

Progress report and preliminary findings on update of the SWOT analysis of the CMEF and the ongoing evaluation systems

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Introduction

- **The update of the SWOT analysis** in 2010 has the specific aim to
 - **Highlight STRENGTHS** of the CMEF and positive changes with regard to the former period
 - **Identify WEAKNESSES** (inconsistencies, problems etc.) in the application of evaluation methodologies and processes
 - **Analyse OPPORTUNITIES** for further improvement of the evaluation system
 - **Define THREATS** that may undermine the functioning of the (common) evaluation system

Information sources

- **...reviewed for the present Progress Report**
 1. Focus group reports (2008, 2009)
 2. Requests received in Info mail box
 3. Minutes of missions
 4. Problems encountered section in Annual Progress Reports
 5. Conference proceedings
 6. Thematic Working Group Papers (Impact, Leader); RuDi Paper; Advanced Eval
 7. Minutes of expert interviews
 7. Minutes of the meetings of the Evaluation Expert Committee
- **...still to be integrated**
 - Outcomes of interactive validation workshop at EU and MS level
 - Further information sources

SWOT-analysis – preliminary findings

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

RD programmes as evaluation subject

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic approach to RD policy • Simplification through single funding system; single set of rules (programming, financing, monitoring, auditing) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much sector approach, little importance of territorial approach (exception: LEADER) • No „rural eligibility criteria“ to target interventions more effectively |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables incorporation of RD policy into wider EU policies • Chance for clearer M&E system (as requested by Court of auditors) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk that contribution of RD Policy to EU Priorities can not be measured sufficiently. • Risk to overlook other important effects of RD Policy |

The CMEF and the evaluation approach

- CMEF has become useful reference point for evaluation stakeholders within and across Member States
- Consistent evaluation framework

- CMEF is a rather complex and demanding system
- Missing experience and resources

- CMEF enables harmonisation of approaches
- Flexibility allows for innovative approaches in the Member States

- Changing evaluation framework (e.g. Health Check, new definitions etc.) creates problems to RDPs

The timing of the evaluation process

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation is organised as series of evaluation activities instead of isolated, singular evaluation reports• Strong process-orientation of evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ex-ante too early to allow full assessment of M&E system• MTE too early to capture impacts in the full extent |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On-going evaluation might be a an opportunity to balance not favorable timing of the mid-term and ex-post evaluation (but... question of resources!) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTE and APR as the only source for policy adjustments may not provide sufficient information on the actual RDP short and long term impacts |

Reporting requirements / quality of reports

- National authorities do pay attention to ongoing evaluation and deliver Annual Progress Report, strategic monitoring Report, Evaluation Reports

- Ex-ante reports are flat and rely on qualitative methods
- Annual Progress Reports shift too much information in tables
- Administrative burden

- Clearer focus for reporting requirements might increase usefulness

- Annual reporting risks to become a formal exercise (without meaning)
- Uncertainties about reporting obligations create confusions

The common indicator set

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common indicator set available• Focus on quantification of indicators at each level (output, result, impact)• Possibility to generate additional indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall too many indicators (but not enough on impacts)• Low relevance of common baseline and impact indicators• Difficulties in setting up quantified target levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chance to incorporate RD evaluation system in country-specific framework (through additional indicators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in definition and measurement could negatively influence comparability• Use of programme-specific indicators not enough encouraged

The methods for assessing RD impacts

- Flexibility in methods for the assessment of RD impacts
- Further development and collection of methods by EC and Evaluation Expert Network
- Supplementary guidance

- Methodological challenges (multiple intervening factors; counterfactuals etc.)
- Costs of complex evaluation methods
- Broad use of naive methods

- Fostering of complementary methodological approaches
- Combination of qualitative/quantitative methods
- Use of advanced methods

- Variety of methodological approaches may hamper comparability
- Impacts of axis 3 and 4 may be difficult to assess (with given indicators)

Evaluation culture / use of evaluation results

- Stronger link between monitoring, evaluation and decision-making, encourages a close communication between the Managing Authority and evaluators

- Lack of recognition of usefulness of evaluation results

- Opportunity to establish evaluation as an interactive process between evaluator and public
- To introduce the evaluation component to implementation

- Policy makers may have no interest to consider evaluation outcomes or to collect information on impacts

Involvement and roles of evaluation stakeholders

- **Very clear institutional role and responsibilities given by Reg. 1698/2005) – for EC, Helpdesk, MA, PA, MC**

- **Economic & social partners and local actors still not sufficiently involved in evaluation**
- **Low coordination among different DGs**

- **Early stage involvement of programme evaluators facilitates data collection**
- **Bottom-up approach of evaluation enhances quality of evaluation process**

- **Top down pattern in evaluation causes lack of interest**
- **Low use of evaluation results by MAs**

Evaluation capacity

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Evaluation Expert Network brings evaluation know-how from the MS level to the EU• Support to MS is provided through ongoing methodological work at EC level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New system not sufficiently equipped with capacities• Insufficient training at regional national and EU level• Still rather few networking activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possibility to further develop evaluation approaches in a dialogue between evaluators and administrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of training and networking might hinder appropriate implementation of evaluation framework• Accumulation of evaluation know-how in very few institutions

Next steps

- Integration of further information sources
- Validation of SWOT-findings
- Drafting of conclusions

- Thank you for your attention!