Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation

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Contents

Glossary

Beneficiary	'beneficiary' means a public or private body and, for the purposes of the EAFRD Regulation and of the EMFF Regulation only, a natural person, responsible for initiating or both initiating and implementing operations; and in the context of State aid schemes, as defined in point 13 of this Article, the body which receives the aid; and in the context of financial instruments under Title IV of Part Two of this Regulation, it means the body that implements the financial instrument or the fund of funds as appropriate;
Enterprise	Organisation producing products or services to satisfy market needs in order to reach profit. The legal form of enterprise may be various (self-employed persons, partnerships, etc.).
Entity	An ‘entity’ can either implement or be supported by projects. In the latter case, in the same way as for participants, an entity should only be counted when it benefits directly from ESF support that incurs expenditure.
Operation	A project, contract, action or group of projects selected by managing authorities of the programmes concerned, or under their responsibility, that contributes to the objectives of a priority or priorities; in the context of financial instruments, an operation is constituted by the financial contributions from a programme to financial instruments and the subsequent financial support provided by those financial instruments.
Participant	‘Participants’ refer to persons benefiting directly from an

	intervention. Only those persons who can be identified and asked for their personal data and for whom specific expenditure is earmarked shall be reported as a participant.
Project	A ‘project’ is the lowest unit of organisation of ESF funded activity and covers an activity/activities implemented by an economic operator within the context of an operation.

Monitoring and evaluation: what they are and why they are needed

Monitoring is the observation of programme implementation and performance through a continuous and systematic process of generating quantitative and in many cases qualitative information.

Monitoring helps to detect and quantify any deviation from initial plans and targets and is a requirement of ESF and ERDF funding.

In addition to monitoring expenditure, monitoring progress against performance indicators enables outputs such as the number of enterprises or participants supported and results[1] to be measured.

Indicators should be clearly defined, be relevant and measureable and clearly link the activity to expected outputs and results. They do have limitations and additional data will be usually required to enable evaluation of short, medium and long term outcomes.

Whilst monitoring can demonstrate what has been delivered, i.e. show the before and after situations, in order to attribute that change to the activities of the project you will need to undertake evaluation. Externally commissioned, independent evaluations are a condition of ESF and ERDF funding.

Evaluation examines the implementation and impact of the activities that have been delivered, to what extent the outputs and results can be attributed directly to those activities and looks at whether the anticipated effects and benefits have been realised.

Evaluation can therefore achieve much more than monitoring alone, including:

- Identifying what works and for whom
- Finding out how interventions work and why they work

[1] ' results' is the EU terminology for 'outcomes'

- Highlight good practice
- Demonstrate value for money
- Feed into the development of future policy development and projects
- Identify unintended consequences

For evaluation to be effective, it needs to be viewed as an ongoing process within which monitoring takes place, rather than a retrospective review of project's success. It is therefore essential to engage with monitoring and evaluation during the early stages of developing your operation. Leaving it until later on carries the risk that you will not have sufficient, appropriate or robust data to undertake evaluation, as a consequence of which you may be unable to demonstrate that you have delivered against the original project objectives or demonstrate value for money. Using best practice in evaluation can also be helpful in designing policy and securing funding for future projects.

The core indicators in the ERDF and ESF Operational Programmes set a high level framework intended to steer activities towards the results WEFO is seeking to achieve at programme level. In many cases there will be wider impacts and unintended consequences which will not be demonstrated directly or effectively solely by those indicators.

It is a condition of WEFO funding that independent external evaluations are undertaken. Early involvement of the evaluator is therefore recommended.

Overview: Evaluation Approaches[2]

Whilst detailed specification of an evaluation is beyond the scope of an M&E Plan, the overall approach needs to be considered so that appropriate resources can be allocated.

Evaluation appropriate to ERDF/ESF operations will usually comprise one or more of:

- **Process evaluation** – best practice would be to use the process evaluation as a means of measuring progress against the baseline, for instance against the logic model or wider economic data developed at the beginning of the operation.

- **Impact evaluation** – this demonstrates the results of the operation and compares them to what would have happened anyway. Impact evaluations for ERDF/ESF operations are likely to adopt either experimental type counterfactual impact or theory-based approaches.

