The *ex ante* evaluation of SWOT analysis and needs assessment:

Prerequisite for sound intervention logic?

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Outline

- **BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES**

- **OVERVIEW ON *EX ANTE* EVALUATION**

- **CASE STUDIES**

- **CHALLENGES**

- **MAIN OUTCOMES**

- **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

BACKGROUND

Managing Authorities are in the **process of drafting** their RDPs:

1. The SWOT analysis and the needs assessment (NA)

**2. The *ex ante* evaluation provides feedback on**

- Quality of data and use of common context indicators;
- Completeness and consistency of the SWOT-analysis and needs assessment;
- Structure of the SWOT and needs assessment;
- Linkages between SWOT analysis, needs assessment and RDP intervention logic, etc.

OBJECTIVES

- **Develop understanding** on common issues raised by the *ex ante* evaluation on SWOT and needs assessment;

- **Exchange of experiences** on SWOT analysis and needs assessment;

- **Identify lessons learnt** for the improvement of the SWOT analysis, needs assessment and intervention logic before finalizing the RDP.

Tendering and type of contract (May 2013)

**Most of the contracted *ex ante* evaluations were contracted to private consortia;**
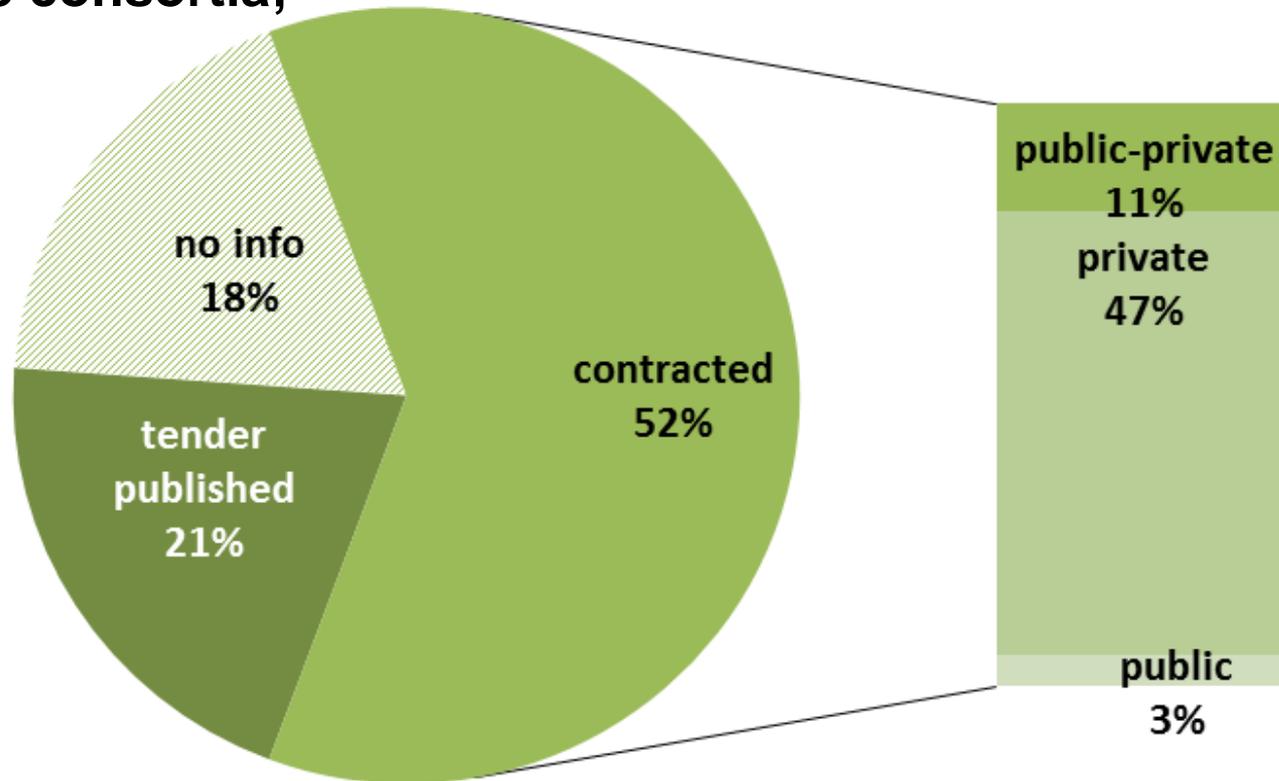
Moreover:

- 37% were assigned to evaluators previously contracted;

- 21% to new evaluators.

