

Evaluating Methodology of Community Regional Funds

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Abstract: The evaluation process is a basic element of modern public sector management practice. If this process is well conducted, it can contribute to improved public interventions, increased transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness. In the European Union, old Member States have a relatively long record of conducting evaluations and acting on their results, especially regarding Structural Funds. For Romania and other new Member States, this process is being introduced increasingly, in particular, after integration. The study has a major key-objective: to present the main categories of evaluation used for assessing the Structural Fund expenditure and the logical framework process and to examine how the evaluation co-financed public programmes is organized and conducted in the EU.

Keywords: evaluation; public intervention; regions

JEL Classification: R11; R12

1. Introduction

Evaluation of public programmes and policies is a long-standing activity within the European Union, but also at world level many countries resorting to this control form for public funds spending.

Within the EU, after 1996, evaluation turns into the key-element at the basis of improving management culture, being compulsory for all programmes financed by Structural Funds, irrespective of the reference field (regional, environment, transport, etc.) and their implementation moment (ex-ante, interim and ex-post).

According to the European Commission, evaluation is regarded as a process of “*judging the value of public intervention based on explicit criteria and standards* (for instance, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, equity, etc.)”². Evaluation contributes to the achievement of responsible governance through the feedback

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² European Commission – DG Regio webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/index_en.htm

provided about efficiency, effectiveness, and performances of public policies, organizations, or programmes¹.

2. Objectives and Structure

The general objective of the present paper is to analyze from the theoretical and practical viewpoint the way in which the evaluation process for a public intervention financed by EU structural funds develops.

The specific objectives pursued by the present research paper are the following:

- Synthetic presentation of the evaluation typology and of the corresponding logic framework;
- Good practice examples in the field of evaluation in some member-states.

3. Evaluation – Typology, Logical Framework and Indicators

According to currently enforced EU legislation, evaluation aims *to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of the assistance from Structural Funds and the strategy and implementation of operational programmes with respect to the specific structural problems affecting the Member States and regions concerned, while taking account of the objective of sustainable development and of the relevant Community legislation concerning environmental impact and strategic environmental assessment*².

From the perspective of the theoretical approach, it can be stated that there are several evaluation categories which use and implement a series of specific indicators selected within a logical framework substantiated by the identified needs and the impact analysis.

Hereunder is synthetically presented the typology, the logical framework and indicators used in evaluating public interventions.

3.1. Typology

By evaluation can be identified the particular contribution of some public interventions considering the following aspects:

¹ Public Management Service (PUMA) within OECD “Public Policy Brief no. 5 – Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/56/1902965.pdf>.

² Council Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006 of the Council from 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No. 1260/1999.

- efficiency of allotting public resources with limited character;
- setting up and reaching some clearly established objectives through the intervention and the analysis of impact;
- improving performances and effectiveness of public intervention;
- improving and developing the ability of stakeholders to realize and implement programmes and projects.

By and large, evaluation is regarded as a multifunctional instrument available to those interested (public local and central authorities, beneficiaries of funds, etc.) used for:

- analysis of public intervention development as compared with national priorities established and the ones agreed on at Community level (*strategic evaluation*);
- supporting by data and provided information the monitoring process (*operational, ongoing evaluation*);
- optimizing resources allotted by intervention (programme, project) and improving the quality of the programming process as a whole already from starting-up implementation (*ex-ante evaluation*); within this process are identified disparities, lacks and the development potential, the objectives to be attained, the provisioned outcomes, the quantified objectives, the coherence of regional strategy, the Community value added, the integration degree of priorities, conclusions of the preceding programming and quality of implementation, monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as of the financial management;
- examining the use degree of resources, the effectiveness and efficiency of Structural Funds programming and of the socio-economic impact at the end of the implementation period (*ex-post evaluation*). During this stage are reviewed the factors contributing to the success or failure of public intervention implementation and the identification of best practice examples

Within the European Union, at the level of Member-States, there are various ways of practically approaching evaluation, from among which the following could be identified:

- (1) *Evaluation of resource allocation*—focuses on efficiency of using resources, both from the planning perspective but also in retrospective,
- (2) *Standard evaluation* or based on established targets —refers to judgments of performances and of the success by applying various criteria,
- (3) *Explanatory evaluation* —focuses on explaining the impact of the programme, of the success and reasons leading to obtained outcomes,

(4) *Formative evaluation* or change-oriented –delivers complex feedback of own monitoring and self-corrections during programme’s implementation,

(5) *Participatory evaluation* - aims to developing some networks, communities and territories by participative methods of the *bottom-up* type.

