

East Midlands 2007-13 ERDF Programme – Programme Evaluation Update

Purpose of the Paper

This paper aims to provide LMC members with an update on the implementation of the 2007-13 ERDF Programme Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, focusing on the work of the Programme evaluators to date and their proposals for the Programme's impact evaluation taking place in 2012. A presentation on the findings of the interim evaluation will be provided at the meeting. .

Recommendations

Members of the LMC are invited to:

- Note the progress made in implementing the Programme's Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy;
- Provide comments on the proposals for the Programme's impact evaluation in 2012; and
- Agree the proposal for a financial contribution towards the national evaluation work.

1. Background

It is an EU regulatory requirement that the East Midlands 2007-13 ERDF Competitiveness Programme sets out the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the Operational Programme (OP). The Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, that guides and sets the framework for activity to be undertaken during the whole programming period, received endorsement from the Programme Monitoring Committee (predecessor to the LMC) on 7 November 2008.

Following Members' endorsement of the Strategy, the ERDF team undertook to procure an external and independent evaluator. Through this tender exercise SQW Ltd was appointed as the Programme evaluator.

2. Implementation of the Evaluation Work Plan

Since their appointment SQW has:

- Developed a detailed evaluation work plan see summary workplan, attached
- Worked with Ecotec Research and Consulting Ltd (the evaluators for *emda's* corporate programme) to ensure there was a joined up approach to evaluating projects that receive both ERDF and Single Programme funding; Delivered the 2010 Interim Programme Assessment Annex A.;
- Delivered a presentation on the findings of the 2010 Interim Programme Assessment at the ERDF Annual Event in October 2011; and
- Held regular meetings with the ERDF Programme team, ensuring the evaluators were informed about changes in reporting arrangements, and updated on Programme content.

2.1 2010 Interim Programme Assessment

The Programme's first evaluation (2010) assessed whether the focus remained relevant given economic and other changes within the region; whether the delivery arrangements in place (relating to governance and sub-regional delivery) were still the most appropriate to ensure effective delivery of the Programme; and whether there were any emerging lessons to learn/areas of best practice to consider for future delivery.

The final 2010 Interim Programme Assessment report, which includes a summary of key findings, is annexed to this paper.

2.2 2012 Interim Performance and Impact Assessment

SQW is now in the process of developing detailed proposals for the 2012 impact assessment of the ERDF Competitiveness Programme. This evaluation will be delivered between February and October 2012, and will involve:

- Regular meetings with the ERDF team
- Analysis of progress reports, monitoring data and project-level evaluation evidence
- A broad e-survey with project managers
- In-depth consultations with partners (x20) and project managers (x20)
- A telephone survey with programme beneficiaries (c.600)
- Analysis of impacts achieved to date, future anticipated impacts and the sustainability of impacts
- A workshop to calibrate findings
- Production of a final report.

The purpose of this stage is to reflect on delivery arrangements, progress made to date and the experience of beneficiaries, while the Programme is underway, and there is still time to make changes.

3. National Evaluation

As part of the standardisation of processes and policies following the transfer of the delivery of ERDF from the RDAs to DCLG, a national evaluation is being commissioned to assess the national impact across England. DCLG is contributing £80,000 to this evaluation and each Programme is asked to contribute £10,000 from its Technical Assistance budget. Subject to LMC agreement we propose to make this contribution. In commissioning the national work, the East Midlands Programme Delivery Team will ensure that the criteria reflect the work underway by SQW to avoid duplication, and will work with SQW to maximise the opportunities to use their findings to inform the national picture.

4. Next Steps

SQW will provide an update at the February LMC meeting on the key findings from the 2010 Interim Programme Assessment and will present proposals for the forthcoming 2012 impact evaluation. Members will have the opportunity at this meeting to comment on and recommend any particular issues to be researched during the 2012 impact evaluation.