  Counterfactual impact assessment (CIE) shows what works for a particular group. In its simplest form, a CIE compares a group of participants or enterprises who have received support with another of similar characteristics who have not. The comparison group provides information on "what would have happened to the members subject to the intervention had they not been exposed to it", the counterfactual case. Additional evaluation or research will be needed to understand how and why the intervention works. Counterfactual Impact Evaluations

  will not be appropriate for all operations and will depend upon factors including

  - level of funding
  - how critical the evaluation is to policy

[2] http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/guide/evaluation_sourcebook.pdf for more detailed guidance

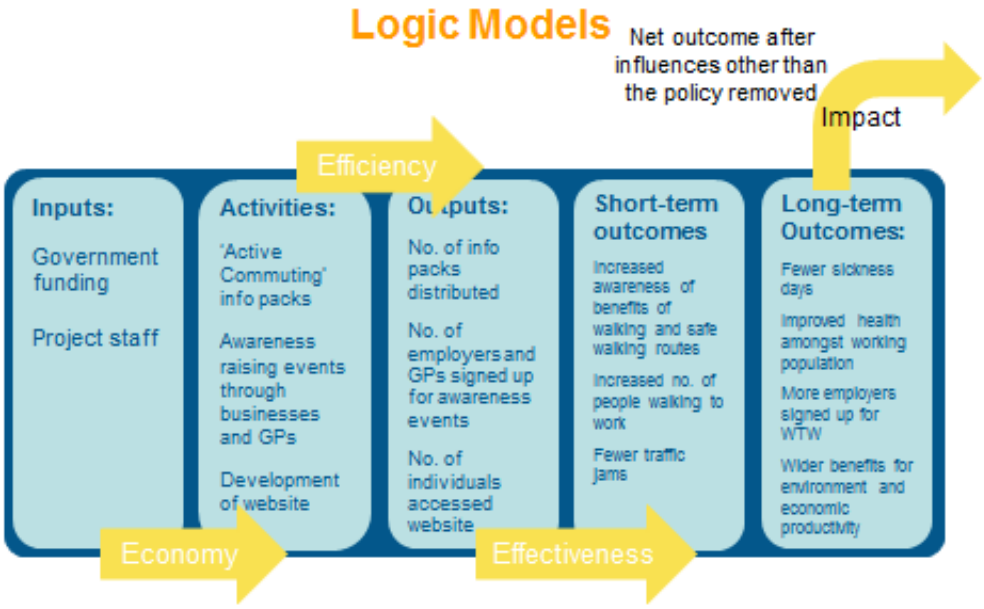
- the nature, scope and scale of the operation
- whether sufficient or robust data is available to identify, measure and link the control and intervention groups

Approaches to CIE

Type	Key features	Data Requirements
Randomisation	Random allocation of target group to intervention and control groups	Recording of who is allocated to each group Baseline data Results for both groups
Propensity Score Matching	Intervention and control groups are matched on the basis of observed characteristics	Data from which to sample the control group Rich data from which to construct a match (ideally collected at baseline) Results for both groups
Difference in Differences	Compares changes in results pre and post operation for control and intervention groups	Before and after results for both groups
Regression discontinuity designs	Assignment to intervention or control group based upon a threshold score on a continuous measure	Scores to compare each unit within both groups to the threshold score and the results

Theory-based approaches seek to analyse the theory behind the operation. Theory based evaluations are designed not just to find out whether there has been any positive or negative effect on a particular group, but seek to understand why and how an intervention works, as well as for whom.

Typically, a logic model is developed at the start of the operation which sets out in detail the anticipated links between the context, inputs, activities, outputs and all of the potential results in the short, medium and longer term. It should try to articulate the assumptions or hypotheses that underpin the logic that inputs and activities will lead to the intended outputs and outcomes. These hypotheses will be tested as part of the evaluation process.



This model will enable you to understand how and why something is expected to work and provide a framework against which progress can be measured. Subsequent summative (interim) and formative (final) evaluations test the theory by undertaking documentary reviews, conducting interviews, surveys or focus groups.

This approach is most effective when evaluators are appointed at the start of the operation to

- develop or review initial logic models to articulate the theory behind the intervention

- identify a counterfactual or control group so that data can be collected and used to demonstrate what would have happened without the operation.

Theoretical approaches are commonly used where the intervention is complex, perhaps as a result of the mix of needs or support available within an operation.

There are a number of approaches to theory-based evaluation, which include 'theory of change' 'contribution analysis' and' realist evaluation'. More information is available from: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/guide/evaluation_sourcebook.pdf

- **Economic evaluation** considers whether the quantified outputs and results justify the costs, but will not demonstrate whether the results justify the policy aims. Economic approaches value inputs and outcomes in particular ways, and so it is essential that appropriate data is identified and collected from the very beginning of an operation. Approaches include cost-effectiveness analysis and cost benefit analysis. Economic evaluation is difficult to undertake successfully for small interventions.

