. It will not however be analysed in the assessment of achievements.

Under successive programmes, specific interventions implemented through programme priorities and measures will have contributed to the development of these thematic axes and had a cumulative effect (e.g. in cases where projects to develop the infrastructure for an incubator were followed by entrepreneurship training and start-up business support).

Within the 15 case study regions, interventions will be classified under these thematic axes (in some cases more than one) in order to identify the levels of expenditure against each of the themes and to be able to model the impact on the underlying levels of activity (e.g. what effect has support for enterprise had on long-term levels of entrepreneurship?).

As well as the econometric modelling of expenditure against performance in these areas, analysis of interventions within the thematic axes allows a better understanding of synergies within the programmes and the ways in which both programme managers (and, in some cases, even project leaders)⁴ have sought to exploit complementarities. In some cases, there may be strong synergies between the priorities of specific programmes linking, for example, measures for employment creation (e.g. strategic investment opportunities) with measures for community development. In other cases, synergies may develop across measures through bottom-up developments, where for example a sectoral development body seeks support for training, innovation and specific infrastructure from different measures, but links them into a targeted cluster strategy.

In order to identify creative and successful examples of complementarity and synergy, thematic groupings will be examined in a flexible way rather than being constrained by the structures of programmes. Also, as programme structures vary over time, it will be necessary to connect the interventions implemented in subsequent programmes to consistent themes over time in order to undertake longitudinal analysis over successive programmes.

The analysis of interventions within the thematic axes is also a useful tool to assess the extent to which the intervention logic that can be inferred from the programmes was reflected in the implementation and to reconstruct the strategy effectively implemented (as opposed to planned), as well as to gauge the overall thrust of the programmes implemented in each region, considered in their entirety.

3.3 Outputs

The outputs of Task 1 will be presented in the First Intermediate Report, which will include the literature review and detail the methodology to be used for carrying out Tasks 2 and 3. In so doing, it will address the challenges of data collection (especially for earlier programme periods) and elaborate the methodological approach for the regional case studies, providing an outline of the regional case study reports, research and interview guidelines for the regional teams, draft interview questionnaires and checklists. It will also explain in greater detail how the econometric work envisaged under Task 3 will be conducted.

3.4 Organisation

Task 1 will be jointly undertaken by EPRC and LSE. The lead person for the task is Professor Iain Begg.

⁴ Through five project case studies that will be undertaken in each region (see below).

4. TASK 2: CASE STUDY SELECTION AND RESEARCH

4.1 Objectives

The objective of Task 2 is to undertake 15 regional case studies involving context analysis, programme analysis, analysis of achievements, assessment of achievements against objectives and needs, and the elaboration of recommendations to improve the ERDF programme design, implementation, results-based management and achievements in future Cohesion policy. The task will be undertaken by EPRC/LSE and the team of national experts.

This Task involves the collection of data and analysis to address the evaluation questions of the study, at case study specific level, as well as making an assessment of each case study region and building a narrative and analysis of achievements in relation to objectives and needs. Given that a primary goal of the evaluation is to draw conclusions and lessons to improve the ERDF programme design, implementation, results-based management and achievements, the case studies will also investigate the reasons for the achievements realised, notably:

- why the programmes achieved what they did (including unintended achievements);
- what were the conditions that made such achievements possible (including those factors that were beyond the control of programmes, such as the lever of other policies or context changes); and
- whether the achievements realised were in line with reasonable expectations or disappointing, what were the factors that caused this (again, within and beyond the programmes) and similar.

The case study research has a dual purpose: first, to assess the achievements of all ERDF programmes and, where applicable, of relevant Cohesion Fund projects, implemented in each case study region in the period reviewed; and, second, to contribute data and information for the comparative analysis of the achievements of ERDF programmes across the 15 selected regions, the analysis of which will be undertaken as part of Task 3 (taking into account the limited comparability that exists between the different types of regions). The evaluation questions listed in the evaluation terms of reference will be answered at both these levels. Through case study research, data will be collected on the evolution of regional needs, on the strategy and objectives of ERDF programmes, on expenditure and achievements, complementarities with other programmes and the overall contribution of ERDF programmes. The case study research will also assess the reliability and completeness of the data collected (including of reported achievements), supplementing this with qualitative assessments through interview research, in line with the strategy presented in Sub-Section 4.8.2.

As already discussed (Section 2.2), a characterising feature of the case study research will also be the effort to reconstruct the intervention logic of programmes and their re-framing

through the lens of today's knowledge, in order to be able to assess not just the programmes' relevance, effectiveness and achievements (including cumulative achievements), but also their utility and the related causal links.

4.2 Case study selection

This study examines the achievements of the ERDF in 15 regions, selected to provide a range of regions across the EU15. The Terms of Reference require the selection to be based on three categories of eligibility criteria:

- A Regions - that have been eligible for Objective 1/Convergence support from 1989-93 to the present (indicatively 6 regions);
- B Regions - that were eligible for Objective 1 (or 6) at one time, but now have Phasing out/In or Regional Competitiveness & Employment status (indicatively 6 regions); and
- C regions - that have partially or wholly had Objective 2 / RCE status from 1989-93 to the present (indicatively 3 regions).

In making the selection from regions within these categories, four further criteria have been taken into account:

- scale of Cohesion Policy support - regions with large programmes in a national context (based on regional EU funding as a proportion of Member State allocations) with a bias towards Member States that have been the largest recipients of EU funding;
- geographical distribution - a 'balanced' representation of Member States, as well as of different institutional contexts, in terms of domestic government arrangements, resource allocation systems and the role of domestic regional policies;
- stability - in terms of regional administrative boundaries and (preferably) minimal changes in terms of institutional change and management arrangements;
- practicality of evaluation - with respect to the known quality of monitoring/evaluation data, known accessibility of archives and anticipated access to interviewees.

Based on the above factors, the list of case study regions agreed with DG Regio is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Agreed list of case study regions

Country	A	B	C	Total
Austria		Burgenland		1
Finland		Itä-Suomi		1
France		Nord Pas de Calais	Aquitaine	2
Germany	Sachsen-Anhalt		Nordrhein-Westfalen	2
Greece	Dytiki Ellada			1
Ireland		Ireland		1
Italy	Campania	Basilicata*		2
Portugal	Norte	Algarve		2
Spain	Andalucía Galicia			2
United Kingdom			North-East England*	1
Total	6	6	3	15

* Pilot case study.

- ‘A’ Regions category - **six** regions, one from each of the Member States that have been major recipients of Cohesion Policy resources and in each case one of the largest programmes: Sachsen-Anhalt, Dytiki Ellada, Campania, Norte, Andalucía and Galicia;
- ‘B’ Regions category - **five** regions covering a broad spectrum of Member States: Burgenland, Itä-Suomi, Nord Pas de Calais, Basilicata and Algarve;
- ‘C’ Regions category - **three** regions that have partially or wholly had Objective 2 / RCE status from 1989-93 to the present and have received large Structural Funds receipts (Aquitaine, Nordrhein-Westfalen and North-East England).
- Ireland treated as a whole, given its status as a single geographical entity until 1999 (type ‘B’).

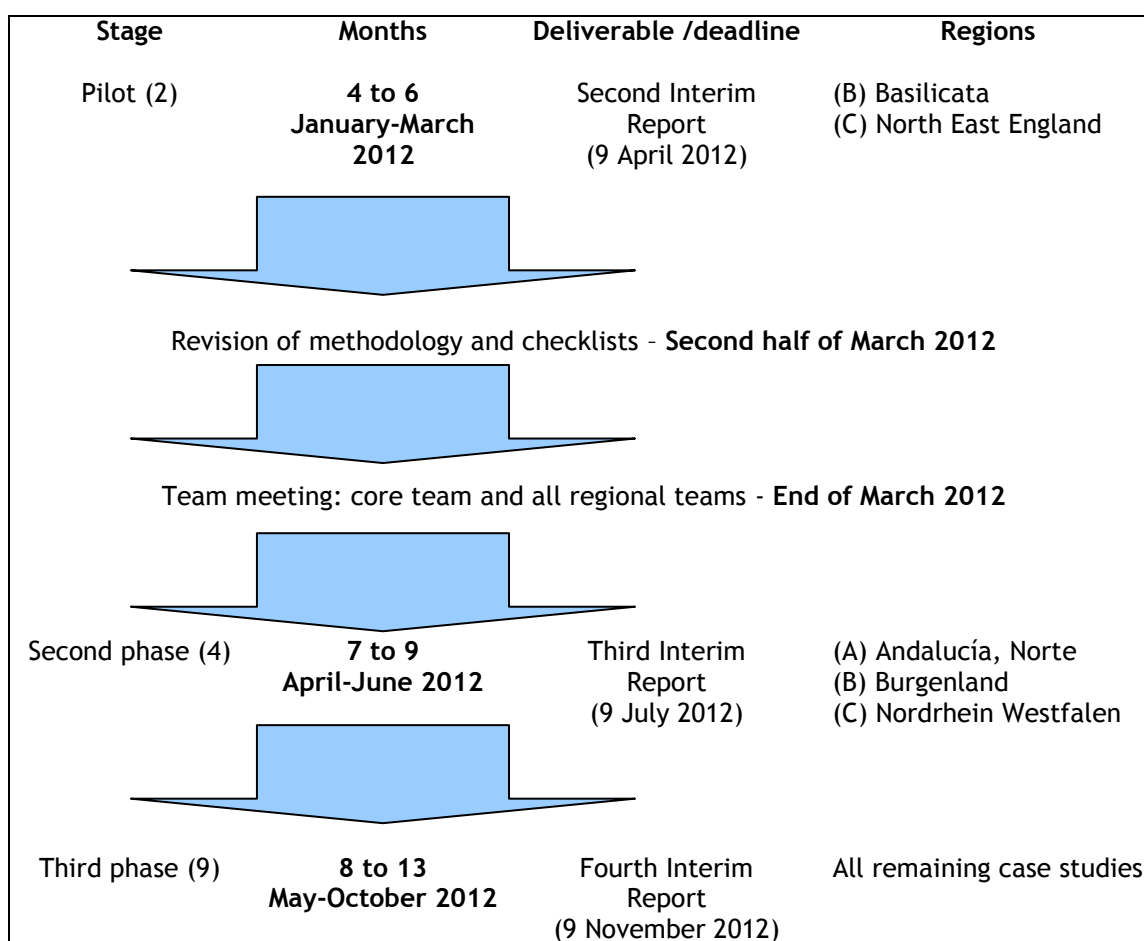
As required by the Terms of Reference, the case study research will be undertaken in three stages (as illustrated in Figure 2 below):

- Two pilot case studies, to be conducted in months 4 to 6, will be delivered in the Second Intermediate Report, in April 2012. It is proposed that the two pilot case studies are Basilicata (Italy) and North East England (United Kingdom). These case studies will be used to finalise the methodology and checklists that will be employed for the remaining case studies.
- Four further case studies, to be undertaken in months 7 to 9, will be delivered in the Third Intermediate Report, in July 2012. It is proposed that these will comprise: Andalucía, Norte, Burgenland and Nordrhein-Westfalen.

The nine remaining case studies, to be carried out in months 8 to 13, will be delivered as part of the Fourth Intermediate Report, in November 2012.

This phasing differs slightly from that proposed in the Technical Offer. Originally it was anticipated that the second-phase and third-phase case studies would be conducted in sequential three-month periods (months 7-9 and 10-13 respectively). However, the scale of data research in some of the larger case study regions (for 30+ programmes), and the complexities of data collection for earlier programme periods indicate the desirability of beginning the third-phase case studies (which are the generally the larger and more complex cases) more-or-less concurrently with the second-phase case studies. This would also be of benefit to the comparative analysis as programme data for all 15 regions would be available earlier. This issue will be discussed with DG Regio and the Steering Group in the context of the First Interim Report.

Figure 2: Phasing of case study research



4.3 Methodology

Task 2 (and some elements of Task 3) will involve a range of primary and secondary research methods, comprising, as already discussed: literature reviews; analysis of administrative documents (e.g. programme documentation, monitoring data, evaluation reports); fieldwork interviews; questionnaire surveys; and regional workshops. These are by and large the typical methods of theory-based evaluation (European Commission, 2011, p. 7).

The task will involve several sub-tasks across each of fifteen regional case studies, as listed in the Terms of Reference:

- Context analysis and regional features
- Programme analysis
- Achievements
- Assessing achievements against objectives and needs

Each sub-task involves a number of methodological components, which draw upon a series of data collection activities in each of the regions. As above outlined, these include desk research (literature reviews and documental analysis), interviews and online surveys. For sub-task 2.1, some central statistical analysis is also foreseen. The exact scope of the desk and field research for each sub-task is illustrated in more detail in the sections to follow, under each sub-task to which they apply. Before this, however, this section provides an overview of planned primary research methods that will be implemented by the regional teams for each case study for all sub-tasks: interviews, questionnaire survey and regional workshop.

It is anticipated that there will be formidable difficulties of data collection for some of these methods, for example: financial expenditure data are likely to be available in partial, inconsistent or only aggregate form for earlier programme periods; outcome data may be completely absent; certain data will be archived or lost; interviewees will have moved post or retired; and interview material for earlier periods is likely to lack detail or suffer from poor recollection. The methodological work currently being undertaken will address these and other problems.

4.3.1 Fieldwork interviews

Face-to-face interviews will be carried out at regional level and, where relevant, sub-regional and national levels with a range of interviewee types, notably:

- strategic interviewees;
- operational interviewees;
- external interviewees;
- beneficiary groups;
- project stakeholders.

