

STARTING POINTS FOR THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF REGIONAL POLICY IN SLOVENIA

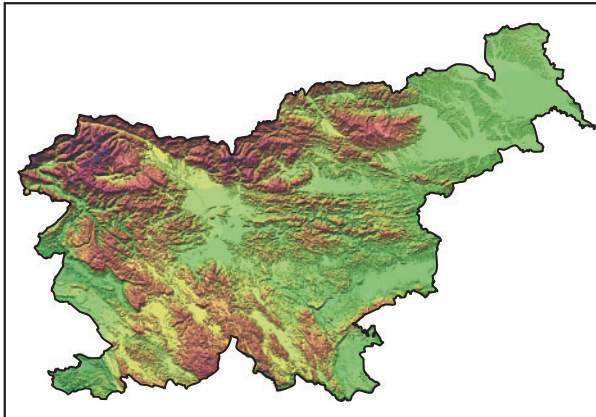
IZHODIŠČA ZA SPREMLJANJE IN VREDNOTENJE REGIONALNE POLITIKE V SLOVENIJI

Janez Nared

Marjan Ravbar



Development wheels? The Babič mill on the Mura River
(photography Milan Klemenčič).
Kolesje razvoja? Babičev mlin na Muri (fotografija Milan Klemenčič).



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Janez Nared
Marjan Ravbar

UDC: 711.2(497.4)
COBISS: 1.01

Abstract

Regional policy represents an important segment of influences on changes to spatial and socioeconomic structures. These influences can be planned or not and can either be useful or even create new disparities. To avoid the latter it is necessary to establish a system of monitoring and evaluating regional policies, which are key factors in guaranteeing the quality and rationality of the implementation of programs that are intended to promote regional development. Monitoring and evaluation provide directions for the correction of programs and at the same time offer starting points for planning new activities. Here they serve their function only if the independence of their implementation is guaranteed and if the mechanisms for their implementation are properly established.

KEY WORDS: regional development, regional policy, monitoring, evaluation, Slovenia.

The editorialsip received this paper for publishing in June 15th 2003.

Addresses:

Janez Nared, B. Sc.

Anton Melik Geographical institute SRC SASA
Gosposka ulica 13
SI – 1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia
Phone: +386 (1) 200 27 16
Fax: +386 (1) 200 27 34
E-mail: Janez.Nared@zrc-sazu.si

Marjan Ravbar, Ph. D.

Anton Melik Geographical institute SRC SASA
Gosposka ulica 13
SI – 1000 Ljubljana
Slovenia
Phone: +386 (1) 200 27 23
Fax: +386 (1) 200 27 34
E-mail: Marjan.Ravbar@zrc-sazu.si

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1 Introduction

Regional policy in Slovenia wishes to become national development policy oriented toward reducing the differences between individual regions in the country. According to its aims, regional policy is therefore a fundamental tool for a long-term and harmonized orientation of development and means an established level of agreement on the basic problems and goals of directing regional development on the national level as well as on the regional and local levels. Together with spatial planning policy, regional policy creates a framework for endeavours toward market economy efficiency, social equity, and ecologically acceptable development. With it, regional policy attempts to establish conditions to enable and encourage economic and social development throughout the country, prevent negative consequences of unbalanced economic investment in the natural and living environment, and harmonize the directions of economic and social development with spatial possibilities or with natural potentials and their regenerative capabilities.

Regional policy represents a very important segment of influences on changes in spatial and socio-economic structures. These influences may either be planned or not; they may be useful or even create new imbalances. To prevent the latter from occurring, a system for the preliminary evaluation of individual development activities/measures, monitoring their effectiveness during the implementation itself, and finally an ex-post evaluation of the instruments used should be established in whose framework we can evaluate the measures taken as well as the regional policy as a whole. An analysis of the goals of regional policies offers us much useful information, which we can use to advantage in the formation of new policies. At the same time, they also confirm the relevance – or irrelevance – of individual instruments of regional policy. So far, regional development documents have shown little acquaintance with either the monitoring and evaluation of individual instruments or indeed of an overall regional policy. This is reflected in the lack of information regarding the implementation of legislation, while an evaluation of the past is not possible at all since numerous necessary facts were not acquired and starting points for evaluation are lacking.

New quality in the field of monitoring and evaluation has been contributed by the currently valid Law on the Stimulation of Harmonious Regional Development, which ranks these two activities among the essential elements of any development endeavours. Monitoring and evaluation are namely important component parts of the development cycle of the policy and important strategic tools for its implementation (Ridder, 2000, p. 70).

The system for monitoring and evaluating regional policy in Slovenia is still being established. A firm theoretical basis must be provided for it, and simultaneously a flexible response to newly arising problems encountered should be made possible. This paper, which wishes to present the fundamental starting points for the implementation of monitoring and evaluation, should contribute to this as well as present its essential phases.

2 Justification for the Necessity of Monitoring Regional Development

From the methodological and theoretical sides, numerous attempts exist at quantitative and qualitative evaluations of the level of the development of spatial and regional development (this also involves the so-called determination of regional disparities) from the economic, social, settlement, infrastructural, and ecological points of view. In practice, however, it is extremely difficult using quantitative or qualitative indicators to determine the dominant level for just a defined or selected group of indicators. Here, the question arises to what extent the dynamics of social development influence the setting of ever-new levels of »margin« values in regional and spatial development. For this reason regional disparities have numerous dimensions and, above all, spatial consequences that must be urgently joined in a uniform and »measurable« concept of the promotion of spatial development.

This paper is an attempt to contribute to the formulation of a system for monitoring the implementation of development policy in the Republic of Slovenia. Indicators are an important part of the system. Among other things, suitably (correctly) selected and grounded indicators ensure the necessary feedback for putting complementary social instruments into force and taking measures either through financial equalization, tax relief, or other stimulative (investment) forms of assistance.

The principal intention of monitoring is to identify all deviations from established goals. Monitoring is accomplished by collecting and analyzing statistical and developmental (structural) data. In this process, relevant indicators are employed that are the means by which we can measure the success of the implementation of the policy. An indicator represents the aggregation of measurements of a defined variable in space (region and/or location) and time. The system of indicators is already of extreme importance in the process of preparation, conducting, and evaluating development activities, which are frequently linked to the preparation of development documents. Here, quantitative as well as qualitative indicators are used, but quantitative indicators take precedence over qualitative indicators. Those indicators must be goal-oriented and in accordance with the planned objectives. The features of good indicators include

1. Measurability – indicators must be expressed in a form that can be measured. Even if the indicators are qualitative, they must be expressed in a measurable way.
2. Availability – indicators must be attainable, relative either to the goal that they are measuring or to the time available for the realization of the set objective.
3. Realistic approach – indicators must be realistically set, which is linked to the setting of the objectives. The objectives should not be set too high, because that would make them unrealistic.
4. Time limitation – like each objective, each indicator must also have a time definition.
5. Clarity – indicators must be clearly defined; their interpretation should be simple, with the possibility of showing trends.
6. Reliability – measurements of indicators must be reliable.

Indicators must also reflect the following specific requirements:

- (1) Suitability relative to the policy or strategy of the public sector department:
 - Clarity of links between the indicator and the purposes and/or objectives and/or guidelines of the policy or strategy;
 - Representativeness of the indicator relative to one or more elements of the policy or strategy;
 - Suitability of the system of indicators for establishing priorities of activity for implementing a strategy;
 - Specificity – the selected indicator must match the intention for which it was selected.
- (2) Analytical soundness:
 - The indicator must be theoretically well based in technical and scientific terms;
 - The indicator must be grounded in the methodology of carrying out the policy or strategy, above all in its concept;
 - The possibility of using a suitable alternative methodology should be checked, if the methodology for carrying out the policy or strategy, or its concept, is inadequate.
- (3) Accessibility of data:
 - Support of indicator with the necessary data that is available relative to a suitable level of territorial division;
 - Establishment of a time frame for the acquisition of suitable data, if it is not available at the moment.

Monitoring is thus a continuous process of regularly acquiring data on funds, output, results, and impacts of the implementation of a program or project in accordance with previously set objectives. It is an integral part of the efficient and successful management of programs and projects. Monitoring is done by collecting and analyzing financial and physical data, some of which is statistical and other data acquired during the carrying out of the projects from those responsible for the implementation.

From the viewpoint of preparing a system of indicators, the monitoring is most important. The system of monitoring is organized in accordance with the logic of programming, but in the opposite direction. It is a »bottom-up approach,« that is, from the project upwards.

Monitoring is based on a sequence: activity (program operations) → output → result → impact. Overall, harmony is necessary between individual levels, on the basis of the following connections:

- Linkage »upwards«: specific objectives of a higher level represent the general objective of the lower level and the results (priorities) on the higher level represent specific objectives on the lower level;
- Linkage »downwards«: specific goals on the lower level represent part of the results (realization of the set priorities) on the higher level, and the general objective on the lower level helps achieve specific objectives on the higher level.

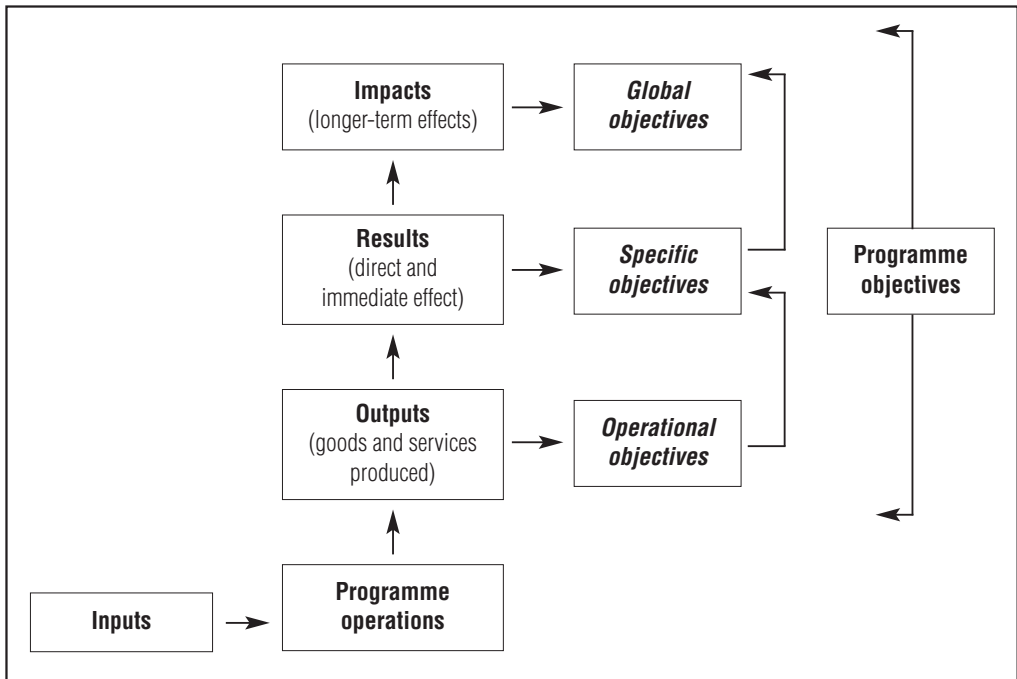


Figure 1: Conceptual logic of programming (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: An indicative methodology, 2000, p. 6).