In practice, evaluations of ERDF and ESF operations are likely to include both process and impact evaluations.

WEFO Monitoring and Evaluation Requirements

The Common Provision Regulation (CPR) European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Regulations for the 2014-2020 programming period lay down the requirements for monitoring of operations and subsequent reporting by Member States (1303/2013;1304/2013; 1301/2013).

The WEFO monitoring and evaluation strategy for the 2014-2020 Programmes comprises Programme and Operation level evaluations. It is also a condition of funding that all beneficiaries agree a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (M&E Plan) and commission external evaluation(s).

WEFO is required to collect and store detailed data about each participant and, where applicable entity, in ESF funded operations[3] and each enterprise in ERDF funded operations.

Beneficiaries are therefore required to collect a complete record for each participant, enterprise and entity supported and to report progress to WEFO against a number of agreed indicators. The data reported to WEFO will be used by WEFO, the Project Monitoring Committee (PMC) and the European Commission to monitor programme progress, for verifications of claims and for research and evaluation purposes.

For ESF, data requirements are set out in Annex A and Annex B and the participant and enterprises micro-level databases available at: http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/esf-indicators1/?lang=en

For ERDF enterprise data requirements are set out in Annex A and the micro-level database available at: http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/erdf-indicators/?lang=en

[3] Article 6 Directive 95/46 provides the legal basis for collecting and processing of personal data for the purposes of monitoring and reporting. This includes data classified as sensitive personal data.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Project Development

Planning for monitoring and evaluation should begin on inception of an operation. Operations within the 2014-2020 ESF programmes are expected to follow an overarching operational logic set out in WEFO guidance. This requires monitoring and evaluation to be addressed at the pre-planning stage.

As a minimum, operations must include:

- evidence that the applicant is fully aware of their data reporting requirements in relation to the operation
- demonstrate that an effective system is in place for the collection, recording and reporting of all required data, including participant and enterprise level data
- provide details of the proposed methodology and timeframe for monitoring and evaluating the identified long term benefits
- provide precise details, justification and definitions of any other indicators outside those required by Structural Funds Programmes
- explain how data collection systems will be used to refine the operation and keep it on track
- explain how the operation will ensure data is of high quality
- explain how data will be effectively reported to WEFO at claim periods, reviews and other intervals
- explain how data will be used in evaluation exercises
- collect, store and use wider information for management and evaluations

- explain and justify the proposed evaluation methods for formative (during the life of the operation) and summative (final) evaluations.
- provide a timetable for internal and external evaluations throughout the operation
- provide a plan for the dissemination of the evaluations, including which organisations you intend to share the results with

Result and Outcome Indicators

The 2014-2020 general project guidance requires beneficiaries to consider output indicators and targets at the pre planning stage, by demonstrating how the proposed operation intends to deliver the result and output indicators identified and all associated targets. Details of the core indicators for ESF and ERDF operations can be found at: http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/?lang=en

Beneficiaries will be required, within their initial proposal, to provide the following:

- an analysis of the predicted ***longer term*** benefits associated with the operation
- details of the output and result indicators and their associated targets that will be achieved in the ***short and medium term***
- details of the precise activities that will be undertaken during the operation and how they will demonstrate that these will achieve the short and medium term indicators and longer term benefits
- details of whom will be responsible for the delivery and monitoring of each identified indicator (i.e. post within the management team or wider delivery model)
- a delivery profile setting out the key activities, indicators and outcomes within a timetable that sets out realistic milestones for the duration of the operation. This profile must include milestones for mobilisation and

delivery; profiles of indicator target achievement and all spend and audit milestones. You will need to ensure that where a final evaluation needs to take place after the conclusion of the operation that this is reflected in the delivery plan

Selecting Indicators

Indicators for each Specific Objective (SO) are aligned with those agreed for the Operational programme (OP).

For example ERDF SO 2.1, aims to "*To increase the amount of finance available to SMEs for both business start-up and for business expansion.*" The linked result indicator is the '*Amount invested in Venture Capital and Expansion Capital'*.

There are eight related output indicators attached to this SO, from which you should select the most appropriate to enable you to demonstrate how you will deliver your operational objectives.