The number of interviews will vary, from a minimum of c. 23 to a maximum of c. 45 interviews, depending on the region and number of programmes. Except for the interviews to be carried out with Commission officials, which will be undertaken by telephone or Skype, all interviews will be undertaken face-to-face to ensure in-depth discussion of the

issues. Standard checklists/questionnaires for each type of interview will be developed by EPRC/LSE and the regional experts. The questionnaires will be discussed at a meeting of the EPRC/LSE core team with the regional teams, which will take place in Brussels before the second and third phases of case study research begin. An indicative list of the themes and key questions to be included in the fieldwork interview research is presented in Annex II. A more detailed description of each type of interviewee is provided in the following sub-sections.

(i) Strategic interviewees

The first level of investigation will be with individuals involved at a strategic level in the management of ERDF-inclusive and non ERDF-inclusive programmes for the case study regions selected and the domestic policies contributing to the same goals of the ERDF programmes (both those used to co-finance EU interventions and, in some cases, other domestic policies which may not be used for co-financing). For the Structural Funds programmes, these will include representatives of what in today's terminology would be the Managing and Paying Authorities; members of Monitoring Committees; and directors of programme secretariats (at regional and, for multi-regional/national programmes, national levels). For domestic policy, these will include senior officials responsible for counterpart domestic regional and, where relevant, national/federal development strategies and heads of department in co-financing organisations with overall responsibility for key areas of ERDF support such as business aid, local infrastructure, human resource development. This category of interviewees will also include current and former staff of the geographical units in DGXVI / DG Regio involved in the negotiation and implementation of programmes. Interviews with this group of respondents will focus on overall assessments of the rationale for programmes, the analytical base, the quality of target-setting, management and implementation process, deviation from financial/physical targets, overall assessment of performance and reasons for success or failure.

A particular emphasis in these interviews will be to identify the underlying logic for the programmes, especially where this is not clearly recorded in programme documentation. Especially in earlier periods, many programmes did not have clear strategies or objectives, and these interviews will be used to construct a framework against which the achievements can be compared.

(ii) Operational interviewees

The second level of investigation will be with individuals involved at an operational level in the implementation of Structural Funds for the case study programmes and the counterpart domestic policies used to co-finance EU interventions (and, where relevant, non-co-financing policies) in each region selected. For the ERDF programmes, these will include representatives of programme secretariats and implementing bodies (e.g. priority or, for particularly relevant measures, measure managers), intermediate bodies, management committees, advisory committees, project selection committees and other programme delivery organisations (e.g. sub-regional or thematic partnership groups). National-level

operational respondents will be included in the research where relevant, i.e. for some 'A' and 'B' type regions. In this case, the research will focus on establishing, for specific sub-aspects of the policy, the perceived utility of the interventions implemented, the interaction between these and other Cohesion Policy or domestic programmes, the critical and success factors, and lessons learnt.

(iii) External interviewees

The third level of investigation will be with a limited number of key individuals not directly involved in the management or implementation of the ERDF inclusive programmes operating in the selected regions, but with a high level of knowledge about the context and practice of EU and domestic policy intervention during the period covered by the research (or fractions thereof). These will include evaluators of EU and domestic programmes from academic and consultancy organisations, academic commentators, and economic development organisations and committees.

Interviews with this group of respondents will focus on gaining an external perspective, in particular a broader, longer-term and critical perspective on the relevance, effectiveness and utility of Cohesion Policy implemented from 1989 to date in the selected regions, in particular with regard to the ERDF-inclusive programmes operating in each region, on the critical and success factors and lessons learnt (also with regard to the synergies with other Structural Funds programmes and with domestic policies), and the contribution of the ERDF programmes to the most significant regional changes identified by the research undertaken under Sub-tasks 2.1 and 2.2.

(iv) Interviewees from recipient groups

The fourth level of investigation will entail face-to-face interviews with a limited number of representatives of recipient groups, such as the representatives of entrepreneurial associations, social partners, and local authorities operating at the regional level.⁵ The interviews with this group will focus on the extent to which ERDF programmes across the period have addressed the right needs and targeted the correct goals, and on the factors hindering or facilitating a good performance and utility of the programmes.

(v) Project stakeholders

For the sample projects studied in each case study region, selected project holders and programme managers involved in the selection, delivery and monitoring of such projects will be interviewed by the regional teams. As already noted, the aim of such interviews will

⁵ Generally, the same associations or bodies have representations at different levels: national, regional and sub-regional (e.g. provincial and municipal). Interview research would focus on the regional level. Nevertheless, the view from the sub-regional levels will be gauged via the questionnaire survey described in Sub-section 4.3.2. Where relevant, representatives from national bodies will also be approached.

be to draw out the nature of the projects' achievements and the significance of the distinctiveness of the projects in the wider programming context.

An illustrative list of indicative research questions for the regional case study interviews - to be adapted into checklists for each type of interviewees - is provided in Annex II.

4.3.2 Questionnaire survey

Depending on the scope for identifying an adequate sample of respondents,⁶ an online survey will be conducted by the research team to supplement the interview research. The questionnaire survey will be administered by EPRC⁷ and will be used in particular to provide information to answer the evaluation questions 1.a, 2.c, 2e, 3.a and 3.b. EPRC will develop the standard questionnaire, in consultation with LSE and the regional teams, and emailed invitations to participate will be sent to the addressees identified in cooperation with the regional teams (who will also provide the relevant mailing lists). EPRC will also summarise the questionnaire returns coding the responses and elaborating a synthesis with the support of the NVivo qualitative data analysis software. For the administration of the questionnaires two specialist software packages are currently being appraised: Qualtrics and Surveygizmo.

In line with the spirit of the questionnaire - which is to supplement fieldwork research - the survey will encompass a broader range of respondents than those involved in the interviews, notably:

- the local authorities operating in the regional territories, i.e. selected senior administrators and political leaders (sub-regional levels, i.e. provinces and/or municipalities or similar, as applicable);
- a sample of firms, drawn up from a list of firms that benefited from ERDF support across the programming periods and, where possible, from lists of unsuccessful applicants;
- political party representations (regional level and, only where relevant and feasible, also sub-regional levels);
- representatives of social partners, third sector organisations and trade unions at regional level (and, where relevant and feasible, also at sub-regional levels);

⁶ Based on information already available to the research team, it is estimated that an adequate sample of respondents should be identifiable for at least some of the proposed regions. However, a full feasibility assessment will be conducted in the project's initial stages, during Task 1 and the pilot case studies, taking into account issues such as administrative turnover (for local authorities respondents), firms mortality, accuracy and availability of regional records. A decision on the undertaking of the survey and the scope of this will be taken in agreement with DG Regio.

⁷ Similar questionnaires were recently used by EPRC for a study for the European Parliament on the simplification of Cohesion Policy management and delivery rules (Bachtler and Mendez, 2010).

- local interest groups, such as regional level environmental associations, citizens' movements and the like (groups focused on specific issues which are relevant to the programmes goals).

Questions in the survey will be 'closed' in the sense of having only specified answers (such as yes/no, or qualitative scale from very strongly to not at all), but it may be worth including at least one open question to enable respondents to raise other issues. This approach will greatly facilitate cross-regional analysis, using frequency counts and simple descriptive statistics, as well as region-specific analysis of the results. Through the specialist software above mentioned survey questions will be organised in multiple 'layers', and different types of respondents will be directed to those questions that are the most relevant to them via a filtering system.

It is anticipated that, where feasible, around 300 questionnaires will be sent out to the above-listed types of respondents for each region. At an expected return rate of 15 percent, this would deliver circa 45 returns.

As mentioned, the questionnaire survey will focus on aspects relevant to answer the evaluation questions 1.a, 2.c, 2e, 3.a and 3.b (though not all types of respondent will be asked to answer questions that relate to all of these evaluation questions), notably: (i) the achievements of ERDF programmes across the period; (ii) the achievements against the objectives sets and needs (discussing needs, effectiveness, utility, factors & causality); and, (iii) the success factors, weaknesses and lessons learnt on the effectiveness and utility of ERDF programmes to regional development in any given region.

In designing the questionnaire, particular attention will be paid to ensure that questions are clear-cut, so that they are interpreted by different types of respondents in the same way, thus warranting accuracy and comparability of responses and will be translated into the native language of each region. The questionnaire will require no more than 15 minutes to complete. For a limited number of key questions, which will imply establishing causal links or assessments of merit, triangulation will also be used.⁸

Before being rolled out across the 15 regions, the questionnaire will be trialled in one selected region: North East England. The pilot will be used to determine the feasibility of the exercise and to refine the content and length of the questionnaire.

EPRC staff will code the answers and compile region-specific summaries of the questionnaire returns. Such summaries will be sent to the regional teams in time for the finalisation of the draft regional case studies.

⁸ This means asking similar questions more than once, so as to discount potential bias. For more detail on this methodology, see the Evalsed sourcebook on methods and techniques, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/sourcebooks/method_techniques/index_en.htm.

4.3.3 Regional workshop

The final stage of the regional case study research will involve a workshop, bringing together a selection of key strategic, operational, external and recipient representatives and, potentially, a limited sample of representatives from the surveyed stakeholders. The aim will be to discuss the provisional findings emerging from the research, on the achievements, relevance, effectiveness and utility of Cohesion Policy in the region, as well as the critical success factors and lessons learnt, testing the preliminary conclusions.

Given the inherent subjectivity involved in identifying utility, an important purpose of the workshop will be to assess the degree to which the aspects of utility identified in the research are shared across different levels and different types of interviewees. Techniques, such as the 'World Café' small-group discussion methods will be used to explore different issues and achieve consensus.

A brief summary of the preliminary regional case study reports findings will be distributed to participants in advance of these workshops, which will be facilitated by two members of the regional teams. To assist the drafting of the comparative analysis, an EPRC or LSE representative from the project's core team intends to participate in these workshops (for the case studies which are done by country experts external to the core team, i.e. all case studies except Basilicata, Campania and North East England).

The outcome of these conclusive regional workshops will be a series of points and observations which will be integrated in the final versions of the regional case study reports.

4.4 Outputs

The outputs of Task 2 will be the 15 regional case study reports that will feature in the above listed Interim Reports (Second, Third and Fourth). Draft fieldwork questionnaires and draft research and interview guidelines for the regional teams, and a preliminary outline of the regional case studies will be provided in the First Intermediate Report.

As noted, the methodologies to be utilised for each Task and Sub-Task are currently being developed and will be outlined in detail in the First Interim Report. An indication of the main methodological approaches foreseen is provided for each Sub-Task in the Sub-sections that follow (to be considered as preliminary at this stage), which illustrate the methodological approaches that will be implemented and the related organisation. A key element of this composite methodological framework, consistent with a theory-based evaluation approach, is the triangulation of different sources. This will allow the research team to ultimately build sound but also clear-cut answers to the evaluation questions investigated. When the findings reported under the various outputs foreseen for this research - i.e. the deliverables listed in Chapter 8 - emerge from the triangulation of different methodologies and sources, this will be highlighted in the reports.

4.5 Organisation

Task 2 comprises four distinct Sub-Tasks, illustrated in detail in Sections 4.6 to 4.9. Each Sub-Task will be coordinated by a distinct lead person. The overall coordination of the Task will be carried out by Dr Laura Polverari.

4.6 Sub-Task 2.1: Context analysis and regional features

4.6.1 Objective

The key question for the context analysis is: **how has the regional economic structure of the case study regions evolved over time in relation to national and EU averages?** The purpose will be to provide the context for assessing the effects of Cohesion Policy intervention in the region, as well as generating part of the database required for subsequent analysis of regional needs and performance. This addresses the evaluation question 1a on the initial regional needs and problems and also provides a context for the evolution of strategy (1b) and objectives (1c), and how the programme has addressed needs (2c).

4.6.2 Methodology

The research for each case study region will be undertaken on the basis of secondary sources, involving a mix of Eurostat/Cambridge Econometrics and national sources. The context analysis for each case study will be undertaken partly centrally by the EPRC/LSE team, notably for the indicators for which comparative data are available, and partly by the national experts based on a structured framework and checklist for analysis and reporting.

(i) *Statistical research*

The starting point will be the **identification of relevant context indicators and data sets**. Comparative data will be drawn from the Eurostat and Cambridge Econometrics databases, focusing on critical indicators such as GDP and GDP growth, GVA and productivity growth, unemployment, employment participation, sectoral compositions (e.g. specialisation, concentration) and sectoral shifts (e.g. changes in employment compositions). Additional indicators and data will be derived from other sources, mainly national statistical sources, relating (for example) to education and female labour force participation, as well as more detailed characteristics such as unemployment durations, physical and human capital endowments, entrepreneurship (business start-ups), R&D expenditure, etc. This will unavoidably have variable coverage, for instance some data will be available for regions in the United Kingdom, but not available for the regions of Greece. The aim will therefore be to undertake comparative analysis across all regions on the basis of a core set of indicators but expanding on this in individual case studies where additional detailed and specific indicators exist.

For these indicators, a **descriptive analysis of each case study region** will be undertaken, analysing trends over time - from 1980 (the decade prior to the reform of the Structural Funds) to the present. The analysis will derive means, variances and other measures of location and dispersion, to identify the range of absolute and relative values for the different regions and regional groupings.

(ii) Case study research

For each case study, a **brief explanatory review of the context** will also be provided, elaborated by the regional teams on the basis of desk and field research. Academic and policy sources relating to the region, as well as the knowledge of the national experts, will be used to describe the evolution of the regional development situation of the region (needs, challenges) and relevant structural, institutional, territorial and policy factors (apart from Cohesion Policy) influencing the regional development situation.⁹

The outcome will be a contextual framework for each of the regions illustrating the evolution of the problems and needs of the region over the period of the programmes, providing a context for the comparative analysis of the programmes' achievements and the cumulative contribution of the interventions over time. .

