

technopolis_{group}

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Final Report

Evaluation of Innovation Activities: Methods and Practice

In association with

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Final Report

Evaluation of Innovation Activities: methods and practice

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Executive summary

This study is one element in a review of evaluation practice undertaken by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Region Policy (DG REGIO). Roughly a quarter of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support is spent on the 'promotion of innovation' during the 2007-13 period. In this context, the study:

- Collected evidence through a literature review and survey of ERDF managing authorities, the 'state of the art' of innovation policy evaluation in the EU.
- Drawing on the evidence, analysed the advantages and limitations of available methodologies for assessing different types of innovation measures.
- Prepared 15 case studies (and short summaries) of interesting evaluations.
- Organised a workshop with evaluation practitioners (representatives of national authorities) and officials of DG REGIO to discuss a draft guidance

The main output of the study is a stand-alone 30 page guidance document that:

- a) discusses the evidence on good practice for the design and implementation of evaluations of five main categories of innovation measures
 - Strategic research programmes
 - Science-industry co-operation and networks
 - Advisory and technical services to innovative companies
 - Funding of innovative companies
 - Cluster initiatives
- b) serves as a reference tool and operational manual for MA officials commissioning evaluations of innovation measures.

This report summarises the overall findings of the entire study. The main messages and insights from the study are as follows:

1. To date, there is only a limited number of evaluations of specific ERDF co-financed innovation measures, and only a minority of these evaluation reports are publicly available.
2. However, there is evidence of an increasing focus on evaluation of innovation measures and a growing demand for corresponding guidance.
3. Only few evaluations of innovation support include a review and **discussion of the underlying intervention logic** and policy objectives. There is clearly a need to tailor evaluation design to take account of the nature and intervention logic of innovation measures.
4. Evaluations of **strategic research programmes** may focus on the effects on structuring research activity, on the quality of scientific output, on attracting (foreign) researchers or on broader societal impacts. The range of methods applied is equally broad from bibliometrics and peer reviews for quality of research to surveys and network analysis to assess co-operation patterns. It is rare to find counter-factual analysis applied but 'value for money' is a core issue.
5. The majority of evaluations of **science-industry collaboration or knowledge transfer programmes** focus on the impacts of the measures on participating enterprises (i.e. the effects on direct beneficiaries) and sometimes on the wider regional business community. From a process perspective, such evaluations should ideally aim to assess how the measure influenced the quality of links between the actors and helped to create new linkages.

6. The effectiveness of support (cost-effectiveness, coverage of target enterprises, direct effects on support firms, etc.) provided to beneficiary firms is the primary focus of evaluation of measures allocating **funding to intermediary bodies** delivering innovation advisory services or facilities (incubators, science and technology parks, etc.). However, evaluations may also attempt to assess network effects (in terms of structuring research and innovation activities of supported firms) and overall impact on regional economies.
7. The evaluation of measures providing **funding to innovative companies** can be methodologically challenging, due to the complexity and skills required for the design of robust analytical frameworks (often involving counterfactual approaches to estimate net-effects of support on assisted firms). The triangulation of survey data with monitoring data and general business statistics can be useful in order to check more subjective opinions of supported firms. The case studies underline the need to differentiate carefully methods and evaluation questions between the types of financial support (grants, loans, equity) and to be explicit about the types of results expected to be generated within the time period covered.
8. Evaluations of **cluster initiatives** typically draw on qualitative study designs and involve a range of data gathering tools, however, the limited evidence shows a reliance on traditional methods at the expense of more innovative techniques such as network analysis. Participatory evaluation approaches can be recommended given the need to understand the effects of the measure on a diverse range of stakeholders.
9. Overall, the **choice of methods and techniques** used tends not to reflect the type/ nature of innovation measure evaluated. Indeed, there is a general lack of differentiation of methodological approaches despite diverse intervention logics of innovation measures. In other words, evaluation methods do not take full account of the specific characteristics of innovation measures.
10. In overall terms, **qualitative evaluation approaches prevail** as a relatively cost-effective choice in the evaluation of most types of innovation support.
11. Evaluations commonly **focus on shorter-term efficiency and effectiveness** criteria and less often assess long-term results. Moreover, despite some 'pilot' evaluations, counter-factual analysis to estimate the net-effects of a measure on beneficiaries is still relatively rare and of varying quality.
12. The analysis of the **coherence of innovation measures** and macro- or system-wide effects remains a limited focus of evaluations. This in spite of the often (implicit or explicit) inter-dependencies between different measures (e.g. the success of a high-tech incubator may be dependent on sufficient investment funds from publicly supported business angel networks or seed capital funds).
13. A relatively large number of evaluations consider the **performance or design of similar types of measures abroad** but this is often more to foster policy learning than benchmark quantitatively or qualitatively performance. A greater use of available European policy benchmarking platforms would help to make benchmarking more robust.
14. **Participatory approaches** are relatively common in the implementation of evaluations, however, this often remains limited to a core group of stakeholders forming a steering group.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

This study is one element of a review of evaluation practice undertaken by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Region Policy (DG REGIO)¹. Roughly a quarter of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support is spent on the 'promotion of innovation' during the 2007-13 period. Hence, the national and regional ERDF Managing Authorities (MAs) need to enhance their capacity and know-how in order to apply the best available methods to evaluate the results of these innovation measures. In order to select the appropriate evaluation questions and manage effectively an evaluation, the officials in MA need to understand the methodological challenges of evaluating specific types of innovation measures. Indeed, a tailored approach to evaluation design, by selecting appropriate combinations of methods to assess the intended and actual results of specific types of interventions, is a key to improved policy learning. Equally, improving the quality of evaluations of innovation support will contribute to the future design of more effective policy interventions.

Hence, the study examines the methods used to evaluate the effects of publicly funded innovation measures and complements this analysis with guidance on additional or complementary methods that could be applied in the future. The study should contribute to improving the quality and effectiveness of future innovation evaluations.

1.2 Scope and objectives of the study

The term 'innovation measure' applies to activities supported by the ERDF under the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment and European Territorial Co-operation Objectives. The scope of inquiry was broadened to include evaluations of non-ERDF co-funded innovation measures. This was done so as to expand the evidence base and to provide a more robust assessment of evaluation practice.

The study had four specific objectives, namely to:

- assess the 'state of the art' of innovation support evaluation.
- analyse the advantages and limitations of available methodologies for assessing different types of innovation activities.
- prepare 15 case studies (and short summaries) of interesting evaluations.
- draft guidance for MAs to support their evaluation activities.

This report summarises the overall findings, however, the main output of the study is a 30 page guidance document (in English, French, German, Polish and Spanish) that:

- a) summarises the evidence on good practice in the design and implementation of evaluations of innovation support;
- b) serves as a reference tool and operational manual for Managing Authority (MA) officials commissioning evaluations of innovation measures.

The guidance document, the 15 evaluation cases and the briefs are published on the DG REGIO website. In addition, the findings will feed into two networks of evaluation experts and Member State officials on evaluation, DG REGIO's evaluation guidance for the 2014-20 period and into an updated version of the Evalsed website².

¹

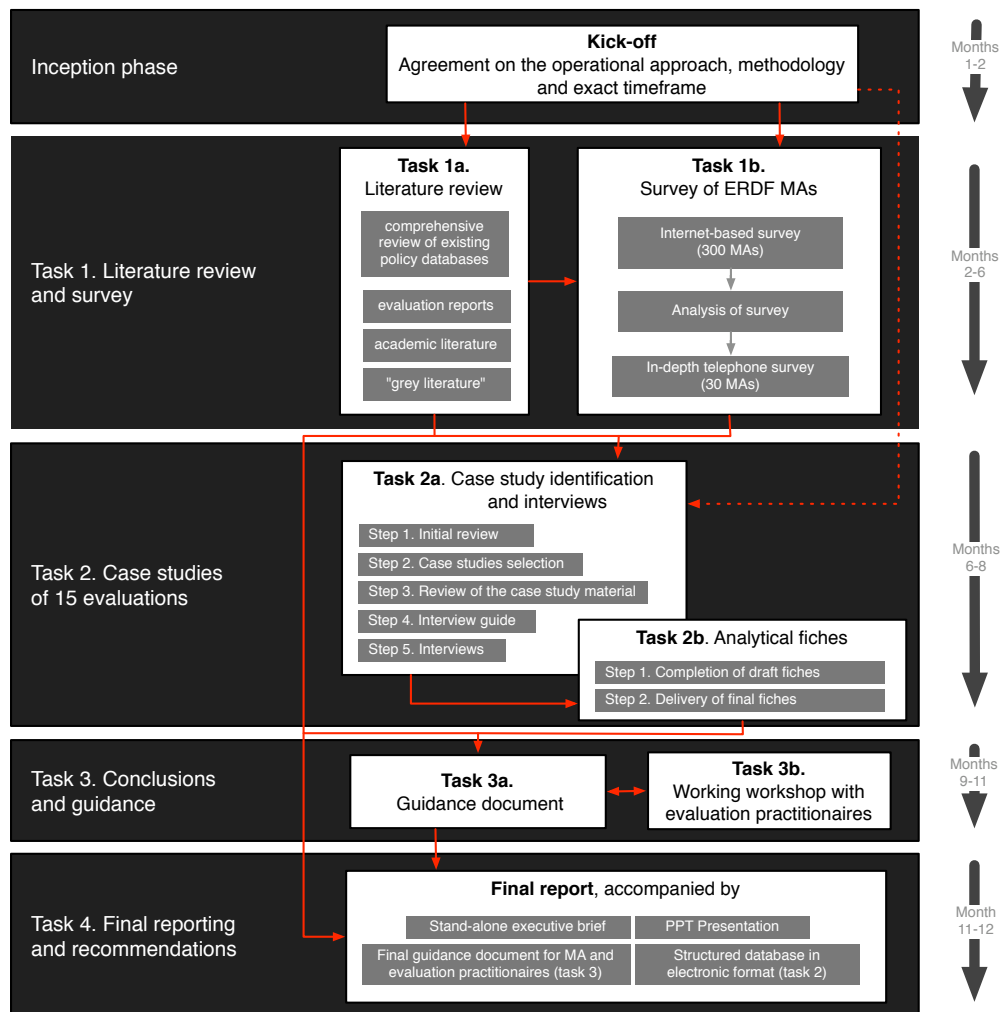
² http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/index_en.htm

1.3 Overview of the study implementation and report structure

The study was implemented in four main steps:

1. a review of available evaluations and academic literature, in order to establish an empirical reference point for the study. (Task 1a)
2. an online survey of 300+ MAs to obtain evidence on evaluation practice and a telephone survey of 30 MA officials provided insight into the strengths and weaknesses of different evaluation methods and identified possible cases (Task 1b)
3. 15 evaluation case studies identify transferable lessons for the evaluation of similar support measures. (Task 2)
4. a draft of the guidance manual was discussed in a workshop (held on 13 January 2012) with ERDF MA officials and the Commission services

Figure 1 Study design flowchart



The results of tasks 1a and 1b were presented in detail in the interim study report³. This report combines a short summary of the literature review and survey results with the additional findings on evaluation practice derived from the case studies of 15 good practice evaluations. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 summarises the **methodological approach** to the study and an **overview of the data gathering tools/ research methods** used at each stage of the study
- Section 3 presents the **main insights and key messages** arising from the overall evidence gathered through the research in relation to the methods and practice in the evaluation of innovation support activities.