Of course, the system of monitoring has limitations (Table 1), and there is therefore no uniform recipe for its establishment. This must be adapted to activities and existing practices in the individual country. Doing so in Slovenia, we have problems since we previously were unfamiliar with monitoring activities financed from public funds and even less familiar with evaluating the effects. Even though the Law on Public Finances and the Decree on the Basis and Procedures for Preparing the Draft Proposals for the National Budget require programming, financing, and monitoring, they do not require evaluation. Therefore, in Slovenia we have no experience either in the selection of indicators for monitoring and evaluation or with collecting and processing the data. This is particularly true of physical indicators. It is also a fact that in the European Union, in the framework of structural policy, greater emphasis was placed on physical indicators only in the last 2000–2006 program period.

Program indicators refer to activities within a program. With them, we try to monitor and evaluate direct and indirect consequences of an individual development program. We distinguish four kinds of program indicators:

- Resource or input indicators: these represent a sum of resources invested (financial, human, material, and other) in the implementation of a specific program;
- Output indicators: these indicate the product of a specific development activity.

Table 1: Typical strengths and weaknesses of sources of existing information.

Source of information	Strengths	Weaknesses
Monitoring systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produced at frequent intervals • Relatively up to date • Generally readily available • Significance is usually apparent • Relatively low cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes unreliable statements • Rarely available for all measures/actions • Data on physical outputs and results of various components not easily aggregated • Not easily comparable
Permanent statistical surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost • Reliability • Richness • Comparability • Ease with which information is obtained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often not directly linked to evaluation criteria • Geographical level not always suitable • Information not up to date
Other research and evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost • Data already analyzed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information not up to date • Often too restricted to provide a reliable answer or one that can be generalized

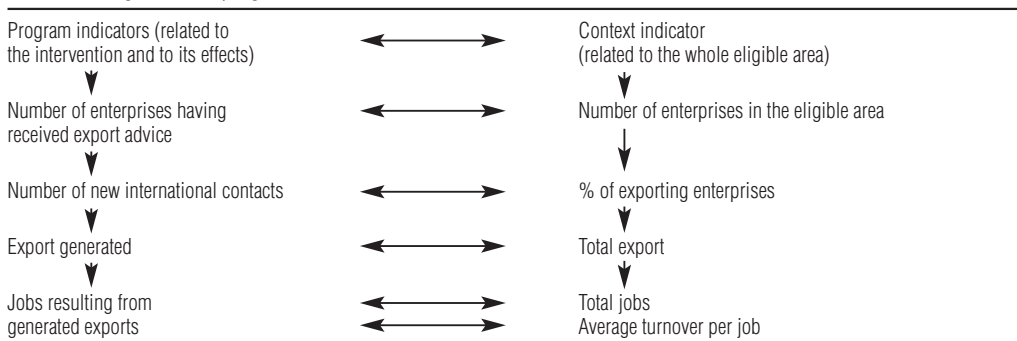
(Evaluating socioeconomic programmes: MEANS Collection vol. 5: Transversal evaluation of impacts on the environment, employment and other intervention priorities. EC, 1999, p. 21).

- Result indicators that represent direct and immediate effects of the activities performed on the recipient of the resources – they provide information about changes (in knowledge, abilities, readiness) of direct users (rightful claimants);
- Impact indicators that refer to consequences exceeding the immediate impact on direct users. There are two types of such indicators: specific impacts that occur after a lapse of a specified time and are directly linked to the activities performed and general impacts that concern a wider population over a longer period. The measurement of such impacts is complex, and we find direct connections only with difficulty (Ridder, 2000, p. 74).

Indicators of output, results, and impact are called performance indicators. Features of good indicators include the following:

- A variable representing the basis of individual indicator must be as closely connected with the activity measured as possible;
- A selected variable must »react« to individual development activity, which is possible mostly with output indicators and result indicators;
- The baseline data and target values for indicators should be set at the start;
- The target values of indicators must be realistic;
- The indicator must be clearly set.

Table 2: Linkage between program indicators and context indicators.



(Evaluating socioeconomic programmes: MEANS Collection vol. 2: Selection and use of indicators for monitoring and evaluation, 1999, p. 28).

Since program documents as a rule contain numerous measures, their mutual comparability is very difficult. Therefore core indicators must be defined. These are used to compare similar measures and programs. These are simple indicators that are easy to measure and also to monitor over a longer period of time. It is sometimes also possible to combine them on a higher level. Since development documents follow certain priorities, core indicators often reflect these priorities (for example employment¹). The number of core indicators should not be too high, and core indicators can also be output, result, or impact indicators.²

To prevent the entire complex of indicators, due to their large number, from becoming a hindrance to the monitoring and evaluation of regional development programs, it is only reasonable to form as narrow a selection of indicators as possible, which should, if possible, in a complex fashion mark the majority of the selected objectives. Here, we must emphasize that the problems in the use of indicators are caused not only by their large number but also by a series of other problems related to the use of indicators:

- It is difficult to establish a direct causal connection between indicators and real conditions and the activities performed;
- The complexity of methods of measuring can be problematic as well – problems are especially great with impact indicators where impacts are the reflection of many different measures, which makes it almost impossible to attribute credit to an individual measure;
- At the fundamental levels of evaluation (ex-ante, mid-term, ex-post), data is not available;
- Problems occur in combining individual indicators – this is especially evident in the aggregation of physical indicators at the level of priorities and programs;
- It is necessary to bear in mind that unexpected consequences also occur that cannot be covered by indicators (Indicators ..., 2000, p. 22).

To ensure effective monitoring, output indicators are necessary for all or for at least the majority of measures. Result and impact indicators can be collected more selectively because they are often quite impossible to collect regularly. In this case, they are collected only for the ex-post evaluation (*ibid.*).

3 Starting Points for the Evaluation of Regional Development

The uniform European structural policy is based on six principles: (1) concentration of assistance, (2) coordination of various development activities, (3) partnership, (4) subsidiarity in regional assistance, (5) programming of regional development, and (6) additionality (of aid). The European Commission is paying increasing attention to monitoring and evaluation of regional development activities so that these basic principles are brought into effect as best as possible in practice and to ensure the prudent use of funds. Here they are not limited merely to financial monitoring but place increasing stress on physical objectives, that is, the impact of activities performed on the spatial and socioeconomic structures of the population and the economy.

With this aim, the Commission is striving for the formation of common guidelines that will act as a foundation for evaluating assistance in all member countries that receive support from structural funds. On this basis, monitoring bodies should be established in all regions sharing support, and ex-ante, mid-term, and ex-post evaluations should be made. In order to unify the systems of evaluation as much as possible, the MEANS research program was established, whose aim is to formulate uniform methods of evaluation and to improve the quality of the techniques used (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000).

The evaluation of regional policy is therefore a continuous and interactive process, which on one hand enables the deliberate planning of activities, and on the other, their adaptation to newly arising conditions and changing needs. As such, it is a part of the development cycle of regional policies and can be

¹ An often used core indicator is the net number of new jobs as a result of a specific activity.

² Encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) is frequently one of the priorities of development programs. Thus the proportion of SME's included in a specific measure is a key output indicator, the percentage of additional private investment as a consequence of a measure is a key result indicator, and the proportion of surviving companies after eighteen months is a key influence indicator.

used as an instrument for the improvement of policies on the basis of the combination of past experience and new development opportunities (Ridder, 2000).

The concept of evaluation itself is usually based on the structure of the (regional) development program, which in its defining of urgently needed development tasks originates in the perceived problems of a specific regional community. On the basis of key problems of a regional community, it is necessary to establish detailed quantified objectives, and on this basis, if possible, a strategy to achieve these objectives should be prepared.

Programming is normally developed through the interchange of two principles:

- from the top down, where we proceed from global objectives to which we subordinate a larger number of specific objectives that we attempt to achieve through individual measures, and
- from the bottom up, where the measures are carried out with the help of numerous institutions employing various financial, human, technical, and organizational means and resources (inputs). On the basis of such inputs, a set of outputs develops that show the progress in implementing the measures. The immediate and direct effect of a measure applied on a concrete user of these means is represented by the results, while the final effects of the measure can be defined as impacts, which means the impacts on the global objectives of the project. They serve as the basis for evaluating whether a certain program is successful or not. Among the impacts, we can differentiate specific impacts (in individual fields) or global impacts (Indicators ..., 2000).

In accordance with this, we can establish various levels of objectives in the framework of programs:

- Operational objectives (expressed in outputs);
- Specific objectives (expressed in results), and
- Global objectives (expressed in impacts) (*ibid.*).

Impacts and results can be defined on all levels of programming, while outputs can be only defined on the level of measures. Individual indicators of output can be summed up on the level of priority³ and program (*ibid.*).

As mentioned above, the objectives and the indicators linked to them referring to programs, priorities, and measures should be, if possible, numerically expressed, since otherwise it is very difficult to measure the extent to which they have been realized. Their establishment is only possible on the basis of the baseline data, which simultaneously provides the necessary starting point for any evaluation of the programs.

The realization of objectives can be achieved through numerous activities that we precisely define and financially evaluate in the development program. Here, it is necessary to know whether the course established to achieve a objective is the only one or the most effective one and what the costs are of this course in comparison with the alternatives. In this sense, it is also necessary to study the effects that each individual set measure would have and on this basis choose the most appropriate measures (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000).

Programs designed this way and their implementation are subject to monitoring and evaluation. Both are carried out on the basis of indicators that directly reflect the changes in individual set objectives. In the evaluation of individual programs, greater attention must be paid particularly to the relevance of the program, which tells us to what extent the set objectives are a reflection of the needs and priorities on the European, national, and regional levels, the efficiency of the program, which indicates financial success in the sense of the ratio between cost and profit or how the inputs transform into outputs, the effectiveness of the program, which shows how successful the program is in achieving the set objectives, and the utility of the program – what is the impact of the program on the target group or population in relation to their needs and the sustainability of the program, where we analyze how long we can expect the effects of the activities performed to last (Indicators ..., 2000).

³ Development programs are divided into individual complexes of tasks according to the principle of program – priority – measure.

In evaluating the results of regional development, the main emphasis must be placed on efficiency and effectiveness, because these two indicators are suitable for a cross-section of conditions on any level of the performed activities. At the same time, they offer useful information to administrators of the program and its evaluators in the formation of even better program decisions (*ibid.*).

The examination of efficiency poses two questions: can the same result be achieved with fewer inputs and can more objectives be achieved with the same amount of means. On the other hand, the examination of effectiveness is oriented primarily toward monitoring expected outputs, while lesser emphasis is placed on potential unexpected positive or negative effects (*ibid.*).