4.6.3 Organisation

Case study research will be undertaken by the regional case study teams. The methodological preparatory work related to the task, the statistical research and the comparative analysis that will be undertaken in Task 3 will be carried out by LSE. The lead person for this Sub-Task is Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis.

4.7 Sub-Task 2.2: Programme analysis

4.7.1 Objective

The key evaluation question for the programme analysis is: **to what extent did the programmes implemented from 1989 to date address regional needs and problems over time?** (the terms of reference's evaluation question number 1). Specific questions that will be addressed include:

- What were the initial regional needs and problems, and what has been their evolution? (evaluation question 1.a)
- What was the strategy of ERDF programmes of each programming period? What has been their evolution? What were the external and internal drivers of strategy? (evaluation question 1.b)

⁹ This will include changes in domestic policies that might have affected the programmes.

- What were the priorities and objectives of ERDF programmes of each programming period? What has been their evolution? Were the objectives SMART? (evaluation question 1.c)
- What has ERDF (and, where applicable, Cohesion Fund) support been spent on in each programme period? Have there been significant transfers from initial allocations of ERDF resources to other priorities in any period? How has the allocation of resources changed during each programming period and across the period observed (for example the mix of capital and revenue funding), and what have been the implications of these shifts for different types of interventions and for the overall performance of Cohesion Policy support? (evaluation question 1.d).

4.7.2 Methodology

In line with the adopted evaluation approach, illustrated in Section 2.2, this part of the case study research will have three elements: (i) an assessment of regional needs and problems over time; (ii) an assessment of programme strategies and a re-construction of the logic of intervention of the programmes reviewed; and (iii) an analysis of intended and actual financial allocations. These tasks will be undertaken via a mix of desk-research, as illustrated below, and field research (as already described).

(i) Analysis of regional needs and problems

The analysis of regional needs and problems over time will extend the context analysis undertaken above by relating the statistical indicators for the region to analyses undertaken within the region and the perceived needs as identified in programme documents. This then provides a framework both for examining the relevance of programmes in addressing needs, their effectiveness in addressing objectives, and the ‘utility’ achieved in addressing underlying long-term problems of the region.

(ii) Analysis of programme strategies

The analysis of programme strategies will involve an assessment framework based on a standardised grid of questions relating to the:

- Strategic rationale - aims/objectives, strategy type (dominant objective/priorities, justification (relationship to regional analysis and SWOT), evidence of learning (reference to evaluation lessons or previous programme experiences);
- Strategic coherence - internal coherence (logical structure, connection of elements, synergies etc); and external coherence (relationship with domestic and EU strategies/funding programmes, i.e. complementarities and synergies);
- Framework for resource allocation - structure of priorities/measures and interventions;

- Measurability - the availability and application of targets, benchmarks, SMART indicators and data.

The main purpose of the analysis of the strategies of the programmes will be to understand the basis for the strategic decisions on how to allocate resources. A key question will be how strategies were designed to respond to the regional needs/problems identified above. Influential factors will also be *domestic policy and institutional drivers* such as national policy preferences and the constraints/priorities of the domestic regional development framework. *EU policy drivers* would include The Delors Plan (1987), the Single European Act (1987), the White Paper: Growth, Competitiveness & Employment (1993), Agenda 2000 (1999), the Lisbon Strategy (2000), the Lisbon re-launch (2005) and the Community Strategic Guidelines (2006). Such drivers will have influenced the evolution of strategies across programme periods both in the regional development planning phase (typically in the 1-2 years before the start of programmes - in response to Commission guidance) as well as at 'break points' in the programme period such as the reprogramming of Objective 2 during the 1994-99 period and after the mid-term evaluation/review in the 2000-06 period. Minor change was also involved in the extension of the originally anticipated 1989-91 programme period to 1993.

It is anticipated that, particularly in the earlier programming periods, strategies will not be explicitly stated or well articulated in the programme documents. In some cases national strategies will simply be replicated at a regional level, or else objectives will be very generic or not even explicit. Target setting is expected to be poor and, on occasion, absent altogether. Interviews with the individuals involved in programme management will seek to reconstruct the logic behind programmes and their actual strategic aims, and to clarify the logic frames used to select projects in each programme period. This may be difficult in the earliest periods where the problem is likely to be most marked and where it may be difficult to trace key individuals. The case study research teams will endeavour to contact former senior officials even if they are now retired, and also speak with academics and other analysts who recall the development of the programmes and are able to recall the strategic context in which programmes were developed.

(iii) Analysis of financial allocations

The third element of the programme analysis will involve an examination of financial allocations, both intended (i.e. as per financial plans) and actual (at programme closure). For each programme, a database of expenditure - at measure level - at key points in programme cycle is being constructed. The minimum requirement is to collect data on initial allocations and actual expenditure. Implementing this database will require an agreed definition of 'spend' (which is interpreted differently at Commission and Member State levels) and standardisation of data by price year (as programme allocations vary in line with exchange rate changes).

The collation of expenditure data will assign spending at measure level for all programmes implemented in each case study region (including national programmes). Subject to experience with the pilot case studies, the aim is to use the 86 expenditure categories used

for the 2007-13 period, which in turn will be aggregated according to the eight thematic axes proposed above (see Box 1 at page 7). Given that many measures are 'dual purpose' (i.e. they could be assigned to more than one expenditure category), a classification system is being studied that would enable these measures to be isolated, so that the development axes could be assessed on the basis of both single purpose and dual purpose measures.¹⁰ Again, the feasibility of this will be assessed in the course of the pilot case study research.

The database will allow the tracking and comparison of allocations and expenditure, indicating areas of over/underspend, virement, impact of the performance reserve (for 2000-06) and decommitment (for 2000-06 and 2007-13) as well as suspension/repayment after audit.

Of particular importance for the analysis of achievements will be to understand the actual profile of spending in different policy areas. For example, during the 1990s (prior to N+2), spend was often characterised by peaks and troughs - programmes started late with little or no spend in the early years, and often spent the largest amount in the final year (hence introduction of N+2), sometimes with considerable reallocations compared to the initial financial plans.¹¹ Programme spending overlapped, with the closure period for programme A overlapping with the first years of the successor programme B.

For the part relating to the analysis of programmes, the case study research will rely on a mix of published and unpublished secondary sources as well as primary research data.

- For the needs analysis, these will include - in addition to the standardised data from Eurostat and national statistical agencies analysed under Sub-Task 2.1 - regional economic assessments and other studies undertaken in the preparation of CSFs, SPDs and OPs as well as other regional level studies and analyses.
- For the programme analysis, these will comprise the regional development plans drawn up as a precursor to CSFs and SPDs for the 1989-93 and 1994-99 period; the agreed CSFs, SPDs and OPs (both regional and multiregional/national); the independent ex ante appraisals commissioned by DG XVI (especially for the 1994-99 period) and the ex ante evaluations commissioned by programme authorities; interim (mid-term), ex post and, where relevant, thematic evaluations. Some insights will also be available from the written Commission responses to draft programme

¹⁰ A previous exercise of this type, conducted on the expenditure allocations for all Objective 2 programmes in the 1994-99 period indicates the differences that may be involved. For example, single purpose RDTI measures accounted for 111 MECU per year, while RTDI spending under business development, human resources or other measures increased the figure to 346 MECU per year. See Bachtler J, Taylor S and Kearney (1996).

¹¹ The example of the early Italian CSFs is highly illustrative. For the CSF 1989-93, the delay was such that the Italian government had to sign a memorandum of understanding with the then Commissioner Wulf-Mathies, to extend the period of eligibility of expenditure until the end of 1997, two additional years compared to the official closure deadline of end 1995; see Rainoldi A (2010).

documents, and the reports of negotiation meetings submitted to Monitoring Committees or otherwise kept in programme archives.¹²

In the absence of a standardised Commission database on financial spending until the 2000s, the financial analysis will require the data to be assembled from the financial tables in the above programme documents, supplemented by programme annual reports, and the European Commission annual reports on the Structural Funds. For this purpose the EPRC/LSE core team will develop a web-based database which will be populated directly, for each programme covered by the research, by the regional teams. An indicative template for the financial analysis of programme expenditure is presented in Annex III.

Primary research will also be required to elaborate on the assessment of regional needs, the programme strategies and logic of intervention, and the implementation of programmes (including the structure of governance over the funds and its evolution over time), the perceived mismatch between policy objectives and the regional needs, and to assess the 'utility' of past ERDF support in each region. A detailed description of the stakeholders that will be involved in the investigation - via in depth face-to-face interviews and the online survey, as above described - will be developed. The most important informants for this sub-task will be:

- national and regional civil servants with responsibility for the regional programmes and, where applicable, national programmes and selected Cohesion Fund projects operating in the 15 regions;
- senior staff in managing authorities and programme secretariats;
- current/former staff of the geographical units in DGXVI / DG Regio involved in the negotiation and implementation of programmes;
- evaluators from academic and consultancy organisations;
- representatives of recipient groups (e.g. associations of entrepreneurs, social partners and local authorities).

4.7.3 Organisation

Case study research will be undertaken by the regional case study teams. The methodological preparatory work related to this Sub-Task and the related comparative analysis that will be realised as part of Task 3 will be undertaken by EPRC. The lead person for this Sub-Task is Dr Laura Polverari.

¹² As noted previously, the data for ERDF projects will be of variable quality. In the first and second programme periods, project sponsors were not necessarily required to present targets for their projects that were consistent with the measure targets in the SPD. In the third programme period, there was more consistency but sometimes differences in interpretation.

4.8 Sub-Task 2.3: Achievements

4.8.1 Objective

The objective of Sub-Task 2.3 is to collect data and analyse the effects observed by the programmes co-funded by the ERDF in the period under investigation, including: the direct reported achievements; other direct but not reported achievements; unexpected achievements; and the achievements realised thanks to the complementarities and synergies of the observed programmes with programmes funded by other EU Structural Funds (ESF, EAGGF/EAFRD and FIFG), where achievements are intended as per definition provided in Section 2.1.

This Sub-Task will provide answers to the questions within evaluation question 2, specifically on identifying the achievements (2a), meeting objectives (2b and 2c) and identifying complementarities and synergies (2d).

4.8.2 Methodology

The analysis of the achievements of the programmes implemented in each region will combine quantitative analysis at a macroeconomic level with qualitative, case study research at the level of the regional programmes, themes of support and even, to a more limited extent, individual projects (including, where applicable, projects funded by the Cohesion Fund). A key aspect of the research is that each case study will seek to establish and appraise the achievements realised in the given region from the several programmes implemented both within each programming period and across the entire period.

This Sub-Task will draw on regional level data and indicators, documentation in the form of evaluations and monitoring reports, plus interviews with managers and stakeholders and online surveys, as already discussed. A number of different forms of achievements may be observed.

Each regional case study will comprise a set of standard, highly structured analyses of achievements, which are described in more detail in the paragraphs to follow:

- An overview of achievements as reported in programme documentation (e.g. Annual Implementation Reports, Closure Reports, Monitoring Committee Meetings reports, evaluation reports);
- An overview of achievements as seen by regional programme managers, stakeholders and beneficiaries as reported through interviews and online surveys;
- A quantitative review of achievements based on statistical analysis;
- An assessment of achievements within key programme themes identified from project managers and beneficiaries through interviews and project level case studies;

- Analysis of sample projects, mainly (but not exclusively) highly successful projects which have had a transformative effect within the region or have become sustainable over time whilst achieving high impact;
- Examples of complementarities and synergies between projects and programmes, also funded by other funds and across time, illustrating how such synergies can be maximised and what added benefits can be achieved;
- Institutional and management achievements that have been realised over the life of the programmes.

The regional case studies will aim to collect comprehensive data on achievements where possible for all the programmes across the period from 1989 (or 1991/1995 as applicable). This will provide part of the basis for the comparative analysis of achievements to be undertaken in Task 3.

In each region, the aim is to collect data relating to the reported achievements as well as assessments of achievements based on evaluations by third parties. These will include data on programme outcomes relating to the effects on beneficiaries of the funds, on the wider business and social targets of the projects, and on the regional economy as a whole, as assessed from evaluations. Much of this data will be drawn from monitoring reports and evaluations, supplemented with some project-level data for very large projects (mainly Cohesion Fund projects, where applicable) and sample projects. The collection of this data presents a series of problems, as does its analysis, and approaches are being developed for testing in the two pilot regions to help overcome these.

First, data on reported achievements are expected to be in many cases unreliable and inaccurate. Information on achievements reported in the programmes' monitoring systems relies on data provided by project holders and the scope for programme authorities to check the accuracy of this is generally rather limited. As illustrated by the recent ex post evaluation of 2000-06 ERDF programmes, notwithstanding the fact that greater efforts were made to monitor outcomes in this period (rather than just expenditure), this task "presented considerable problems in defining and interpreting indicators, setting benchmarks and targets, and collecting data" (Bachtler *et al*, 2009, p. 52). The situation for earlier periods was generally worse.

Second and related, data will be more difficult to obtain going backwards in time. It is expected that the reports on the earlier period will be less comprehensive, where they can be obtained, and estimates of achievements are likely to be less reliable in earlier periods also. This presents particular problems as it is also harder to find the people involved in programmes for the earlier period as many will have moved or retired. The planned approach to addressing these problems is set out below.

Third, data on achievements will not be provided using standard indicators over time as programme goals and indicators definitions will have changed over the period of 20 years, different indicators will have been used, and projects will have developed idiosyncratic indicators or interpreted standard indicators differently.

