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2016 Synthesis of Evaluation Results and Plans under the ESIF Programmes 2014-2020

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This Staff Working Document (SWD) presents an overview of the current outlook of evaluation activities on the European Structural Investment Funds ('ESIF')[1] in the 2014-2020 period.

1. Introduction

In the 2014-2020 programming period a stronger emphasis is placed on the need to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies co-financed through the programmes of the European Structural & Investment Funds (hereafter ESI Funds). The regulatory framework of the ESI Funds and in particular *Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006*[2] (hereinafter referred to as 'CPR', i.e. 'Common Provisions Regulation') has reinforced the focus on results already at the level of programme design. The programmes now require the definition of specific objectives, which articulate the change sought by the policy, result indicators to monitor and measure this change and output indicators characterizing the concrete actions implemented.

Evaluation is understood as the tool to disentangle the effects attributable to the policy from those of other factors that also influence the development of result indicators and achievement of specific objectives. As part of the reinforced result orientation Managing Authorities are required for the first time to conduct evaluations of the results or contribution of the programmes to the objectives (impact evaluations) in order to better understand the contribution of the programmes to the specific change targeted.

In the Annual Implementation Reports, the Managing Authorities synthesise and present the findings of all evaluations of the programme that have become available during the previous financial year (Article 50 CPR).

While some programmes have started to select and implement operations, it is still too early to expect any evidence on the results in the 2014-2020 programming period. The only exception relates to the Youth Employment Initiative ('YEI'), where evaluation results are presented in more detail in Section 4 below. Nonetheless, Managing Authorities have been proactively working in the area of evaluations and in particular in the development of the Evaluation Plans, which are the central tool for designing and mapping the evaluations foreseen during the programming period (Article 56 CPR).

Evaluation plans may cover more than one programme (Article 56(1) CPR), and, given the potential multi-fund nature of some programmes, also foresee evaluations on the interventions related to more than one ESI fund.[3] The Managing Authorities draw up Evaluation Plans

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1 ESIF include the European Regional Development Fund ('ERDF'), the European Social Fund ('ESF'), the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ('EAFRD') and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund ('EMFF').

2 OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

3 For the purposes of this analysis and given that ESF provides 50% of the funding of Thematic Objectives 8-11 in ERDF/Cohesion Fund and ESF multi-fund programmes in which the lead fund is ERDF (roughly EUR 20 billion), the proposed evaluations for these objectives have been assigned 50% to ERDF and 50% to ESF.

laying down the structure of the evaluation function, identifying the evaluations to be carried out during the programming period, including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact, and ensure that, at least once during the programming period, an evaluation assesses how support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority (Article 56 CPR).

The evaluation plans are submitted to the monitoring committee no later than one year after the adoption of the operational programme (Article 114(1) CPR)[4]. In the case of the EMFF, the evaluation plan referred to in CPR Article 56 is part of the operational programme and follows a common structure established in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 771/2014. In the case of the EAFRD, the evaluation plans are also part of the rural development programmes[5] and follow a common structure established in Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014, Annex I, Part I, point 9.

The analysis of the plans offers an overview of what evidence can be reasonably expected and when. However, it must be underlined that the request for an early forecast of all evaluation activities is a novelty introduced with the current programming period. The Evaluation Plan is by nature a living document and we expect that they will be updated in the coming years depending on how the activities develop on the ground.

This document is structured as follows. Section 2 offers a synthetic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current plans. Sections 3-6 look in detail at the contents of the plans by ESI fund, Section 7 concludes summarising the current European Commission evaluation activities and initiatives to support evaluation efforts in the Member States.

2. Strengths and Weaknesses of current Evaluation Plans

Devising upfront an evaluation plan encompassing all the evaluations foreseen for the entire programming period is a new requirement on national and regional Managing Authorities. The structure of evaluation plans is similar across all ESIF programmes. The plans:

- Describe the governance and coordination of the evaluation function identifying the main bodies involved and their responsibilities;
- Describe the source for evaluation expertise and provisions ensuring the functional independence of evaluators from the authorities responsible for programme implementation;
- Provide information on evaluation topics and activities, data availability and, where appropriate, on foreseen evaluation methodologies;
- Give an overall timetable showing how the evaluations will feed into implementation and the various reports on programmes;
- Describe the communication strategy;
- Provide the overall budget needed and foreseen to implement the evaluation plan,
- Devise a quality management strategy for the evaluation process.

The Commission services have provided guidance to the Managing Authorities for the development of the plans[6] and have reviewed the plans approved by the monitoring committees.

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4 Any amendment of the evaluation plan including where it is part of a common evaluation plan is also submitted to the monitoring committee for approval (Article 110(2)(c) CPR.

5 Article 8(1)(g) of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013.

6 ERDF and ESF:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/evaluation_plan_guidance_en.pdf
EAFRD: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014, Annex I, Part I, point 9.
EMFF: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 771/2014, Annex I, Part I, point 10.

A synthesis of the Commission's assessment of the evaluation plans so far received is presented below. Overall, descriptions of the governance of the evaluation function and the communication of results are rather well treated in the evaluation plans examined. However, the evaluation plans are noticeably weaker in relation to evaluation design and methods and on data availability and systems.

Three aspects can explain the relative strengths and weaknesses:

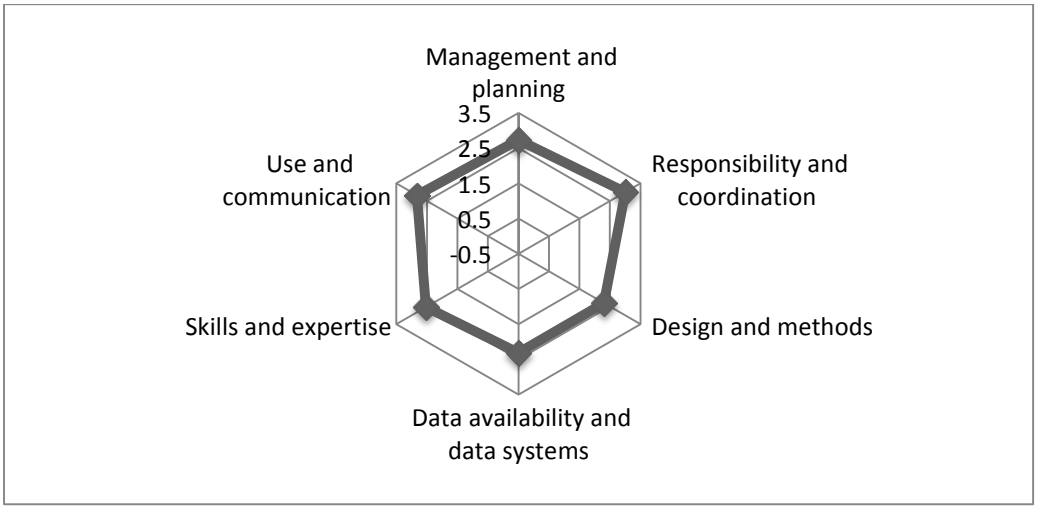
- The expertise of Managing Authorities is stronger in the governance dimensions (and the quality of the plans is indeed good in these aspects) than on evaluation issues. New required expertise in the evaluation area still needs to be acquired,
- The requirements for evaluation plans and impact evaluations are new. These were advised but not required in previous programming periods.
- It is however expectable that Managing Authorities themselves do not yet have a complete picture on how the programmes will be implemented, which would make it difficult to devise the evaluations for assessing their effectiveness.

The Commission services have regularly underlined that the Evaluation Plans should by nature be treated as living documents. In the coming years, the plans should be regularly reviewed and will need further improvements especially on those aspects that require more specific expertise in planning and carrying out evaluations.

For the structural and cohesion funds, the Commission has established an Evaluation Helpdesk, which supports DG REGIO and DG EMPL in assessing the quality of the received Evaluation Plans along 6 main drivers: Management and Planning, Responsibility and Coordination, Use and Communication, Skills and Expertise (of available staff), Design and Methods, and Data Availability and Data Systems. For each of the 6 drivers, the plans were rated on a scale 0-4 (from *poor* to *very good*) in terms of their *Appropriateness*[7] and *Completeness*[8].

The Commission encouraged Managing Authorities to review their plans for next year especially in terms of further reflecting on the characteristics of the individual evaluations (research questions, methodologies, data, budget, timing, coverage of all specific objectives) of the individual evaluations.

Figure 3.1-1 2014-2020 Programming Period: Average quality of ERDF/Cohesion Fund and ESF evaluation plans



7 i.e. whether the proposed solutions are suitable for supporting the activity.

8 i.e. whether the Plan covers all the required aspects.

The improvements to the plans should also dwell on the strategic use of evaluation. For example, evaluations of small experiments and social innovations (cf. ESF Art. 9) to test the efficiency and effectiveness of interventions before bringing them up to scale are absent. Moreover, collaboration among programmes for the evaluation of similar topics/interventions is unfortunately limited and should be enhanced in the future.

For ERDF/Cohesion Fund and ESF, interesting good practices in terms of collaboration were adopted by some Member States.

- Some Member States (for example IT, ES, RO and PT) have devised lists of result indicators that are common to all the operational programmes investing on certain topics. This approach has allowed them to propose Member States-wide evaluations, which can potentially provide relevant insights on effectiveness.
- Other Member States (especially PL) have exploited the fact that many programmes use very similar result indicators (due to data availability) and have adopted a bottom-up approach leading to similar results by proposing meta-evaluation of the regional evaluations planned.

An Evaluation Helpdesk has also been established for Rural Development programmes to support the analysis of the quality of the Evaluation Plans and of the evaluation-related information reported in the Annual Implementation Reports ('AIRs') submitted in 2016. The plans analysed have shown specific strengths in the following aspects: the clear commitment given to the Common EU objectives, the efforts to describe the set-up of the evaluation-related governance system in the Rural Development programmes; the increased concern with ensuring the quality of evaluation by making use of non-mandatory evaluation steering groups, the completion of the Evaluation Plan with detailed internal planning documents, careful planning of provisions to disseminate evaluation findings to appropriate target groups. Along the same lines described above, weaknesses have been identified with respect to vagueness of the specifications on the resources used for monitoring and evaluation, the unclear timeline of evaluation activities besides those required by the legal framework; the missing methodological specifications and descriptions of mechanisms how these will be made.