Contract start and duration

The majority of the *ex ante* evaluations started during the fourth quarter of 2012;

Start of EAE contract (88 RDPs; 53% no info)

Quarter	Percentage
2012-Q2	3%
2012-Q3	10%
2012-Q4	15%
2013-Q1	10%
2013-Q2	7%
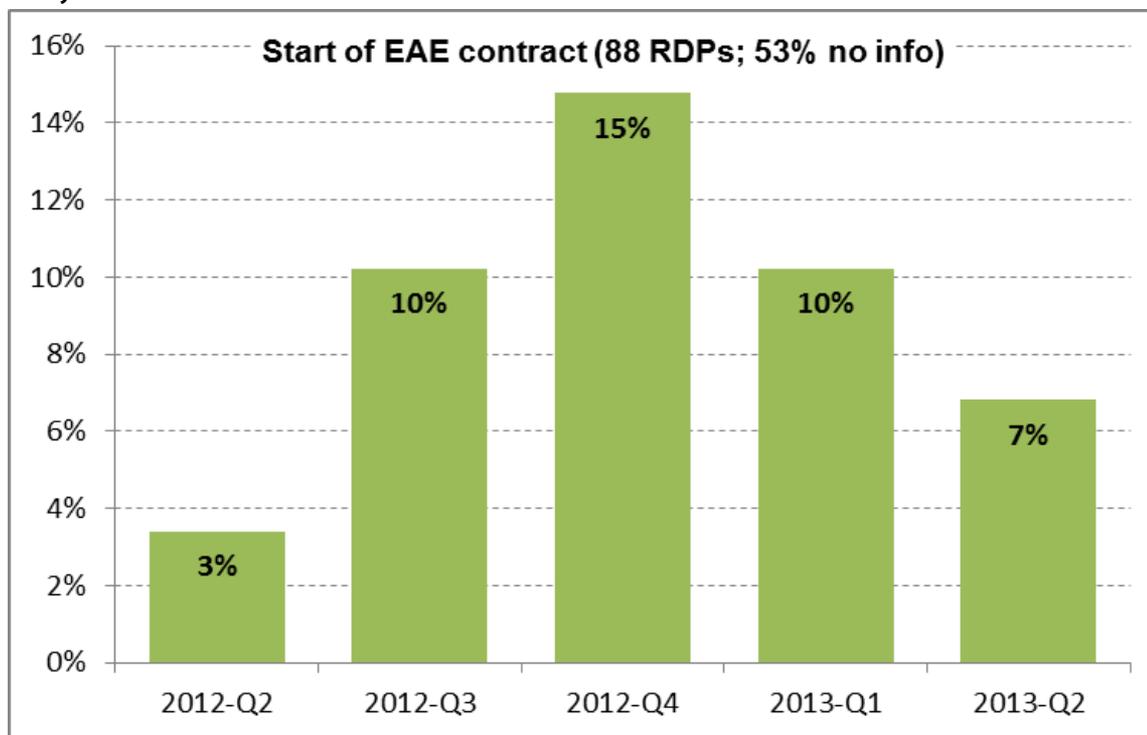
Moreover:

• Most of the contracted *ex ante* have an expected duration of 10-12 months, (15%) or of 13-18 months (11%);

• Only a minority has a duration inferior to 9 months or superior to 19 months (3%).

Case Studies

- **Internal thematic working groups** (e.g. risk management, LFA, investment support, etc.)

- Initially one SWOT by each thematic WG

- One **summary SWOT**

- Stakeholders were **deeply involved** (also through an online platform);

- Difficulties: the **large amount of details** to handle, some **horizontal issues** were crossing administrative boundaries.

- An **external expert** contracted for SWOT and **capacity building** for stakeholders;

- One WG for each RD priority. Findings were **translated** in one summary SWOT table;

- **Wide participation** of stakeholders in Working groups**;**

- Difficulties: to **stabilize the set of context indicators** and establish guidance on how they should be used.