Fourth, assigning achievements to years presents particular problems as the outputs may not match the years of expenditure. Some projects will have immediate impacts as a consequence of the expenditure and some of the multiplier effects will be immediate due to the investments in capital and salaries. Other projects will have impacts that are slightly lagged or, as is the case of infrastructure, that continue to grow for some years after the project and then remain at an enhanced level subsequently. So in adding up achievements over time, it will be necessary to separate out different timescales for impacts in order to assess aggregate levels. Adding up jobs created over time risks conflating short term jobs gained, which may have disappeared by the end of the period, with long term gains. Further, adding up figures over time risks double counting.

Fifth, whilst there will be considerable difficulties in obtaining data for some regions in the earlier periods, making comparisons difficult, the sample includes regions which did not receive funds from 1989, so for the earlier years in the study there will not be data for all 15 regions. Even where available, it is expected that such data will often be of limited quality and reliability.

Lastly, for the purpose of the assessment of effectiveness, target setting is expected to be patchy: not just in earlier periods, when target setting was not done systematically or scientifically, but also more recently, as reported by the recent ex post evaluation of 2000-06 ERDF programmes (Bachtler *et al*, 2009).

To address these issues, a systematic approach to collecting what data exists is being developed, recognising that there will be limits as to what is practically available. The research team will be explicit in stating the limitations to analysis, for example the absence of data, unreliability of records, inadequacies in reported achievements and similar.

- **Addressing the problem of unreliable data:**

Case study teams will collect all monitoring data (monitoring data/reports, Annual Implementation Reports, Final Implementation Reports) and evaluation reports available within the public domain and from regional and national Structural Funds offices. In acknowledgement of the potentially limited reliability and credibility of such data, further clarification of achievements will then be sought through interviews with programme staff including, where possible, staff who were involved in the earlier periods. These interviews will seek to clarify how achievement data were collected, their reliability and how issues such as double counting and short-term/long-term impacts, allowing thus for a triangulation of research findings.

- **Addressing the problem of data gaps:**

As above noted, it is expected that the case study teams will face considerable data gaps, particularly with regard to the earlier phases covered by the research. Establishing the extent to which this is the case will, in itself, constitute a valuable research finding, with possible lessons for the future of the ERDF. Reported achievements will be collected and assigned to the major impact themes so that a narrative can be developed showing how

achievements evolved over time related to changes in expenditure. Data will be presented in the regional case study reports by programme as well as by theme, so that it will be possible to undertake comparative analyses between programmes in each region as well as across regions between programmes and between time periods (insofar as this is relevant, considered the diversity of the 15 regions). Some simple quantitative analysis will be undertaken in each of the regional case studies (as well as subsequently summarised across the 15 regions, as part of the work that will be carried out in Task 3).

Among the dimensions that will be examined with statistical analysis for each region will be:

- the concentration/specialisation of funding in particular areas/axes;
- the level of funding in each axis, in absolute terms as well as in relation to (a) regional incomes and (b) the perceived regional needs (level and type of need);
- the national context, i.e., whether the influence of the above factors differs in contexts of national growth, stability and decline; and
- the international context, i.e., examining the sensitivity in the effectiveness of policies/funds to variable/changing global processes (e.g., whether sectors/axes that are influenced more by changes in the international environment exhibit signs of qualitatively different performance).

In acknowledgment of the significant shortcomings that are expected in the quality of reported achievements, case study experts will be asked to make a judgement of the reliability of such data, through the triangulation of different sources, including fieldwork interviews. A further assessment of data on reported achievements will also be undertaken by the core team as part of the comparative case study analysis that will be made under Task 3 (not least comparing the reported achievements with the results of the econometric and statistical analyses which will be undertaken as part of this task).

(i) Overview of achievements

It is anticipated that programme managers and key stakeholders within the region will have a perspective on the successes and failures of the programmes, and the particular areas of support which have had the strongest achievements, in quantitative and qualitative terms. These views would be supported by interim and ex post evaluations, and monitoring reports, but as these typically focus narrowly on a single programme there may be narratives covering the evolution of the programmes over time that have not been previously captured.

As already mentioned, a workshop will be held in each region to discuss and validate the draft case study findings. Participants will be asked to comment on the realism of reported achievements and on their sustainability over the longer term. The workshops will include various participants, described in detail in Sub-section 4.3.3.

Interviews will also be conducted with key individuals. At least five strategic interviewees will be interviewed concerning the design and management of the programmes but including an assessment of the achievements/performance over the longer term as distinct from each individual programme. Further, as already noted, additional information will also be gathered from other interviewees such as operational staff, evaluators and other external privileged observers, recipients' groups, and even project stakeholders.

(ii) Achievement by thematic axes

As already noted, the evaluation will focus on eight thematic axes and will examine the achievements under each. A measure of the impacts will be identified from the descriptive statistical analysis in terms of the effects on basic indicators under each theme, but additional interviews will be undertaken with specific stakeholders and project managers to identify a wider set of effects. In each region this section will draw primarily on the operational, external and beneficiary interviews which will be spread over the eight themes, but additional information will also be gathered from the analysis of project samples (see next section).

Some of the achievements identified by interviewees may not have been predicted or reported in monitoring processes. Examples of these will be drawn out from these interviews although their unexpected nature means that a comprehensive analysis is unlikely to be possible. Particular attention will be given to what aspects of the programmes led to such unexpected outcomes - whether for example they derived from the design of projects, flexibilities in the operation of programmes, responsiveness to opportunities that arose during a programming period, or the virement of resources to fulfil spending targets.

Particular issues and questions relating to each thematic axis will be identified, along the following lines.

- **Enterprise** - the aim of support for enterprise is broadly to enhance the supply of new firms, the rate of growth and survival of firms (new and existing) and the creation of an enterprising culture in the region. Whilst quantitative indicators of firm formation and survival can be identified, an important question is whether a sustainable, holistic support system for new firms and SMEs has been created, and whether firms are able to move smoothly through the system obtaining appropriate support at different stages of their lifecycle.
- **Structural adjustment (sectoral development)** - Structural change may be observed as a result of targeting of aid on particular sectors or clusters, resulting in the establishment, growth or revival of an industry within the region. While the benefits of this may be immediately observable from aggregate data on that industry, the case study will need to draw out the relationship between specific investments and the process of change in the industry. It will be interesting to see how regions have aggregated support for particular clusters from across measures, programmes and over time, and whether this form of targeting has been successful. The relative

success of a focus on new economy clusters or more traditional manufacturing clusters will also be investigated across regional case studies.

- **Innovation** - Support for innovation includes both investment in R&D related activity in public institutions and firms as well as downstream activities to support networking, innovation management and the promotion and adoption of new technologies. As with the enterprise theme, the case studies will examine the progress in development of a regional level innovation system, with comprehensive support across that system. They will examine whether investment has been influenced by strategic studies such as RTP/RIS/RITTS etc. and whether such studies have had a long-term effect on programming and integration. Another important dimension will be the extent to which innovation support is open to information and networks from outside the region and ensures that regional activities are connected with global networks.
- **Environmental sustainability** - Here the question is whether the region is able to use investments in support of sustainability to develop new employment opportunities and build long-term advantage in new green industries.
- **Labour market/social inclusion** - The major focus of projects in this field is to help the long term unemployed move back into the labour market. This theme is not a significant focus of ERDF for the purpose of this evaluation and is only included to ensure all expenditure is captured. The theme will not be investigated in detail.
- **Community development** - Projects in this area are aimed at enhancing social cohesion through the improvement of community services and assisting groups within disadvantaged communities to develop new social enterprises etc. As a result, there may be evidence of beneficial social changes as a result of the targeting of policies on particular problems or areas, often in conjunction with national investment.
- **Spatial distribution of economic activity within the region** - Some strategic projects are focused on helping to rebalance activity within a region, although they may be primarily focused on another theme. The emphasis of this theme is whether the interventions have helped to overcome some of the territorial disparities within the region, or whether intra-regional disparities continue.
- **Regional infrastructural endowment** - Some interventions in this area are focused on addressing basic infrastructure which has a supporting impact on a wide range of economic and social activities and may also have a beneficial environmental impact. Whilst these project may be measured by conventional quantitative indicators and assessed using cost benefit analysis, a key question is how infrastructure investments have contributed to positive developments in the productive sector, or have helped to mitigate problems of access for disadvantaged communities.

(iii) Examination of sample projects

Based on the analysis of the eight main themes, and drawing on information from earlier interviews, about five examples of outstanding projects, or projects with significant impacts and achievements will be selected for each region. The core team is also considering the inclusion of one or two examples of project with disappointing outcomes or experiences in the sample. The examination of each sample project will draw on interviews with project stakeholders, including beneficiaries and/or representatives of beneficiaries. A template will be prepared by EPRC setting out the basic information required for each sample project, but the nature of the achievements and the significance of the project will be set out in a narrative so that the distinctiveness of the project can be explored without constraint. Each project analysis will draw on at least one interview, although some of these will be used for other elements in the regional report also.

(iv) Complementarities and synergies

Particular attention will also be placed on the complementarities and synergies between the different programmes within a region, both between the different elements of the Structural Funds (between regional and multi-regional/national programmes, within programmes, and across time), as well as the links with domestic policies (regional and national). Evidence on complementarities and synergies (including with the Cohesion Fund, where relevant, and the European Social Fund) will be drawn from all of the above mentioned components including interviews and project case studies, and will be outlined in a separate section of the regional case study report.

(v) Institutional and management achievements

Institutional changes may have resulted from the action of the programmes in helping to initiate new support agencies, organisations or infrastructure that provides a lasting legacy in the region and adds value to the regional asset base. This may include for example new cluster organisations that develop a life after initial support, support agencies for SMEs, or research organisations which go on to win further funding from national, international and industry sources. Again this element draws on all of the previous sections and will be developed as a separate chapter of the regional case study report.

4.8.3 Organisation

Case study research will be undertaken by the regional case study teams. The methodological preparatory work related to this Sub-Task and the related comparative analysis that will be undertaken in Task 3 will be carried out by EPRC and the LSE. The lead person for this Sub-Task is Professor David Charles.

4.9 Sub-Task 2.4: Assessing achievements against objectives and needs

4.9.1 Objective

This Sub-Task integrates the material developed in Sub-Tasks 2.1 to 2.3 and draws conclusions for each region on the extent to which the achievements of the programmes have met the objectives set by the programme authorities in the design of the programmes and the underlying needs of the region. This task therefore focuses mainly on the questions 2b and 2c within the evaluation question 2. The extent to which objectives and needs have been met by the achievements of the programmes will be assessed for each programme period as well as for the whole period of the study. Based on this, explanations will be sought for the success or failure in meeting objectives and needs, and key elements will be identified in the design or implementation of the programme, or in external events, which account for this performance (the ‘why’ questions discussed in Section 2.2). Lastly, this section of the study will evaluate the extent to which the regional needs and problems have changed as a consequence of the impact of ERDF programmes, ideally by a mitigation of some of the region’s problems, i.e. the programmes’ contribution or impact.

4.9.2 Methodology

(i) Meeting objectives and needs

For each region, the objectives and needs have been identified from Sub-Task 2.2, informed by the regional context developed under Sub-Task 2.1. Achievements will have been identified under Sub-Task 2.3. Analysis is therefore needed of the relationship between the two.

First, comparison will be made between the explicit objectives of the programmes and the reported achievements as noted in ex post evaluations, monitoring reports, and the programmes’ closure reports. Comparison will be made for each of the programmes to see whether the programmes delivered against targets and if not, which areas of the programmes experienced problems. Whilst ex-post evaluations may have made judgements on delivery against objectives, the longer timescale of this study enables a better use of statistical data to compare the situation at the outset of a particular programme and after its completion. It may be that the achievements are lagged relative to the timing of the interventions, so we will make allowances for this.

Second, comparison will be made with needs and again the actual achievements of the programmes and the evolution of indicators relating to the needs of the region, cross referenced with information from interviews regarding the perceived dynamics of needs within the region.

(ii) Key elements in success or failure in meeting objectives and needs

Having identified particular areas of the programmes that experienced significant success or failure in meeting objectives and needs, the reasons for that performance will be

examined more closely by reference to the previous interviews, survey returns and documentary materials. For those identified areas of under and over performance we will re-interrogate the information gathered to examine:

- problems in the management or implementation of programmes which account for under-performance (or over-optimism in setting objectives);
- examples of innovation in the design of programmes or projects that yielded positive results (or whether this was due to pessimistic projections in the planning phase);
- successes due to unanticipated synergies within and across programmes and with national programmes;
- successes as a consequence of external influences, such as an unanticipated major inward investment, or changes in the regional and sectoral contexts; and
- failures due to external shocks or policy changes at national level which have adversely affected ERDF programmes, or have adversely affected needs.

This analysis will primarily draw on the information gathered through interviews.

(iii) Impact of ERDF on changes in regional needs

This final element will seek to identify the significance of ERDF intervention on changes in regional needs as measured by the indicators already identified. Statistical measures will be used to examine the changes in the indicators of need over time and the potential influence of a number of external factors including ERDF expenditure, but also including national and EU level effects (Crescenzi, 2009). The aim will be to identify changes relative to trends which can be imputed to be an effect of the programmes.

In the statistical analysis comparisons within each individual case study will be performed at two levels:

- across sub-programme axes; and
- across programming periods.

4.9.3 Organisation

Case study research will be undertaken by the regional case study teams. Methodological work related to this Sub-Task (and the related comparative analysis as part of Task 3) will be undertaken by EPRC and LSE. The lead person for this Sub-Task is Professor Ugo Fratesi.

5. TASK 3: CROSS-CASE STUDY ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 Objective

The objective of Task 3 is to analyse programme achievements across all selected regions with a view to: (i) reaching conclusions, insofar as pooling of results and findings is possible and meaningful, given the diversity of the 15 regions, on the relevance, effectiveness and utility of programmes (and, where applicable, Cohesion Fund projects); (ii) comparing and analysing achievements of ERDF programmes (and, where applicable, Cohesion fund projects) over time; c) identify success factors and weaknesses; and (iii) elaborating suggestions on how to improve programme design, implementation, results-based management, and achievements.

