



ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΤΑΜΕΙΟ ΠΕΡΙΟΧΕΣ ΑΝΑΤΙΣΤΕΥΣΗΣ

UPDATE OF THE FIRST PROGRAMME EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4th Deliverable: Dissemination Plan &
Simplified Executive Summary

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PROJECT TITLE	"Update of the first Evaluation of the implementation process and the Communication and Impact Assessment of the Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A GREECE-CYPRUS 2014-2020" of the European Territorial Cooperation Objective "	
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DISSEMINATION PLAN OF THE EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Dissemination Plan aims at guiding Programme MA / JS how to utilize evaluation outcomes. First, it is considered appropriate to identify in detail potential users of evaluation results and their interests in them. These include:

Potential Users	Which findings interest them	What they expect from the evaluation
Programme Monitoring Committee	If the Programme Strategy is still relevant, if it is being implemented as planned, how does the Programme perform in terms of resource efficiency and effectiveness, and if there is a danger of losing resources.	Suggestions for improving management procedures. Programme revision proposals.
Implementation stakeholders		
Programming Committee	If the wider developments in the cross-border area and the performance of current Programme interventions (mainly in terms of impact) justify any changes in the focus of the new Programme.	Proposals for new or modified types of actions / beneficiaries / target groups. Proposals for new management structures ¹ / procedures.
Programme design stakeholders		
Citizens and the wider interested public	How resources are used (European and National), if they are used efficiently and what are the most important results achieved through the Programme (thematic and spatial).	

From the above analysis it appears that the users of the evaluation results fall into 3 general categories:

- those involved in the implementation of this Programme,
- those involved in the preparation of the new Programme, and
- the general public.

Το μήνυμα της επικοινωνίας προς κάθε κατηγορία χρηστών διαφέρει και περιλαμβάνεται εν πολλοίς στην τρίτη στήλη του παραπάνω πίνακα. Περαιτέρω, ο βαθμός της χρησιμότητας των πορισμάτων της αξιολόγησης θα εξαρτηθεί και από τον τρόπο διάδοσης της πληροφορίας, η οποία θα πρέπει να παρουσιάζεται με τρόπο κατανοητό προς τους χρήστες και ανάλογο με τα επιμέρους χαρακτηριστικά τους (δηλαδή εάν προτιμούν τα οπτικο-ακουστικά μηνύματα, εάν αναμένουν μεγάλο ή μικρό επίπεδο ανάλυσης, πόσο χρόνο είναι διατεθειμένοι να διαθέσουν, ποια είναι να συνήθη μέσα που προτιμούν για την ενημέρωσή τους, κλπ). Παρακάτω επιχειρείται μία ανάλυση των επιμέρους χαρακτηριστικών των 3 ομάδων χρηστών.

The communication message to each category of users differs and is largely included in the third column of the table above. Furthermore, the degree of usefulness of the evaluation findings will depend on how the information is disseminated, if it is presented in a way that is understandable to the users and proportional to their individual characteristics (i.e. whether they prefer audio-visual messages, if they wish a high or low detail of analysis, how much time they are willing to devote, what is the media they prefer for their information, etc.). Below is a mapping of the individual characteristics of the 3 user groups.

¹ E.g. Programme info-points.

Preferences	Group A	Group B	Group Γ
Voice messages			✓
Visual messages	✓	✓	✓
Brief messages			✓
Good practice examples	✓	✓	✓
Simplified language			✓
Detailed data	✓	✓	
Electronic means			✓
Video/ TV			✓
Presentations (ppt)	✓	✓	
Technical briefs	✓	✓	
Infografics	✓	✓	✓

Based on the above analysis, the following table presents in a concise manner the proposed dissemination action plan.

User Group	Information to be disseminated	Venue/means	Product
Stakeholders involved in the implementation of this Programme.	Detailed presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation. Focus on the needs for Programme revision and improvement of implementation processes. Good practice examples.	Internal dissemination (MA/JS) Monitoring Committee Meetings Conferences Internet	Technical briefs Presentations (ppt) Infografics
Stakeholders involved in the design of the new Programme.	Detailed presentation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation regarding the new Programme. Focus on impacts and proposed new actions.	Internal dissemination (MA/JS/partners/consultants/EU) Programminh Committee Meetings Conferences Internet	Technical briefs Presentations (ppt)
Wider public	Presentation of financial progress and the results / impacts of the Program.	Website Social Media Press (electronic, print, TV)	Video Podcasts Infografics Presentations (ppt)

The internet is a basic means of dissemination and can be accessed by all groups of users. The Programme website (<http://greece-cyprus.eu>) should be used for the presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation, in a simplified language so that it is accessible by all users. It is suggested to use at least:

- the simplified executive summary (text below),
- a presentation (PowerPoint), and
- an infographic.

