



Evaluation a management tool supporting decision-making

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I. What is evaluation?



Importance of evaluation

Evaluation is a judgement on interventions regarding their **results, impacts and needs** they aim to satisfy.

The European Commission regulates that evaluations must be carried out to improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes, as well as to assess their effectiveness, efficiency and impact. This makes evaluation an important tool:

- to be used in the design and management of programmes financed by EU Structural Instruments;
- to assess the extent to which interventions reach the policy objectives set and how their performance can be improved in the future;
- to provide a rigorous evidence base to inform decision-makers.



Importance of evaluation

Thus, evaluation can be regarded as:

- a way of **ensuring accountability**, throughout the process of decision-making;
- a way of **measuring performance** by assessing effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the intervention;
- a valuable **input** into the shape of future programmes and policies that can lead to the **improvement** of the quality of the design and implementation of programmes.

In order to achieve this, evaluation must be planned, designed and performed in partnership with all stakeholders.

What can evaluation provide?

The evaluation's purpose is to formulate useful recommendations for the efficient application of public funds.

Although evaluation commissioners place high expectations on evaluation's providing solutions to all problems identified, it must be said that **evaluation can provide PERSPECTIVES and RECOMMENDATIONS not solutions.**

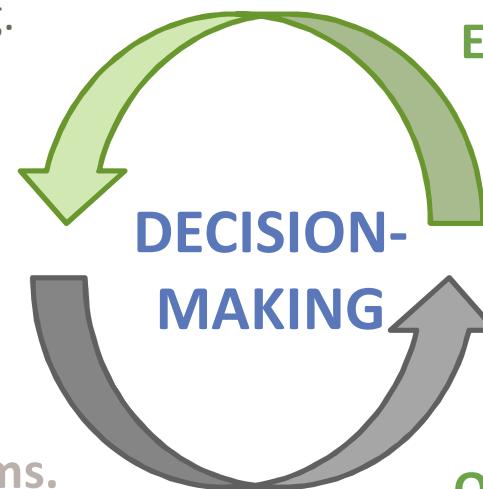


By providing key data and knowledge to ensure better informed decision-making for planning, designing and implementing the OP as well as for managing the institution.
By enhancing the legitimacy of decisions and the accountability of decision-makers.

Evaluation – monitoring – decision-making

The proposed approach emphasizes the need for stronger links between monitoring and evaluation on the one hand, and on the other, between these two interlinked exercises and decision-making.

Monitoring examines process/operational information mainly on outputs and results achieved, financial absorption and on the quality of implementation mechanisms.



Evaluation examines information on socio-economic impact, continuing relevance and consistency of strategies at national/OP level, changes in community, national or regional priorities affecting an OP and proposed adjustments.

In order to ensure high quality of information and analysis to inform management decision, **monitoring and evaluation should be planned in advance** so that relevant evaluation results are available in due time for operational and strategic decision-making and reporting needs.

The timing of evaluations must enable the results to be included into any decision on the design, renewal, modification or suspension of activities or changing legislation.



II. The working of evaluation

Stages of evaluation

Evaluation, throughout its stages, serves as management tool for decision-makers and stakeholders.

- ***At the ex-ante stage***, evaluation can help to improve the relevance and guarantee the rationale of the programme design. Ex-ante evaluations are meant to improve the quality and design of a programme, and verify that objectives and targets can be reached.

The new regulations on cohesion policy for 2014-2020 set out **the contribution to the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth -Europe 2020**, as a priority task for ex-ante evaluations (*Article 48, Common provisions on ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF*), having regard to **11 thematic objectives**.



Thematic objectives

1. research, technological development and innovation;
2. information and communication technologies;
3. competitiveness of SMEs, agriculture and fisheries;
4. shift towards a low-carbon economy;
5. climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;
6. protecting the environment and resource efficiency;
7. sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;
8. employment and labour mobility;
9. social inclusion and combating poverty;
10. education, skills and lifelong learning;
11. institutional capacity and public administration.