A series of annexes to the report include the case studies, reporting templates, etc.

³ Available on the DG REGIO website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/innovation_activities/interim_synthesis.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/innovation_activities/interim_appendix_a.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/innovation_activities/interim_appendix_b.pdf

2. Overview of research methods, data sources and key findings

The evidence on methods and practice for the evaluation of innovation measures was gathered through the three main tasks:

- a review of publicly available evaluation reports and academic literature,
- a survey of ERDF Managing Authorities, and
- 15 analytical case studies.

The following sections provide a brief summary of the sources, methods and main findings for each task.

2.1 Literature review (Task 1a)

2.1.1 Objectives, scope and approach

The main sources of information for the literature review task were:

- Evaluation reports published by national/regional governments with a preference for measures co-financed by the ERDF.
- Academic literature on evaluation of R&D and innovation policies, with a preference for work at regional level;
- ‘Grey literature’ (working papers, conference papers, etc.) on the methods used to assess the effects of innovation measures; or providing evidence on effects.

2.1.2 Review of policy databases and identification of evaluation reports

A large number of evaluations of innovation measures were gathered and systematically profiled in order to generate a view on the ‘state of the art’ and to provide an empirical baseline. Specifically, the literature review sought to:

- Identify the approaches used for evaluating different types of innovation measures commonly funded by the ERDF.
- Assess the advantages and limitations of these methods for evaluating different types of innovation measures.
- Examine the use of selected data collection and analytical techniques.

The study team obtained up to 10 published evaluations from a representative range of countries for each of the eight categories of innovation measures proposed in the inception phase. The aim was to acquire enough evaluations to form a view of the sorts of approaches in use and not an exhaustive list⁴. The criteria for inclusion were:

- an independent and substantive evaluation,
- reported in a public document, and
- with a good description of the study methodology.

⁴ <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/page/inno-appraisal>

2.1.3 Profiling and review process

The principal data sources were the ERAWATCH-TrendChart and Regional Innovation Monitor databases, which together generated more than 1,300 leads. This was supplemented by 196 additional references (URLs) obtained through the online survey of MAs. In order to establish a framework for qualitative analysis, these leads were profiled and categorised according to the type of innovation measure evaluated.⁵

The study team made use of this portfolio of 58 evaluation reports in two ways:

- Profiling the basic study design parameters (questions, tools, analytical techniques, etc.) for each evaluation, in order to produce descriptive statistics.
- Based on the methodological descriptions in each evaluation report, the rationale for choosing a particular approach was explored and the extent to which those design choices are determined by the type of innovation measure examined. These in-depth assessments were informed by a review of the specialist (academic literature) and evaluation guidance from the Commission or Member States.

The review process consisted of (a) an initial scoping/ filtering and (b) profiling phase.

2.1.3.1 Phase 1: Scoping

- As a first step, the ~1,500 leads were scanned systematically in order to build a repository of relevant evaluation reports and specific guidance material.
- The vast majority (70%+) of the leads linked to an organisation's web page with a description or profile of the measure and not to published evaluation reports.
- Where the links did connect to a downloadable report, the great majority were annual reports or programme descriptions rather than evaluations.
- The residual group of evaluation reports were then screened individually to confirm that they did indeed relate to innovation support activities.

This process ultimately resulted in a portfolio of 58 relevant evaluation reports that served as a basis for an in-depth analysis.

2.1.3.2 Phase 2: Profiling

The study team reviewed the 58 evaluation reports individually (in particular the methodology chapters, where available) in order to record the methods and tools used. Using a consistent mapping template, the evaluations were then profiled according to a number of parameters in order to prepare the ground for more detailed and systematic analysis. The following information was recorded for each publication:

- Standard meta-data: author/ evaluator, title of evaluation, commissioning body, year of publication, etc.
- Innovation support measure evaluated: title, nature of support provided, national or ERDF co-funded, etc.
- Type of evaluation: scope, objectives, evaluation issues and evaluation questions
- Study design and methods: data sources, data collection and analytical techniques.

As a final step, the evaluation reports were grouped in broad categories of innovation measures (See Appendix C for an overview.) The database of evaluations was the basis for the analysis and provided evidence on the evaluation techniques commonly used.

⁵ A description of these categories is included in Appendix B. The list of categories ('typology of innovation support measures') was refined during the later stages of the study to reflect the evidence gathered.

2.1.4 Analysis of evaluation reports, academic literature and grey literature

The findings from the 58 profiled evaluation reports were combined with the results of a review of academic literature and grey literature in order to characterise the strengths and weaknesses of the individual evaluation tools and methods. The following headings served as a starting point for analysis and reflection:

- Data collection requirements
- Typical costs of data collection / reporting
- Costs to people or populations being surveyed
- Time implications
- Typical robustness of the resultant data
- Methodological strengths from an innovation perspective
- Any critical weaknesses or limitations

The analysis of the evaluations and literature went beyond a statistical cross-tabulation of methods or particular study designs with individual innovation measures or portfolios of measures. Instead, the aim was to come to a broad and differentiated view on strengths and weaknesses for each instrument, from an innovation perspective, and critically to assess in what context it is reasonable to use such a method and where it would almost always be inappropriate.

2.1.5 Main findings

On balance, the search and screening process was less successful than anticipated, both in terms of the number of relevant evaluations identified and in terms of the quality of those reports. Three points stand out, which may warrant further reflection:

- A large proportion of organisations that fund innovation measures either do not publish the evaluations they commission, or do so only very occasionally and selectively. Assuming that innovation measures are being evaluated reasonably frequently, which the survey of MAs suggests is the case, there may be value in pressing for greater transparency and more open publication (of summaries, at least), ideally both in the national language and in English.
- The format and presentation of many of the evaluation reports was rather poor, inasmuch as most reports do not include a specific chapter or appendix explaining the choice of methodology or any reflection on how it might be improved in future. As with the previous point, good practice would suggest that every evaluation ought to reflect on its study design and lessons learned as a means by which to support learning among funding agencies and practitioners.
- The majority of evaluations of ERDF-funded measures focus on testing the coherence of investments (i.e. their alignment with Operational Programmes) and reconciling project outputs with contracted results. Only a minority looked explicitly at the effectiveness of the specific innovation measures supported.

2.1.6 Summary of conclusions

Overall, the design of evaluation studies and choice of methods (data collection tools and analytical techniques) are only partially determined by the particularities of the innovation measure under review. The majority of evaluations address the same central questions applicable to any policy evaluation (relevance, efficiency and effectiveness) and most deployed a broadly similar set of methods:

- Desk research (a) to test the alignment of the measure (volume / shape of investments, activities and outputs) as compared with the strategic plan, and (b) to gather definitive statistics on inputs and outputs for incorporation in a subsequent value for money or actual result analysis.

- Stakeholder interviews to explore opinion on the continuing need for such a measure within the country or region in question, in light of wider developments (events) and more recent policy initiatives (complementary measures).
- A questionnaire survey to obtain semi-quantitative feedback on the management and cost efficiency of the measure and to detail attributable results (social and economic).

This triad of methods is an attempt to characterise a core methodology. There are, naturally, exceptions within the portfolio of evaluations reviewed, with many studies deploying two or three other data collection tools or analytical methods. Equally, there are cases where one or other of the above elements is missing from the study design. This outcome often reflects a conscious decision to quickly and efficiently answer a specific question (e.g. a strategic review might focus on the stakeholder interviews, or a pilot evaluation might emphasise the desk research and beneficiary survey).

Despite this over-simplification, there is something of a split evident in the overarching design of evaluation studies between two clusters of the innovation measures under review, which can be describe, in a simplified manner, as the ‘science’ and the ‘innovation’ ends of the innovation support spectrum:

- measures that support (pre-competitive) research within the university sector, whether that is strategic research programmes or competence centres, are narrower and more homogeneous in methodological terms – *qualitative research methods* predominate and the evaluation questions revolve around *effectiveness* (research quality and community engagement) rather than relevance or efficiency.
- at the ‘innovation’ end of the spectrum (measures aimed at providing support for the proprietary activities of a large numbers of actors) evaluations are much more focused on *quantitative research methods*. They are more likely to devote a particular effort to assessing the *net benefits* directly attributable to the policy support and to appraise the wider *economic impacts* of a measure (through the economic multipliers of wages and purchases). Comparison groups and simple econometric techniques (including control groups, in some cases) are also very much in evidence. Questions about efficiency are prominent, both operational efficiency (service quality) and overall efficiency (relative value for money of a measure as compared with any practicable alternative policy option).

2.2 Online survey of 300+ Managing Authorities (Task 1b)

2.2.1 Objectives, scope and approach

The overall objective of the broad-based survey of MAs was to obtain information on different aspects related to the implementation and evaluation of innovation support measures operated at the regional level. The purpose of the survey was four-fold:

- To identify and locate evaluations of ERDF co-funded innovation support measures and similar measures operated at the regional level across the EU.
- To identify examples of evaluation practice at the regional level that could provide the focus for the case studies at a later stage of the study.
- To identify representatives of the MA for the telephone survey, i.e. officials who have relevant experience in the evaluation of innovation support and/ or who have been involved in relevant ‘good practice’ evaluations (and who might therefore provide more in-depth information on those evaluations).
- To gather general information concerning the ‘state of the art’ in the evaluation of innovation measures across the EU.

