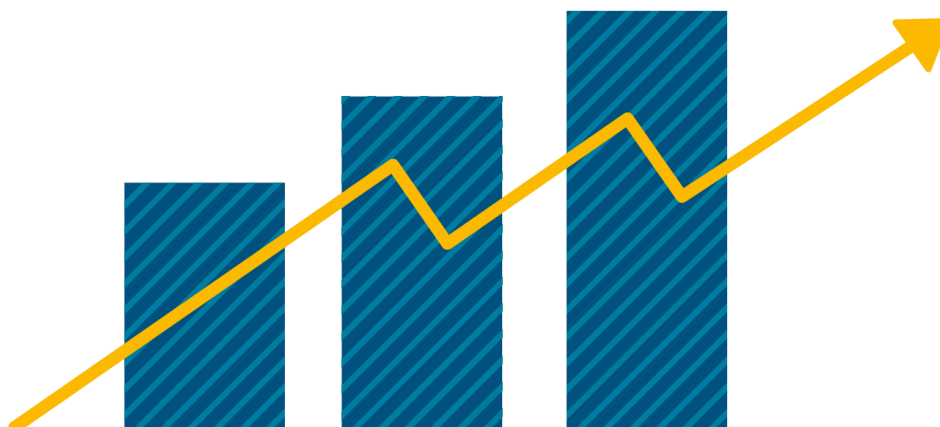


Q&A Indicators and data collection

1st version, April 2017



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Introduction

This 'Q&A Indicators and data collection' resource is a practical document intended to support Interreg programmes in their planning and implementation of impact evaluations in the 2014-2020 period. The document was prepared with the support of UK-based evaluation expert Simon Pringle, director with SDG Economic Development.

The 'Q&A Indicators and data collection' document summarises:

- The most important information relating to data collection, defining the 'right' indicators, and using indicators in the monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.
- A set of questions, which were raised in the context of an evaluation seminar run by Interact, Indicators and data collection, 2-3 March 2017, Florence, Italy
- A series of 'tips for success' in progressing monitoring and evaluation, which were offered by Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development and the Interreg programmes during the March 2017 seminar.

The 'Q&A Indicators and Data Collection' is intended as a working paper, and Interact will update it regularly over time as new material and content become available. Please feel free to contact Daniela Minichberger (daniela.minichberger@interact-eu.net) if you would like to comment or contribute to the document.

1 How to define the right indicator

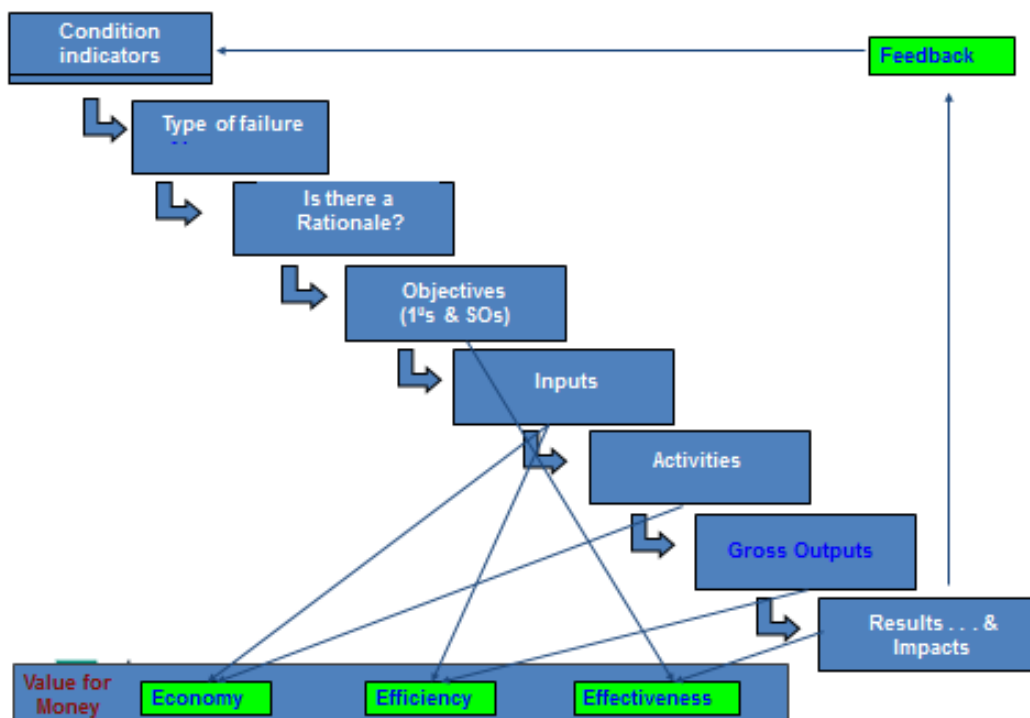
There are several factors and concept which can help the programme managers to define the right indicator for their programmes:

- 1.1. Concept one: The Logic chain
- 1.2. Concept two: The Programme/Project Life Cycle
- 1.3. Concept three: Data & Indicators framework
- 1.4. The importance of the Objectives
- 1.5. The importance of Contextual Factors

1.1. Concept one: The logic chain

It is crucial to have a well thought through and solid logic chain. A logic chain is a model that explains how an intervention is understood to contribute to a chain of results that produce impacts. Detailed information about the elements and setting up of a logic chain can be found in our video 'How to define the right indicator? Concept 1: The logic chain'¹ and in the Q&A document 'Approaches, ToR and methods of impact evaluation'²

