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1.2.1 Evaluation Questions and Associated Activities

The activities proposed and the questions posed in the ToR for the analysis of the implementation of the SOP HRD are structured with reference to the following three evaluation criteria: relevance; efficiency; & effectiveness.

In summary, the activities proposed to explore ongoing relevance include an analysis of the relevance of programme priorities and objectives given the changed socio-economic context (i.e., since the inception of the programme) as well as the ongoing relevance (and/or coherence) of indicative operations, eligible activities and established indicators when set, for example, against the overall aims and objectives of the programme. Finally, under the relevance criterion, the ToR also envisage an analysis of the extent to which the projects financed under the programme contribute to the achievement of the general and specific objectives of the SOP HRD / FDI SOP HRD for each related Key Area of Intervention (KAI).

The activities envisaged under the efficiency criterion involve an analysis of the efficiency of the SOP HRD delivery system at the level of MA SOP HRD and at the level of the Implementing Bodies (IB) SOP HRD taking into account project appraisal and selection processes, the contracting process, the SOP HRD monitoring system and the financial management system. It is also envisaged that an analysis will be conducted under the efficiency heading of the current and forecasted financial status of the programme in order to evaluate the level of fulfilment of the MA SOP HRD “n+3” and “n+2” rules and of the adequacy of the monitoring system in terms of its capacity to provide the necessary and relevant data to support evaluation at programme level.

Under the effectiveness heading, a range of issues are tabled for analysis including analysis of the effectiveness of:

- a range of information and publicity measures designed, *inter alia*, to support awareness raising and to provide guidance to prospective applicants;
- the process of evaluation and selection in respect of applications received as a result of the various calls for project proposals;



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- the way in which the internal monitoring system at project level provides the necessary information to support the effective monitoring of the programme as a whole;
- the way in which the monitoring of the programme answers to the specific reporting needs of SOP HRD;
- the extent to which the SOP HRD beneficiaries understand the indicators of the SOP HRD monitoring system;
- the way in which the beneficiaries took into account the SOP HRD themes and horizontal objectives when they prepared project applications and in their implementation of projects ultimately approved and implemented; and, finally,
- internal and/or external factors/characteristics that influenced/influence/will influence SOP HRD implementation.

1.3 Our Approach to the Interim Evaluation of SOPHRD

The approach to the interim evaluation of SOP HRD is outlined in detail in the InR. In that report we have described the manner in which we proposed to build the evaluation through the various deliverables i.e., draft reports.

In that regard we adopted an integrated, flexible and participative approach to the evaluation process. An integrated approach is clearly required. For example, the programme structure and programme level data provide a common basis upon which a significant amount of the required analysis is carried out across the various evaluation questions. These also provide a valuable source of information that was taken into account in structuring our engagement with stakeholders. As such, a number of critical, integrated tasks were undertaken with a view to responding to the ToR and upon which the development of the methodological tools and approach are based³.

³ It should also be noted that these critical tasks (for example, data management) also underpin aspects of the analysis that was necessary to respond to the ToR for the *ad hoc* evaluations of PA4 and PA5 (KAI 5.2).