As WEFO is required to collect and report financial and other indicator data according to SO, operations are required to focus on one SO wherever possible. Although your operation may have wider aims and objectives, precise details of any indicators other than those required by the OP will need to be provided, along with justification of why they are necessary.

Where your operation has broader aims than a single SO, the impacts of the operation can be captured by evaluation. You will however, need to consider what evidence you are going to collect to enable you to do so, and include this in your M & E plan.

Guidance on the appropriate indicators for each SO is provided separately for each OP and Priority Axis. This guidance also provides WEFO's OP targets, providing the context for operation level activities.

The guidance covers

- indicator definitions

- unit for recording and reporting data
- category breakdowns required for data collection and reporting
- a template for the collection of mandatory participant and enterprise data

Setting Targets

You will be required to provide WEFO with targets for each of the indicators you have selected. These targets will need to be broken down and set out in a delivery profile so that progress can be measured at various points during the lifetime of the operation. The M&E Plan should set out key milestones and what data will be reported against them.

Forecasts of targets should be challenging but achievable. Data from the past performance of similar projects might provide part of the evidence you use to set your targets. Contextual data, such as the characteristics of the market sector, geographical area or population group will help to establish the baseline from which the direct impact of the intervention can subsequently be shown by evaluation.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Monitoring and evaluation should be considered as a discrete work package within your project/operation. The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan should therefore be looked upon in the same way as a project plan that sets out how monitoring and evaluation will be planned, managed and resourced.

The Planning Process

Key stages and indicative considerations in planning an evaluation include

Overarching aims of M&E Plan	Identify and clearly set out information requirements, ensure appropriate evaluation approach is selected, identify key dates and requirements, ensure quality, transparency and relevance of findings

Defining the policy objectives and intended outcomes	What is the project/programme logic or theory about how inputs lead to outputs, outcomes and impacts in the particular policy context?
Define the audience for the evaluation	Who will be the main users? What are the potential uses?
Identify the evaluation objectives and research questions	Who needs to know what? What difference did the project make? How broad is the scope of the evaluation?
Select the evaluation approach	Process, Impact or Economic? How extensive is the evaluation likely to be? What level of robustness is required or can be achieved?
Identify the data requirements	When is the impact to be measured? What data are required? What is available and from where? What additional data needs to be collected? Who is responsible for data collection and how will it be stored, and used? Who are the key stakeholders?
Identify the resources required and governance arrangements	Who will manage the evaluation contract? Who will be on the steering group? What resources are available for evaluation and are they sufficient? How will quality be managed and assured?
Commissioning and conducting the evaluation	Who will be specifying and managing the evaluation contract? Who needs to approve commissioning? What processes will be used for commissioning? Are there any special considerations such as Data Protection, Welsh Language that need to be considered? Are there

	any potential obstacles to data collection? When is the evaluation required by/ how long will the evaluation need to take to meet the objectives?
Using and disseminating the evaluation findings	What will the findings be used for and by whom? How will the findings be disseminated? How will the findings feed back into the policy process?

Adapted from Magenta Book table 4A

The following are recommended sections to be included in your M&E Plan:

The Purpose of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

This section should set out why monitoring and evaluation are to be conducted and identify the key users of the evaluation findings. In general, the monitoring and evaluation plan is to ensure that the beneficiary sets out clearly which data will be collected and why, how data will be stored, used and managed to ensure that the operation delivers its intended outputs and outcomes. The intention of evaluation might be to understand the mechanisms and the impact of an intervention, to improve intervention design or management or to provide an evidence base for future policy/ operations.

These elements should be considered when writing this section:

- Why you are undertaking evaluation
- What you want to achieve from evaluation
- Who will use evaluation results
- How evaluation results will be used

It is recommended that your Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is reviewed regularly and that you set out the review profile in this section. Whilst a review of monitoring and evaluation takes place within WEFO quarterly reviews, including your own internal reviews will help you to demonstrate good

governance, keep your activities focussed on outputs and results and will have a positive impact in any process evaluation.

Policy Context: Objectives and Intended Outcomes

This should clearly set out the context for the operation, the underlying assumptions and rationale. This will have been set out in the approved Business Plan and so in many cases can be transferred across to this document. Having a standalone M&E Plan can simplify the commissioning process, contributes to improved management and acts as a quick reference to good governance.

An initial logic model should normally be developed to clearly describe how the resources (inputs) feed into the activities and intended or anticipated outputs, outcomes (short and medium term) and impact. These stages should clearly set out the underlying assumptions or conditions that are expected to bring about the impact.

