Operational Evaluation, focusing on the follow up activities e.g. reduction of administrative burden

Evaluation update – Edinburgh, 28 June 2018
Gianluca Ferreri – Interreg 2 Seas

What I will talk about:

- 2 Seas evaluation: general framework
- Operational evaluation:
  - ✓Effectiveness: methodology, findings and follow up
  - ✓Efficiency: methodology, findings and follow up
  - ✓Performance: methodology, findings and follow up
- Conclusions, lessons learned and next steps

2 Seas evaluation: general framework

- External evaluation, but iterative process
- Framework contract
- Launched in 2016 and covering the whole programming period
- Series of subsequent contracts

Framework contract: how in practice?

- Subsequent contracts to follow the framework, but can be **adjusted** according to **needs**
- Needs **discussed** mostly with **MA/JS** and with **Evaluation Task Force**
- Highly iterative and cooperative process
- Evaluating the past to inform the future

Subsequent Contract n.2

Operation Evaluation on:

➤ Effectiveness

➤ Efficiency

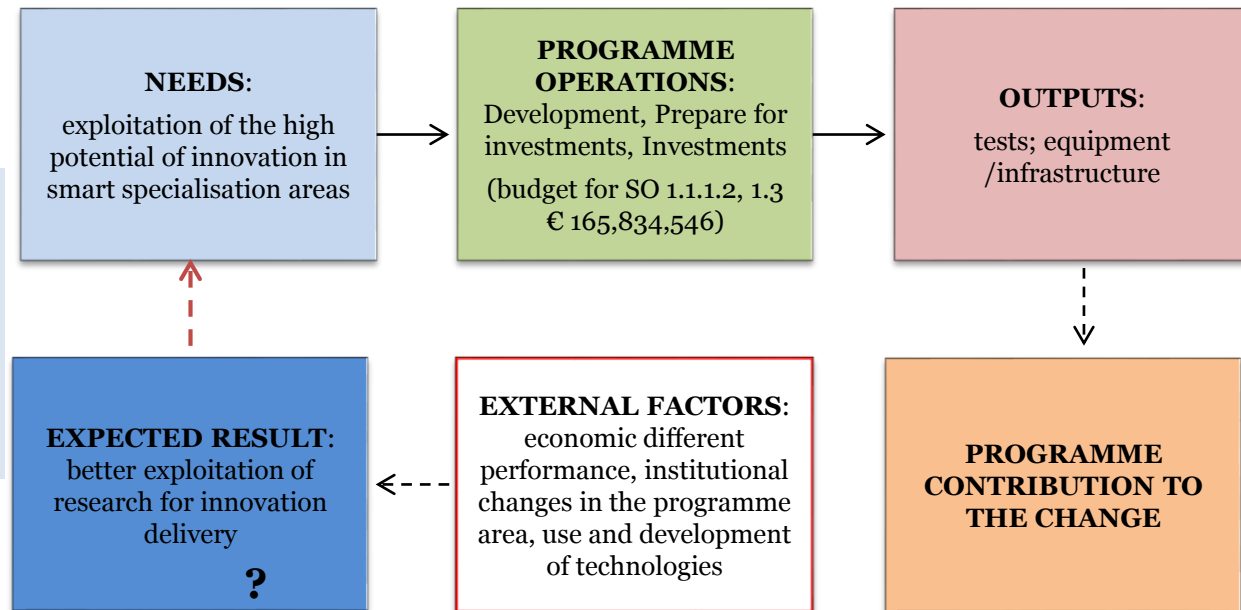➤ Performance

Operational evaluation: Effectiveness

EQ: *are the operation selected in line with the Programme strategy?*

Methodology:

1. Unpacking the theory: benefit matrix
2. Reality check: approved projects VS benefit matrix

Unpacking the theory: in practice

Example:
SO 1.2 'Increase the delivery of innovation in smart specialisation sectors'
Figure 3 Theory of change of SO 1.2

NEEDS: exploitation of the high potential of innovation in smart specialisation areas

PROGRAMME OPERATIONS: Development, Prepare for investments, Investments (budget for SO 1.1.1.2, 1.3 € 165,834,546)

OUTPUTS: tests; equipment /infrastructure

EXPECTED RESULT: better exploitation of research for innovation delivery **?**

EXTERNAL FACTORS: economic different performance, institutional changes in the programme area, use and development of technologies

PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHANGE

?

