

Sourcebook on Sound planning of ESF programmes



Report resulting from the ESF Seminar
Vilnius 17-18 November 2005

June 2006

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Introduction

This report was composed as a result of the ESF seminar on sound programming of the new European Social Fund programmes. It aims to provide more than a factual account of the seminar. Therefore, it has also been written as a sourcebook, drawing upon many sources of good practice, from inside but also outside the EU. It is hoped that this can be a "living document" that can continually be updated with new tools and experiences. It is in full accordance with other Commission guidance but it is less focussed on *what* should be present in programming documents and more on *how* programmers can draw up quality programming documents.

At the eve of a new financing round of the Structural Funds, it was essential to reflect on the planning process for the future European Social Fund (ESF) programmes, notably on the basis of the lessons learned from the EQUAL Community Initiative. The seminar brought together politicians and managers to clarify the programming process, to learn about specific methods and tools for sound planning and to share experience from across the whole of Europe.

The seminar was organised by the EQUAL unit together with the EQUAL Managing Authorities from Lithuania, Italy, Poland and French speaking Belgium. It proved to be of great interest to the Member States, attracting almost 200 delegates from all over the EU as well as Bulgaria and Romania.

The seminar was also a kick-off for a series of follow-up seminars organised by the Commission's EQUAL unit together with the ESF co-ordination unit in December 2005 on innovation and transnationality and in January 2006 on partnership and gender mainstreaming. Therefore the Vilnius did not specifically address those issues but focussed on generic planning of ESF programmes.

The high level of representatives from the host Member State stressed the significance of the seminar. The presence of Mr Kairelis, State Secretary of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Mr Mockeliunas, Vice Minister, Ministry of Education and Science, Mr Simonavicius, Vice Minister, Ministry of Finance and finally Mr Rupsys, Secretary of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour was highly appreciated by all participants.

Lenia Samuel, Deputy-Director General of DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, discussed the key success factors for planning the new programmes: a strategic approach oriented towards the objectives of the new "Integrated guidelines on jobs and growth", a wide partnership in support of reforms and a shared ownership of the objectives of the European strategy for growth and jobs and finally the capability to facilitate and enable learning and the delivery of reforms.

Marie Donnelly, head of the ESF co-ordination unit (European Commission), confirmed the importance of these success factors by stressing the importance of the coherence between needs and objectives, stakeholder involvement, monitoring and evaluation and implementation systems. She also stressed the importance of mainstreaming EQUAL principles and the support for institutional capacity in Convergence Regions and Cohesion Member States.

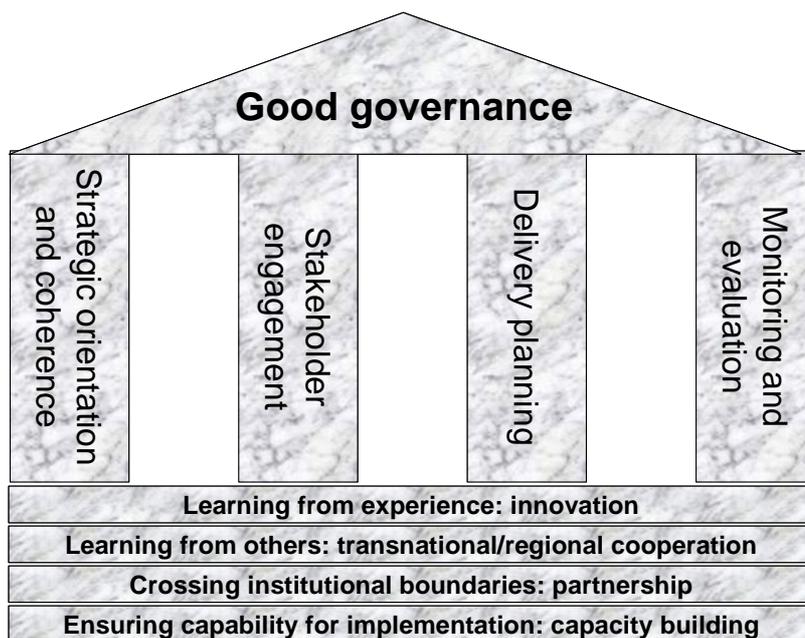
The strategic approach for the next generation of ESF presented by the Commission was also underpinned by contributions from senior officials from the UK Prime Minister's cabinet office and the Italian region of Emilia-Romagna.

In addition, the EQUAL Managing Authorities of Lithuania, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, United Kingdom, French speaking Belgium and Sweden had organised an information market to showcase

and explain their experiences concerning effective planning of projects and programmes, by applying a jointly developed toolkit for planning, monitoring and evaluation of innovative and transnational projects.

Subsequently, during highly interactive workshops, the seminar participants identified key challenges that confront them when planning the next generation of ESF programmes. They also identified useful approaches, including from EQUAL, to tackle those challenges (see annex for details).

Finally, they formulated a number of priorities to be addressed by themselves as well as the Commission related to the key themes of the seminar (see annex).



The seminar addressed the four main issues identified in the speeches, being strategic orientation and coherence, stakeholder engagement, delivery planning and finally, monitoring and evaluation (see figure). They did not directly address innovation, transnational/regional cooperation, partnership and capacity building as other seminars were scheduled that would focus on those issues.

Lenia Samuel stated in her closing speech: "I will be keen to follow the actions you will undertake to tackle the challenges identified in your programming process. You have also proposed actions addressed to the Commission. I can assure you that on our part we are prepared to assist you in the preparation and development of Operational Programmes within the framework of constructive dialogue. Indeed we see our role as a facilitator in the process of exchanging experience and giving prominence to good practice".

I. Strategic orientation and coherence

I.1 Introduction

With its Communication "Working together for growth and jobs A new start for the Lisbon Strategy" of February 2005, the Commission launched a revamped Lisbon strategy.

The **Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs** (2005-2008) that aim to support the Lisbon strategy, were proposed by the Commission and approved by the Council (July 2005), presenting common priorities to the Member States national employment policies. The employment guidelines are now integrated with the macroeconomic and microeconomic policies and are set for a three year period. These new employment guidelines are yet more streamlined. Numbering eight they fit within three priorities: attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems; improve adaptability of workers and enterprises; increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

Every Member State draws up a **National Reform Programme** (NRP) (until 2005, these were the National Action Plans) which describes how the Employment Guidelines are put into practice at the national level. They present the progress achieved in the Member State over the last 12 months and the measures planned for the coming 12 months: they are both reporting and planning documents. In addition, the member States need to ensure that the social inclusion and social protection / pensions as well as education and training processes (all using the open method of coordination) feed into their response to the Employment Guidelines.

At the same time, the "**Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013**" draw attention to the following:

- The strategic dimension of cohesion policy is strengthened to ensure that Community priorities are better integrated into national and regional development programmes;
- Efforts are made to ensure greater ownership of cohesion policy on the ground. This is reflected in a reinforced dialogue in the partnerships between the Commission, the Member States and the regions and in a clearer and more decentralised sharing of responsibilities in areas such as financial management and control.

The cohesion policy exposes three main transversal priorities for 2007-2013.

- improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving their environmental potential;
- encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies;
- creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

Consistency between The Employment Guidelines and the third cohesion priority is ensured as these are almost identical.

A great deal of attention is devoted to the concept of "good governance". This concept also finds its place in the draft ESF regulation where it is linked to institutional capacity building and the promotion of partnership (adequate participation of social partners and non-governmental organisations).

The **draft new general regulation for the structural funds** defines common principles, rules and standards for the implementation of the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund. Based on the principle of shared management between Commission, Member States and regions, this regulation describes programming requirements, as well as common standards for financial management, control and evaluation.

The **draft ESF regulation** provides ESF specific requirements.

The focus on strategic approach to programming is the key change as compared to the current programming period. Member States should set out national objectives, in line with the CSG, in the National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs), along with a strategy to achieve these objectives. The NSRFs must also ensure that the assistance from the funds is consistent with the National Reform Programme.

The NSRF should therefore present a consistent strategy for the concerned Member State to respond to the EU objectives.

The next step is to further operationalise the strategy set out in the NSRF through the operational programmes (OP). Thus, the strategy of the OP should be seen as an integral part of the whole strategic approach (CSG- NRP – NSRF- OP).

Other crucial issues of the new ESF Regulation are:

- promotion of innovation and transnational cooperation which gives important opportunities to go beyond traditional actions and to reinforce all ESF activities;
- strong focus on the adequate involvement of all partners in preparation, implementation and monitoring of the ESF support;
- the focus on institutional capacity, which constitute a priority for ESF interventions in the next programming period: the priority will support Convergence regions in their efforts to reform and modernise their administrations. Interventions under this priority will be extended to the whole territory of Cohesion countries. In comparison to the current and previous programming periods, the new priority will focus on supporting reforms or comprehensive modernisation of the administration and not on ad hoc actions. Under this priority support will be provided to the development and design of policies and programmes as well as to their delivery and implementation.



Source: ESF seminar slides

To summarise and conclude, it is crucial for the strategic approach to ensure coherence and logic of the objectives and indicators:

- between strategic documents;
- between programmes;
- within one programme.

The Operational Programmes' objectives must clearly contribute to the objectives established on national level, which in turn respond to the objectives established on the EU level.

Moreover, the clear link between the needs, objectives and results must be ensured.