Public interventions supported by structural funds are focused on certain fields with impact on the economic and social development, the majority displaying a complex, sectoral and territorial character. For several of these fields, the evaluation represents a true challenge in the attempt to analyse not only the contribution of each element, but also the synergy between them or the matrix of cross-sectional impact. Each intervention brings with it a certain particularity regarding traditional evaluation and very often the difficulty of being combined with other types of interventions.

Next to the specificity of evaluated public intervention there are a series of factors with significant impact on the quality of the evaluation process as a whole, from among which as most important we consider the following:

1. *Factor no. 1 – decentralized management* - some public interventions promoted by regional or local agencies lead to different information used for evaluation;
2. *Factor no. 2 – quality of evaluators* involved in the process and their independence, objectivity, professional training, experience degree, etc.;
3. *Factor no. 3- receptiveness of management authorities* and of other institutional categories involved in the implementation process of public interventions to the recommendations made as result of the evaluation;
4. *Factor no. 4 - financial resources used for evaluation, etc.*

As already mentioned previously, evaluation pursues the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, usefulness and sustainability of the programme, applying general or specific techniques and methods depending on the existence of the economic and social context and the perspectives considered¹. The main aspect characterizing the methods used in evaluation is that they can contribute to proper understanding and interpreting of the information resulting from implementing a public intervention with territorial impact. Also, the methods highlight and focus mainly on the relevant (significant) effects of the intervention, the selection of one technique or another depending a lot on the aptitudes of the evaluator and the way in which the latter can present, synthetically, the obtained outcomes and conclusions.

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http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/guide/annex_a/progr_cycles_en.htm

The evaluation of the impact of a public intervention aims to the entire change obtained as result of implementing the measures with the purpose of attaining the established objectives (for instance, diminishing inter- and intra-regional disparities, balanced economic and social development, increasing jobs' number, output and consumption, improving social, transport, environmental, tourism, educational infrastructure, etc.).

The impact of a regional level intervention can be found both at the microeconomic level (increasing output, innovation, etc.) and at macroeconomic level (contributions to reaching economic cohesion, etc.), as the evaluation has as task to identify and quantify.

3.2. Logical Framework

By definition, the logical framework presents the way in which are defined the main elements of a project and the relationships between provisioned entries, planned activities, and expected outcomes. The logical framework can be used both during initial planning of the intervention and during the time of its implementation.

In any logical framework, public interventions (or development projects) are regarded as causality links between events taking place at various levels (entries, activities, outputs, objectives). The relationships and causality links at the basis of any evaluation process can be reflected with the help of the logical framework and of its basic elements (Nagarajan & Vanheukelen, 1997, p. 25):

Needs → [Objectives → Inputs → Activities → Outputs →] Outcomes → Effects

The relational system between needs, objectives, inputs/outputs, outcomes and effects substantiates the evaluation process of the programme impact, the notified differences being sensibly affected by the specifics of the observed field and the of the corresponding economic and social issues. When the objectives set up by the programme are expressed in terms of outcomes, the efficiency can be measured as relationship between outputs (exits) and inputs (entries), costs and benefits, etc.

Evaluation contributes to improving efficiency and effectiveness of intervention by diminishing the initial asymmetry of existing information at the level of the financier and at the one of the one benefitting from the funds or realizing the implementation.

The most important element of evaluation – impact – can be regarded in terms of:

1. *results* (outputs – physical immediate results);
2. *effects* (outcomes, effects on long term on the beneficiaries).