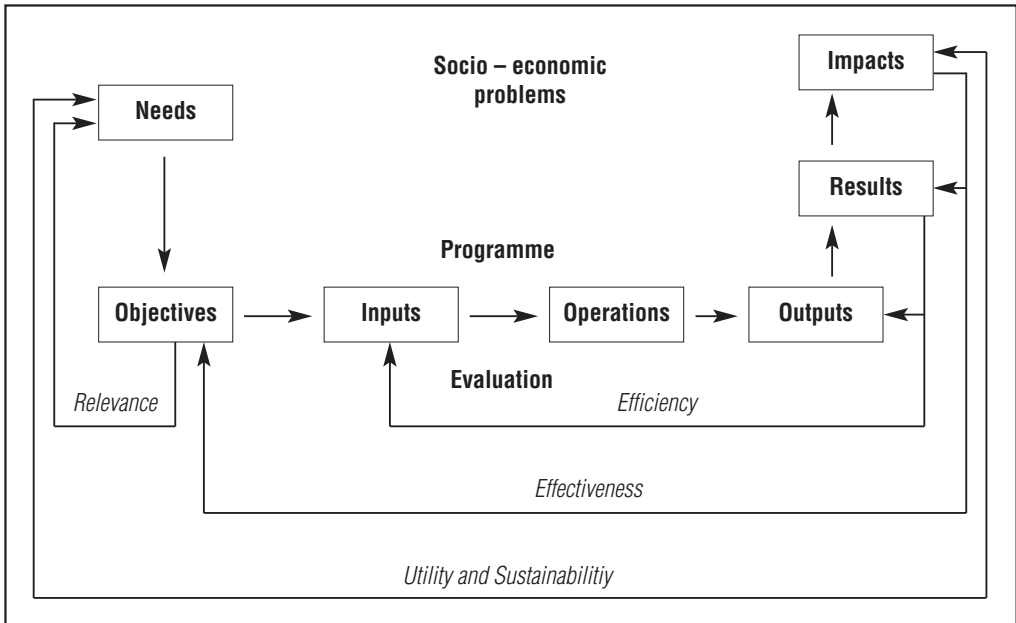


Figure 2: Key evaluation issues. (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: An indicative methodology. The New Programming period 2000–2006: methodological working papers. Working paper 3. European Commission, Directorate-General XVI, Regional Policy and Cohesion, Co-ordination and evaluation of operations, Brussels, 2000, p. 9).

Evaluation must also answer numerous other questions related to the implementation of a regional development policy:

- What is a regional policy expected to achieve?
- What effects should a regional policy have and by what methods should these outputs be measured?
- What instruments are most effective for achieving the objectives of a regional policy?
- Does past experience offer any information on which instruments of regional policy are efficient or effective? (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000, p. 363.)

Evaluation of the advancement of regional development can be implemented with the help of two fundamental principles. The »top-down« principle is based on broader analyses and studies of the entire region where support is provided. Here, various »input-output« analyses are performed, as well as analyses of spatial and socioeconomic structures. On the other hand, »bottom-up« evaluation is also possible based on studies of the outputs of the support provided to individual recipient. Since each of these principles has its own advantages and weaknesses, a supplementary combination of the two principles is the best for an objective and complex evaluation.

Table 3: Methods of evaluation.

	»Top-down« evaluation	»Bottom-up« evaluation
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates broader effects of projects, including the »spill-over« effect; • Easier acquisition of data (mostly from public statistic sources); • Generalization is possible; • Possibility of supervision from the »distance«; • Clearly defined indicators; • Relatively easy processing of data, which is universal for all regions; • Mutual comparability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of direct effects of individual projects; • Offers precise data on the outputs, which can be aggregated (as well as interpreted) in different ways; • Aggregation to individual fields is possible.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient »tracking« of individual projects (measures); • It is impossible to eliminate effects of individual programs, measures or projects; • Expensive system, in case we decide to get corresponding and matching, as well as detailed data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not indicate »spill-over« effects; • It is not possible to track results and impacts; • The majority of the data is hard to access; • Possibilities of manipulation of data (from the side of the beneficiaries of the funds); • Beneficiaries exaggerate outputs in their desire to acquire further funds; • Difficult processing of data.

4 Problems in Establishing a System for Evaluating the Effects of Regional Development

In establishing a system of evaluation, as well as in the evaluation itself, we encounter numerous problems. These usually originate from objectives set too loosely and difficulties in acquiring quality data. Another major problem is that while programming, the authors of development plans do not keep the fundamental principles of monitoring and evaluation in mind, which can result in numerous deficiencies in defining the objectives as well as in the selection of indicators for tracking individual objectives.

Many problems also originate in the structure of regional programs themselves. They have numerous objectives that are quite diverse in their content and usually have a large number of organizations with their own priorities included in the implementation of the programs. This very much complicates monitoring as well as evaluation because we find it difficult to monitor such an extensive number of indicators, which are usually very specific on the level of the project. Furthermore, a large number of instruments, over which we quickly lose control, are used to achieve the objectives of an individual program, which also fosters poorer knowledge of the effectiveness of individual instruments.

It is also difficult to determine to what degree the detected changes in the objective field are the actual consequence of the implementation of the program and to what extent they are the consequence of numerous other factors.

Many problems are caused by the collection or acquisition of reliable data, which is especially evident for data whose source is not public. On one hand, such data is difficult to obtain, and on the other, it is unreliable and at the same time potentially susceptible to manipulation. This is particularly the consequence of the fact that this data is collected and managed largely by the final beneficiaries of the funds. In their wish to keep the support, they can be misleading in their answers relating to the success of the instruments of regional policy.

Specific problems also occur with data from public databases. Such data is often published after a lapse of time, which renders impossible the use of the latest data corresponding to actual conditions in the field in our evaluation.

Also important is the way of interpreting the available data. Many times we are satisfied with the achieved quantitative objective and are less interested in the quality achieved. This is clearly evident in the example of employment, where it is vitally necessary to monitor »gross« as well as »net« new jobs. We must monitor those that are a direct consequence of the measures, for example, in financed small and medium-size enterprises, as well as those that are an indirect consequence such as new jobs that are the consequence of investments in the infrastructure. Net jobs also consider how many work places would have been created without the intervention and how many jobs were created only by transferring workers from one company to another (for example, due to a lesser ability to compete, a job is closed in a related local company) (Indicators ..., 2000). It is also necessary to know the quality of the jobs created, who takes them, how long these jobs are going to last, and whether they are full-time or part-time jobs (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000, p. 397).

There are also numerous cases where individual objectives cannot be quantified. In such cases, the objective can be assigned a range or defined qualitatively. In both cases we set the objectives, if possible, in more detail later (Indicators ..., 2000, p. 14). In evaluation, the peculiarities of individual local areas must be taken into consideration since relative to structure they respond to the offered and used help in different ways (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000, p. 398).

Measuring some effects is not possible at all because of their specific character (for example, quality of life, social climate, ...) (*ibid.*).

All these stated obstacles direct us to employ methods that are simple to use and at the same provide relatively reliable results. Here, we must focus on the clearly set components of the programs.

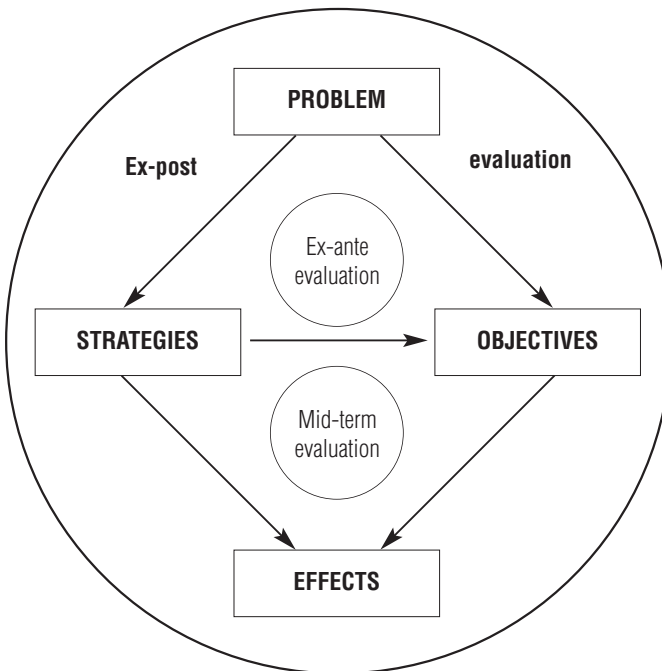


Figure 3: Linkage of evaluation with elements of the development program.

5 Ex-Ante Evaluation

Ex-ante evaluation is an interactive process that produces expert assessments of planned programs or policies and recommendations for their improvement. Its principal objective is to improve the quality of a plan or program in the preparation stage (The Ex-Ante Evaluation ..., 2000). To this end, close cooperation between the people preparing the program and evaluation experts is imperative, which consequentially leads to the integration of evaluation in the program itself.

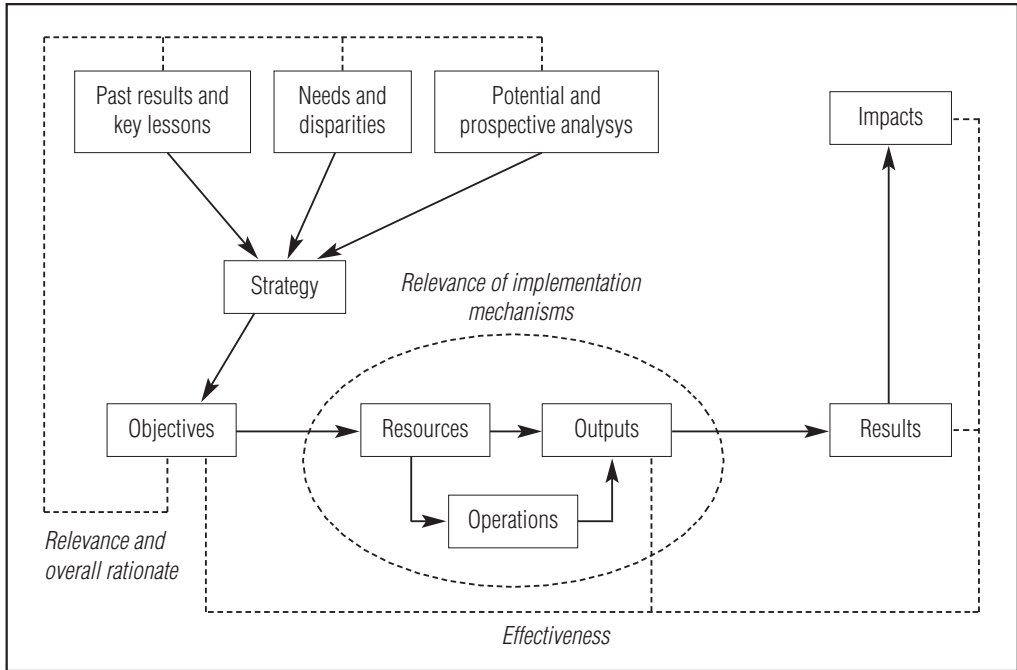


Figure 4: Key components of ex-ante evaluation. (The Ex-Ante Evaluation of the Structural Funds interventions. The New Programming period 2000–2006 methodological working papers. Working paper 2. European Commission, Directorate-General XVI, Regional Policy and Cohesion, Co-ordination and evaluation of operations, Brussels, p. 6).

Ex-ante evaluation comprises a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, a prior assessment of the congruence between the strategy and the selected objectives that offer an answer to major development obstacles, and analyses of the anticipated impacts of the planned activities. In the framework of the ex-ante evaluation, great emphasis must be placed on the anticipated impact on the horizontal objectives of the European Union, for example, the situation in the field of competition, the small and medium-size enterprises, employment and the labour market, and the impact on the development of the information society, on the environment, and on equal opportunities for both sexes.

In the framework of the ex-ante evaluation, the attention of evaluators is oriented toward studying numerous factors that indicate to what extent the program or plan corresponds to actual conditions. Here, we must extrapolate from past experience, which offers us a solid starting point for the evaluation of individual activities and objectives. We must also thoroughly study the socioeconomic conditions of the given region since they indicate the needs and opportunities of the treated region; simultaneously, our knowledge of these allows us to assess the planned strategies and selected action priorities and their interior and exterior consistency. Major emphasis should also be placed on the quantification of the objectives

and, in connection with them, on the anticipated socioeconomic impacts. Special attention should also be devoted to the implementation of the system itself.

