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ECONOMIA E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

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- DEVCO'S EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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Abstract

Over the last decades, the demand for evaluation has been growing and the European Commission have had a major role in boosting evaluation practices in the European Union (and its Member States) by successfully institutionalising an evaluation system and establishing a comprehensive framework for the evaluation of its activities.

Although no common methodology has been defined within the European Commission Directorate-Generals, common procedures are used across several evaluation units and some guidelines were established among some of them that have a longer the tradition in evaluation, notably DG DEVCO.

The evaluation process is long and complex, involves many stakeholders and therefore the boundaries established by a clear and uniformed methodology enhances the integrity and independence of the results. However, it also often causes the loss of ownership, making more difficult the incorporation of the evaluation results into the decision-making process.

Keywords: European Commission, Evaluation, DEVCO, Evaluation Methodology, Evaluation System

Resumo

Nas últimas décadas, a procura relativamente a estudos de avaliação tem sido crescente e a Comissão Europeia teve um papel importante na dinamização de práticas de avaliação na União Europeia (e os seus Estados -Membros), através da institucionalização com sucesso de um sistema de avaliação e de um quadro conceptual abrangente para a avaliação de as suas actividades .

Embora não exista uma metodologia única, procedimentos comuns são utilizados em várias unidades de avaliação da Comissão Europeia e algumas diretrizes foram estabelecidas entre as Direcções -Gerais que têm uma mais longa tradição em avaliação, nomeadamente a DG DEVCO.

O processo de avaliação é longo e complexo, envolve muitos *stakeholders* e, portanto, os limites estabelecidos por uma metodologia clara e uniforme permite aferir a integridade e a independência dos resultados. No entanto, muitas vezes também provoca a perda do sentimento de pertença pela mesma, tornando mais difícil a incorporação dos resultados da avaliação no processo de tomada de decisão.

Palavras-Chave: Avaliação, Comissão Europeia, DEVCO, Metodologia de avaliação, Sistema de avaliação

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Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ADE	Analysis for Economic Decisions
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CTB	Cooperation Technique Belge
CV	*Curriculum Vitae*
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DEVCO	International Cooperation and Development
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
ECG	Evaluation Cooperation Group
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EDF	European Development Fund
EIB	European Investment Bank
EQ	Evaluation Question(s)
EU	European Union
GROW	Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
HQ	Headquarters
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IL	Intervention Logic
ISG	Internal Steering Group
JC	Judgement Criteria
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OCDE	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OCP	Overseas Countries and Territories
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SPD	Single Programming Document
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
ToR	Terms of Reference

Context of the Internship

This report aims to account for the internship realised at ADE (Analysis for Economic Decisions) within the study program of the Master in Economics and Public Policies at ISEG (Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão). The internship took place for a period of 6 months (1040 hours), between 22/01/2015 and 31/07/2015, under the supervision of both the professor Dr. Paulo Trigo Pereira from ISEG and Dr. Neil Dillon from the host institution.

The internship aimed not only to develop a direct contact with professional practices linked to the knowledge acquired during the Master's Program but also to improve skills of theoretical and methodological tools appropriate to approach concrete problems, in this particular case in the field of monitoring and evaluation of public policies.

Host institution[1]

Created in 1990, ADE is a private consulting company based in Louvain-la-Neuve, near Brussels, Belgium, that delivers objective and independent services to assist private and public decision-makers in the formulation of rational economic decisions and in monitoring their implementation. ADE intervenes at every stage of the decision-making process: from problem analysis and advisory studies, to support in the formulation, in the monitoring and in the evaluation of strategies/policies/programmes. ADE has a staff of over 40 people, including a large number of in-house experts in various thematic areas and in evaluation methodology.

ADE concentrates on four main areas of specialisation in which it has a recognised reputation for excellence, and which it considers to be complementary and mutually reinforcing:

- Evaluation and monitoring;
- Regional policies and innovation;
- Economic policies and public finance;
- Rural development and environment.