Concept 1: the Logic Chain



¹ Video will be available from 5 May under <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVYGvGv4leH8ozOytd8qu8IOcRMd28Rd>

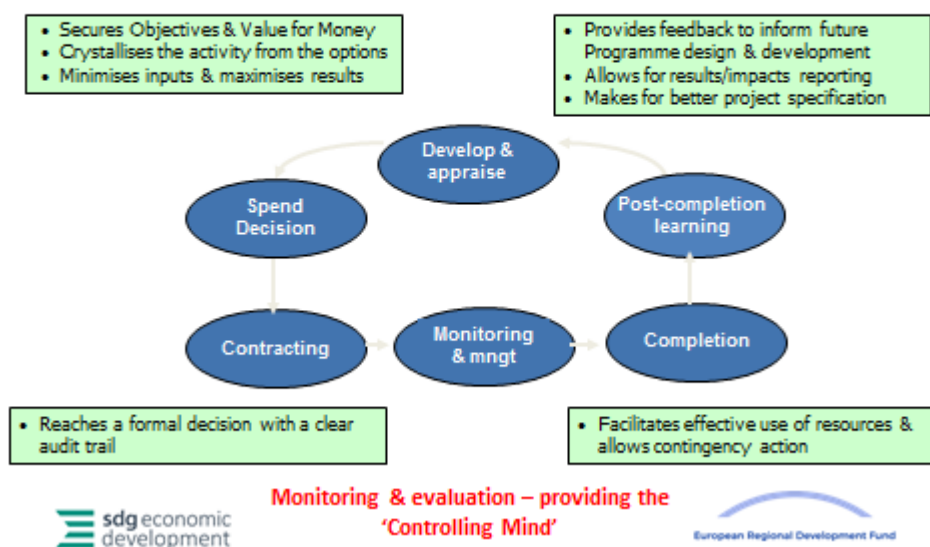
² http://www.interact-eu.net/library?field_fields_of_expertise_tid=16#791

- Operational evaluation is about the process and the procedures, Impact evaluation is more about the totality of the theory of change: Do not forget that in that theory of change process, not all elements are the same for an evaluator. Some bits are easy, some more demanding, such as objectives, results and impact.

1.2. Concept two: The programme/project life cycle

There are 6 key phases of the programme and project life cycle that should be set up in a proper way in order to allow a good handling of indicators. Detailed information about the programme/project life cycle can be found in our video 'How to define the right indicator? Concept 2: Programme and Project Life Cycle'³.

Concept 2 - The Programme/Project Life Cycle



1.3. Concept three: Data and indicator framework

This framework captures the data and indicators and explains what is happening in the programme:

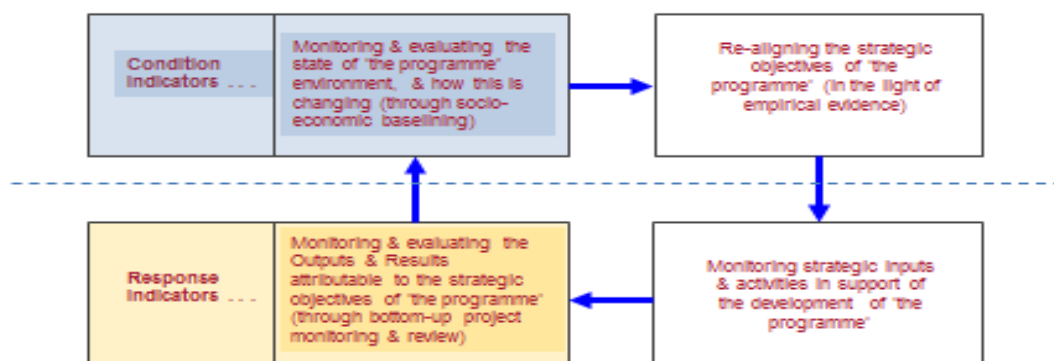
- Make sure your programme and project management is active - so your programme and project are constantly up to date– that is very important. Don't have fossil programmes', don't have dinosaur programmes, which are fixed in the moment in time. Keep them dynamic! Keep them fresh! Keep them alive!

³ Video will be available from 5 May under <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvYGVfGv4leH8ozOytd8qu8l0cRMd28Rd>

- Response indicators should be closely aligned to condition indicators
- Refresh your baselines: it does not have to be a big and expensive exercise. It will allow you to see how the context, in which you are working in, is shifting. Therefore, are the strategic objectives, which we have coded into the programme in a reasonable way.

Detailed information about the data and indicator framework can be found in our video 'How to define the right indicator? Concept 3: Data and indicator framework.'⁴

Concept 3: Data & Indicators framework



1.4. The importance of the objectives

- The link that holds the logic chain/ToC, Project Life Cycle, & M&E frameworks together
- All good interventions revolve around clear & sound Objectives
'You should sweat blood when you are drafting programme/project objectives'
- So, 3 tests:
 1. Do your objectives align with the context & the rationale for getting involved?
 2. Are the objectives that you have defined 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, & Time Bound)
 3. Do the outcomes you have defined intelligently & fully capture what the objectives are seeking⁵

⁴ Video will be available from 5 May under <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvYGVfGv4leH8ozOytd8qu8IOcRMd28Rd>

⁵ See the presentation of Simon Pringle under: <http://www.interact-eu.net/#o=events/indicators-and-data-collection>

Detailed information about the objectives can be found in our video 'How to define the right indicator? Objective' ⁶

