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Challenges for Evaluation 2014-2020:
Ex Ante Evaluation & Evaluation Plans

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Challenges for Evaluation 2014-2020: Ex Ante Evaluation & Evaluation Plans

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European Commission

Presentation

- *Ex Ante Evaluations – requirements, challenges and use*
- *Overview of quality of first Operational Programmes Received*
- *Challenges for Evaluation, 2014-2020*

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Ex Ante Evaluation, Article 55 (ex 48), Common Provisions Regulation

- *Applies to all European Structural & Investment Funds*

- *Evaluation to appraise 14 elements, of which 9 concerned with intervention logic*

Main requirements (Article 55)

- *Strategic coherence*
  - **Alignment with EU priorities, regional & national needs, taking account of previous experience**
  - **Were needs correctly translated into priorities and objectives? Consistency between objectives and fund allocation?**
  - **Coherence between OP and other programmes or policies? Between objectives?**

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Main requirements (Article 55)

Intervention logic

- **Rationale for the form of support proposed**
- **How planned actions will deliver outputs contributing to results (taking account of other factors)**
- **Relevance and clarity of proposed indicators**
- **Realism of quantified target values for indicators (kind of action, financial allocation)**
- **Suitability of milestones for performance framework**

Main requirements (Article 55)

- *Monitoring and evaluation*
  - **Adequacy of human resources and administrative capacity**
  - **Suitability of procedures for monitoring and collecting data necessary to carry out evaluations**

- *Horizontal principles: Adequacy of planned measures to promote equal opportunities, sustainable development and to reduce administrative burden on beneficiaries*

Timing & Responsibility

- *Ex ante evaluation and programming should go hand in hand*
- *Final report and executive summary submitted to Commission with draft OPs, summary of ex ante evaluation in Partnership Agreements*
- *Carried out under the responsibility of authority developing the programme*

Useful for whom?

- *Primarily for programmers (MA) who will use expertise of evaluator to:*
  - **analyse choice of priorities, use of ERDF amongst other tools, credibility of expected results according to actions/expenditure planned**
  - **Help design indicators reflecting logic of intervention with realistic target values**
  - **Help set up performing monitoring systems including collection of data for future evaluations**
- *Guidance on ex ante evaluation (EN/FR/DE)*
- *Ex ante evaluation should be regarded as an opportunity to improve the quality of programmes*

Useful for whom?

- *For Member States*
  - **Partnership agreement: summary of ex ante evaluations or summary of ex ante evaluation of PA**
  - **Need for sufficient information in the evaluation final reports.**
- *For EC desk officers when assessing OP*
  - **Evaluator may have suggested alternatives, were they taken into account?**
  - **On what evidence are targets for indicators and milestones based? (e.g. "logical frameworks" to clarify the intervention logic of an Investment Priority)**

Message for Evaluators

- *This is not "business as usual"; the requirements for the ex ante evaluation are challenging*
- *Role of the evaluator is to challenge the intervention logic and help the MA construct robust priorities which will deliver for EU citizens*
- *Particular support in establishing baselines and fixing targets*
- *Generate evidence also to support the milestones and targets for the performance framework (perhaps based on experience of current programmes – unit costs)*

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Overview of First OPs Examined (I)

- *In first drafts, specific objectives usually not specific: impossible to assess intervention logics when specific objectives vague, general and all encompassing*
- *Questions: What will change if this is done? Why do you want to do this?*
- *Often first drafts talk of actions, not objectives*
- *First versions often rejected by EC – "go back and make some choices"; "focus"; "concentrate"*
- *Second versions usually but not always better; sometimes these too are rejected*

Overview of First OPs Examined (II)

- *Result indicators and baselines: use available data or special surveys (possibility to use ex ante conditionality and provide baselines later in line with an action plan – for some indicators)*
- *Remember to use common indicators*
- *Performance Frameworks only after intervention logic clear*

- *What are the ex ante evaluators doing to help???*

"Specific" Objectives – Bad examples

- *"Promoting foreign direct investments, research and development and driving the demand for investments to increase investments from the private sector in RDI"*

- *"Promoting the implementation of innovation in a wide sense"*

- *"Development of economic potential in disadvantaged areas of the region"*

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Specific Objectives – Good examples

- *"Increase the number of high growth enterprises"*
- *"Increase the number of SME start-ups"*
- *"Reduce CO2 emissions through reduced energy consumption of public buildings"*
- *These are supported by clear definitions, baselines, and targets (sometimes direction of change with indication of order of magnitude).*

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Challenges for Evaluation 2014-2020

- *Evaluation Plans within one year of approval of programme*
- *Requirements for impact evaluations*
- *Guidance being developed*
- *Plan timing of evaluations (depends on nature of intervention), data, methods*
- *Follow-up by European Commission (to feed into annual reports by Commission to Council & Parliament from 2016)*
- *Follow-up by Monitoring Committees foreseen in Regulation*

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Clear Message from European Commission

- *Commissioner Johannes Hahn in Vilnius, 26 November 2013:*

*"Let's be very clear. The Commission **is not ready to trade quality for speed**. We will take all the time necessary to agree on robust, clear, forward looking strategies and programmes. Also, the Commission will apply the same standards when evaluating and eventually adopting all Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes."*

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Thank you for your attention!

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evaluation_en.htm

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