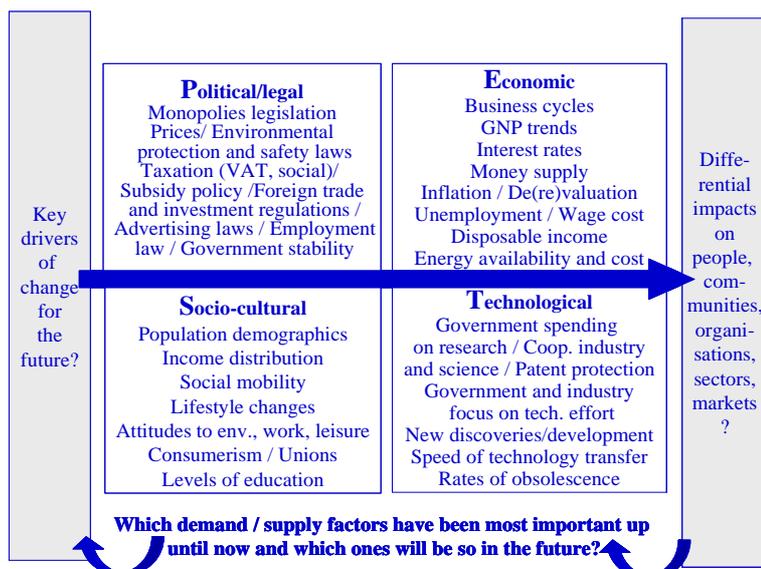
Reference material

-Working together for growth and jobs A new start for the Lisbon Strategy COM (2005) 24, February 2005
 -Delivering on growth and jobs: a new and integrated economic and Employment co-ordination cycle in the EU. SEC(2005) 193 February 2005
 -Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008), Council document, April 2005
 All above documents are to be found at: http://www.europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/key/index_en.htm
 Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013 COM(2005) 0299, June 2005: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index_en.htm
 -Speech at the Vilnius seminar by Mrs L. Samuel, Deputy Director General DG Employment, Social Affairs and EQUAL Opportunities
 -Presentation at the Vilnius seminar by Mrs M. Donnelly, Head of Unit of the ESF co-ordination unit
 Both documents can be found at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/news/20051125-vilnius_en.cfm

I.2 Situation analysis

TOOLS

SOCIO-ECONOMIC / TECHNOLOGICAL / POLITICAL TREND ANALYSIS



This analysis helps to systematically identify the key drivers of changes in the past as well as the future and to gauge their impacts on trends related to people, communities, organisation and sectors at a local, regional or national level. You should look out into the future far enough to match the lifespan of the programme.

Under the heading of political and legal trends, relevant current and future policies and legislation should be looked at. Policy characteristics analysis is a useful tool to help managers better understand the dimensions and dynamics of the policy, where it came from, and where support and opposition are likely to be strongest. This understanding can carry over into more detailed appraisal, such as stakeholder analysis. In addition, Strategic Environmental Analysis describes a process to help integrate specifically environmental concerns in programmes.

-PESTLE analysis <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

-Technical note 3 on policy characteristics analysis

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

-Handbook on environmental assessment on Regional Development Plans and EU Structural Funds programmes <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/sea-support.htm>

BENCHMARKING

The previous exercise is more useful if trends can be put into perspective by comparing them to best-in class performers. It is essential to have sufficient data to allow meaningful comparisons. This could

be either historical data over time, or cross sectional data. It should be used in the first place to increase understanding of the reasons for differences, rather than prompt specific actions.

Benchmarking in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

RATIONALE FOR GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION / COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

This rationale is usually founded either in market failure or where there are clear government distributional objectives that need to be met. Market failure refers to where the market has not and cannot of itself be expected to deliver an efficient outcome; the intervention that is contemplated will seek to redress this. Distributional objectives are self-explanatory and are based on equity considerations.

In addition, recent research suggests that microeconomic differences as determinants of national or regional competitive advantage account for much of the variation across countries and regions in GDP per capita. The microeconomic foundations of economic development are embodied in: factor conditions, demand conditions, context for firm strategy and rivalry and related and supporting institutions. The traditional rationale for intervention still applies to these micro-economic dimensions.

Finally, it has to be kept in mind that the Structural Funds need to ensure added value. This concept can be defined on the basis of a range of criteria:

- Economic and social cohesion,
- Policy added value in relation to Community priorities,
- Financial added value, in terms of additionality and leverage effect,
- The added value of the Structural Funds method, including partnership, multi-annual planning, monitoring, evaluation and sound financial management,
- Added value which stems from the exchange of experience and networking at a transnational, national or regional level.

-Rationale for government intervention in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>
-National/regional competitive advantage in <http://www.isc.hbs.edu/economicdevelopment.htm>
-The added value of the structural funds <http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/iqnet/reports2.cfm>

SWOT (STRENGTH-WEAKNESSES-OPPORTUNITIES-THREATS) ANALYSIS

A SWOT analysis can be a useful way of summarising the relationship between environmental influences and internal resources. It identifies the main strategic issues to be addressed. These issues can be further explored using a problem tree or, systems theory. Within this SWOT analysis, it can also be useful to reflect upon the main strengths and weaknesses of the key organisations that will be involved in implementing the programme (see II.3 for supporting tools).

	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	Possibility to build on current strength to grab opportunity	Use strength to fend off threat
Weaknesses	Need to amend weaknesses	Exit

-Technical note 1 on strategic management

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

-SWOT: <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

- SWOT-analysis as a basis for regional strategies: www.nordregio.se/Files/wp0104.pdf

PROBLEM TREE ANALYSIS AND SYSTEMS THEORY

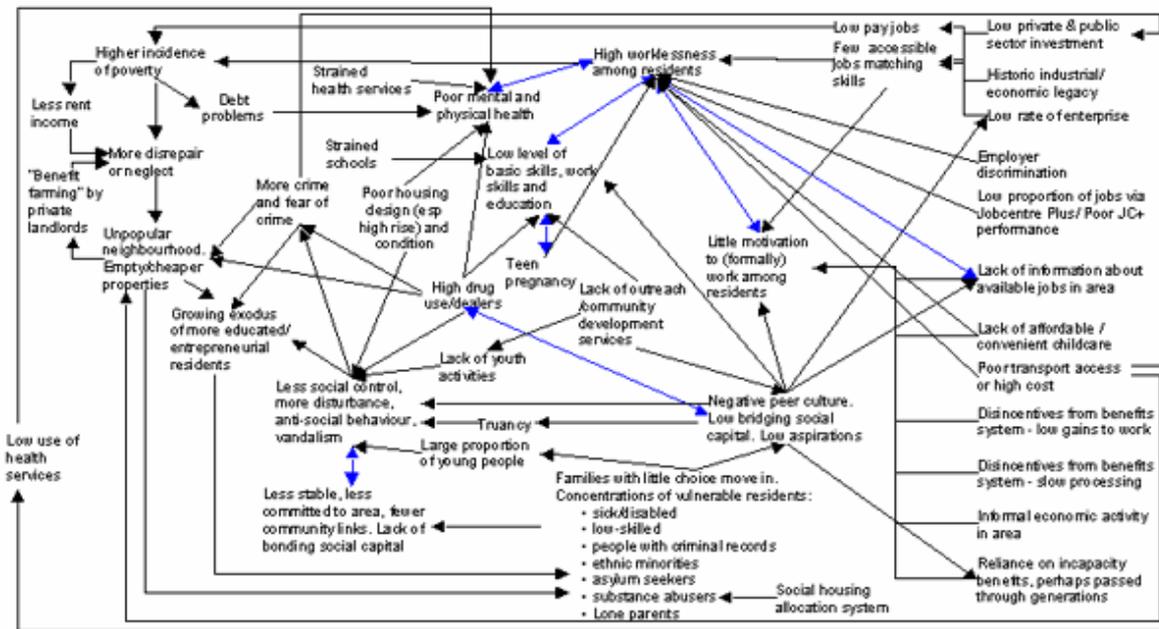
The problem tree analysis identifies problems and brings together different people's perceptions into a single agreed set of related problems. A problem is an existing negative situation and should not be used to describe the absence of a desired situation. For example, an existing negative situation can be 'the skills of the target group do not meet the needs of the employers'. Whereas the absence of a future desired situation can be 'the target group needs to be trained to a particular level'. The former is a real situation felt by both the unemployed and employer, whereas the latter, may be desired by some of the actors in the field, but it is not necessarily the problem but rather one of many possible solutions.

