**BACKGROUND FICHE FOR EGESIF: LESSONS LEARNED FOR REPORTING AND MONITORING**

The changes in reporting for 2014-2020 aimed at harmonising the content of what should be reported for all ESI Funds and at rationalising efforts by introducing lighter annual implementation reports (AIRs) and abolishing reporting for the first year. At the same time, the assessment of strategic progress throughout the programming period was strengthened, with more detailed AIRs and progress reports in 2017 and 2019, as well as regular reporting from the Commission to the EU institutions.

The Open Data Platform allows for the first time the wider public to observe progress in implementing each ESIF programme. It is updated in line with the reporting from Member States and expanded to present new types of data.

However, some important quantitative and qualitative data is transmitted very rarely, e.g. for the output and result indicators or the breakdown of financial data into categories of expenditure. Both the quantitative and the qualitative information are usually outdated when the report is submitted and discussed during the annual review meetings (or the MAs provide the Commission with updated information).

In addition, there are significant errors in common indicator data reported to the Commission, some of them seriously undermining their reliability and aggregation. This necessitates a lengthy cleaning process involving the MAs and the Commission services. Therefore, the added value of the current monitoring and reporting processes for the strategic dialogue between the Commission and the MAs as well as for the communication purposes could be further improved, but it may require streamlining, modernisation and better data management – both quantitative and qualitative.

Suggested questions for ESIF members:

* What is your experience so far with the lighter AIRs? Which elements are actually useful for the management of programmes, including monitoring of achievements (outputs/results)? Which have a limited use but generate a significant administrative burden simply because they have to be included in the reports?
* In a world of open data, what information on ESIF Funds should be regularly made available to the general public? How can we increase frequency of quantitative data (financial progress and indicators monitoring achievements in the results-based model), without losing reliability? What constraints would have to be addressed?
* Can we make better use of public data sources (registers, statistical offices)? If the quantitative data can be automatically generated and transmitted to the Commission, could the AIRs and the progress reports be further slimmed down or even eliminated? What would be the role of qualitative data and evaluation, in particular where and how to discuss addressing obstacles to effective implementation?
* How do you assess current rules for monitoring committees and annual review meetings? What could make them more useful for an effective, results-oriented implementation of programmes? Should all social partners in monitoring committees have voting rights?
* Are there other elements of the system which in your view can be streamlined/improved?