On the basis of the above, we can precisely define the objectives of an ex-ante evaluation:

- to determine whether a set plan or program is a suitable means for solving the problems plaguing a region or sector;
- to judge whether a plan or program has well defined priorities and objectives, their relevance, and whether these objectives are achievable;
- to help with the quantification of the objectives and to establish the bases for monitoring and further evaluation;
- to examine the suitability of the set implementation and monitoring and to participate in formulating the criteria for the selection of the projects;
- to determine what the possibilities for the success of the planned activities are;
- to judge whether the anticipated results are such as to justify the use of public funds and whether the same objectives can be achieved with a smaller use of funds (The Ex-Ante Evaluation ..., 2000; Armstrong and Taylor, 2000).

The ex-ante evaluation with its instructions represents an important contribution to the quality of the set program and at the same time provides the necessary starting point for all further evaluations. For these reasons, it is necessary to pay great attention to ex-ante evaluation and to give its output suitable weight.

6 Mid-term Evaluation

The mid term evaluation is intended to check the progress of the implementation and the suitability of the set system of monitoring. From this viewpoint, it is a means to improve the quality and suitability of the programming. It ensures the possibility of preparing necessary improvements and corrections in the event we establish that they are necessary to achieve the set objectives. At the same time, it also allows the review and upgrading of the established system of indicators for performance reserve as a part of all of the indicators of the program.

Mid-term evaluation devotes attention primarily to the operative level where its basic tasks are:

- to assess to what a degree the SWOT analysis is still valid;
- to assess whether the set forms of support are still the appropriate means for achieving the set objectives or eliminating the problems in the region or the sector;
- to examine whether the strategies, priorities, and objectives are still coherent and to what extent they have approached the set objectives in the period of implementing the program and to what extent these objectives can be achieved;
- to assess the suitability of the quantified objectives from the viewpoint of making possible their monitoring and evaluation;
- to assess to what extent horizontal priorities (equal opportunities for both sexes, environment) have been included in the forms of support;
- to determine the suitability of the implementation and planned monitoring;
- to present the results of the monitoring relative to indicators for evaluating the performance reserve (The Mid-Term Evaluation ..., 2000).

On one hand, these tasks point to the suitability of the strategy of the program, and on the other, to the principal object of the performed evaluation, that is, an assessment of the quality of the implementation judged on the basis of relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness.

In accordance with European regulations, a mid-term evaluation is carried out by an independent assessor under the auspices of an Managing Authority in cooperation with the Commission and the member-country. A mid-term evaluation is lead by a special group of the Monitoring Commity, which forms the basic directions for its implementation, chooses assessors, guides the implementation of the evaluation, and provides a commentary on the resulting report. It is desirable that outside experts also work in this group.

Evaluation is performed by an independent assessor, meaning independent in relation to those responsible for leading and implementing the program. The attention of the evaluator is oriented primarily toward analyzing the results of ex-ante evaluations, checking of the validity of the SWOT analysis from the ex-ante evaluation, and assessing the continuing relevance and consistency of the strategy, the quantification of the objectives, the efficiency and effectiveness, and the quality of the implementation and the established system of monitoring.

7 Ex-Post Evaluation

The Ex-Post evaluation rounds off the implementation of the program and assesses the entire program in the light of its contributions to the spatial and socioeconomic structure. Its intention is to establish the use of resources and to report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the interventions and on the extent to which the anticipated objectives were achieved. It focuses on the factors of success or lack of success and on the duration of the results and impacts. It also attempts to draw the principle conclusions that can be generalized and transferred to other programs and regions. In the implementation of the Ex-Post evaluation, it is necessary to study the unexpected outputs – both positive and negative – along with the effects anticipated in advance (Evaluation design ..., 1999).

The primary approach in the Ex-Post evaluation is to establish the ratio between the funds used and the benefits acquired, which serves for assessing the expedient use of public funds, and if we focus on individual instruments, to judge their effectiveness and suitability. Here, we must be very careful since individual instruments can achieve different results in different environments due to local peculiarities just as they do in different fields.

It would be ideal to have the Ex-post evaluation available before planning subsequent programs; however, due to the nature of interventions this is not possible since the individual impacts of implementation activities only begin to appear after a longer period. Also, evaluation itself is a long-term process since it must be very widely set in order to encompass all the possible impacts.

8 Conclusion

Monitoring and evaluation are therefore key factors in ensuring the qualitative and prudent implementation of programs in the promotion of regional development. They provide guidelines for the correction of programs and simultaneously offer starting points for programming new development activities. Here, they perform their function only if the independence of their implementation is guaranteed and if the mechanisms for their implementation are set in a qualitative way.

In Slovenia, a system of monitoring and evaluation is still being established. Here, we are starting from the specific needs of Slovenia's regional policy and, of course, from the numerous recommendations made by the European Commission based on the experience of those countries where a system of monitoring and evaluation has been established for a longer period.

The system of monitoring established by the Agency for Regional Development of the Republic of Slovenia is a bold one and should enable the monitoring of not only regional but also all developmental support and programs. This is desirable from the viewpoint of the use of budgetary funds, but the fear exists that individual department of ministries will not cooperate actively in this demanding and complexly planned project.

Relative to the monitoring of regional development programs, the system or its requirements must be adapted to the available financial means. It is absurd to plan a very complex and expensive monitoring and evaluation system if the amounts devoted to regional development are low. The too detailed selection of indicators for monitoring (mainly in the initial phase) is also under great scrutiny. Here, we should start from already available statistical data since any additional data collection would only make the system much more expensive and complicated. From this viewpoint, closely monitoring the output of individual projects is the most sensible course, while results and impacts should be monitored only through a limited and carefully selected choice of indicators.

In Slovenia, regional and local peculiarities must be considered in implementing the monitoring and the evaluation process. These peculiarities can quickly lead to different outputs for individual instruments or activities. In the same way, general global conditions must be encompassed since involvement in global streams at one time encourages and at another hinders development activities.

In any case, monitoring and embryonic evaluation have already begun in Slovenia. Their quality will increase with experience and training of those involved in the system. We can only hope that the monitoring and evaluation will justify our expectations and bring a more enviable quality to Slovenia's regional policy.

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Izhodišča za spremljanje in vrednotenje regionalne politike v Sloveniji

Janez Nared
Marjan Ravbar

UDK: 711.2(497.4)
COBISS: 1.01

Izvleček

Regionalna politika predstavlja pomemben segment vplivov na spremembe prostorskih in socialnoekonomskih struktur. Ti vplivi so lahko načrtovani ali pa tudi ne, bodisi so koristni ali pa ustvarjajo celo nova neravnovesja. Da bi slednja preprečili, je treba vzpostaviti sistema spremljanja in vrednotenja regionalne politike, ki sta ključna dejavnika pri zagotavljanju kakovostnega in preudarnega izvajanja programov, ki so namenjeni pospeševanju regionalnega razvoja. Dajeta namreč smernice za korekcijo programov, obenem pa nudita tudi izhodišča za načrtovanje novih aktivnosti. Pri tem svojo funkcijo opravljata le, če je zagotovljena neodvisnost njunega izvajanja in če so mehanizmi za njuno izvedbo kvalitetno zastavljeni.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: regionalni razvoj, regionalna politika, spremljanje, vrednotenje, Slovenija.

Prispevek je prispel v uredništvo 15. junija 2003.

Naslova:

Janez Nared

Geografski inštitut Antona Melika ZRC SAZU
Gosposka ulica 13
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenija
telefon: +386 (1) 200 27 16
faks: +386 (1) 200 27 34
el. pošta: Janez.Nared@zrc-sazu.si

Marjan Ravbar, dr.

Geografski inštitut Antona Melika ZRC SAZU
Gosposka ulica 13
1000 Ljubljana
Slovenija
telefon: +386 (1) 200 27 23
faks: +386 (1) 200 27 34
el. pošta: Marjan.Ravbar@zrc-sazu.si

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1 Uvod

Regionalna politika Slovenije želi postati nacionalna razvojna politika in teži k zmanjševanju razlik med posameznimi območji v državi. Regionalna politika je torej, po svojem namenu, temeljno orodje za dolgoročno in usklajeno usmerjanje razvoja ter pomeni doseženo stopnjo soglasja o temeljnih problemih in ciljnih usmerjanja regionalnega razvoja na državni ravni, pa tudi na pokrajinskih in lokalnih ravneh. Regionalna politika tvori skupaj s prostorsko politiko okvir prizadevanjem za tržno gospodarsko učinkovitost, socialno pravičnost in ekološko sprejemljivost razvoja. Z njo poskuša vzpostaviti pogoje, omogočiti ter vzpodbuditi gospodarski in socialni razvoj na celotnem območju države, preprečiti negativne posledice neusklajenih gospodarskih investicij na naravno in bivalno okolje ter uskladiti usmeritve gospodarskega in socialnega razvoja s prostorskimi možnostmi oziroma z naravnimi potenciali in njihovo regenerativno sposobnostjo.

Regionalna politika predstavlja zelo pomemben segment vplivov na spremembe prostorskih in socialno-ekonomskih struktur. Ti vplivi so lahko načrtovani ali pa tudi ne, bodisi so koristni ali pa ustvarjajo celo nova neravnovesja. Da bi slednja preprečili, je treba vzpostaviti sistem predhodnega vrednotenja posameznih razvojnih aktivnosti/ukrepov, spremljanje njihove učinkovitosti med samim izvajanjem in na koncu še zaključno vrednotenje uporabljenih instrumentov, v okviru katerega ovrednotimo izvedene ukrepe, kakor tudi regionalno politiko kot celoto. Analiza ciljev regionalne politike nam nudi veliko koristnih informacij, ki jih lahko s pridom uporabimo pri oblikovanju novih politik, obenem pa tudi potrjujejo (ne)smiselnost posameznih instrumentov regionalne politike.

Dosedanji regionalno-razvojni dokumenti spremljanja in vrednotenja posameznih instrumentov, kakor tudi celotne regionalne politike, niso poznali. To se odraža v pomanjkanju informacij v zvezi z izvajanjem zakonov, onemogočeno pa je tudi vrednotenje za nazaj, saj številni potrebni podatki niso bili zagotovljeni, manjkajo pa tudi izhodišča za vrednotenje.

Novo kvaliteto na področju spremljanja in vrednotenja prinaša sedaj veljavni zakon o pospeševanju skladnega regionalnega razvoja, saj ta omenjeni aktivnosti uvršča med nujne sestavine vsakršnih razvojnih prizadevanj. Spremljanje in vrednotenje sta namreč pomembna sestavna dela razvojnega cikla politike in pomembni strateški orodji za njeno implementacijo (Ridder, 2000, str. 70).

Sistem spremljanja in vrednotenja regionalne politike v Sloveniji se še vzpostavlja. Zagotoviti mu je treba čvrste teoretične podlage, obenem pa mu omogočati fleksibilno odzivanje na novo nastale probleme, s katerimi se bo srečeval. K temu naj bi doprinesel tudi pričujoči prispevek, ki želi predstaviti temeljna izhodišča za izvajanje spremljanja in vrednotenja, kot tudi predstaviti njune bistvene faze.

2 Utemeljitev potrebnosti spremljanja regionalnega razvoja

Z metodološke in teoretske plati obstajajo številni poskusi kvantitativnih in kvalitativnih izpeljav vrednotenja stopnje razvitosti prostorskega in regionalnega razvoja (gre tudi za tako imenovano ugotavljanje regionalnih disparitet) bodisi z ekonomske, socialne, nasebinske, infrastrukturne ali ekološke plati... S praktične plati pa je izjemno težko s kvantitativnimi ali kvalitativnimi kazalniki določiti dominantno stopnjo le določeni – izbrani skupini kazalnikov. Pri tem se postavlja tudi vprašanje, koliko dinamika družbenega razvoja vpliva na določanje vedno novih stopenj »mejnih« vrednosti v regionalnem in prostorskem razvoju. Prav zato imajo regionalne disparitete številne dimenzije in predvsem prostorske posledice, ki jih je nujno potrebno povezati v enoten in »merljiv« koncept pospeševanja prostorskega razvoja.