Based on the 671 MAs that received an invitation to participate, the survey achieved a response rate of 35.5%, which can be considered a very good result for a ‘cold-approach’ survey of this type. 77% of the respondents indicated that they are responsible for the management/implementation of ERDF co-funded programmes or other measures to support innovation activities, while 70% of the respondents are responsible for commissioning or conducting evaluations of these programmes.

2.2.2 Main findings and conclusions

Around three-quarters of the target audience were familiar with the implementation of ERDF co-funded programmes and similar innovation measures and just below three-quarters also had familiarity with their evaluation. Thus, the majority of the respondents were relevant to the issues addressed by the survey.

A total of 442 evaluations were suggested as examples by the respondents (153): 39% of the respondents noted that their suggested evaluations belonged to measures funded during the 2000-2006 programming period (or the 2004-2006 programming period in new Member States), while 84%⁶ noted that the evaluations they had suggested belonged to measures from the current 2007-13 period. Thus, not surprisingly, the evaluations provided as examples tended to be those that had been performed more recently.

- While the *distribution of the types of measures* evaluated reports tended to be as anticipated (with a large proportion of direct funding type measures), there was a relatively equitable spread across all the measure types, with a small residual group of un-categorised measures.
- The *data collection methodologies* typically employed in the evaluations were the use of monitoring data and document searches, followed by interviews. The use of monitoring data is a cost effective approach, as opposed to the collection of data during the evaluation process itself, and this appears to be recognised.
- Similarly, the use of *data analysis methods* follows an anticipated pattern, with descriptive statistics and case studies being used most frequently. However, the relatively frequent use of more sophisticated approaches such as cost-benefit analysis, macro-economic models and social network analysis was surprising.
- The types of *barriers and issues associated with evaluating innovation measures* were mainly related to resources and capabilities/skills constraints (the latter both in-house and, to a lesser degree, in the available community of consultants). However, the reported significant relevance of a lack of higher level policy-making demand for evaluations is a cause for concern.

A complete analysis of the survey results is found in an appendix to the interim report.

⁶ The respondents were invited to propose up to six evaluations. It was possible for the suggested evaluations to belong to either or both of the relevant programming periods and, therefore, the percentages indicated exceed 100%.

2.3 Telephone survey of targeted Managing Authority officials (Task 1b)

2.3.1 Objectives, scope and approach

The literature review and the online survey of 300+ MAs served to identify MA officials with experience in the evaluation innovation support measures, or who had been involved in relevant evaluation studies in the past. A total of 30 officials were contacted for structured telephone interviews.

The main objectives of the telephone survey were

- to deepen and widen the insights gained from the online survey of all 300+ MAs;
- to identify the specific requirements of MAs in relation to guidance for the evaluation of innovation activities;
- to identify relevant evaluation studies and corroborate the list of ‘good practice’ evaluations identified through the online survey of MAs and the literature review, *thereby providing a final filter for the selection of 15 evaluation case studies.*

In addition, the telephone survey:

- Investigated the experience of different MAs in the evaluation of ERDF co-supported innovation support instruments in greater detail;
- Elicited insights into the strengths and weaknesses of various evaluation methods in relation to different types of innovation measures
- Explored practical issues related to scoping, designing and commissioning evaluations of innovation support measures;
- Identified MA officials interested to participate to the evaluation workshop.

2.3.2 Selection of survey participants

The list of MA officials for the telephone survey was drawn up based on the relevant evaluation reports identified through the literature review and the responses to the online survey, where participants were asked to indicate if (a) they had been involved in an evaluation that they would consider a ‘good practice’ example, and (b) if they would be available for an in-depth interview.⁷ Additional selection criteria included (based on responses to the online survey):

- Evidence of reasonable experience in the management of ERDF co-funded programmes (or other measures to support innovation activities) and the commissioning of their evaluations.
- Familiarity with the application of a broad range of evaluation methodologies.
- Evidence of a good level of engagement with the on-line survey.
- Coverage of the EU27 Member States.

The sample of telephone survey participants included 30 MAs officials from 23 Member States (with a further 11 contacts included in a ‘reserve list’). DG REGIO approved the final list of interviewees prior to the launch of the survey.

⁷ In addition, in order to improve the overall quality of the sample and to capture the most relevant ‘good practice’ evaluations, the study team deviated from the original approach and proactively targeted MAs who did not necessarily indicate a willingness to participate in the telephone survey but who indicated that they had been involved in interesting ‘good practice’ evaluations.

In order to facilitate the discussion, survey participants were sent an interview guide with an explanatory note outlining the key concepts and definitions (evaluation terms, types of innovation activity, etc.) prior to the telephone interview. The interview guide was reviewed and finalised in consultation with the Steering Group.

2.3.3 Outcome of the telephone survey

Interviews for the telephone survey took place in June 2011 and, in the majority of cases, were conducted in the mother tongue of the interviewee. From the original list, 29 MAs from a total of 22 Member States could be contacted/ were available for interview.

When asked about the common shortcomings of evaluation practice of innovation measures, the MAs highlighted a general lack of competence and expertise in the various evaluation methods. In particular, it was pointed out that evaluation officers lack specific methodological guidance for the evaluation of innovation measures and that consequently they are evaluated using the same questions and the same methodology). A few interviewees also considered that officials currently lack the competence for analysing complex innovation policy hindering their ability to comprehend the methodologies required. In the words of one MA official, “evaluations focus just on whether an innovation measure is successful or not, without paying any attention to the explanation of the underlying mechanisms generating the success.”

Concerning interviewees’ expectations vis-à-vis an evaluation guidance document, the following elements were quoted most frequently:

- it should include good practice examples of evaluations of different types of innovation support so that MAs can learn from the experience of other countries/ regions. Summaries of evaluations of innovation support should have information on the substance of the evaluation, the process, the methods used and the outcomes/ effects on policy making.
- it should focus on specific methods and explain which methodological approaches, tools and indicators are most relevant and appropriate for the evaluation of different types of innovation support measures. It should transfer methods used in evaluation in general to innovation activities and clearly explain the benefits and limitations of each method in different contexts.
- it should ideally include guidance on evaluating specific types of innovation measures and not only innovation support in general. It should provide practical guidance on the selection of the most appropriate methodological tools for different types of innovation support.

2.4 Case studies of ‘good practice’ evaluations (Task 2)

2.4.1 Objectives, scope and approach

The purpose of the 15 case studies was to explore operational practice in the evaluation of innovation support in greater detail, and to better understand the issues associated with choosing specific tools and methods in different contexts. The case studies provide a structured critique of the selected evaluations for the following issues:

- Commissioning the evaluation study: designing the technical specifications and choosing the implementation approach
- Implementing the evaluation: observations on methodology and processes
- Effectiveness and efficiency of the evaluation: critique of methods and analytical techniques
- Conclusions: relevant insights and transferrable lessons

In order to ensure that findings were reported in a consistent and systematic way, the case study authors were provided with templates for the case study report (see Appendix E) and the accompanying evaluation brief (see Appendix F).

2.4.2 Selection of case studies

The study team compiled a long-list of 30 evaluations that could be considered ‘good practice’ and covering a mix of nationally funded and ERDF co-funded innovation measures. While the primary selection criterion was the quality of the evaluation (study design and methodological robustness), a balance was sought in terms of:

- The type of innovation support measure evaluated, and
- The country profile (size, level of development and innovation potential).

Based on the long-list, the steering committee selected 15 ‘good practice’ evaluations for in-depth review covering 14 different Member States (two cases were sourced from the UK). An overview of the 15 case studies is included in Appendix D. Compared to the initial eight categories, the 15 case studies are grouped under five broader categories of innovation measure (see Figure 2). The majority of the evaluations are of measures that provide ‘funding to innovative companies’.

Figure 2 Overview of case study evaluations by type of innovation support measure

Type of measure	Scope/ description	Modality of funding	# of case studies
Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures	Research centres; science and research associations/ foundations; specific research programmes	Funding channelled to research institutions	3 (+2)
Science-industry co-operation and networks	Includes competence centres and competitiveness 'poles' type initiatives.	Funding allocated to consortia or joint projects involving business and research/HEI	1 (+1)
Advisory and technical services to innovative companies	Services related to innovation management, technology transfer, and training. Includes incubators, business innovation centres, innovation advisory networks	Funding of intermediaries	2 (+2)
Funding of innovative companies	R&D grants; loan/ guarantee measures	Funding to businesses through grant, loan/ guarantee, equity finance for young innovative firms and start-ups	6 (+2)
Cluster initiatives	Innovative clusters	Funding to cluster managers and/ or cluster initiatives	1

NB: Figures in brackets refer to additional evaluations of mixed support (i.e. Czech and French case study evaluations) that include an element of support related to the category

While the case study sample may not entirely reflect the relative importance of each type of measure (e.g. in terms of budgetary allocations in ERDF programmes), the evaluations serve as a good basis for a detailed examination of different evaluation methods and practices for the categories of support measures.

2.4.3 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was carried out between July and September 2011. The analysis is based on information obtained from a range of sources and at a minimum involved:

- a review of the tender documents/ technical specifications for the evaluation;
- an analysis of the evaluation report (tools, methods, approaches, etc.);
- a review of other relevant material (policy documents, background papers, etc.);
- in-depth interviews with (one or more of the following):
 - a official responsible for evaluation at the commissioning body,
 - a member of the team that carried out the evaluation,
 - a representative of an organisation concerned by the measure evaluated,
 - a regional policy maker active in the area of innovation support.

2.4.4 Reporting

The findings were presented in detailed case study reports and stand-alone two-page evaluation briefs, which were quality reviewed by the core team and DG REGIO. The case studies added an important layer of information concerning operational practices in the evaluation of innovation measures.

3. Synthesis of findings: observations and key messages emerging from the evidence on evaluation practice

This section summarises the key messages and insights by integrating the evidence on evaluation practice obtained from the case studies with the qualitative and quantitative data of the literature review and survey of MAs. Even given the wide variety of evaluations reviewed (in terms of scope, objectives, methodological approaches and type of measures concerned), there are a number of ‘stylised facts’ that can be derived from the study findings that are summarised as follows:

- Trends in the evaluation of innovation measures.
- The distinct intervention logics (in terms of design and policy objectives) of the five categories of innovation measures require tailored approaches to evaluation questions, criteria, indicators and to some extent methods.
- Methodological approaches (data collection tools and analytical techniques) tend not to differentiate adequately between the type of measures.
- A need to reinforce the capacity of MAs to design and manage innovation evaluations.

