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Best practice for output indicator monitoring
(valid as of 1 May 2019)

BACKGROUND

Indicators are quickly becoming a central issue in the monitoring of Interreg programmes and projects. There has been an increase in questions since the beginning of this programme period about the quality of evidence for the figures reported. More and more programme stakeholders want to see information that backs up projects' achievements of their outputs and results.

At our implementation seminar in February 2019, we introduced several points about indicators. We displayed one project's template for keeping track of their outputs, gave a warning about double-counting, and reassured projects that they do not need to worry about over achieving their targets. However, we received several questions related to indicators during and after the event, and we decided that guidance would be helpful to our project community. Here are some best practice tips to help you monitor your indicators over the lifetime of your project.

BEST PRACTICE TIPS

How can we demonstrate the project's record-keeping on output targets?

There is no 'one way fits all' model for demonstrating your project's record-keeping on output indicator targets. What is crucial, however, is that you agree as a project partnership how to collect and calculate the numbers behind the targets and that you use a consistent approach across the partnership and over time.

We recommend using a spreadsheet that you can update and upload with each progress report, but you are welcome to develop and use other solutions. Please discuss this with your project advisor. If you choose to use a spreadsheet, you can design your own or download and adapt the one provided by us, which was developed by the project DUAL Ports.

Having a template that each contributing partner can use and that you update each reporting round helps you avoid double counting (counting the same number twice in a report). If you do not use the example template, a similar type of document, or clear references within the text of the report to the information that backs up your numbers, we will remind you in the Concluding Cover Letter to provide this overview in the next report.

What should we consider as we prepare to report for the first time?

If you are not already doing so, please start thinking about how you will collect the information that will back up the numbers you put in your progress reports. If you are a relatively new project, you should start the discussion at the kick-off meeting or soon thereafter.

The joint secretariat recommends an open discussion with all partners about the targets entered in the application, how they were decided on, how the partnership will achieve them, and how the partnership will keep track of the data and related information to provide evidence of that achievement. Please remember that output indicator definitions can be found in Fact Sheet 23.

What should we do if we've already reported - but haven't yet provided evidence of achievement of our targets?

If you begin using a more systematic method of keeping track of your targets after submitting more than one report, you may discover that you need to make some adjustments in the next report because you discover some 'errors'. That is ok. It may even be the case that you must subtract from the numbers you have already entered. If this is the case for you, simply include in the report an explanation for the adjustment.

What should we do if we overachieve our targets?

Some projects have asked if they may adjust their targets because they foresee that they will surpass them by a large margin or because they realise that they were far too ambitious when filling in the application.

We do not facilitate the adjustment of targets at this time and we do not aim to secure 100% achievement by all projects on all targets. It is more interesting to see the difference between what you expected to achieve and what you actually do achieve than to report to the Commission that every project reached their targets - no more, no less.

How should we count 'organisations/enterprises informed about new solutions'?

One issue that several projects have brought to our attention is that of publicity efforts that result in outputs far beyond their expectations. This concerns, in particular, the last compulsory output: 'Number of organisations/ enterprises informed about new solutions by project end.' Some projects have received heavy media attention, including television coverage, that they estimate reaches hundreds of thousands - if not millions - of people.

However, the definition of this output (which can be found in Fact Sheet 23) is: 'obtaining sufficient information to consider a change to existing practices/procedures or equipment as a result of project information activities. This requires that the enterprise/organisation has actively sought the information by e.g. attending an event, visiting a website, or requesting a publication.' In other words, passively receiving information about the project, e.g. television news coverage, does not qualify.

SOME WORDS ON PROJECT RESULTS

Please note that because results are very specific to each project, we do not have a template for keeping track of targets and information on how progress on these is calculated.

However, we strongly recommend employing a systematic method of recording similar background information on your results. If you have any questions about this or any of the points raised above, please contact your Project Advisor.