Problem tree workshop

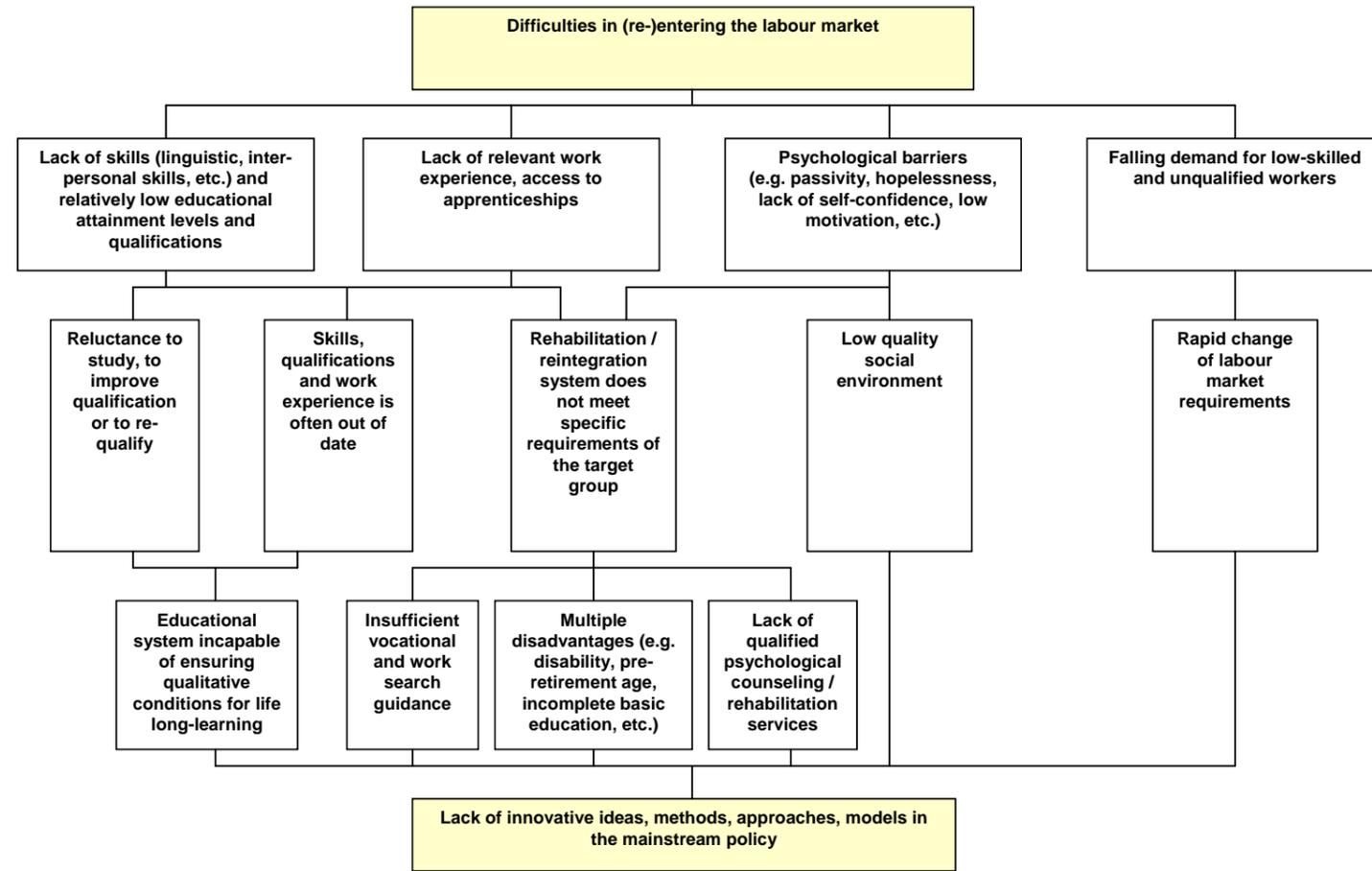
- A general starter problem or rationale (which can come from a SWOT) will have been identified before the workshop.
- Once you have clarified the problem write it on a card and place it in the middle of the wall.
- Give all the stakeholders cards of the same colour (yellow) to write their own ideas on about the associated problems, which either cause the key problem or are an effect (result) of the key problem. Within any group different people will see the same problem in different ways so you should encourage each person present to say what they think. The exercise captures all the different perceptions and insights which you must include as they form the basis of understanding the whole problem. Try to describe the problem in terms of how it affects people. Use a phrase, for example, instead of using 'lack of skills' it is preferable to describe the problem in more detail such as 'existing skills do not match employers needs' If it is difficult to express a problem in concrete terms, try adding the specific target group to the problem and in that way the problem will become specific.
- The workshop leader should then place all the cards on the wall below or above the starter problem to create a hierarchy of cause and effect. If it is a cause, it goes on the level below, if it is an effect, it goes on the level above and if it is not a cause or an effect, it goes on the same level where it can create a new column of causes or effects.
- The workshop leader should then create different vertical columns of cause and effect problems.
- The exercise is complete when the top of the problem assessment could also be at the very bottom as the main cause. A continuous negative cycle of cause and effect is then revealed. At this stage you should confirm that the original problem is still the key problem. Review the hierarchies and try to put them into clear cause-and-effect relationships.

A related tool is systems theory. Where problem trees depict reality in a linear way, stopping before causal feedback arises (problems re-connecting to other problems), systems theory tries to capture that

complexity for an even deeper understanding. After such an exercise, it is relatively easy to single out and simplify parts of the system to be drawn up as a problem tree.



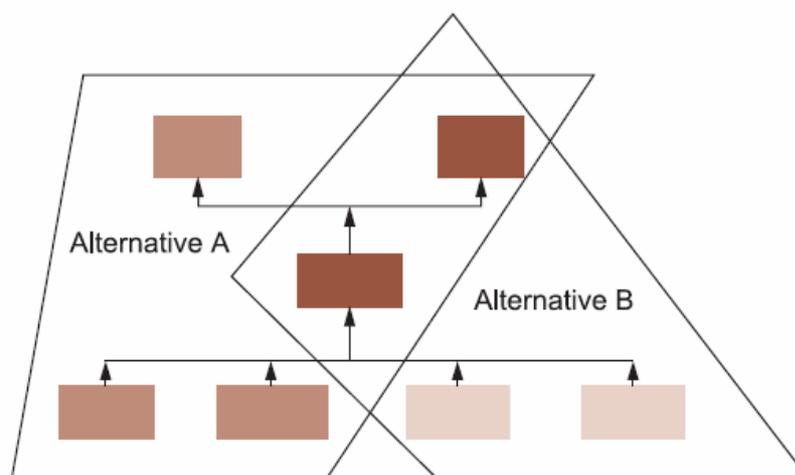
←→ Doubled headed arrows blue for clarity



-Asian Development Bank sector improvement oriented approach
http://www.adb.org/Documents/Guidelines/Logical_Framework/chap01.pdf
-Systems thinking in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

OBJECTIVE TREE

Once a problem tree has been constructed, it is relatively easy to turn the negative, undesired existing situations into positive future situations. Objectives are not activities. An activity will use verbs such as 'to improve', 'reduce', 'construct' and so on. An objective is a description of what it will be like once something has been improved, reduced, constructed, and so on. The next step is then to prioritise between these objectives in a coherent way, deciding what YOU will do and what you assume someone else will take care of or you think is not really crucial to solve the key problem.



Asian Development Bank sector improvement oriented approach
http://www.adb.org/Documents/Guidelines/Logical_Framework/chap01.pdf

DEVELOPING A VISION

A vision is a short description of what you want the future to look like. As the desired state of the future is described in this vision, strategic objectives will be needed to define those things that need to be achieved in order to bring it about. This can draw on the problems and objectives analysis done earlier.

At this stage the primary concern is 'what' needs to be achieved rather than 'how' - which will be more fully addressed through design (see I.3) - however some broad appreciation of the interventions that might deliver the objectives will help to ensure that realistic objectives are set. It is important to set objectives that are:

- Suitable - addressing key issues and able to deliver desired outcomes
- Feasible - achievable with potential organisational and system resources
- Acceptable - with the support of those with the authority and influence to legitimise action.

Strategic direction setting <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

Effective government depends, among other things, on the ability to:

- understand trends, opportunities and challenges;
- use this understanding to underpin decisions and make resource allocations to back them;
- respond quickly to changing circumstances and crises; and
- identify and prepare for a range of strategic futures.



These considerations are relevant at three levels. The strategic level, which has been the focus of the report up to this point, includes major policy decisions and concerns the government’s political contract with the electorate and the coherence of its overall programme. External factors are likely to be critical to this contract, as are some endogenous factors (e.g. failures in key public services). At this level there will often be fundamental uncertainties surrounding decisions (e.g. globalisation trends). Risk management needs to take this into account.

The programme level, to which we will turn in the subsequent chapters, is the level at which most policy is made. Decisions are made on procurement / acquisition, funding, organisation, establishing projects, service quality and business continuity. Uncertainty will be bounded at this level, as strategic parameters will have been set, and risks (such as unexpected service demand, poorly specified contracts, setting over-ambitious targets, budget cuts, widespread industrial action or computer failure) are more likely to come from internal rather than external sources.

The operational and project level is where services are delivered. Here, an even clearer direction will have been set, and the key decisions will be on technical issues, resource management, managing schedules, managing providers/partners and infrastructure. Risks (for example, in delivering a project to cost/time/quality, recruiting sufficient skilled staff, getting value for money from a contract) are more likely to be internal at this level.

Although each of these levels has distinct characteristics, some common approaches are necessary at all three:

- risks have to be identified and assessed, with responsibility and accountability allocated and clear;
- judgement is needed about their importance;
- mitigation and contingency plans may need to be considered;
- the impact of actions on risks need to be reviewed and reported; and
- the information and decisions need to be effectively communicated.

Managing risks in http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/risk/index.asp

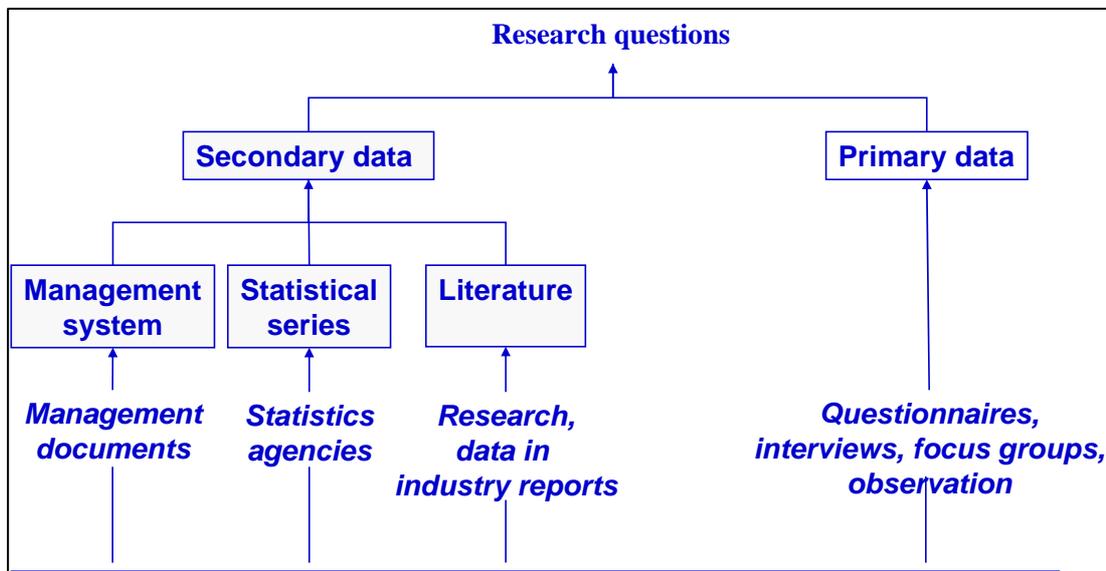
DATA GATHERING:

In order to use the aforementioned tools, you will need to compose a base of evidence. This can be done in the ways listed below, as well as by involving stakeholders (see chapter IV).