As regards the EMFF, the analysis of the Commission services highlights that the current Evaluation Plans are adequate as a starting point for guiding the evaluation work required by the result-orientation. Evaluation methods and tasks are described only briefly and more details are needed to understand how the operational programmes are going to be evaluated. It is important to note that the EMFF has introduced a new approach focusing on the establishment of a Common Monitoring and Evaluation System with a set of common indicators and emphasis on results. This allowed the construction of intervention logics that are much more robust than in the previous funding period, which will facilitate the work of evaluators. Further, an essential component of the Common Monitoring And Evaluation System is the new monitoring system which has been redesigned in order to provide information at the level of individual operations. This should address the frequent data gaps that appeared when the FIFG and the EFF were evaluated.

3. ERDF/Cohesion Fund

3.1. Overview of evaluations in the 2014-2020 programming period

By 30 June, 2016, most of the Evaluation Plans were submitted to the monitoring committees for assessment and approval, covering the vast majority of ERDF/Cohesion Fund resources. The picture is not yet complete for IT, ES and TC programmes due to their late adoption.[9]

In total, the programmes expect to carry out roughly 2 000 evaluations out of which roughly 1 300 evaluations (i.e. 63% of the total) will be looking at results or at the impacts of the investment policies supported in both 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 periods. Roughly 10% of the impact evaluations should be completed by the end of 2017 (roughly 20% by the end of 2018 and 50% by the end of 2020).

For the MFF 2014-2020 the Commission proposals relied almost entirely on ex-post evaluation carried out by the Commission from the previous period (i.e. 2000-2006) and not on impact evaluations of the period that was running (i.e. 2007-2013 period). The expected completion of a body of impact evaluations before end 2017 could for the first time provide the Commission with evidence for the impact assessment for post 2020 based on implementation of the current period.

Moreover, the figure for 2020 provides a first approximation of the volume of evidence that will likely be available to the Managing Authorities for the planning and negotiations of the next programming period.

During the period 2015-2020, more than 80% of the process, implementation or monitoring assessments will also be carried out reflecting how these types of assessments are mostly relevant in the initial and intermediate phases of programme implementation. Managing Authorities will naturally focus on impact evaluations towards the end of the programming period and beyond, when interventions should have been already completed and operational (2020 – 2024). It is necessary to underline that these figures come from the initial version of the Evaluation Plans devised by the Managing Authorities and, most probably, the will change in the course of the period as the implementation of the programmes advances.[10]

Table 3.1-1 2014-2020 Programming Period: ERDF/Cohesion Fund total number of evaluations planned by type and timing of their delivery

	Total number of expected evaluations:	Of which to be delivered by the end of …		
		2020	2018	2017
Impact	1316	658	279	134
Other focus	79	22	10	7
Process, implementation or monitoring	689	563	374	253
Grand Total	2084	1243	663	394

[9] The subsequent analyses are based exclusively on the Evaluation Plans submitted to the monitoring committees by 30.06.2016.

[10] While the regulation requires that "at least once during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess how support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority" (art. 56.3), no specific requirement is set on the date for the evaluation.

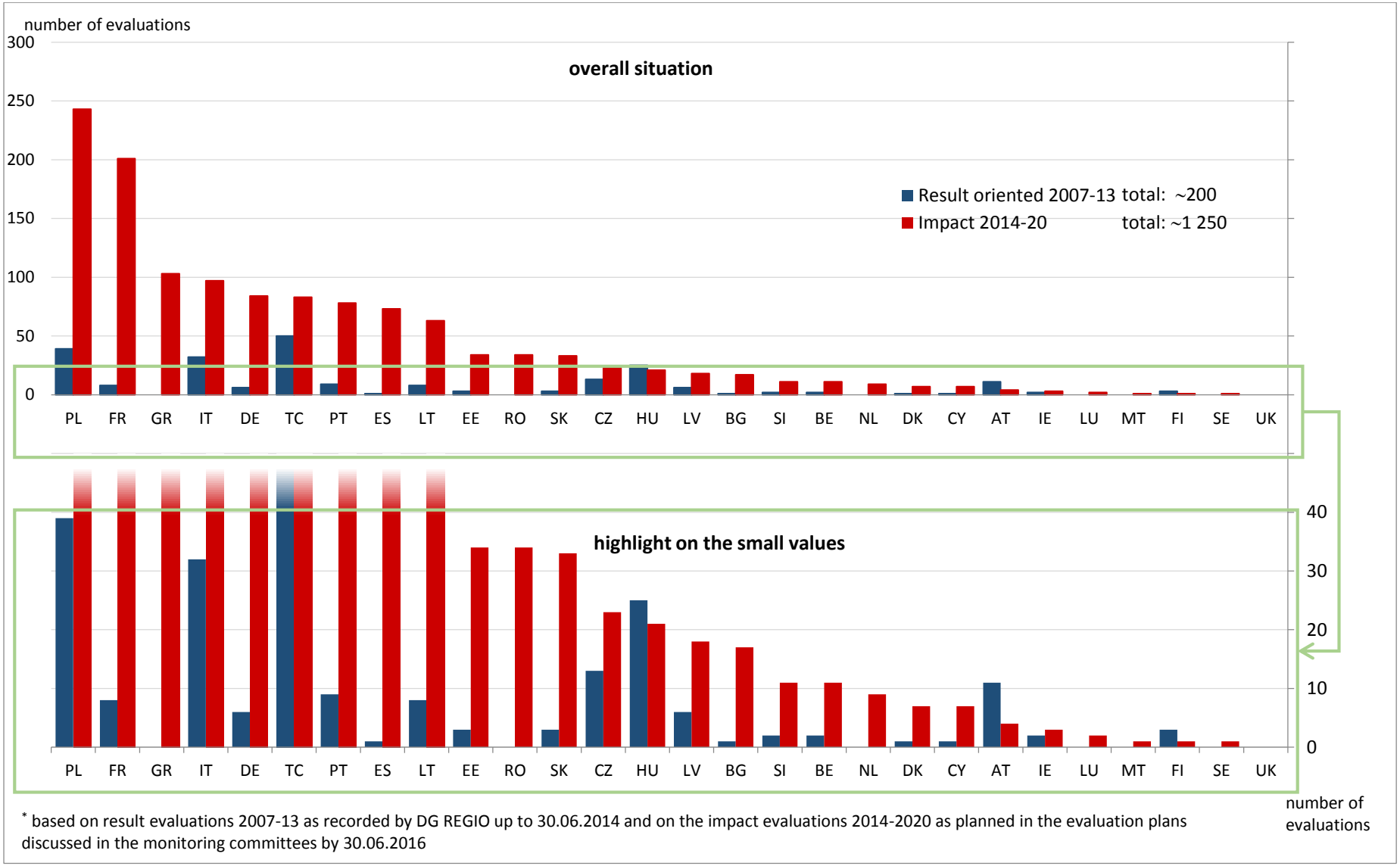
In general, most of the evaluations will be carried out between 2018 and 2022; during these years, the expectation is that between 200-250 evaluations per year will be completed and available. More than 100 evaluations are still expected in 2023, while the number of evaluations produced per year will be less than 50 at beginning (2016-2017) and at the very end of the programming period (2024). Especially in the initial years, the evaluations produced would be mainly process oriented and would not provide much information on the results of the activities. As previously indicated, these numbers relate to the *evaluations planned in the version of the Evaluation Plans submitted to the monitoring committees within one year from programme adoption*. Provided that, at this stage, various programmes were not yet fully operational, it is expected that there will be multiple instances in which the number and especially the content, the breadth, the grouping and the timing of evaluations will be modified during the next 2 years. The Commission expects that most Programmes will submit to the monitoring committees revised versions of the Evaluation Plans in 2017 and 2018.

As sketched in figure 3.1-1, the number of foreseen evaluations, and especially of impact evaluations, is substantially larger than in the past programming period when roughly 200 impact evaluations were carried out and published up to 30.06.2014.[11] The large increase of impact evaluations indicates that Managing Authorities have considered carefully the regulatory requirements and are focussing more on programme results rather than on process and implementation aspects (which were the main drivers of evaluations in the previous programming period).

Nonetheless, some caveats should be considered when interpreting these figures. First, many plans are proposing one or more evaluations per specific objective to be carried out with multiple methodologies. It is foreseen that each operational programme will carry out more than 11 evaluations on average. Second, in this initial stage of the programming period, the actual contents of many evaluations are not clearly identified, which complicates the categorization of the current evaluation proposals.

11 Since then, 150 additional evaluations have been identified and the evaluation plans indicate that almost 100 more should be completed between 2016 and 2017.

