EVALUATION PLANNING: INDICATIVE 'BUILDING BLOCKS'

1. Baseline Review

This would involve: reviewing the agreed programme – OPs and measures – in relation to EU, national, sectoral and territorial strategies/objectives and needs analyses previously conducted; and conducting an evidence review based on previous evaluations, other studies, published literature etc. so as to ensure existing knowledge is fully incorporated

Outputs: Baseline document that makes clear the scope of potential evaluations including concentrations and clusters in relation to programme and stakeholder objectives

2. Capability Review

This would involve: reviewing the capabilities and preconditions that need to be in place to plan, commission and manage an evaluation portfolio including for example, QA systems; evaluation capacities both within MA evaluation functions and on the supply side; the state of data systems and their areas of weakness; links with external experts including with specialists, consulting firms and relevant university units; existing consultation and dialogue arrangements with stakeholders/partners and beneficiaries; and mechanisms for MA coordination

Outputs: identification of 'pinch' points and areas where remedial steps are needed

3. Interdependency Mapping

This would involve: identifying overlapping objectives and target groups; the prevalence of horizontal principles such as climate change mitigation, inclusiveness and non-discrimination and environmental sustainability; and points of overlap across national, territorial and administrative boundaries

Outputs: a first mapping of the scope for 'joint', 'thematic' evaluations

4. Prioritisation and Budgeting

This would involve: Reviewing the outputs of the 'Baseline Review' and 'Interdependency Mapping' so as to identify candidate evaluations that should be assessed against criteria such as: centrality, risk, innovativeness etc

Outputs: Identification of candidate evaluations ranked in terms of priority with indicative budgets attached to each priority area

5. Questions, criteria and methodology

This would involve: a) Identifying high level evaluation questions (HLQs) for each candidate evaluation (outputs of Building Block 4); b) indication kinds of evidence needed to inform Better Regulation Criteria – i.e. Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Coherence and EU value added; and c) an indication of the likely methodologies that would be needed to answer evaluation questions and generate required evidence.

Outputs: a 'template' that summarised HLQs, evidence requirements and outline methodologies for each candidate evaluation

6. Consultation and Dialogue

This would involve: Preparing a 'scoping document' that indicated priority areas and main candidate evaluations to discuss with partners, stakeholders, users and beneficiaries; and with evaluation providers/companies in order to a) receive feedback from potential and actual 'users'; b) identify delivery and implementation issues c) mobilise support for positive engagement in Programmes and their evaluation.

Outputs: A summary of stakeholder responses and review of issues identified by stakeholders, users and beneficiaries and preparation of a response document that highlights implications for candidate evaluations

7. Defining Interim Plan

This would involve: collating the outputs from all other 'building blocks' so as to prepare a provisional list and timetable for evaluations indicating priorities, themes, budgets and outline methodologies

Outputs: A provisional plan to meet requirements of (CPR Article 44(5)) submitted to Monitoring Committee

8. Systems Strengthening

This would involve: Collating outputs of 'Capability Review' (Building block 2) and 'Consultation and Dialogue' (Building block 6) to identify which areas need strengthening. This might include for example: improved Quality Assurance systems; priorities for data 'cleaning' and inter-operability of databases; establishment of network meetings with evaluation providers; a plan to build links with relevant domain experts and academics; and training/professional development requirements for staff of evaluation function.

Outputs: A prioritised list of system strengthening 'actions' with time-lines and budgets attached.