USE AND SOURCES OF DATA

Typical uses of data in strategy work include measuring or describing:

- Trends - the changing state of the world over time
- Preferences - what the public and stakeholders value, and what they think about certain issues
- Finance - how much is spent, lost, earned, saved, invested etc
- Performance - the outputs or outcomes of an intervention or service
- Evaluation - how well an intervention addresses the underlying issues
- Impacts - the level and nature of unintended consequences of an intervention
- Benchmarks - how the current situation compares to other similar situations
- Forecasts - what the future may hold.



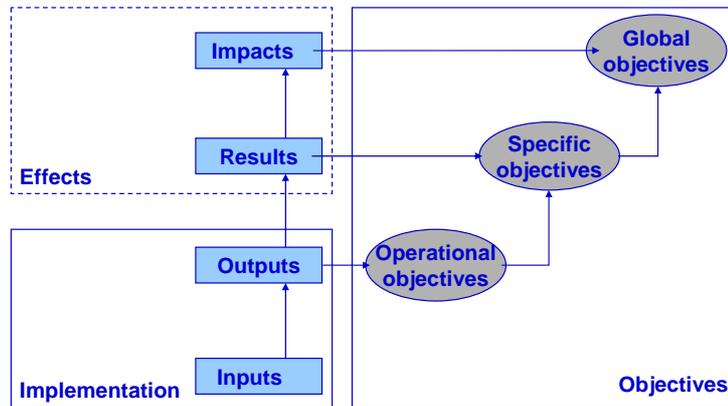
Data types and sources, surveys, interviews and focus groups in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

EX-POST EVALUATIONS

At this stage, the ex-post evaluation can provide indications of major problems that still exist and give ideas on what should be done about these. In addition, ex-post evaluations may provide sources for indicators.

1.3 Programme design

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK



It is very important to take the objectives of the vision and to determine a clear hierarchy of objectives for the programme. Objectives are something that we intend to make happen. However, not all objectives can be delivered by a programme with the same degree of control. Drawing up the logical framework is setting the ambition of the programme at the appropriate level.

Operational objectives represent the product of the programme's activity. They are everything that is obtained in exchange for public expenditure and are normally under the entire control and therefore responsibility of operators. They are measure by output indicators. Examples are: number of trainees whose training was paid by the programme; and percentage of this training of which the quality is certified.

In the new ESF programmes, the objective of an Operational Programme priority axis should be a specific objective.

Specific objectives represent the immediate advantages of the programme for the direct beneficiaries in terms of changes which occur for them. An advantage is immediate if it appears while the beneficiary is directly in contact with the programme. The full results may be observed only when the operator has concluded the action. They are measures by results indicators (sometimes referred to as outcomes). Examples are: qualifications earned by trainees.

This is what the intervention tries to influence by delivering on the operational objectives. The programme should therefore aim to make sure to specify all needed operational objectives to ensure the realisation of the specific objective as well as make any assumptions explicit (see risk management in II.3).

At the overall Operational Programme level, objectives should be composed of global objectives, to which specific objectives contribute.

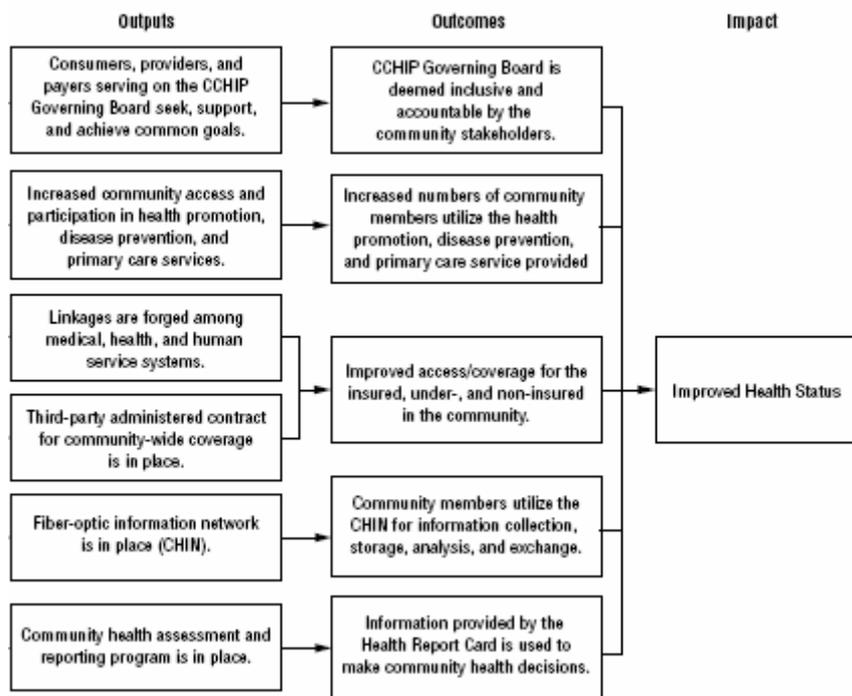
Global objectives refer to the consequences of the programme beyond its direct and immediate interaction with the beneficiaries. An intervention is rarely able to determine directly the impact as many other factors influence this.

Global objectives are measured by impact indicators:

- specific impacts: consequences for direct beneficiaries of the programme, which appear or which last into the medium term: e.g. the placement rate of trainees after twelve months.
- global impacts: all the consequences that affect, in the short or medium term, people or organisations that are not direct beneficiaries. Examples are broader macro-economic impacts. These are also referred to as context indicators.

At this point, a logic model can be used to pull together the programme in one picture, by drawing upon the objectives analysis (displaying the determinants that the programme is trying to influence as well as their linkages). In effect, the logic model is a representation of a theory of change.

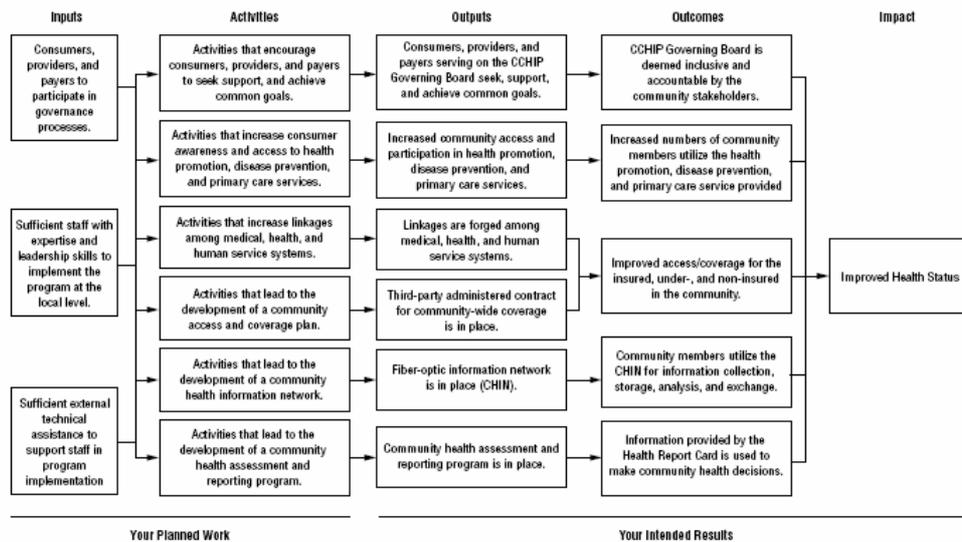
A logic model allows you to more clearly explain and illustrate program concepts and approaches for key stakeholders. It also helps you identify and collect the data needed to monitor and improve programming as well as evaluate it.



Logic model guide <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>
 Creating indicators in www.evaled.com

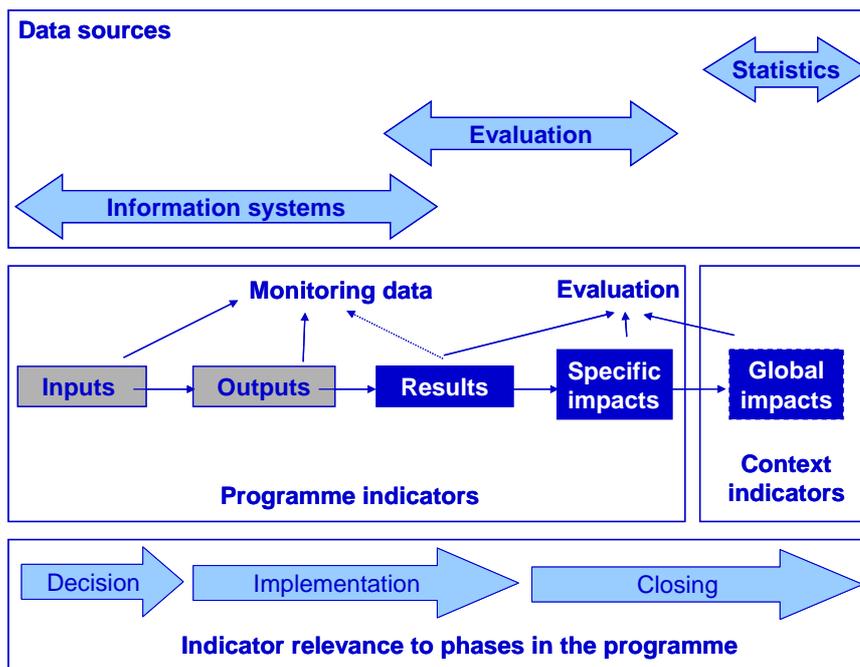
IDENTIFICATION OF DELIVERY MECHANISMS

The next step is to determine the broad actions that will try to influence the determinants in the theory of change. It should be clear who will be the target groups/sectors/areas for the actions and which organisations will be involved in the action in terms of delivering services/products (intermediaries) and how they will do this, using which resources. Input indicators relate to the resources and activities to be run by the programme. It is good practice to look at alternative means of delivering on the programme objectives.