1.5. Contextual factors

Detailed information about the contextual factors can be found in our video 'How to define the right indicator? Contextual factors;' ⁷

The importance of Contextual Factors

Outcome	Example sources
Business start-up rates	VAT registration data, national datasets
Stock of business units	Annual business surveys (incl by size/sector of business units)
Self-employment rates	Population surveys
Total entrepreneurial activity indicators	E.g. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
Business investment in R&D	EU/National R&D & Innovation datasets
Proportion of businesses reporting skills gaps	National employer skills surveys/studies
Proportions of firms, which are innovation active	Innovation Surveys – EU & national
Employment & unemployment rates	Annual population surveys
Economic activity/ inactivity rates	Annual population surveys
Highest qualification level held	Annual population surveys
Number of hectares of derelict land	National land use datasets & surveys
Housing affordability	House prices, property ownership, incomes (Annual population surveys)

⁶ Video will be available from 5 May under <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvYGVfGv4leH8ozOytd8qu8l0cRMd28Rd>

⁷ Video will be available from 5 May under <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvYGVfGv4leH8ozOytd8qu8l0cRMd28Rd>



2 Questions related to logic chain

Q: Projects are about delivering results. Many projects plan to have these results once the project has finished. How can programmes reuse the results and have them fed back into the objectives if we only see them at a very late stage?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Project results aren't either 'off' or 'on'. Rather, they develop over time. Good evaluation will review these results at distinct points – for example at Interim and Final stages. But good monitoring – that is keeping a day to day eye on the progress you are making – will provide insight in real time in how project objectives are being achieved. And by understanding progress in real-time, you have the evidence to start to make appropriate and necessary tweaks to the way your projects and programme is/are performing. Rather like when you take a boat out for a sail, you need to tweak the tiller in response to the weather conditions you are facing. Monitoring and evaluation are like Yin and Yang. You need to do both for effective programme delivery.

Q: For most of the programmes the objectives up until the result box are normal, features for the evaluation. But the main concern is how to translate, these baselines and towards the response indicators into the impact. The programmes need to show the added values, the increased employment how do we translate that into our plan?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Okay, there are three points here:

- Yes, all programmes (and their projects) need good SMART objectives to guide them. Once objectives are in place, you then define measures of activity, output, and result with the latter in particular allowing you to understand how and where objectives are being achieved. Good and active monitoring ensures we are on track with our activities and outputs, and good evaluation will tell us if our intended results have, in fact, been achieved.

- Our programmes (and projects) operate in the real world, and external change does happen. So, it may be that objectives defined at the time of the programme's baseline, or the projects conception, which were right for the then situation may have to change somewhat to meet new circumstances. Provided we are not fundamentally altering the nature of what the programme/project is trying to do, there is no problem in making such tweaks to objectives so that they best align with, and reflect, the new changed context. But make sure any such revisions are based on clear evidence, and are well documented for audit and evaluation purposes
- Results are the key indicators by which our success in achieving programme or project objectives is assessed. So, think very hard about the results indicators you define, and ensure that they accurately and fully reflect what your programmes', or component projects', objectives are intending. And if you need to come forward with results indicators outside the Common Indicators Framework used routinely by Interreg, there is no problem with this, provided they can be evidenced and tracked.

Q: Can sets of output and result indicators capture the totality of programme, the achievements which contribute to the objectives we have set? We have also heard examples, e.g. trust, social capital, which may also contribute to business development, for instance, but which may not be captured through indicators. In the light of 'Results Orientation', how can we make sure that the entirety of project/programme achievement will be captured?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): I would make three comments here:

- The programme's/project's objectives define what you are seeking to do through your intervention, and you need to frame these within a coherent, comprehensive, and communicable logic chain so that the richness of the programme/project is understood. SMART objectives and a good logic chain should set out what the programme/project is seeking to achieve, and how.
- With a logic chain in place, you can then define a set of indicators – activities, outputs, and results by which the roundness of the programme/project can be captured. Self-evidently, these indicators need to link to the programme's/project's objectives and logic – so, if your programme/project is about Social, Trust, or other objectives, these intents need to be reflected in the indicators you choose. And don't forget that indicators can be both quantitative and qualitative, to best capture what your programme/project is intending (A key tip on qualitative indicators: tracking progress with these is a bit tricky because qualitative effects don't easily lend themselves to be coded in spreadsheets or databases. So, do make sure you and applicants are recording qualitative effects as you go along – people won't remember these nine months on!)
- Whilst monitoring tells you in real time how you are doing, only evaluation gives the opportunity look at how the programme/project in-the-round and assess, in totality, how and where it is making a difference. Evaluation is always important, but especially so complex intervention with sophisticated routes to results and impacts. So, when you are setting up your evaluation plans and evaluation Terms of Reference, do think hard about the questions you want to be asked, and what you want unearthing. Remember, evaluation is not primarily about audit or indicator verification (although it has both these elements); it is fundamentally about assessing whether you achieved what you set out to do, and if you have done this economically, efficiently, and effectively.

Q: My question is in regards to result indicators. Basically, we have some indicators which are very specific, and they tend to capture just an aspect of the whole specific objective. So, my question is, how best do we get result indicators to align with our objectives?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): I understand the problem! Ultimately, the results provide the evidence by which your success in meeting your programme objectives will be assessed. So, there are two logical things to get right here:

- A set of relevant objectives which are clear, concise, comprehensive in their definition. As I have said elsewhere, defining high quality objectives is one of the most demanding things a programme manager can do – get these right and you have a good chance of success, get these wrong and you may have a troublesome programme experience.
- Informed by these objectives, and the logic chain that they give rise to for your intervention, think similarly hard about those results indicators which will best tell you (and any evaluators) if and how your objectives are being progressed. Some of these results indicators may have been used in the past, and will be obvious ones to go for; others may well be new and being used for the first time. Either way, the key issue is to arrive at a manageable basket of results indicators which when taken together will provide real insight into how your objectives are being achieved and progressed.