3.1 Trends in the evaluation of ERDF supported innovation support measures

1. *As yet, a limited number of evaluations of specific ERDF co-financed measures*

The online survey of MAs, interviews and desk research revealed that only a very small number of evaluations focused specifically on an innovation support measure funded by the ERDF.

The very great majority of the reports identified through the comprehensive review of policy databases are evaluations of national innovation support measures, with only a handful of evaluations that address ERDF-financed innovation measures directly. Among the latter, most are evaluations of types of innovation measures that the ERDF commonly co-finances, albeit they were commissioned and paid for by regional and national agencies independent of the ERDF. In addition, it is telling that the online survey of 300+ MAs only helped to produce 11 leads to evaluation reports which dealt in some way or other with ERDF co-funded support measures.

An assessment of good practice in the use of tools and methods to evaluate ERDF co-funded support measures is not possible on the basis of the available evidence. The findings suggest that evaluation practice of ERDF co-funded innovation support is still largely underdeveloped.

2. *And only a minority of evaluation reports are publicly available*

The survey of MAs and the literature review yielded a large number of references and leads to evaluations of innovation support measures. However, the 1,500 or so evaluation ‘leads’ identified through the literature review and the survey of MAs boiled down to 58 publicly available evaluation reports. Hence, a majority of MAs either do not publish evaluations or do so only very selectively. Where innovation evaluations are published, their presentation is of somewhat variable quality and in particular many have a rather short description of the methodology and almost none reflect on the choices behind the study design and what lessons have been learned for future evaluations

3. *However, an increasing focus on evaluations of innovation measures*

The survey and interviews suggest that there are an increasing number of evaluations of innovation measures. This is a reflection of the growing importance of innovation in national and regional policy priorities and the volume of ERDF funding targeted at different types of innovation measures across the EU27.

However, most evaluations are of broad fields of intervention such as ‘competitiveness and innovation’ or ‘higher education and research’ as opposed to specific measures. Indeed, the majority of evaluations identified treat innovation support as part of broader competitiveness-related interventions. This is notably the case for ERDF co-funded measures, where the evaluations usually span a mix of activities across different categories of innovation support.

This poses a concrete challenge for commissioning authorities and evaluators alike. The need to accommodate measures with different intervention logics and into one single evaluation often complicates, or even, undermines the development of a coherent methodological approach. This is evident from the varying degrees of methodological robustness of the 15 case study evaluations.

A frequency analysis based on a more detailed and comprehensive mapping of published evaluation reports would help to reveal trends more clearly. Nevertheless, evidence from interviews with MA officials suggests that there is a clear trend to separate out specific support measures for individual evaluations. Consequently, future evaluations will be required to apply more targeted methodologies to specific types of support measures.

4. *Leading to a growing demand for guidance on evaluating innovation support*

The survey of MAs and interviews suggest that thematic evaluations of specific ERDF funded innovation support measures will become more common and that officials would welcome bespoke guidance. Interviews with targeted MA officials responsible for the design and commissioning of evaluations show that innovation support still forms a relatively small part of the overall portfolio of evaluations undertaken, although the number of evaluations is expected to increase in the coming years. At present, there is no understanding of the particular methodological requirements (the appropriateness of different tools and methods) for the evaluation of different types of innovation support measures. Officials commonly follow generic ERDF evaluation guidance such as the guidance notes issued at the beginning of a programming period or online guides like EVALSED.

3.2 Taking account of specific intervention logics

5. *Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures*

Evaluations of strategic research programmes or research centres (including research infrastructures) take a wide variety of forms. Depending on the particular objectives of the evaluations, a mix of methods are adopted from qualitative to more complex quantitative approaches. The interim evaluation of the Austrian Genome Research Programme focused on programme management and had a particular focus on the success in terms of raising awareness of the role of basic research in society. The ex-post evaluation of Finnish Centres of Excellence Programmes essentially sought to assess the impact of the measure on researcher training and the attractiveness of Finnish research centres for foreign researchers. The Value for Money Review of the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) took yet another approach and examined the performance of the SFI in terms of cost-efficiency, based on evidence on outputs and outcomes arising from the implementation of the SFI activities. The SFI review is a relatively unusual example of an evaluation of cost-efficiency of support for strategic research using a counterfactual analysis based on a survey of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

6. Science-industry co-operation and networks

Evaluations of science-industry collaboration or knowledge transfer programmes (where funding is allocated to consortia or joint projects involving business and public research institutions/ HEL) tend to put the focus on the results of the measures on participating enterprises (i.e. the effects on direct beneficiaries) and sometimes on the wider regional business community.

Given their scope, evaluations of science-industry cooperation and networks tend to be carried out on behalf of national agencies, however in most cases the reports reviewed as part of the literature review indicate that the measures have benefited to some degree from ERDF funding.

Beyond these broad observations, the evidence is not conclusive and does not reveal specific patterns in terms of evaluation methodologies used in the evaluation of science-industry cooperation measures. The methodological descriptions found in evaluation reports do not disaggregate their choice of methods and analytical techniques in such a way as to permit one to infer any relationship between the study design and secondary objectives.

Improving science-industry cooperation is often a subsidiary objective shared by many evaluations identified through this study, and there can be varying degrees of thematic overlap with measures supporting the development of cluster initiatives. Measures under this broad category can span a variety of issues, depending on the specific type of support activities and expected effects (and timing of the evaluation).

The key evaluation perspective can be summarised as follows:

- Interim evaluations under this category commonly review the strategic relevance of the intervention, as well as the quantity and quality of scientific outputs resulting from the cooperation activities (using bibliometric and patent analysis).
- A common objective of ex-post evaluations is to measure the immediate (outputs) or longer-term effects (results) of cooperation initiatives on direct beneficiaries, i.e. both research institutions (scientific publications) and private enterprises (patents registered; new products and services introduced).
- In addition to assessing the micro-level effects on beneficiaries, ex-post evaluations can take a system level approach and try to assess the wider socio-economic impact of a programme. (c.f. Berlin Technology and Innovation Support Programme)

The complex nature of science-industry cooperation, in terms of linkages, support activities, and variety of outputs and desired effects, make evaluations in this field highly demanding. The following is a summary of some of the key challenges:

- Evaluations should ideally aim to assess the *quality* of links between the different actors and the *nature* of interaction, which can vary significantly from one collaboration or knowledge transfer project to another. Assessing the *quality* of linkages (as well as the factors influencing these linkages) seems of particular importance given the underlying rationale for a majority of interventions under this broad category, namely to facilitate and promote the exchange of knowledge between the academic community and the private sector (e.g. through mobility of research personnel). With regard to the *different types of interaction* between the science and the business communities, the variety of actors involved makes the application of a single analytical framework using consistent benchmarks difficult. In light of this, social network analysis would appear particularly suitable in the evaluation of science-industry cooperation and a logical choice. It is therefore surprising

that only one reference to this method can be found in the evaluations reviewed for this study (cf Austrian Genome Research Programme).

- Given that collaboration projects involve both the academic and the business communities, impact evaluations should attempt to treat both parties on an equal footing when assessing the effects of the support. Science-industry collaboration is studied from both perspectives with separate sets of tools and methods (e.g. through individual surveys addressed to enterprises and academic partners). For example, the effects of an intervention on the knowledge could be assessed based on the quantity and quality of scientific outputs, e.g. using bibliometric analysis and peer reviews. On the other hand, when assessing the impacts of the same measure on private enterprises, an entirely different methodological toolset would be required.
- Another important factor is that impacts can be captured both at the level of direct beneficiaries of support (improving innovative capacity; competitiveness; etc.) and at the macro-economic level (boosting the economy; improving the regional knowledge base; smart specialisation; etc.). Most commissioning authorities will need to make a basic choice between the two, given the complexity and the resource intensiveness, and therefore high cost, of evaluations involving econometric modelling techniques and assessment of net-effects.

7. *Advisory services to innovative firms through intermediary bodies*⁸

Based on the available evidence, a broad distinction can be made between two types of support measures allocating support to intermediary bodies (for the provision of advisory and technical services to enterprises): Incubator/Innovation centre support programmes (such as the Swedish National Incubator Programme, which was the subject of a case study) and Science and Technology Park support programmes (e.g. West of Scotland Science Park, also one of the case studies).

Efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability are the core issues for evaluations of both types of interventions. Evaluations of incubator measures are particularly concerned with the efficiency of programme management and operations. The focus on efficiency is hardly surprising, given that the management of various forms of advisory services is the central function of incubators.

On the other hand, evaluations of measures allocating funding to Science and Technology Parks (that provide businesses with a location for the development of their R&D activities) focus on the effectiveness of the support and the impacts of the measure on business performance. The effects are measured both in terms of direct outcomes and impacts linked to growth of firms through innovation activities, and indirect outcomes and impacts linked to the resulting increase of innovation projects amongst the tenants of an incubator or science park.

Nevertheless, differences do exist: some evaluations focused primarily on the effect on the beneficiaries, while others included an impact assessment element and compared the effects with an “untreated” control group. Only rarely was the link between the measure and its effect on the economy reviewed.

In terms of methods and study design, the use of administrative data forms a cornerstone in the approach of all evaluations. This is often supplemented by questionnaire surveys of the resident businesses, and individual in-depth interviews with a selection of businesses and/ or incubator managers. The evaluation of the Swedish National Incubator Programme stands out in its use of individual case studies and a peer review.

⁸ *Provision of innovation management, technology transfer, and training services. Includes funding of incubators, business innovation centres (BICs), support networks (e.g. Enterprise Europe Network).*

8. *Funding of innovative companies*

A number of patterns in the methodological design of evaluations of measures providing direct funding to businesses (through grant, loan/ guarantee, financial engineering-equity) can be observed:

Questionnaire surveys are a common tool for obtaining performance-related data from beneficiary businesses and non-supported businesses, which serves as a basis for counterfactual analysis aiming to assess the net-effect of the measure. A note of caution is required here since if businesses are asked what they would have done, there is a risk of subjective self-assessment and therefore results may not be robust. The use of standard business statistics to set up a baseline, including a comparison group of non-assisted firms, or 'before and after' surveys to compare supported and non-supported businesses can make results more robust.

Whereas all of the evaluations reviewed include a survey of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (applicant and non-applicant), an interesting variation is provided by the Dutch innovation voucher measure where the vouchers had been assigned randomly by means of a lottery. While this arguably strengthens the robustness of the overall analysis, the non-response rates the survey (half of the SMEs with a 2004 voucher did not respond) may have introduced a bias. Hence, effects on the total population may differ from those found in the survey.