It is also suggested to make a series of thematic posts in the social network accounts of the Programme. For example, there could be a series dedicated to impact assessments per Specific Objective, another series of posts dedicated to the directions for the next Programming period, etc.

Evaluation of the Cooperation Programme "Interreg VA Greece – Cyprus 2014-2020"

Web Link to the full text of the Evaluation [greece-cyprus. eu]

Contact Information for further information about the Evaluation Process +30 [τηλέφωνο],
[ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση]

1 SUMMARY

The aim of the evaluation project is to update the first evaluation of the implementation process of the Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A GREECE-CYPRUS 2014 - 2020", and the evaluation of its outcomes and impacts.

2 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK AND PLAN

The key evaluation questions the Consultant was asked to answer concerned:

- Programme Effectiveness, especially in terms of the achievement of output indicator targets,
- the attainment of Performance Framework targets,
- the efficient or non-efficient use of resources,
- the continued relevance of Programme intervention logic in relation to the new trends in the eligible area and the mix of interventions as shaped by project approvals,
- revision needs of the Programme,
- Programme Impacts by Specific Objective, and
- the evaluation of the Communication Strategy.

The main methods / tools used included:

- Bibliographic research.
- Analysis of programme texts & monitoring data.
- Field surveys (based on structured questionnaires) to Programme beneficiaries.
- Statistical analysis of secondary data and primary data from field surveys.
- Graphical analysis (SWOT, correlation matrices, flow charts)
- Interviews with final users and Programme beneficiaries.

Two methods were used specifically for impact evaluations:

- Η μέθοδος της συγκριτικής αξιολόγησης με «αντιπαραδείγματα» (counterfactual), και
- Η μέθοδος της θεωρητικής (theory-based) αξιολόγησης. Στη δεύτερη περίπτωση χρησιμοποιήθηκαν ομάδες εστίασης για τη διατύπωση και έλεγχο της θεωρίας αλλαγής που διέπει τον κάθε ειδικό στόχο του Προγράμματος.
- Counterfactual evaluation, and
- Theory-based evaluation. In the second case, focus groups were used to formulate and validate the theory of change behind each specific objective of the Programme.

3 MAIN OUTCOMES

Both the degree of Programme activation (Calls) and the degree of project approvals are more than satisfactory. Already from the approved projects until 31/12/2020, it is estimated that the Programme will exhibit an over-achievement of output indicator targets (by up to 1660%) with the exception of only two indicators and from the approved in 2021 projects overachievement by up to 7622% with the exception of only one indicator, where achievement is estimated at 33%. At the same time, it seems that all quantitative targets of the performance framework can easily be attained.

In relation to time efficiency of Programme management, the durations of Call and contracting processes are satisfactory, but improvements can be made in the turnaround times of project approvals/contract signings. In terms of resource efficiency, this is considered quite reasonable based on comparative data from international experience.

Socio-economic analysis in the eligible area shows that Programme Strategy remains largely relevant, as most of specific objectives continue to correspond to significant challenges / problems. Minor modifications to Strategy are required for the next 2021-2027 Programming Period. Impact assessment

shows a significant degree of variation among specific objectives.

The specific objectives with the highest estimated impacts include:

- **Specific Objective 3.4. Improving the efficiency in the use of urban waste:** increase of up to 76% in the pilot Municipalities and up to 51.4% in case of general application of the pilot technologies in the entire cross-border zone.
- **Specific Objective 1.1 Increase the use of ICT in areas of common interest:** increase up to 44% in the general population in the pilot Municipalities.
- **Specific Objective 2.1 Increase energy savings in public buildings:** savings of up to 39% in pilot buildings during 2018-2020 and weighted savings of 12.7% in relation to the general consumption trends in the cross-border zone over the same period.
- **Specific Objective 3.2 Improving the attractiveness of areas of natural and cultural interest:** long-term estimated increase in tourist overnight stays up to 14% in case of general application of interventions throughout the cross-border zone.