Getting these two issues right will help ensure you achieve the alignment you require.

3 Questions related to refreshing the Baseline

Q: What does it mean to revise the baseline?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Baselines are simply a data snapshot in time. You had one at the time of your program's design and development. But the world moves on, and contexts can shift. So, revisiting/updating your baseline to understand what has changed, and if and how your programme (now up and running) remains fully aligned with the evidential needs, is an important discipline.

Q: The baseline for indicators were fixed during the process of drafting the programme. Why should they be refreshed? And another question regarding changing or updating indicators, should programmes update indicators during this period, as it was quite rigid during the last period, when it was strongly advised not to change the indicators?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): If you do find that the justifying context for your programme has changed and you have good evidence for this from revised baseline data, then there is no problem in revising the indicators (and potentially their values). Clearly, we need to be sensible here i.e., we're talking about tweaking indicators, rather than a root-and-branch change (which would imply a new programme), but ensuring your programme and the projects it supports remain aligned to appropriate with the present context is a good practice.

Q: What to do with programme indicators that were written down in the programmes three years ago, now we have four years to go, we change, or looking at baseline changes values, what to do with programme indicators?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): This leads me onto a wider point. High quality programme management is not about treating programmes as fossils or rigid entities designed at some stage in the past. It is about making sure your programs and their projects are valid and appropriate in the current context, and so can deliver their maximum added value with the resources that you have available.

Q: If you do make some marginal changes, how does this impact on the data you have been collecting up until that point, and projects which have focused their activities and outputs on your original baseline and targets and indicators? And how do you aggregate what you have previously collected with what you are collecting from that point onward?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Making modifications to indicators, be this in terms of the type of indicator and/or the scale of values associated with indicators, for in-flight programmes/projects is tricky because you can lose a consistency with what you have already specified and counted.

But such difficulty should not be a reason the changing types of indicators and/or their values if the programme's (or projects) management requires it. If you do need to make such changes, make sure you have a clear and audited documentary trail of the changes you have made, and how monitoring processes have been altered accordingly. And, if it is technically feasible to translate from your old indicators to any new ones, then by all means do so. Of course, do advise any evaluators of such in-flight changes, so they can understand how the programme, and its project regime, have been actively managed over time. This does raise again the importance of reflecting and thinking about the best indicators at the point of programme design and approval, and de-risking these (and their values) to the greatest extent as you get into the implementation activity.

We all, as Programme Managers, want clean, tidy and easy indicators to collect and monitor. But sometimes, programme experience and changing contexts mean we should make alterations to these.

Q: The programme has a baseline that drew on a data source. The source has disappeared. What happens now?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Not much you can do! You might think about using proxies for the original source, and you might extrapolate forward from that data from the source which remains. Other than that, unless you can create a new source (which may be expensive and time-consuming), you're stuck!

This does raise the important consideration of making sure you are using data sources which are substantive, long-lasting, and authoritative. These sorts of data sources tend not to come and go.

4 Questions related to impact evaluation

Q: How does an evaluator assess results and impacts when a programme has not yet had much impact? Can we use evaluations from 2007-2013 Programming Period to inform our own impact evaluations?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): It's hard to evaluate for results and impacts if results and impacts are not yet apparent! But you as a Programme Manager can analyse monitoring data and, by looking back to the programme's logic chain, you can try and predict what you might expect results/impacts-wise. Also, although hard numeric results and impacts may not yet be evidenced, process and behavioural effects might be in play, and you could usefully track and capture these. From the point of view of evaluators' assessing resource and impacts, they can only assess what information is evidentially available to them (with suitable forward estimates) at the time they evaluate the intervention. Evaluators tend not to make heroic judgements for the future. Another option, where current programs are similar to past ones, is to borrow formal evaluations from those past programs and apply it to the current one. Clearly, care is needed to ensure the comparisons are like for like, but this can sometimes be helpful when other routes aren't available.

Clearly, a programme finally delivering low-impact results has not worked as planned, and would be likely to be evaluated critically. If we are monitoring and evaluating our programmes/projects effectively, then this should be a very rare occurrence!

Q: Is the fact that - especially for the impact evaluation - you rely on information provided by projects an issue? All of them will have different methodologies to collect data. How do you make sense of this variety of data sets and data submissions? How do you make sure that it's harmonised, and that's example 'one job' is counted in the same way by all project deliverers?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Ensuring the consistency of monitoring data provided by applicants is a key operating consideration. You as Programme Managers need to de-risk providing monitoring data, so ensuring that what is reported to you in terms of activities, outputs, and preliminary results is accurate, timely, verifiable, and consistent. How do you ensure this? The only way really is, at the point of issuing your letters of offer to project deliveries/applicants; to define unambiguously what needs to be reported by when, with what frequency, and in what form. Key to the process is to set out clearly what the indicators being reported on comprise with respect to their definition and that there is no ambiguity in the interpretation of this between the applicant and you as a monitor. I've seen on many occasions 'jobs' being defined as a key output, but really without any detailed explanation of what that means – do we mean full-time jobs, part-time jobs, seasonal jobs, or what? Different people will interpret indicator labels in different ways, and designing out ambiguity in indicator interpretation is a key project management discipline. 'Garbage out' (in terms of indicator definitions from Programme Managers) invariably gives rise to 'garbage in' (from Project Deliverers). And then life becomes very hard for monitors and evaluators in trying to sort out 'the sheep from the goats'.