Evaluation at the level of aid programmes and public policies is at the heart of ADE's range of activities. ADE has conducted more than 200 evaluations, including *ex ante*

[1] The information in this section was taken from ADE's website (http://www.ade.eu/)

evaluations, monitoring, mid-term and final/*ex-post* evaluations. They include also in particular complex strategic evaluation, such as country-level, thematic and institutional evaluations. ADE has also developed specific expertise in terms of support to developing private sector developing countries, development finance, humanitarian aid, conflict prevention and peace building.

ADE's main clients are international institutions and agencies (e.g. European Commission, EIB, UN, World Bank) and national public institutions from both the EU (e.g. Agence Française du Développement, CTB) and third countries (e.g. AfDB).

Through conducting these evaluations, ADE has developed and refined its methodological and analytical tools and has become a recognised major player in terms of evaluation, providing methodological support for evaluation in the following areas:

- Development and promotion of evaluation methods and tools;
- Advice on donors' evaluation systems and knowledge management systems;
- Dissemination of evaluation results by the organisation of seminars or participation in conferences;
- Trainings in evaluation.

The internship took place in ADE's Evaluation Department, which over the years has been carrying out policy, strategy, programme and project evaluations, commissioned by different type of clients, concerning different fields of expertise and conducted at global, EU, regional, country and local level.

Main activities and responsibilities[2]

Being part of the Evaluation Department, the activities during the internship mainly involved the production of inputs for the ongoing evaluations, particularly these commissioned by the European Commission:

- Evaluation of the EU blending mechanisms, commissioned by DG DEVCO
- Evaluation of the EU cooperation with Pakistan, commissioned by DG DEVCO
- Evaluation of the Use of Different Transfer Modalities in ECHO Humanitarian Aid Actions, commissioned by DG ECHO

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[2] A detailed description of the main activities and responsibilities in each project is available in chapter 3.

- Evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis, commissioned by DG ECHO

Considering the length and period of the internship, there was the possibility not only of being involved in almost all phases of these evaluations but furthermore to take part in a diversified portfolio of activities which included also commercial work. Main activities included:

- Active research support on different evaluations including data collection, inventory management and reporting;
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis, providing inputs for cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness analysis;
- Contribution to commercial activities, including support to proposal writing, expert's selection and general business development.

Introduction

Over the last 30 years the demand for evaluation has been growing tremendously and evaluation practices have spread and become common in most OECD countries (Højlund, 2014a).

The key actors in the field of evaluation are the World Bank, OECD, UN, multilateral banks, the American Evaluation Association and the European Evaluation Society as well as regional supranational political organizations such as the EU and some national donor agencies (Furubo et al., 2002). They commonly reinforce the evaluation institution through the production of guidelines as well as exchanges of opinions in public debates and at evaluation seminars, courses and conferences (Højlund, 2014b).

By its nature, development and humanitarian aid programmes are important key players in the evaluation field. The public and taxpayers increasingly demand credible assessments of whether aid improves the lives of the world's poorest (OECD, 2010).

In Europe, before the 1990s, except from some countries such as UK, Germany and Sweden, most EU Member-States did not have a tradition in evaluation. Since then, the development of an evaluation culture was influenced both by the EU regulations requirement to undertake evaluations at the end of each funded programme and by broader trends spread from the UK and the USA such as "New Public Management"[3] and "Evidence-based Policy"[4] (Riché, 2012).

Due to its major relevance in the evaluation scene, over the last decades the EC has established a comprehensive framework for evaluation and published a collection of procedures to be implemented across all evaluations.

[3] The New Public Management (NPM) movement emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the UK under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and it does not represent a paradigm change, but only the replacement of the traditional public management by processes and techniques of business management in order to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the public administration services. It can be achieved by introducing competition within the public sector or by the transfer to the private sector responsibilities and competencies that traditionally were in the public sector administration (Gruening, 2001).