Case Studies
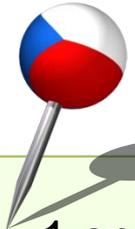
- **8 WGs** (1 for each RD priority, 1 on LFA and 1 on forestry) to develop **one SWOT** summary table

- Needs: **Turn** the weak points of the SWOT into strengths, to meet opportunities and face threats

- Difficulties: Stakeholders did **not have sufficient experience,** data was not fully available from the beginning

- Solution: **train stakeholders and start data collection at early stages** ensuring a continuous data flow.

- In several German Länder a **joint socio-economic, SWOT analysis and NA** were carried out to coordinate the interventions across CSF funds;

- **The joint SWOT and NA was on limited use**, and more fund-specific SWOT and NA was needed.

- Main limitation was the **diverging interpretation of priorities and needs** among programmes;

- The **main benefits** were to be able to earlier identify thematic, sectorial or regional gaps in funding and to identify potentials for creating synergies.

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Challenges faced in SWOT, NA and *ex ante* evaluation

4 Case Studies

Participants identified main challenges

WORKING GROUP's THEMES

1. The structure of the SWOT analysis
2. Integration of characteristics of different territories
3. The use context indicators / data in the SWOT
4. Prioritization of needs and the links to the RD strategy
5. Cooperation between *ex ante* evaluator, MA and SWOT experts and RDP stakeholders?

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MAIN OUTCOMES

– Key to develop a holistic **analysis of the territory** as the bases for the SWOT analysis and needs assessment

– **Territorial differences and specificities** should be reflected in the analysis of the territory when relevant for the RDP

– Important to consider indicators' **trends** in the analysis of the territory

– At the <u>development</u> stage, diverse options for **structuring** the SWOT analysis and need assessment → The <u>final</u> SWOT and NA **comply with the structure requested by the EC.**

MAIN OUTCOMES

– **Links** between the identified needs with the SWOT and the situation analysis should be **clearly reflected** (flow charts, clarity in statements, etc.)

– How to prioritize the needs:

- **Technical approaches for prioritization**, e.g. Multi-Criteria-Analysis, cost-benefit-analysis, etc;

- **Involving stakeholders** in the process (e.g. stakeholder-negotiation), put them in dialogue and allow them to put forward their expectations and needs;

➔ *needs are not prioritized based on purely technical or political criteria.*

MAIN OUTCOMES

– **Participation** and consideration of **stakeholders opinions** becomes relevant at all development stages (SWOT analysis, NA, intervention logic)

– Important and active **role of MAs** in applying a participatory approach

  • Ensure diversity of stakeholders involved

  • Manage stakeholders' expectations (framing discussion, clarifying their role and influence).

  • Avoid dominant positions through proper strategic design of the participatory approach

  • Ensure adequate capacities of stakeholders (by *ex ante* evaluator)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. How to submit and present the *ex ante* evaluation report ?

The finalized *ex ante* evaluation report will be **submitted** together with the RDP as an Annex.

2. Evaluation questions as bases for *ex ante* evaluation?

The *ex ante* **evaluation report** does **not** need to be based on **evaluation questions**.

However, if the approach is selected, the "*Guidelines for the* ex ante *evaluation of 2014-2020 RDPs*" recommends potential evaluation questions.

3. Iterative approach when delay in contracting *ex ante?*

If the *ex ante* evaluation commences late, it is still expected to **assess** the complete RDP and **reflect the process** and **recommendations** in the respective chapters.

CLARIFICATIONS WITH EC

1. How should the SWOT analysis and NA be **presented and submitted** to the EC?

2. How should the SWOT analysis and the needs assessment be **structured** in the RDP?

3. In which part of the SWOT should Member States reflect the **context indicators** that were used?

4. What is the expected **length** for the *ex ante* evaluation report?

5. What parts or elements of the *ex ante* evaluation report should be **included** in the RDP?

FURTHER INFORMATION

1. FAQ website
   http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/faq/en/faq_en.cfm

   In July- Working Document - **Frequently Asked Questions** regarding SWOT analysis, needs assessment and *ex ante* evaluation*.*

2. Good Practice Workshop Newsletter

3. Webpage on Good Practice Workshop on "The *ex ante* evaluation of SWOT analysis and needs assessment" **http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/good-practices-workshops/ex-ante-evaluation-swot-analysis-needs-assessment/en/ex-ante-evaluation-swot-analysis-needs-assessment_en.cfm**

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