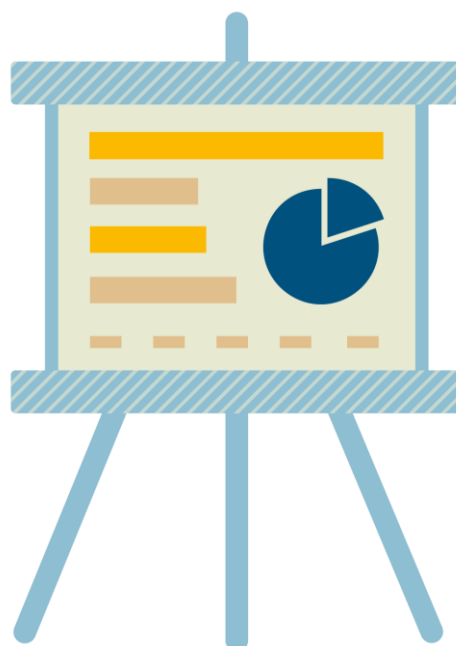
Q: What if I use Difference in Difference Counterfactual Evaluation at the level of the key project; for example I have two skiing resorts, they are both small, one is a bit bigger, but they are affected by the same conditions, more or less, same amount of snow every year, and connected to highway or railway, so if I see the difference of the one supported through my programme's intervention, then I can make maybe a meaningful assessment of impact, right?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): In theory yes. But remember what I said about Difference in Difference (DiD) at Amsterdam in June 2016. DiD only makes sense if you have large and significantly representative sample groups, where all the factors are the same, other than that one has had your programme's intervention, and the other has not. In most situations that Interreg programmes experience, this matching will be exceptionally difficult to achieve.

So, in your specific example, I suspect DiD would be hard to do technically (and pretty expensive practically) and that you might be better advised to do some targeted smaller-scale qualitative survey work.

Q: We must keep in mind that programmes are implemented in the context of political aspirations or interests. And the culture of evaluation, within administrations of the different countries varies. How do we handle this?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Yes, we should never lose sight of the political dimension to our work. But evaluation is about understanding the reality of how programs have performed, not providing a political gloss. Leave evaluators to focus on the truth of programme realities... and if Programme Management Committees want to politically position the results of evaluation work, that is their call. Your job as good Programme Managers is to provide robust and objective evaluation findings, not to spin the results!



5 Questions related to quantitative and qualitative indicators

Q: A key emphasis of our programmes is to encourage and support cooperation between different countries and regions. This is a qualitative activity, and hard to track. How do we monitor and evaluate this sort of activity?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Good questions. Measuring numeric performance is easy, measuring qualitative effects is much harder, and often therefore avoided. Qualitative effects are less tangible, less easily stored in a spreadsheet, and importantly quite quickly forgotten.

So, what tips are there to measure qualitative effects such as cooperation effects? I would propose three things:

- Record qualitative effects as it happens, then it doesn't get overlooked
- In the context of your Q15 on Cooperation and Partnerships, think about monitoring how the value added of such behaviours might be tracked e.g. in terms of leadership effects, catalytic effects, synergy effects, leverage effects etc.
- Maybe think about using learning diaries with newly formed partnerships so that the effects and benefits of partnership working under the programme/project can be recorded consistently in real time, and then reviewed systematically later, either as part of monitoring or a formal evaluation.

Q: Do you advise us to accompany the quantitative monitoring and evaluation of indicators with an element or component of qualitative analysis? If so, then should we also be requiring of our projects to not only have quantitative data, but qualitative information as well?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): It all depends on what your objectives are demanding – you monitor to understand performance against objectives. So, if the objectives are requiring quantitative things, then measure for these; if the objectives are focused on qualitative effects, then measure for these, and if the objectives are intended both quantitative and qualitative effects, then you've got the joy of collecting both!

Q: How would you advise programmes to best capture qualitative effects on a regular basis? What would be the best mechanisms to use to try and capture these?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): This said, as the challenges in economic development become more complex, and our programme interventions get more sophisticated, I suspect the need to record qualitative effects – such as changed behaviours, new attitudes, and fresh cultures – will become greater, increasing the need for more qualitative-facing indicators and processes.

Q: Do you think that those could be aspects to reflect on capitalisation?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): For sure, as we seek to realise the benefits of programs through capitalisation, focusing on the qualitative results and long-term impacts of programs is important. Much of what we are trying to do fundamentally through our

programs is to build linkages, stronger relationships, and working with colleagues in other territories and jurisdictions in new and innovative ways. Numbers will tell you something about the scale of these effects, but qualitative reflections and examination will tell you about the richness and sophistication of these more fundamental changes.

6 Questions related to internal – external evaluation

Q: We do some evaluations internally with our programme staff and some evaluations with external experts. But how do we select good external experts in countries where we do not have a lot of companies who are dealing with impact evaluation?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Research the market! So, talk and get suggestions/referrals based on past evaluations, for example from

- The Interact team centrally
- Other Interreg colleagues who have undertaken evaluations in the past
- Industry databases relating to evaluators – e.g., the national Evaluation Societies in different countries
- Consultancy supplier frameworks, e.g., those operated by DG Regio etc.
- Your personal professional networks e.g., via LinkedIn *‘do you know someone who can evaluate...’*

Q: What do we do if we cannot find experienced impact evaluators in our country? The evaluators of our country have got all the benefits of understanding of our context and speaking the local language, but they didn’t have the strength of evaluation expertise.