A review of inputs (allocation of funding through the measure in question) was also part of the majority of evaluations of measures providing direct support to businesses. This concerns in particular the volume and direction of funding and the composition of supported activities and resulting outputs. This approach is often used to establish an overview of the overall funding patterns and composition of demand for support, as well as a baseline of data for later econometric analysis, i.e. as a reference for programme effectiveness.

Finally, individual interviews are the fourth element encountered in almost all the evaluation reports reviewed. Interviews typically follow as a second step in the evaluation in order to probe into findings emerging from the preliminary analysis of a survey or desk research. Interviews provide an important qualitative complement to quantitative approaches and seek to explore issues related to programme relevance, efficiency and added value.

9. *Cluster initiatives*

Measures providing funding to cluster managers and/ or cluster initiatives tend to explore effectiveness in terms of fostering cooperation between different actors involved (businesses, researcher groups, research institutions, HEIs). While the core element of evaluation studies in this field tends to be a qualitative assessment of programme effects based on interviews and case studies, evaluations frequently involve basic quantitative data gathering tools (in the form of surveys) and a review of programme monitoring data. In a few cases, more complex designs can be observed, e.g. the evaluation of the Danish Innovation Consortium measure involved econometric modelling approaches. See also point 14 below on participatory approaches which may be particularly relevant for cluster development measures.

3.3 Methodological approaches: data collection tools and analytical techniques

10. *The choice of methods and techniques tends not to reflect the type/ nature of support measure evaluated*

Overall, for innovation measure evaluations, the choice of methodology is determined firstly by factors other than the nature of the innovation support: for example, the scale and policy importance of a given measure; and the extent of the evaluation tradition nationally or institutionally. While this may evolve as the field matures and methodological transparency (fitness for purpose) improves, there may be countervailing forces. Firstly, a fully robust evaluation is much more expensive than a mediocre assessment, perhaps by one or two orders of magnitude, and secondly, robust evaluation is much more challenging for programme managers or policy makers whose future budget and authority is contingent on such exercises. Equally, it can be an unwelcome source of evidence for more 'intuitive' approaches to policy making and prioritisation.

11. *Limited differentiation of methodological approaches across types of innovation support measures*

Methodological approaches tend to be uniform. The evidence shows that there is a general lack of differentiation in terms of methodological approaches, analytical techniques and data collection tools used for evaluating different types of support measures. The literature review gathered together innovation evaluations and material from many other sources, however the core evaluation questions and methodological approaches were broadly similar across types of measures and countries

It is not clear from the literature review or case studies that there is a very strong view as to the particularities and differences for a study design for say an innovation voucher or for a regional network of science parks. The performance metrics will differ to a greater extent than the choice of methods. The former might emphasise behavioural change and the persistence of that behaviour, while the latter may focus on the synergy created and the increased rate / success of innovation that results from the kind of melting pot of businesses, scientists and investors found in a park

12. *Basic methodological split evident between two main clusters of innovation support measures*

The literature review revealed the principal methodological split between different types of innovation-support measures at the 'science' (basic research) and 'innovation' (R&D support) ends of the innovation support spectrum. Broadly speaking, the former tend to focus on questions about quality and project success and combine international peer review with desk research, interviews and beneficiary surveys, whereas the latter typically have a broader set of questions and use more sophisticated methodologies, and will seek to determine the net economic effects given the very real risk of public support simply crowding out private investment (deadweight) and distorting and displacing the location of growth within a larger economic system.

The additional evidence gathered through the study tentatively confirms this basic distinction. The case studies in particular show that evaluations of those measures targeting the 'science' end of the innovation support spectrum – in particular the Austrian Genome Research Programme (GEN-AU) and the Finnish Programmes for Centres of Excellence in Research – have an important forward-looking element and seek to provide recommendations for future improvements in the programme design. In addition, these evaluations typically assess the coherence of the measure in relation to other innovation activities and the appropriateness of programme design and eligibility criteria for beneficiaries.

By contrast, evaluations of measures on the ‘innovation’ end of the spectrum that provide innovation support to individual businesses on a more universal basis – here a good example is the UK *Grant for R&D* (later *SMART*) measure, which provides direct financial support for R&D activities – tend to look more closely at the net-effects on beneficiaries’ performance. The evidence from six of the case study evaluations of measures aimed at funding innovative companies show that these evaluations are mostly concerned with effectiveness issues and aim to assess the added value of the support measure in monetary terms.

Nevertheless, this differentiation is by no means clear-cut and can only be used in a broad sense. There are important variations, e.g. a considerable number of ‘science’ focused support measures use quantitative bibliometric techniques and some form of network analysis, often with a quantitative dimension.

13. *Qualitative evaluation approaches prevail*

Evaluations of innovation support activities tend to rely predominantly on qualitative data collection tools and simple triangulation techniques as the main basis for analysis. Desk research (involving a basic statistical analysis of programme inputs/outputs and a review of relevant programme documentation), in-depth interviews of key stakeholders, and descriptive case studies are the most common tools in evidence across the whole spectrum of innovation support activities. These basic tools are sometimes complemented by focus groups and discussion workshops intended to elicit further insights from experts and stakeholders, and to review and discuss the findings at the final stage of an evaluation prior to drawing up conclusions.

A general observation is that, depending on the overall study design (e.g. the number of case studies, the robustness of inquiry methods, the level of understanding of the study team and quality of resulting analysis), qualitative approaches can have the benefit of yielding specific information that allows more differentiated assessments than would be possible based on quantitative tools alone. The obvious downside of study designs that rely exclusively on qualitative data gathering tools is that they will not generate insights that are representative of the beneficiary population as a whole.

From the evidence gathered for this study it is clear that many of the evaluations with a strong qualitative design have an added quantitative layer – in the form of online surveys of beneficiaries (that may or may not have a qualitative element) or affected stakeholders of a programme – with the aim of generating a more robust set of evidence for analysis. *Surveys of beneficiaries* are prominent where evaluations are concerned with the direct effects of a measure on the target beneficiary population (with statistical representativeness of the survey results being a primary concern), whereas *stakeholder surveys* tend to focus on the effects generated by an intervention more generally (and representativeness does not play a major role). By contrast, depending on the objectives and scope of the evaluation, *stakeholder surveys* are used to explore a range of different aspects including the perceived relevance of the innovation support measure, the efficiency or effectiveness of the management/ implementation (e.g. in terms of application procedures, eligibility criteria), or the behavioural change induced by the measure (in terms of influencing agenda setting, priorities and strategies of an organisation).

14. *Differences in preferred methodological approaches across the EU27*

A geographical pattern is visible with certain countries favouring more quantitative methods focused on the net economic effects, whilst other countries/regions favour more qualitative methodologies with an emphasis on the formative (learning) dimension. While not conclusive, the evidence obtained for this study certainly places, for instance, Poland and the UK, in the former group (with quantitative approaches prominent in the majority of evaluations reviewed), whereas the Nordic Countries (Finland, Denmark) and the Netherlands tend to place a greater emphasis on qualitative elements. This may reflect underlying attitudes and expectations towards evaluation as a discipline/ policy tool, i.e. whether its primary purpose is to serve as a validation / audit tool or as a policy learning tool. Equally, it may reflect a culture of prioritising ‘value for money’ (economic returns) visible in a focus on estimating gross value added in the UK.

15. *Counter-factual analysis is still relatively rare and of varying quality*

As would be expected, quantitative methods are most common in evaluations that are primarily concerned with the effectiveness of a measure on the performance of beneficiaries (in particular changes in the innovative performance of enterprises receiving support for R&D) and/ or impact on the wider economy in monetary terms. Whereas a large number of the evaluations reviewed use surveys in order to obtain basic data on business performance or include a review of monitoring data in order to profile applicants and establish a baseline for inquiry, most of them fall short of using advanced statistical analysis using matched control groups (based on firm level data). Counter-factual approaches can provide significant insight into the relative (short, medium or long-term) results of a measure. However, they appear to pose significant challenges for evaluators due to the methodological complexity of designing a robust framework for analysis and the difficulty of obtaining the required firm-level data. This is reflected by the still relatively few ‘good practice’ examples of this type of evaluation, particularly in those Member States where evaluation is still a developing discipline. Nevertheless, an increasing number of evaluations of direct financial support measures attempt to integrate some form of analysis (using comparison groups as opposed to control groups, in the majority of cases) which indicates that this method is becoming more prominent and that greater efforts are being made to quantify effects. However, even a robust counter-factual analysis only provides an indication of whether or not a measure has made a difference, not how or why it worked and needs to be complemented by qualitative methods (case studies, etc.)

16. *Evaluations commonly focus on shorter-term efficiency and effectiveness criteria and less often assess long-term results*

While, there is a common understanding that innovation policy is not targeting ‘singular events’ (e.g. an R&D project in one company) but about creating new interactions in the wider innovation system that enables knowledge to diffuse, etc. Yet, relatively few identified evaluations of innovation measures are concerned with assessing the wider impacts of a measure, and instead focus on issues related to appropriateness, relevance, and efficiency of a particular measure or, on occasions, a portfolio of measures.

Moreover, the time dimension is generally considered as a factor that makes it more complex to evaluate the results of innovation measures compared to traditional regional development policy funding for infrastructure or investment grants. The majority of evaluations assessing the *effects* (economic or otherwise) of a measure look at the short-term and intermediate results, rather than taking a more longitudinal approach. This may reflect the timing of interim and ex-post evaluations of innovation measures. As the majority of ex-post evaluations are undertaken shortly after the end of a measure it makes an appraisal of long-term results impractical.

17. *Analysis of the coherence of innovation measures and macro or system wide effects remains rare.*

A final issue is that innovation evaluations rarely look at the internal and external *coherence* of a measure in terms of its strategic fit with other innovation support measures and its place in the wider innovation policy system. This seems surprising given the complexity of innovation systems and the need to delineate the objectives and scope of individual measures so as to create a more cohesive approach to innovation support from an overall policy perspective. Evaluations that include a discussion of programme coherence commonly draw on an analysis of relevant literature (academic and policy papers) and a review of the overall innovation strategy. However, there are significant variations in the robustness of the conceptual approach and therefore in the quality of the analysis from one evaluation to another.

