Strategies, Role and Impact of Project Evaluation

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Group task

What can you say about the object in your hands?
Project Evaluation

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1. The Role of Evaluation
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The Role of Evaluation (1)

- context for open discussion on project performance
- strengths & weaknesses, obstacles to progress
- recommendations to continue, modify, and/or delete
- assures and improves the quality of the project and project outcomes
The Role of Evaluation (2)

- involvement of the whole partnership, the target group(s) and other actors
- a culture of quality assurance
- helps quantifying results
- predicts how the project work will develop
- reduces the work of the final report
Stages of Evaluation (1)

- already at proposal stage, before the application was submitted.
- agree who will be responsible for evaluation across the partnership
- agree the priorities for evaluation. It is impossible to evaluate everything!
  (What are we going to evaluate? The processes of the project? The outputs of the project? The outcomes of the project?)

- create an evaluation workplan
Stages of Evaluation (2)

- begin soon after the project funding was approved
- work by a logical schedule
  (e.g. not every 4 months but rather in connection with some milestones)
- use evaluation tools carefully structured and make indicators clear:

1. Questionnaires
2. Interviews
3. Observation
4. Document analysis
5. Reflective diary (self-evaluation is very important!)
6. Website analysis
7. Focus group
Stages of Evaluation (3)

- use the evidence to implement changes
- analyse results - if possible at a team meeting

(What does this mean for the project? What should we do next? How will we manage changes to the project’s workplan?)

- draw attention to the positives as well as challenges
- adapt: workplan, activities, communication platforms, management, budgets
- inform everyone involved - try not to impose!
- record all reasons for the changes
Types of Evaluation (1)

1. Internal Evaluation – performed by staff of partnership members, preferably directly involved in the project work

1. External Evaluation – performed by an expert not attached to any of the partnership members, who has no other task in the project

NOTE: The evaluation performed by experts of the EACEA is not external evaluation.
Types of Evaluation (2)

1. Planning Evaluation (leading to an Inception Report and a QA Plan)
2. Formative Evaluation (leading to Progress Reports and Quality Assurance Recommendations)
3. Summative Evaluation (leading to Impact Reports and Quality Assessment)

NOTE: Each one of the above can be conducted as internal or external evaluation, or preferably as a combination of the two. All three types are necessary.
Group task

What tools would you use to evaluate the aspect of the project on your table? Consider all three types of evaluation discussed.
EXAMPLE: Event Evaluation

Planning evaluation:
Send a questionnaire to all the participants before the event to assess their expectations

Formative evaluation:
Enable the participants to reflect on the progress of the event (e.g. training, meeting, seminar) while it is taking place (e.g. through reflective diaries, individual interviews, post-it notes stuck on a wall, etc.)

Summative evaluation:
Gather final evaluative information at the end of the event, discuss it, use to to improve the next event
External Evaluator

Role, rationale and requirements for the external evaluator:

• to provide objectivity to the evaluation process ("second pair of eyes")
• to bring additional experience and a wide range of evaluation methodologies
• to be (preferably) a recognised expert, familiar with both the subject area and the management and evaluation of European projects
• to be acceptable to the project team
Summary

• Begin early in the project
• Involve others (external evaluator, but also target group representatives)
• Use all types of evaluation
• Use evaluation mechanisms that predict the development of the project
• Record all data and data analysis and use it in project implementation