Logic model guide <http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>

INDICATORS / TARGETS



The different types of indicator have already been discussed in connection to the objectives in the logic model and to the delivery mechanisms to which they relate. However, it is important to note that the relevance of the types of indicators changes during the lifetime of the programme. Their source of data is also different, e.g. some results will be picked up by the monitoring system but to ascertain others, evaluation data may be necessary.

-EC Indicators guidance (draft)
 -Creating indicators in www.evaled.com

1.4 Incorporating ex ante evaluation findings

The purpose of the ex ante evaluation is to provide inputs which improve coherence and quality of the programme. These inputs should be provided interactively at various stages of the programme preparation.

It is also the task of the evaluator to check whether the programme design takes into account recommendations as to various alternative options to achieve the objectives.

Stage of Programme Preparation	Stage of Ex Ante Evaluation	Calendar starting in Month 1
Decision on number of ex ante evaluations	Core Terms of Reference drawn up (optional)	1
	Responsible Authority draws up Terms of Reference	2
Socio-economic analysis undertaken for Programme Broad lines of strategy developed	Evaluator Appointed	4
	Evaluation of socio-economic analysis and resulting needs assessment and appraisal of the relevance of the proposed strategy to the needs identified	5
Socio-economic analysis revised Strategic chapters of operational programme prepared		5-6
	Evaluation of the rationale and overall consistency of the strategy Appraisal of the coherence of the strategy with regional and national policies and the Community Strategic Guidelines	6
Strategic chapters revised Quantified objectives for programme priorities identified		6-7
	Appraisal of the quantified objectives and evaluation of estimated impact	8
Revision of quantified objectives Implementation system for Programme described		8
	Appraisal of the proposed implementation systems	8
Final revisions of draft Operational Programme	Production of Ex Ante Evaluation report which synthesises the evaluation work undertaken and describes the process	10
Submission of Operational Programme and Ex Ante Evaluation to the Commission		10
	Some further analytical work by the ex ante evaluator, as necessary	11
Agreement on Operational Programme		12-14

-EC Ex ante evaluation guidance (draft)

-Appraising policy options in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

II. Delivery planning

II.1 Introduction

Thinking about implementation aspects while developing a programme can be considered as good practice.

Experience shows that countries which use existing structures and systems for ESF absorption achieve high rates of spending. The other conclusion which can be drawn from the current programming period is the need to simplify the structures. The Structural Funds require to establish complex structures: Managing Authority, Paying Authority, audit, monitoring and evaluation bodies are the most obvious examples. But it can be observed that some countries even overcomplicate the system by multiplying management and implementation bodies.

It is up to each Member State to establish a system which is in line with the administrative arrangements and the share of responsibilities. But it is worth to bear in mind that multiplication of management layers require strong co-ordination and thus can cause significant problems.

To use committed funds expenditure must be incurred first. Simulating the implementation of a programme is essential for deciding the right split of the budget between priorities and between years. This in turn is essential for avoiding decommitments in the future. The efforts to engage all stakeholders and to ensure their commitment, the preparation of a system to ensure good quality projects, putting in place back-up plans etc. are also extremely important to avoid decommitments.

II.2 Activity planning and forecasting

Activity planning answers in detail questions regarding the actions (what, how), timing (when), resources (with what), responsibilities (who) and milestones (an important aspect to be delivered at a specific time) as well as key links between different activities.

Forecasting is a planning tool as well as a tool for risk management (by checking whether one deviates from the forecast). It identifies and tracks past trends and extrapolates them into the future. Typically, it is used to track over time (time-series forecasting), and to make predictions about differences among people, firms or other objects (cross-sectional forecasting). At the programme level quantitative, statistical methods can be used¹.

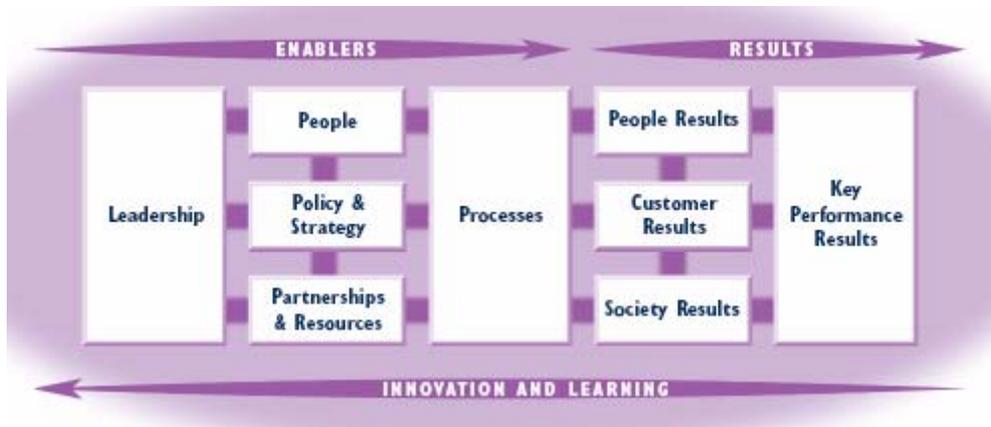
Designing an implementation plan and forecasting in http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp
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II.3 Quality assurance

Organisational analysis aims to generate an understanding of the resources that are at the disposal of organisations and which tasks they perform well or poorly. This can help in understanding the ease or difficulty with which new strategies can be adopted. There are many different frameworks for conducting such an analysis. EFQM and its public sector derivative (available free of charge), CAF,

¹ At the strategic level it also includes the use of more qualitative (judgmental) methods.

provide excellent self-assessment materials. These frameworks can also help define the specific strengths and weaknesses that the key programme implementing organisations face (thus providing input into the SWOT analysis).



-Organisational analysis <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

-European Foundation for Quality Management www.efqm.org

-Common assessment framework for the public sector www.eipa.nl/default.htm

In addition, it should be clear that there can be no quality programmes without quality projects. It is therefore essential to put in place mechanisms that ensure that only excellent projects, which contribute to the programmes goals, will be financed. The EFQM and CAF tools can also be used at the project level.

In addition, the EQUAL community initiative has provided guidance for planning for Development Partnerships. The EQUAL programme has demonstrated that such guidance is essential to guarantee the quality of projects that strive for cross-border co-operation and/or innovation. Many of the tools mirror the programme level approach and therefore help ensure consistency between programme and projects.

Partnership Development Toolkit A partnership oriented planning, monitoring and evaluation guide for facilitators of EQUAL Development and Transnational Partnerships

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/about/key-doc_en.cfm

In addition, a short introductory video of the planning process can be viewed at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/equal/news/20051125-vilnius_en.cfm

III. Monitoring and evaluation

III.1 Introduction

It is extremely important that we learn continuously from the implementation.

Effective on-going monitoring and evaluation systems are not only important because we have to control the programmes, but also because they enable us to learn what goes wrong and allow us to adjust the programmes accordingly.

Experience shows that evaluators should be in interaction with programme managers through the programme cycle. That should be ensured by efficient monitoring and evaluation structures.

III.2 Information systems, reporting and review mechanisms (scorecards; reports, meetings)

Monitoring systems start from the objectives, their indicators and targets. They need to foresee adequate collection of data to feed the indicators. The indicators can then be inserted into a scoreboard, to ensure a good overview of what is happening. This scoreboard can also make links between certain indicators explicit (an example is the Balanced Scorecard). The scoreboard can look differently depending on the management level and the domain of interest of the audience.

On the basis of the scoreboard and reports that accompany it, meetings are scheduled and discussions should take place. These discussions can be about the reasons why indicators are not on target:

- whether this is due to external events, not under the control of management;
- whether this is due to a misconception of the links between the drivers of change or the influence of the intervention on those drivers;
- whether this is due to internal factors, under the control of management;
- whether the indicators do not measure what they are supposed to and require adaptation or whether the targets were, set inappropriately.

-Information into intelligence http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/iqnet/reports2.cfm -Indicators see I.3

III.3 Evaluation

TYPES OF EVALUATION THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAMME

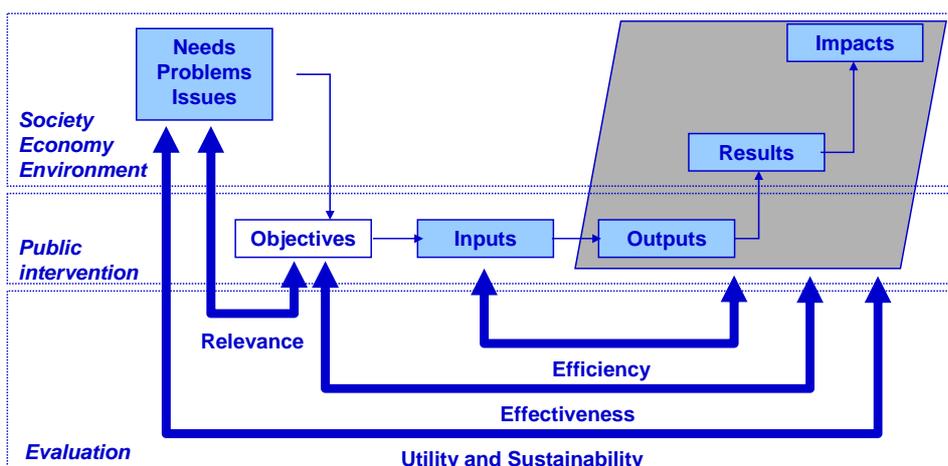
From start to finish of the programme, formative evaluation seeks to strengthen or improve a programme by examining, amongst other things, the delivery of the programme, the quality of its implementation and the organisational context, personnel, structures and procedures. As a change oriented evaluation approach, it is especially attuned to assessing in an ongoing way, any discrepancies between the expected direction and outputs of the programme and what is happening in reality, to analysing strengths and weaknesses, to uncovering obstacles, barriers or unexpected

opportunities, and to generating understandings about how the programme could be implemented better.