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): In-country knowledge is an important consideration in bringing local knowledge and understanding quickly to bear. So, in framing your Terms of Reference, think about whether mixed teams of local partners pairing up with international evaluation consultants is a sensible way forward. Yes, evaluation is a ‘compliance’ task, but it should also be about procuring the best possible evaluation brains and expertise to understand how your programme/projects have performed – think creatively about how you procure this.

Q: We selected chosen evaluators from the pool of the experts, but their work was not good. We were dissatisfied with the results, because the evaluators didn’t answer the questions we tried to raise at the beginning in the ToR.

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Okay, to some consultancy realities!

- Evaluators want to do as little of your Terms of Reference as they can get away with, for as much of your budget.
- Evaluators will only work in excess of the specification in the Terms of Reference (and the accompanying study budget) if you pay them
- Like all of us, evaluators want an easy life.

So, as a client, you need to manage your evaluators. How? I suggest the following:

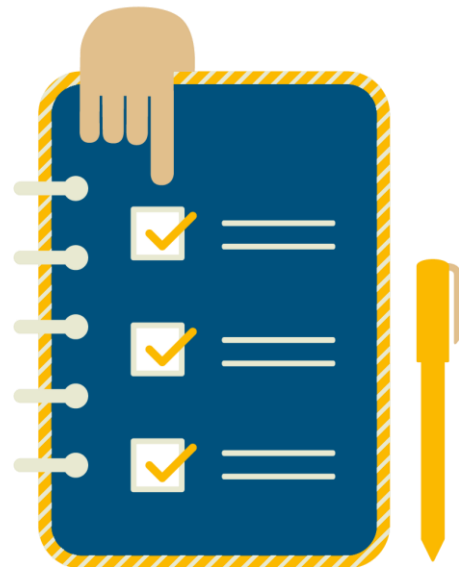
- Strong, comprehensive, and unambiguous Terms of Reference. Be specific and comprehensive. If you don't understand your Terms of Reference, it's highly unlikely your evaluators will, and if what you want done is not in the Terms of Reference, it's unlikely that evaluators will spontaneously read your mind!
- Ensure clear and specific milestones in the way the work is delivered, so the evaluation study's deliverables are produced and assessed in a managed way
- Communicate regularly with your evaluators e.g. formal monthly progress meetings, weekly calls for update purposes etc.
- Don't allow yourself to get surprised by the evaluator's report – if you are, you have mismanaged the process, and disappointment will result.

Maybe also suggest as part of your Terms of Reference that one of your Programme Team is seconded as an active member of the evaluation team, so that your colleague can see evaluators working first-hand, and bring back to your team appropriate evaluation skills, tools, and techniques. If you are to manage evaluators well, then increasingly you need to understand what good and bad evaluation looks like.

Q: We are a small team. We want to go down the external evaluation route, but the PMC is not convinced of value for money. What are the arguments?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): Okay, there is a value judgement here. Using external evaluators costs money, but the benefits are:

- An objective, detached, and professional view of programme/project performance
- Technical expertise to probe trickier evaluation issues such as additionality, displacement, attribution, qualitative value added, etc.
- The ability, as an external agent, to say things which might be difficult for programme/project managers or partners to articulate.
- Resource capacity to undertake what can be a significant and concentrated research exercise.



So, lots of benefits, but clearly this is a commercial deal and you need to pay. So, therefore the judgement is whether the benefits of going external for evaluation purposes exceed the costs. You and your Programme Structures must think this through, and do what is right for your context and need.

Of course, there is the option of doing your own internal evaluation. But the actual issue is that you will always be open to the criticism of 'marking your own homework', and not having brought sufficient objectivity to the proceedings. Frankly, no programme manager, having worked on an intervention for four or more years, is going to self-evaluate and say that he/she did a poor job!

7 Questions related to ToR

Q: We are putting together the ToR that will cover both operational and impact evaluation. We are allowing or asking people to either bid on one part or on both parts, so they can either bid on the operational or the impact or operational plus impact. How can we assess such a different range? What are some tips for assessing the bids when it can be one way or the other?

A (Simon Pringle, evaluation expert): To ensure purchasing fairness, you will be scoring bids to an agreed assessment frame, typically split between quality (and its component aspects), team (expertise bought), and price (budget). You must use this frame objectively to shortlist and then seek your optimal provider.

On the question of separate commissions, or one, for operational and impact evaluations that must be your call. My own professional view is that operational and impact evaluations are flip sides of the same coin, and trying to evaluate one without understanding the other is difficult and potentially dangerous. So, I as a commissioner would always try and go for a single provider for both elements, so that the feedback loops and interfaces between these two key parts of the programme are fully explored, both absolutely and relatively.

8 Questions related to the quality of delivered outputs

Q: Do you have any tool or approach aimed at reconfirming the quality of the delivered outputs (e.g., websites, platforms, feasibility studies)? To which extent do you check the quality of these delivered outputs?

Programme experience: The programme officers, who accompany the projects through the whole process of application and implementation, they do occasional on-the-spot visits, just to verify whether outputs are actually there. In addition these programmes officers are in close contact with the projects all the time. So, they are actually supposed to know whether what projects report is plausible or not.