In the practice of evaluating public interventions financed from structural funds, the initial impact is known as output of implementing the programme, while the impact on long term is regarded as sustainable outcome. During evaluation is also taken into account the usefulness of the programme, the way in which outputs meet economic and social needs, the obtained outcomes on long-term, etc. Depending on the impact categories considered, the objectives of the programme can be established which are regarded as operational (*output*), specific (*results*) or general (*outcome*) (Figure 1).

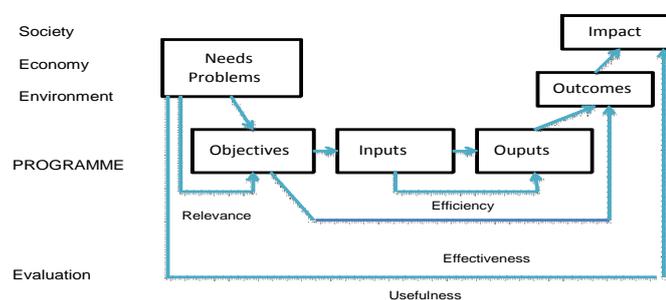


Figure 1. Logical framework of evaluating a public intervention (development programme)

Source: MEANS, 1999, p. 32

Irrespective of its nature, the evaluation of a public intervention (development programme, project, etc.) presupposes a logical framework built-up on relationships and/or links between the inputs and outputs obtained as result of implementing it. In this relational context, evaluation intervenes at one or another moment with the purpose of some information completion (against the time of reference) regarding implementation and, eventually, possible deviations so as to remedy them.

3.3. Indicators

An important place within the logical framework of the evaluation process without which it could not be developed is held by the used system of indicators, which contributes to:

- (1) knowing the economic, social and environmental situation (state of affairs) and the starting point of needs' analysis.
- (2) forecasting effects and efforts on types of public interventions,
- (3) delivering information required for setting-up targets,
- (4) the reference framework for monitoring progress, etc.

The indicators used for evaluation must meet a series of quality criteria, such as:

1. to overlap with the needs identified by the programme, as this must be equal to or higher than three-quarters from planned expenditures;
2. to be simple and easy understandable (for instance, number of jobs, no. of km. of modernized public roads, number of hospitals, etc);
3. between the output, input, outcome and impact indicators a certain balance should be given;
4. to present significant implications of the decisional process;
5. to be found/searchable within national or regional statistics.

The data and information used within the evaluation process are, as a rule, delivered by the monitoring system of the public intervention, including the ones regarding physical outputs and outcome indicators.

The system of indicators is the most important instrument of an evaluation. Still, the difficulties encountered as result of some context changes lead to the impossibility of identifying some impact data as sources for the outcome indicators. It is necessary to establish already at the beginning of intervention's implementation some basic indicators that, subsequently, should be followed-up during the entire programming period and also within other subsequent evaluations.

There are several categories of indicators; the most used being the following¹:

- partial, complete, complex indicators;
- derived, composite indicators;
- specific, generic indicators and key-indicators;
- context and programme indicators;
- resource indicators;
- indicators of immediate results;
- outcome indicators;
- impact indicators;
- relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and performance indicators.

On evaluation are taken into consideration, predominantly, resource (input) indicators, of immediate results (outputs/exits), of outcome and impact.

1. *Resource indicators* (inputs) are important as they provide information on the entirety of means used in implementing the programme (financial, human, material, etc.). Most of the indicators are quantitatively determined by the

¹ European Commission "Common Guidelines for Monitoring and Evaluation", 1995, Luxembourg: OPOCE.

monitoring system. Examples: number of employees working in implementing the programme; number of involved organizations, etc.

2. *Indicators of immediate results (outputs/exits)* present the situation obtained as result of spending public resources. Examples: kilometres of roads built, progress rate of constructing a road, rehabilitated hectares of disaffected urban land, capacity of purifying systems, etc. Output indicators refer to operations supported by public intervention.