Summative evaluation is performed after a programme has been implemented to assess its results and impacts, whether it achieved its aims and objectives and whether it was beneficial overall to those it was intended to benefit. It informs decisions about future resource allocations.

		Ex ante	Interim	Ex post
Relevance	The extent to which an intervention's objectives are pertinent to needs problems and issues to be addressed	●	●	
Coherence	The extent to which the intervention logic is non-contradictory/the intervention does not contradict other interventions with similar objectives	●		
Economy	The extent to which resources are available in due time, in appropriate quantity and quality at the best price	●	●	●
Effectiveness	The extent to which objectives set are achieved	●	●	●
Efficiency	The extent the desired effects are achieved at a reasonable cost	●	●	●
Sustainability	The extent to which positive effects are likely to last after an intervention has terminated			●
Utility	The extent to which effects corresponded with the needs problems and issues to be addressed			●
Consistency	The extent to which positive/negative spillovers onto other economic, social or environmental policy areas are being maximised/minimised	●	●	●
Allocative/distributional effects	The extent to which disproportionate negative/positive distributional effects of a policy are minimised/ maximised	●	●	●
Acceptability	The extent to which stakeholders accept the policy in general and the particular instrument proposed or employed	●	●	●

The main evaluation criteria are defined in relation to the programme's maturity: in the planning stage (ex ante), during operation (interim or ongoing) and after completion (ex post).



The evaluation criteria are also defined in relation to the logical framework.

-Evaluation of Socio-Economic Development: The guide www.evaled.com

-EVALUATING EU ACTIVITIES: A Practical Guide for Commission Services (2004)
http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/evaluation/Key_documents/evalguides_en.htm

COUNTERFACTUAL ANALYSIS

A key aspect to consider when planning to ensure an adequate evaluation of the programme is the counterfactual. The counterfactual is an estimate of the circumstances that would have prevailed had a new programme not been introduced. By comparing counterfactual outcomes (often referred to as either control or comparison group outcomes) with outcomes measured for those units subject to the new programme, causality or attribution can be established. Think about the data needs for counterfactual analysis early on.

Counterfactual analysis in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

IV. Stakeholder engagement

IV.1 Introduction

The experience of current programmes and especially of EQUAL demonstrates that ensuring broad partnership is vital for the successful implementation of reforms. Moreover, experience with current and previous programming periods shows that engagement of all stakeholders in the very early stage of programming is crucial for the successful implementation of a programme. What is programmed now must be implemented later. Someone will have to take responsibility for the implementation of actions on the ground. The co-financing must be ensured. It is therefore crucial to reach agreement and commitment of the stakeholders before the programme is finalised.

IV.2 Stakeholder analysis

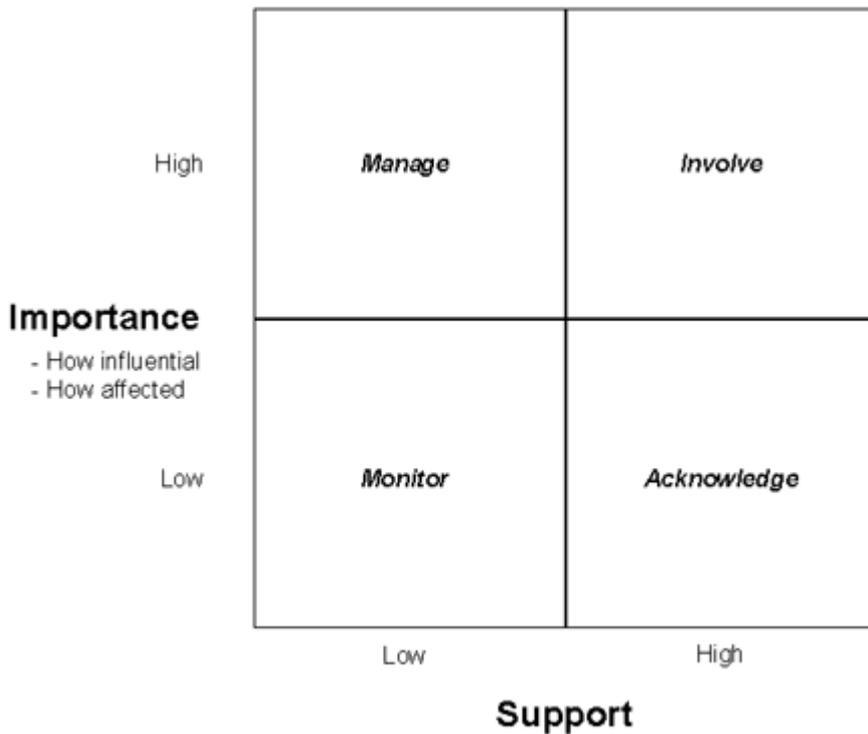
The purpose of stakeholder analysis is to indicate whose interests should be taken into account when making a decision. At the same time, the analysis ought to indicate why those interests should be taken into account. What are the group's specific interests in the policy? Be careful to select only those two or three interests and/or expectations that are most important. In the second cell are noted those resources that the group possesses that could be brought to bear in the decision making or implementation of the programme. Can the group offer some special knowledge or information? Would the group's status and presence be key to implementation? If the group appears to have resources that can be brought to bear, it is important to know whether the group is capable of mobilizing those resources quickly or only slowly. Quickly mobilizable resources are advantageous if the issue has immediacy, but less so if the impact of the issue is further out into the future. Finally, the group's position regarding the programme should be examined and noted.

GROUP	GROUP'S INTEREST IN ISSUE	RESOURCES	RESOURCE MOBILIZATION CAPACITY	POSITION ON ISSUE

In order to prioritise the team's efforts it is necessary to identify the most important, or key stakeholders - i.e. those who are most affected by or most capable of influencing the strategy and its implementation. Combining this with an understanding of how supportive each stakeholder is likely to be will then enable the team to differentiate their approach to engaging with them.

- Stakeholders who are highly supportive and highly important should be closely involved with the work of the team.
- Stakeholders who are highly important but not supportive need to be closely managed with the aim of increasing their level of support. To do this, it is helpful to determine the benefits that the project can offer to them, and identify how those benefits can be sold to the stakeholder.
- Stakeholders who are supportive but of little importance could provide a distraction and should be acknowledged but then managed accordingly.

- Stakeholders who are neither supportive nor important should be monitored to ensure that their level of importance does not change, but otherwise should not distract the team.



Stakeholder analysis can be complemented and fed into by policy mapping, network analysis and force field analysis.

Technical note 2 on stakeholder analysis

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

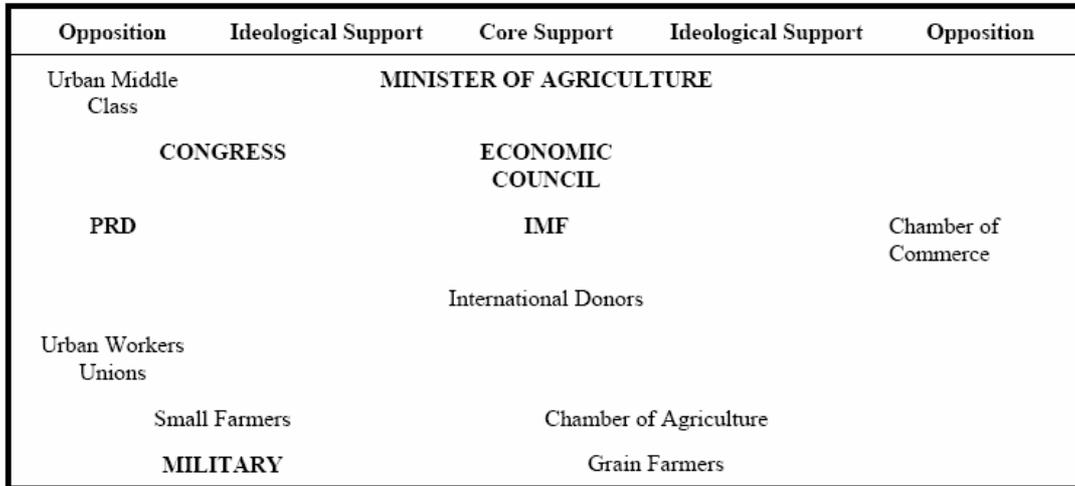
Managing stakeholders and communications in <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/survivalguide/index.asp>

IV.3 Other stakeholder oriented analysis tools

POLITICAL MAP

The purpose of the political map is to organize and reduce the amount of information available regarding politics to a manageable quantity in order to focus on those aspects of the terrain most important to the decisions managers must make. The map organizes and identifies the most important actors and spatially illustrates their relationships to one another (whether they are supportive or in opposition, and, if the latter, on which side of the opposition).

