

Thematic Evaluation of the EU Structural Funds - Evaluation of the monitoring indicators of the EU Structural Funds

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SYMMARY

Following the results of the open tender (ID FM 2005/ERAF-5.2.3.-2), the Contracting Authority, the Ministry of Finance concluded a Service Contract with COWI A/S (Denmark) on implementation of EU Structural Funds Thematic Evaluation which included elaboration of three evaluation reports:

- Report No.1 "Evaluation of the Monitoring Indicators System of the EU Structural Funds";
- Report No.2 "Evaluation of Implementation of the Single Programming Document's Activities";
- Report No.3 "Evaluation of Impact of the EU Structural Funds on Regional Development in Latvia".

Service is provided by a consortium of three consulting companies: COWI A/S (Denmark), "DEA Baltika, Ltd." and "PKC, Ltd." (Latvia).

This Final Evaluation Report of the Report No.1 "Evaluation of the Monitoring Indicators System of the EU Structural Funds" contains the following sections of information:

- Objectives and aims of the thematic evaluation,
- Reached results,
- Evaluation questions,
- Detailed description of the activities,
- Detailed time schedule,
- Conclusions and recommendations.

Main objective of the report is to provide qualitative technical evaluation of monitoring indicators system of the Single Programming Document.

The reached result of the evaluation is an elaborated thematic evaluation report on the following theme: "Evaluation of the Monitoring Indicators System of the EU Structural Funds".

The analysis, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation has been directed to answer the following questions stipulated by the terms of reference:

- significance: are the output, outcome and impact indicators put forward in the Single Programming Document and its Supplement relevant to the realistic situation in the sectors, as well as planned measures and activities;
- effectiveness: how successful have monitoring indicators been identified in the Single Programming Document and its Supplement and are these indicators realistic and achievable;
- efficiency: is it possible to measure efficiency of implementation using the identified indicators or is it necessary to identify additional indicators or re-define the existing ones; how to eliminate deficiencies of the indicators system

of the structural funds and how to improve the indicators system and monitoring process;

- impact: do the existent indicators allow to efficiently measure and evaluate impact and usefulness of enforcement of the structural funds;
- propriety: is the choice of the identified indicators reasonable and well-grounded (from the point of view of territorial division and possibility to measure).

The evaluation was carried out between December 20, 2005 and May 26, 2006.

The main activities of the evaluation process have been the following:

- Evaluation planning and management;
- Elaboration of the evaluation methodology;
- Elaboration of the Inception Report;
- Collection and analysis of documents and statistics;
- Organisation of the survey and analysis of the obtained data;
- Elaboration of the Evaluation Report;
- Elaboration of the Final Report.

The service providers concluded that the most positive aspect of evaluation process has been an effective cooperation with the Ministry of Finance and the following intermediary bodies: State Regional Development Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health and Secretariat for the Minister of Special Assignment on E-governance Issues.

The factors, which impeded the evaluation process, have been the following:

- Insufficient willingness to cooperate from the side of the Ministry of Economics and Ministry of Education and Science;
- Discrepancies in the evaluation questions stipulated in the terms of reference;
- Conceptual changes in the evaluation reports after submission of the 1st draft.

In order to improve the evaluation process of the European Union Structural Funds in the future, the service provider suggests to (1) involve the intermediate bodies on more formal grounds in the evaluation process, (2) include preparation of the final report in the time schedule for the evaluation activities as stipulated in the terms of reference, (3) agree on the format for evaluation report prior its preparation is started, and (4) foresee a minimum of 4 weeks for commenting the draft evaluation report and preparation of its final version.