[4] Evidence-based Policy (EBP) is an approach that 'helps people make well informed decisions about policies, programmes and projects by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation' (Davies, 2004). Although the concept of using evidence to inform policy is not new, it has gained political emphasis over the last decade, notably in the UK under the Blair administrations, and it is committed to putting an end to ideologically-driven politics and replacing it instead with rational decision making (Sutcliffe & Court, 2005).

Within its evaluation strategy[5], the EU carries out a range of different evaluations, which can be summarised into two groups: prospective (*ex-ante*) and retrospective (*ex post*) evaluations. Prospective evaluations are undertaken as part of the design of a programme and the use of mechanisms, such as impact assessments, have gain major relevance in the EC's evaluation context (see section 1). However, the most common outputs are still retrospective evaluations that include project/programme evaluations and strategic evaluations (e.g. long term geographic, thematic).

Among all types and levels of evaluation used in the EC, the scope of this report will be restrict only to the retrospective strategic evaluations, notably those commissioned by the DG DEVCO and DG ECHO, since these were the projects assigned and undertaken during the internship period.

Thus, this report consist of an assessment of the procedures and methodology applied to the evaluations implemented by the European Commission on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid programmes, contextualized by the experience obtained during the internship[6].

Furthermore, the report is structured in three parts: the first chapter provides a contextualization of EC's evaluation framework, presenting its structural organization, evaluation process and a general overview of the evaluation activities. The second chapter presents the methodology and procedures followed in the evaluations commissioned by the EC and applied on ADE's on-going evaluations during the internship supported by an illustration of a concrete example. Lastly, the third chapter specifies a detailed description of the activities developed during the internship contextualized by the methodology and tools used in the evaluations.

[5] Evaluation is part of a wider Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system that covers different tools such as Evaluations, Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Reviews and internal monitoring. At this point, it's important to clarify the difference between evaluation, monitoring and audit, which are complementary but target different purposes. Evaluation focuses on the outcomes or impact, appraising, either before and/or after, the reasons behind the achievement of the changes; whereas monitoring focuses on assessing progress and results during the implementation of the programme and audit judges the integrity of processes, procedures and compliance (DEVCO, 2014).

[6] However, all the examples provided within this report are not from the evaluations under way during the internship due to the fact they are still ongoing and the respective content and results are not public yet.

1. EC's evaluation system and policy

As defined by the OECD an evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an on-going or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results. The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors (OCDE, 1991).

Furthermore, the European Commission specifies that an evaluation uses available evidence to judge how the intervention has performed (or is performing) taking into consideration the predictions earlier made. It should look at a wider perspective, assessing not only what happen but explaining why something occurred and, if possible, how much has changed as a consequence, drawing conclusions on whether it continues to be justified (EC, 2015c).

The EC has a relatively long tradition in evaluation, which started in the 1980s on a sectoral basis and has grown substantially in the 1990s due to an increasing demand for accountability, budgetary discipline and effective programme execution. In the mid-1990s, with the implementation of an initiative to reform the management of the Commission, it developed an evaluation framework to acquire systematic, timely and rigorous evaluation of the expenditure programmes[7].

After that, two major developments have occurred within the EC's evaluation capacity. First, with the administrative reforms introduced in 2000 and the shift to results-based management, the scope of the evaluation activities within the EC was extended to cover all types of public interventions, particularly legislation and other non-spending activities[8].

Second, the emergence of the Better Regulation Agenda in 2002[9], in which the EC made commitments to strength the evaluation practice by improving the quality of its evaluation, not only by defining a number of standards and principles, but also by enhancing the evaluation instruments available. Under this condition, it created the

[7] EC (1996).

[8] The White Paper on Reforming the Commission (2000) recognizes that the Commission had established evaluation practice but recommended strengthening the evaluation tools and structures within its services. Following that, the EC published the document "Focus on Results: Strengthening Evaluation of Commission Activities" (EC, 2000c).

