

Evaluation Helpdesk

The Evaluation Helpdesk support available

Terry Ward

Applica

Evaluation Network Meeting

Bucharest, 21 June 2019



Evaluation Helpdesk activities

Five kinds of Helpdesk activity:

- Reviewing evaluation plans on Cohesion policy programmes produced by MAs and suggesting ways of improving them
- Reviewing Cohesion policy evaluations published in 2014-2020 period and producing summaries and assessments of these, the summaries feeding DG Regio's online evaluation library
- Carrying out peer reviews of evaluations of Cohesion policy undertaken in Member States
- Providing support to individual MAs on specific evaluation issues
- Organising a training Summer School each year for MAs on evaluation topics

All activities have ultimate objective of strengthening capacity of MAs to carry out, or commission, good standard evaluations

Focus here on the last three – those directly aimed at this objective

Peer reviews

Objective:

- To improve evaluations carried out by highlighting both examples of good practice and aspects of weakness

Method:

- To subject selected evaluations to critical review by high-level evaluation experts at peer review meetings
- Initially, focused only on final evaluation reports
- For past 2 years, focus extended to whole evaluation process from drafting ToR, selection of evaluator and inception report to interim and final reports
- Meetings expanded to include MA concerned and sometimes evaluators
- Evaluations reviewed can be at any stage of process – planning, ongoing or final
- Expert guidance and advice on all aspects of process

Support to MAs

- Support to MA on evaluation issues can take a number of forms, such as:
 - advice and guidance to an evaluation unit
 - organisation of a seminar or training for one or more MAs
- Issues concerned can be various:, e.g.:
 - how to plan an evaluation
 - drafting ToR and deciding evaluation questions
 - approach to specific evaluations – e.g. enterprise support, transport
 - how to undertake a theory-based evaluation
 - counterfactual evaluation techniques
- In each case, support given by high-level evaluation expert with Helpdesk personnel
- In each case, guidance given stops short of actually performing task so that support recipients learn how to do themselves
- But follow-up support available to comment on what is then done

Summer School

- Summer school provides 2-3 days of training on a specific evaluation topic or topics to MAs
- Maximum of 40 participants
- Training - mix of teaching by high-level evaluation experts, working groups and open discussion of particular issues
- Participants divided into working groups of no more than 8 participants, moderated by an evaluation expert
- Facilitates active discussion and joint reflection
- Emphasis on practice more than theory with focus on evaluation of Cohesion policy programmes
- Consideration of concrete examples of evaluations or aspects of them
- Participants encouraged to bring actual examples of evaluations with them to discuss

**Thank you
for your attention**