Figure 3.1-1 Comparison 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 Programming Periods: ERDF/Cohesion Fund total number of foreseen impact evaluations by Member States

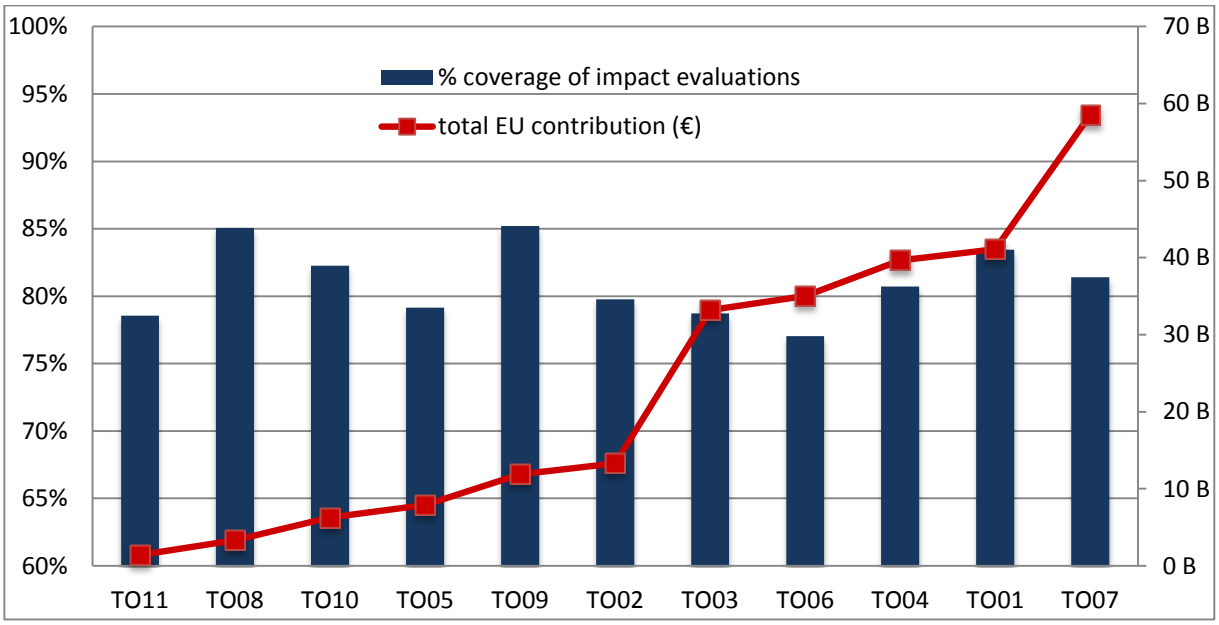


* based on result evaluations 2007-13 as recorded by DG REGIO up to 30.06.2014 and on the impact evaluations 2014-2020 as planned in the evaluation plans discussed in the monitoring committees by 30.06.2016

3.2. Thematic scope, timing, methods

The analysis by operational programme of the foreseen impact evaluations per Thematic Objective suggests that, independently from the total volume of resources invested in the TO under scrutiny, the average coverage is about 80% (Figure 4.2-1). This figure indicates that in roughly 20% of the Operational Programmes there is funding allocated to thematic objectives that are not covered by impact evaluation. In this early stage of the programming period the definition of the scope of individual evaluations need to be further developed. This can imply that some TOs could be covered by evaluations that cannot currently be categorised. Therefore, the apparent lack of coverage of certain TOs is not a major weakness in this first phase of planning. Nonetheless, the evolution of the coverage of all TOs should be closely monitored as the regulatory requirement indicates that at least once during the programming period an evaluation should assess how support from the Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority.

Figure 3.2-1 2014-2020 Programming Period: ERDF/Cohesion Fund foreseen coverage impact evaluations by TO and total volume of available EU funding

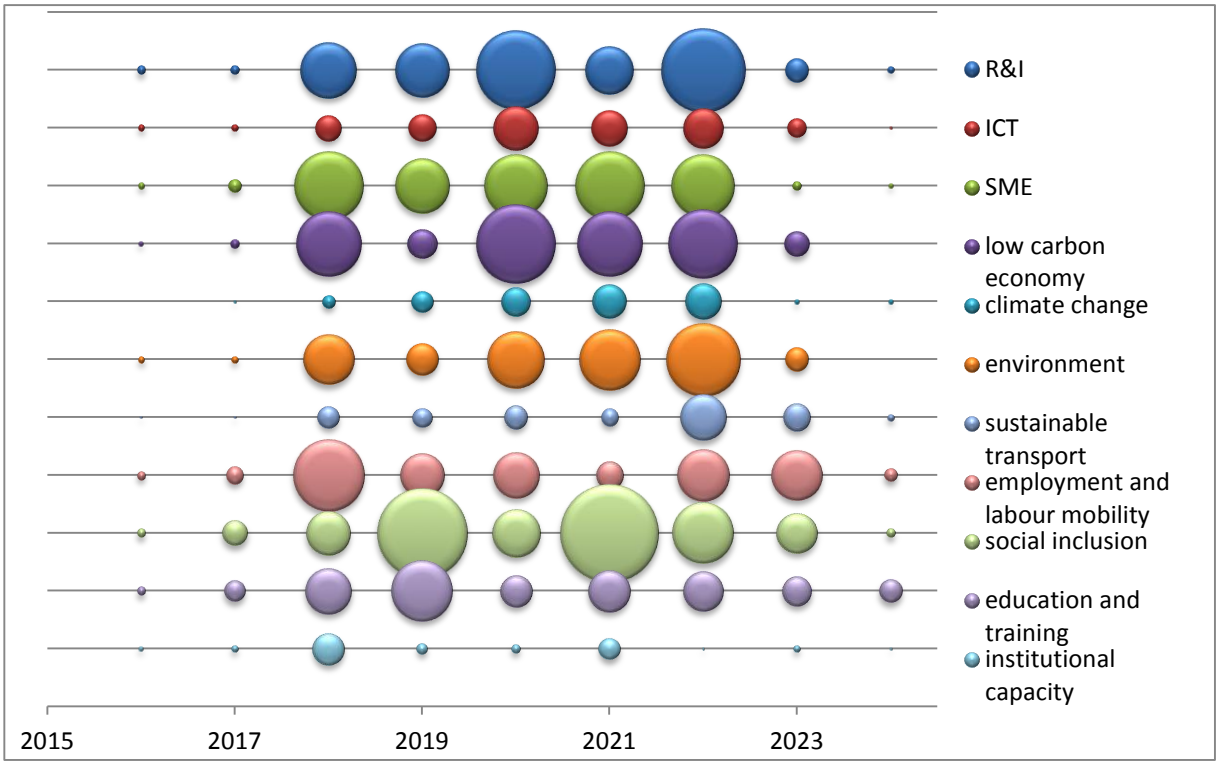


Looking at the timing of evaluations (Figure 3.2-2), the current planning indicates that very little – if any – evidence related to 2014-2020 should be expected in 2016 and 2017. This can certainly be largely attributed to the fact that the programmes are in the launch phase and that the nature of the interventions often requires medium-long timeframes for completion. This confirms the need for the Commission to rely on additional sources of performance information in the preparation of the post-2020 period such as relevant findings from the ex-post evaluations of 2007-2013 programmes, latest available monitoring data or thematic studies covering specific implementation aspects related to the 2014-2020 framework.

Starting in 2017, further analyses will be needed to understand what topics, sub-topics, and geographic areas will be covered by the planned evaluations to understand if some aspects within certain Thematic Objectives will be more assessed than others (e.g. S3 within TO01 – R&I). Moreover, the limited number of evaluations does not necessarily mean that some areas are not well covered. One example in this direction is TO07 – Sustainable transport. This TO receives the largest share of EU funding overall, but almost 50% of the funding is concentrated in one single operational programme in Poland. Consequently, the number of planned evaluations is much more limited than if the funding had been scattered across many programmes.

Moreover, looking further ahead, the results of less than half of the impact evaluations planned by the programmes can be expected by the end of 2020. This must be kept in mind when thinking of the negotiations of the post-2020 programmes and on the ex-post evaluations of the 2014-2020 programmes (due by 2024).

Figure 3.2-2 2014-2020 Programming Period: ERDF/Cohesion Fund Impact Evaluations Planned by year and Thematic Objective



In the absence of significant studies and evaluation work by end 2015 only a minority of the 2016 AIRs completed the section on "summary of evaluations" and the information reported relates to ex post evaluation of the 2007-2013 programming period. The evaluation plans indicate that 80 impact evaluations are planned on 2007-2013 distributed among all the thematic objectives and that these should be completed by the end of 2017.

Independently, DG REGIO collects and analyses the evaluations produced in the Member States. Since 1 January, 2015, 80 evaluations on ERDF/Cohesion Fund were identified. Of those,

- 66 evaluations (57 impact, 9 process/monitoring) are ex-post or intermediate evaluations of the 2007-2013 programming period,
- 14 evaluations are process/implementation evaluations for the 2014-2020 period.

4. ESF

4.1. Overview of evaluations in the 2014-2020 programming period

By 30 June, 2016, 128 ESF (including multi-fund) Evaluation Plans were submitted to the monitoring committees for assessment and approval, covering an estimated 75% of ESF resources. Some Spanish ESF OPs, Italian regional ESF OPs and the Dutch ESF OP did not submit an evaluation plan covering their ESF programmes by that time.

