

Good Practice Workshop, Prague 27-28 May 2013

"The ex ante evaluation of SWOT analysis and needs assessment"

Case Study of Hungary

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PART 1: APPROACH TO CONDUCT THE SWOT AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Background

- Work on SWOT started relatively early (relative to list of common context indicators, to WP on Elements of strategic programming and before tendering the ex-ante)
- Hungary decided to hire a professional moderator for the SWOT analysis: The ongoing evaluator got commissioned for the task ('Pre-exante' evaluation)

The role of the external expert

The role of the external expert was:

- To contribute to the development of programming capacities: To train stakeholders on the SWOT, on the new requirements for 2014-2020
- To facilitate several SWOT workshops, to act as moderator
- To give methodological guidance and prepare background documents (list of international trends to support the development of Opportunities and Threats)
- To make sure the SWOT can be supported by evidence and is in line with the requirements following from the Regulation: There is a logical „SWOT-needs assessment- strategic response” chain

Our approach

- Establishment of Working Groups representing *key stakeholders*, mapping and analysis of further stakeholders by the WGs
- *Capacity building* in all WGs (stakeholder mapping, SWOT, ex-ante evaluation, tools)
- *Evidence based SWOT* (data, lessons of the present programming, international trends)
- Structuring along *EAFRD priorities* and concentrating on territorial differences
- The *coherence* of the next steps with the SWOT

Main principals

- Stakeholder Participation: SWOT developed by Thematic Working Groups (WG). Aiming at achieving 'consensus' at the Coordinatory WG (Heads of WGs)
- Basis of Evidence: The SWOT is based on statistical data, trends and assumptions about the potential influence of external factors e.g. policy shifts at national level, new economic trends etc. and the experience of the present programming period (mid-term evaluation)

A Series of Participatory Workshops

12 sessions between 12 Sept 2012- 6 Nov 2012

aiming at:

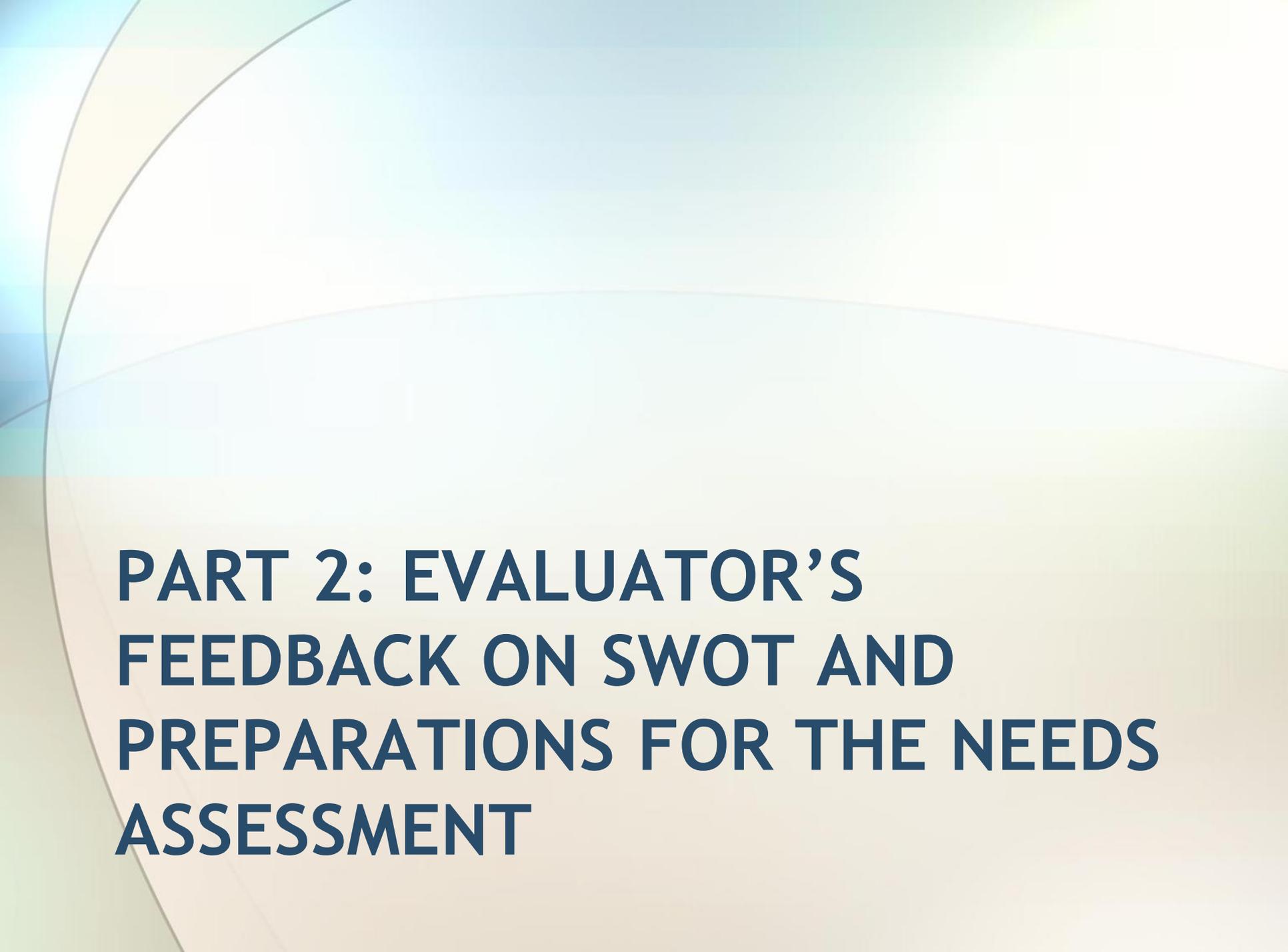
1. Providing information: requirements re 2014-2020 regulation, methodologies, priorities for RD, ex-ante evaluation and guidelines
2. Preparing for and justifying of the SWOT (facts - context indicators, international trends)
3. SWOT workshops in each WGs