Pričujoči prispevek poskuša prispevati k oblikovanju sistema spremljanja izvajanja razvojne politike v Republiki Sloveniji. Pomemben del tega sistema so indikatorji. Ustrezno (pravilno) izbrani in utemeljeni kazalniki med drugim zagotavljajo potrebno sporočilnost za uveljavitev komplementarnih družbenih instrumentov in ukrepanja bodisi s finančnimi izravnavami ali davčnimi olajšavami, bodisi z drugimi, spodbujevalnimi (investicijskimi) oblikami pomoči.

Poglavitni namen spremljanja je zaznava vseh odstopanj od zastavljenih ciljev. Spremljanje se izvaja s pomočjo zbiranja in analiziranja statističnih in razvojnih (strukturnih) podatkov. Pri tem se uporabljajo ustrezni kazalniki (indikatorji), ki so sredstvo, s pomočjo katerega merimo uspešnost izvajanja politike. Kazalnik predstavlja skupek meritev določene spremenljivke v prostoru (pokrajini in/ali lokaciji) ter času. Sistem kazalnikov je izredno pomemben že v procesu priprave, vodenja in vrednotenja razvojnih aktivnosti, ki so pogosto povezane s pripravo razvojnih dokumentov. Pri tem se uporabljajo tako kvantitativni, kakor tudi kvalitativni kazalniki, vendar imajo kvantitativni kazalniki prednost pred kvalitativnimi. Ti kazalniki morajo biti ciljno naravnani in v skladu z načrtovanimi cilji. Značilnosti dobrega kazalnika so:

1. Merljivost – kazalniki morajo biti taki, da jih lahko merimo. Tudi če so kazalniki kvalitativni, jih je treba izraziti na merljiv način;
2. Dosegljivost – kazalniki morajo biti dosegljivi bodisi glede na cilj, ki ga merijo, bodisi glede na čas, ki je na voljo za uresničitev postavljenega cilja;
3. Realističnost – kazalnik mora biti postavljen realistično, kar je povezano s postavitvijo ciljev. Le-ti ne smejo biti previsoki, ker so potem nerealni;
4. Časovno omejenost – tako kot vsak cilj, mora imeti tudi vsak kazalnik časovno opredelitev;
5. Jasnost – kazalnik mora biti jasno definiran, njegova interpretacija lahka, z možnostjo prikaza teženj;
6. Zanesljivost – merjenje kazalnika mora biti zanesljivo.

Kazalniki morajo izražati še naslednje specifične zahteve:

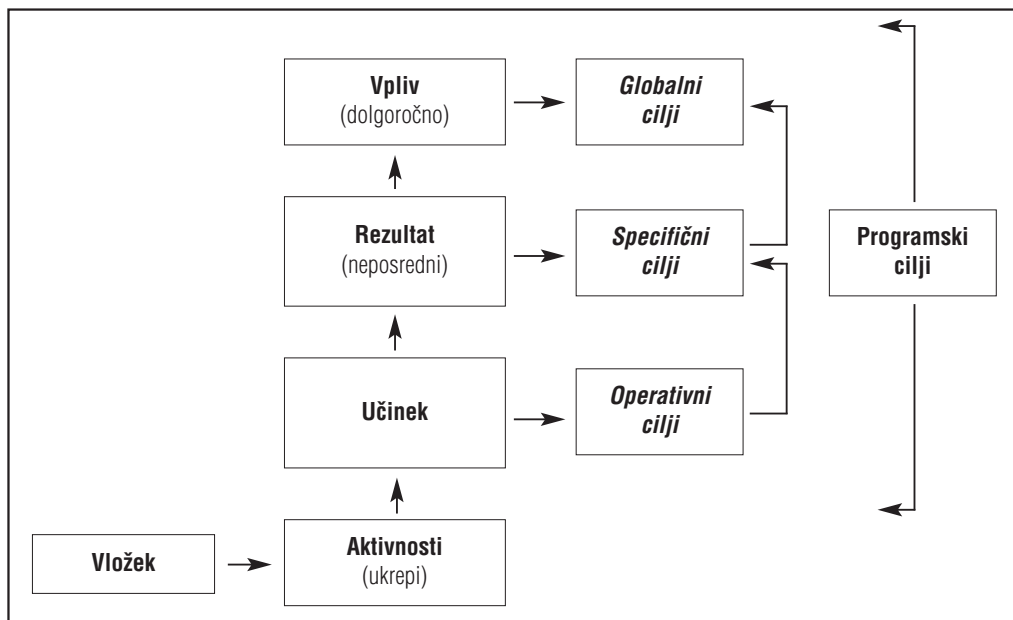
- (1) Ustreznost glede na politiko oziroma strategijo javnega sektorja – resorja:
 - jasnost povezave med indikatorjem in smotri in/ali cilji in/ali smernicami politike oziroma strategije;
 - reprezentativnost kazalnika glede na enega ali več elementov politike oziroma strategije;
 - primernost sistema kazalnikov za izpostavitve prioritete aktivnosti izvajanja strategije;
 - specifičnost – izbran kazalnik mora ustrezati namenu za katerega je izbran.
- (2) Analitična trdnost:
 - dobra teoretična osnovanost kazalnika v tehničnem in znanstvenem izrazu;
 - utemeljenost indikatorja v metodologiji izdelave politike oziroma strategije, predvsem pa njenem konceptu;
 - preveritev možnosti uporabe druge ustrezne metodologije v kolikor je metodologija izdelave politike oziroma strategije ali njenega koncepta pomanjkljiva.
- (3) Dostopnost podatkov:
 - podpora indikatorja z želenimi podatki, ki so na voljo glede na ustrezno raven teritorialne členitve;
 - izpostavitve časovnega okvira pridobitve ustreznega podatka, v kolikor ta ni trenutno na voljo.

Spremljanje (monitoring) je torej stalni proces rednega zbiranja podatkov o sredstvih, učinkih (output), rezultatih in vplivih izvajanja programa ali projekta v skladu z vnaprej postavljenimi cilji. Je integralen del učinkovitega in uspešnega upravljanja s programi in projekti. Spremljanje se izvaja s pomočjo zbiranja in analiziranja finančnih in fizičnih podatkov, od katerih so nekateri statistični, druge pa dobimo s pomočjo izvajanja projektov od tistih, ki so za izvajanje odgovorni.

Z vidika priprave sistema kazalnikov je pomembno predvsem spremljanje. Sistem spremljanja je organiziran v skladu z logiko programiranja, vendar v obratni smeri. Gre za pristop od spodaj (»bottom up approach«), torej od projekta navzgor.

Spremljanje temelji na sosledju: aktivnost → učinek (output) → rezultat → vpliv. V celoti je potrebna skladnost med posameznimi ravnmi, in sicer na temelju naslednjih povezav:

- povezljivost »navzgor«: specifični cilji višje ravni predstavljajo splošni okvir (general objective) nižje ravni in rezultati (prioritete) na višji ravni predstavljajo specifične cilje na nižji.
- povezljivost »navzdol«: specifični cilji na nižji ravni predstavljajo del rezultatov (uresničitev zastavljenih prioritete) na višji in splošni cilj na nižji ravni pomaga k doseganju specifičnih ciljev na višji.



Slika 1: Konceptualna logika programiranja. (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: An indicative methodology, 2000, str. 6).

Seveda pa ima sistem spremljanja omejitve (preglednica 1), zato ni enotnega recepta za njegovo vzpostavitve. Ta mora biti prilagojen aktivnostim in obstoječi praksi v posamezni državi. Pri tem pa imamo v Sloveniji težave, saj doslej pri aktivnostih, financiranih iz javnih sredstev, nismo poznali spremljanja, še manj pa vrednotenja učinkov. Čeprav Zakon o javnih financah in Uredba o podlagah in postopkih za pripravo predloga državnega proračuna urejata programiranje, financiranje in tudi spremljanje, pa ne zahtevata vrednotenja. Zato v Sloveniji tudi nimamo izkušenj z izborom indikatorjev za spremljanje in vrednotenje, niti s zbiranjem in obdelavo podatkov. To še posebej velja za fizične indikatorje. Dejstvo je tudi, da v Evropski zvezi v okviru strukturne politike šele v zadnjem programskem obdobju 2000–2006 dajejo večji poudarek fizičnim indikatorjem.

Preglednica 1: Prednosti in slabosti sistema spremljanja v primerjavi z ostalimi viri informacij.

Vir informacij	Prednosti	Slabosti
Sistem spremljanja	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redni in pogosti intervali • Relativna ažurnost (informacije so relativno nove) • Informacije so večinoma uporabne takoj • Nujnost • Cenenost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zaključki niso vedno zanesljivi • Redko dosegljivo za ukrep • Kazalnike (fizične, finančne) pogosto ni možno seštevati • Omejena primerljivost
Statistične informacije	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cenenost • Zanesljivost • Veliko informacij • Primerljivost • Enostavnost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pogosto slaba povezanost z vrednotenjem • Podatki so pogosto (pre)stari
Raziskave in vrednotenje	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cenenost • Informacije so že analizirane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podatki so pogosto stari • Pogosto so analize prilagojene ciljem

(Evaluating socio-economic programmes: MEANS Collection vol. 5: Transversal evaluation of impacts on the environment, employment and other intervention priorities. EC, 1999, str. 21).

Programski indikatorji se nanašajo na aktivnosti znotraj programa. Z njimi se poskušajo spremljati in vrednotiti neposredne in posredne posledice posameznega razvojnega programa. Ločimo štiri vrste programskih indikatorjev:

- Indikatorji vložnih sredstev (resource indicators): predstavljajo skupek vložnih sredstev (finančnih, človeških, materialnih in ostalih) v izvajanje določenega programa.
- Indikatorji učinkov (output, outcome indicators): kažejo proizvod določene razvojne aktivnosti.
- Indikatorji rezultatov, ki predstavljajo direktne in takojšnje učinke izvedenih aktivnosti na prejemnika sredstev – dajejo nam informacije o spremembah, (vedenja, sposobnosti, pripravljenosti) direktnih uporabnikov (upravičencev).
- Indikatorji vplivov, ki se nanašajo na posledice, ki presegajo takojšnje učinke na direktne uporabnike. Imamo dve vrsti tovrstnih indikatorjev, in sicer specifične, ki se pojavijo po preteku določenega časa in so direktno vezani na izvedene aktivnosti ter splošne vplive, ki v daljšem časovnem obdobju zadevajo širšo populacijo. Merjenje tovrstnih vplivov je kompleksno in le težka najdemo neposredne povezave (Ridder, 2000, str. 74).

Indikatorje učinkov (output), rezultatov in vplivov imenujemo indikatorji izvajanja (performance indicators). Lastnosti dobrega indikatorja izvajanja so naslednji:

- Spremenljivka, ki predstavlja osnovo posameznega indikatorja, mora biti čim bolj povezana z aktivnostjo, ki jo merimo.
- Izbrana spremenljivka mora »reagirati« na posamezno razvojno aktivnost, kar je možno predvsem pri indikatorjih učinkov (output) in indikatorjih rezultatov.
- Izhodiščna in ciljna vrednost indikatorja morata biti določeni že na začetku.
- Ciljne vrednosti indikatorjev morajo biti realistične.
- Indikator mora biti jasno določen.