When assessing the results of the measures, there is a choice to be made between the micro- and the macro level. Evaluations would usually focus either on (1) an analysis of the effects of the funding provided on beneficiaries based on a micro-economic analysis, or (2) a macro-economic analysis of wider socio-economic effects. Exceptions are possible, such as in the case of the ex-post evaluation of the Berlin Innovation and Technology Support Programme, an ERDF co-funded programme comprising five separate measures aimed at improving collaboration and knowledge transfer between the research base and enterprises in Berlin. This evaluation is remarkable for its scope and is a good example of a multi-level impact evaluation (capturing both micro- and macro-economic effects) of a measure⁹.

Finally, portfolio and system evaluations remain relatively rare possibly due to the cost of these broader ranging studies, even if they by their nature provide a framework that is more adapted to understanding the inter-linkages (coherence) between measures in a policy mix and to the wider 'system' level impact.

3.4 Observations on the design, commissioning and implementation of evaluations

In addition to the above key messages, a number of general observations can be made in relation to the design and implementation of evaluations. The evidence also raises a number of questions and points for further inquiry.

18. *Lack of reflection on intervention logic and the place of the evaluated measure in the wider innovation policy landscape*

The design and methodological approach of evaluations across the different categories of support are in most cases linked to the intervention logic and there is no reflection of the underlying policy rationale of the intervention and the resulting evaluation questions, criteria and indicators. This can be considered a basic shortcoming in current evaluation practice, given the need to measure the extent of an intervention's success (in terms of direct and indirect effects on beneficiaries, as well as wider economic impact) in relation to the original policy objectives (which can be both micro- and macro-economic). A more systematic approach to linking (a) the market failure / intervention rationale and resulting programme objectives to (b) the goals of the evaluation would arguably result in more robust analytical frameworks and serve to guide the overall design of evaluations and underpin the methodological choices.

⁹ The evaluation of the Berlin Innovation and Technology Support Programme assessed the impact of the measures at both levels, i.e. it distinguishes between an analysis of the achievement of direct results of the funding provided on beneficiaries (a micro-economic analysis), and a macro-economic analysis of wider impacts on the region's economy. The evaluation took place over 18 months at a cost of €229,000.

There are, nonetheless, a number of good practice study designs that take the intervention logic as a point of departure and systematically integrate evaluation objectives, judgement criteria and indicators into a coherent analytical framework. A good example is the evaluation of the interim programme management evaluation Austrian Genome Research Programme, which systematically links the global policy objective of the intervention to the specific intervention goals, inputs, activities, outputs, short term and long term results and draws out relevant evaluation questions and corresponding indicators.

A review of the intervention logic can be considered good practice and ought to be the starting point of any evaluation of innovation support given the need to understand the complex interactions and the nature of the intervention.

19. *Interest in international comparison*

Whereas a relatively large number of evaluations of science-industry collaboration and cluster measures take an interest in similar programmes in other Member States, this is often complicated by the difficulty to find programmes with a matching design, operations and inputs. Programme benchmarking appears to be of some interest to policy makers and programme managers, however, benchmarking the effectiveness of a programme would require a programme that is very similar along a number of parameters. No examples of a successful approach were found in the evidence gathered for this study.

Evaluations that examine appropriateness and relevance issues therefore commonly attempt basic comparisons of programme design (as opposed to performance) with programmes in other countries that pursue similar policy objectives or use similar support mechanisms. This is sometimes termed 'benchmarking of programme design' and typically takes the form of detailed case studies that draw out key insights (similarities and differences) and transferrable lessons. The case study evaluation of the Finnish Centres of Excellence Programmes provides a good example of this practice.

More use could be made of publicly available benchmarking tools such as innovation policy monitoring platforms (for example the Regional Innovation Monitor¹⁰ or the Cluster Observatory¹¹) or the statistical benchmarks such as the regional innovation scoreboard¹² within the Innovation Union Scoreboard exercise. These tools provide a cost-effective and rapid means to analyse relevance or to select similar measures in other countries to benchmark.

20. *Participatory approaches*

Participatory approaches are particularly suitable for evaluations of multi-actor measures (e.g. cluster measures, competence centres, networks, etc.). Such evaluations often seek to explore the issues of relevance, appropriateness and coherence and hence need to use a range of qualitative tools such as interviews, case studies and focus groups. Hence, a close collaboration from an early stage between the evaluators, steering group members and stakeholders can help to decide on the best methods and to facilitate the development of adequate data gathering.

¹⁰ <http://www.rim-europa.eu/>

¹¹ <http://www.clusterobservatory.eu>

¹² <http://www.proinno-europe.eu/metrics>

In practice, although ‘participatory’ approaches are used quite frequently, in the evaluation reviewed they were often limited to feedback and close consultation with a steering group. The evaluation of the societal impact of the Finnish Centres of Excellence Programme provides an example of the successful involvement of stakeholders in the deliberation of study findings and conclusions. A workshop that brought together key stakeholders from the various science and research institutions as well as the responsible public authority served as a platform to review the central observations made by the study team. The workshop took the form of a moderated focus group and was structured around key evaluation issues explored by the study team. It served to pull together the evidence and to validate evaluation findings before they were being wrapped up as conclusions and fed into recommendations presented by the study team. This helped to reach balanced observations and to strengthen the recommendations of the study team.

A potential risk in participatory approaches is that they can introduce positive bias in the evaluation process and limit the ability or willingness of evaluators to make an impartial judgment and critical assessment of the intervention. This is a particular concern in cases where the steering group is composed of officials who are also responsible for programme design and management. A way of avoiding this is for stakeholders and programme managers to be invited to submit final written comments on the evaluation report which can then be published as an annex with possibly a rebuttal from the evaluation team. This was done, for instance, in the case of the Estonian evaluation of business support funding

Another limitation of participatory approaches is that they are more time and resource intensive due to the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders in all stages of the evaluation process. In sum, while participatory approaches can improve the overall quality of the evaluation process, they may slow down and hamper the evaluation depending on the particular circumstances.

21. *Inertia and risk aversion on the part of commissioning bodies?*

The technical specifications for evaluations tend to be rather permissive, i.e. commissioning authorities rarely prescribe the tools and analytical methods or overall methodological approaches to be used by evaluators. This can be beneficial in cases where a particularly innovative methodology is required or an atypical set of evaluation questions is to be explored. In addition, leaving options open challenges evaluators to adopt original approaches rather than follow a standard model. Nevertheless, commissioning authorities should still reflect in advance on possible alternative approaches or tools that would appear particularly suitable as part of the overall design with a view to addressing different evaluation questions. Steering groups can only form an opinion of the quality of proposals if some reflection was done in advance on the usefulness of particular tools and methods.

In sum, a reasonable balance must be struck between a prescriptive and permissive approach when designing study specifications. The literature review reveals that there is a general pattern for technical specifications to be more prescriptive in Member States with a more mature evaluation culture, which is likely a reflection of the experience of authorities with commissioning a range of evaluations and their greater familiarity with different approaches.

22. *Limited experience of programme managers in evaluation design.*

Related to the above, is the need for commissioning authorities to elaborate a clear intervention logic that links the inputs, activities and outputs of the measure and describes the underlying objectives, policy rationale and theory of change. An intervention logic, usually in the form of a flowchart diagram, can help to illustrate in a snapshot how the intervention is supposed to help to achieve the wider policy objectives. It is noteworthy that only one out of 15 case study evaluations included an intervention logic in the technical specifications.

The fact that a clear description of the intervention logic is still the exception rather than the rule may be symptomatic of a general tendency among policy makers and programme managers to focus on programme implementation and operational issues (distribution of funds), instead of reflecting on how the design of an intervention can help to redress market failures, and how measures are linked to the underlying policy issues.

The evidence suggests that there is a lack of understanding among commissioning authorities of the importance of the intervention logic for delineating the scope and focus of an evaluation. This is surprising given that the intervention logic should be the starting point in the planning process, and is a basic exercise that must form part of the preparation of technical specifications as it helps officials think through the a number of evaluation-related issues and determines against which criteria the intervention ought to be (or can be) assessed. An understanding of the intervention logic is also a necessary prerequisite for the elaboration of specific evaluation questions and a starting point for estimating a budget and timeframe for the evaluation based on an evaluation's objectives and questions that need to be addressed.

A review of the technical specifications of evaluation reports shows that in the majority of cases there is no obvious link between the evaluation questions and the underlying intervention logic. Ultimately, this can lead to arbitrary study designs and an inefficient use of the budget available for evaluations. Technical specifications that are designed around the intervention logic tend to do a better job at delineating the scope and exact focus of the evaluation instead of taking a 'wish-list' approach to drawing up evaluation questions that may be interesting but not necessarily of key relevance. This, in turn, tends to create better conditions for evaluation through a realistic budget and timeframe for the study.

Appendices

Appendix A Glossaries of common data collection tools and analytical methods

A.1 Common data collection tools

The following table provides an overview and description of the main data collection tools commonly used in evaluations. This categorisation was used as part of the online survey of MAs, and was appended to the interview guide explanatory note for the telephone survey of targeted MAs.

Figure 3 Common data collection tools

Method	Description
Use of existing monitoring data collected during programme lifetime	Use of data and other information relating to the programme's administration, activities or performance systematically collected during the lifetime of the of the programme, usually by the programme management or administration.
Use of existing surveys or databases	Generally collected for purposes external to the evaluation and the measure (e.g. Community Innovation Survey data, opinion polls, business expenditure surveys, etc.).
Document and literature searches	Use of documents and literature directly or indirectly related to a programme. May include, for example, administrative manuals, application forms, assessment forms, existing evaluation reports and broader policy reports.
Participant interviews	Interviews (either face-to-face or by telephone) conducted with those who have participated in a measure (e.g. recipients of funding) or those who have benefited from the activities or services provided by a measure. May involve a structured interview format but allows scope for investigating issues that arise during the interview itself.
Non-participant interviews	Interviews (either face-to-face or by telephone) conducted with those who have not participated in a measure (e.g. recipients of funding) or who have not benefited from the activities or services provided by a measure. May involve a structured interview format but allows scope for investigating issues that arise during the interview itself.
Participant surveys	Surveys conducted with the participants or beneficiaries of a measure. Usually involve the completion of a structured questionnaire (paper or on-line).
Non-participant surveys	Surveys conducted with those who have not directly participated in, or are not the main intended beneficiaries of, a measure. Usually involve the completion of a structured questionnaire (paper or on-line).
Focus groups, workshops, group meetings, etc.	A small panel of people selected for their knowledge or perspective on a topic of interest, brought together to discuss the topic with the assistance of a facilitator. The discussion is used to identify important themes or to construct descriptive summaries of views and experiences on the focal topic.
Peer reviews	Evaluation or assessment of programme activities or programme outcomes/outputs involving qualified individuals within the relevant field.
Bibliometric or patent database studies	Searches of scientific publications (and sometimes their citations) and patents from bibliometric and patent databases.