How to better define the expected results?

3 Evaluation task forces as focus group format

Category	SO 1.2: Expected project results / benefits	SO 1.2 Programme expected result and programme contribution
	Result / benefit	
Networking	Involvement of new types of partners	**Programme expected result:** The programme supports a better exploitation of research outcomes for the development of new technologies / products / services generating an impact on key sectors of shared interest identified in smart specialisation strategies.
	New forms of cooperation and partnerships	
Knowledge	Exchange and use of practices	
	Created/increased skills and capacities	
	Increased awareness	
	Improved applications	
Socio-economic	Triggered investments	
	Increased jobs	
	Increased employability	
	Improved health and general living conditions	**Programme contribution to the programme result:**
	Increased business activity / capacity (new products, processes, services, techniques)	
	Cost savings	➢ enhancing technology transfer;
	Improved services	➢ testing and developing pilot actions;
	Patent applicants	
Environmental	Eco-efficiency (energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable management of natural resources)	➢ promoting a tighter, more effective and operational cooperation among the key stakeholders of innovation.
	Reduction of pressure on marine and land ecosystems and water consumption	

Programme theory of change unpacking

Category	Result / benefit	Specific Objectives						
		1.1	1.2	1.3	2.1	3.1	4.1	4.2
Networking	Involvement of new types of partners	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Development of clusters	X				X		X
	New forms of cooperation and partnerships	X	X	X	X		X	X
Knowledge	Exchange and use of practices	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Created/increased skills and capacities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Increased awareness		X		X	X	X	X
	Technological transfer	X	X					
	Behavioural change in stakeholders			X	X	X	X	X
Governance and policy	Influence on policy making	X		X	X		X	X
	Improved governance quality and capacity	X				X	X	X
	Removal of barriers to cooperation	X		X	X	X		X
Socio-economic	Triggered investments		X	X	X		X	
	Increased jobs		X	X	X		X	X
	Increased employability		X	X	X		X	X
	Improved health and general living conditions		X	X		X		
	Increased business activity / capacity (new products, processes, services, techniques)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Cost savings		X	X	X	X	X	X
	Improved services	X	X	X				X
	Patent applications		X					
Environmental	Eco-efficiency (energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable management of natural resources)	X	X		X		X	X
	Reduction of pressure on marine and land ecosystems and water consumption		X		X		X	
	Climate change adaptation					X	X	
	Climate change mitigation				X		X	

Effectiveness: evaluators conclusion on the reality check

Approved projects: 26

Outputs

👍 Targeted structures and networks (OI 1.1.2)

⚠️ *For programme monitoring* (considering the actual programme implementation): Targeted action plans, strategies and solutions (OI 1.1.1, OI 1.1.3)

Partial sectoral / thematic coverage

⚠️ *For evaluation*: Map the smart specialisation domains

For project generation: Promote specific initiatives with sectoral stakeholders / launch targeted calls

Contribution to the change

👍
- SO 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.1 substantially cover the programme expected results / benefits
- SOs 4.1 and 4.2 are partially capable (but with one project approved) to create the expected networking, governance and policy, and socio-economic results

For evaluation:
- Analyze the achievement of all benefits / results

⚠️ *For project generation*:
- Prioritize projects ensuring the missing benefits / results, in particular socio-economic benefits in the case of SO 4.1 and 4.2 (e.g. cost savings, improved services, triggered investments)

Operational evaluation: Efficiency

EQ: *Are the measures proposed (implemented) by the Programme effective in making things easy for beneficiaries? How well was the Programme managed and / did it mitigate financial risks? (as ultimate risk in a series of risks)*

Methodology:

Desk research, interviews with Programme bodies; focus group, survey to applicants and beneficiaries.