SWOT workshops at the level of the WG for Coordination

- Synthesis of the WG SWOT tables
- Work in focus groups based on assessment grid provided (repetitions, filtering incoherence, relevance, proper level of analysis, clarity, completeness etc.)
- As a result: First draft version of the RDP SWOT

Evidence based classic approach

We set the objectives (focus area), connected them to relevant (characterized by common context indicators) situation features (S and W) and predictable changes resulting from the trends (O,T)



**PART 2: EVALUATOR'S
FEEDBACK ON SWOT AND
PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEEDS
ASSESSMENT**

SWOT and needs assessment

- The approach followed had the strengths of consensus, stakeholders, participation, BUT the weakness of being „universal”, having mostly „general” items
- An Excel based model and a needs assessment template were built by the evaluator using Commission’s existing guidelines and findings of the MTE for the purpose of a ‘bottom-up’ refinement of the SWOT and the support of the needs assessment and the formulation of the strategy

Guidelines used

- WORKING DOCUMENT FOR THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (05/11/2012) RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING AND TARGET SETTING (2014-2020)
- European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Working Paper, Elements of strategic programming for the period 2014-2020, Working paper prepared in the context of the Seminar on “Successful Programming” EAFRD 2014-2020, Brussels, 6th and 7th December 2012

Model description (Attachments)

- We matched objectives with the strategic directions for the 18 focus areas
- We revised the table on the contribution of measures/submeasures to the objectives of the focus areas based on MTE and other empirical evidence
- The global SWOT got completed „bottom-up”

Needs assessment template

Focus area (overall objective of the SWOT at this level)	S	W
Trendek (lehetőségekhez vagy veszélyekhez)	O	T
	Submeasure	Submeasure
Comment	Measure (strategic direction)	

Needs assessment and strategy

18 needs assessment tables got completed for all focus areas and submeasures contributing to the focus areas in question

The first step of the strategy phase will be setting priorities based on the following guiding principles:

- Coherence with the national development objectives and the long term development concepts of the subject concerned
- Coherence with the PA and the other OPs
- Coherence with the Position Paper

The development needs identified by the SWOT will be filtered and the number of areas of future intervention significantly reduced

PART 3: CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS

Difficulties faced and lessons learned

- Context indicators: „Further work remains necessary to stabilize the set of context indicators and establish guidance on how they should be used by MS during the SWOT analysis and through the evaluation process”
Guidelines pp. 13. and 50.
- Necessity of additional context indicators to support the SWOT analysis
- The most challenging programming task (and new in relation to 2007-2013) was the issue of contribution of measures to (several) focus areas (its assessment is being performed by the ex-ante evaluator)

Cont.

- More evaluations and impact assessments will (would) be needed
- The requirement of an overall SWOT is not in line with the need of prioritizing development needs
- The use of the RDP template is not clear e.g. for the partnership consultations
- Guidelines aren't always fully clear (structuring SWOT and context indicators)

THANK YOU!

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