**BACKGROUND FICHE FOR EGESIF: LESSONS LEARNED FOR THE CONTENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND PROGRAMMES**

In the 2014-2020 programming period, Partnership agreements (PA) and programmes were elaborated, the contents of which were set in Articles 15 and 27 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

According to a simplification study[[1]](#footnote-2) of 2017, the results regarding the **benefits of the PAs** replacing the National Strategic Reference Framework were mixed. Some participants linked the PAs to increased complexity and administrative effort. Others affirmed the PAs' positive effect in terms of a more strategic and integrated approach in some Member States along the lines of the European Semester and the Europe 2020 strategy, leveraging synergies, eliminating duplications and even bringing benefits in terms of increased institutional capacities.

The 2014-2020 programming period introduced **new elements in the legislative framework** which had an impact on the content of the programming documents, such as ex-ante conditionalities, performance framework, additional options and requirements for the use of financial instruments, territorial instruments (e.g. Article 7 ERDF), new thematic concentration requirements, structured information in programmes, etc. While acknowledging the positive influence on the quality of investment, the preparations were slowed down due to the initial time and resource investment needed to understand and develop these new elements. In addition, from a programme content point of view, there seems to be scope for streamlining the programming architecture to enhance its focus.

Suggested questions for EGESIF members:

* Programming architecture:
  + What was the impact (added value and constraints) of the PA? Do you consider it useful to maintain the current programming architecture with PAs and programmes?
* What was the impact (added value and constraints) of multi-fund programmes? Do you consider it necessary to maintain the option of multi-fund programmes?
* Which new elements of the 2014-2020 programming period concerning the PAs and programmes are considered as unnecessarily complex or do not bring added value? Which new elements are considered useful and why?
* Content of the PA:
  + Which parts of the PAs were considered as useful by the Member States and the regions and why? What is the most valued feature of the PA in view of its strategic dimension? Should there be a greater focus on co-ordination and demarcation between funds? Which parts of the PAs did not bring the expected added value or were not considered as useful and why?
  + How could the structure of the PA be streamlined?
* Content of the programmes:
  + How could the structure of programmes and the process for their adoption be streamlined? What has been the experience with the increased provision of structured information?
  + Which elements are crucial and need to be kept in the programme?
  + What elements could be provided to the Commission for information only (possibly in a structured way) without being part of the programme?
  + Which elements do not need to be provided to the Commission at all?
* For EAFRD programmes only: how could the particularities of the CAP new delivery model comprising direct payments and rural development policy be addressed?

1. Study on the "Use of new provisions on simplification during the early implementation phase of ESIF", available on <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/improving-investment/studies_integration/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)