

# Evaluation Network Meeting

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## Update of Evaluation Helpdesk activities

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**19 April 2021**



## Helpdesk activities

- Reviews of all evaluations produced on Cohesion policy programmes in Member States - and published
- Expert support to Member States on evaluation issues, including
  - expert assessment of evaluation reports
  - advice on ToRs, methods and data
  - advice on evaluation process, developing an evaluation culture and evaluation market
- Expert support to DG Regio on evaluations
- Organisation of Summer School providing training on specific issues
- From evaluation reviews:
  - Production of Country fiches, summarising evaluations carried out
  - Production of Thematic reports, summarising evaluation findings by TO

## Evaluation reviews

- Since Helpdesk set up in 2015, over 1,500 evaluations reviewed – summaries of all of these published in DG Regio's online Evaluation Library
- Increasing number of evaluations attempt to assess impact:
  - of 123 reviewed in first 3 months of 2021, 43 on impact – over a third as against 20% or less previously
  - Of 20 evaluations published in first 3 months of 2021, 12 on impact
- Can expect increase to continue as outcomes of interventions become more evident and as MS attempt to comply with regulation of reporting evaluations on each PA before end-2022
- Clear from support meetings with MS that increasing focus on preparing ToRs for impact evaluations

## Production of summary reports on evaluations

- Country fiches for each MS + ETC evaluations:
  - First produced in October, now being updated, summarise:
    - Findings of every evaluation on 2014-2020 + 2007-2013 on impact
    - Policy implications
    - Strengths + points for improvement of impact evaluations
    - Feedback from country support meetings
- Thematic reports for each TO:
  - Produced at end-2020, summarise:
    - Main findings of evaluations on TO (2014-2020 + 2007-2013 impact)
    - Types of evaluation
    - Geographical coverage
    - TO + IP coverage
    - Lessons learned (in terms of evaluation design, methods, data used)
    - Expert comments on methodological issues in evaluating TO measures

## Support meetings

- Much of recent support requested over past few months been on ToR.
- Since November, 7 support meetings:
  - with CZ, providing expert input into 6<sup>th</sup> Czech Evaluation Conference workshop, responding to questions mainly on ToR and assessing proposals
  - with LV, brain-storming meeting on preparing questions for evaluation of energy efficiency measures
  - with LV, feedback on draft ToR prepared on basis of previous meeting
  - with RO, comments on ongoing evaluation of RDI interventions – on ToR, Inception report and initial evaluation report
  - with MT, on ToR for ESF evaluation of Youth Guarantee
  - with BG, on draft ToR for ESF evaluation of deinstitutionalisation measures and on Inception report on ESF evaluation of labour market measures
  - with LT, on TBEs – in general and on ToR + Inception report on TBE of financial instruments plus advice on evaluation plan for 2021-2027

## Scheduled support meetings

- With IE, brain-storming meeting on questions for an evaluation of the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII)
- with IE, follow-up meeting to provide feedback on ToR prepared on basis of previous meeting
- with MT, to comment on Inception report on evaluation of SME support
- with BG, to comment on draft final report on ESF labour market measures, on ToR for evaluation of Good governance OP and on final evaluation report on Transport OP
- with SK, to comment on a draft ToR for an evaluation still to be specified
- with EL, to comment on a draft ToR on evaluation of smart specialisation
- with EE, to help prepare agenda for a joint evaluation seminar with LV and LT and to provide speakers.

## Points to come out of support meetings

- ToRs:
  - Questions to include – how to decide? How to frame? How many?
  - How much info to give on interventions, data availability?
  - How tightly to define methods to use?
  - How to define evaluator requirements?
  - How to define selection criteria?
- Evaluation design:
  - How to decide approach/method(s) to use?
  - How to decide unit of analysis?
  - How to carry out theory-based evaluations?
  - How to define theory of change?
- Procedural aspects:
  - How to ensure get what is wanted from evaluation?

## Theory of change/theory-based analyses

- Theory-based evaluations – many undertaken, very few good ones
- Starting-point – theory of change (not only for TBEs)
- Confusion between theory of change and intervention logic – not same
- Intervention logic – identifies link between intervention and objective
- Theory of change goes further - explains how one leads to other and why:
  - Pathway(s) involved and links in chain
  - Underlying mechanisms
  - Assumptions on which based
  - Contextual and other factors at work
  - Time scale involved
- Theory-based impact evaluation investigates whether and how far theory holds, whether **causal** link between intervention and outcomes – whether responsible for observed changes ...
- or, more usually, contribution to changes
- Clear this is issue where more guidance needed



## Summer school

- Miryam has offered to host Summer school in Estonia since last year's physical event was cancelled and help online because of Covid restrictions
- Online training proved less than satisfactory – intention is to avoid holding Summer school online this year if at all possible
- Therefore, event postponed to September-October in hope it will become possible to travel
- Dates and venue to be decided in coming months
- Topic to be decided, as customary, through survey of prospective participants suggestions

**Thank you  
for your attention**