

**Thematic Evaluation of the EU Structural Funds – Impact evaluation of EU SF  
on the regional development in Latvia**

A/S "COWI", SIA "DEA Baltika", SIA "PKC"

20.12.2005.-26.05.2006.

**SUMMARY**

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 Report of the Evaluation Report No.3 “**Impact of the EU Structural Funds on Regional Development in Latvia**” contains the following sections of information:

objectives and results of the thematic evaluation, description of the activities and time schedule, conclusions and recommendations.

**The general objective** of the project is – to provide qualitative technical evaluation of the priorities, measures, and activities of the Single Programming Document in order to evaluate efficiency of their implementation in the time period between 01.05.2004. and 01.01.2006. as well as to elaborate conclusions and recommendations for improving efficiency of structural funds management.

**The direct objective** is to prepare thematic evaluation on following topic: „**The Evaluation of the Impact of the European Union (EU) Structural Funds to Regional Development in Latvia**”. The expected **output** of the project is the Report on thematic evaluation „ **The Evaluation of the Impact of the European Union (EU) Structural Funds to Regional Development in Latvia**”.

According the Terms of Reference the conclusions and recommendations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Report have to meet the following criteria:

- significance: how significant is access to the resources of the structural funds for development of planning regions of Latvia and approximation of development indicators;
- effectiveness: is it possible to achieve the envisaged development by using the planned resources according to the defined indicators;

- efficiency: to what extent is it possible to promote development of the planning regions by using the planned resources;
- impact: what impact will enforcement of the structural funds have on diminishing regional socio-economic differences and development of Latvia on the whole;
- sustainability: will the projects financed by the structural funds ensure sustainable development of Latvia in the future.

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;
- Elaboration of Middle Report;
- Interviews;
- Elaboration of the Thematic 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 other institutions involved in the EU SF management and implementation process.

The main problems evaluators meet in the evaluation process were following:

- The formulation of regional development is very wide, regional policy is not specified and therefore the questions of the thematic evaluation have very wide interpretation.
- Not all questions formulated in the Terms of Reference could be substantiated by information with territorial breakdown.
- As the EU SF MIS has not providing territorial information, the process of collections and formation of information had high job and time capacious.

To improve the process of evaluation connected with regional development in the future, evaluation experts recommend:

- To improve the EU SF MIS or to elaborate united forms for reports to reflect the implementation progress in the territorial breakdown.
- To ensure the provision of consolidated documents (SPD, PC), where the process of amendments are reflected.
- To use united structure (forms) for similar documents, reports (most visible differences at this moment are in the four EU SF finance plans).