Preglednica 2: Povezava med programskimi kazalniki in kazalniki konteksta.



(Evaluating socio-economic programmes: MEANS Collection vol. 2: Selection and use of indicators for monitoring and evaluation, 1999, str. 28).

Ker programski dokumenti praviloma vsebujejo številne ukrepe, je njihova medsebojna primerljivost zelo otežena. Zato je treba določiti ključne indikatorje (core indicators). Le ti služijo primerjavi med podobnimi ukrepi in programi. To so enostavni indikatorji, ki jih je mogoče enostavno meriti in tudi spremljati v daljšem časovnem obdobju. Včasih jih je možno tudi združevati na višji ravni. Ker razvojni dokumenti sledijo določenim prioritetam, pogosto ključni indikatorji odlikavajo te prioritete (npr. zaposlovanje¹). Število ključnih indikatorjev ne sme biti preveliko in ključni indikatorji so lahko tako indikatorji učinkov (output), rezultatov ali vplivov².

¹ Pogosto uporabljen ključni indikator je neto število novih delovnih mest, kot posledica določene aktivnosti.

² Spodbujanje srednjih in malih podjetij (SMP) je pogosto ena od prioritet razvojnih programov. Tako je delež vključenih SMP v določen ukrep ključni indikator učinkov, odstotek dodatnih zasebnih investicij kot posledica ukrepa je ključni indikator rezultatov, medtem ko je delež preživelih podjetij po 18 mesecih ključni indikator vplivov.

Da nebi celoten kompleks indikatorjev spričo velikega števila postal ovira pri spremljanju in vrednotenju regionalno razvojnih programov, je smiselno izoblikovati čim ožji nabor indikatorjev, ki naj bi, če je le mogoče, na kompleksen način označeval večino izbranih ciljev. Pri tem je treba poudariti, da težav pri uporabi indikatorjev ne povzroča samo njihova številčnost, temveč je na uporabo indikatorjev vezanih še cela vrsta drugih problemov, kot so:

- težko je narediti neposredno vzročno povezavo med indikatorji in realnimi razmerami ter izvedenimi aktivnostmi;
- problematična je lahko tudi kompleksnost metod merjenja – problemi so zlasti veliki pri indikatorjih tipa vpliv, kjer so učinki odraz več različnih ukrepov, ter je tako skoraj nemogoče pripisati zasluge posameznemu ukrepu;
- podatki ob bistvenih stopnjah vrednotenja (predhodno, vmesno, zaključno) niso dosegljivi;
- nastopajo težave pri kombinacijah nekaterih kazalnikov – to je še zlasti očitno pri agregiranju fizičnih kazalnikov na raven prioritet in programov;
- potrebno se je zavedati, da prihaja tudi do nepričakovanih posledic, ki jih ne moremo zajeti z indikatorji (Indicators ..., 2000, str. 22).

Da bi zagotovili učinkovito spremljanje, je treba indikatorje za učinke (output) izdelati za vse oziroma vsaj za večino ukrepov. Bolj selektivno se lahko zbira indikatorje rezultata in vpliva, saj se teh velikokrat niti ne da redno zbirati. V tem primeru se jih zbere le za zaključno vrednotenje (ibid.).

3 Izhodišča vrednotenja regionalnega razvoja

Enovita evropska strukturna politika temelji na šestih načelih, in sicer (1) koncentraciji pomoči, (2) koordinaciji različnih razvojnih aktivnosti, (3) partnerstvu, (4) subsidiarnosti pri regionalnih pomočeh, (5) programiranju regionalnega razvoja in (6) dodatnim pomočem. Da bi se ta temeljna načela kar najbolje uveljavila v praksi, in da bi zagotovila preudarno porabo sredstev, Evropska komisija vse večjo pozornost posveča spremljanju in vrednotenju regionalno-razvojnih aktivnosti. Pri tem se ne omejuje zgolj na finančno spremljanje, temveč vse večji poudarek daje fizičnim ciljem, to je vplivu izvajanih aktivnosti na prostorske in socialnoekonomske strukture prebivalstva in gospodarstva.

S tem namenom teži Komisija po oblikovanju skupnih smernic, ki bodo delovale kot temelj za vrednotenje pomoči po vseh državah članicah, ki prejemajo pomoč iz strukturnih skladov. Na tej podlagi je treba v vseh regijah, ki so deležne pomoči, ustanoviti telesa za spremljanje, ter izvajati predhodno, vmesno in zaključno vrednotenje. Da bi sisteme vrednotenja kar najbolje poenotili, je bil ustanovljen raziskovalni program MEANS, katerega namen je oblikovati skupne metode vrednotenja in izboljšati kakovost uporabljenih tehnik (Armstrong in Taylor, 2000).

Vrednotenje regionalne politike je potemtakem stalen in interaktiven proces, ki nam po eni strani omogoča premišljeno načrtovanje aktivnosti, po drugi strani pa njihovo prilagajanje novo nastalim razmeram in spreminjajočim se potrebam. Kot tako je del razvojnega cikla regionalne politike in se ga lahko uporablja kot instrument za izboljšanje politik na podlagi kombinacije preteklih izkušenj in novih razvojnih priložnosti (Ridder, 2000).

Sam koncept vrednotenja običajno sloni na strukturi (regionalnega) razvojnega programa, ki v opredeljevanju nujno potrebnih razvojnih nalog izhaja iz zaznanih problemov posamezne regionalne skupnosti. Na podlagi ključnih problemov regionalne skupnosti je treba zasnovati natančne kvantificirane cilje in na tej podlagi, če je le mogoče, pripraviti strategijo za doseg le-teh.

Programiranje se ponavadi izvaja z izmenjevanjem dveh principov:

- od zgoraj navzdol, pri čemer izhajamo iz globalnih ciljev, katerim podredimo večje število specifičnih ciljev, ki se jih poskuša doseči preko posameznih ukrepov, in
- od spodaj navzgor, kjer se ukrepi izvajajo s pomočjo številnih institucij, ki uporabljajo različna finančna, človeška, tehnična in organizacijska sredstva in vire (inputs – vložki). Na podlagi tovrstnih vložkov

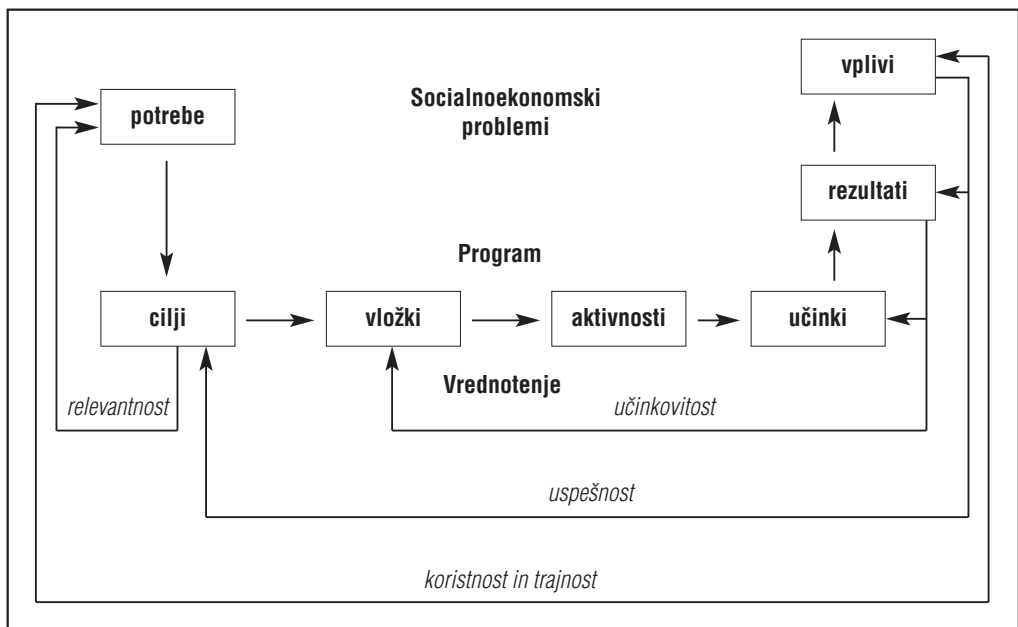
se razvije vrsta učinkov (output), ki kažejo na napredek pri izvajanju ukrepa. Takojšen in neposreden učinek izvedenih ukrepov na konkretnega uporabnika sredstev predstavljajo rezultati (results), končne učinke ukrepa pa lahko opredelimo kot vplive (impacts), ki pomenijo vplive na globalne cilje projekta. Ti služijo kot osnova za ocenjevanje, ali je nek program uspešen, ali ne. Med vplivi lahko ločimo specifične vplive (na posameznem področju) ali pa globalne vplive (Indicators ..., 2000).

V skladu s tem lahko v okviru programov zastavimo različne ravni ciljev, in sicer:

- operacionalne cilje (izraženi z učinki (output);
- specifične cilje (izraženi z rezultati), in
- globalne cilje (izraženi z vplivi) (ibid.) Vplivi in rezultati so lahko opredeljeni na vseh ravneh programiranja, učinki (output) pa le na ravni ukrepa. Posamezne indikatorje učinkov (output) lahko seštevamo na raven prioritete³ in programa (ibid.).

Cilji, kot smo že omenili, in nanje vezani indikatorji, ki se nanašajo na programe, prioritete in ukrepe naj bodo, če se le da, numerično izraženi, saj drugače zelo težko merimo, do kakšne stopnje so le-ti uresničeni. Njihova postavitve je mogoča le na podlagi izhodiščnega stanja, ki pa nam obenem daje nujno izhodišče za kakršnokoli vrednotenje programov.

Uresničevanje ciljev dosežemo s številnimi aktivnostmi, ki jih v razvojnem programu natančno opredelimo in tudi finančno ovrednotimo. Pri tem pa je treba vedeti, ali je zastavljena pot za dosego cilja edina oziroma najučinkovitejša, ter kakšni so stroški te poti v primerjavi z alternativnimi. V tem smislu je tudi treba preučiti, kakšne učinke naj bi imeli posamezni zastavljeni ukrepi, in na tej osnovi izbrati najprimernejše (Armstrong in Taylor, 2000).



Slika 2: Izhodišča vrednotenja. (Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation: An indicative methodology. The New Programming period 2000–2006: methodological working papers. Working paper 3. 2000, European Commission, Directorate-General XVI, Regional Policy and Cohesion, Co-ordination and evaluation of operations, Brussels).

³ Razvojne programe delimo na posamezne sklope nalog po principu program – prioriteta – ukrep.

Tako zasnovani programi in njihovo izvajanje so podvrženi spremljanju in vrednotenju. Oba opravljamo na podlagi indikatorjev, ki neposredno odražajo spremembe pri posameznih zastavljenih ciljih. Pri vrednotenju posameznega programa je treba večjo pozornost posvečati zlasti relevantnosti programa, ki nam pove, koliko so postavljeni cilji dejanski odraz potreb in prioritet na evropski, nacionalni in regionalnih ravneh, učinkovitosti programa, ki kaže na finančno uspešnost v smislu razmerja med stroški in dobičkom, oziroma kako se vložki spremenijo v učinke (output), uspešnosti programa, ki kažejo na to, kako uspešen je program pri doseganju zastavljenih ciljev, koristnosti programa – kako program vpliva na ciljno skupino oziroma populacijo v odnosu do njihovih potreb in trajnost programa, pri čemer analiziramo, kako dolgo lahko še pričakujemo, da bodo trajali učinki izvedenih aktivnosti (Indicators . . . , 2000).

