



Methods for Assessing Impacts of Structural Interventions: Lessons from Ex Post Evaluation, 2000-2006

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Role & Aims of Ex Post Evaluation

- To establish effectiveness, efficiency and impact in relation to economic and social cohesion
- To identify factors contributing to success or failure

(article 43)



Ex Post Evaluation 1994-1999

- EU wide evaluations for each Objective and Community Initiative; synthesis & national reports (e.g., 11 MS for Objective 1; 12 for Objective 2)
- Focus on all programmes/themes:
 - impact
 - effectiveness
 - efficiency
 - implementation systems
 - community added value



Weaknesses of 1994-1999 Exercise

- Data gaps
- Lack of involvement/interest from Member States
- Too wide scope
- Poor analysis
- Usage potential not clear

- Strong criticism from Court of Auditors



Context for 2000-2006 Evaluation

- Political importance – accountability, given policy review for post 2013
- Plenty of vocal critics of the policy
- Director General has made it top priority for the DG REGIO Evaluation Unit for 2008-2010



New Evaluation Approach

- A thematic approach, rather than geographic
- Much more detailed terms of reference:
 - A selective approach, consciously focusing on certain evaluation questions
 - Awareness and taking account of data availability
 - Piloting more rigorous methods, usually within case studies
- Increased budgets
- Longer duration
- Much stronger focus on quality and quality management



Structure & Timing (1)

Objectives 1 & 2, ERDF

Co-ordination & Synthesis	10/07 – 12/09
Data Availability	10/07 – 03/08
Macro Modelling (Hermin & Quest)	01/09 – 06/09
Structural Change & Globalisation	09/08 – 11/09
Transport	06/08 – 07/09
Environment & Climate Change	06/08 – 07/09
Enterprise & Innovation	01/08 – 11/09
Gender & Demography	01/08 – 03/09
Transport Modelling	06/08 – 06/09
Rural Development	01/08 – 04/09
Efficiency (Major Projects – Unit Costs)	06/08 – 04/09
Management & Implementation	01/08 – 06/09



Structure & Timing (2)

Other Ex Post Evaluations

INTERREG Community Initiative	09/08 – 12/09
Urban Community Initiative	07/08 – 10/09
Cohesion Fund	10/09 – 12/10 (?)
ISPA	10/09 – 10/10
Sample of 1994-1999 projects	10/09 – 12/10 (?)



Methods in our Ex Post Evaluations

- Literature Review - establishing the conceptual basis for each evaluation (case for public/EU intervention)
- Review of administrative data – financial & physical (we still have an accountability imperative!)
- Unit cost analysis (for major projects)
- Case Studies (including counterfactual pilots)
- Modelling & economic analysis



Challenges for 2009/2010

- Ensuring Quality
- Investing in Dissemination
- Using Results to feed policy debate
- Spreading evaluation culture: evaluation is about learning and recognising & debating openly what doesn't work as well as what does (not propaganda – but also – evaluation results are not gospel – they can be debated & contested)



What have we learned? (1)

- Not possible to evaluate everything from all angles at one point in time - Breadth militates against depth & more rigorous methods
- Selective approach, based on needs
- Clear Terms of Reference
- Realistic evaluation design, based on data availability & budget available
- More rigorous methods for certain cases (with a view to encouraging regional authorities to develop in future)
- Quality assurance as important as methodology



What have we learned? (2)

- Mix of methods necessary, adapted to evaluation questions
- Accountability is also important – what was the money spent on?
- Causal links still challenging (inputs – outputs – results – impacts) and there are no easy answers