Programme experience: The programme has developed a methodology to validate all outputs that contribute to the output indicators. First of all, projects will report the outputs and deliverables with some data, metadata, that includes any capitalisation activity, dissemination activity, and some statistic information also on what has been produced by the projects. For the output that contributes to the programme output indicators, the programme has developed some key criteria for each one of them. This information is shared with the projects in the application manual, in order for the projects to develop their attributes in view of these criteria.

Programme experience: We have an output quality management, which will mainly be done by the projects. So each project has to have a quality assurance manager that is validating the outputs. No project can submit outputs to the programme without a validation of the quality of the content. Since the programme is so broad, the programme officers cannot be experts in every little field. That is why we need someone who actually guarantees the content of the output is usable. And then we leave it to the project to find and pay an expert therefore.

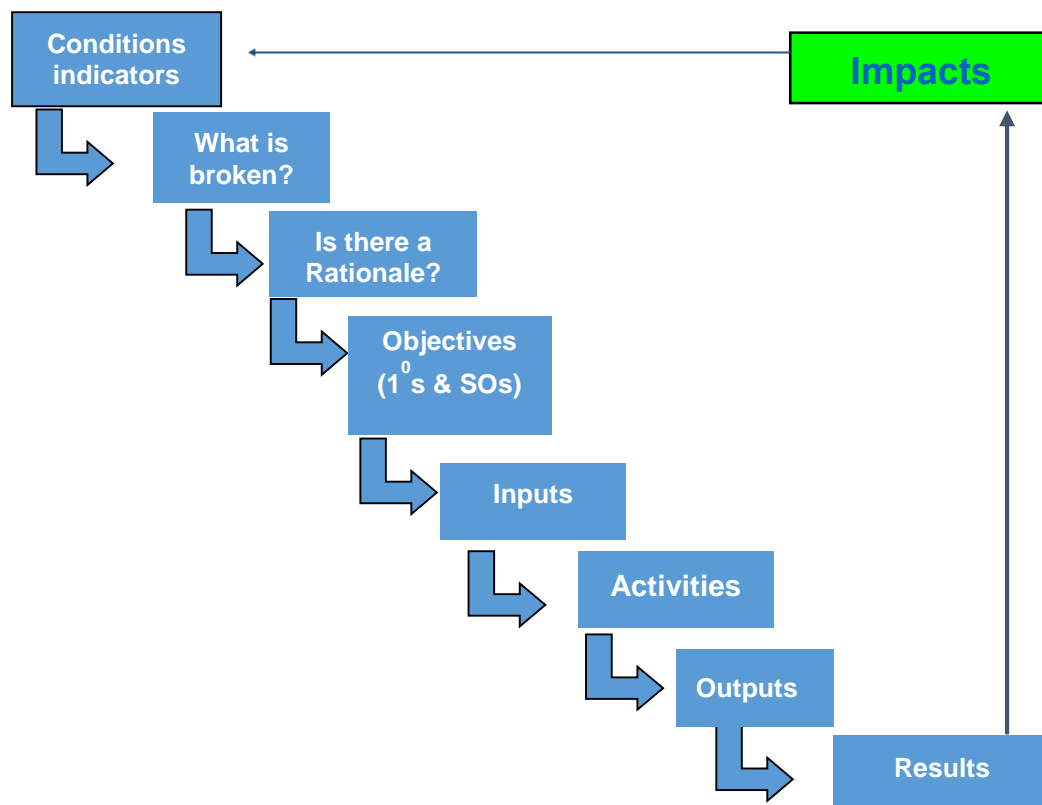
9. Tips for monitoring and evaluation success

- Objectives are the things that make programmes and projects work. Make sure they are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound) and well-defined so all viewers and partners understand them. Take real time, and effort, to draft your objectives.
- Earth all your objectives in the market and other failures which are in play - your objectives should be defined to address and resolve these. Also, ensure that the demand for your programme/project is evidenced, not simply asserted.
- Make sure your SMART objectives, and how they will be achieved, are set out in a clear, comprehensive, and coherent logic chain. Anybody seeing this should be able to understand quickly and easily what your programme is seeking to do, with what how, and to what ends.
- Define all your indicators - activities, outputs, results and impacts - clearly and unambiguously so that all partners involved in working with these are clear on what you are talking about. That way, you will reduce any confusion in what you are seeking to achieve and what project applicants are reporting.
- Don't see your programme as a fossil locked in time. The world changes, and programmes need to flex and amend to align with these alterations. Through baseline refreshing and active monitoring, make sure your programme remains relevant and current, not locked in time to a situation context which no longer exists.
- Being busy and being effective are not the same. Good programmes/projects are the former to achieve the latter. Sloppy programmes/projects are the former to no real purpose
- Do get hungry professionally for understanding how other relevant programmes and projects have performed. Understand 'what works' for them and what might work for you.
- Use your experience and this evaluation evidence to begin to assemble benchmarks of programme/project activity – e.g. what does it cost on average to deliver a unit of a particular output (e.g. full-time job, or a degree qualification), what is the minimum level of cash input necessary to make a particular sort of project happen. Keep these benchmarks fresh and relevant, so that your programme and its projects can draw on them, as well as feeding back in to them. Such benchmark information is helpful in you understanding how economic and efficient your programme and its projects are.
- Be an intelligent consumer of the monitoring and evaluation inputs that you receive. Are they right, accurate, verifiable, traceable? If not, be challenging and if you don't get the resolution you want, don't hand over any payment to your partner (be this a project deliverer or an external evaluator) until you're content. You are the client, and you are always right!
- Get expert at evaluation. Try and read one evaluation report every two months to develop your understanding and technical capacity relating to evaluation tools, concepts and methods
- Need an evaluator? Phone a friend, search a database, take a recommendation from previous evaluation exercises
- The biggest testament to your success is that your programme is no longer needed because you have addressed all the market and other failures that justified activity in the first place.

