

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

Results from a survey

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# Outline

- 1. PURPOSE**
- 2. OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS**
- 3. MAIN FINDINGS**
- 4. LESSONS LEARNT**

# 1. Purpose

- To **identify approaches** used to develop the SWOT analysis and needs assessment
- To **screen findings** of the *ex ante* evaluation
- To **analyze the effective influence of the *ex ante* evaluation** on the SWOT analysis, NA and intervention logic

## 2. Overview of respondents

- The survey was sent to MAs and *ex ante* evaluators
- 22 surveys were collected from 15 different MSs
- State of play of respondents:
  - **SWOT analysis** : Most respondents are in an **advanced stage**.
  - **NA**: Half of respondents **did not start** the assessment.
  - **Intervention Logic**: Half of the respondents are in the **development stage**. Few are in a final stage.
  - **Ex ante evaluation**: Overall, the *ex ante* is at an **early stage**.

# 3. Main findings

## *(Methods & organization)*

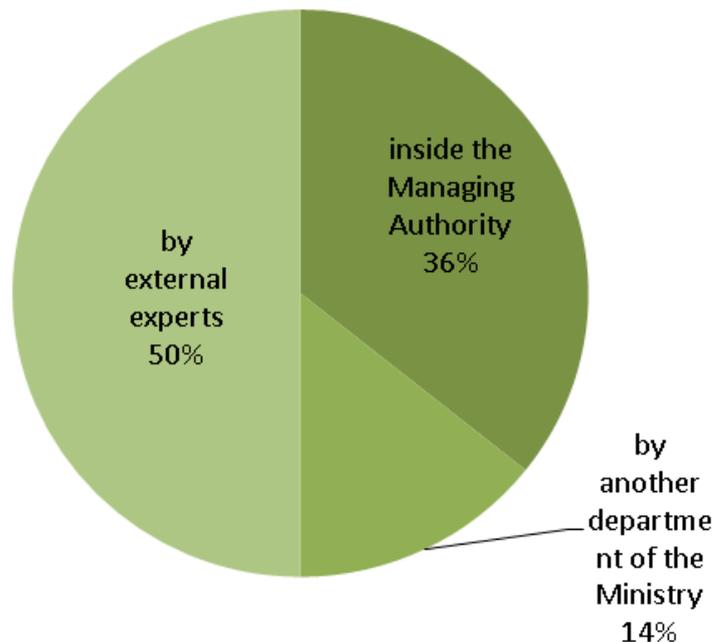
- The **SWOT analysis** is mainly based on **quantitative methods** (data analysis, indicators assessment etc.), however often qualitative assessments complemented the analysis of the SWOT.
- The **needs assessment** is driven by more **qualitative approaches and consultations** (e.g. external experts (LV, LT)), steering committee (EE), thematic working groups with RD stakeholders (EL)).
- *Example UK\_England:*
  - (1) Based on the SWOT and discussions with policy teams within the MA, a list of 39 'Opportunities', draft objectives and interventions for the next programme was produced.
  - (2) Prioritization of needs was conducted using a 'Multi-Criteria Analysis' spreadsheet to identify the strength of need for each objective based upon scoring each objective against a set list of criteria developed in working groups with RD stakeholders.

# 3. Main findings

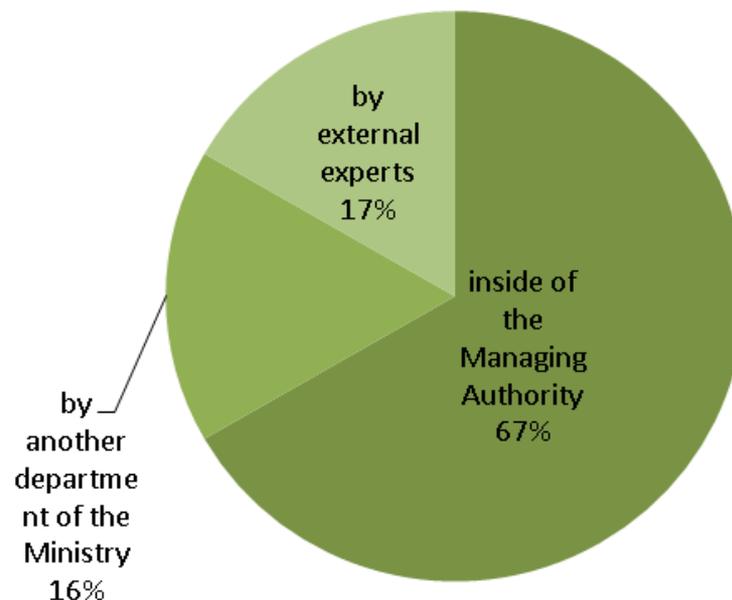
## (Methods & organization)