The logic mapping exercise will enable your operation to focus on its stated aims and objectives, help to identify what evidence is required and will inform the evaluation objectives and research questions. It will be the basis of reviewing progress and help to identify any unintended consequences.

There are a number of generic logic models available for reference in the Magenta Book: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book

The Evaluation Objectives and Scope

You should set out what you aim to find out from your evaluation under this heading. This might be to assess the impact of the operation, or to understand the mechanisms that produce that impact. The objectives of the evaluation should be appropriate to the specified SO and to the stage at which evaluation is being undertaken.

The scope defines the focus and limits of evaluation. Details here could include the time period, the geographical or thematic coverage of the

evaluation, or the target population. The scope of the evaluation must be realistic given the time and resources available.

Quality considerations might be included in this heading. Data quality should be addressed in terms of relevance, accuracy, comparability and coherence. Trying to demonstrate a direct effect on regional or national economies through localised interventions, for instance, is unlikely to produce a robust or particularly useful evaluation outcome.

Evaluation Tasks and Questions

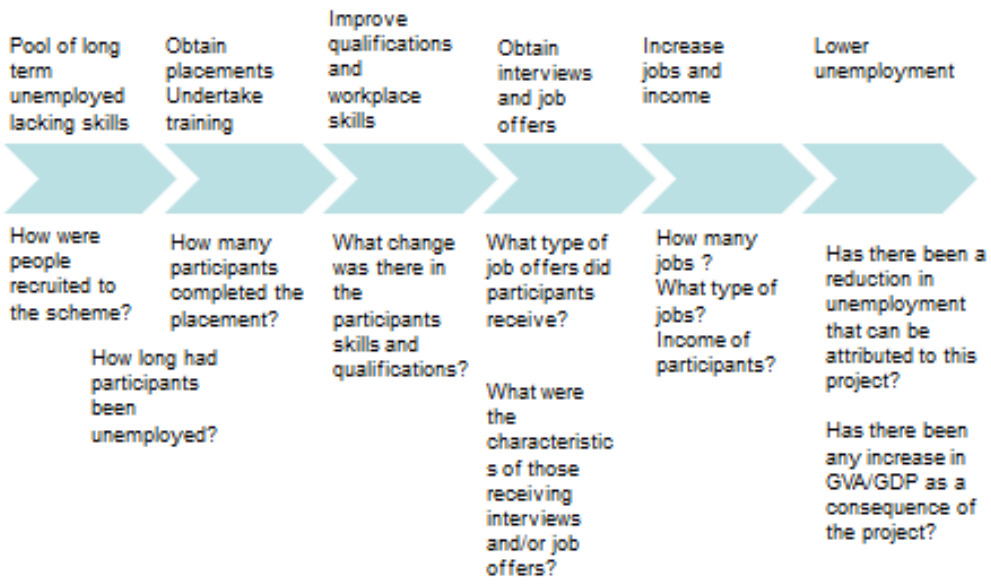
Evaluations may be used

- to establish the baseline data that demonstrates the need for the operation and from which progress towards the operation's objectives can be assessed[4]
- to review the programme processes, intervention logic, indicators and resources to improve management and implementation
- to understand the impact of the operation

Many operations will use all three of these as a baseline, interim (formative) and final (summative) evaluations.[5] A well developed logic model will assist in developing appropriate research/evaluation questions, which will in turn inform appropriate methods and tasks.

[4] Certain 2014-2020 ESF indictors require evaluations to be undertaken using a representative population sample, randomly selected to reflect the socio-economic characteristics of the participants according to investment priority. This means that the sample design is an evaluation task that needs to be undertaken at an early stage of the operation. EC Guidance Document Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy ESF (Sept. 2014, p22) *"Non-probability, convenience sampling is not considered an appropriate sampling method"*

[5] There are benefits in commissioning an evaluator at the beginning of an operation to undertake an initial review or inception evaluation and then to review it in a summative evaluation.



Adapted from Magenta Book (2011) Box 2c

Evaluation tasks will be appropriate to the stage of evaluation and scale and scope of the operation. By following the operational logic and undertaking appropriate evaluations for each stage of the operation, you should build up a body of evidence that can be drawn upon in the final evaluation. The final evaluation should be an analytical review of the operation and its impact. It is important when setting evaluation questions to be clear that the evaluation seeks to ascertain the impact excluding the effect of other factors. The aim of a final evaluation will therefore be to achieve a wider understanding than merely demonstrating progress by comparing indicators and targets over time.