The Task will thus entail, on the one hand, the undertaking of aggregate analysis of the 15 case studies and, by means of a comparative analysis, the examination of the conclusions that derive from them regarding the relevance, effectiveness and utility of ERDF programmes and, on the other, quantitative statistical and econometric analysis undertaken centrally.

5.2 Methodology

The Task will be articulated in a number of activities grouped under the two following Sub-Tasks:

- Sub-Task 3.1, entailing a summative, comparative analysis of the information delivered by the case study reports; and
- Sub-Task 3.2, a statistical and econometric analysis undertaken centrally by the core team (largely independently from the case study research, except for the collection of regional level data which cannot be obtained from EU-wide statistical sources).

5.2.1 Sub-Task 3.1: Comparative analysis from case study research

This Sub-Task comprises the comparative analysis of: the evolution of regional contexts and features (from Sub-Task 2.1); programmes (from Sub-Task 2.2); achievements (from Sub-Task 2.3); and achievements against objectives and needs (from Sub-Task 2.4).

(i) Comparative analysis of contexts and regional features

This activity relates to the development of a narrative on the evolution of the regional context in the 15 case study regions throughout the period observed drawing from both the narratives provided in the case study reports (Sub-Task 2.1), as outlined in Section 4.6.2(ii), and the descriptive statistical analysis undertaken centrally by the core team, illustrated in Section 4.6.2(i). This narrative will appraise how the economic structure of the case study

regions evolved over time in relation to both national and EU averages. It will provide the context for the analytical sections that will follow.

(ii) Comparative programme analysis

This activity will entail developing explanations of the evolution of regional needs and problems, across the 15 regions with the aim of drawing conclusions on the extent to which the programmes implemented from 1989 (1991/1995 in some cases) did indeed address regional needs and problems over time, allowing thereby comparative conclusions to be drawn on the programmes relevance and its evolution across the period observed. The analysis will draw on the information provided by the case study reports on intended and actual financial allocations, and on the programme strategic rationale and internal and external coherence (both as spelt out in the programme documents and as reconstructed by the case study teams), as illustrated in Section 4.7.

(iii) Comparative analysis of achievements

This activity will deal with the comparative analysis of achievements, both reported and actual. This analysis will be undertaken drawing, on the one hand, on information contained in the 15 case study reports (as illustrated in Section 4.8) and, on the other, on centralised statistical analysis.

Aggregate levels of achievement can be obtained from monitoring data. Statistical assessment is needed of the cumulative effect of this as jobs created in one period may then be lost in a later period and continuous effort may be needed to maintain existing levels of economic activity. The synthesis and evaluation of the results obtained from the 15 case studies will rely both on a qualitative analysis of the material provided by these studies - including the achievements which have been reported over time in the regions, e.g. in evaluations and other reports such as Annual Implementation and Final Implementation Reports (and an assessment of their reliability and credibility) - as well as on a quantitative analysis that will seek to reveal common patterns and main differences. Given the focus of the project on the 15 case studies, the scope for a formal econometric analysis is limited. Instead, the planned approach will be largely based on quantitative comparisons of trends, means and spreads (descriptive analysis), an analysis of frequencies across groups of regions, programmes, sub-programme axes and periods (cross-tabulations, comparisons of means, etc), and on variance decomposition techniques (analysis of variance - ANOVA).

Drawing on the information derived from the qualitative analysis from material emanating from the case studies (desk-research, interviews, online survey), the Final Draft Report will present a number of quantitative indicators concerning: (a) the quality and structure of management of the funds; and (b) the level and composition of the funding allocations (across periods, programmes and axes). These indicators will be complemented by performance/outcome data derived from published sources (Cambridge Econometrics, Eurostat, National Statistical Agencies, regional authorities). The aim is to reveal patterns and associations between the performance/outcome indicators and the

governance/structure indicators by means of correlations, cross-tabulations and analysis of variance - thus not formally providing a confirmatory analysis, which would require the use of a much larger dataset (to increase variability within the sample and provide more degrees of freedom).

(iv) Assessing achievements against objectives and needs

This activity will draw on the 15 case studies to appraise the extent to which achievements met the objectives set and the regions' needs as established by the case study teams, i.e. on the effectiveness and utility of programmes. Where meaningful, given the diversity that characterises the 15 selected regions, cross-regional statistical analyses will also be performed, notably: between the regions belonging to the same group (i.e. the three groups, as set out in the project specifications); and between regions that had no change in status (e.g. 'A' regions) and ones that did ('B' regions). The objective will be to derive inferences based on a presumed counter-factual. For example, a comparison between the performance of a region which exhibited stability in the way it allocated its Cohesion Policy funds across policy axes with an otherwise comparable region which experienced a shift in the prioritising of funds (as long as this shift happened for regions exogenous to the indicators examined) would offer a better indication of the effectiveness and utility of spending in the particular axes from which funds have been shifted.

5.2.2 Sub-task 3.2: Quantitative analyses

The Sub-Task under this heading is concerned with the achievements of ERDF and related Cohesion Fund projects at a macro-scale, starting from the premise that the achievements of different projects do not necessarily impact upon the same factors/processes or with the same intensity at the macro-scale due to a number of possible concurrent or additional effects, including backwash, leakages, spillovers, national shocks, etc. Each of the 15 regions is manifestly different, and they have been selected to be reasonably characteristic of three distinct groups. The point of the econometric analysis is therefore to try to identify the structural characteristics that give rise to different sorts of results and outcomes.

For this reason, the aim of this Sub-Task is to run an analysis of the achievements of ERDF within the 15 case-study regions by looking at their impact on macroeconomic variables such as GVA, employment and productivity, as well as - whenever possible - on other more general indicators of quality of life, linking this analysis with the one of the regional teams in order to understand what the various programmes and projects intended to change.

The nature of the empirical strategy of the case study research leaves unavoidably some open questions on the accuracy of the identified effects, the reliability of reporting and of the inferences drawn. For example, there may be a case where respondents claim that a particular set/size of interventions helped to address regional (general or specific) needs even if with some temporal hysteresis, and attribute some positive regional evolutions/outcomes to such interventions. The qualitative analysis of Task 2 will be able to record such assertions and will of course evaluate critically their validity, through intra-

and inter-case comparisons (i.e., by examining the consistency of responses within cases or the relative importance of factors/outcomes across cases). However, where relying exclusively on the analytical methods used in Task 2, it will still be impossible to find empirical confirmation for a particular assertion/relationship reported by the relevant regional actors.

The quantitative analysis undertaken in this Sub-task will thus complement that of the case study research and of Sub-task 3.1, by pooling the 15 cases together in a panel dataset with sectoral, temporal and spatial detail and applying econometric and other quantitative techniques that allow a more accurate estimation of associations and identification of emerging (average) patterns. Given the size of the sample, and the decision to focus almost exclusively on the 15 regions / case-studies, it will not be possible to test directly for causal (rather than indicative) links by performing a fully robust identification analysis. Nevertheless, the analysis proposed under Task 3 includes a number of complementary techniques that are designed to help with identification, at least in the form of a comparative examination against related/plausible counterfactuals.

Specifically, by exploiting temporal and cross-case variations in economic performance (across a set of outcome indicators), the team will be able to examine not only the contribution of ERDF funding (and Cohesion Policy more generally as well as comparatively) to economic performance at the macro-scale for the 15 case-study areas, but also the average hysteresis in the materialisation of the observed effects together with the validity of a number of more specific assertions derived from the qualitative analysis (Task 2). These will include claims that specific funds work only/mainly when combined with other characteristics (e.g., sector-concentrated funding, decentralised administration of funds, cases of singular 'needs', conducive national and extra-regional contexts, etc). As mentioned already, this analysis is an important complement to the results coming from the case studies since it will be able to test if and when, on the average of the 15 regions, the support from ERDF has contributed to the promotion of development at the regional level.

To be clear, the use of a quantitative analysis is meant to complement rather than to replace the results of the case-studies, also by providing them with econometric support whereby relationships between different aspects will be taken into account as deeply and far as possible.

Finally, the quantitative analysis is directly linked to the case studies also in practical terms. The quantitative analysis implemented in Task 3 contributes to the existing state-of-the-art research on the economy-wide effects of Cohesion Policy. Despite its necessarily limited focus on a small sample of 15 regions, it is still based on the collection and operationalisation of very detailed expenditure data (collected in eight categories and with annual frequency by the regional teams) at a level of detail that has never been possible in previous studies. In this sense, the data collection of Task 2 **facilitates** the econometric analysis of Task 3 and the latter **extends** the use of this data beyond the boundaries of Task 2.

The econometric analysis will not make use of the reported achievements given that this data will realistically not be available for many of the years covered by the analysis and

given the limited reliability of the data that is available. However, it will provide the team with a relevant benchmark to be compared against any reported achievement data. In this way the analysis will provide a reality check on the reported outputs of the programmes. This Sub-Task will mostly rely on quantitative techniques in order to provide complementary answers to the research questions of the study. At the basis of the work there will be the construction, based on the data provided by the regional teams, of a panel containing the amount of expenditure in ERDF and (separately) Cohesion Fund for each of the 15 regions, each year, and each category in the classification of expenditure in Box 1. In order to build this panel, the core team in charge of this task will prepare a template for data collection to be handed to the regional teams, which will ensure data consistency across the analyses.

With the data provided in this panel by the regional teams, used jointly with other data mainly from secondary sources (e.g. Eurostat, Cambridge Econometrics), it will be possible to perform the following analyses.

(i) *Formal analysis of growth and employment*

This first part of Task 3 will reinforce with quantitative analysis the reply to the research question “What has been the overall contribution of ERDF programmes to regional development?” provided in Task 2. The 15 case studies will provide a wealth of information about the functioning and impact of Cohesion Policy in each of the selected regions. However, it is also important to scale up from them to obtain estimates of the overall effects. The conclusions of this task will be valid for the 15 selected regions and, as the rest of the project, could provide inductively some ‘general’ insight if the 15 regions comprise a sufficiently representative and substantial sample of the whole population of supported regions so as to make some sort of aggregation feasible. Moreover, this task will get results insofar as the 15 regions are heterogeneous enough (i.e., cover a broad range of experiences and outcomes) to provide the necessary variability that is needed for a comparative analysis. It is proposed to conduct this analysis through a series of statistical exercises that both build up different pieces of evidence and provide means of adding-up.

Ideally, a formal econometric investigation would be needed, but the emphasis on the 15 case studies, and the fact that it will not be possible to obtain consistently defined data with the same depth of information for all 15 regions, means that the sample is too small to allow for the implementation of those econometric techniques that directly address problems of identification and causality. A way to deal with this will be through the construction of larger panels in terms of time and categories of expenditure, by taking account of different time periods and, to the extent possible, different axes of support, building on the analyses set out under Sub-task 2.4.iii above. Thus, with 15 regions and annual(ised) data on actual expenditures within each programming period - as well as with different axes of support - a sufficiently large panel will be available, allowing for a **formal**

analysis of growth and employment along the lines of the approach adopted by Mohl and Hagen (2010).¹³

(ii) Factors determining success or failure

The second analysis performed in Task 3 will complement the answer to the question “What are the main lessons learnt on the effectiveness and utility of ERDF interventions in each region?” Particular attention will therefore be here devoted to the **identification of the key factors conditioning programme success or failure** by looking at how pre-existing contextual socio-economic (Crescenzi and Rodríguez-Pose, 2011) and institutional conditions may act as ‘filters’ that can block or enhance the impact of the funds, especially the finding that Cohesion Policy is more effective in regions that have sufficiently developed institutional capacity (Ederveen *et al*, 2006; Beugelsdijk and Eijffinger, 2005). In addition, research will examine to what extent concentration of policy/funding in a few specific axes of support is more, or less, effective than a more dispersed distribution of funds across many policy areas - and whether this differentiation is associated with different results for different types of regions. For example, narrow forms of policy intervention may be more productive in regions that suffer from singular weaknesses (for example, sub-standard transport infrastructure), while breadth of projects/objectives may be more suitable for regions suffering from multiple weaknesses. Ideally, in doing this analysis reference will be made to the achievements of Task 2.4 with a view to trying to relate the results to the correspondence of expenditure with the regional achievements and needs.

(iii) Descriptive statistical analysis

Nevertheless, the main thrust of the planned approach (especially under the above contingency scenario, as described above) will be to rely on statistical comparisons without always carrying out comprehensive testing to derive statistical significance for the differences observed. Descriptive statistical analysis will complement the answer to the question of “What are the main good/bad practices?” and will seek to establish general patterns concerning level/type of spending and economic performance (measured along a range of axes: unemployment, growth, employment participation, etc). This analysis will look at regional needs - as defined in Task 2 - in order to take into account that not all projects aim at boosting GVA or employment. Consequently, in this task descriptive analysis will be used in order to capture variations in terms indicators of ‘needs’.

Changes of concentration over time will also be monitored in order to assess what the determinants of concentration are: why certain regions choose a specific distribution of funding across axes? This question will be explored by linking the observed concentration

¹³ This proposal is based on the crucial assumption that relevant quantitative data on the 15 case studies can be generated in a comparable consistent fashion (which does not mean, however, that the analysis will compare like with unlike). Acknowledging the potential risk that the 15 case studies might not always produce sufficiently detailed data on actual expenditures (e.g., by year), the contingency plan would be to complement the available data with information on expenditure commitments, which would be annualised through extrapolation based on the information derived from case-studies in which the annual data will be made available.

patterns with institutional, organisational and political variables at the national and (where possible) at the regional level.