The specific objectives with the lowest estimated impacts include:

- **Specific Objective 1.2 Promoting extroversion of SMEs:** increase of export activity in the agri-food sector of up to 9% and increase in cross-border exports of up to 1.8% in case of general application of interventions.
- **Specific Objective 2.2 Reduction of the environmental footprint from public transport in urban areas with significant air pollution:** reduction of air pollutants by at least 7.3% (it is necessary to make further measurements to document the upper limit).

Regarding the communication strategy, evaluation showed that it is overall well-structured and effective but the usage of the Programme website and perhaps the presence on social networks could be improved. At the same time, the Programme performed exceptionally well in communication events. Some shortcomings were also recorded in the annual communication plans (low degree of specialization, lack of time schedule).

At the same time, a beneficiary survey showed that most projects lack a strategic communication text. Partners with a strong communication culture and sufficient prior experience do not seem to be affected by this shortcoming, but partners who lack the above fail to fill the gap.

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From now on, the Programme should put more emphasis into the monitoring of projects:

- on one hand, on the new projects approved in 2021 that will have a reduced implementation horizon (2-2.5 years at most), and
- on the other hand, on a small number of projects - already under implementation - that have noted implementation failures.

In the context of increased monitoring, attention should be paid to the methodology projects use for measuring certain output indicators, such as e.g. tourist visits, so that the values reported by beneficiaries are reliable. Some revisions are needed in certain result indicators due to errors in their initial calculations. The indicators and the necessary revisions are described in the detailed evaluation report. Also, small modifications to the wording of certain specific objectives and their expected results are suggested. Finally, an increase is required in the Programme budget and modifications in the distribution by Priority Axis and by Intervention Code. These modifications are described in the detailed evaluation report. For the next Programming Period, the following Strategy modifications are proposed:

- **Entrepreneurship support:** should be dealt horizontally by national programmes. The Cooperation Programme should only support joint development of innovations and pilot applications that will address specific challenges in productive areas of particular importance to the cross-border region.

- **Blue economy:** shift the focus to the development of actions that solve specific problems, such as e.g. inadequacy of fish catches, problems of land use conflicts (such as between hydrocarbon exploitation and coastal tourism), etc ..
- **Tourism:** focus on creating "tourist added value" and not on simple promotion of tourist assets.
- **Abandon the field of maritime transport.**
- **Digital technologies:** abandon interventions creating online databases or interactive information platforms and target high value-added digital services, such as e.g. applications that increase public sector efficiency, smart applications in productive sectors (eg precision agriculture), etc.
- **Circular economy:** continue with higher Programme focus in the management of organic waste and in the management of water resources (with extending to more thematic areas beyond water supply systems) with emphasis on technological or other innovations.
- **Air pollutants:** urban interventions should be seen in a broader context where the combined impact of air pollution and climate change will be taken into account. Also, interventions should not be limited to public transport alone.
- **Energy savings:** focus interventions on innovative applications and demonstration projects instead of simple energy efficiency upgrades. Place more emphasis on improving energy behavior during summertime by exploring combined solutions such as green infrastructure, highly reflective materials, bioclimatic design, etc.
- **Risk management:** focus interventions entirely on the effects of climate change and especially on issues related to rising temperatures and droughts.

The communication strategy of the Programme, could become more inventive, especially in terms of ways to activate the beneficiaries to act as multipliers of the communication effort, and in terms of monitoring and evaluating the impacts of the communication effort. It is proposed that the annual communication and publicity plans become more detailed and acquire a time dimension, while the communication actions should start earlier (long before the first Calls). It is recommended to seek input from PR professionals for the organization of a wide information campaign immediately after the first specialization of Programme actions. In order to improve the performance of projects, it is suggested to make the submission of a communication strategy mandatory either with the submission of the funding application, or before signing the project contract. It is also suggested to have a special paragraph in the annual progress report which to mention the achievements of the communication strategy of the project (in terms of its objectives) and not just its outputs. Finally, good communication practices by the projects should be published on the Programme website annually.