(Article 9, Common provisions on ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF)



Community-led local development

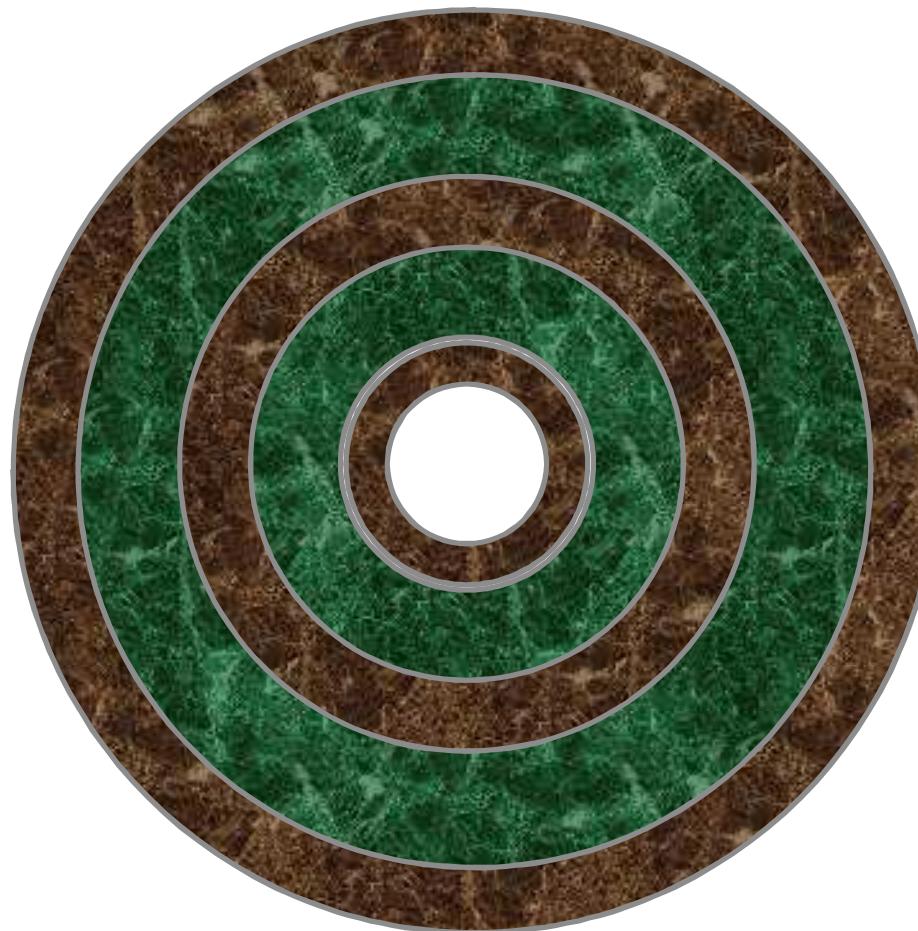
- Community-led local development shall be:
 - a) focused on specific sub-regional territories;
 - b) community-led, by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, where at the decision-making level neither the public sector nor any single interest group shall represent more than 49 % of the voting rights;
 - c) carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies;
 - d) designed taking into consideration local needs and potential, and include innovative features in the local context, networking and, where appropriate, cooperation.
- The decision to approve a local development strategy by the managing authority shall set out the allocations of each CSF Fund.
- Local action groups shall design and implement the local development strategies.
- At least 5% of the ERDF resources allocated at national level shall be allocated to integrated actions for sustainable urban development delegated to cities for management through Integrated Territorial Investments.



Stages of evaluation (cont.)

- ***On an ongoing basis***, evaluation can help to assess performance, detect implementation problems and point to corrective measures. On-going evaluations are used to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact for each programme on the basis of the evaluation plan. (*Article 49, Common provisions*)
- ***At the ex-post stage***, evaluation can tell us what has been achieved and point to lessons for future periods. Ex-post evaluations shall examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the funds and their contribution to Europe 2020. (*Article 50, Common provisions*)

The project and evaluation cycle



Policy cycle

Programme cycle

Project cycle

Evaluation cycle

Evaluation of priority axis "Improvement of transport infrastructure" in Saxony, Germany

Scope

The evaluation looks at priority axis 4 "Improvement of transport infrastructure" of the Regional Operational Programme of Saxony, funded from the ERDF 2007-2013.



Aim

- To check the validity of the programme strategy.