A.2 Common analytical methods

Figure 4 below provides an overview and description of the main analytical methods commonly used in evaluations. This categorisation was used as part of the online survey of MAs, and was appended to the interview guide explanatory note for the telephone survey of targeted MAs.

Figure 4 Common analytical methods / techniques

Method	Description
Descriptive statistics	Use of basic descriptive statistics to analyse the data (e.g. uptake analysis, meaning the extent to which target beneficiaries have taken up the support provided by an intervention/ support measure).
Input/output analysis	Method used to characterise economic activity in a given time period, and to predict the reaction of a regional economy to stimulation, for example, from increased consumption or changes in government policy.
Cost benefit approach	Procedure for determining the economic efficiency of a programme, expressed as the relationship between costs and outcomes, usually measured in monetary terms.
Counter-factual approaches	Approach that compares the state where no intervention has (or is assumed to have) taken place and the state where there has been an intervention. This approach typically uses a comparison group of non-treated units in order to be able to estimate additionality.
Other econometric analysis	The use of other techniques drawing on advanced statistical methods such as regression analysis.
Case studies	Methods of inquiry that focus on detailed data collection and analysis and which focus on a restricted number of participants/ beneficiaries.
Network analysis	Analysis that aims to map the social interaction between the subjects of an evaluation including the beneficiaries.
Before/after group comparison approaches	Approach that compares data on participants/ beneficiaries collected before the intervention with that collected after the intervention.
Micro-economic modelling	Micro-economic modelling refers to modelling behaviour/ performance of individual economic actors, most often businesses but also households, consumers, etc. In the context of evaluation, micro-economic modelling would be used to try to understand the effects (or lack thereof) of public interventions on the behaviour of a business (or other economic actors). The usefulness of the model depends on whether it can be generalised.

Appendix B Categorisation of innovation support activities

B.1 Initial typology of innovation support measures

Figure 5 below provides an overview and description of the main categories of innovation support measures drawn up in the inception phase of the study.

Figure 5 Main categories of innovation support measures (inception phase)

Type of measure	Description
Direct financial support for innovation activities	Support for R&D and demonstrator projects (through loans or grants), through competitive or uncompetitive application process.
Innovation management support and dissemination	Support for non-R&D related aspects of innovation such access to advice and training for innovation related management or for entrepreneurship.
Intermediary bodies	Support for intermediary organisations to facilitate technology transfer, including science parks and technology transfer agencies, poles and incubators.
Start-ups and Spin-Offs	Mechanisms aiming to support the creation of innovative enterprises and the growth of firms/ SMEs, including seed funding and venture capital.
Networks & Clusters	Support aimed at the development of inter-organisational cooperation in the production and transfer of knowledge/ innovation. Networks and clusters involve cooperation amongst a wide range of participants, often around a particular set of competences and themes. This cooperation is organised either around a territory (clusters) or around virtual communications (network). Can involve mobility of personnel.
Science-industry cooperation	Support for linkages or direct cooperation between science (including both HEIs and public research establishments) and industry to facilitate/ promote exchange of knowledge. Can involve mobility of personnel. Science-industry cooperation is more bilateral (compared to 'Network and clusters'). It is based either on short-term collaboration (often around R&D projects) or around long-term collaboration (centres of competences or centres of excellence).
Support for the development of ICT	Support for the uptake of ICT by firms and households, support for the supply and demand of ICT products and services including e-government, e-business, e-learning and e-health, broadband infrastructures.
R&D training and skills	Measure aiming at developing Science & Technology labour force, mainly through the introduction of training/ curricula in universities/HEIs, that might involve enterprises or aimed at supporting the technology/innovation capabilities of a region/country.

B.2 Typology used for literature review analysis (Task 1a)

The table below provides an overview and description of the main categories of innovation support measures used for the in-depth review of evaluation reports.

Figure 6 Main categories of innovation support measures (for literature review)

Type of measure	Description
Direct financial support for innovation activities	Support for R&D and demonstrator projects (through loans or grants), through competitive or uncompetitive application process.
Innovation management support and dissemination	Support for non-R&D related aspects of innovation such access to advice and training for innovation related management or for entrepreneurship.
Intermediary bodies	Support for intermediary organisations to facilitate technology transfer, including science parks and technology transfer agencies, poles and incubators.
Start-ups and Spin-Offs	Mechanisms aiming to support the creation of innovative enterprises and the growth of firms/ SMEs, including seed funding and venture capital.
Networks & Clusters for Technology and Knowledge Transfer	Support aimed at the development of inter-organisational cooperation in the production and transfer of knowledge / innovation. Generally involves inter firm networks rather than individual collaborations. Can involve mobility of personnel.
Science-industry cooperation	Support for linkages or direct cooperation between science (including both HEIs and public research establishments) and industry to facilitate/promote exchange of knowledge. Can involve mobility of personnel.
Support for the development of ICT	Support for the uptake of ICT by firms and households, support for the supply and demand of ICT products and services including e-government, e-business, e-learning and e-health, broadband infrastructures.

B.3 Typology used for the online survey of 300+ MAs (Task 1b)

Figure 7 below provides an overview and description of the main categories of innovation support measures used for the Online survey of 300+ MAs element of the study.

Figure 7 Main categories of innovation support measures used for the online survey of MAs (survey Q.11)

Type of innovation support measure	Description
Direct financial support for innovation activities	Support for R&D and demonstrator projects (through loans or grants)
Innovation management support and dissemination	Support for non-R&D related aspects of innovation such access to advice and training for innovation related management or for entrepreneurship, etc.
Intermediary bodies, agencies etc.	Support for intermediary organisations to facilitate technology transfer, including science parks and technology transfer agencies, poles and incubators.
Start-ups and Spin-Offs	Mechanisms aiming to support the creation and growth of new firms, including seed funding and venture capital.
Networks & Clusters, collaboration and Technology/Knowledge Transfer	Support aimed at the development of inter-organisational cooperation in the production and transfer of knowledge / innovation. Generally involves inter firm networks rather than individual collaborations. Can involve mobility of personnel.
Science-industry cooperation	Support for linkages or direct cooperation between science (including both HEIs and public research establishments) and industry to facilitate/promote exchange of knowledge. Can involve mobility of personnel.
Support for the development of ICT	Support for the uptake of ICT by firms and households, support for the supply and demand of ICT products and services including e-government, e-business, e-learning and e-health, broadband infrastructures
Other innovation support measures	<i>[Please specify:]</i>

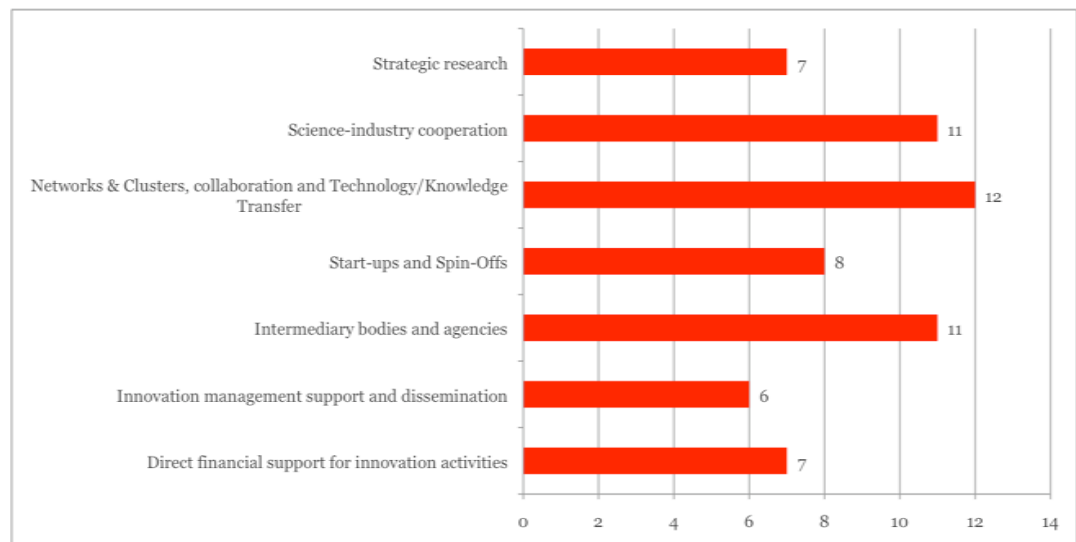
Appendix C Categorisation of 58 evaluation reports in the literature review

Figure 8 shows the number of evaluation reports for which a qualitative analysis was made in the literature review, grouped by category of innovation support measures.

