

BACKGROUND FICHE FOR THE EGESIF: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 2014-2020 INTERVENTION LOGIC SETUP

Interventions supported by ESI Funds deliver tangible results on the ground. To increase the ultimate impact, effectiveness, accountability and ensure greater focus on results, **a reinforced intervention logic was introduced in the 2014-2020 period complemented and supported by other new performance-focused elements**. The approach to the intervention logic was applied within a framework comprising of the following elements:

- Support under each ESI Fund is possible under eleven **thematic objectives**. The thematic objectives are further broken down into **Fund-specific priorities** set out in the Fund-specific rules. They define in a more detailed manner the policy goals to be pursued by each Fund. Furthermore, one or more **specific objectives** need to be established along with a corresponding result indicator representing the key policy change.
- **EU-level common or programme-specific output indicators** are included under each investment priority for cohesion policy funds, under each measure for EAFRD and under each Union priority for EMFF. For ESF, EAFRD and EMFF there are **also common result indicators** defined in the EU rules, which may be supplemented by programme-specific ones. In the case of ERDF and Cohesion Fund the result indicators are programme specific. Each programme sets out the planned target values to be achieved and, during implementation, the Member States regularly report the values achieved.
- In cohesion policy the **categories of intervention** are used to provide an indicative break down of the planned use of financial resources at the priority axis level, but also for reporting on the funding allocated to selected projects as well as the eligible expenditure notified to the managing authorities. In ESF the categories correspond to the investment priorities.

The current intervention logic and reporting arrangements lead to more focussed setting of objectives and the availability of structured data (cf. the ***ESIF Open Data Platform***), but also to information being reported at different levels.

In cohesion policy, the result indicators signify different kind of achievements in the ERDF/CF (change in the economy) and in the ESF (i.e. changes in the participant's labour market status). Specific objectives, corresponding to investment priorities, include the identification of result indicators. The output indicators measure the direct deliverables of the action or measures financed. The indicative split of financial resources into categories of intervention is set at the level of priority axis. This also means that for the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund it is impossible to aggregate financial resources allocated to the investment priorities across the programmes in all the Member States, contrary to ESF where the categories of intervention coincide with investment priorities.

In EAFRD and EMFF the intervention logic of each programme is different, as it consists of (i) a set of rural development measures with a certain budget under various focus areas under the Union priorities for rural development; and (ii) result and output indicators are defined and their targets are set for each focus area.

Questions for discussion

- Which elements of the intervention logic were beneficial and which the most problematic in the programming, and the monitoring/reporting phases for national/regional authorities? How to address these shortcomings?
- Based on your experience, how could the intervention logic be improved in order to better reflect the policy cycle (financial inputs → outputs → results → impacts) and further strengthen the result-orientation while also facilitating communication of ESI Funds achievements?
 - Would a more coherent approach be helpful to...
 - (i) ...indicator concepts - outputs, (direct) results, impacts (in line with the Better Regulation Guidelines), or
 - (ii) ...introducing cross-cutting indicators for all ESI Funds (including the CAP-related measures)?
 - Could the links between the types of indicators and the levels of programming be more effectively aligned? What could be the impact on the management/monitoring systems of the different ESI Funds?
- How could the time lag between investments and results be better communicated? Can the monitoring system produce more relevant and timely information to help this narrative?