Evaluation tasks might include:

- a literature review
- agreeing a scoping report to clearly define the scope, outline risks and mitigation strategies, research activities deliverables and timescale.

- analysis of administrative data
- carrying out surveys
- focus groups
- developing case studies
- statistical analysis.

Existing data might be used or it might be necessary to collect new data. The beneficiary should, however, demonstrate an understanding of the potential, limits, and basic technical features of different methods and be able to relate them to the evaluation questions they have selected.

There is no single evaluation method that can cover all projects. The evaluation questions should, however, flow from the objectives and tasks of the operation and should correspond to a real need for knowledge, understanding or identification of new solution. The conclusions of the evaluation must clearly answer these questions, present the evaluator's *reasoned* judgment (rather than personal opinion) and must be supported by the evidence.

When deciding on the questions to pose, issues of greatest concern should be addressed by specific, answerable evaluation questions.

- a baseline evaluation might, for instance, address questions relating to the need for the operation/project, the socio-economic characteristics of the population, or the appropriate sampling design. The baseline is intended to provide a reference value against which targets are assessed.
- an interim evaluation should address questions relating to the progress of the operation/project towards its indicators, aims and objectives; the effectiveness of management and operational processes, and make recommendations regarding any changes to bring about improvements.

- a final evaluation should address questions that relate to the impact of the intervention as well as reflect on what has worked well (or otherwise), why and how.

Your evaluation questions should include specific reference to the Cross Cutting Themes and how well they have been integrated into the delivery of the operation and take into account the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and Wellbeing of Future Generations Act .

The operation should consider the broad approach and methodology at the pre-planning stage as this can have resource implications. It does not, however, need to be too detailed – more detail can be included in any specification for an external evaluator.

Evaluation Timing and Deliverables

Beneficiaries are required to provide regular updates on their activities to WEFO and have evidence of expenditure and outputs available when they submit claims. The agreed delivery profile and Business Plan will set this out and form the basis of review.

The timing and nature of evaluations should take account of the delivery profile and be set out in the M&E plan. A delivery profile for evaluations should be set out in the M&E plan and should be incorporated in the specification for external evaluations. The time taken to specify, advertise and select the evaluator will need to be reflected in that delivery profile.

Some key considerations are:

CIE methodologies An ex-ante evaluation would take place at the beginning of the operation providing the baseline data for successive evaluations. The sample will need to be representative of the target population for the investment priority, in line with EC monitoring and evaluation requirements.

TBE evaluation approaches The evaluation plan should, in most cases, comprise a baseline, or inception, evaluation which can be used

to develop or refine the initial logic model, check that the data being collected will be sufficient for evaluation purpose and that the collection and monitoring systems are robust. This can be standalone, but there are advantages in procuring the initial and interim evaluations under one contract.

In cases where there is a funding review, typically 3 years into the operation, it is vital that you plan for the interim review to be completed and the final report to be with WEFO decisions makers in sufficient time for them to make the decision. This should be agreed with WEFO but should be 2-3 months prior to the review date.

On conclusion of your activities, you will need to critically consider whether the impact of the operation can be ascertained at that point in time, or whether the final impact evaluation should take place some time after completion when there will be greater confidence that the real effects can be captured.

Draft evaluation reports will need to be made available to WEFO for comment, prior to being finalised for wider dissemination.

Data and Monitoring

Data requirements should be identified from the logic underpinning the intervention. This will be used to demonstrate progress against the aims and objectives of the operation and the selected output targets.

In addition, for EU funded projects you will need to provide evidence of

eligibility http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/looking/eligibility/?lang=en

outputs http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/?lang=en

and for verification purposes http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/looking/eligibility/?lang=en

The M&E Plan should set out clearly the systems to be used to collect, monitor, store, report and quality assure data for monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring Systems

Developing a good monitoring system is an essential part of developing your operation. The data collected and recorded needs to be accurate and needs to be recorded correctly and timely. Monitoring systems also need to have the capacity to support retroactive correction in the case of recording errors.

The system you use should be appropriate to your operation's needs, be able to provide you with the information you need to manage your operation and meet the reporting requirements of WEFO.

The scale and complexity of the system needs to be proportionate to the size and complexity of your operation. For example, a small operation with a small number of projects requiring enterprise level data will have less complex system needs than a large operation which includes multiple projects or complex participant data requirements. Although spreadsheets are useful for small projects with a limited number of activities, a more bespoke database is likely to be required where a number of users are likely to be recording, monitoring or using the data.