3. *Outcome indicators* show the immediate advantages obtained by the direct beneficiaries. The outcomes can be observed entirely when the operator has concluded the activity and ceased payments. Also, information are provided on changes occurred which are aimed at the direct beneficiaries, such as, for instance time saved by those using a certain road; low tariffs for phone calls; qualifications obtained by those taking part in trainings; new tourist activities developed by a farmer; use of a new production capacity created by a certain company; and the satisfaction of companies receiving consulting services.

4. *Impact indicators* show the change attributed to a public intervention. There are several categories of impact: (a) *specific impact* – focusing on the effects on direct beneficiaries of the programme that occur or last up to a medium-term for instance (ex. created sustainable jobs) (b) a second category refers to total consequences on short- and medium-term on indirect beneficiaries (for instance, improving quality of living standard among people living in the neighbourhood of an industrial disaffected land). Depending on the effects' propagation mechanism, the impact can have effect on the market or not. These indicators are occasionally quantified, in general, during evaluation.

Next to quantitative indicators, in evaluation are used also qualitative analyses (qualitative findings) and combined analyses – quantitative and qualitative -, as well with the aid of which the performances of implemented measures can be interpreted.

As a rule, the quality of an evaluation process depends, firstly, on the availability and quality of processed data and information, and on the selected evaluation methodology (evaluation techniques and methods). Hence, it is necessary to know the inputs to the system for evaluating the efficiency of the programme. Still, this activity cannot develop separately from other categories of interventions included into a regional policy. From the methodological viewpoint, econometric approaches are preferred that test the statistical importance of the impact of some independent variables on dependent variables. For this purpose, the independent key-variables are the variables of regional policy, and the dependent ones can be selected from among the impact indicators of the policy, for instance, the number of created jobs. The impact of the policy is determined by using the econometric

estimated coefficients on the policy variables computed as diminishment effect of these variables to zero.

For evaluating the impact and progresses registered in implementing the various public interventions, at EU level (Regulation 1083/2005 – Art. 37) a certain number of indicators was set-up. Thus, 41 key-indicators are identified and used in evaluating the programmes financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund that should present a basic value (usually zero) and a target-value. The characteristics of used indicators may be shown by using the acronym SMART (S-specific, M-measurable, A-available, R-relevant, T-timely), the quality of the evaluation being directly influenced by the quality of existing and analyzed data and information.

4. Evaluation of Public Interventions in European Union – Tradition and Experiences

This chapter presents synthetically some relevant practices in the field of impact evaluation for public interventions financed by Structural Funds in the European Union. Thus, the experience and tradition related to evaluating public interventions are directly influenced by the volume of allocations from structural and cohesion funds.

During the first programming stages, EU left at the latitude of member states the selection of the various evaluation categories, without imposing conditions and requirements regarding this process. Currently the evaluation of public interventions is compulsory in all member states, as it is regarded as correction means for possible details identified during local, regional and national programmes' and projects implementation

4.1. Different Perspectives on Evaluation

Regarding the practice of evaluation, at community level, between member states, major approach differences can be found, as countries with an important tradition in the field can be identified, but also states less familiarized with evaluation (especially countries from South-eastern Europe). In countries with tradition, evaluation is regarded as an important component of the public policy, and considered as an interactive process.

The evaluation of the impact of public interventions financed by structural funds turned compulsory during the programming period 1989-2003 being gradually implemented in all EU Member States. The initial difficulties were determined by the lack of data, of indicators and of target-objectives, and of the monitoring system coherence, in particular at regional level.

Subsequently, many of the above mentioned deficiencies were improved with the help of the suggestions and conclusions of the programme MEANS¹, by which it was attempted to promote a “European evaluation culture” with the purpose of increasing awareness about the importance of this process. The outcomes of this programme were visible as of the programming period 1994-2000, the member state adjusting own regulations to the requirements imposed at Community level. One of these rules is the one regarding the obligation of member states to evaluate strategies, programmes and projects financed by structural funds in various stages of their implementation, this turning into the common item of all sectoral or regional policies.

Public interventions implemented at regional level are periodically evaluated for the following main considerations:

1. firstly, outputs and outcomes are evaluated of individual schemes provided by private companies at regional level;
2. Secondly, the aggregated outcomes of public interventions are evaluated with the purpose of identifying regional economic performances.