According to the plans, the national Managing Authorities intend to carry out a total of 565 evaluations out of which 444 evaluations (79%) will be looking at results or at the impacts of the investment policies supported in both 2007-13 and 2014-2020 periods. This shows a

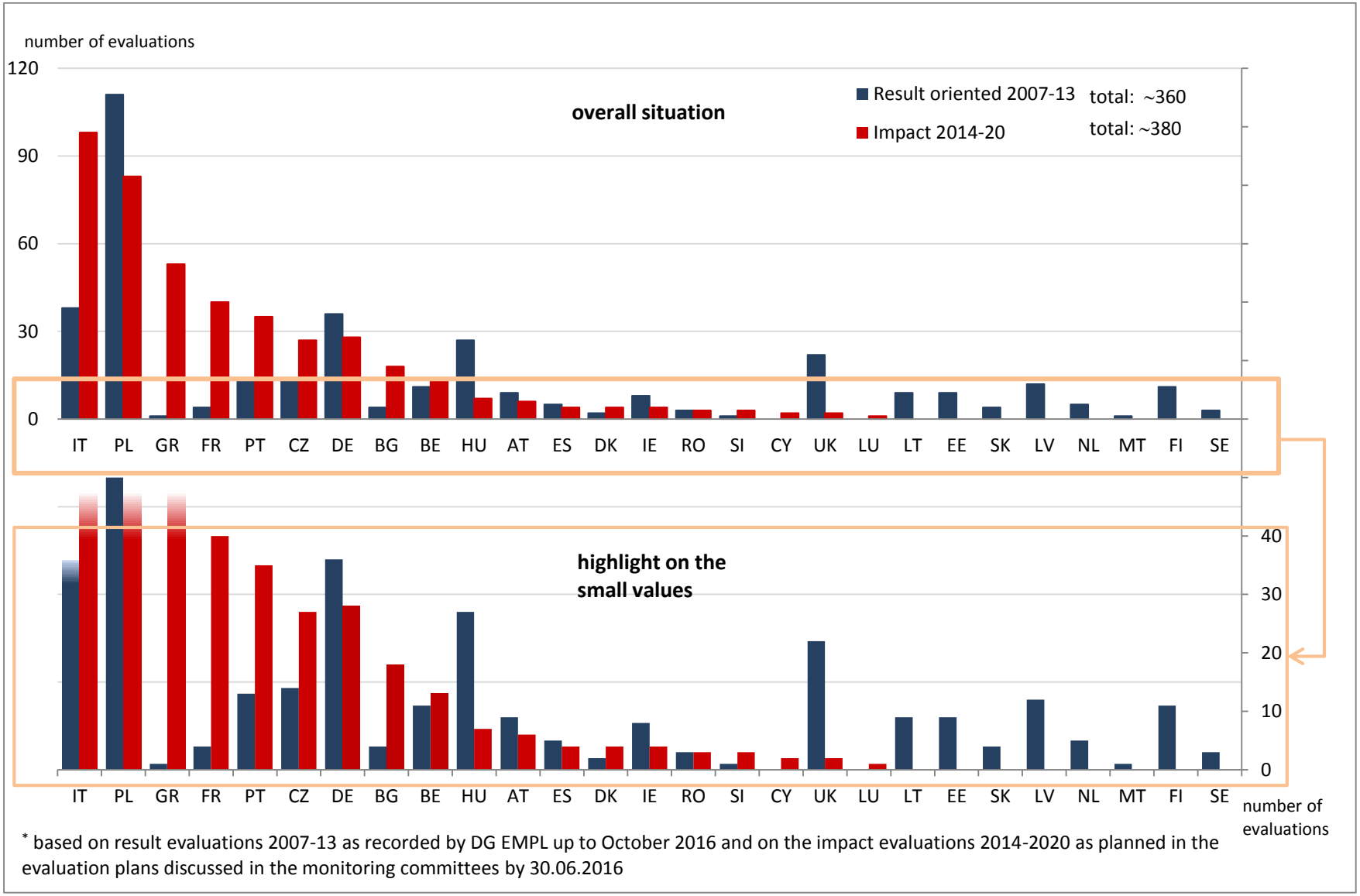
doubling in the share of impact evaluations compared to the previous programming period (34%), when the total number of completed evaluations went above one thousand, out of which 363 were impact (including process oriented) evaluations. In contrast, total evaluation intensity decreased from 9.3 evaluations per billion euros to 4.3; however this is coupled with an increase in impact evaluation intensity (3.6 impact evaluations per billion euros). An overview is presented in Table 4.1-1 and a comparison of the two periods by Member State in Figure 4.1-1 below.

Table 4.1-1 2014-2020 programming period: total number of planned ESF evaluations by type and timing of their delivery

	Total number of expected evaluations:	Of which to be delivered by the end of …		
		2020	2018	2017
Impact	444	225	114	41
Other focus	9	4	3	0
Process, implementation or monitoring	112	85	54	39
Grand Total	565	314	171	80

If implemented according to schedule, the 225 impact evaluations by 2020 (114 by 2018) should provide timely input in the planning of the operational programmes of the forthcoming period. Similarly, the majority of process, implementation or monitoring oriented evaluations should by then provide input to the adjustments of the delivery systems. As regards contributing to the development of the more general framework for the next MFF by the Commission, as already indicated for the ERDF and Cohesion Fund, the limited availability of evaluation evidence in 2017 and 2018 shows the need to rely on alternative sources of performance evidence (e.g. monitoring data) for this process.

Figure 4.1-1 Comparison 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 Programming Periods: ESF total number of foreseen impact evaluations by Member States



* based on result evaluations 2007-13 as recorded by DG EMPL up to October 2016 and on the impact evaluations 2014-2020 as planned in the evaluation plans discussed in the monitoring committees by 30.06.2016

The YEI financial resources are composed of a specific budget allocation and there is an at least equal contribution from the ESF.

Article 19(6) of the ESF Regulation sets out that Member States will conduct at least two evaluations to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the YEI. The first evaluation had to be completed by 31 December 2015 with the second evaluation due by 31 December 2018.

Most of the first YEI evaluations submitted by Member States to the Commission focused on design of the measures adopted, their relevance and implementation of the operations. The new provisions governing the YEI and the specific administrative and monitoring arrangements put in place had an impact on the late start of operations and to limited available quantitative data. However, in 2016 the rhythm of implementation of YEI interventions is catching up and significant outputs and results are to be expected. Overall the quality of the evaluations can be considered as methodologically adequate and the results presented robust.

It appears that a range of measures funded through the YEI had been set up in most countries, offering a 'menu of support' for young people not in employment, education or training ('NEET') with the overarching objective to integrate them into employment, education or training. There was a strong focus on the provision of qualification and work experience type activities, such as the provision of first job experience (implemented in 81% of cases where implementation had started), traineeships and apprenticeships (71%) and high quality VET courses (65%). All countries developed personalised action plans when young people took part in YEI activities, although to varying degrees. In some Member States this policy practice was a novelty.

Based on the available data at the time of the evaluations, the YEI more frequently reached those aged 15-24 (rather than those aged 25-29), females (rather than males) and the unemployed (rather than inactive). YEI provision primarily targeted NEET young people with upper secondary and tertiary education. At this early stage of YEI implementation, results data was limited and only available for a small number of Member States and often for individual interventions only.

Further to the evaluations, the reporting in the 2015 AIR exercise showed some interesting figures like the total number of YEI participants until end 2015 amounted to 501 000 out of whom 79% are unemployed (LTU included), half of them having completed secondary education. 8% belong to migrant groups or minorities. The results at aggregate level indicate that 203 000 completed a YEI intervention, 82 000 received an offer after completing the intervention and 109 000 participants were in education or training, gained a qualification or were in employment following the support.

Other interesting evaluation findings include the fact that Public Employment Services are the main implementers of the YEI across Member States. .Evaluations indicate that the quality of service provided has risen because of increased capacity of public employment services and overall higher chance of finding a job of YEI supported NEETs than by the national schemes Furthermore YEI enables collaboration among the various stakeholders to realise synergies and multiplier effects.

Evaluations also helped to highlight and potentially to rectify some implementing issues, such as limited take-up from vulnerable groups (e.g. ES, HR, PL, SK), partners chosen based on cost and not on quality (LT), pre-financing arrangements that may render activities ineligible (ES), different understanding of concepts such as "personal plan" even within a single Member State (PL) and heterogeneity of capacity/effort by authorities.

In summary, based on existing evidence, YEI operations are provisionally considered to represent an appropriate offer of education, training, work placement and employment-based measures to support young people in the labour market.

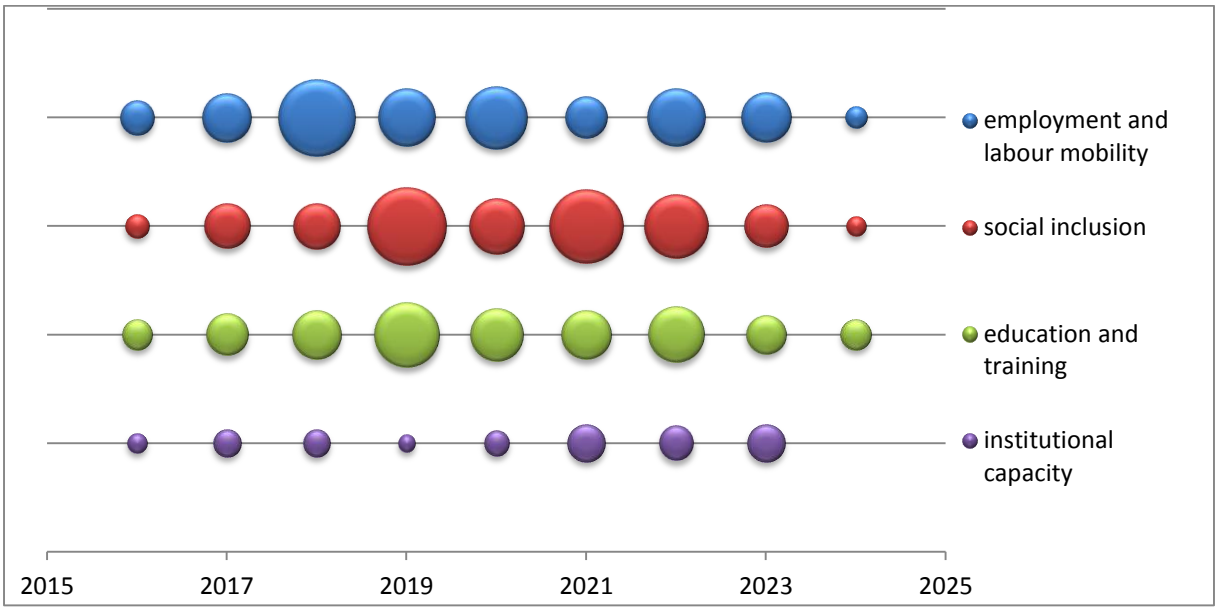
4.2. Thematic scope, timing, methods

The analysis by operational programme of the foreseen impact evaluations per Thematic Objective suggests that in each axis of each programme, at least once during the programming period there is an evaluation of the results of the axis.

These evaluations are often more demanding, methodologically and from the point of view of data collection and expertise compared to process evaluations. It is expected that the availability of micro-data about the socio-economic characteristics of individual participants will enable the Commission to undertake more counterfactual impact evaluations. Such increase in the number of counterfactual impact evaluations will allow for better measurement of the actual impact of the ESF in line with increased focus on the results and evidence based programming.