1. Programme efficiency: findings

Applicants' workload

- <u>Conclusion</u> - Applicants' workload in project application is estimated to be in line with other Interreg programmes

- <u>Recommendation</u> - consider the possibility to further simplify the concept note for the future programming period

Follow up

- No specific follow up for the current programming period

1. Programme efficiency: findings

Quality of programme support

- <u>Conclusion</u> - It is rather satisfactory, notably the programme manual and the support of TFs

- <u>Recommendation:</u> reinforce the support to the formulation of project ideas

Follow up

- Some of the proposed actions are either already existing (e.g. training session on state aid) or have been implemented in the past and can be implemented again at the earliest occasion (e.g. project pitch; project labs)

- The JS is currently checking how to make more intuitive finding the key documents in the website

1. Programme efficiency: findings

Project assessment

- <u>Conclusion</u> – overall, smooth and effective process

- <u>Recommendation</u> - consider project unproductive costs in the assessment phase

Follow up

- In the framework of the existing assessment and selection procedure, the so called «unproductive costs» are already assessed

- The future call ToRs could stress the importance of this aspect for the projects' selection

1. Programme efficiency: findings

Project implementation and simplification measures

- Conclusion –support in project implementation is very appreciated. Appreciated efforts to promote further simplification. Paperless submission + AF only in EN very appreciated

- Recommendation - programme authorities and MS to take concrete initiatives in order to further harmonise in the future programming period

Follow up

- There are potentially many actions that could be taken within and beyond the programme governance, however it is too early to imagine them at this stage

2. Programme performance

EQ:

➢ *What is the Programme performance in light of the requirements of the performance framework?*

➢ *How well was the Programme managed and /did it mitigate financial risks?*

Methodology:

Mainly desk research

2. Programme performance

Procedural performance

- <u>Conclusion</u> - Procedural performance is uneven among the specific objectives

- <u>Recommendation</u> - further analyse existing types of projects in other Interreg programmes in Circular economy ; Specific events (or leaflets) on the definition of the key concepts

Follow up

- Continue the monitoring of the project's generation

- Continue the comparison with other ETC programmes

- Develop guidance and events where appropriate

2. Programme performance

Financial performance

- Conclusion - The current level of financial implementation is slightly higher than the average of ETC

- Recommendation - Assess existing opportunities to speed up the commitment and the expenditure knowing that designing a new programme strategy seems not easy

Follow up

- MC to discuss the various options, previous MC evoked some top down initiatives at governance level

2. Programme performance

Physical performance

- <u>Conclusion:</u> It appears difficult to reach, by 2023, the targets of all the indicators defined as "solutions" in the performance framework.

  The underperformance of the indicators in the performance framework of SO 2.1 and SO 3.1 appears to be more related to the choice of the indicators

- <u>Recommendation</u> - Reconsider some programme indicators' targets. For SO 2.1 and 3.1, accelerate the approval of projects producing cross-border "solutions" or reconsiders the set of indicators and / or targets in the performance framework

Follow up

- Wait to see the evolutions of the programming, do a state of play in July and Nov 2018 and Feb 2019

- Then propose a programme modification where needed

2. Programme performance

Features of approved projects

- <u>Conclusion</u> - increase in the number of partners and the involvement of new stakeholders to comply with the quadruple helix principle

- <u>Recommendation</u> - In project risk management, monitoring and evaluation activities, particular attention should be paid to how the larger partnerships and the introduction of new partners will have an impact on the success of the projects

Follow up

- Specific attention to be devoted to large partnership projects.

- Take into account this aspect in the Programme risk management

2. Programme performance

Risk management

- Conclusion - The proposed risk management system promotes a substantial shift in programme governance and supports the performance orientation of the programme. It promotes a preventative programme monitoring ; contributes clarifying roles; increases the internal capacity of the JS to identify potential risks

- Recommendation - continue the implementation of the risk management system and exploits the opportunities to use benefit mapping and ongoing evaluation activities to inform on results.

Follow up

- Keep in mind how to fully exploit the benefit mapping in the framework of the ongoing evaluation

Preparatory analysis for impact evaluation

• Quality and reliability of data from projects APR : SMART Analysis of specific results from projects (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)

Next steps

- Launch Subsequent Contract n.3

- Focus on performance and first impact evaluation

- To ensure reliable impact evaluation: keep analyzing quality of data from APR

Conclusions and lessons learned

- Framework is essential
- Adapt evaluation needs as it goes
- Involve Programme bodies and stakeholders
- Exploit evaluation to improve the Programme as a whole
- Constant dialogue with evaluators
- Mix of techniques to be solid as well as inclusive
- Use evaluation also for the Programme narrative

Questions?

Thank you for your attention!

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