The experiences regarding implementation of public interventions are influenced decisively by the quality of the evaluation process. Thus, clear evidence can be identified about the change of the evaluation process from a static and punctual one into a more active, but also compulsory one, both in terms of benefits and regarding the answer of involved beneficiaries (Table 1).

Table 1: Evaluation in some EU Member states before implementing compulsiveness

<i>Member State</i>	<i>Experience in the field of evaluation</i>
Austria	Austria has low experience in evaluation, yet there are some measures taken for the evaluation of regional policy in the last years.
Belgium	There were no periodical evaluations of the regional policy (neither in Flanders nor in Wallonia). The evaluation studies influenced a series of measures taken subsequently.
Denmark	In Denmark there were no regional policies up to 1992, therefore the evaluation was not possible. Thereafter, the country adjusted to new regulations and uses efficiently this instrument.
Finland	Periodically evaluates regional policy and the industrial ones, in particular the effect of subventions granted by government to individual companies.
France	A certain tradition exists in evaluating public policy measures, especially after the nineties.
Germany	Theoretically, evaluation is a component of the public policies system only if regional aid is involved. Frequent actions take place of evaluating measures of regional policy.

¹ European Commission - Evaluation Methods for Actions of a Structural Nature, 1995.

Greece	No constant evaluation of regional policy took place, even though there were some academic evaluations of the regional policy measures in the eighties.
Ireland	There is a relatively moderate tradition in the field of evaluation, even if there were some studies during the '70s which applied a mix of models and interviews/questionnaires. The interest increase for evaluating Structural Funds took place after the '90s, and one of the involved bodies was the Institute of Economic and Social Research.
Italy	No tradition in evaluating regional policy financed by Structural Funds. The set-up of some evaluation units at the level of all national and regional administrative authorities led to a process change.
Luxembourg	Inconsistent evaluation process, correlated with the drafting stage of the regional policy.
Netherlands	There are regular periodical evaluations, taking place each 4 to 5 years with the purpose of revising regional policy legislation. The methods involved in evaluating efficiency and effectiveness are econometric models and surveys.
Portugal	No tradition in evaluating regional policy with respect to Structural Funds.
Spain	No tradition in evaluating regional policy financed by Structural Funds. Still, there were some evaluations in the '70s which were based on evaluation methods similar to the ones from Great Britain.
Sweden	There is an important tradition in evaluating regional policy, especially by using surveys for companies benefitting of governmental subventions/grants.
Great Britain	Regional policy evaluation has a relatively long tradition, already as of the '70s, as evaluation methods regarding the efficiency of spending structural funds were applied.

Source: Methodologies used in the Evaluation of the Effectiveness of European Structural Funds, European Policies Research Centre, Fraser of Allander Institute

For the above analyzed countries an own perspective and different approach is found regarding the evaluation process of public interventions at regional level. Thus, some member states had already from the beginning an important evaluation culture for spent public funds, whereas in other states evaluation was inexistent. Still, it can be said, that where evaluation was not part of the public policy ad-hoc studies and analyses were realized which were politically dictated or as a requirement of economic policy. In other member-states evaluation is regarded as a critical instrument for measuring performances of regional policies (from draft to implementation and up to outcomes delivery).

At EU level, depending on the perspective on the evaluation process, we can identify the following groups of member states:

- states regarding evaluation as an institutionalized part of enforcing a policy;
- states regarding evaluation as an occasional exercise;

- states regarding the evaluation as a limited exercise and irrelevant of the implementation practice of regional policy.

In the countries newly accessing the EU, the evaluation of the programmes financed by structural funds is in an incipient stage, its importance being found in the efficiency of spending resources. In general, a more positive attitude is found on evaluation in countries from the north-western European Union. For instance, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Great Britain regard evaluation as part of a political culture and not just as a simple department of regional policy. A similar outlook can be found in countries such as Austria and Ireland. In all these countries there is a systematic evaluation process, it being part of the decisional process within the regional policy (Table 2).