**Micro Political Map of Boliguay
Agricultural Sector
(Reduction of Price Controls)**

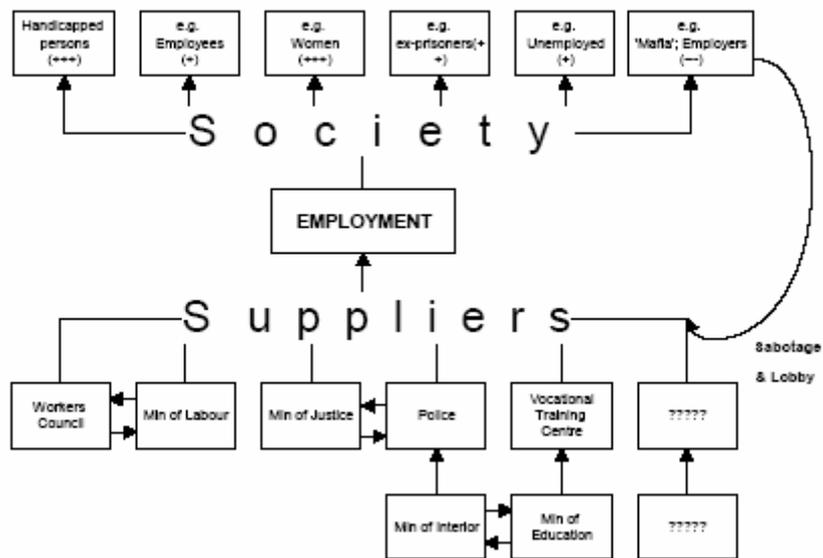


FORCEFIELD ANALYSIS

In forcefield analysis groups are placed on a continuum of “strongly in favor,” or supportive, to “strongly opposed” to “x” issue or policy. The middle of the continuum is a neutral position. The product is a “map” of who supports and who opposes a particular policy. It is particularly useful as a “first-cut” mechanism for sorting out positions of different stakeholders, and for giving the manager a quick impression of where major opposition and support lie.

NETWORK ANALYSIS

The purpose of a network analysis is to determine the relative importance of these actors. This is done by analysing, first, what are the different points through which a project or policy passes to become approved and implemented? Second, who are the actor(s) in charge of each step? Third, how can officials gain access to these actors? Are there other actors, though not officially part of the process, that have substantial influence over those who decide? Finally, in which ways can officials exercise influence over this process? The network analysis can be combined with a forcefield analysis (using + and – that indicate how strong opposition or support is).



Technical note 4 and 5 on Management & the Environment for IPC
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

IV.5 Participative workshops with stakeholders

Because policy implementation crosscuts the nominal authority and statutory responsibility of any individual agency, management of the implementation process calls for mechanisms that bring together the relevant parties in ways that reduce the potential for conflict and increase the possibilities for effective coordination.

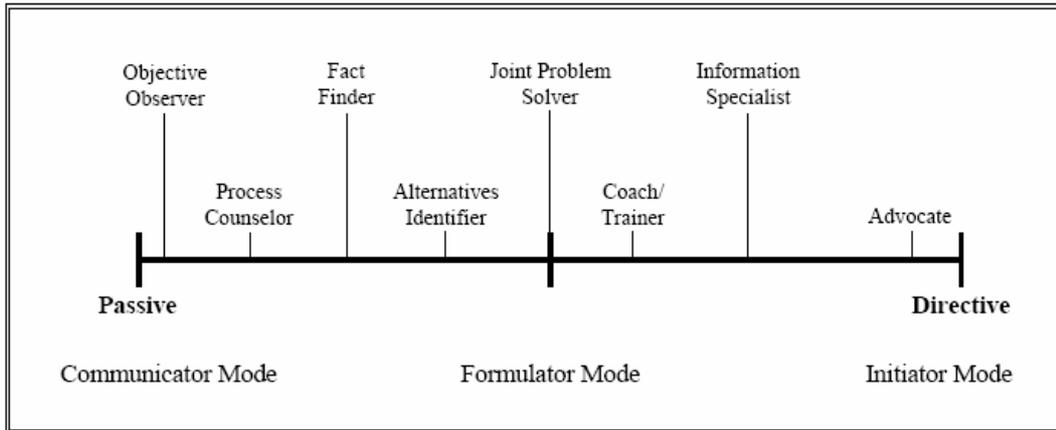
The use of workshops throughout the life of a policy reform reinforces the strategic management process cycle by creating periodic venues for taking stock of progress, comparing targets with accomplishments, revising plans, addressing conflicts, reinforcing or renegotiating agreements, and sustaining new behaviours among participants. These outcomes serve to operationalize the iterative, adaptive nature of strategic management in a way that is clear, visible, and practical.

Technical note 6 on workshops for strategic management of policy reform
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

V. Expert's input

Attribute	Process Mode	Expert Mode
Objectives	Building sustained recipient capacity for self-reliance	Diagnosis of problem and recommendation for change
Motives	Client is committed to resolving the problem; consultant is motivated to apply process techniques and develop indigenous capability in process skills	Consultant is motivated to provide answers; client is not committed to act upon advice
Roles	Consultant assists host country client; responsibility for progress is shared; consultant viewed as fact-finder, broker, counselor, mentor, coach and facilitator; client viewed as partner	Consultant takes lead in recommending action; consultant viewed as formulator, problem solver and advocate; client viewed as ultimate decision maker
Ownership of Proposals	Stakeholders and principal client own the proposals that emerge from a participatory process	Consultant owns the proposals
Preparation	Consultant provides stimulus for client's change efforts; consultant assists client in developing vision and articulating intentions, rationale, objectives and strategies; consultant guides on process management; consultant challenges old ways of looking at things and raises questions; consultant offers information and communicates experience; consultant provides skills training in process	Expert's presence may trigger interest; expert offers new thinking to the client; expert is responsible for analysis; expert offers information and judgment; expert uses experience from other situations; expert articulates action proposals and rationale to client
Method of Work	Contractual understanding with principal client is secured with mutual obligations and expectations from consultant and client; consultant assists client in mobilizing all stakeholders in designing and implementing change; consultant assists client in managing the planning and implementation processes for change	Consultant serves as technical guru and conducts advisory tasks; client is the recipient of consultant-proposed recommendations; consultant seeks to develop practical, efficient and acceptable proposals; consultant does not necessarily expect to be engaged in implementation of change recommendations unless specifically requested to help
Recommendations	Reflects consensus from team effort involving all major stakeholders	Consultant submits independent report with diagnosis and prescription

Experts can provide support in many different ways. One model looks at the distinction between process consultants and "experts". Another ways of looking at expert roles focuses on the extent of direction experts provide.



Technical note 8 on Consultant Roles in the Management of Policy Change
http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

ANNEX I: sources of information

The following links provide ESF programmers with a small but manageable selection of sources for good practice in the area of public sector strategic management and programming. It intentionally is not limited to ESF related sources in order to provide a broad view of current practice across the globe. For example, some of the sources are linked to interventions for developing countries, which tend to operate broadly along the same lines as the Structural Funds. A Europe that wants to move forward should not suffer from the "not invented here" syndrome but should look for good practice across the globe.

In addition, a number of links are provided to Commission guidance related to the evaluation of EU funded activities. Many of the tools used by evaluators are similar to the ones proposed in this report as strategic management tools. However, it is essential to note that strategic management is an essential management task whereas evaluation is an explicit and independent appraisal of performance.

UK Prime Minister's strategy unit

The UK Prime Minister's strategy unit provides the Prime Minister with in-depth strategy advice and policy analysis on his priority issues. At the Vilnius seminar, the deputy director of the unit, Mrs Patricia Greer was an appreciated speaker.

The unit currently has three specific roles:

- to carry out strategy reviews and provide policy advice in accordance with those policy priorities
- to support Government Departments in developing effective strategies and policies - including helping them to build their strategic capability
- to conduct occasional strategic audits, and to identify and effectively disseminate thinking on emerging issues and challenges for the UK Government

<http://www.strategy.gov.uk/>

USAID's Implementing Policy Change (IPC) programme

From 1990 through 1995, the Implementing Policy Change Programme (IPC) provided technical assistance and undertook studies that concentrated on the implementation and management side of policy reform in over 30 developing countries. A second phase of the project (IPC 2) began in late 1995 and continued to provide technical assistance for capacity-building and applied research for an additional five years. The unifying theme of IPC technical assistance has been the application of a strategic management process approach to policy reforms.

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/publications/ipcindex.html

W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to apply knowledge to solve the problems of people. Its founder W.K. Kellogg, the cereal industry pioneer, established the Foundation in 1930. Since its beginning the Foundation has continuously focused on building the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to solve their own problems. The organization awarded more than \$4.15 billion in grants to approximately 15,000 grantees. Its evaluation unit provides a range of very useful guidance.

<http://www.wkkf.org/>

IQ-Net

IQ-Net is a network of regional and national partners whose aim is to improve the quality of Structural Funds programming through exchange of experience. The network exchanges experience on aspects of programme development, management and evaluation, bringing together ideas from across the EU and sharing information on good practice.

<http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/iqnet/>

Asian Development Bank

ADB is a multilateral development finance institution dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific. Established in 1966, they are now owned by 64 members, mostly from the region. It helps improve the quality of people's lives by providing loans and technical assistance for a broad range of development activities.

<http://www.adb.org/>

Harvard Business School Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness

The Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness is dedicated to the study of competition and its implications for company strategy; the competitiveness of nations, regions, and cities; and the relationship between competition and society.

<http://www.isc.hbs.edu/economicdevelopment.htm>

European foundation for quality management

EFQM, a not for profit membership foundation, is the primary source for organisations in Europe looking to excel in their market and in their business. Founded in 1989 by the CEOs of prominent European businesses, EFQM is now the hub of excellent, globally-minded organisations of all sizes and sectors, and both private and public. It provides a version of its Excellence model destined for the voluntary and public sector.

www.efqm.org

European Institute of Public Administration

The European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), created in 1981, is an independent institute carrying out training and research on public administration and European policies, providing a variety

of services to the administrations of the Member States and the candidate countries as well as to the EU institutions in support of their tasks and responsibilities related to European integration.

The general aim of the Institute is to support the European Union and its Member States and the countries associated with EIPA by providing relevant and high quality services to develop the capacities of public officials in dealing with EU affairs by way of training, applied research, consultancy and publications.

The European Commission contributes to EIPA's activities and publications through the European Union budget.