To facilitate this analysis, the team will **construct composite indicators of regional performance**, but with different weightings of relevant variables to capture the different policy objectives. The aim here is to explore the extent to which Cohesion Policy affects some target variables more than others, and thus to link the assessment of Cohesion Policy to the notion of well-being, as opposed to narrower measures of economic performance. This issue has been receiving increasing attention since the publication of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi (2010) report and is echoed in the European Commission's 'Beyond GDP' initiatives. There are tricky normative issues around what should be included in an index of well-being, but also a variety of toolkits for conducting such analyses (see, for example, Osberg and Sharpe, 2002). The work in this component of the study will comprise the construction of a matrix of performance variables for the regions and the application of different weighting schemes to them. In the development of the composite indicator **sensitivity analysis** will, consequently, be especially important as means of establishing convincing ranges and boundaries.

(iv) Regional benchmarking

A further component of the quantitative work will be the implementation of **comparisons (benchmarking) between each case study region and a set of other regions** comparable along different dimensions (e.g. similar initial levels of GDP, similar degree of peripherality or structural disadvantage etc.) that have either not had Cohesion Policy support or have been assisted to a much lesser extent. The exercise to contrast the 15 case study regions and a comparable group of regions will cut across regions and across programming periods. Because the 15 case study regions come from three different funding groups, the comparisons will allow assessment of the contribution of a particular type of programme against an empirical benchmark.

The validity of inferences from the 15 cases for Cohesion Policy generally has to be continually justified and monitored. In part, this ought to be achieved at the outset by selecting regions that are sufficiently representative. But the analysis also has to be alert to the risk that some of the sample would be revealed to be outliers.

(v) Time effects

Because economic development and the translation of policy support into lasting changes in economic performance is an uncertain and time-consuming process, care should be taken to specify lags correctly. This will entail some **exploratory analysis using different time periods and aggregations of policy inputs and effects** over a number of years. While the Cohesion Policy programming periods define one possible aggregation over time, it does not follow that these are the best to capture long-term effects. Moreover, because of cumulative causation, it may be that, only when certain thresholds are attained (for example, for viable infrastructure), econometrically testable regularities can be captured. As a consequence annual(ised) data will be used in order to test the effects of ERDF expenditure over time, in a similar way as in Rodríguez-Pose and Fratesi (2007) who, however, relied only on data on commitments, for four macro-axes and up to 1999.

(vi) *Spatial effects due to concentration of disadvantage*

If one wants to answer the question of “What has been the overall contribution of ERDF programmes to regional development?”, the impact of Cohesion Policy cannot be assessed in isolation. The regional economy does not operate in a vacuum, as it interacts with neighbouring regions generating and receiving spillovers of various forms. For these reasons spatial interactions are particularly important and should be taken into account in the quantitative analysis outlined above. For this purpose an additional dataset will be developed from published sources only (e.g. Eurostat and Cambridge Econometrics) with information on the economic characteristics¹⁴ of all regions neighbouring the 15 case studies regions. By means of these additional (spatially weighted) indicators for the structural characteristics of the neighbourhood, it will be possible to assess how the structural characteristics of neighbouring regions affect the local impact of Cohesion Policy in the 15 case-study regions. A strong neighbourhood effect would suggest that the policy should carefully take into account the spatial dimension when assessing the needs of the regions.

(vii) *Possible methodological and data issues*

Performing the quantitative analysis will involve, as the rest of the project, a number of possible issues which can arise and which, if arising, will require the identification of the scientifically most suitable alternative strategies among those feasible.

- The first potential issue could arise where the regional teams are not able to provide the necessary data in a consistent way. This problem can certainly be mitigated by means of estimations of missing values through interpolative and extrapolative techniques. The regional teams, in any case, will need to build most of the data from the projects and especially data before 2000, since the classification of expenditure 2007-2013 was not implemented before and no official classification was available before¹⁵.
- This analysis also requires that there will be enough variation over time in terms of expenditure in order to produce significant results in the panel estimations. From previous investigations, the core team of Task 3 is confident that there will be significant variability in the data. Alternatively simpler estimation techniques or multivariate descriptive statistical analyses will be used.
- A possible issue with the analysis concerns the fact that the 15 regions belong to three different categories with regard to eligibility, programme scope, financial weight and wider regional evolution. In particular, the analysis will explore the extent to which it is possible to draw general results and when it is necessary to provide results distinguishing between A regions which have always been eligible under the Objective

¹⁴ Necessarily excluding expenditure data that are only available for 15 regions.

¹⁵ In order to address the data issues we will also refer to the ESPON project 2.2.1 “Territorial effects of structural funds” for 1994-1999 and the Final Report of the project “ERDF and CF Regional Expenditure” for 2000-2006 (Contract No 2007.CE.16.0.AT.036).

1/Convergence objective, B regions, which have moved out of the Objective 1 objective, and C regions, which have never been eligible under the Objective 1/Convergence objective.

- A related possible problem could arise with the C - regions, whose expenditure will presumably be much lower than in other regions. In this case, the estimated effect would be smaller and hidden by the 'noise' in the data, but this would also mean that there exist threshold effects in order to get macro-economically significant results. In this regard, previous studies suggest that Objective 2 interventions aligned with a broader regional strategy were more effective¹⁶. A related problem could arise from the fact that Objective 2 eligibility used to be granted at a smaller spatial scale with respect to the regional one, and that for most of Objective 2 regions the population living in eligible areas was less than half of the total¹⁷.
- Further investigation is needed on the classification of expenditure. This classification can be either 'unambiguous' ('single') if each expenditure item can only be classified into a single expenditure class, or 'ambiguous' ('multiple'), where each type of expenditure can be associated to different classifications. The final decision on the best classification approach will be taken only after an empirical pre-assessment of the problem. Presumably, in case of predominantly ambiguous classifications - depending on the type of analysis - it will be decided whether to subdivide each ambiguous expenditure item into different 'classes' or if to classify it under the most important 'class' only.

5.3 Outputs

The output of Task 3 will be a dedicated chapter in the draft final and final reports, and a series of conclusions and recommendations that will feed into the overall conclusions and recommendations of the draft final and final reports.

5.4 Organisation

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of Sub-Task 3.1 will be undertaken by a team comprising: Vassilis Monastiriotis (for the part relating to the comparative analysis of regional contexts and features); Laura Polverari (for the part that relates to programme analysis); David Charles (for the part that relates to the analysis of achievements); and Ugo Fratesi (for the part pertaining to the assessment of achievements against objectives and needs). The quantitative analysis of Sub-Task 3.2 will be undertaken by the LSE core team, under the leadership of Dr Riccardo Crescenzi. The drafting of the evaluation's conclusions and of the recommendations on the improvement of programme design, implementation,

¹⁶ Ex Post Evaluation of the ERDF in Objectives 1 & 2, Work package 4: Structural Change and Globalisation.

¹⁷ See the Ex Post Evaluation of the ERDF in Objectives 1 & 2, Work Package 1: Coordination, Analysis and Synthesis, Task 5, A taxonomy of Objective 2 regions.

results-based management and achievements, from the entire Task 3, will be undertaken jointly by EPRC and LSE core team members.

6. TASK 4: PRODUCTION OF THE FINAL REPORT

The results from the above tasks will be brought together in a final set of conclusions and recommendations in the Draft Final Report and Final Report. These will draw out overall findings across Tasks 1-3 on the main achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes and projects over the period reviewed, 1989 to date, and on the relevance, effectiveness and utility of programmes.

The Draft Final and Final Reports will provide answers to the three first-level evaluation questions of the investigation and to all the second-level evaluation questions, listed in Table 1, in Chapter 2 :

- (i) to what extent the programmes addressed regional needs and problems over time? (first-level evaluation question 1);
- (ii) to what extent the ERDF achievements met regional objectives and needs in each programming period and across all periods? (first-level evaluation question 2);
- (iii) what are the main lessons learnt on the effectiveness and utility of ERDF interventions in each region? (first-level evaluation question 3).

In addition to concluding on the relevance, effectiveness, utility, achievements and overall contribution of ERDF programmes and Cohesion Fund projects in the 15 case study regions during the period observed, this final part of the research will also identify good (and even bad) practices, and lessons and recommendations, to improve ERDF programme design, implementation, results-based management and achievements in the 2014-20 period. Recommendations will be drawn at European, Member State and programme levels.

The Draft Final Report and the Final Report will be written by a team comprising Professor John Bachtler, Dr Laura Polverari and Professor David Charles (EPRC), and Professor Iain Begg and Dr Simona Milio (LSE). The person responsible for the Task is Professor John Bachtler.

7. MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

7.1 Organisation

7.1.1 *Project and research management*

The overall organisation of the project is shown in Figure 3, at page 60.

(i) *Project direction*

The overall direction of the project will be undertaken by **Professor John Bachtler (EPRC)** and **Professor Iain Begg (LSE)**. They will have overall responsibility for all aspects of the project, in particular the development of the methodology, quality control of all outputs, the derivation of conclusions and recommendations, participation in the key meetings with DG Regio and the Steering Group. Additional advice to the project direction, especially on methodological and policy issues, will be provided at key points by **Professor Andrés Rodríguez-Pose (LSE)**.

(ii) *Project management*

The operational management of the project, including contract and financial management, liaison with the Commission, reporting to the Steering Group, research coordination, management of the Regional Teams, the timely delivery of reports, and presentation of results will be undertaken by **Dr Laura Polverari (EPRC)**. Throughout the project, for the undertaking of project management and coordination tasks, Laura Polverari will be supported by a research assistant (Stephen Miller), a secretary (Alyson Ross) and, lastly, by the European Policies Research Centre's Centre Coordinator, Lynn Ogilvie, who will take charge of contractual arrangements and the coordination of the financial flows pertaining to the project.

7.1.2 *Core Research Team*

The core research will be undertaken by an EPRC and LSE team comprising: **Professor John Bachtler, Dr Laura Polverari and Professor David Charles of EPRC, and Professor Iain Begg, Dr Simona Milio, Dr. Riccardo Crescenzi, Professor Ugo Fratesi and Dr Vassilis Monastriotis of LSE**. The core research team will be responsible for undertaking the central and comparative research, developing the detailed methodological guidance for the research teams, and ensuring the quality of the research outputs from the teams under the relevant tasks. They will also contribute to drafting relevant parts of the research reports. Specific lead responsibilities for individual tasks are as follows:

- Task 1 - Development of a theoretical and methodological approach for the study: Professor Iain Begg

- Task 2 - Case study research: Dr Laura Polverari
 - Sub-Task 2.1 - Context analysis: Dr Vassilis Monastiriotis
 - Sub-Task 2.2 - Programme analysis: Dr Laura Polverari
 - Sub-Task 2.3 - Achievements analysis: Professor David Charles
 - Sub-Task 2.4 - Achievements/needs analysis: Professor Ugo Fratesi
- Task 3 - Cross-case study assessment of programme achievements
 - Sub-Task 3.1 - Comparative analysis of the 15 case studies: Dr. Vassilis Monastiriotis, Dr. Laura Polverari, Professor David Charles and Professor Ugo Fratesi
 - Sub-Task 3.2 - Comparative statistical and econometric analysis: Dr Riccardo Crescenzi
- Task 4 - Production of the Final Report: Professor John Bachtler.

7.1.3 Regional Teams

The case study research in the 15 regions will be undertaken by Regional Teams. These are all long-standing research partners of EPRC and have previously demonstrated their sound, in-depth knowledge of Cohesion Policy, experience of evaluation and delivery of outputs to specification and on time.

The Regional Teams will be responsible for the programme analysis, assessment of achievements, and assessment of achievements relative to needs, and they will also have input to the context analysis and comparative analysis. Each of the teams will undertake secondary source analysis of programme documentation, population of the financial expenditure database for their region, interview research, analysis of results, identification of survey respondents (and provision of the related mailing lists to EPRC), and writing up of reports on each region.

One meeting of all Regional Teams will be organised in the early stages of the project, following approval of the methodology and the two pilot studies, to ensure common understanding of concepts and methods, to explain research requirements and to address likely problems.

Regional teams	
Austria	Markus Gruber and Simon Pohn-Weidinger, Convelop, Graz
Finland	Professor Heikki Eskelinen and Dr Timo Lautanen, University of Eastern Finland (UEF)
France	Dr Georges Mercier, Pascal Chazaud, Delphine Paumelle, Estelle Floirac, ADT Consult, Echirolles
Germany	Dr Oliver Schwab and Kristin Schwarze, Institute for Structural

	Research (Ifs), Berlin Dr Sara Davies, European Policies Research Centre, Glasgow
Greece	Dimitrios Lianos, LKN Analysis, Athens
Ireland	Dr Jim Fitzpatrick, Brendan Shiels and Niall Crosbie, Fitzpatrick Associates, Dublin
Italy	Dr Laura Polverari, Stefan Kah, European Policies Research Centre, Glasgow Dr Simona Milio, Laura Todaro London School of Economics, London
Portugal	Professor Regina Salvador, Professor António Rebelo de Sousa and Ricardo Filipe Azinheirinha Fadista Simões, New University of Lisbon
Spain	Professor Andres Faiña and Professor Jesús López-Rodríguez, University of Coruña, Spain
United Kingdom	Professor David Charles and Rona Michie, European Policies Research Centre, Glasgow

7.1.4 External experts

A panel of three external experts will advise the EPRC/LSE research team on specific policy issues related to the long-term achievements of Cohesion Policy programmes and projects in the different policy fields.

External Experts	
Dr John Bradley	Economic Modelling and Development Strategies (EMDS)
Professor Helmut Karl	Ruhr-University Bochum
Dr Angel de la Fuente*	Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIS)

*To be discussed/agreed with DG Regio.