Pri vrednotenju rezultatov regionalnega razvoja mora biti glavni poudarek namenjen uspešnosti in učinkovitosti, saj sta oba indikatorja primerna za presek stanja na katerikoli stopnji izvajanih aktivnosti. Obenem dajeta koristno informacijo upravljavcem programa in njihovim ocenjevalcem pri oblikovanju čim bolj-ših programskih odločitev (ibid.).

Proučevanje učinkovitosti odpira vprašanja, kot sta: ali bi lahko isti rezultat dosegli z manj vložkov in ali bi z enako količino sredstev lahko dosegli več ciljev. Na drugi strani je proučevanje uspešnosti usmerjeno predvsem na spremljanje pričakovanih učinkov, manjši poudarek pa je namenjen morebitnim nepričakovanim pozitivnim ali pa negativnim učinkom (ibid.).

Vrednotenje mora odgovoriti tudi na številna druga vprašanja povezana z izvajanjem politike regionalnega razvoja:

- Kaj se pričakuje, da bo regionalna politika dosegla?
- Kakšne učinke naj bi regionalna politika imela in s katerimi metodami bi te učinke merili?
- Kateri instrumenti so najbolj učinkoviti za doseganje ciljev regionalne politike?
- Ali pretekle izkušnje nudijo informacije o tem, kateri instrumenti regionalne politike so uspešni oziroma učinkoviti. (Armstrong in Taylor, 2000, str. 363.)

Vrednotenje pospeševanja regionalnega razvoja je možno implementirati s pomočjo dveh temeljnih načel. Načelo od zgoraj navzdol temelji na širših analizah in raziskavah celotnega območja, na katerem se neka pomoč izvaja. Pri tem se izvajajo različne »input-output« analize ter analize prostorskih in socialnoekonomskih struktur. Na drugi strani pa je možno tudi vrednotenje od spodaj navzgor, ki temelji na preučitvi učinkov posredovane pomoči pri posameznemu prejemniku. Ker ima vsak od omenjenih načel svoje prednosti in pomanjkljivosti je za objektivno in kompleksno vrednotenje najboljša dopolnjujoča kombinacija obeh načel.

Preglednica 3: Načini vrednotenja.

	»Top-down« vrednotenje	»Bottom-up« vrednotenje
Prednosti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kaže širše učinke projektov, vključno s »spill-over« efektom; • lažje je pridobivanje podatkov (večinoma iz javnih statističnih virov); • možno je posploševanje; • možnost nadzora z »distance«; • jasno definirani indikatorji; • relativno lahka obdelava podatkov, ki je univerzalna za vsa območja; • medsebojna primerljivost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analiza neposrednih učinkov posameznega projekta; • da podrobne podatke o učinkih (output), ki jih je možno agregirati (in tudi interpretirati) na različne načine; • možno agregiranje na posamezne panoge.
Pomanjkljivosti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premajhna »sledljivost« posameznim projektom (ukrepom); • nemogoče je izločiti učinke posameznih programov, ukrepov ali projektov; • drag sistem, v kolikor želimo pridobiti ustrezne in ujemajoče ter natančne podatke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ne kaže »spill-over« efektov; • ni možno spremljanje rezultatov in vplivov; • večina podatkov je težko dosegljiva; • obstajajo možnosti prirojanja podatkov (s strani koristnikov sredstev); • koristniki v želji po nadaljnjem pridobivanju sredstev olepšujejo učinke; • težka obdelava podatkov.

4 Problemi pri vzpostavljanju sistema vrednotenja učinkov regionalnega razvoja

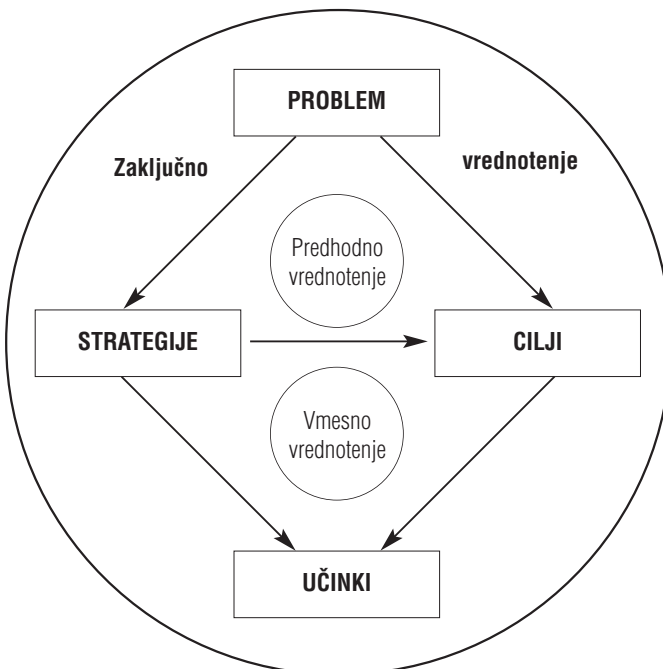
Pri vzpostavljanju sistema vrednotenja, kot tudi pri vrednotenju samem, naletimo na številne probleme. Ti običajno izhajajo iz preveč medlo zastavljenih ciljev in težav pri pridobivanju kakovostnih podatkov. Velik problem je tudi to, da snovalci razvojnih načrtov pri programiranju nimajo pred očmi poglobitnih načel spremljanja in vrednotenja, kar se lahko odrazi v številnih pomanjkljivostih tako pri opredeljevanju ciljev, kot pri izbiri indikatorjev za sledenje posameznemu cilju.

Veliko problemov izhaja tudi iz same strukture regionalnih programov. Ti imajo številne, po vsebini zelo različne cilje, prav tako pa je običajno v izvajanje programa vključenih veliko število organizacij z njim lastnimi prioritetami. Vse to nam spremljanje, pa tudi vrednotenje močno zaplete, saj težko spremljamo tako obsežno število indikatorjev, ki so običajno na ravni projekta zelo specifični. Po drugi strani se za doseg ciljev posameznega programa uporablja tudi veliko število instrumentov, s čemer hitro izgubimo pregled nad njimi, kar botruje tudi slabšemu poznavanju učinkovitosti posameznega instrumenta.

Težko je tudi razbrati, koliko so zaznane spremembe na ciljnem področju dejanska posledica izvajanja programa in koliko so te posledica številnih drugih faktorjev.

Veliko težav povzroča tudi zbiranje oziroma pridobivanje zanesljivih podatkov, kar je še posebej očitno pri podatkih, kjer vir ni javen. Te podatke je po eni strani težko pridobiti, po drugi strani pa so tudi nezanesljivi in obenem dovzetni za morebitne manipulacije. To je zlasti posledica dejstva, da te podatke zbirajo in posredujejo večinoma končni uporabniki sredstev. Ti lahko v želji po ohranitvi pomoči zavajajo z odgovori o uspešnosti instrumentov regionalne politike.

Specifični problemi se pojavljajo tudi pri podatkih iz javnih baz. Te so pogosto objavljene s časovnim zamikom, kar nam pri vrednotenju onemogoča, da bi uporabili najnovejše in dejanskim razmeram na terenu ustrezne podatke.



Slika 3: Povezanost vrednotenja z elementi razvojnega programa.

Pomemben je tudi način interpretiranja razpoložljivih podatkov. Velikokrat se namreč zadovoljimo z doseženim kvantitativnim ciljem, manj pa nas zanima kvaliteta doseženega. To je dobro razvidno na primeru zaposlovanja, kjer je nujno potrebno, da spremljamo tako »bruto« kot »neto« nova delovna mesta. Spremljati moramo tako tiste, ki so neposredna posledica ukrepov npr. v financiranih malih in srednje-velikih podjetjih, kot tudi posredne – npr. nova delovna mesta, ki so posledica vlaganj v infrastrukturo. Neto delovna mesta upoštevajo tudi to, koliko delovnih mest bi nastalo brez intervencije, ter to, koliko delovnih mest je nastalo le s premestitvijo iz enega podjetja v drugo (npr. zaradi manjše konkurenčnosti se zapre delovno mesto v sorodnem lokalnem podjetju) (Indicators ..., 2000). Prav tako je potrebno vedeti, kakšna je kvaliteta ustvarjenih delovnih mest, kdo jih zasede, kako dolgo bodo ta delovna mesta ostala, in ali so to delovna mesta za poln ali polovičen čas (Armstrong in Taylor, 2000, str. 397).

Številni so tudi primeri, kjer posameznih ciljev ne moremo kvantificirati. V takih primerih lahko cilj določimo v razponu, ali pa ga opredelimo kvalitativno. V obeh primerih cilje, če se le da, natančneje določimo kasneje (Indicators ..., 2000, str. 14). Pri vrednotenju je treba upoštevati tudi posebnosti posameznih lokalnih območij, saj se ta glede na strukturo različno odzivajo na ponujeno in izkoriščeno pomoč (Armstrong in Taylor, 2000, str. 398).

Merjenje nekaterih učinkov zaradi njihove specifičnosti tudi ni možno (npr. kvalitete življenja, socialne klime, ...) (ibid.).

Vse navedene ovire nas napeljujejo na uporabo metod, ki so preproste za izvedbo, obenem pa postrežejo z dokaj zanesljivimi rezultati. Pri tem se moramo osredotočiti na jasno zastavljene komponente programov.

5 Predhodno vrednotenje

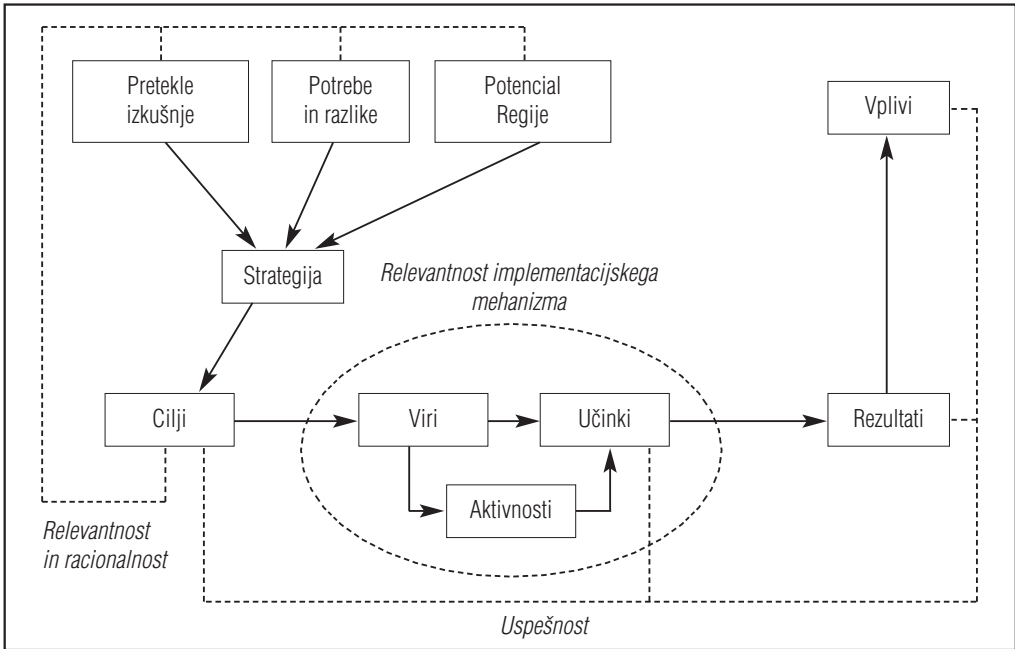
Predhodno vrednotenje je interaktivni proces, ki daje strokovno oceno o načrtovanih programih ali politiki in priporočila za njihovo (njeno) izboljšanje. Njegov poglobilni cilj je izboljšati kakovost pripravljane plana ali programa (The Ex-Ante Evaluation ..., 2000). V ta namen je potrebno tesno sodelovanje med pripravljavci programa in strokovnjaki za vrednotenje, kar posledično vodi v integriranje vrednotenja v sam program.