Table 2. Evaluation in some EU member countries during the current programming period

ITALY	<p>In Italy there are 15 administrative regions and five autonomous regions.</p> <p>The regional policy is implemented by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • five ROP within the Convergence objective, • 16 Regional Operational Programmes under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective • seven Transborder OP under the Territorial Cooperation objective <p>The Regional Programmes are implemented under the responsibility of the regions. The Regional Government is Management Authority. The Regions deliver part of the co-financing (approx. 25%).</p>	<p><i>Key aspects, strengths, weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National authorities tend to coordinate the performances of regional governments • Specific regional interests are predominant; • Project implementation is difficult when involving several regions simultaneously (for instance for a highway or railway crossing over three regions). • Their decentralized system allows for creating a small number of management units and control units being more efficient and closer to the territory. <p><i>Evaluation and approval of projects is done only at regional level.</i></p>
SPAIN	<p>17 autonomous communities and 19 Operational Programmes financed by ERDF both for the Convergence and for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective.</p> <p>Also, there are four multi-regional programmes and three CBC operational programmes.</p> <p>The Ministry of Economy and Finances by the State Sub-unit for ERDF Management is the Management Authority (MA). This Ministry is responsible with managing all programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund. This MA takes into account the management and control of funds.</p> <p>In a region three authorities are involved in</p>	<p><i>Key aspects, strengths, weaknesses</i></p> <p>There are significant regional disparities. The monitoring system is still ineffective and incapable of delivering relevant information regarding obtained results.</p> <p><i>Evaluation of regional policies</i></p> <p>Evaluation culture needs to be strengthened both within national authorities and regional authorities. Still no complete system of monitoring the indicators. Evaluation capacity needs to be developed.</p>

	evaluation. The Management Authority, the Certification Authority and the Audit Authority.	
CZECH R.	<p>Territorial organization is formed out of 14 large autonomous units. From these, 13 are regions, and one is the city Prague.</p> <p>For accessing European funds eight cohesion regions were drawn up, shaped from one or two autonomous regions. Within the institutional frameworks ROP is ensured MA-ROP – Regional Council, the Payments and Certification Authority – Ministry of Finances, and the Audit Authority – Ministry of Finances.</p> <p>The Ministry of Regional Development has the role of National Coordination Authority, next to the Budget Department (decides on financing).</p>	<p><i>Key aspects, strengths, weaknesses</i></p> <p>Regional development in the Czech R. has a trans-sectoral character and a multi-sectoral nature, in this process being involved almost all ministries managing activities with territorial impact and which might contribute to diminishing disparities between regions.</p> <p>Evaluation is realized by the Ministry of Regional Development in cooperation with the other ministries (Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Industry, and Trade, etc.).</p>
POLAND	<p>From the viewpoint of administrative-territorial organization, Poland is constituted of 16 regions. The regional development is supported by a multi-regional programme managed at national level (integrated regional programme) by 16 Regional Operational Programmes and seven European Territorial Cooperation programmes, and additionally a Technical Assistance programme.</p> <p>The programmes implemented at regional level have absorption of 24.6% (16 bill. Euro) from the total allocation of funds for the period 2007-2013.</p> <p>The regions are involved in implementing sectoral programmes.</p> <p>ROP are managed by the regional authorities (25% of the funds).</p>	<p><i>Key aspects, strengths, weaknesses</i></p> <p>Structural Funds are managed by the Regional Authorities in partnership with the central ones.</p> <p>The government is not involved in managing Regional Operational Programmes, only imposes the guidelines.</p> <p>The issue which persists is determined by the existence of low financial resources of the regional authorities.</p> <p>In the period 2007-2013 was introduced a new approach regarding the performance increase of regional programmes, that is setting-up management by objectives, including by determining the minimum annual sums certified by the EU.</p>

Source: Evaluation the administrative capacity of the regions in the field of regional development, Project co-financed by ERDF by ROP 2007-2013, Contract No. 61/25.02.2011, Evaluation Report (Summary December 2011)

The experiences of the member-states with respect to evaluation have undergone process of adjustment and change, especially as result of the requirements imposed by the regulations of Community funds. Thus, the co-financing granted by the European Union and the complexity of the evaluation process determined member states to expand their evaluation capacities also to other public interventions, not only for those financed by structural funds. The general trend noticed is that of the member states presenting a wide variety of policy approaches with respect to evaluation but, during the last programming period is found an improvement

phenomenon of this process, even if an harmonization of evaluation is still not in place from the organizational and methodological viewpoint.

