



ESF Evaluation Partnership as an arrangement for mutual learning and supporting quality and usefulness of evaluations

**Evaluation of EU Structural Funds:
Reinforcing Quality and Utilisation
Vilnius, 26-27 March 2009**

Evaluation and Impact Assessment Unit



Employment, Social Affairs & Equal Opportunities

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Outline



1. Introduction – evaluation in the ESF policy cycle
2. Organisation of the Partnership
3. Examples of activities
4. Achievements
5. Lessons for Member States



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Why are evaluation results not used?

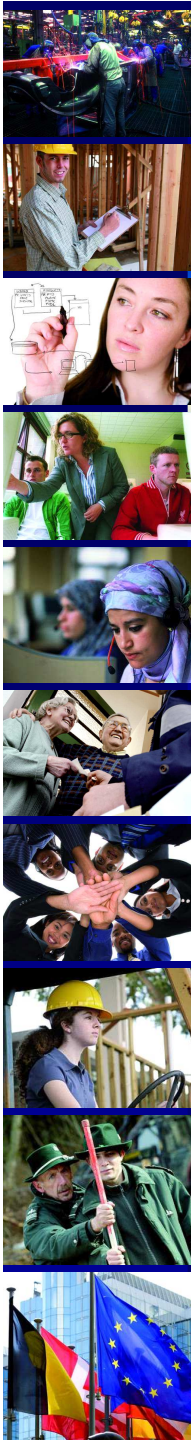
- They come too late
- Poor quality of analysis or lack of proper data leading to unreliable results
- They are not relevant for policy makers
- Other considerations predominate



Levels of evaluation

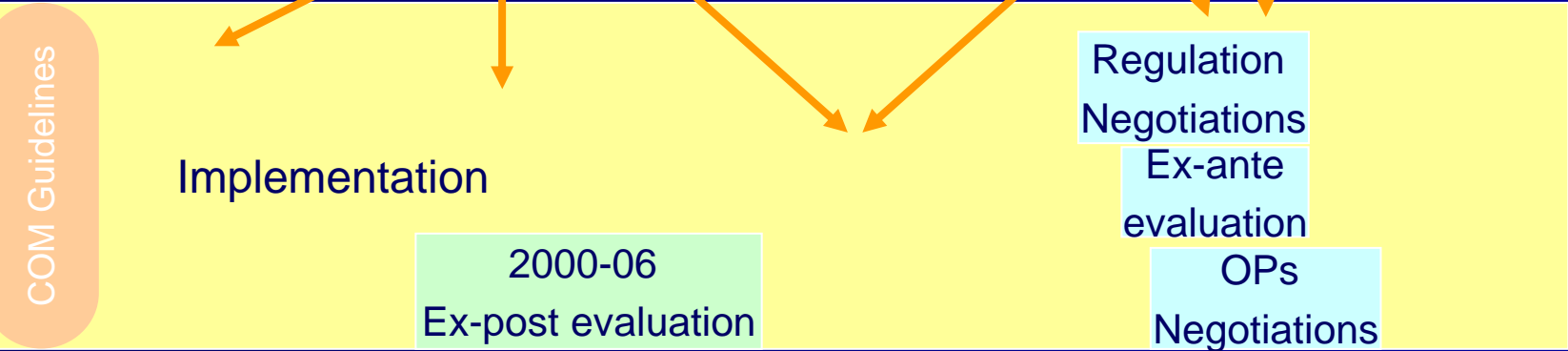
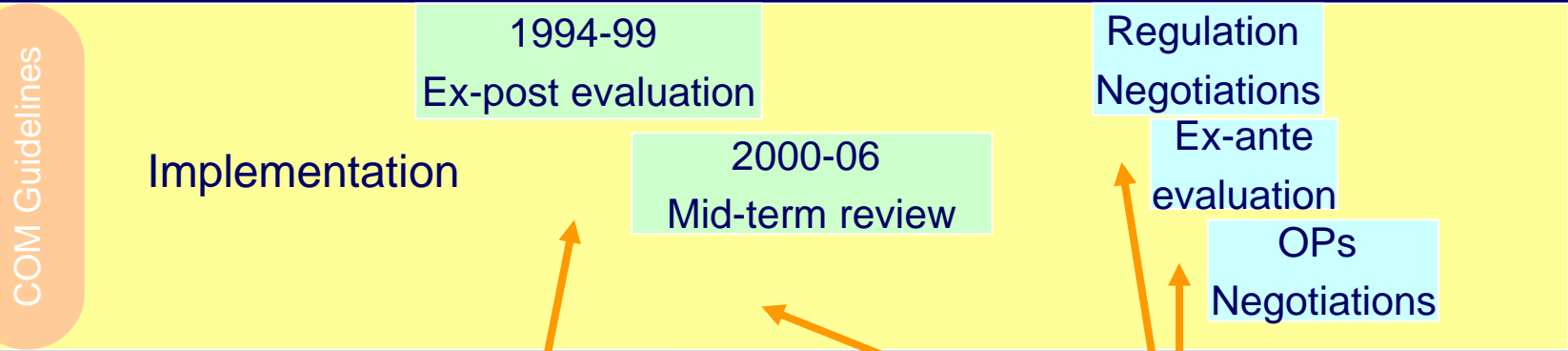
- Practical (operational) evaluations
 - Aspects of SF implementation
 - Fairly easy to implement the recommendations
 - MA & MS
- Policy (strategic) evaluations
 - Contribute to policy formulation
 - The linkage is not straight forward
 - COM & MS





2000

2006



2007

2013



- Many information streams
- Impossible to align 100% evaluation with the policy cycle
- Sometimes difficult to say how the results will be used
- Evaluation is to inform policy but often cannot make it
- Evaluation informs also other evaluations



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Evaluation fabric

+

Diversity of Member States

=

Need for soft coordination
To create an evaluation culture



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Mandate

The ESF Evaluation Partnership is since the early 90s the major forum for discussions between MS and the Commission on ESF evaluation issues.