Conclusions

- The system of objectives and indicators is conclusive.
- Improved road infrastructure reduced accessibility deficits and improved competitiveness of the region.



Evaluation of priority axis “Improvement of transport infrastructure” in Saxony, Germany

- There are existing disproportions between projects “environmentally friendly transport modes” supported only in the area of bicycle infrastructure and “road traffic infrastructure”.
- Projects related to environmentally friendly transport modes make slow progress.
- Selection of traffic projects is comprehensible and transparent. The traffic planning has adequate instruments to choose and prioritise road infrastructure projects regarding their regional and traffic effectiveness under economic aspects.

Recommendations

- Keep the existing objectives, strategy and actions required for PA4;
- To support the complementary of projects “environmentally friendly transport modes” and “road traffic infrastructure”.



Who can make use of evaluation and how?

- *The extent to which the use and usefulness of evaluation can be strengthened depends on the demand and interest for evaluation results from decision-makers and senior management but also on the applicability of recommendations. It must be admitted that at times recommendations are too general or simply lack practicality.*
- In order to lessen **evaluation lag**, which hinders the evaluation to materially effect the programmes, policies and structures they are intended to benefit, **evaluation must be approached as a an integral part of programmes and institutional operational procedures.**
- **It is crucial that evaluation is seen as a process which begins at the point of programme elaboration and is owned by and shaped by the stakeholders.**



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II. Why to evaluate?



Who can make use of evaluation and how?

HOW?

WHO?

Programme managers;
Policy- and decision-makers;
Other stakeholders.

- By using experience gained from previous interventions to translate political priorities into meaningful objectives and indicators;
- By using evaluation results to justify existing or new initiatives on efficient allocation of resources;
- By using evaluation results to complement and enrich data from monitoring exercises;
- By using evaluation to identify gaps (or missing links) and emerging needs.



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Evaluation of the management of infrastructure projects for hospitals in Romania

Scope

The study was issued in 2009 and drawn on seven case studies of hospital infrastructure projects, interviews with 41 hospital managers and 3 local officials .

Aim

- To evaluate the institutional framework at central and local level and the capacity of hospital managers to effectively manage complex investment projects in the field of health infrastructure in Romania.

Conclusions

- Lack of experience in preparing and running hospital infrastructure projects.
- Rather low or no incentives for hospital managers to launch projects.
- Poor communication between institutions and stakeholders.
- Inadequate human resources and lack of sanctions in case of non-performance.
Data on number of physicians in Romanian health system show lower figures as compared to other countries: 215.8 physicians per 100,000 inhabitants as compared to the EU27 average of 317.1.
- Uneven distribution of personnel by areas: urban/rural and by regions.



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Evaluation of the management of infrastructure projects for hospitals in Romania

- Minimal role of the hospital manager within the infrastructure projects. For EU-funded ROP projects, the applicant is the LPA while the hospital is only required to provide data on patients. In project contracts managed by LPA, hospitals cannot monitor and influence the work done under these projects. Moreover, there is a feeling that in order for a manager to have access to funds, he must "soften" relations with LPA representatives.
- The hospital is largely perceived as a renter not an administrator, despite a legal contract with LPA.

Recommendations

- Hospitals should insist on being part of the management of the contracts and be involved in the design and implementation phase.
- Manager's role should span from project initiation to fund identification, assistance in design, approval of technical solution, approval and conclusion of contract, control of work and signature on acceptance of work.

However, it is admitted that implementing such recommendation requires political commitment.



Contribution of evaluation to the programme management

Evaluation can:

- improve the Operational Programme management capacity in terms of analysis and decision-making;
- disseminate information within the Operational Programme's management and implementation structures;
- improve the co-operation within the Operational Programme's management and implementation structures;
- generate new ideas, perspectives;
- identify deficiencies in the monitoring system.



Midterm evaluation of Operational Programme Regional Development in Bulgaria

Scope

The evaluation covers aspects such as accessibility, urban development, tourism, local development and technical assistance and was issued in 2011. The OPRD is one of the best performing (first in contracting, third in payment) and most popular SF-funded development programme in Bulgaria.

Aim

- To asses the programme's relevance and achievements of its objectives in the middle of the programming period. The study also analyses the quality of implementation.