The EIPA has simplified the EFQM framework for use in the public sector. All the material is available free of charge.

www.eipa.nl/default.htm

European Commission sources on evaluation

-DG EMPL evaluation website:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/evaluation/esf_en.html

-Evaluation of Socio-Economic Development: The guide: www.evaled.com

-DG REGIO evaluation website:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evaluation_en.htm

-DG Budget evaluation website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/evaluation/index_en.htm

-DG environment SEA website:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/sea-support.htm>

-SEC-GEN impact assessment website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/impact/index_en.htm

ANNEX II: Outcomes of the interactive workshops²

Strategic Orientation and Coherence

Subject area 1 Coherence with EU & national policies³

- EC: more flexibility: not all EU priorities have to be mandatory for each MS (11)
- EC: make jargon (eurospeak) simpler (3)
- EC: strategic guidelines have to be more stable (3)
- MS: involvement of other Ministries at a very early stage in programming, put ESF on the political agenda (3)
- MS: while planning use the already existing evaluations (3)
- MS: use research more actively to identify real problems (2)
- MS: build the strategy from bottom-up! (1)
- MS: try to look for best practices/models in other MS

Subject area 2 Integration of horizontal issues into programmes

- MS/EC: Provisions and incentives to make sure that horizontal issues are included in Pos (6)
- EC/MS: Simple and clear structure of implementation – administrative simplicity (4)
- MS: take experts on board when drafting the programme (2)
- Project level: team of experts / multidisciplinary approach helps address horizontal issues (2)
- MS: Realistic goals (1)
- MS/EC: Make horizontal issues an inherent part of evaluation
- MS: At national or regional level incentives in calls for proposals for good mainstreaming strategies

Subject area 3 Internal coherence

- EC/MS: Top down meets bottom-up (7)
- MS: Think twice: what sounds nice on paper may not be implementable (national rules, financing) (7)
- MS: Identify problems and needs (3)
- MS: Long term forecasts to anticipate (3)
- MS: Measurable goals (1)
- MS: Identify wider/complex actions
- EC/MS: Focus
- MS: SWOT analysis
- MS: Discussion with key stakeholders/partners at all stages
- MS: Identify priorities
- MS: Organise topic oriented meetings of institutions

Subject area 4 Process management

- EC: Simplification and flexibility of procedures (12)
- EC: Priority setting workshops with stakeholders (6)
- EC/MS: Draw up and implement a roadmap (4)
- MS: Effective allocation of responsibilities (3)
- MS: Strategic planning teams at higher level of authority (2)
- MS: Clear objectives (political decision)
- EC: Define difference between programme and project management
- MS: Implementation studies for new objectives

² The seminar also addressed challenges and useful practices before proposing actions. Due to the nature of the seminar methodology and the scale of the seminar, it was impossible to fully record discussions at the table. Only what was written down by participants is reflected. In most cases, subject areas were identified as a result of the discussions.

³ Next to the actions, there are sometimes references to whether this is addressed to the Commission or to the Member States; in addition, actions were sometimes prioritised by voting (the number in brackets reflects this).

- MS: Implementation capacity analysis of potential implementers

Delivery planning

Subject area 1 Finances

- Exchanges between EC and Member States on management and financial control practices (6)
- EC: Leave division between annual budgets in financial tables completely up to MS without EU opinion/ (5)
- MS: To have only one MS administrative decision for one project (combining national and European funds) (3)
- EC: solve the financial perspective rapidly (3)
- MS: Include the “cash flow” projection in the contracts (2)
- MS: More support to the stakeholders of programmes and the project managers (training, exchange of practices,...) (1)
- MS: Une décision administrative pour l’ensemble du budget du promoteur avec identification des fonds
- MS: Accompagnement/ appui renforcé aux opérateurs /partenaires
- EC: Echanges au sein UE sur les pratiques de gestion EM
- EU: Renforcement de l’avance UE
- EU: raise the advance from EU at beginning of programmes
- EU: Delay N+2 rule to 2nd year of the programme

Subject area 2 Management of projects

- MS: Encourage to make trans-national cooperation possible in the ESF (5)
- MS: Standard project framework and flexible tools (3)
- MS: Definition of responsibility (2)
- MS: Clear rules (1)
- MS: vice versa communication with policy-makers (1)
- MS: Ongoing training on PCM (1)
- MS: Critical review of national rules and procedures
- MS: Clarify to every participant the rules
- EC / MS: Simple procedures and flexibility in improving delivery system
- EU: Make it easier to change the priorities (programme level) (changing labour market)
- MS: Split project proposal into compliance areas and project design areas
- MS: Make it easy to change implementation if necessary

Subject area 3 Implementation structure

- MS: Simplify & streamline administrative procedures by the MS (8)
- MS: Provide helpdesk in MS: finance, changes, project design (5)
- MS: social partners involvement more real and active in all the phases (2)
- MS: To build a system of support for social partners (2)
- MS: Decentralisation to the regional level (project selection) (2)
- MS: Provision of technical support to the project leaders (helpdesk) (1)
- EU: Work hard and fast about simplification (1)
- MS: use own and other MS experiences from this period for the next
- MS: use evaluation results and stakeholders knowledge and combine it with the structure already existing
- MS: more open talks
- MS: should involve stakeholders early in order to ensure good cooperation in the next period
- EU: Clear directives from the EU concerning budget and concrete thematic aspects (clearer guidelines for audit requirements)
- Provide a solution to the budget discussions

Subject area 4 Capacity Building

- EU: A general EU training for ESF-staff on good practice implementation: “ESF-University” every 6 months (12)
- EU: To introduce system of certification of projects management qualification (4)

- MS+EU: Thematic meetings with implementation structures on Lisbon targets. (in different MS or EU if no MS wants a topic) (3)
- Set up support system for people responsible for planning (trainings, meetings, foras)
- Promotion of useful methodologies (3)
- EU: Prepare benchmarks (1)
- MS: Support the project promoters capacity (lessons learned, exchanging experiences) (1)
- Providing guidelines for sound programming
- EU: To use best practices and standards from non-EU organisations, global methodologies and well known tools and techniques
- Ensure continuous feedback: questionnaires, interviews
- Create possibilities for exchanging knowledge between planners on European level
- MS: Complementarity between ESF and ERDF: more effective contribution and support to ensure the infrastructure for ESF
- MS: Analyse situation, design actions
- Programme training plan, includes: training materials, guidelines, etc
- MS: Identify key actors involved in designing the programme and set the co-operation mechanisms.
- To create the system of support at program level
- MS: Assess the capacity of potential applicants and provide support to them (planning support, training, etc).
- Task-based timely capacity planning
- MS: To design new training programmes.
- EC: Ensure links with ED institutions in Member States

Monitoring and Evaluation

Subject area 1 Use of Evaluation Programme/Project Level

- EC: Involve the evaluator of the last period in the new planning (5)
- Ensure Independence of Evaluation (4)
- Involve Stakeholders in the Evaluation process (4)
- Implement ongoing evaluation
- EC: Ensure a minimum [mandatory] budget % for the evaluation
- Create tools for systematic retrieval of good practice
- Sensibilisation campaign on evaluation
- Evaluate the process
- Share results with the stakeholders
- Dissemination of the results
- EC: More money for the evaluation
- Exchange of good practices of evaluation from different countries
- Use an adapted method ie PCM

Subject area 2 Indicators of Achievement

- EC: Research to help identify qualitative indicators (6)
- EC: Setting up a system for data collection (5)
- Qualitative research can give good quantitative indicators (3)
- Consulting stakeholders when setting up indicators of achievement (3)
- Identify accountable and responsible project/programme managers from initial stages
- Have a good continuous reporting mechanism to avoid delays
- Must be a measurable and results oriented process
- Provide training to projects to set indicators and monitor these effectively
- Thinking about impact means involve indicators that “work” in a long term ie employability
- Use milestones to determine if you are on the track
- Make needs ‘smart’: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound and set indicators for achievement;
- Easily measurable does not mean the most important (risk!)

Stakeholder engagement

Table 1

- Use understandable and accessible language and appropriate medias for beneficiaries (7)
- Inform politicians at EU-level & national level (3)
- Use method that allows confidence building – identification of objectives - decision making (all levels) (3)EC: EU-wide TV-spot to raise awareness for ESF programme planning
- MS: Information by press (specific channels)
- Information campaign in relevant media (different languages) which are used by NGO's / local authorities.
- Explain the benefit for stakeholders in being actively involved from the beginning
- Information campaign national / EU level
- No eternal talking shop
- National agencies use meetings, newspapers, websites to give clear and completed information
-
- Programme managers: motivate (beneficiaries) through visible progress

Table 2

- Train project evaluators on methodology to obtain real commitment (7)
- MS: Organize round tables (6)
- EC: train “policy makers” on methodology before preparing new programs (1)
- EC: support with projects & tools a common approach for programme planning (1)
- EC: make basic choice on adopted methodology and set up an organization to support dissemination
- MS: offer forum for participation including financial aid, venues, infrastructure
- MA: involve policy makers into working groups at the early stage of the programming
- MS: implement participative process

Table 3

- give visibility to the cooperation with key players in order to give legitimacy to taken decisions (3)
- Capacity building for stakeholders (3)
- Take into accounts opinion in the first phase of planning (2)
- Institutionalise partnership with key players (2)
- Finance mainstreaming activities – soc. Partners (1)
- Motivate by allocating finances - ex. Next ESF. (1)
- EU: use all mechanisms to make politicians take responsibility
- Duty of reporting at ministerial level

Table 4

- Adopting PCM's principles (terms of reference) in programme for tackling discriminations in the labour market (11)
- Decide about setup of monitoring committees (3)
- MA: to have a good practice of partnership with social and economic partners of interested areas / territories ad hoc (4)
- Research at all levels to form baselines of real needs (1)
- MS: Setting up web site on the programming process (1)
- MS: make the guidance clear about stakeholder involvement at all stages from monitoring committees to programme delivery (2)
- EC: carry out research on good practice in all countries
- Using experience (1)
- Base on correct data and figures
- MS: Organize periodical meetings/research to verify if data and figures are correct
- Ensure all targets are aligned (1)
- MS: partnership with social and economic partners of interested areas/territories

- Communication
- Transparency & information.