You should ensure that you understand the Indicator Definitions so that the system can be designed to capture all of the necessary data, whilst avoiding duplication of recording.

Data and Governance

The data requirements for each SO can be found within the Indicator Definitions guidance for each priority Axis.

ESF: http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/esf-indicators1/?lang=en

ERDF: http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/erdf-indicators/?lang=en

Beneficiaries should familiarise themselves with these and the associated data requirements before commencement of the operation. A template (ESF *Annex A, Annex B*: ERDF *ANNEX A*) is provided in the guidance to assist you in collecting the correct data.

The frequency for reporting against the operation's indicators will vary, but will need to be set out in the M&E Plan and be agreed with WEFO. The M&E plan should set out who is responsible for collecting data, to whom and how often it will be reported, how it will be used in the management of the operation and how data quality will be managed and assured. This section should be more than stating that the beneficiary has ISO accreditation.

In addition to meeting the reporting requirements of WEFO, you should consider the benefits of capturing additional management data. This data can inform the evaluation of your operation and contribute towards lessons learned from management and delivery. This will be guided by the logic model developed as part of the M&E planning process.

Governance arrangements will set out who is responsible for which task, which could be the project manager, senior responsible owner, project director or steering group.

The Magenta Book (Table 5c) gives the following examples:

Internal Project Manager	Senior Responsible Owner/Project Director	Steering Group
Drafting specification	Ensuring appropriate resources	Ensuring quality and relevance
Obtaining necessary data and security clearance	Ensuring necessary information is collected and	Facilitating work of external evaluators

	available to evaluators / WEFO	
Day to day management of risks[6]		Access to information and contacts[7]
Ensuring on track, meets objectives, is on time and within budget		Quality assurance: design, questions, methods, research tools
Contractors: advice and responding timely to issues arising		Assist in analysis and interpretation
Ensuring quality		
Feedback findings to relevant audience		

The governance arrangements should also be clear as to who is responsible, as data controller, under the Data Protection Act (1998).

Data Protection

ESF regulations (1304/2013;1303/2013) provide Member States with the legal basis to justify collection and processing of personal data for the purposes of monitoring and reporting on ESF funded operations. Member States shall provide that personal data must be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a way incompatible with those purposes as stipulated by EU data protection legislation. Annex A to the ESF Guidance on Indicator Definitions, Data and Evidence Requirements sets

[6] The risk register can be something the external evaluator produces as part of the specification
[7] Stakeholder details should be collated and retained at various stages of the operation. Difficulties have been experienced by evaluators where this has not been done as stakeholders cannot be traced

out the data that must be collected and reported to WEFO and is available at: http://gov.wales/funding/eu-funds/2014-2020/delivering-your-project/esf-indicators1/?lang=en

Privacy notices should be provided to all participants and the form and content of this should be agreed with WEFO and annexed to the M&E Plan.

Data protection rules do not always apply for enterprises, but care needs to be taken where an enterprise may be based at a residential address and in the case of sole traders. It is advisable that privacy notices are provided to all enterprises to ensure they are aware that data is being shared with third parties and how it will be used.

Verification

The type of evidence required varies according to indicator and is set out in the Indicator definitions for each SO. Indicative guidance is provided within the indicator definitions. Where the format of evidence to be provided is agreed with WEFO it is recommended that it is annexed to the M&E Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation Resources

Appropriate and sufficient resources should be provided for monitoring and evaluation and these should be set out in the M&E Plan. The costs of in-project monitoring and evaluation are usually reflected in the global delivery costs of an operation.

Budgets for externally commissioned evaluations should be proportionate to the aims and objectives of the operation. However, inadequately resourced evaluations are likely to lead to poor quality evidence or even false conclusions and may not provide the evidence base needed for future project planning.

A robust monitoring and evaluation plan, comprehensive and appropriate enterprise/ participant database, financial/management records and management analysis will feed into a) a better quality evaluation and b) value for money in the evaluation. The less data analysis an external evaluator has to do the lower the cost of evaluation and the better the management

outcomes are likely to be. A robust M&E plan that is clear in its intentions, has a well defined logic model supported by quality data should reduce the cost of evaluation.

Commissioning and Managing the Evaluation

The Governance arrangements should set out clearly responsibilities for specifying, commissioning, approving and managing evaluation contracts.

