

# SIXTH EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON EVALUATION OF COHESION POLICY

WARSAW, 30 NOVEMBER-1 DECEMBER 2009

## “NEW METHODS FOR COHESION POLICY EVALUATION: PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING”

### PROVISIONAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

30 NOVEMBER 2009

**8.30 – 9.00: Registration**

**9.00 – 10.30: Opening and Keynote Speeches**

9.00 – 9.30: Opening speech by Polish Minister

9.30 – 10.00: Opening speech by Commissioner / Director General for Regional Policy

10.00 – 10.30: Keynote speaker

**10.30 – 11.00: Coffee**

**11.00 – 13.00: Workshop Sessions**

***Workshop 1: Measuring impact with counterfactuals, comparisons & controls***

Counterfactuals and control groups are a powerful technique, with the potential to generate convincing evidence for the rigorous evaluation of effects. However, the quality of the results relies crucially on preparation, data availability and intelligent application of the key underlying principles. In this workshop, academics and practitioners will discuss the potential applications and limitations of such techniques, giving examples and tips from recent experience.

***Workshop 2: Cohesion Policy major projects: incentives for better performance and accountability***

The requirement to carry out cost benefit analyses for major projects financed by Cohesion Policy has generated much interest in this analytical technique in Europe. The workshop will discuss challenges linked to correct cost and time estimates, incentives to improve the quality of CBA and in this context, the administrative capacity of Member States to commission such analyses.

***Workshop 3: Revealing the causal chain***

Evaluation should help to make explicit why and how an intervention should achieve its effects and analyse causal factors. "Theory driven evaluation" and particularly "realistic evaluation" are relevant methods. These methods focus on logic models and frameworks

to generate a programme theory and evaluation of the combination of processes and context may lead to certain effects. This workshop will explore whether methods of explaining and testing out the underlying theories of a policy, programme or project can help to identify their effects.

This workshop will address the following issues:

- Making sound judgements about the effects of public policies: how to explore the missing links between cause and effect?
- Determining causality in theory-driven evaluation: explaining connections between programme theories, activities and effects.
- Is realistic evaluation a realistic approach to evaluate complex policies, including Cohesion policy?

#### ***Workshop 4: Innovative methods for evaluating innovation***

Innovation may take different forms: it encompasses innovative products, processes, services and governance. It may happen in all sectors of activity and may require new way of working and thinking. It cannot be assessed in isolation: it stems from the interaction and collaboration of different actors in a given socio-economic environment and it depends on their ability to create and to absorb new ideas and techniques. Innovation also takes time to turn into added value and to translate into regional development.

This workshop will address the following issues:

- What type of innovation is meaningful to evaluate in the framework of ERDF-funded programmes?
- What methods should be used to evaluate innovation? How should we take into account the socio-economic context? What should we measure and at what stage of the innovation process? What indicators should we use?
- What are the benefits and constraints of evaluating innovation at national and at regional level?

#### **13.00 – 15.00: Buffet Lunch**

#### **15.00 – 17.00: Workshop Sessions**

##### ***Workshop 5: Macroeconomic models: the regional challenge***

Macroeconomic modelling is a useful technique, giving clear headline figures for programme performance in terms of growth and employment. However, a macro model is only as good as its underlying assumptions. This workshop discusses practical attempts to improve models by building them on firmer micro-economic foundations. In addition, the workshop will discuss regionalisation of models and complementary approaches for measuring the macroeconomic impact of Cohesion Policy, using econometric techniques.

##### ***Workshop 6: Telling the story: using case studies***

Case studies have become a common evaluation tool because they can provide a picture, which is often more reliable than the outputs from other tools in context of the scarcity of basic data. This workshop will address the following issues:

- In which situations are case studies appropriate?
- What are their advantages and limitations?
- In which conditions could we generalize from a set of case studies? Or how can a series of case studies be selected to enable sound comparative analysis?
- Which are the main features of each type of case study (Exploratory case studies; Illustrative case studies; Programme implementation case studies; programme effects case studies)?

#### ***Workshop 7: Designing and using Indicators***

Indicators express the goals and objectives of interventions quantitatively, and are also necessary to measure the progress of socio-economic programmes. Employing indicators to monitor the progress or outcome of development programmes, however, is a more demanding and complex task than is usually expected.

- Development programmes usually contain various operations to reach complex socio-economic objectives. At the same time we can only use a limited number of indicators to describe the observed effects. How can a limited number of indicators reflect these complexities? Are quantitative indicators appropriate tools or should we find another way to express impacts?
- Where and how can causal links be established among indicators? At the level of operations or at higher levels (at group of operations or programmes)? What time-lag is tolerable between an operation and its effect that still allows establishing causal links?
- How can the common interpretation of indicators be ensured? How can we ensure that indicators measure what programme developers wanted them to measure? What do indicators measure?

#### ***Workshop 8: GDP, sustainable development, quality of life: what really counts?***

GDP illustrates economic activity; it allows regions to buy good environment and social welfare. Sustainable development, on the other hand, is a concept promising reconciliation of economic, social and environmental progress. The broadest concept is perhaps quality of life. GDP is easy to measure; but sustainable development and quality of life are intrinsically difficult to be analysed and measured. This workshop will discuss which concept really matters for Cohesion policy and if measurement challenges for complex concepts can be overcome.

This workshop will address the following issues:

- GDP as a good indicator for need of intervention, but not for the success of the policy- does it tell us the full story?

- Sustainable development – a concept developed enough to guide Cohesion Policy programmes?
- Improving quality of life: can this objective guide our policy development?

**18.00 : Reception offered by the Polish authorities (tbc)**

**1 DECEMBER 2009**

**9.30 – 11.00: Plenary: Feedback Session**

Feedback by the workshop rapporteurs

**11.00 – 11.30: Coffee**

**11.30 – 13.00: Round Table – Using the Evaluation methods: from Theory to Practice**

The round table will discuss the following issues:

- Different and identifying the most appropriate evaluation methods for programmes / areas of intervention / projects
- Quantitative vs. qualitative evaluation methods
- Appropriate evaluation questions at different points in time

**13.00: Close of Conference**

**13.00 – 14.30: Sandwich lunch**