Looking at the timing of evaluations, the current planning indicates that very little – if any – evidence related to 2014-2020 could be expected in 2016 and 2017 except on YEI. This can certainly be largely attributed to the slow start of the programming period and the nature of the interventions often requiring medium-long timeframes for completion. Starting in 2017, further analyses will be needed to understand what topics, subtopics, and geographic areas will be covered by the planned evaluations to understand if some aspects within certain Thematic Objectives will be more assessed than others.

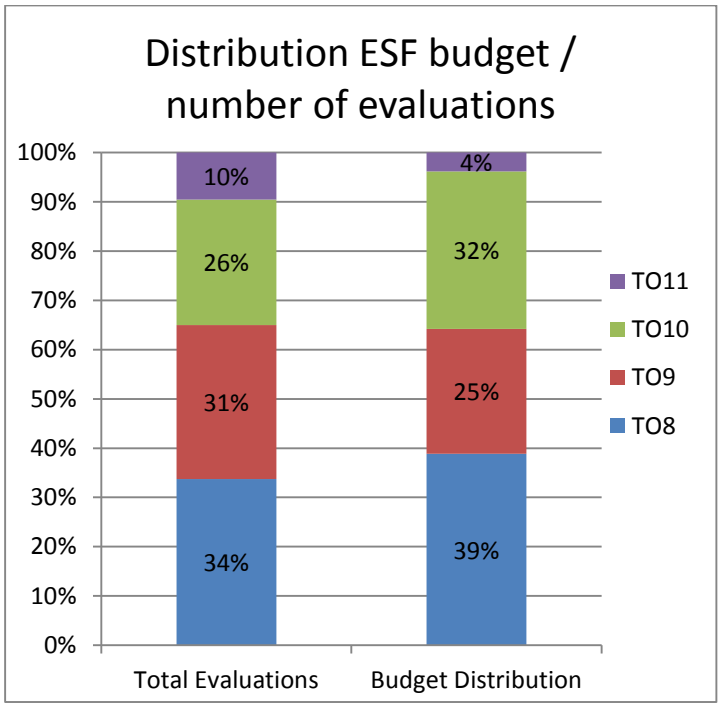
Figure 4.2-1 2014-2020 Programming Period: ESF Impact Evaluations Planned by year and Thematic Objective



The Figure 4.2-1 shows that until 2018, significant evaluation activity is only expected in TO 8, in which the 2nd YEI impact evaluations are due in 2018. The largest number of impact

evaluations are planned for 2019. From 2019 onwards, the distri bution by years is more even than in case of the ERDF. The TO 8 "employment and labout mobility" is the most evaluated TO in absolute terms, while TO 11 "Institutional capacity" represents the lowest number of evaluations, most of which taking place between 2021 and 2023. In relative terms however, the number of evaluations per billion Euro funding for the ESF and the YEI, is the highest for TO 11 relating to efficient public administration.[12]

Figure 4.2-2 2014-2020 Programming Period: Distribution of ESF budget over number of evaluations



Similarly to ERDF, due to the bulk of evaluations expected from 2019, only a minority of the 2016 AIRs completed the section on "summary of evaluations" and the information reported attains to ex post evaluation of the 2007-2013 programming period. For 2015, 27 OP AIRs do make reference to evaluation findings, while for the majority (103) of the 187 OP, the AIRs merely report on the procedural implementation of the evaluation plan. In 22 AIRs, nothing is reported regarding evaluations. Where evaluation findings are reported, these generally refer to evaluations of the YEI. Only in 3 OP (in NL, IT, GR) are evaluation findings discussed that are not related to YEI. These findings focus on the relevance of the interventions, as no clear results and achievements have been reported yet. Those Member States that do report evaluation findings on YEI report positive effects of YEI on labour market outcomes of young people (BE, CY, CZ, ES, FR, GR, HR, IE, IT, LT, PL, SE, SI, SK, UK).

[12] The four relevant TOs display the following evaluation intensity: TO 08: 1.80: TO 09; 1.60; TO 10: 1.30; TO 11: 6.64.

5. EAFRD

The Rural Development programmes include evaluation plans designed to assess the progress on the implementation of the programmes and the results reached. This section of the SWD analyses the content of the evaluation plans, which are structured in 7 headings, and the evaluation activities reported in the annual implementation report submitted in 2016.

To this end 115 evaluation plans (out of 118 Rural Development programmes[13]) were analysed and the key features extracted. The first activities in implementing the evaluation plans were assessed on basis of the information provided by Member States in the AIRs submitted in 2016. In total 115 AIRs were screened whereas 8 AIRs do not report on evaluation activities and 3 AIRs mainly refer to the ex-ante evaluation or dissemination activities.

5.1. Overview of evaluations in the 2014-2020 programming period

The evaluation plans included in Rural Development programmes 2014-2020 have been drafted in accordance with the minimum requirements outlined in the Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2013. They are structured in 7 sections, as described below, and the degree of details given by Member States varies across the countries (e.g. in terms of length of the EP ranging from 2 pages in ES-Cantabria up to 29 pages in ES–Cataluña).

Objectives and purpose of the evaluation plan

A clear reference to the common EP objective of ensuring sufficient and appropriate evaluation activities is given in 83% of the evaluation plans. 38% contain moreover programme-specific EP objectives. A number of evaluation plans refer to the improvement of the communication between the stakeholders while others include a specific thematic focus.

Governance and coordination

Governance and coordination of the RDP monitoring and evaluation system has been defined in great detail in nearly all evaluation plans. Besides the mandatory bodies to be involved in evaluation (Managing Authority, Paying Authority, monitoring committees, beneficiaries) the Member States have described in detail many other bodies playing a key role in evaluation (e.g. technical working groups). The **involvement of Local Action Groups and National Rural Networks** to evaluation is specifically recognized in 65%, respectively in 40% of evaluation plans. Local Action Groups are mentioned as information providers for evaluation, being part of the Evaluation Steering Group or responsible for carrying out a self-assessment of Local Development Strategies. National Rural Networks disseminate monitoring and evaluation-information and provide evaluation support to LAGs. The majority of Rural Development programmes make use of **non-mandatory Evaluation Steering Groups** as key tool for content-related steering of evaluations activities and for ensuring the quality of the evaluation results, for highlighting new evaluation needs and for following up evaluation results. **Coordination of evaluation activities with other ESI Funds** is explicitly addressed in more than half of the evaluation plans. It is mainly organized through multi-fund monitoring committees or evaluation steering groups with participations from other Funds.

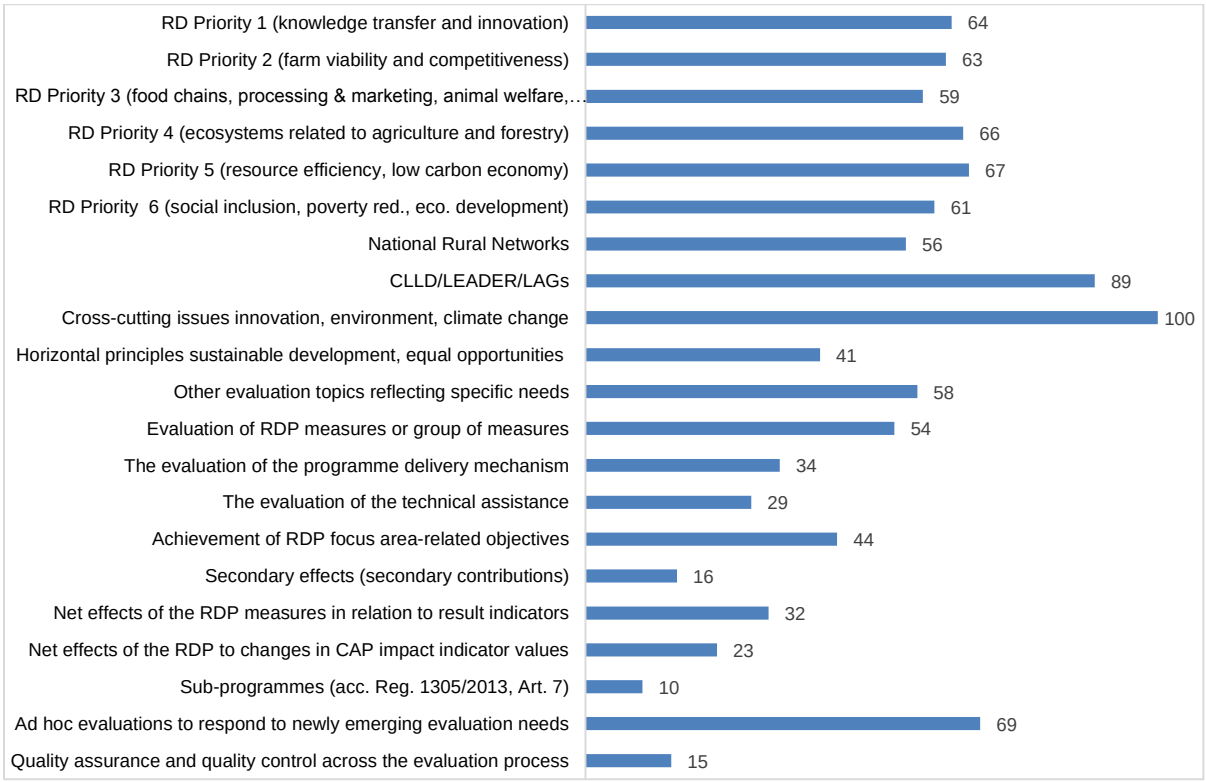
Evaluation topics and activities

The planned **evaluation topics and activities** are indicatively described in 97% of the evaluation plans. They are very diverse and correspond to the specific priorities and interest of the programmes. Around 20 overarching thematic and horizontal evaluation topics could be

[13] The National Frameworks (DE, ES, FR) do not include an EP.

identified. The standard topics such as the evaluation of the six rural development priorities, cross-cutting issues (e.g. innovation, climate change etc.), National Rural Networks, Community Lead Local Development / LEADER / Local Action Groups are clearly addressed in most – but not in all – evaluation plans, as illustrated in the figure below. Many evaluation plans refer to ad-hoc evaluations, which will be tendered out in accordance with emerging evaluation needs.