4.2. Compulsiveness of Evaluation Public Programmes and Policies

Evaluation of public interventions by and large, and of the ones financed from structural funds in particular, became compulsory within the European Union as of the programming period 1998-2004. Thus, up to the reform of Structural Funds (1989), the evaluation of public interventions financed at the level of the member states was regarded as an attribute of central and regional governments, the involvement of the Commission being minimal. This fact triggered, frequently, controversies with respect to spending Community public funds and to obtained impact. The process of setting-up the institutional structures necessary to evaluating public interventions was a relatively slow one, the greatest difficulties being identified in obtaining data and information for quantifying the proposed indicators (targets), but also as result of some major variations between various regional statistical systems. Implementing compulsiveness in evaluating public interventions financed by structural funds changed significantly the attitude of member states on this process and, especially, of the countries that did not have a minimal evaluation culture (for instance, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, etc.). Contributing to co-financing the evaluation process from structural funds, the Commission determines the member-states to revise the attitude against the process. The compulsiveness of evaluation was regulated by various regulations of the Council (EC) and Working Papers of the Commission¹, and it was established that for public interventions financed by structural and cohesion funds are required evaluations at different time intervals (before implementation, during and at finalizing implementation), from which the impact and obtained outcomes should result. As a rule, evaluation of some major public interventions (for instance, certain policies or territorial or sectoral programmes) are very costly, therefore, next to compulsory standard evaluations (ex-ante, intermediary, ex-post) are regarded as more useful the punctual (ad-hoc) evaluations or the financing of some institutional arrangements that meet simultaneously the conditions:

1. to contain departments/agencies involved in the economic development at all levels (national, regional, and local);

¹Regulation no. 1083/2006 which was the basis of Gov. Res. 457/2008 regarding the institutional framework of coordinating and managing structural instruments; by this Gov. Res. are established the role and responsibilities in the field of evaluation; *Working paper no. 1*: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: ex-ante evaluation; *Working paper no. 2*: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: monitoring and evaluation indicators; *Working paper no. 3*: the methodological paper of the Commission delivering the guidelines regarding the calculation of public expenditures or structural expenditures with the purpose of complying with the principle of additionality; *Working paper no. 5*: Indicative guidelines regarding the evaluation methods: evaluation during the programming period.

2. to be able to combine resources intended for evaluation with the ones regarding the monitoring, but also with the financing of existing expertise;
3. to contribute to understanding efficiency and effectiveness of interventions of regional (territorial) nature.

5. Conclusions

The present paper intended to present a theoretic image on the evaluation process in European Union. Thus, evaluation is a process pursuing the improvement of the quality, efficiency and coherence of interventions from structural funds, of the strategy and operational programmes. From the viewpoint of existing typologies, for evaluating the interventions from structural funds are used three important categories that take into account the moment of implementation: the ex-ante, intermediary and ex-post evaluation. Also, the consecrated indicators used for evaluation and present within the logical framework for substantiating needs are: context and programme, resource, immediate output, outcome, and impact indicators, along with relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and performance indicators. With respect to the experience of member-states regarding evaluation, these underwent an adjustment and change process, in particular as result of the requirements imposed by the regulations of Community funds. The co-financing granted by the European Union and the complexity of the evaluation process have determined member-states to develop their evaluation capacity also for other public interventions, not only for those financed by structural funds. The general trend noticed is that the member-state have a large variety of political approaches with respect to evaluation but, during the last programming period, a phenomenon of improving this process is found, even if not yet of harmonization of evaluation from the organizational and methodological viewpoint.

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