Specification

Advice can be obtained on the content of evaluation specifications from WEFO RME RME.MAILBOX@wales.gsi.gov.uk

In addition to any internal governance arrangements, specifications for external evaluation contractors should be reviewed and approved by WEFO before being advertised. WEFO guidance on conducting procurement should be followed.

Examples of published specifications can be provided is required.

Specifications might include:

- Background to the operation, to include a brief description of the strategic background and objectives of the Operational programme
- Aims of the operation
- Objectives of the evaluation
- Methodology – indicative e.g. process, impact.
- Deliverables might include – e.g. scoping or inception report with agreed methodological approach; analysis of data; meetings and updates (specify time and means); draft and final reports to specified standards; presentation to stakeholders. This should also set out any formatting and Welsh language requirements (delivery).

- Timescale (indicative milestones) from ITT to delivery of final report.
- Budget available, any requirement for cost breakdown e.g. into daily rates; whether fixed price contract; inclusive or exclusive of VAT.
- Award evaluation criteria: e.g. MEAT and criteria to be used an example might be:

Evaluation Criteria[8]	Weighting
1. Understanding of the research context and response to brief (1,500 words max)	20
2. Methodological approach; including rationale, suitability of methods proposed, timescales for delivery and anticipated risks and proposed mitigation (3,500 words maximum)	40
3. Details of the project team; relevant prior experience roles and responsibilities within this contract (1,500 words maximum)	20
4. Cost (completed on the price schedule pro forma provided)	20

- Payment details
- Welsh Language requirements
- Required financial standing/resources, including existing commitments

[8] Further supplementary guidance on this can be provided in the body of the text

- Freedom of Information
- Environmental sustainability/Equality requirements
- Monitoring details – named contractor responsible
- Security
- Whether changes to specification can be made and how
- Impact of TUPE regulations

Survey Control

Where surveys of participants or enterprises are being undertaken it may be necessary to obtain approval of the form and content of the survey from Welsh Government Survey Control. Further guidance is available from http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/about/surveys/?lang=en

Data Collection and Data Transfer

Appropriate arrangements need to be in place to ensure that data is transmitted securely between evaluation contractors and the client/beneficiary.

Quality Control

Quality assurance can be implemented through active management of the contract and by specifying that contractors follow recognised codes of professional practice, for example the Market Research Society or Social Research Association.

Style Guidance and a Government Social Research (GSR) report template are available from WEFO RME RME.MAILBOX@wales.gsi.gov.uk

As part of the quality control framework, specifications and draft reports are required to be sent to WEFO for comment.

Annexes

Documents annexed to M&E Plans make evaluation more straightforward as the evidence base is readily available to evaluators. However to be effective these annexes need to be kept accurate and should therefore be updated and reviewed.

It is recommended that you annex sample data collection forms, privacy notices and output evidence forms to the M&E Plan as evidence of what has been agreed with WEFO.

Annexing lists of key stakeholders, their role, organisation and contact details is also useful information for evaluation, and lack of this information has hampered effective evaluation of 2007-2013 projects. This should be dated to provide context and the list should be added to rather than names replaced.

Further Guidance

For updated information please refer to the WEFO website.

http://wefo.wales.gov.uk

EVALUATION

Additional evaluation guidance for European Social Funds can be found at:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/evaluations/guidance_en.cfm#1

EVALSED:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/evaluations-guidance-documents/2013/evalsed-the-resource-for-the-evaluation-of-socio-economic-development-evaluation-guide

EC Impact Evaluation Centre:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/evaluations/guidance/impact_faq_theor

Quality in Quality in Qualitative Evaluation: A Framework for Assessing Research Evidence(PDF 750KB) GCSRO, 2003. http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Quality-in-qualitative-evaulation_tcm6-38739.pdf

HM Treasury Magenta Book:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-magenta-book

HM Treasury Green Book:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-governent

ETHICS

ESRC Framework for Research Ethics 2010 (revised September 2012) (PDF, 480Kb)
http://www.esrc.ac.uk/_images/framework-for-research-ethics-09-12_tcm8-4586.pdf

Social Research Association Ethical Guidelines http://the-sra.org.uk/research-ethics/ethics-guidelines/

GSR Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government
http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/networks/gsr/publications

Market Research Association Code of Conduct:

http://www.marketingresearch.org/issues-policies/mra-code-marketing-research-standards

For more information:

www.gov.wales/eu-funding

@wefowales / @wefocymru

Enquiries Helpdesk 0845 010 3355

Cronfeydd yr UE: Buddsoddi yng Nghymru

EU Funds: Investing in Wales

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