- **MAs** tend to **outsource the SWOT analysis** to external bodies (e.g. research institutes such as (IRES) Istituto Ricerche Economiche e Sociali (IT\_Piemonte), external ongoing evaluation team (SK)) while developing the needs **assessment in house**.

organisational set-up for SWOT



organisational set-up for NA



# 3. Main findings

## (Methods & organization)

- When **qualitative and participative approaches** (e.g. via thematic workshops, working groups, reflection groups, etc.) different bodies are involved (e.g. MAs, Steering Committee, *ex ante* evaluators, external experts, other Ministry departments, and the civil society).
- An **iterative approach** between ***ex ante*** and programme design is only possible when the *ex ante* evaluation is contracted at an **early stage** → *ex ante* feedback is provided several times.
- Most of the **SWOTs** are **structured around RD priorities**. However, **other solutions** were also implemented to structure the SWOT
  - SWOT structured around FAs and main sectors (IT\_Piemonte),
  - One overall SWOT for EARDF, ERDF and ESF with separate SWOT synopsis (DE\_Hessen).
  - Additional SWOTs for cross-cutting issues and thematic sub-programmes (HU)

# 3. Main findings

## *(Data & Indicators)*

- **The draft list of Common Context Indicators (CCIs)** was **employed** from the initial stages. For some SWOTs not used as they were already advanced (DE-Hessen, UK\_England, EE ).
- **Estimations and Proxy indicators** are **employed** as a solution to overcome data gaps on CCIs. (e.g. Forestry and agricultural productivity (LV)). In IT the NRN will support the identification of adequate proxy indicators (IT\_Piemonte).
- **Programme-specific context indicators** are evidently **broadly employed** to cover the specificities of the territory and to allow for and analysis at lower territorial levels. (e.g. rural disaggregation, land consolidation, international trade, level of market-oriented farms, auto-sufficiency degree or short supply chains)

# 3. Main findings (*ex ante* evaluation)

- The **ex ante** evaluation of the SWOT and NA has raised mainly issues on
  - Weak **coherence and linkages between** SWOT, NA and int. logic.
  - Insufficient **evidence-based** strategic decision and statements.
  - Weak **stakeholder participation**.
  - Poor **definition of objectives and RD vision**.
- The **feedback** of the *ex ante* evaluation on the SWOT analysis and needs assessment is recognized as **an essential contribution** to improve it.

*More detailed issues presented in table of Annex 2, Working document-Survey result*

### 3. Difficulties: methodological

- Identify an adequate **methodology and structure** for the SWOT (UK)
- Combine a **linear and integrated logic** at the same time. (HU)
- Define the **object of analysis** (RDP territory? Agri-forestry sector?), and its internal and external environment for SWOT (PT)
- Link the **SWOT analysis with objectives** in the intervention logic. (UK)
- Correlate the **needs of rural areas with the RD priorities**, focus areas, measures and operations. (HU)
- **Prioritize** the needs (LV)

## 3. Difficulties: data, coordination, stakeholders

- **Collection of primary data** from different official sources and **analyze** it (e.g. time and data gaps, association and consistency issues). Insufficient quantitative information to conduct SWOT (ES)
- Limited regional **disaggregated data** (at least at NUTS III) (RO).
- Formulate and deliver **proxy and additional indicators** (RO)
- **Coordination** and further **involvement** of MAs (SK)
- **Harmonize and integrate different views** of stakeholders (LV, PT)

*More detailed issues presented in table of Annex 1, Working document-Survey result*

## 4. Lessons learnt

- Overall, an **interactive and integrated process** benefit the programme design.
- Frequent **meetings** and improved **communication** bring **positive results** to the process (including the *ex ante* evaluation).
- A **strong evidence-based** justification (information, analysis, investigations) facilitates the **decision-making process**.



# Thank you for your attention!

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