

ESF AND ERDF MONITORING AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

PURPOSE OF PAPER

1. Following the revised format of the Programme Monitoring Committee, the Managing Authority identified the need to review and revise the current monitoring and evaluation strategy to reflect the programme at the mid-point of the programme and socio-economic changes since 2015. This paper outlines the current plans, regulatory requirements and potential changes, and the committee is invited to consider the principles outlined.

DECISIONS REQUIRED

2. For information only

MONITORING AND EVALUATION TO DATE

3. The current strategy (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/esif-monitoring-evaluation-strategy-2014-2020/>) was approved at the November 2015 meeting and outlines the proposed approach at the start of the programme. Since then, a number of factors, namely the UK's decision to leave the EU, have changed the context of the programme and therefore a review of the strategy is appropriate.

4. Monitoring and evaluation of the programmes are underpinned by two main drivers – requirements of the Commission regulations and the principle of on-going assessment of the programmes as part of effective programme management. The role of evaluation is outlined in the Common Provision Regulation, which states that evaluation “shall be carried out to improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes, as well as to assess their effectiveness, efficiency and impact”.

5. To date evaluation has concentrated on the requirements within the ESF Regulation on the Youth Employment Initiative priority. These have been provided to the members of the committee and are published on the Scottish Government website.

OUTLINE CHANGES TO STRATEGY

6. The strategy is required to be updated to reflect the now standalone PMC. The strategy will cover Monitoring as well as Evaluation, reflecting preparation of AIR and reporting to PMC.

7. The strategy will reflect changes agreed by the Joint Programme Monitoring Committee regarding the changes to its structure and the abolition of the standalone Monitoring and Evaluation Group.

8. The review of the strategy will consider whether existing proposed evaluations are still appropriate and identify potential changes to the scope/timing of these.

9. The review will identify new pieces of work which could be introduced to evaluate the programme at least in terms of:

- Programme delivery and management (e.g. Horizontal themes, lead partner model, financial instruments),
- Impact on the Scottish economy and alignment with/contribution to wider Government economic strategy (e.g. Economic Action Plan, Regional Economic Growth, Highlands and Islands),

- Thematic evaluations (i.e. around Smart, Inclusive and Sustainable growth).

10. The review will consult with lead partners, in particular through the members of the existing lead partner groups.

11. The Managing Authority (MA) will continue to review the strategy on an on-going basis through the remainder of the programme and will regularly update the committee on deliver of the strategy and any further changes.

12. Activity will continue to be funded through the Technical Assistance budget, managed by the Stakeholder Engagement and Governance team within the MA and copies of the completed evaluations will be provided to the PMC. Evaluations will be led by or procured by the MA. Where additional resources are required or the MA identifies gaps in the evaluation of the programme, consideration may be given to inviting proposals from stakeholders to carry out the plan.

Decisions Required

The committee's is invited to note the proposed changes to the Monitoring & Evaluation Strategy and identify any key issues to be highlighted as part of the changes.

PMC SECRETARIAT
29 May 2019