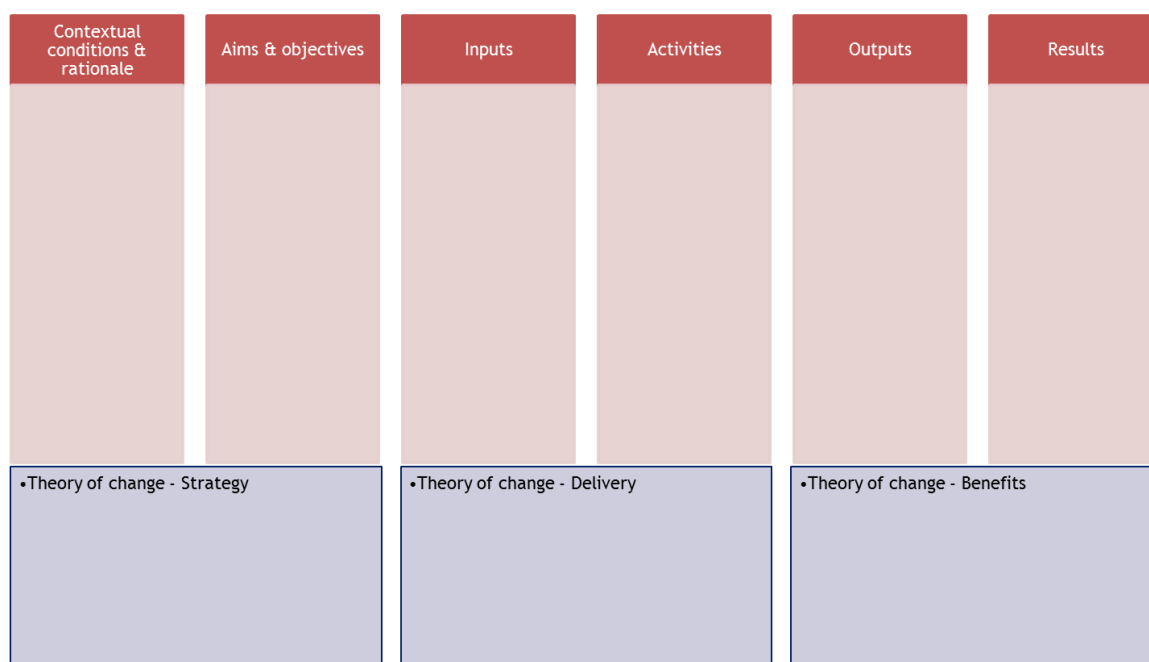
Annex 1 Acronyms

CIE	Counterfactual Impact Evaluation
CP	Cooperation Programme
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EC	European Commission
GDP	Gross domestic product
IP	Investment Priorities
MA	Managing Authorities
MC	Monitoring Committee
SFC	System for Fund Management in the European Union
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TA	Technical assistance
TBIE	Theory Based Impact Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of References

Annex 2 Logic Chain



Example: simple logic model



Annex 3 Literature and videos

Literature

- Howard White Daniel Phillips: Addressing attribution of cause and effect in small n impact evaluations. Towards an integrated framework. June 2012, http://www.3ieimpact.org/media/filer_public/2012/06/29/working_paper_15.pdf
- European Commission: Evalsed Sourcebook – Methods & Techniques
- Rogers, P (2008): Using Programme Theory to Evaluate Complicated & Complex Aspects of Interventions. Evaluation, Vol 14(1): 29 – 48
- Westhorp, G (2014): Realist Impact Evaluation – an Introduction. ODI.org/methodslab
- Mayne, J: Contribution analysis (2008): An approach to exploring cause & effect. ILAC Brief 16
- Baptist, C & Befani, B (2015): Qualitative Comparative Analysis – A Rigorous Qualitative Method for Assessing Impact
- More information on different evaluation approaches can also be found under: http://betterevaluation.org/approach/realist_evaluation

Videos

- **Video: Data for monitoring - data for evaluation;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: How to define the right indicator? Concept 1: The logic chain;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: How to define the right indicator? Concept 2: Programme and Project Life Cycle;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: How to define the right indicator? Concept 3: Data and indicator framework;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: How to define the right indicator? Objective;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: How to define the right indicator? Contextual factors;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: Link operational and impact evaluation;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development

- **Video: What to do with the information gathered?** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: Attribution;** Presenter: Simon Pringle, SDG Economic Development
- **Video: ESPON targeted analyses, tools and evidence for evaluation;** Presenter: Zintis Hermansons, ESPON EGTC
- **Video: Data collection on achievement of output and result indicators (output fact sheets and focus groups);** Presenter: Monika Schönerklee-Grasse, Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE, Joint Secretariat
- **Video: Cross-border observation - The case of Örestat/Ørestat;** Presenter: Peter Lundberg, CBC SE/DK/NO Öresund - Kattegat – Skagerrak Programme
- **Video: Requirements for indicators and data collection;** presenter: Ivanka Lakova, REGIO B2 Evaluation & European Semester Unit
- **Video: Can KEEP support evaluation?** Presenter: Linda Talve, Interact