

2nd Greek Evaluation Network meeting

Ex-post evaluation of the 2014-2020 European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative

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Process

- Final Report approved in August
- 2014-2022 evaluation period: Cut-off data in the supporting study: end 2023

- Different data sources
Supporting study, JRC analytical report, meta-analysis of counterfactual impact evaluations, helpdesk report on concrete evaluation examples...



Findings and lessons learned (1)

Effectiveness

64.6 million participations



7+ M found a job



10 M gained a qualification



3 M in education/training



After 6 months: 6.9 M employed



22.3 million positive changes



GDP multiplier: 1.256 euro in 2030

Facilitating factors

effective governance and implementation approaches, strong cooperation with stakeholders, synergies with related operations, flexibilities (CRII/CRII+)

Challenges

administrative burden, difficult reach to hard-to-reach target groups, lack of evidence to support targeting and implementation.

Findings and lessons learned (2)

Effectiveness - Lessons learned:



- ❑ Importance of **targeted approach** to support particular groups
- ❑ **Embedding horizontal principles:** To ensure principles like gender equality are consistently embedded in ESF operations
- ❑ Increase **knowledge building**
- ❑ **Annual reporting** of all indicators, including long-term result indicators can enable more consistent and reliable assessments of performance throughout programme delivery

Findings and lessons learned (3)

Efficiency

IP	Sum of returns (Benefit – Cost)	Benefit-cost ratio
8i (Access to employment)	€ 26 468	16.0
8iii (Self- employment)	€ 40 154	20.5
9i (Active inclusion)	€ 30 799	16.2
10i (Early school leaving)	€ 27 004	43.0
10ii (tertiary education)	€ 28 606	14.8



positive evidence
of cost
effectiveness

Source: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Supporting study

- Significant progress made in simplifying the ESF/YEI processes, notably via **SCOs**. Yet **administrative burden remains a concern** to MA/ beneficiaries.
- **Management and control systems**: well functioning, with room for further improvement. Limited capacity of beneficiaries
- **Facilitating factors**: SCOs, digitalisation and streamlined reporting.

Findings and lessons learned (4)

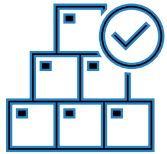
Efficiency - lessons learned



- ❑ Simplification could be enhanced by **streamlining application processes** – requiring less information, avoiding redundant information and streamlining **audit** requirements
- ❑ **Monitoring systems could be improved** – with clearer linkages between expenditure and output/result indicators and additional information when publishing the **list of projects** (target groups or delivery mechanism)
- ❑ **Address capacity** constraints and enhance evaluation usefulness in decision-making processes.

Findings and lessons learned (5)

Coherence



- **Strong complementarity** with national and regional strategies, and good level of internal coherence. Good complementarity also with EU policies
- **Coherence with other EU instruments**, especially with the ERDF, FEAD or Erasmus+, RRF.

Lessons learned:

- ☐ Internal coherence should be further built-upon **reducing the risk of overlap between activities**
- ☐ Collaboration and **knowledge-sharing** events among beneficiaries could be promoted
- ☐ Few **references** in planning documents to EU policies for specific target groups. This could be considered by MS



Findings and lessons learned (6)

Relevance

- **ESF/YEI programmes were relevant** to and well aligned with the needs of their target groups, in particular unemployed, inactive people and NEETs
- Scope for better reflecting the needs of specific **hard-to-reach groups** (Roma, refugees, migrants, homeless...)
- The flexibility provided under TO 13 (REACT-EU) and the introduction of the CRII/CRII+ and CARE initiatives helped **ensure the continued relevance** of the ESF in view of changing needs.
- **Key factors** for relevance: involvement of stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring, as well as continuous monitoring of implementation and systematic needs assessment.



Lessons learned:

- ❑ More use of **ex-ante impact assessment** to inform the design of interventions. Exchanges of good practices are important
- ❑ Multi-faceted and **holistic approaches** can be beneficial to address the needs of concrete vulnerable groups.
- ❑ continued support for the partnership principle and capacity-building for effective implementation

Findings and lessons learned (7)

EU Added Value



ESF and YEI allowed to **reach more individuals** and entities



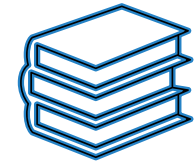
Larger number and scale of activities (especially in times of the pandemic)



They **broadened the actions** to diverse target groups and new or underdeveloped policy areas



Supporting innovation and transfer of ideas, enabled changes in national systems or structures.



Enabled MS administrations and participating organisations to gain **new competences**, enabled collaboration among stakeholders and allowed drawing lessons learned

Findings and lessons learned (8)

EU Added Value - Lessons learned:



- ❑ **Early assessment** from national authorities on what objectives could be pursued through existing operations, which innovative approaches could be scaled up and where operations can be best supported to achieve sustainability.
- ❑ Need to **avoid the risk that EU-funding replaces national funding** in areas that are not policy priorities
- ❑ **More flexibility** in programming could benefit the contribution of EU funding to emerging priorities and objectives

Findings and lessons learned (9)

Visibility



Good levels of visibility: organisations and stakeholders which were **directly involved in the implementation** of the supported projects.



Different approaches across Member States



Less robust evidence as regards the visibility of ESF/YEI support towards the **general public**.
Main area for improvement

Lessons learned:

- ☐ **Multi-faceted approach** combining different communication channels is needed, and consider concrete specificities of target groups
- ☐ **Exchanges of good practices** between Member States and dissemination of results could be strengthened