



Ireland's European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014-2020

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PMC Meeting 22 November 2018 Agenda Item 8 PEIL Evaluation Update

PEIL Mid-Term Evaluation

Article 56 of Regulation 1303/2013 requires that at least once during the programming period, an evaluation is carried out on how support from the ESF has contributed to the objectives of each Priority.

Article 19(6) of Regulation 1304/2013 requires that at least twice during the programming period, evaluations are carried out to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of joint support from the ESF and the specific allocation for YEI including for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The first evaluation was completed in December 2015 and the second must be completed by 31 December 2018.

As set out in the PEIL Evaluation Plan, an evaluation to address both of these regulatory requirements is being undertaken this year. The evaluation is being overseen by an Evaluation Steering Group. The membership of the Evaluation Steering Group is set out in Appendix 1.

Fitzpatrick Associates were appointed in June 2018 to undertake the evaluation following a public procurement process carried out under the Office of Government Procurement's Multi-Supplier Framework Agreement for the Provision of All of Government Business & Management Consulting and Advisory Services.

The detailed terms of reference for the evaluation are provided in Appendix 2.

The methodology has comprised:

- a documentary review of existing literature, reports and other documentation;
- analysis of quantitative monitoring data available under the OP;
- structured consultations with the Managing Authority, Evaluation Steering Group Members, Intermediate Bodies, and wider stakeholders including beneficiaries and Monitoring Committee members; and
- assessment of all Programme Activities, incorporating a desk-based review of relevant documents and data, interviews with key stakeholders at intermediary body and beneficiary organisation level with direct responsibilities for activity management and delivery, and in a number of cases further case studies and consultations.

In line with the agreed timelines for the evaluation, Fitzpatrick Associates have to date submitted inception, interim and draft final reports to the Evaluation Steering Group.

The final evaluation report is due to be submitted to the Evaluation Steering Group on 10 December 2018. Subject to the Group's approval of the report, it is intended to submit the report to the PMC for approval by written procedure before Christmas.

Youthreach and Community Training Centres

SOLAS has commissioned an evaluation of Youthreach provision. The evaluation, which is being undertaken by the ESRI, is intended to:

- be a comprehensive analysis of Youthreach provision through Youthreach Centres and Community Training Centres
- incorporate multiple perspectives (participants/learners, teachers/instructors and co-ordinators/managers)
- capture the voice of young people who have disengaged from school; and
- inform policy and practice regarding provision for early school leavers.

The study involves a mix a desk research, a national survey of Youthreach managers, analysis of existing data on school leavers, case studies and consultative workshops.

ESRI began their research in September 2017 and SOLAS expect to receive a final report by the end of the year.

Specific Skills Training (part of ETB Training for the Unemployed)

An evaluation of Specific Skills Training and the Vocational Training and Opportunities Scheme as a single exercise has commenced. SOLAS has appointed Indecon International Economic Consultants to undertake the evaluation.

The ESF Managing Authority is a member of the Advisory Group for the evaluation.

Disability Project (Ability Programme)

Pobal has appointed Quality Matters to undertake an external evaluation of the Ability Programme. The evaluation will assess the achievement of the programme's original aims and key objectives. The evaluation will also explore the effectiveness of different approaches and measures applied in bringing young people with disabilities who are not work-ready, closer to the labour market in addition to examining the range of impacts on the participants of the programme.

The evaluation will be a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, which will be supported by an analysis of quantitative data collected by Pobal. It is expected that the evaluation will be conducted over the duration of the programme and it will conclude in June 2020.

The ESF Managing Authority is represented on the Steering Group for the evaluation.

Garda Youth Diversion Projects

The Department of Justice and Equality plans to commission an external evaluation of the Garda Youth Diversion Projects in 2019.

The ESF Managing Authority will be represented on the Steering Group for the evaluation and will input through the group on the terms of reference.

November 2018

Appendix 1:

Evaluation Steering Group Membership

Member Organisation
ESF Managing Authority
Department of Education and Skills
Department of Justice and Equality
Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Higher Education Authority
European Social Fund Committee

Appendix 2:

Mid-Term Evaluation of the ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020, including an evaluation of the operation of the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) element of the Programme

Terms of Reference

The key objectives of the Evaluation is to provide an independent analysis of progress under the PEIL and developments in the programme environment to date¹ and to make appropriate recommendations for programme adjustments on the basis of this analysis.

The completed Evaluation Report must address, in particular:

Review of External Developments

1. A brief review of the implications for the Operational Programme of relevant external developments in the programme environment since it was agreed. This should include analysis of relevant socio-economic data such as labour force and employment.
2. A succinct review of the implications of any relevant policy and legislative developments at both national and EU level. The developments reviewed shall fall under two distinct headings, namely:
 - Overarching issues affecting the programme as a whole or a range of priorities; and
 - Priority-specific issues
3. An assessment of the continued validity of the priorities and objectives of the programme.

Progress of Operational Programme to Date

4. Review financial progress and forecasts at Activity, Priority and Operational Programme level up to date.
5. Assess the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of each Activity to date. In assessing the extent to which the Activities in the Operational Programme are meeting the target indicators, the successful tenderer will be required to provide detailed Activity-specific analyses of the reasons why any particular indicators/targets are not being met and will also be required to propose detailed Activity-specific action plans to enable Intermediate Bodies/Beneficiaries to bring the Activity in line with initial projections, where feasible. The analysis should incorporate an assessment of the softer / non-absolute outcomes of selected Activities.
6. Assess how support from the ESF (and YEI including for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, where relevant) has contributed to the objectives of each Priority Axis.
7. Identify any constraints (internal or external to the programme) which have affected the progress of programme implementation to date. These may include, but not be limited to, operational issues, regulatory changes, global trends etc.

Indicators

8. Review the indicators at priority level against the following criteria:
 - Comprehensiveness in terms of capturing programme outputs and benefits;
 - The relevance, reliability and timeliness of the indicators including the quality of the data used;
 - Were the targets set down achievable;

¹ References to “to date” refer to the latest date for which data is available, which in most cases will be end 2017.

Horizontal Principles

9. Assess how the Horizontal Principles, as set out in the Operational Programme, are being dealt with by activities and how they're being mainstreamed into Activity delivery.

Conclusions and Recommendations

10. The successful tenderer will be expected to draw appropriate conclusions in relation to each of the analytical tasks set out above. However, there are a number of key issues on which overall conclusions should be formulated as follows:-
 - A view as to whether Operational Programme and priority objectives are likely to be achieved;
 - The continuing validity of the ex-ante analysis at programme and priority level as appropriate and the continuing relevance of the programme/priority objectives and strategy in this light;
 - The efficiency, effectiveness and impact of each Activity to date, including the YEI and the implementation of the Youth Guarantee;
 - The extent to which the Horizontal Principles have informed and influenced the management and delivery of the programme; and
 - The structures and arrangements for programme management and delivery, including where there are gaps in necessary data.
11. The successful tenderer will be expected to make appropriate recommendations for possible programme modifications.
 - In terms of recommendations, it is open to the successful tenderer to make recommendations on any issue arising from the conclusions drawn. Where the successful tenderer proposes adjustments to the allocation of resources within the programme, these must be made within the envelope of remaining resources in the Operational Programme budget.
 - The evaluation report shall state recommendations clearly and these shall be numbered and stratified in order of priority.