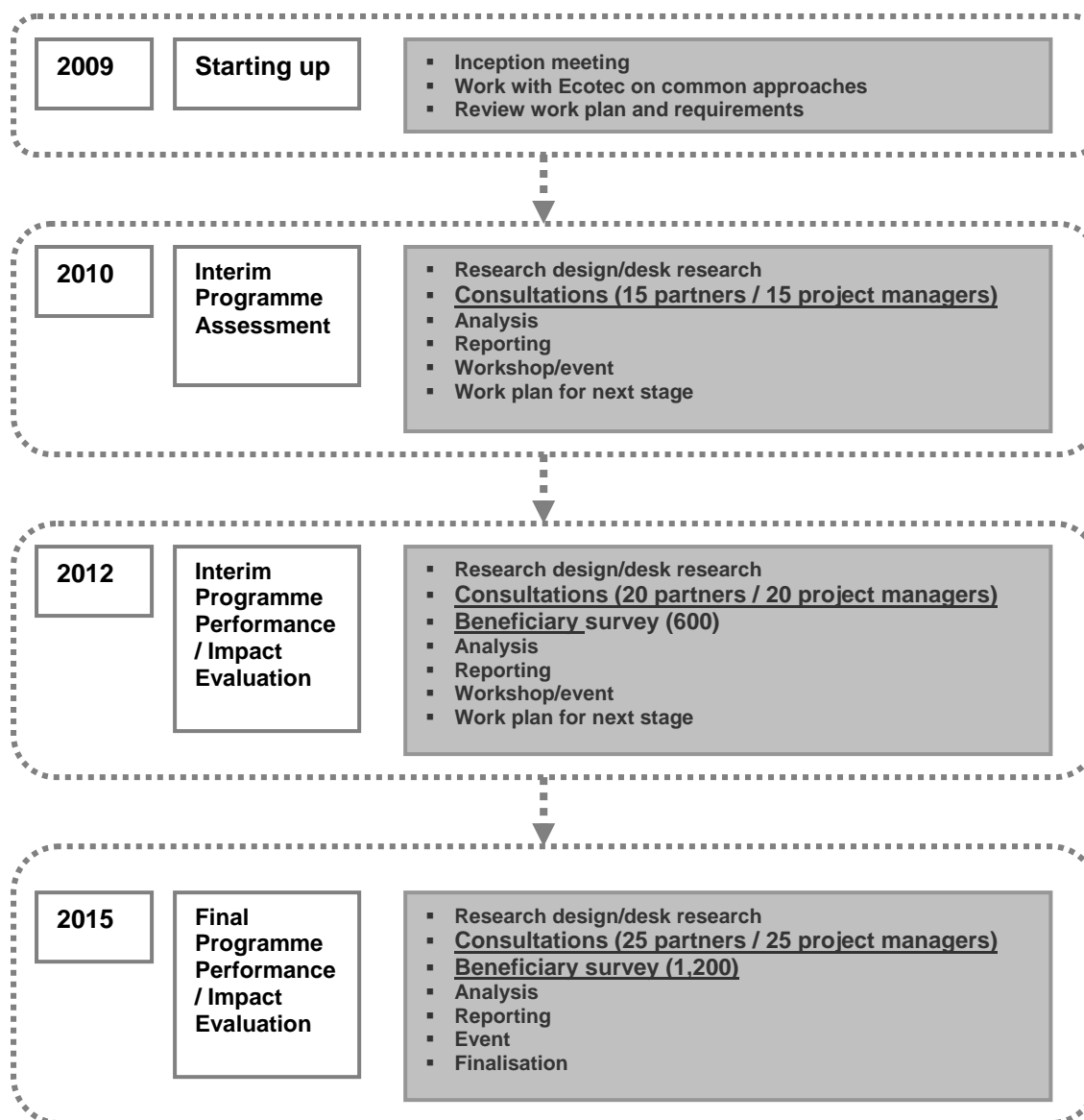
5. Recommendations

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- Provide comments on the proposals for the Programme's impact evaluation in 2012; and
- Agree the proposal for a financial contribution towards the national evaluation work.

Annex A: Evaluation of the East Midlands 2007-13 ERDF Operational Programme: Work Programme

Activities



Purpose and outputs

Familiarisation with ERDF programme and evaluation set up

- Agreement on broad structure of programme of evaluations
- Alignment with *emda Single Programme* evaluation framework – toolkit(s) appropriate for both frameworks
- Overall work plan
- Report to PMC

Half-way point review

- Still opportunity to change direction
- Stakeholder contact only – views on direction of programme and efficiency of process
- Analysis of financial performance
- Analysis of PA2 approach
- Review report on:
 - programme structure
 - finance
 - management

One year of formal programme remaining but several years more spend

- Still opportunity to change direction
- Requirement for emerging evidence on net impacts
- Inform future Programme activity (post-2013)
- Beneficiary survey this time
- Report on:
 - net economic impact
 - effect in disadvantaged areas
 - programme structures
 - management
 - recommendation for remaining life (including N+2) issues

Final ex-post evaluation

- Principally about reporting on final net impacts
- More extensive beneficiary survey
- Report on:
 - net economic impact
 - effect in disadvantaged areas
 - lessons learned on the programme structure, management arrangements, finance etc.