Figure 4.2-3 Planned evaluation topics and activities according to evaluation plans (absolute numbers) (multiple answers possible) (total = 115 evaluation plans)



Source: Evaluation Plan Baseline Screening (Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016)

Programme-specific evaluation topics are presented in a number of evaluation plans, e.g. employment in rural areas; young people in agriculture; Agro-environment-climate measures; biodiversity, production units/farms, preservation of water resources, economic development of the forestry sector, agro-food industry; Organic farming.

Methodological specifications concerning the planned RDP evaluations have generally been very scarce in the evaluation plans, keeping flexibility for Managing Authorities and evaluators to specify methods in the tendering phase. Reference to the analysis of net effects is given to a higher degree for result indicators, than for impact indicators. Reference to the mandatory assessment of secondary contributions of operations to focus areas is only given in a few evaluation plans.

Data and information

The data management systems have been described in almost all evaluation plans. Overall, the evaluation plans highlight new processes, better quality control, improved user interfaces, and a better coordination between the relevant actors as major changes to face the challenge

and provide data on time. In a number of evaluation plans the information obligation by the beneficiaries will be better aligned with the evaluation requirements. Guidelines and agreements between the local/regional actors and the Managing Authorities are expected to ensure the availability of monitoring data on time for evaluation purpose. **Data gaps, bottlenecks and potential difficulties** include lack of information on context indicators at regional level, lack of updated information at certain territorial levels, lack of a central database for M&E data and problems with matching and consolidation of data.

Timeline

The timing of evaluation activities is presented in most of the evaluation plans in relation to the major common evaluation milestones: Most evaluation plans specify concrete steps to set up the system to answer the common evaluation questions and assess the RDP achievements in the enhanced AIRs submitted in 2017 and 2019, and the ex-post evaluation in 2024. Additional programme-specific evaluation milestones are mentioned in about one third of the evaluation plans, however without giving a precise indication on their timing.

Communication

Communication activities are described in 92% of the evaluation plans and differ mainly in the use of communication channels to reach the different target recipients, including user friendly and easy understandable summaries. Meetings of the monitoring committees, focus groups and workshops with relevant stakeholders will be used in many countries internally to discuss the evaluation findings and present good practices. The **follow-up mechanisms** to ensure the use of evaluation findings are (at least partly) described in 65% of the EP, but in many cases without much detail.

Resources

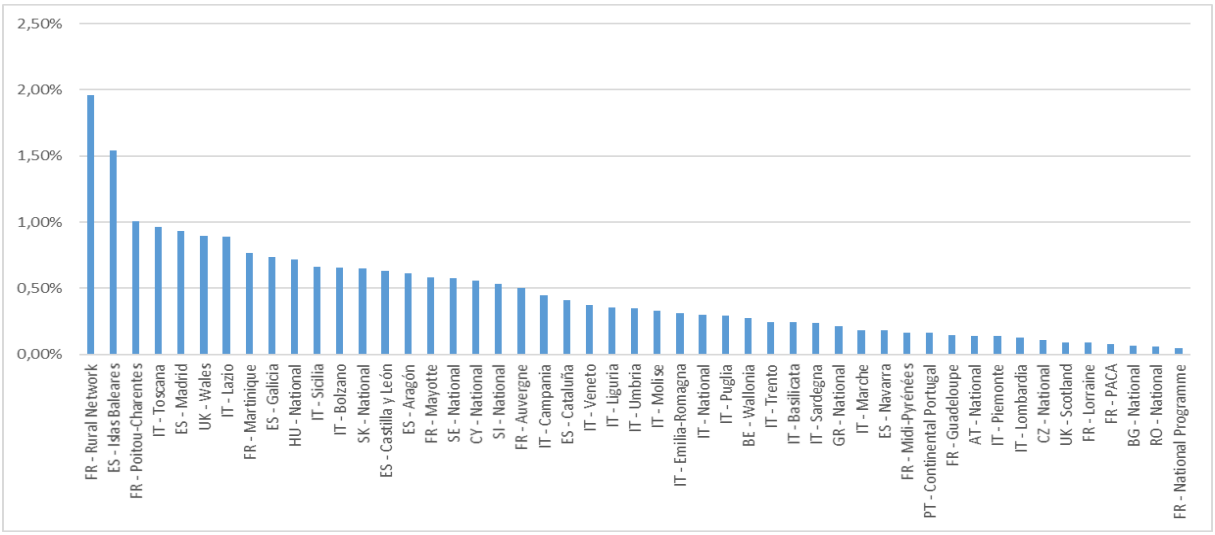
The financial and human resources which are necessary for carrying out evaluation activities were specified in around half of the evaluation plans. The financial resources for evaluation were mainly presented in form of a global budget. In other evaluation plans qualitative statements were made that sufficient resources will be provided.

According to the (limited) quantitative information on financial resources provided, the percentage of the total programme budget 14-20 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the EP ranges from 0.06% (France-National) to 1.5% (ES - Islas Baleares).

In average 0.43% of the total programme budget (EAFRD) is planned in Rural Development programmes to cover the activities of the EP (under the Technical Assistance budget). A specific situation is given in a National Rural Network programme where 1.9% of the total budget is allocated to evaluation activities (FR – NRN programme).

Most of the evaluation plans mention the need of contracting additional external expertise. Evaluation-related capacity building is recognised in about half of the evaluation plans as of key importance for successful RDP evaluation. Member States refer to internal and national evaluation-related trainings but also to those offered at the European level (ENRD, European Commission).

Figure 4.2-4 % of total programme budget 14-20 (EAFRD) allocated to implement the EP



Source: Evaluation Plan Baseline Screening (Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016); only those programmes were considered who reported a budget to implement the EP

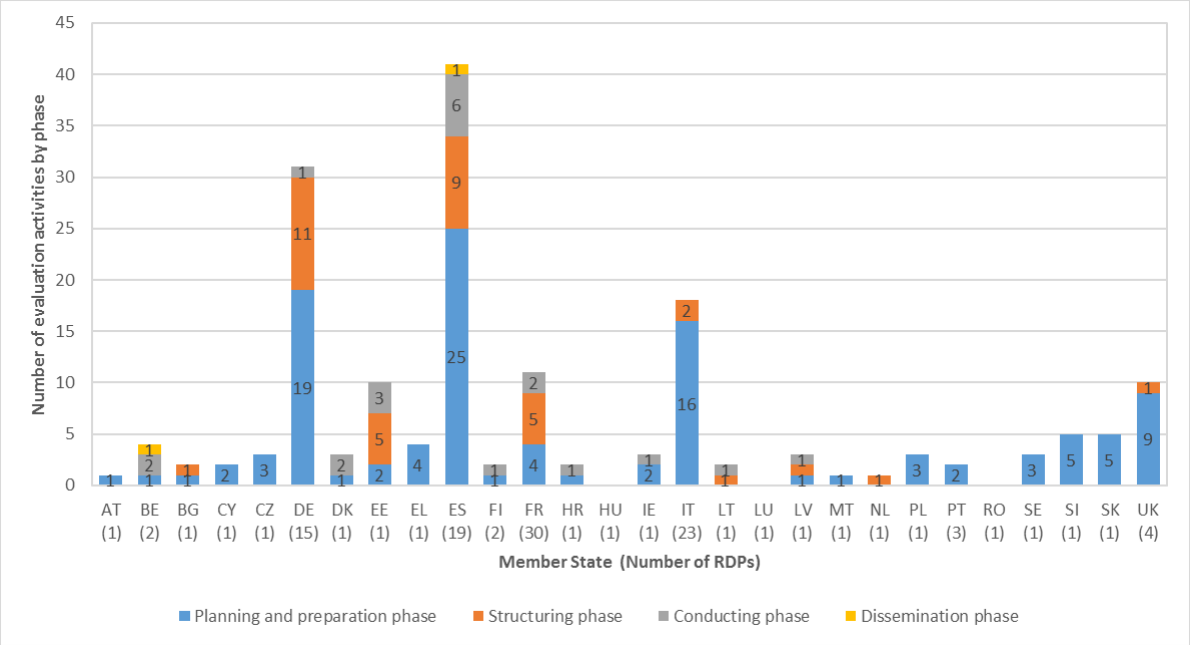
5.2. Thematic scope, timing, methods.

This section describes the progress in implementing the evaluation plans and is based on the screening of section 2 of the draft[14] AIRs 2016. The evaluation activities undertaken during the years 2014 and 2015 can be summarized as follows:

- The evaluation activities reported mainly concern the planning and preparation phase of evaluations. With regard to this phase, 115 activities were reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016, e.g. the preparation of Terms of Reference and tendering procedures, set-up of administrative arrangements etc.
- 37 Rural Development programmes have also carried out evaluation-related activities of the structuring phase, e.g. review of evaluation questions and indicators, development of an evaluation approach and methods
- 23 Rural Development programmes also reported activities from the conducting phase of evaluations
- 8 AIRs do not include information on evaluation activities and 3 AIRs provide information in relation to the ex-ante evaluations or dissemination activities.

[14] It does not take into account subsequent versions of AIRs 2016 sent following improvement requests from DG AGRI.

Figure 4.2-5 Number of reported evaluation activities per Member State and phase



Source: Screening of AIRs submitted in 2016 (Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016)

The evaluation topics explicitly addressed in the AIR submitted in 2016 are cross-cutting issues, the evaluation of Rural Development priority 4 (Ecosystems) and the evaluation of Community Lead Local Development/LEADER/ Local Action Groups.

Data management related activities were reported in 75 of the AIRs submitted in 2016, most of them related to the preparation of the operation database to collect data and information, screening of data and information sources and arrangements to fill data gaps.

