

Actors, roles and tasks involved in the assessment process in the Territorial Cooperation

Project applications and assessment in the Territorial Cooperation Programmes

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Assessors are a gateway to quality projects

- Who is involved in the project assessment?
- How do the different groups interpret the selection criteria?
- How can we match different interests?
- Can we find a common ground?

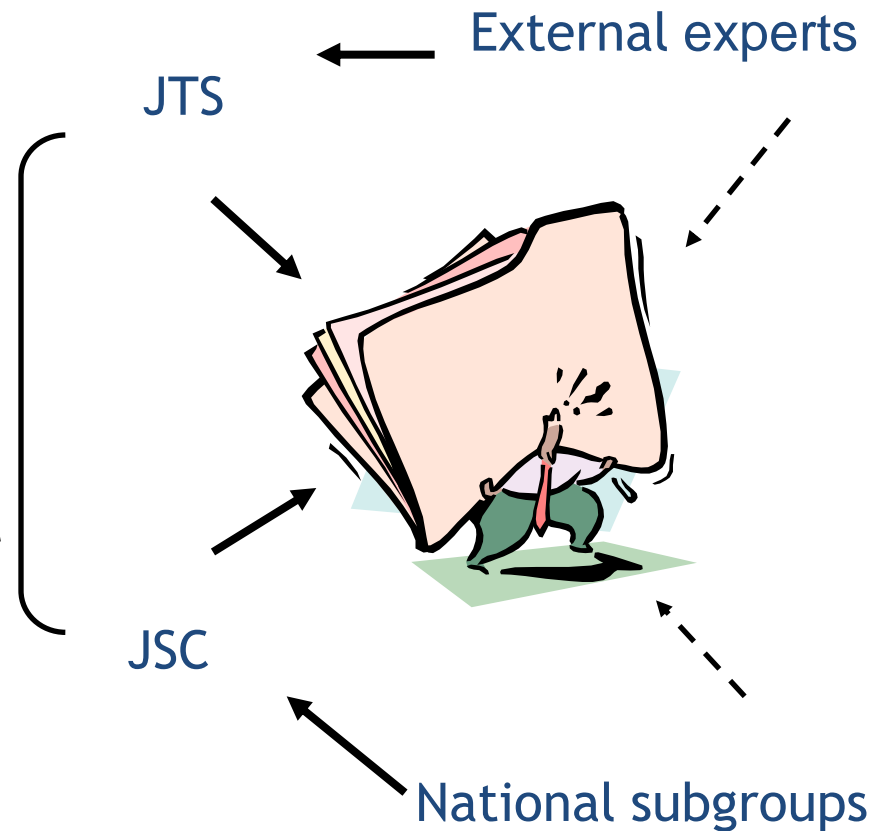


Main principles in project assessment

- Objectivity of assessment
- Equal treatment
- Transparency of assessment
- Professionalism
- Analysis
- Take account of information presented in the application only

Main actors in the selection process?

- Assessors (internal and external)
- JTS/Managing Authority
- JSC/JMC
- National authorities/Contact points





Assessors

Internal (“in-house”)

- JTS/Antenna staff
- MA
- Contact points
- JSC/JMC members
- National/regional authorities

External (outside of programme)

- Contracted assessors
- Consultants with specific knowledge
- Experts from specific sectors: engineers, professors, researchers
- Other



Formal checks

Administrative compliance

Eligibility/Accessibility

Quality check



| <i>Pros</i> | <i>Cons</i> |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the programme best; • Involved in identifying priorities/objectives; • Involved in identifying gaps; • Secure the principles of TC are adhered to; • Experience with what does/doesn't work; • Knowledge of what is already there; • Can detect early warning signs; • Consequences to deal with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impartiality; • Sectoral experience; • High staff turn-over; • Inexperienced new staff to assess projects; • Capacity (when too many applications) |



Quality check!

Pool of assessors or *ad hoc*

Technical expertise needed to understand and assess the proposal

Specific calls for assessors

INDEPENDENCE is a key word



Can we marry the two approaches?