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Midterm evaluation of Operational Programme Regional Development in Bulgaria: Conclusions

- Low absorption rate and too ambitious targets. Volume of payments -12% of total allocation by end of 2010. Targets likely not to be met by end of programming period.
- The high level objectives are still fundamentally valid, relevant and compatible with the programme strategy.
- Too many indicators and complex indicator system hinder progress measurement. Indicator based progress is lagging behind the interim target values for 2009.
- The average time for processing applications close to international benchmark (118 working days) and ranges between Romania (longer time) and Hungary (shorter time).
- Management and administration in one organisation carries the risk of emerging conflicts in the long run.
- Extensive involvement of social partners in the programming phase and less extensive in the implementation phase. Inter-municipal, local and regional partnerships scarcely promoted while public-private partnership is missing at this stage of implementation.
- Information and publicity activities support well the activities covered in OPRD.



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Midterm evaluation of Operational Programme Regional Development in Bulgaria: Recommendations

- To define more realistic target values for the next programme. To accelerate payments for the current period and review payment and post-contract related issues in order to ensure better payment conditions for the next period.
- To shift towards more integrated approach to regional development with clear targets and identification of regions that can act as engines for development.
- To develop less but better defined indicators that are easier to collect and monitor.
- To improve the application process by extending comparison to other CEE countries' regional OPs and other Bulgarian OPs.
- To separate the management and administration functions in two or more organisations, MA responsible with policy issues and IBs with administration and management of projects.
- To seek for and develop suitable public-private partnerships, reconsider local and regional partnership between beneficiaries with common needs and constraints.
- To monitor indicators defined in the Communication Plan and present them in Annual Reports. To identify successful model projects and make them known.



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IV. Partnership



Partnership

Partnership is essential for planning, designing and carrying out evaluation for it provides a basis for learning, openness and transparency during the whole process. Evaluation of cohesion policy is undertaken on a partnership basis, with Member States responsible for ex-ante and ongoing evaluation and Commission responsible for ex-post and other thematic evaluations.

Member State shall organize a partnership with partners:

- a) competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities;
- b) economic and social partners; and
- c) bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, nongovernmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality and non-discrimination.



Evaluation – Partnership

- When planning and carrying out evaluation, in order to ensure **relevant** and **useful** evaluation **results**, close co-operation between **all stakeholders** involved in national/local level monitoring and evaluation is important.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING EVALUATION

- Evaluators must cooperate with the concerned individuals /entities, which makes it necessary to define the evaluation objectives and **make the concerned individuals/entities aware** of these.
- Open approach is important during evaluation process and when formulating recommendations, in order to avoid that the concerned individuals/entities become opposed to the evaluation, or feel that they have no influence on procedures.

DECISION- MAKING

- When making informed decisions, **opinion** from **all stakeholders** should be sought and taken into consideration.

Evaluation – Transparency and publicity

Evaluations are important tools to inform national and regional authorities, the general public and other stakeholders about the outcomes of the Cohesion Policy.

- Effective and timely communication of evaluation results can increase their impact on decision-making, be more useful and better exploited.
- To facilitate the use of evaluation results, they must be communicated to decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders in a clear and transparent manner. This requires a careful assessment of **what** type of information is useful to **whom**.
- Evaluation results should be communicated in such a way that they **meet the needs of decision-makers**. The information needs to be politically relevant, concise and easily comprehensible.
- Policy implications and lessons learnt from evaluations must be synthesized and appropriately disseminated.
- Results must be followed-up.



Evaluation – Transparency and publicity

- According to the European Commission policy, each Member State must be committed to strengthening its citizens' confidence in Europe with a focus upon results, transparency, informed debate, and good co-ordination and partnership across Member States and European Institutions. Evaluation can facilitate these processes. Evaluation supports the Member States and their Managing Authorities in better communicating the added value of using the Structural Instruments to the European citizen.
- **All evaluations must be made public in their entirety** (Article 47, Common provisions), so they can enhance transparency of state operations and democratic accountability and stimulate dialogue and public debate on evaluation findings.



**Thank you very much for
your attention**

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/evaluations/germany/1010_saxony_transport_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/evaluations/romania/0910_hospital_infra_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/evaluations/bulgaria/1102_midterm_op_reg_dev_en.htm

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