



ENPI CBC Conference, 10-11 December, Rome

## Workshop on “Monitoring and Evaluation”

### INTRODUCTION

#### Why monitoring and evaluation are important?

Behind each ENPI CBC programme there is a vision and assumptions that are important to monitor and to evaluate in term of results and impacts, in addition to operational aspects. Monitoring and evaluation are therefore key activities for ensuring quality because they **support timely and coherent decision-making processes**. Nevertheless, often evaluation is seen as a burden or a threat rather than as a useful planning tool and a fundamental learning process.

Monitoring and evaluation activities are interlinked and complementary but there also some important differences:

- **Monitoring** is a systematic and continuous collection and examination of actual outputs and results against initial targets for the purpose of management and decision making. It relies mainly on a monitoring information system that can be integrated by field visits. It is carried out by the JMA (with the support of the JTS) and data should be regularly reported to the JMC and to the EC (annual reports).
- **Evaluation** is a periodic assessment aimed at explaining the outputs and results achieved by formulating a judgment on the value of an intervention (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact) with a view to drawing lessons guiding decision-making. In other words, it is a planning tool for reducing uncertainty and improving implementation as well as a learning and capacity building opportunity. Evaluation is usually carried out by external experts to ensure an objective evaluation of the programme (“a pair of fresh eyes”); still involving the internal staff and decision makers in the process is fundamental to ensure that there is a link between the regular monitoring and the external evaluation, to strengthen ownership and facilitate follow-up.

Due to the nature of ENPI CBC programmes, their quality is determined by the quality of the projects they grant. Therefore **monitoring and evaluation should be carried out at both programme and project level** allowing the joint management structures to take corrective measures when necessary but also to identify good practices to be used as flagship projects.

**Quantitative and qualitative indicators** at programmes and projects level should constantly be collected, elaborated (with the support of an information system) and analysed. Their role is essential to indicate whether a programme is on track or not. In the latter case, evaluation helps to find out the reasons for the problems or difficulties encountered, helping programme authorities to react on the situation. However, indicators are problematic for cross border cooperation programmes because of the multi-country and multi-sectoral setting, the great range of projects and their generally small budget.

To ensure ownership and needs-driven evaluation, an **evaluation plan** over a multi-annual perspective and where the demands of decision-makers and various stakeholders are taken on board should be developed. An evaluation plan responds to the need of tracking the implementation and delivery of the JOP, meets arising knowledge demands to support decision making and serves both the immediate and far reaching strategic and operational needs of programme authorities. From a practical point of view an evaluation plan is a tool to put most suitable evaluation methods, timing, responsibilities and resources together in a transparent way to provide a kind of 'road map' to be followed in the course of the programming work (on-going evaluation). Approved by the JMC, it should be flexible in terms of timing, thematic scope and methodological design and must be reviewed on a regular basis.

#### Inputs from the INTERACT ENPI Laboratory Group on monitoring and evaluation

In order to provide tailored support to programmes with regard to monitoring and evaluation activities, INTERACT ENPI has adopted a methodology consisting in setting up and facilitating a Laboratory Group gathering representatives from the JMAs or JTSs of the different programmes and the EC to exchange ideas and define practical solutions. A first meeting was held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November and hereinafter the main points analysed are presented.



**A. Requirements and responsibilities:**

- According to article 6 of the Implementing Rules (IR), the aim of monitoring and evaluating each JOP shall be to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the implementation.
- The JMAs are responsible for setting up their monitoring systems and yearly reporting to the JMC and to the EC on progresses achieved in implementing the programmes and their priorities.
- With regard to evaluation the IR make a clear reference only to the evaluations that will be carried out by the Commission without setting specific requirements for programmes. In those programmes where evaluation is specifically foreseen the JMC is responsible for deciding when and how it will be carried out.

**B. Monitoring system:**

- All the programmes are developing their internal monitoring system mainly using systems developed for monitoring Structural Funds activities and the indicators set out in the JOP. These indicators have been developed differently among programmes and, as acknowledged in several JOPs, defining impact indicators has proven to be particularly challenging due to the specific nature of the programmes.
- Participants raised the need to know what EC expects from programmes in terms of annual reports because this will help them to develop the monitoring system. This will be addressed by EC in parallel with instructions concerning the financial part of the annual report.
- Internal monitoring system at project level is seen as hardly applicable especially in case of small grants. At the same time it is acknowledged that annex VI (template for reporting at project level) was not taken into due consideration when preparing the application pack and this will affect the monitoring at programme level as this will be fed mainly with data extracted from these reports.

**C. Evaluation:**

- It is up to the programmes exploring specific issues and questions that are of special interest for them and develop accordingly their evaluation plans. In fact, evaluation is to be useful and usable for supporting internal decision making process and communicating to external stakeholders what has been achieved and what is the added value of ENPI CBC programmes.
- Evaluation can have a strategic nature aimed at assessing the contribution of the JOP to the objectives set out in the Strategic Paper as well as to the national and regional strategies and policies (how the programmes answer the needs of the territories and of the target groups). Evaluation can have also an operational nature aimed at assessing how the programme is delivered and how implementation could be improved (for instance, if there is a lack of applications for a given priority or projects are of low quality, evaluation can help identify the reasons for those problems and suggest solutions).
- An interesting option is to carry out cross-programmes evaluation to better understand the factors contributing to successful implementation. With this respect, participants suggested that the results of the first call could be assessed across programmes in order to present and compare results and find out differences.
- Programmes that foresee large scale projects or strategic projects (in the case of the MSB and the IT-TU programmes) envisage to evaluate them due to the important share of budget they will absorb. In addition, internal monitoring system and evaluation activities will be compulsory for this kind of projects.
- As for the other projects, programmes think to carry out the evaluation of only a sample of projects. In defining the criteria for selecting this sample, synergies could eventually be analysed with the methods adopted for defining the sample of projects to be submitted to the external audit.
- In the application packs so far approved, evaluation at project level carried out by partners is not compulsory even though the costs are eligible.

**D. Coordination with monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken by EC:**

- Participants expressed the need to know when EC envisages to carry out the mid term evaluation, how this will be done (at policy or programme level?) and what will be the role of the programmes (at which extent they will be involved in defining the evaluation questions and indicators?).
- Programmes are interested in better understanding how the EC internal results oriented monitoring system (ROM) works and eventually which synergies could be developed at project level.