Table 4.2-1 Reported activities related to data management

Type of data management activity	No of activities reported
Preparing and running the operations database to collect data and information for evaluation	67
Screening data and information sources/providers to ensure the application of robust evaluation methods (including preparation of counterfactual analysis)	21
Arrangements to fill data gaps and collect missing information	18
Agreements with data providers and necessary arrangements/legal steps to include the identified providers´ data in the databases used in the RDP evaluation	19
Other activities	6
Total number of data management activities reported	**131**

Source: Screening of AIRs submitted in 2016 (Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, 2016)

A number of 66 **completed evaluations** have been reported from Rural Development programmes. These evaluations, however, include numerous ex ante evaluations, strategic environmental assessments, and mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the 2007-13 period. Around 30 evaluations refer to the ex-ante evaluation of the 2014-20 reporting period concerning the process of developing the RDP before its approval.

Overall, 89 **evaluation-related communication activities** were reported in the AIRs submitted in 2016, of which the main communication channels were the website (26 activities) and the discussion in meetings (28). Communication activities undertaken in relation to publicising evaluation findings mostly refer to the publication of the ex-ante evaluation reports. In total, 238,112 stakeholders were accounted for, mainly related to meetings, workshops, etc. The number of reached stakeholders through online channels is reported to be difficult to monitor and therefore evidently underestimated. Communication activities during the ex-ante evaluation were however included. Regarding the addressed evaluation topics, the majority of the communication activities refer to cross-cutting issues, but also to evaluations of RD priority 4 (ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry). Most of the communication activities are organised by the Managing Authority and the ministry or one of its departments and the main target groups envisaged are the general public, the programme authorities, the ministries and its departments themselves, evaluators and other economic and social stakeholders and partners.

The monitoring and evaluation system, and the corresponding EP, may be subject to **modifications** during the programming period. In the reporting period 2014 and 2015 a number of 4 evaluation plans were already updated. Modifications concentrate on the following areas:

- changes in bodies who facilitate data collection;
- changes in the timing of evaluation activities (evaluation of the RDP implementation initially envisaged in 2016 is postponed to 2017 and will be conducted in a multi-funds approach parallel to the evaluation of the other ESI Funds implementation in the region);
- the elaboration of an inter-funds EP covering all ESI-Funds in the region was skipped;
- the budget for financing the EP out of the technical assistance was corrected regarding VAT.

6. EMFF

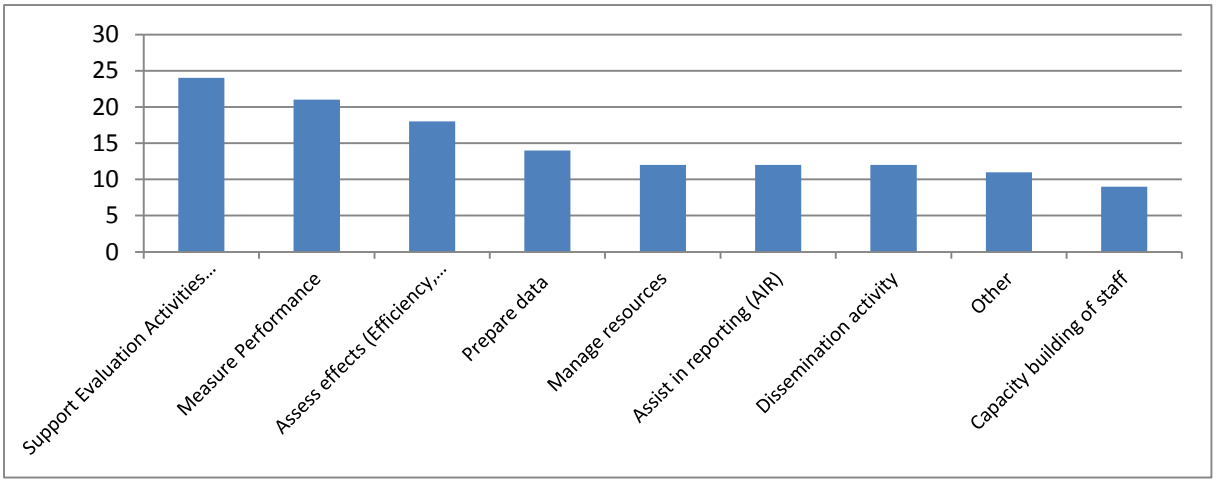
6.1. Overview of evaluations in the 2014-2020 programming period

The minimum requirements for the Evaluation Plans are laid down in an Implementing Act[15], and aim at creating a general framework for all evaluation activities. To allow maximum flexibility, Member States were advised that the Evaluation Plans should not include explicit lists of evaluations including time schedules going beyond the requirements the CPR.

In the EMFF, the evaluation plan has been designed as a central instrument to foster a culture of evaluation, largely absent in the former period, where the Member States only had to undertake a mid-term evaluation. The table below shows that the "Objectives" sections of the Evaluation Plans are generally very broad; this can be explained by the lack of experience of many fisheries administrations in monitoring and evaluation.

Figure 6.1-1 Objectives as stated in the Evaluation Plans in the EMFF operational programmes

15 Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 771/2014



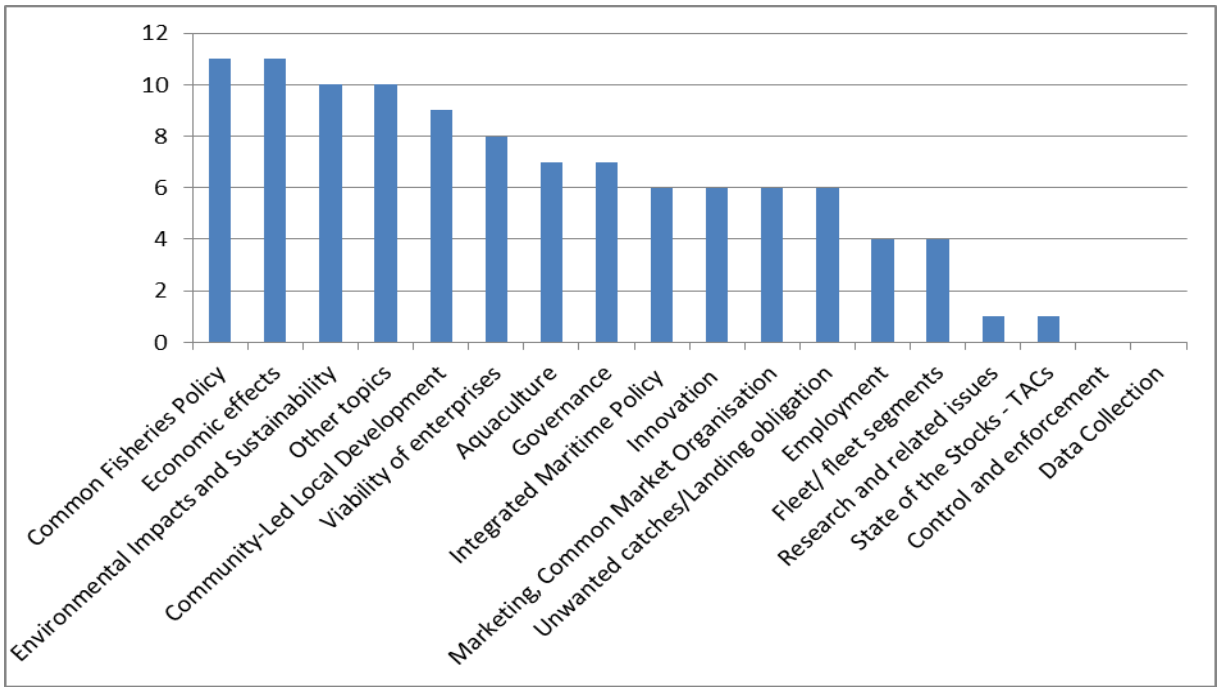
Source: FAME SU, 2016

6.2. Thematic scope, timing, methods.

The Implementing Act 771/2014 required Member States to identify in their Evaluation Plans topics they intended to cover.

Figure 5.2-1 gives an overview of the topics chosen across the 27 operational programmes. The topics highlighted for evaluation are coherent with the main aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy; they mainly address aspects of both economic and environmental sustainability of the fisheries, aquaculture and related sectors, while aiming at measuring the contribution of the EMFF to these aspects. More emphasis could be put on better defining the methods for specific evaluations and perhaps make them available to other Member States.

Figure 6.2-1 Overview of topics for evaluation identified in EMFF operational programmes



Source: FAME SU, 2016

The Evaluation Plans contain little information on the methods that are going to be used. The methods most frequently mentioned were simple performance/target comparison and review of the intervention logic as well as the validation of beneficiaries' estimates for result indicators. Other methods mentioned included ad-hoc workshops, consultations with stakeholders, brainstorming sessions, etc.

Budgets allocated to evaluation are limited and elaborated impact evaluation and counterfactuals will be beyond means. In most cases, theory based evaluation approaches are deemed adequate.

The "governance" section of the Evaluation Plans establishes the core responsibility of the Managing Authorities under the authority of the monitoring committees. Partner and stakeholder involvement is also mentioned frequently as well as the setting-up of an evaluation steering group.

10 Member States provide timelines for planned evaluations. Most of them include interim evaluations between 2018 and 2020 and thematic evaluations as from 2017.

7. Commission initiatives in the field of evaluation

As described in Articles 54 to 57 CPR, the responsibility for the evaluation of the programmes is shared between the Commission and the Managing Authorities. During the programming period, the main actors in the field of evaluation are the Managing Authorities, who shall ensure that evaluations, including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact, are carried out for each programme (Article 56 CPR). The ex post evaluations shall be carried out by the Commission, or by the Member States in close cooperation with the Commission (Article 57 CPR).

7.1. Guidance, networking and support to Member States' evaluation efforts

All the services have produced extensive guidance to support the evaluation activities in the Member States[16]. In addition, the ESIF directorates have also planned and implemented a variety of activities.