- Identify cases where external expertise is necessary;
- Invite external experts to thematic events when applications are being developed;
- Arrange for regular briefings between external assessors and programme staff;
- Make available to them results of programme gap analyses, scoping studies, focused calls or other important programme documents which direct the scope of the programme (e.g. spatial studies identifying new challenges);
- If relying only on external experts make sure they are reliable/tested



Joint Technical Secretariat

Assessment in-house

- Organizes and coordinates assessment process
- Collects questions and clarifications arising during assessment
- Main contact point for external assessors
- Prepares assessment manuals
- Collects results of different sections of the assessment by processing assessment grids
- Prepares reports and recommendations for JSC/JMC
- Participates in the decision process as observer
- Informs beneficiaries of the decision



Applications in at deadline



JTS/MA convenes a meeting with those involved in the assessment Procedure (JTS staff, external experts, etc.)



Decision on how to carry the assessment process:

- split of projects
- who assesses what , when?
- timeframe
- regular meetings - when, who is involved?
- review specific requirements for the call.
- how are decisions on final recommendations reached?



Assessment starts



Joint Monitoring Committee/Joint Steering Committee

Decision-making bodies!

- Joint selection and approval of projects on the basis of the joint selection criteria and recommendations prepared by JTS
- Draws up and approve the final ranking list of the selected projects (accepted for financing/accepted with conditions/rejected)
- Members of JSC/JMC have the possibility to change the scoring in duly justified cases exclusively based on the agreed selection criteria



JMC

- Compulsory for each programme
- Secures and oversees programme implementation
- Countries of the programme represented
- Takes decision about programme management issues, e.g. discusses and reviews criteria for selecting of projects; reviews criteria following the programme needs; discuss and agree programme documents and templates; reviews progress on targets, etc.
- When there is no JSC in the programme also makes a decision on projects

JSC

- Optional programme body
- Set at the first meeting of the JMC
- Responsible for the selection of projects;
- Reports its task to the JMC;
- Has its own rules of procedure
- Usually implies a wider representation



Programme Committees

JMC / JSC are the programme's ultimate decision-maker on project selection. They act on behalf of the participating countries. As such they have a key quality assurance role!



Example: How do Joint Steering Committees work?

- JSC gets together after recommendations have been formed (usually 2 times per year);
- They receive the full applications together with the recommendations prior to the meeting (in some programmes 3 weeks);
- Each meeting has a Chairman (on a rotating principle) to facilitate discussions and draw conclusions;
- Representatives are formed from the national, regional and local level.
- It is also possible to involve other socio-economic actors.
- There are participants with no-voting status.
- The JTS/MA is also present at the meeting
- Decisions should be reached on each project that has passed eligibility check.



Example: How are Joint Steering Committees run?

- What do you send them in advance? When?
- The need for pre-meeting - with whom? Why?
- How do JSCs convene?
 - What are the roles in the JSC? What is the role of the JTS?
 - Right of vote/no right of vote? Who?
 - Discussion of projects - one by one, per priority, other...
 - How is decision reached?
- Rules of procedures for JSC - what do they normally cover?
 - For example: Tasks, conflict of interest, membership, tasks and remit of chairperson; quorum and decision-making; requirements for decisions on projects, working language, confidentiality.



Monitoring and Steering Committee - single or separate body?

Quality considerations to be kept in mind:

- It is expected that stronger links to the national level will be built
- Running back-to-back JSC and JMC meetings may save time for travel but at the same time sufficient time should be allowed for discussions and decision-making in both committees.
- Decisions on providing funding and monitoring the effects of these decisions are combined in one body



National subcommittees

- To allow relevant actors to express opinion regarding the projects;
- To formulate national opinion and priorities;
- Who can participate?
- How does it work?



National subcommittees: Positive aspects

- Allows for a health-check against national/regional priorities and relevance to national/regional debates
- Allows additional expert opinions to be expressed and considered
- Improves transparency of programme procedures and decision-making
- Improves the sense of ownership among stakeholders
- Can provide an indication of the perceived relevance of project objectives and results - i.e. an indication about the real strategic value of the project



National subcommittees: Some concerns

- Could undermine the programme's decision-making structure;
- Not all actors participating in sub-committees are familiar with the principles/nature of Territorial Cooperation programmes/projects
- Opens the door for national lobbying by project partners
- If the final JMC/JSC decision is different to the sub-committee opinion, this can lead to tension, requests for appeal, etc.



How to assure quality?

- Committees should approve projects that suit best the programme's goal
- The base for decision-making should be clear;
 - When to give conditional approvals and when to reject a project?
 - Discourage project lobbying
- Important to make JMC/JSC members aware of the implications of their decisions
- What to do in cases where decisions largely overturn recommendation?