Sestavljeno je iz SWOT analize, predhodne ocene usklajenosti med strategijo in izbranimi cilji, ki predstavljajo odgovor na pereče razvojne ovire, ter analize pričakovanih vplivov načrtovanih aktivnosti. Veliko pozornost je potrebno v okviru predhodnega vrednotenja posvetiti pričakovanemu vplivu na horizontalne cilje Skupnosti, kot je stanju na področju konkurenčnosti, majhnih in srednje velikih podjetij, zaposlenosti in trgu dela ter vplivom na razvoj informacijske družbe, na okolje in na enake možnosti med spoloma.

Pozornost ocenjevalcev je v okviru predhodnega vrednotenja usmerjena v proučevanje številnih dejavnikov, ki nam kažejo, koliko program ali plan ustreza stvarnim razmeram. Pri tem moramo izhajati iz preteklih izkušenj, ki nam nudijo čvrsto izhodišče za ocenjevanje posameznih aktivnosti in ciljev. Prav tako moramo dobro proučiti socialnoekonomske razmere danega območja, saj nam te kažejo na potrebe in priložnosti, ki jih obravnavana regija ima, obenem pa nam njihovo poznavanje služi tudi za oceno načrtovanih strategij in izbranih akcijskih prioritet ter njihove notranje in zunanje konsistentnosti. Velik poudarek je treba nameniti tudi kvantifikaciji ciljev, ter v povezavi z njimi, pričakovanim socialnoekonomskim vplivom. Posebno pozornost je nujno posvetiti tudi samemu implementacijskemu sistemu.

Na podlagi opisanega lahko natančneje opredelimo cilje predhodnega vrednotenja:

- ugotoviti, ali je zastavljeni plan oziroma program primerno sredstvo za reševanje problemov, ki tarejo regijo ali sektor;
- oceniti, ali ima plan ali program dobro definirane prioritete in cilje, njihovo relevantnost ter ali so ti cilji dosegljivi;
- pomagati pri kvantifikaciji ciljev ter vzpostavitvi osnov za spremljanje in nadaljnje vrednotenje;
- proučiti primernost zastavljene implementacije in spremljanja ter sodelovati pri snovanju kriterijev za selekcijo projektov;



Slika 4: Sestavine predhodnega vrednotenja. (The Ex-Ante Evaluation of the Structural Funds interventions. The New Programming period 2000–2006 methodological working papers. Working paper 2. European Commission, Directorate-General XVI, Regional Policy and Cohesion, Co-ordination and evaluation of operations, Brussels, str. 6).

- ugotoviti, kakšne so možnosti za uspeh načrtovanih aktivnosti;
- oceniti, ali so predvideni rezultati tolikšni, da opravičujejo porabo javnih sredstev in ali je iste cilje mogoče doseči z manjšo porabo sredstev (The Ex-Ante Evaluation ..., 2000; Armstong in Taylor, 2000).

Predhodno vrednotenje s svojimi napotki predstavlja pomemben doprinos h kakovosti zastavljenega programa in obenem oblikuje potrebna izhodišča za vsa nadaljnja vrednotenja. Prav zaradi omenjenih dejstev je potrebno predhodnemu vrednotenju posvečati veliko pozornost in mu dati učinkom primerno težo.

6 Vmesno vrednotenje

Vmesno vrednotenje je namenjeno preverjanju poteka implementacije in ustreznosti zastavljenega sistema spremljanja. S tega vidika je sredstvo za izboljšanje kvalitete in primernosti (ustreznosti) programiranja. Zagotavlja možnost za pripravo potrebnih izboljšav in korekcij, v kolikor spoznamo, da so te potrebne, če hočemo doseči zastavljene cilje. Obenem omogoča tudi pregled in nadgradnjo vzpostavljenega sistema indikatorjev za rezervo na osnovi doseženih rezultatov (performance reserve), kot dela vseh indikatorjev programa.

Vmesno vrednotenje posveča pozornost predvsem operativni ravni, pri čemer so njegove temeljne naloge:

- oceniti, koliko še velja SWOT analiza;
- oceniti, ali so zastavljene oblike pomoči še vedno primerno sredstvo za doseganje načrtovanih ciljev oziroma za odpravljanje težav, ki so v regiji oziroma v sektorju;
- preučiti, ali so strategije, prioritete in cilji še vedno koherentni in koliko se je v obdobju izvajanja programa približalo zastavljenim ciljem ter koliko bodo ti cilji dejansko lahko uresničeni;
- oceniti ustreznost kvantificiranih ciljev z vidika njihovega omogočanja spremljanja in vrednotenja;
- koliko so horizontalne prioritete (enake možnosti med spoloma, okolje) vključene v oblike pomoči;

- ugotoviti primernost implementacije in zastavljenega spremljanja;
- predstaviti rezultate izvajanja glede na indikatorje za ocenjevanje rezerve na osnovi doseženih rezultatov (The Mid Term evaluation ..., 2000).

Omenjene naloge kažejo na eni strani na ustreznost strategije programa, na drugi strani pa na bistveno stvar izvajanega vrednotenja, to je ocena kakovosti implementacije, kar ocenjujemo na temelju relevantnosti, uspešnosti in učinkovitosti.

V skladu z evropsko regulativo vmesno vrednotenje izvaja neodvisen ocenjevalec pod okriljem telesa za upravljanje, v sodelovanju s Komisijo in državo članico. Vmesno vrednotenje vodi posebna skupina telesa za spremljanje, ki izoblikuje temeljne napotke za izvedbo, izbere ocenjevalce, vodi izvedbo vrednotenja in daje komentarje na oblikovano poročilo. Zaželeno je, da v tej skupini delujejo tudi zunanji strokovnjaki.

Vrednotenje izvede neodvisen ocenjevalec, pri čemer je mišljena neodvisnost v relaciji do odgovornih za vodenje in implementacijo programa. Pozornost ocenjevalca je usmerjena predvsem v analizo rezultatov predhodnih vrednotenj, preverjanje veljavnosti SWOT analize iz predhodnega vrednotenja, oceni nadaljnje relevantnosti in konsistentnosti strategije, kvantifikaciji ciljev, vrednotenju uspešnosti in učinkovitosti ter kakovosti izvajanja in vzpostavljenega sistema spremljanja.

7 Zaključno vrednotenje

Zaključno vrednotenje zaokroži izvajanje programa in presoja celoten program v luči njegovih prispevkov k prostorski in socialnoekonomski strukturi. Njegov namen je utemeljiti porabo virov in poročati o uspešnosti in učinkovitosti intervencij ter o obsegu, do katerega so bili pričakovani cilji doseženi. Usmerja se na faktorje uspešnosti oziroma neuspešnosti ter na trajnost rezultatov in vplivov. Orisati poskuša tudi osnovne zaključke, ki se jih da posplošiti in prenesti na ostale programe in regije. Pri izvajanju zaključnega vrednotenja je treba poleg v naprej predvidenih učinkov proučiti tudi nenačrtovane, bodisi pozitivne, ali pa negativne učinke (Evaluation design ..., 1999).

Osnovni pristop pri zaključnem vrednotenju je ugotavljanje razmerja med porabljenimi sredstvi in pridobljenimi koristmi, kar nam služi za oceno smotrnosti porabe javnih sredstev, če pa se osredotočimo na posamezne instrumente, tudi za oceno njihove učinkovitosti in ustreznosti. Pri tem moramo biti pazljivi, saj posamezni instrumenti v različnih okoljih zaradi lokalnih posebnosti lahko dosežajo različne rezultate, prav tako pa so ti različni tudi po posameznih panogah.

Idealno bi bilo, če bi zaključno vrednotenje imeli pred planiranjem naslednjih programov, vendar to zaradi narave intervencij ni možno, saj se posamezni učinki izvajanih aktivnosti začnejo kazati šele po daljšem časovnem obdobju. Prav tako pa je dolgotrajno tudi samo vrednotenje, saj mora biti, če hoče zaobjeti vse možne učinke, zelo široko zastavljeno.

8 Sklep

Spremljanje in vrednotenje sta torej ključna dejavnika pri zagotavljanju kvalitetnega in preudarnega izvajanja programov pri pospeševanju regionalnega razvoja. Kažeta nam smernice za korekcijo programov, obenem pa nam nudita tudi izhodišča za programiranje novih razvojnih aktivnosti. Pri tem svojo funkcijo opravljata le, če je zagotovljena neodvisnost njunega izvajanja in če so mehanizmi za njuno izvedbo kvalitetno zastavljeni.

V Sloveniji se sistem spremljanja in vrednotenja še vzpostavlja. Pri tem se izhaja iz specifičnih potreb slovenske regionalne politike in seveda tudi številnih priporočil, ki jih nudi Evropska komisija in temelje na izkušnjah tistih držav, ki imajo sistem spremljanja in vrednotenja že dalj časa vzpostavljen.

Sistem spremljanja, ki ga vzpostavlja Agencija Republike Slovenije za regionalni razvoj, je smelo zastavljen, in naj bi omogočal spremljanje ne samo regionalnih, temveč vseh razvojnih pomoči in programov. To je z vidika porabe proračunskih sredstev zaželeno, vendar pa obstaja bojazen, če posamezna resorna ministrstva ne bodo aktivno sodelovala pri tem zahtevnem in kompleksno zasnovanem projektu.

Kar se tiče spremljanja regionalno-razvojnih programov, je treba sistem oziroma njegovo zahtevnost prilagoditi razpoložljivim finančnim sredstvom. Nesmiselno je namreč izvajati zelo kompleksno in s tem tudi drago spremljanje in na to vezano vrednotenje, če so sredstva, namenjena regionalnemu razvoju, nizka. Pod velikim vprašajem je tudi prepodroben nabor kazalnikov (predvsem v začetni fazi) za spremljanje. Pri tem bi bilo treba izhajati iz že razpoložljivih statističnih podatkov, saj bi vsako dodatno zbiranje sam sistem močno podražilo in zapletlo. S tega vidika je verjetno najbolj smiselno, če podrobneje spremljamo učinke (output) posameznih projektov, rezultate in vplive pa le preko omejenega in skrbno izbranega nabora kazalnikov.

Spremljanje in vrednotenje v Sloveniji moramo izvajati tudi z upoštevanjem regionalnih in lokalnih posebnosti. Te namreč lahko hitro privedejo do različnega učinka posameznega instrumenta ali aktivnosti. Prav tako je treba zaobjeti splošne globalne pogoje, saj vpetost v globalne tokove enkrat vzpodbuja, drugič pa zavira razvojne aktivnosti.

Kakorkoli že, spremljanje, pa tudi zametki vrednotenja so se v Sloveniji že začeli izvajati. Njihova kvaliteta bo rasla z izkušnjami in usposobljenostjo akterjev, ki so vključeni v sistem. Pri tem si lahko le želimo, da bi tako spremljanje kot vrednotenje upravičila naša pričakovanja in slovensko regionalno politiko privedla do zavidljivejše kakovosti.