The external experts have been selected on the basis of their specialist knowledge, expertise and experience on the topics of different aspects of Structural and Cohesion Fund modelling, evaluation and analysis. The external experts will be responsible for: attending four meetings in Brussels; advising on the development of the overall project methodology; providing critical comment on draft versions of the research outputs; and providing other guidance required by the EPRC/LSE research team.

In particular, the Expert Panel will provide advice on key deliverables, notably: the First, Second and Fourth Intermediate Reports, and the Draft Final and Final Reports. To this purpose, the four meetings with the Expert Panel are scheduled to take place before the final delivery of each of these reports (in months 4, 6, 13 and 15). In addition, the Expert Panel will also provide advice on any particular difficulty or issue that may arise during the evaluation, on which the EPRC/LSE team may want to seek advice.

7.2 Allocation of tasks, responsibilities and days

The division of tasks and responsibilities, and the allocation of days between the members of the research team and policy advisors are shown in Table 3. The division of days by task may be reviewed upon finalisation of the methodology. This will not affect the total allocation of days/fees to the Regional Teams in the budget.

7.3 Internal and external communication

7.3.1 Communication with DG Regio

The main contact person for any aspect pertaining to the management and delivery of the study is Dr. Laura Polverari, project manager for this evaluation. Professor John Bachtler is the ultimate contact point in relation to any issues requiring a senior decision-making capacity.

7.3.2 EPRC - LSE communication

EPRC and LSE will have a close working relationship at all levels. Strategic management decisions will be made jointly by Professor John Bachtler and Professor Iain Begg. The EPRC-LSE core team will meet periodically during the project, for example during the methodology development phase and in the run-up to Steering Group meetings. Dr Laura Polverari will manage the input of all members of the project, in both EPRC and LSE. Dr Simona Milio will provide support with progress-chasing in LSE if required. As noted below, a SharePoint site has been created to allow information sharing.

7.3.3 Communication with the regional teams

The main reference point for the regional teams will be Dr Laura Polverari, who will also act as the first contact point for queries on the evaluation, send meeting invitations and relevant documentation, obtain from the regional teams the monthly updates on research progress and the likes. Nevertheless, once the case study research is underway, regional teams will liaise directly with the Task/Sub-Task coordinators for any specific issues that may arise on each Task/Sub-Task.

More generally, the management and organisation of the research is being facilitated by three organisational tools:

- a **project briefing** meeting, which will involve the EPRC/LSE core team and the regional teams in order to discuss the research questions, methods and analytical tools, deliverables and milestones of the evaluation, and clarify any doubts regarding the methodology of the case study research; this meeting will be held after the completion of the two pilot case studies, at the end of March 2012;
- **briefing papers** for the regional teams on the detailed aspects of the case studies and related Tasks and Sub-Tasks, covering methods and outputs;

- an **internal project SharePoint**, providing access to project documentation and allowing the core and regional teams to upload their inputs to the evaluation (see Section 7.3.5 below).

7.3.4 Communication with the External Experts

External experts will be contacted at key points in the evaluation, notably in advance to the finalisation of the First, Second and Fourth Intermediate Reports, and of the Draft Final and Final Reports, and at any other stage in the evaluation when particular difficulties or issue arise that may require the Experts' input. As already noted, four meetings with the Expert Panel are scheduled to take place around four weeks before the delivery of each of the above reports (in months 4, 6, 13 and 15). Liaison with the Experts will be undertaken primarily by Dr Laura Polverari.

7.3.5 SharePoint

An online SharePoint server has been set up by EPRC to support overall project management and serve primarily as a documents source and exchange platform. Documents are organised in a number of 'libraries' with differentiated access rights according to user groups (i.e. 'All Users', 'Case Study Teams' and 'Core Team').

These libraries will contain all background project documentation such as all the programme and evaluation documents for each case study region for the 1989-93, 1994-99, 2000-06 and 2007-13 periods (where available in electronic version); the briefing notes for Regional Teams; and the documentation from project meetings, Progress Meetings, Steering Group meetings and Expert Panel meetings.

The SharePoint also includes an address file, listing all partners involved in the project alongside with project responsibilities and contact details. Project partners are categorised under 'Core Team', 'Case Study Teams' and 'Expert Panel'. The provision of a project calendar and the flagging-up of upcoming deadlines via regular announcements will ensure the ongoing up-dating of all project partners. Further, SharePoint users will be able to receive periodic updates on the information available on SharePoint by enabling customised alert mechanisms.

Guidance on the SharePoint server and individual usernames and passwords will be provided to project partners and DG Regio after the submission of this Inception Report. The personalised access rights will allow for maximum confidentiality of the uploaded information.

Figure 3: Management and organisation of the study

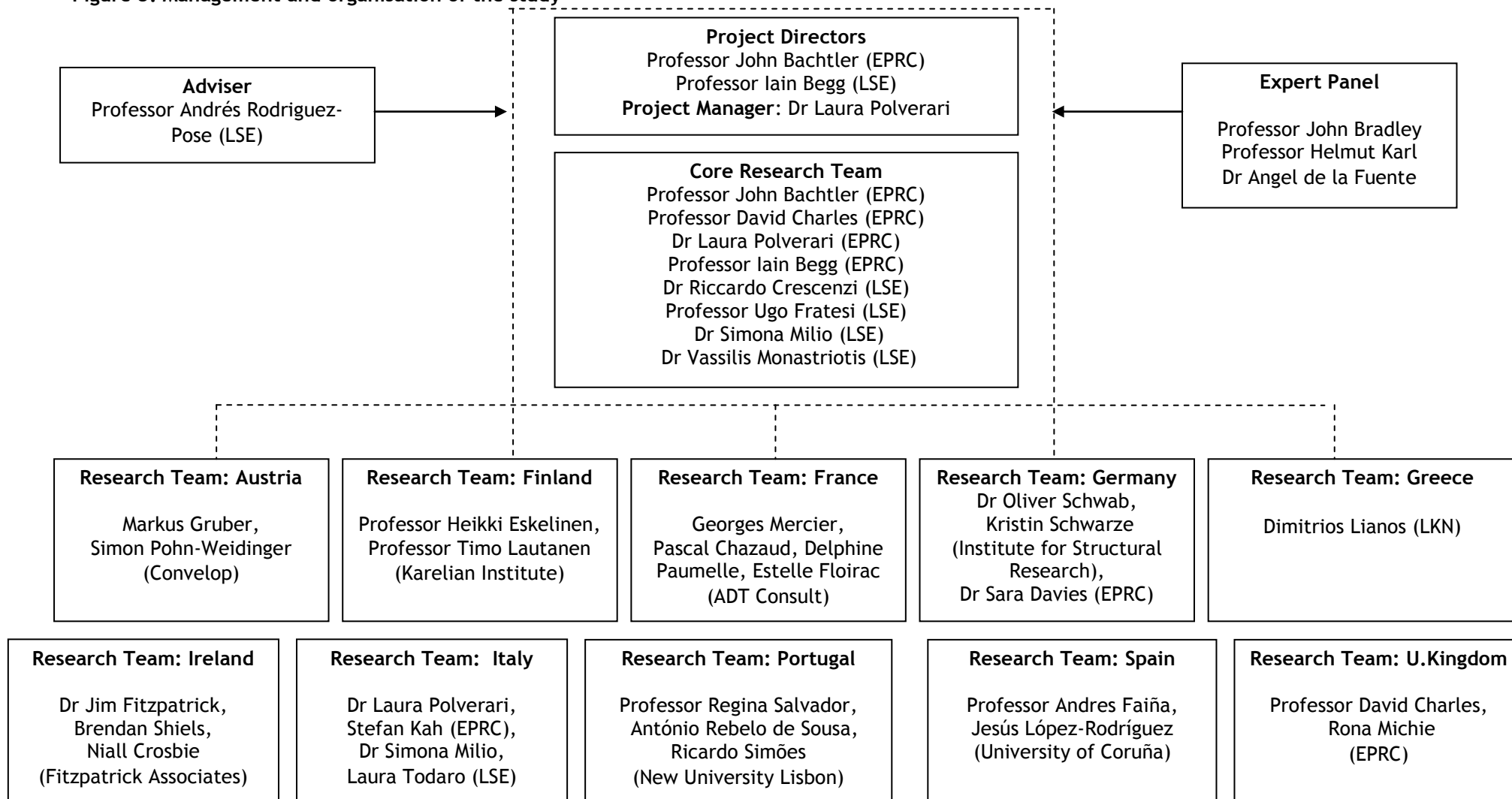


Table 3: Allocation of Tasks and days among the research team

	TASKS	EPRC research team				LSE research team							Regional Teams	Expert Panel	Totals	
		Bachtler	Charles	Polverari	RA	Begg	Rodr-Pose	Milio	Monastir.	Crescenzi	Fratesi	RA			Sub-Totals	TOTAL
	Project Research Management	14		32	5	14		15							80	80
Task 1	Theoretical and Methodological approach															37
	Literature review				10				2						12	
	Development of methodology	3	5	5		6	1		2	1	2				25	
Task 2	Case study research															1308
	Questionnaire survey			10	5								32		47	
	Context analysis and regional features 2.1								10	3	3		77		93	
	Programme analysis 2.2			15	5								467		487	
	Analysis of achievements 2.3		20		10								273		308	
	Achievements against objectives/needs 2.4			10	10		1	5				5	10	115		156
	Workshops, writing-up, project samples												217		217	
Task 3	Comparative analysis and conclusions															154
	Comparative analysis								33	33	33	30			129	
	Conclusions & recommendations (Tasks 2/3)	5	5	10		5									25	
Task 4	Reporting/meetings															231
	Synthesis and report drafting	10	10	50		15	1	12							98	
	SG and project meetings, presentations	18	9	18		15	2	8	3	3	3		30		109	
	Expert panel input													24	24	
TOTAL	50	49	150	45	55	5	40	50	40	51	40	1211	24	1810	1810	

Note that the allocations to individual Tasks and Sub-Tasks will be finalised following completion of the methodology that will be presented in the First Intermediate Report; this table is still provisional.

Table 4 : Allocation of days to case study teams

Country	Case study region	Type	Current Status	Period	Reg OP	Nat OPs	CF	No. OPs to be reviewed	Pilot	Days
Austria	Burgenland, AT11	B	Phasing-Out	1995-2011	Yes	No	No	3	No	55
Finland	Itä-Suomi, FI13	B	Phasing-In	1995-2011	Yes	No	No	4	No	55
France	Aquitaine, FR61	C	RCE	1989-2011	Yes	No	No	8+	No	68
France	Nord pas de Calais, FR3	B	RCE	1989-2011	Yes	No	No	7+	No	68
Germany	Nordrhein-Westfalen, DEA	C	RCE	1989-2011	Yes	No	No	5+	No	65
Germany	Sachsen-Anhalt, DEE	A	CONV	1993-2011	Yes	No	No	5+	No	66
Greece	Dytiki-Ellada, GR23	A	CONV	1989-2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	28+	No	100
Ireland	Ireland, IE01 + IE02	B	Phasing-In/RCE	1989-2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	15+	No	80
Italy	Campania, ITF3	A	CONV	1989-2011	Yes	No	No	30+	No	100
Italy	Basilicata, IT92	B	Phasing-Out	1989-2011	Yes	No	No	26+	Yes	105
Portugal	Algarve, PT15	B	Phasing-Out	1989-2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	23+	No	94
Portugal	Norte, PT11	A	CONV	1989-2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	23+	No	94
Spain	Andalucia, ES61	A	CONV	1989-2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	22+	No	94
Spain	Galicia, ES11	A	CONV	1989-2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	19+	No	94
U.Kingdom	North-East England, UKC	C	CONV	1989-2011	Yes	No	No	5+	Yes	73
										1211

Note that the number of OPs to be reviewed, which is presented in column 9, refers only to the period 1994 to date, based on a review of the OPs through the information available in the DG Regio (Inforegio) databases. These databases do not cover the period 1989-93. For this period, the review of the OPs implemented in each case study region will be done at the stage of case study research.

8. WORKPLAN AND FUTURE REPORTS

The proposed workplan for the study is shown in Figure 4 below. The study will run for 18 months from the date when the contract was signed, beginning with the kick-off meeting with DG Regio held at the outset of the study.

The main deliverables of the study, after this Inception Report, will be as follows.

- **Deliverable 2: The First Intermediate Report**, presenting the work of Task 1 on the theoretical and methodological design of the project as a whole, including the 15 case studies, as well as the detailed questionnaires and interview guidelines, will be delivered four months after the start of the project, on 16 January 2012. It is anticipated that the team that will be drafting the report will comprise the following: Professor Iain Begg (lead person for Task 1), Prof. John Bachtler, Dr. Laura Polverari, Professor David Charles, and Dr Simona Milio, Dr Riccardo Crescenzi, Dr. Vassilis Monastiriotis and Professor Ugo Fratesi.
- **Deliverable 3: The Second Intermediate Report** will present the first two pilot regional case studies, in a dedicated chapter each. Each case study chapter will include a case study executive summary with indication of findings, lessons learnt, recommendations and answers to the evaluation questions. The Second Intermediate Report will be delivered seven months after the start of the project, in April 2012. It is anticipated that the team drafting the report will comprise the following: Dr. Laura Polverari, Professor David Charles and Dr Simona Milio.
- **Deliverable 4: The Third Intermediate Report** will present a further 4 case studies, in a dedicated chapter each, and will be delivered after ten months of the project, on 9 July 2012. As in the previous deliverable, each case study chapter will include a case study executive summary with indication of findings, lessons learnt, recommendations and answers to the evaluation questions. It is anticipated that the team drafting the report will comprise the following members of the core team - Dr. Laura Polverari and Professor David Charles - plus the regional teams responsible for Andalucía, Norte, Burgenland and Nordrhein-Westfalen.
- **Deliverable 5: The Fourth Intermediate Report** will contain the final nine regional case studies and be delivered 14 months after the start of the project, on 9 November 2012. It is anticipated that the team drafting the report will comprise the following members of the core team - Dr. Laura Polverari, Professor David Charles - and the regional teams in charge of the remaining case studies included in this submission. As in the previous deliverables, each case study will be presented in a dedicated chapter of the Fourth Intermediate Report, each one of which will include a case study executive summary with indication of findings, lessons learnt, recommendations, as well as the answers to the evaluation questions.
- **Deliverable 6: The Draft Final Report** will be delivered 16 months after the start of the project, on 9 January 2013. This will contain two parts. The first part will contain a description of the tasks carried out and the related results. In particular, it will

contain the answers to the evaluation questions, a description of the context and goals of the evaluation, as well as the organisation and outcomes of the study (under all Tasks). The second part will contain 15 chapters, each one containing the revised versions of the case study reports submitted in previous deliveries. It is anticipated that the report will be drafted by: Prof. John Bachtler, Dr. Laura Polverari, Professor David Charles, Professor Iain Begg and Dr Simona Milio.