Its main objectives in the 2007-2013 programming period are:

- to steer and capitalise on evaluation work on actions supported by the ESF with a view
- to provide assessment of the contribution of actions supported by the ESF to objectives also pursued by other EU instruments (such as OMCs, legislations).



Organisation

■ Plenary

27 MS evaluation capacities' representatives and DG EMPL Evaluation and IA unit discussing all issues concerning ESF evaluation

■ Working Groups

are to be considered as a resource for the full evaluation partnership to which they will report. Their objective is to investigate particular issues selected by the Evaluation Partnership

1. ESF contribution to the EES
2. ESF support to Antidiscrimination policies
3. ESF support to Adaptability





What do we do in the Partnership

- ToR consultation
- Discussion on methodology – 3 levels
- Presentation of EU overviews/summaries
- Presentation of evaluation results
- Presentation of evaluation set-up/organisation/system



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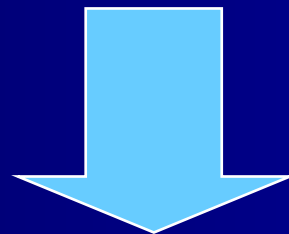
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Consultation of ToR

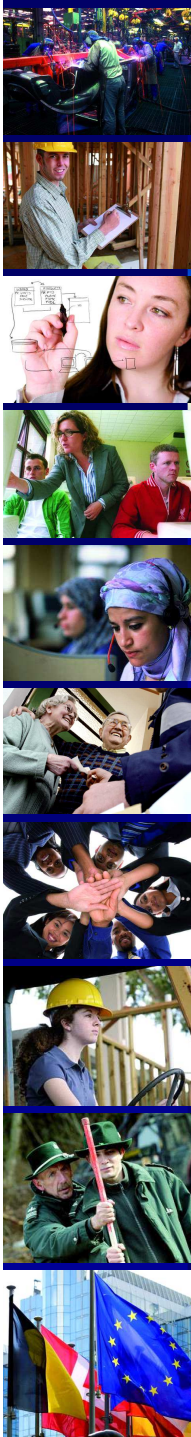
Example: ESF contribution to the EES

- Working Group
- Information on evaluations carried out/planned in MS
- Discussion on how MS see the links between ESF and EES and on data availability
- Involvement of the EES policy unit



- Common understanding of the challenges for the evaluation
- Revision of the draft ToR





Presentation of evaluation results

Example: “Researching race and employment in the UK: from human capital to employment discrimination”

- Working Group on Antidiscrimination
- Presented by Ethnic Minority Employment Division of Department for Work and Pensions
- Results of
 - 2001 Census analysis
 - Ethnic penalties in the labour market
 - Job Interviews



- “Evaluation of ESF support to the integration of the ethnic minorities and migrants in the labour market” to be commissioned by DG EMPL Evaluation Unit
- Guidance on evaluation of interventions in the field of antidiscrimination to be prepared by DG EMPL Evaluation Unit

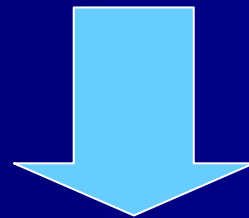




Guidance papers

Example: Equal

- Working Group on EQUAL Evaluation 2007-2008
- common approach to evaluation of EQUAL during 2007-2008
- Guidance paper for MAs on evaluation topics, questions and methodologies



- comparable evaluation results during 2007 – 2008 in order to feed them into future policy process and programmes
- synthesis of national evaluations





Discussion on broader methodological issues

Example: Indicative Guidance on ESF Evaluation Quality Standards

- Complement and make operational the WD no.5 “Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Evaluation during the Programming Period”
- 4 sections:
 - 1) Evaluation environment
 - 2) Planning of evaluation
 - 3) Implementation of evaluation
 - 4) Dissemination and utilisation of evaluation outcomes
- Good practices which constitute minimum requirements
- Examples from practice in Member States showing that the standards can be met in different ways



Achievements

- sharing ESF evaluation practices throughout the Union and introducing common approaches
- improving evaluation methods and questions
- facilitating the use of evaluation results in policy design and implementation



Lessons for Member States In practice

- Cooperation and communication within the MS administration
- Use of results cannot be forced but early involvement of the potential users might help
- Common approaches especially important for
 - Meta-evaluations
 - Evaluations of horizontal issues
 - Evaluation of mainstreaming



Lessons for Member States In general

- Talking costs little but you can gain a lot
 - Learning
 - Not repeating mistakes
- Developing expertise/critical mass experience (component of capacity building)





Thank you for your attention



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