Figure 8 Number of reports used for in-depth analysis in the Literature Review

Innovation Measure	No. of reports in category
Strategic research	7
Science-industry cooperation	11
Networks & Clusters, collaboration and Technology/Knowledge Transfer	12
Start-ups and Spin-Offs	8
Intermediary bodies and agencies	11
Innovation management support and dissemination	6
Direct financial support for innovation activities	7
Total number of unique reports used	58 (of which 4 used in more than one category)

Figure 9 Distribution of literature review evaluation reports



Appendix D Case studies of 15 'good practice' evaluations

MS	Type of innovation support	ERDF (co-)funded	Evaluation title	Year published
AT	Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures	no	Interim programme management evaluation Austrian Genome Research Programme	2005
IE	Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures	no	Value For Money Review of the Science Foundation Ireland	2008
FI	Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures	no	Impact Evaluation of Finnish Programmes for Centres of Excellence in Research 2000-2005 and 2002-2007	2009
EE	Funding of innovative companies	yes	The impact of the State's enterprise support on the competitiveness of the Estonian economy	2010
HU	Funding of innovative companies	yes	Ex-post evaluation of Measure 3.3. 'Reinforcement of corporate R&D capacities and innovation skills' within the 'Economic Competitiveness' Operational Programme (ECOP)	2010
PL	Funding of innovative companies	yes	Ex-post evaluation of enterprise support instruments within the Integrated Regional Operational Programme (IROP) and the Sectoral Operational Programme 'Improvement of the Competitiveness of Enterprises' (SOP-ICE) in the 2004-2006 programming period (Westpomeranian Region, Poland)	2010
BE	Funding of innovative companies	no	A look into the black box: What difference do IWT R&D grants make for their clients?	2006
NL	Funding of innovative companies	no	The effectiveness of the Innovation Voucher 2004 and 2005: effect on innovative inputs and innovative output of companies	2007
UK	Funding of innovative companies	no	Evaluation of Grant for R&D and SMART	2009
SE	Advisory and technical services to innovative companies	no	Mid-term evaluation of the Swedish National Incubator Programme	2008
UK	Advisory and technical services to innovative companies	yes	Evaluation of the West of Scotland Science Park	2009
DK	Cluster policy initiatives	no	An Analysis of Firm growth Effects of the Danish Innovation Consortium Measure	2010
DE	Science-industry cooperation	yes	Evaluation of the Berlin Innovation and Technology Support	2010

MS	Type of innovation support	ERDF (co-)funded	Evaluation title	Year published
FR	<p><i>Mixed support, related to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures • Funding of innovative companies • Advisory and technical services to innovative companies 	yes	Thematic evaluation of the ERDF Operational Programme (OP) and the State-Region Programme (CPER) in Franche-Comté – Innovation, Research and Technology Transfer	2010
CZ	<p><i>Mixed support, related to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic research programmes and research centres/ infrastructures • Science-industry cooperation • Funding of innovative companies • Advisory and technical services to innovative companies 	yes	Assessment of economic effects and the programme settings of the support programmes Innovations, Cooperation and Potential within the Operational Programme Enterprise and Innovations (OPEI)	2011

Appendix E Case study reporting template and interview proforma

E.1 Case study template

Introduction (0.5 page)

- Short description of the evaluation and the evaluated measure and its policy context
- Short paragraph on why and for whom is this evaluation useful (highlight the most interesting elements of the evaluation, e.g. use of specific method, communicating the recommendations, etc.)

Description of the evaluated measure (0.5 p)

- Objectives and main target groups of the policy measure
- Policy context: policy objectives, programme objectives, targets (if specified)
- Background information (box): name of the measure, name of the programme, type of measure as per the typology used, budget of the measure (national, EC, private), start-end date, geographical coverage

Designing evaluation study (2 p)

- The process of designing the terms of reference (organisation, responsibilities)
- Key elements of the ToR:
 - Main objectives and the lead questions/key topics of the study
 - Methodological approach: requirements as per ToR, prescriptive or open approach to methodological approach
 - Evidence: indicative evidence base of the evaluation
 - Budget and duration of the study
- To what extent the data needed for the evaluation was taken into consideration during the design of the programme and/or for the design of the ToR

Implementing evaluation: methodology and process (3 p)

- Internal or external evaluation
 - If internal: short description of the department/unit/team responsible for evaluation
 - If external: short description of the selection process of the evaluator (short information on the award criteria)
- The approach and methodology
 - General approach
 - Methodology
 - Gathering information and data process: organisation, methods and tools
 - Analysis and recommendations: methods and tools
- Organisation of evaluation process
 - the contacts between the MA and the contractor, reporting, feedback, engagement of stakeholders etc

Effectiveness and efficiency of evaluation (2-3 p)

- Robustness and effectiveness of methodology/methods applied: to what extent the study has responded to the evaluation objectives; if case of limits or gaps describe:
 - external limitations (e.g. data availability, nature of measure evaluated, lack of formal targets)
 - internal limitations (e.g. evaluation budget, evaluators competencies, time constraints, etc.)
- Efficiency of methods
 - could the same or better results be achieved with another approach (e.g. less costly and less complex methodology) or with a slightly higher budget?

Conclusions and lessons learned (1 p)

- What worked well in the evaluation (process, methods, interactions)?
- Limitations to the evaluation of this type of instrument (internal resources, availability evaluation competencies, context issues, scale and scope issues, target issues, etc.)
- What was learned about evaluating innovation support measures?

E.2 Interview questions

The following interview questions are indicative and need not be asked in the suggested order. While the respondents should not feel constrained by the formal requirements of the template, the interviewer should make sure that the main points of the above case study template are covered.

The questions should be adapted to the experience and knowledge respondents (e.g. detailed methodological questions are not primarily aimed at members of the MAs, but rather responsible evaluators and/or desk officers).

The suggested interview questions are as follows:

- Why was the evaluation commissioned?
- How was the process of preparing terms of reference organised (drafting, internal and external consultations etc.)?
- Who designed the objectives, scope, evaluation questions and the budget?
- Are there ‘official’ guidelines or procedural guides (either at regional, national or supra-national level), which were followed in the evaluation design and commissioning process?
- Have the evaluation methodology been adjusted and discussed during the implementation? Give concrete examples and explanation why.
- How have the contacts between the MA and the contractor organised (number and frequency of meetings, participation in meetings etc)? Were there any problems encountered in the relation between the MA and the contractor?
- Were there any problems encountered in terms of gathering evidence and getting access to the beneficiaries? How were the contacts between the contractor and the stakeholders organised?
- Was the methodology sufficient to address to respond to the evaluation questions?
- Which questions/issues were not addressed or not addressed sufficiently – and why?
- Was the methodology and methods efficient in terms of budget used (cost/benefit assessment; possible alternatives)?
- What worked well in the evaluation (process, methods, interactions)? What did not work well?
- What are the limitations to the evaluation of this type of instrument?
- What strategies could be defined to deal with these difficulties?
- What was learned about evaluating innovation support measures?
- If the MA (and other stakeholders) could design the terms of reference and the evaluation process again would they change anything (e.g. in terms of restrictiveness in designing the methodology, quantifying the results, number of evaluation questions, involvement of stakeholders, involving of policy makers etc)?
- What additional support could be provided to assist in the evaluation of future ERDF-supported instruments? (evaluation capacity building, training in monitoring and evaluation, more prescriptive guidelines, less prescriptive guidelines, best practice examples, etc.) What form could this take? (information exchange, secondments, training courses, etc.)

Appendix F Case study evaluation brief template

Template for an evaluation brief

The evaluation brief is designed as a 2-page stand-alone document.

Introductory information

- Title of the study
- Name of the evaluated measure / programme
- Short description of the evaluated measure
- Type of evaluation
- Region / Country
- Commissioned by
- Author
- Key words (e.g. cluster, business networks etc)

Summary

Introduction (one paragraph)

- Objectives of the evaluated measure
- Objectives and main questions of the evaluation

Methodology and evaluation process (two paragraphs)

- Approach and main research methods, key information sources, duration and budget of the evaluation
- Key findings

Conclusions and lessons learned (one paragraph)

- What was learned about evaluating innovation support measures?

Further information

- Full case study at (url)
- Link to the evaluation study (url)
- Link and contract to the MA that commissioned the evaluation (url)

Appendix G Workshop with evaluation practitioners (representatives of national authorities responsible for the commissioning of evaluations of ERDF funded support measures)

Evaluation of innovation activities: methods and practice

Workshop with representatives of national authorities

Brussels, 13 January 2012

European Commission

Directorate General Regional Policy (DG REGIO)

As part of an ongoing review of evaluation practice in the field of innovation policy, the European Commission (DG REGIO) has commissioned Technopolis Group and the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research (MIOIR) to undertake a study on evaluation activities related to innovation support instruments co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The objective of the study is to review the current practice in the evaluation of innovation support measures in EU Member States, and to examine the advantages and limitations of common tools and methods for evaluating different types of innovation support activities.

The output of the study is an operational manual (“Guidance Document”), which will present good practice in the design and implementation of evaluations and serve as a reference for Managing Authority officials responsible for commissioning evaluations of innovation support measures. It will be translated into French, German, Polish and Spanish and published on the DG REGIO website alongside 15 analytical case studies of ‘good practice’ evaluations.

The workshop with representatives of national authorities is the final stage of the study. It will bring together a small group of EC officials, evaluation experts, and representatives of national authorities (Managing Authority officials) from different Member States. Its purpose is

- to review the main findings of the study,
- to discuss key issues arising from the evidence on evaluation practice and explore transferrable lessons, and
- to improve the design of the Guidance Document in order to ensure that it addresses the practical needs of evaluation practitioners (representatives of national authorities responsible for the evaluation of ERDF funded programmes) in Member States.

The full programme of the workshop is included overleaf. The outcomes of the workshop discussions will be reflected in the final design of the Guidance Document, which will be published in 2012.

Workshop participants:

- Mr Tito Bianchi, Ministry of Economic Development, Italy
- Mr Gordon McLaren, European Structural Fund Programmes for Lowlands and Uplands Scotland 2007-2013 (ESEP Ltd), United Kingdom
- Mr Kieran Moylan, Border Midland and Western Regional Assembly, United Kingdom
- Mr Ondrej Ptacek, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Czech Republic
- Ms Doris Schnitzer, Department of European Affairs, Vorarlberg State Government, Austria

Schedule	Programme
10:00-10:15	Introduction to the day: Objectives and expectations of the Commission (DG REGIO, Head of Evaluation Unit)
10:15-10:45	Presentation of the main findings of the study: Lessons from current practice in evaluating innovation activities: awareness and capabilities of MAs, methods and types of evaluation in use, and practical issues in the design and implementation of evaluation studies. (Study team)
10:45-11:15	Q&A
11:15-11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30-11:45	Guidance on evaluation of innovation support activities: The logic and purpose of the Guidance Document (Study team)
11:45-13:00	Moderated discussion on the Guidance Document: Identifying areas for improvement and points to adjust (relevance of information, areas where more details or examples are required, user-friendliness, comprehensibility of language, etc.)
13:00-14:00	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00-16:00	Applying the Guidance Document: Hands-on session to test the usability of the guidance for the design and implementation of evaluations of several different innovation support measures. (Facilitated by study team)
16:00-16:15	Concluding remarks (DG REGIO)

For further information on the workshop, please contact Todor Kamburow, Technopolis Group Belgium (todor.kamburow@technopolis-group.com).

Marielle Riché, DG REGIO, Evaluation Unit (marielle.riche@ec.europa.eu) is responsible for this study in the European Commission.

Further information on the study can be found on the DG REGIO website:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/innovation_activities/interim_synthesis.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/innovation_activities/interim_appendix_a.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/eval2007/innovation_activities/interim_appendix_b.pdf

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