- **Deliverable 7: The Final Report**, containing the required revisions to the Draft Final Report, will be delivered eighteen months after the start of the project, on 9 March 2013. In particular, the Final Report will contain the same two parts as the Draft Final Report, plus an executive summary. It is anticipated that the report will be drafted by: Prof. John Bachtler, Dr. Laura Polverari, Professor David Charles, Professor Iain Begg and Dr Simona Milio.

All reports will be written in such a way that the information provided is easily understood and in English of high standard. Each deliverable will be discussed with the evaluation Steering Group, according to the timetable provided in Table 5, below.

Table 5: Deliverables, deadlines and Steering Group meetings

Report delivery date	Type of report	Proposed meeting date	Meeting type
		9 September 2011 (held)	Kick-off meeting
10 October 2011	Inception Report (IR)	19 October, 14.30-16.30	1 st SG meeting
16 January 2012	First Interim Report (FIR)	Tbc	2 nd SG meeting
9 April 2012*	Second Interim Report (SIR)	Tbc	3 rd SG meeting
9 July 2012	Third Interim Report (TIR)	Tbc	4 th SG meeting
9 November 2012	Fourth Interim Report (FoIR)	Tbc	5 th SG meeting
9 January 2013	Draft Final Report (DFR)	Tbc	6 th SG meeting
9 March 2013	Final Report (FR)	Tbc	

* Easter Monday - revised date to be agreed with DG Regio.

All reports - interim and final - will comply with the general editing rules which have been provided by the DG Regio Evaluation Unit to the research team. Three presentations of the results will also be delivered (to be held, most likely, in mid/second half of 2013).

All reports will be provided in hard copy and electronic version (in both Word and PDF formats). For the final versions of the report, three hard copies and an electronic version (three CDs, word format and PDF format) will be provided.

Figure 4: Project workplan

	TASKS	MONTHS	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
	Project/research management		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Task 1	Theoretical & methodological approach																					
	Literature review		█	█	█	█																
	Development of methodology		█	█	█	█																
Task 2	Case study research																					
	Context analysis & regional features						█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█						
	Programme analysis						█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█						
	Analysis of achievements						█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█						
	Achievements against objectives/needs						█	█	█		█	█	█	█	█	█						
Task 3	Comparative analysis and conclusions																					
	Comparative analysis																█	█	█			
	Conclusions and recommendations																█	█	█			
Deliverables and Meetings	Deliverables																					
	Inception report		█																			
	1 st Intermediate Report			█			█															
	2 nd Intermediate Report									█												
	3 rd Intermediate Report												█									
	4 th Intermediate Report																█					
	Draft Final Report																		█			
	Final Report																				█	
	Progress Reports		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
	Kick-off Meeting		█																			
	1 st Steering Group meeting			█																		
	2 nd Steering Group meeting						█															
	3 rd Steering Group meeting										█											
	4 th Steering Group meeting												█									
	5 th Steering Group meeting																	█				
6 th Steering Group meeting																			█			
Presentations to MS and Commission																					█	

9. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PROJECT CONTINUITY

9.1 Academic and editorial standards

EPRC operates to the highest professional standards in terms of integrity, objectivity, independence and confidentiality. All EPRC research is governed by the University of Strathclyde ‘code of practice’ on ethical research, which ensures that all research is conducted to the highest ethical standards. Further details on the code or practice are here: <http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/eprc/ethics.cfm>

In line with standard EPRC practice, all reports delivered will be proof-read by a native speaker of English for language, linguistic and typographical accuracy. All reports - intermediate and final - will also undergo accurate editorial checks. In addition, the draft final report will be subject to additional sets of checks:

- a pre-submission check of factual accuracy (statements, data, referencing of sources) by the EPRC project team;
- a language check by senior staff within EPRC who have not been involved in the study in order to verify the objectivity, balance and independence of the language of the study; and
- a political sensitivity check (subject to the agreement of the European Commission) by selected EPRC research associates - former European and national officials, who have experience of previous Cohesion Policy reform debates but who are no longer in post - in order to obtain independent assessment of the political sensitivity of the opinions in the report.

Quality assurance, as above described, for each report will be carried out in three iterations: a first check by the coordinator of the report; a second check by a member of the core team involved in drafting the report; a final check by either one or both project Directors, as indicated in the table to follow (Table 6). The project directors - Prof. John Bachtler (EPRC) and Prof. Iain Begg (LSE) - will take ultimate ownership of all project outputs.

Table 6: Report drafting and quality assurance

Report	Writing Team	Quality Assurance 1	Quality Assurance 2	Quality Assurance 3
First Intermediate Report	All core team	Begg	Polverari	Bachtler
Second Interim Report	Charles, Milio, Polverari	Polverari	Bachtler	Begg
Third Interim Report	Polverari, Charles, Andalucía, Burgenland & Nordrhein-Westfalen regional teams	Polverari	Charles	Bachtler & Begg
Fourth Interim Report	Polverari, Charles & remaining regional	Polverari	Charles	Bachtler & Begg

	teams			
Draft Final Report	Bachtler, Polverari, Charles, Begg and Milio	Polverari	Bachtler	Begg
Final Report	Bachtler, Polverari, Charles, Begg and Milio	Polverari	Begg	Bachtler

9.2 Project continuity

In the event that a legitimate issue arises which may affect project continuity, DG Regio will be informed without delay and every effort will be made to ensure that an appropriate and mutually agreed solution is reached. Accordingly, in full compliance with the European Commission's requirements, EPRC, as leading institution, will immediately report a description of the problem, when it began, and details of the relevant remedial actions planned and taken. In the unlikely event that a member of the research team needs to be substituted, we will ensure that any replacement meets DG Regio's expectations and be fully capable of carrying out the tasks required. In such an instance, the Commission's agreement to the substitution will be sought. Moreover, in such an event, EPRC and LSE have measures in place which ensure that clear and accurate records of all research conducted are kept.

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ANNEXES

10.1 Annex I: Indicative structure of the literature review

Consolidated approaches to appraise the contribution of ERDF programmes

- Regional convergence
- Induced growth (macro-economic models, econometric research)
- Job creation
- By policy fields and themes
- Qualitative added value

New perspectives: theory-based evaluation

- The emphasis on logic of the intervention and utility
- Rationale and methodologies

Lessons *for the present research*: informing the evaluation methodology

- Revisiting the key concepts of the study: relevance, achievements, effectiveness and utility
- Existing evidence on the quality of the logical framework of past and present ERDF programmes
- Outputs, outcomes and contribution (including in terms of qualitative added value)
- Lessons drawn for the present evaluation

10.2 Annex II: Regional case study interviews - illustrative list of case study research questions

Regional needs

- What were the main regional needs and problems over the last 20 years?
- How have these needs and problems changed over this period?
- What were the main factors affecting these changes?
- How did the objectives of the Structural Funds programmes match the perceived needs of the region? Did they become more focused on the principal needs over time?
- To what extent did the projects funded under the ERDF address regional needs and problems over the period?

Achievements

- To what extent did ERDF achievements meet regional objectives and needs in each programming period and across periods?
- To what extent did programme achievements meet the needs identified by the programme analyses?
- To what extent did programme achievements meet the programmes' goals?
- Were the reported direct achievements realistic and appropriate to the funding and the needs of the region?
- Were there specific elements of the programmes which were more successful than others?
- Were there other direct but not reported achievements, and did these address regional needs?
- Were there unexpected effects and were these positive or negative?
- What were the success factors in those parts of the programmes that met their objectives and regional needs?
- What were the problems which led to parts of the programmes failing to meet regional needs?

Complementarities and synergies

- To what extent were the ERDF interventions complementary to the interventions realised with other funding sources, e.g. other Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund (where applicable), domestic regional programmes/plans, domestic national interventions?
- Were there examples of specific synergies between programmes? Were these designed in or accidental?

Issues in programme implementation

- What were the main difficulties/critical aspects of programme implementation in each programming period and across periods?
- Were any of these difficulties overcome by changes in the programmes? What changes were made?
- What were the major successes in the implementation of the programmes and what were the success factors?
- What lessons were learnt and how have these been used in the design of subsequent ERDF or other programmes?

Impacts

- To what extent have there been observed changes in regional needs and problems which can be attributed to the ERDF programmes implemented over the last twenty years?

10.3 Annex III: Template for programme expenditure financial analysis

	Enterprise	Structural adjustment	Innovation	Green economy	Labour market/ social inclusion	Community development	Spatial distribution of economic activity	Intraregional infra- structural endowment
Expenditure categories (2007-13)								
Research and technological development (R&TD), innovation and entrepreneurship								
R&TD activities in research centres			x					
R&TD infrastructure		x	x					
Technology transfer and improvement (SME)	x	x	x					
Assistance to R&TD	x		x					
Advanced support services for firms	x	x						
Assistance to SMEs for environment products	x		x	x				
Investment in firms for research/innovation	x	x	x					
Other investment in firms	x	x						
Other SME research/innovation measures	x		x					
Information society								
Telephone infrastructures	x		x		x			x
IC technologies	x		x					
Information and communication (TEN-ICT)								x
Services and applications for the citizen					x			
Services and applications for SMEs	x		x					
Other SME measures for ICT access/use	x				x			x
Transport								
Railways							x	x
Railways (TEN-T)								x
Mobile rail assets							x	x
Mobile rail assets (TEN-T)								x
Motorways							x	x
Motorways (TEN-T)								x
National roads							x	x
Regional/local roads							x	x
Cycle tracks						x		x
Urban transport						x	x	x
Multimodal transport							x	x
Multimodal transport (TEN-T)								x
Intelligent transport systems							x	x
Airports							x	x
Ports							x	x
Inland waterways (regional and local)							x	x
Inland waterways (TEN-T)								x
Energy								
Electricity							x	x
Electricity (TEN-E)								x
Natural gas							x	x
Natural gas (TEN-E)								x
Petroleum products							x	x
Petroleum products (TEN-E)								x
Renewable energy: wind				x				x
Renewable energy: solar				x				x
Renewable energy: biomass				x				x
Renewable energy: hydroelectric, geothermal, etc				x				x
Energy efficiency/generation/management				x		x		x

Evaluation of the Main Achievements of Cohesion Policy Programmes and Projects over the Longer Term in 15 Selected Regions (from 1989-1993 programming period to the present)

	Enterprise	Structural adjustment	Innovation	Green economy	Labour market/ social inclusion	Community development	Spatial distribution of economic activity	Intraregional infra- structural endowment
Expenditure categories (2007-13)								
Environmental protection and risk prevention								
Management of waste								x
Management/distribution of drinking water								x
Water treatment (waste water)								x
Air quality								x
Integrated prevention and pollution control				x				x
Mitigation and adaptation to climate change				x				x
Rehabilitation of sites and land				x			x	x
Promotion of biodiversity and nature				x				x
Promotion of clean urban transport				x			x	x
Risk prevention				x				x
Other measures environment / risk				x				x
Tourism								
Promotion of natural assets		x					x	
Protection/development of natural heritage		x		x			x	
Other assistance to improve tourist services		x				x	x	
Culture								
Protection/preservation of cultural heritage						x		
Development of cultural infrastructure						x		
Other assistance for cultural services						x		
Urban and rural regeneration								
Integrated urban & rural regeneration						x	x	
Increasing the adaptability of workers and firms, enterprises and entrepreneurs								
Life-long learning systems / strategies					x			
Innovative ways of organising work					x			
Specific services for employment, training					x			
Improving access to employment and sustainability								
Modernisation labour market institutions					x			
Active labour market measures					x			
Active ageing and prolonging working lives					x			
Self-employment and business start-up	x				x			
Access to employment (gender-equality)					x			
Migrants' participation in employment					x			
Improving the social inclusion of less-favoured persons								
Integration for disadvantaged people					x			
Improving human capital								
Reforms in education and training systems					x			
Increase participation in education/training					x			
Human potential in research and innovation			x		x			
Investment in social infrastructure								
Education infrastructure					x	x		
Health infrastructure					x	x		
Childcare infrastructure					x	x		
Housing infrastructure					x	x		
Other social infrastructure					x	x		
Mobilisation for reforms in the fields of employment and inclusion								
Partnerships, pacts, networking					x	x		
Strengthening institutional capacity at national, regional and local level								
Improving policy and programme design								
Reduction of additional costs hindering the outermost regions development								
Compensation for accessibility deficits							x	
Compensation for size market factors								
Compensation for climate conditions/relief								
Technical assistance								
Implementation, monitoring inspection								
Evaluation and studies								