



Lowlands and Uplands Scotland ERDF and ESF Programmes 2007-2013 Programme Monitoring Committee

Evaluation Plan Report from the Scottish Government

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the development of an Evaluation Plan for Structural Funds Programmes in Scotland 2007-2013.

2. Background

- 2.1 Article 47 of Council Regulation 1083/2006 details the general provisions for the use of evaluation in the 2007-2013 programming period. This period differs from previous programmes which were required to produce interim or mid-term evaluations. Regulation 1083/2006 provides for a shift from a concept of fixed-point, mid-term evaluation driven by regulatory imperatives towards a more flexible, demand-driven approach to evaluation during the programming periods - this can be described as **on-going evaluation**. Past experience and the lessons learned have paved the way for the new approach.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government has developed a draft Evaluation Plan for the 2007-2013 Scottish Programmes. It provides a framework and a context for achieving three key objectives through enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems. These are:
- political accountability,
 - improved programme management and performance; and
 - the need to ensure that the current round of programmes builds in an exit strategy for projects and leaves a lasting legacy.
- 2.3 The production of such a plan is not a requirement but results in part from the recommendations contained in the European Commission's working documents, and also in part from the increased emphasis placed on evaluation by the Structural Fund Regulations (Article 41[1] and Article 13 of Council Regulation 1083/2006). It also draws on lessons learned from the previous programmes.
- 2.4 Article 47[2] outlines that evaluation should centre on the strategic and operational functions of the Operational Programmes such that;
- the **strategic** function should assess the contribution of Operational Programmes (OPs) to domestic strategies (especially the Lisbon and Gothenburg Agendas). It may focus on macro-economic impacts at an operational level or specific strategic themes within the OPs (such as innovation or rural development), or the horizontal themes (equal opportunities, social inclusion, environmental sustainability).
 - the **operational** function of evaluation is a key mechanism for improving

programme implementation. This would focus on how we deliver the programmes and would include analysis of financial and physical data to ensure we are meeting reporting targets and recommendations to improve performance. It should also assess the administrative functions and the quality of implementing mechanisms.

2.5 A key element of evaluation is the on-going monitoring of progress through quarterly claims and monitoring systems based on the aggregation of data. The Annual Implementation Reports will therefore, through the collation of annual and progress data, provide the key building blocks for the on-going evaluations and ex-post evaluation which will be the strategic level evaluations of the interventions at the end of the programming period.

2.6 The Evaluation Plan was developed by a Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group which involves representatives from the Scottish Government, the IABs and the Enterprise Networks. The Plan is attached to this report.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is invited to:

3.1.1 note the contents of the report; and

3.1.2 make comments on the Evaluation Plan.