The "***Evaluation Helpdesk***" supports the Commission in the analysis of the ERDF/Cohesion Fund, ESF and YEI 2014-2020 evaluation plans, identifies evaluations undertaken by Managing Authorities in 2015-2019, reviews a sample of evaluations, and provides support to Member States in refining their evaluation plans and designing and managing evaluations. During 2016, the Helpdesk Team has visited Latvia providing support in evaluation design.

The 7th European Evaluation Conference "***The result orientation: Cohesion Policy at work***" was held in Sofia on June 16-17, 2016. The conference brought together almost 500 participants among Managing Authorities, evaluation experts, the academia, and stakeholders from across Europe to discuss the achievements of EU Cohesion Policy in 2007-2013 and the challenges to the effectiveness of the interventions in the Programming Period 2014-2020. The conference was also the showcase for the 1st Competition of Best Evaluations of EU Cohesion Policy (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/evaluations/conferences/evaluating-effects/#1).

16 ERDF: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/legislation/guidance/

A short course on: "***Development of quality terms of reference for impact evaluations***" has been organized in Valletta (MT) on October 5-7, 2016. The course was attended by 35 experts from Managing Authorities of 15 Member States.

In line with the ESIF result-orientation approach for the current period and the ex-ante conditionality of Research and Innovation strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) plans for TO 01, DG REGIO shall receive the support of DG JRC in the ex-ante definition of common indicators and guiding principles for regions to collect data on their S3 (Smart Specialisation Strategies) funded interventions. This would allow regions to self-evaluate their impact. Along these lines, the "Common Monitoring and Evaluation System" established under the EMFF (known as FAME) can be a useful reference (see: https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/20151109-fame-definitions-en.pdf).

In an effort to support Member States, the Commission currently runs several activities to promote the conduct of counterfactual impact evaluations of ESF operations. The activities are performed in continuous collaboration with DG JRC through the Centre for Research on Impact Evaluation (CRIE)[17] and aim notably at capacity building and practical guidance. These include a number of regional workshops on Counterfactual Impact evaluations, Conferences to facilitate the dialogue between evaluators, academics and programme managers (COMPIE 2014 and forthcoming COMPIE 2016[18]) and a recently established Community of Practice on counterfactual impact evaluations.

The Commission has set up an ***ERDF Evaluation Network*** and an ***ESF Evaluation Partnership*** with the representatives of the Managing Authorities to facilitate exchange of information and practices on matters relating to the evaluations and monitoring systems. Evaluation network and partnerships meetings are held regularly three times per year.

The Commission has also put in place the ***European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development*** (Evaluation Helpdesk) with the aim to contribute to the improvement of evaluation of EU rural development policy. It supports the Commission services, Member States and other evaluation stakeholders in meeting the objectives of the CMES, and in facilitating networking between them. The Evaluation Helpdesk develops methodological guidelines, answers evaluation-related queries from the Member States, collects good practice examples in evaluation methodologies and processes, organizes good practice workshops and capacity building events in Member States, provides evaluation-related input to numerous meetings and publishes the newsletter RuralEvaluation NEWS.

Equally a "***Support Unit for Fisheries and Aquaculture Monitoring and Evaluation***" (FAME SU) was set up in 2015 that supports the European Commission and the Member States in the development of the Common Monitoring And Evaluation System established by Article 107 of the EMFF Regulation. The objectives of FAME are:

- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the EMFF and provide the European Commission with regular updates and analyses.

- Support Member States in building up expertise on evaluation and monitoring methodologies, indicators and good practices and in setting up effective and efficient systems.

17 https://crie.jrc.ec.europa.eu/

18 Counterfactual Methods for Policy Impact Evaluation (https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/conference/compie-2016)

The FAME Support Unit has developed several guidance documents in cooperation with the Managing Authorities on the establishment of effective monitoring systems and on the definition of the indicators included in the CMES. Further work is planned on the evaluation requirements, including the development of evaluative questions, and on the exchange of good practices in M&E, for example through stakeholders meetings and peer reviews.

7.2. Evaluation activities of the Commission

7.2.1. Ex Post Evaluation of 2007-2013

The Commission is completing the ex post evaluations of Cohesion Policy in the period 2007-2013. The summaries of the findings and policy conclusions are set out in these documents:

- Staff Working Document SWD(2016) 318 of 19 September 2016[19] summarising the ex post evaluation 2007-2013 of the ERDF/Cohesion Fund;
- Forthcoming Staff Working Document summarising the ex post evaluation 2007-2013 of the ESF.

For the EAFRD, ex post evaluation reports of all 2007-2013 programmes will be submitted by the Member States to the Commission by 31 December 2016. A summary of the ex post evaluations shall be undertaken under the responsibility of the Commission by 31 December 2017.

For the European Fisheries Fund 2007-2013, an ex post evaluation is planned to be completed by the Commission and in consultation with the Member State and the Managing Authorities by end 2016.

7.2.2. Planned evaluation activities in the 2014-2020 period

During the 2014-2020 programming period, the main evaluation work undertaken by the Commission will relate to the accumulation of evidence from Member State evaluations, with specific evaluations launched to fill gaps or meet particular needs arising. There are no mid-term evaluations by the Commission foreseen for the shared management part of the ESI Funds. According to Article 53 CPR the Commission has to submit annually a synthesis of available evaluation findings to Parliament and Council and other committees.

In line with the above, the Commission may carry out, at its own initiative, evaluations of programmes; in this case, it shall inform the Managing Authority and the results shall be sent to the Managing Authority and provided to the monitoring committee concerned (Article 56 CPR).

Accordingly, for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, in 2017 the Commission intends to launch an ex post evaluation of major projects supported by the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund between 2000 and 2013. This ex post evaluation will analyse the long term contribution to economic development and to the quality of life and well-being of society based on the example of selected major investment projects. The evaluation will focus first on transport, with the possibility to cover also other policy areas with important major projects presence (i.e. environment, energy, and ICT and research infrastructure).

Additional to the work on the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund, the Commission is also launching an evaluation on the European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) 2002-2016. This evaluation aims to assess the effectiveness of the fund against its stated objectives (e.g.

[19] http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/expost2013/wp1_swd_report_en.pdf

rapidity, efficiency and flexibility) over the pre-reform period as well as its potential performance in light of the adopted reform.

As regards ESF, the Commission has launched the following studies during 2015:

- Overview of Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes
- Study/evaluation on thematic objective 11 (institutional capacity and public administration), encompassing the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods
- Study on simplified cost options
- Study on YEI first results, YEI and youth related ESF interventions

In 2016, the Commission services have started working on the Harmonisation of monitoring and evaluation terminology and concepts across ESIF DGs.

Moreover, they have launched an "ESF Performance report and thematic report" contract to collect, analyse, synthesise and aggregate monitoring data and evaluation results information provided by Member States through AIRs. The ESF Performance contract will produce also specific reports on various ESF thematic objectives.

As regards YEI specifically, a study[20] has taken stock of the structured data submitted in 2015, the national evaluations and the most update monitoring data available. A short summary of this study is presented in section 4.1.

The Commission will undertake a study to review 2014-2020 data collection methods and definition in 2017.

The Commission services plan to carry out an ex-post evaluation of the programming period 2014-2020 in close cooperation with the Member States and Managing Authorities. It is required to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the Funds and their contribution to the Union priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The ex-post evaluations will be completed by 31 December 2024. In preparation to the ex-post evaluation, the Commission services intend to carry out a gap analysis midway to identify the areas that have not been covered extensively by Member State evaluations and which will be object of additional evaluations by the services. Depending on the actual availability of evaluation evidence from Member States, the gap analysis could be carried out in 2018 and 2021.

Having completed the work in 2015 on the synthesis of the 115 ex-ante evaluations established for the Rural Development programmes and National Rural Network Programmes co-financed by the EAFRD in the 28 Member States, the Commission services published the synthesis report in 2016. A similar exercise on the synthesis of the ex-post evaluations will be undertaken in 2025. During the programming period the services will launch focussed evaluations on RD aspects. Four separate framework contracts have been launched in order to analyse the contribution of the CAP measures towards each of the three CAP general objectives (viable food production (FWC 1); sustainable management of natural resources and climate action (FWC 2); balanced territorial development (FWC 3), as well as the impact of the CAP on cross-thematic issues (FWC 4). A first evaluation will be launched under FWC 2 at the end of 2016 of the forestry measures under the rural development policy.

The EMFF Regulation (508/2014) requires the Commission to undertake a synthesis of ex-ante evaluation (Article 118) and an ex-post evaluation by 31/12/2024. Further evaluations are the responsibility of the Member States and the Commission services intend to facilitate their

[20] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7931

implementation with the support of FAME (see above). They will publish a synthesis of Member States' ex-ante evaluation reports by the end of 2016 [21]. This will have a prospective dimension as it will also assess the usefulness of these evaluations and whether their "iterative" design has led to better Operational Programmes and stronger intervention logics. In cooperation with FAME the EMFF indicator system will be further developed, i.e existing indicators revised as well as specific qualitative indicators for Community Lead Local Development introduced; Guidance documents will be drafted covering specific themes such as the contribution of the EMFF to the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy. The services will undertake a mid-term evaluation of the direct management section of the EMFF[22] by 2017 and an ex-post evaluation by the end of 2024.

[21] This date has been established in the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2015/895, supplementing the EMFF as regards transitional provisions.

[22] The EMFF Regulation contains a mix of measures implemented through both shared and direct management. There will be no mid-term evaluation by the Commission of the shared management part since evaluations during the implementation period are the responsibility of the Managing Authorities.

List of acronyms

CPR: 'Common Provisions Regulation'

ESI Funds: European Structural & Investment Funds

YEI: Youth Employment Initiative

ERDF: European Regional Development Fund

ESF: European Social Fund

EAFRD: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

EMFF: European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

NEET: young people not in employment, education or training