

Evaluation of the EUSAIR

A proposal by Greece (N.C. and EYSSA, GR FP project partner), in the context of Work Package 3 of the EUSAIR Facility Point

A. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring and evaluation is obviously an issue of paramount importance for a multifaceted transnational strategy such as the EUSAIR. So far we have made significant progress in specifying what we need as a monitoring system that can of course be used as a basis and a framework for evaluation, but we have not discussed evaluation itself.

In this respect a range of important questions should be raised and answered collectively. (a) Can a macroregional strategy such as the EUSAIR exist for long and can it go on into the next programming period without some sort of evaluation of its strengths and its weaknesses, its successes and its failures, the effectiveness and sufficiency of its Action Plan and the human and financial resources put to its service, possible obstacles to be overcome and improvements deemed necessary? (b) is it not the case that a full and proper evaluation which will, among other things, bring out the usefulness, the benefits and the added value of the macro-regional Strategy for the programmes concerned, constitutes a crucial decision taking factor?

B. EVALUATION

Evaluation is an integral part of the EUSAIR Action Plan. The ADRIAN application, does include a deliverable titled “*EUSAIR evaluation support*” (deliverable T.3.2.8), indicating that a first deliverable will be submitted in 2019, but the nature and the content of this is “*to be agreed by GB and EC in the course of the project*”. Some of the tasks usually associated with evaluation (relating mainly to quantitative indicators etc.) have been included in the specification of the TSG Experts’ work for Monitoring (WP3), in line with the ADRIAN Application and the views expressed during the 20-21 June 2017 FACILITY POINT partners’ meeting in Ljubljana. But, what still remains absent is a provision for an evaluation, conducted by an independent external expert, who is not in any way directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of the Strategy, an evaluation which will aim to assess the success of the EUSAIR as a macroregional Strategy, what is being done well and what may not in the implementation of the Action Plan and what could be improved in order to make the EUSAIR even more successful, useful and attractive, now and especially in the post 2020 period.

What follows here, is an attempt to provide **a proposal** to be discussed with the GB and the EC.

It is a proposal to conduct a once-off evaluation, that could be delivered by end 2020, so that its conclusions can be taken into account for the post 2020 Strategy and the relevant programmes. If this proposal is agreed, GR, as lead project partner for WP3 and making use of the FP LP budget for evaluation (up to 120.000 €), can initiate the necessary procedures for the selection, through a relevant call for tenders, of a EUSAIR evaluator, who will assume duties before the end of June 2020 and will have a contract with a final deliverable within 6 months of the sign of the contract. The successful bidder will have to use the appropriate team of experts with experience in all Pillars of EUSAIR and its crosscutting themes.

C. The tasks of the Contractor (Evaluator and its team of experts)

The task / content of the Evaluation would consist of:

1. A synthetic evaluation of the EUSAIR as a macroregional Strategy. On the basis of the Synthetic Annual Monitoring Reports and the analyses presented below, the Evaluation will analyse EUSAIR strengths and weaknesses, its successes and its failures, the effectiveness and sufficiency of its Action Plan and the human and financial resources put to its service, possible obstacles to be overcome and improvements deemed necessary by (a) review and reassess the overall conception of the EUSAIR and its suitability for the participating countries, (b) evaluate the continuing suitability and sufficiency of the existing Action Plan to support the strategic overview and objectives of the EUSAIR and (c) suggest, if and as necessary, possible amendments / improvements / corrective actions which could be undertaken, both at national and macroregional level, in order to make the EUSAIR more effective in achieving its strategic and operational objectives and thus enhance the suitability, attractiveness and effectiveness of the EUSAIR as a strategy for macroregional co-operation and development.
2. An evaluation of the application of (a) the EUSAIR's general criteria and (b) the TSG special selection criteria at the macroregional level. On the basis of the Annual TSG Monitoring Reports and taking into account the development of the discussion on labelling and/or criteria for identifying projects of EUSAIR interest, the Evaluator will assess the way the EUSAIR's general criteria and the TSG special selection criteria are practically applied in the internal TSG procedures, as well as their usefulness and necessity for the financing of labelled projects or regardless of that.
3. A synthetic evaluation of the EUSAIR's delivery mechanism and governance system. This is a matter of great importance for the future development of the macroregional Strategy. Drawing from the information in the Synthetic Annual Monitoring Reports, the Evaluation will refer to all aspects of the EUSAIR's governance system and delivery mechanisms, focusing inter alia on matters such as
 - a) the progress achieved in institutional development and capacity building in the participating countries
 - b) the degree to which the governance system is successful in informing and motivating stakeholders to involve themselves and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the EUSAIR,
 - c) the degree to which national-level systems are successful in involving universities, research centres, regional and local authorities and the civil society at large in the formulation of proposals for EUSAIR-interest projects to be put forward at TSG meetings,
 - d) the degree to which an adequate level of exchange of information and mutual co-operation has been established between TSG operators at national level and the MAs of ESIF (national or transnational) or IPA II programmes implemented in the participating countries,
 - e) the degree to which EUSAIR general criteria, Priority Actions and special selection criteria are taken into account when deciding the selection criteria for the above

mentioned programmes, as well as any special arrangements made by these programmes to promote projects of EUSAIR interest (through extra evaluation points, special budget allocations, targeted calls etc.),

- f) assess the performance of the EUSAIR governance system and delivery mechanisms at the macroregional level, looking, inter alia, at the operation of the EUSAIR's Governing Board, the degree and the results of inter-Pillar co-ordination, the suitability and efficiency of TSG working processes etc
4. The Evaluation will also assess the performance of the EUSAIR governance system and delivery mechanisms at the macroregional level, looking, inter alia, at the operation of the EUSAIR's Governing Board, the degree and the results of inter-Pillar co-ordination, the suitability and efficiency of TSG working processes etc. Based on all the above, **the Evaluation will present concrete proposals** (a) to the National Co-ordinators of the EUSAIR, relating to adjustments and improvements in the *national* EUSAIR delivery mechanisms and procedures and (b) recommendations and proposals that refer to the *macroregional* level, to be put forward to the EUSAIR Governing Board.

The work delivered by the TSG Experts for Monitoring , ESPON, the OECD or any other institution that has been assigned/contracted will have to be duly used as inputs by the Contractor/Evaluator.