[9] EC (2002c)

conditions for a rapid institutionalization of the "Impact Assessment" mechanism[10] which examines the potential economic, social and environmental consequences of proposed options, mainly concerning policy and legislation proposals. Impact assessment acts as an *ex-ante* evaluation, providing an important input to decision-makers of the consequences of policy choices and, at the present, is fully integrated into the preparation of major legislative proposals and non-legislative initiatives[11]. Despite its major relevance in the EC's evaluation context, it should be noted that, due to its singularity, "Impact Assessment" as a prospective type of evaluation does not take part of the scope of this report, which remains with the retrospective evaluations.

Following these directives, the EC set out guidelines for evaluations firstly in 2004, then in 2007 with the adoption of a communication "Responding to Strategic Needs: Reinforcing the use of evaluation", then in 2010 with the adoption of the "Smart Regulation Action Plan" and more recently, in 2015, with the implementation of the "Better Regulation Guidelines".

If it is inevitable to acknowledge the relevance that evaluation has developed over the last decades, it is also important to realise that the function of evaluation has also been changing.[12]

The literature distinguishes three generations in the evolution of the evaluation function. Between the 1960s and the 1970s, policy emphasis on evaluation prevailed over the function of information. The focus was on improving programs and managers were interested in using evaluation as a feedback mechanism, using it to measure project and programme outputs and outcomes (Segone et al, 2006). In the 1980s, the (re)allocation function prevailed, which was intended to promote a rational allocation of resources in the budget process. During the 1990s the key determinant in evaluating policies becomes the legitimation function, providing the provision of information to the public as a basis for accountability on the policy decisions, ensuring democratic transparency and governance in accordance with the public interest (Derlien, 2001). More recently, another trend/generation has developed using evaluation to better

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[10] EC (2002b)

[11] It is important to distinguish impact assessments from impact evaluations. The latter are normally retrospective (*ex post*), and seek to assess the impact a policy or programme has had, often by using scientific or quasi-scientific methods such as control group comparisons.

[12] Three main functions can be identified in the literature plus other specific functions depending on the subject.

understand the intervention and its effects and through the feedback of lessons learned improve future decisions (OECD, 1991).

1.1. Structural organization

Over the last decades the EC has been successfully institutionalising its evaluation system and establishing a comprehensive framework for the evaluation of its activities, pursuing the quality, impartiality and independence of its function (Furubo et al., 2002).

According to international guidelines [13] the institutional structure for managing evaluation is a key component to certify the independence of the evaluation system, which, according to the same recommendations, will best be accomplished by separating the evaluation function from the line and staff management function responsible for planning and managing the operations.

Complying with that, within the EC's general decentralized organizational framework, each Directorate General has a designated evaluation unit responsible for guiding and supervising the evaluation of its own activities and it should reflect its evaluation needs and requirements.[14] Thus, three models of organising the evaluation function can be distinguished across the Commission services. The first one is a centralised approach, where the evaluation function is fully centralised in a horizontal unit, more common in DGs responsible for expenditure programmes. The other two are a decentralised model where the evaluation is fully decentralised, where the evaluation unit mainly provide support to the operational units in charge of the evaluation projects, or a hybrid model where operational management of evaluations is decentralised, supported by a central evaluation unit. These approaches are more common in DGs mainly responsible for legislation and other policy instruments (EC, 2015b). In addition, the EC's evaluation activities are centrally coordinated by the Secretariat-General[15], which provides support including general guidance and training on evaluation, and a Commission-wide network meets several times a year to discuss evaluation issues and share information (EC, 2007; EC 2015b).

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[13] OECD (1991), UNEG (2003) and ECG (2012).

[14] The World Bank Group, for instances, has a completely different structural organization since it has only one evaluation unit, the IEG (Independent Evaluation Group), which reports directly to the World Bank Group's Board of Directors. The IEG is charged with evaluating the activities of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (the World Bank), the work of International Finance Corporation (IFC) in private sector development, and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency's (MIGA) guarantee projects and services (http://ieg.worldbank.org).

[15] This coordination function was situated within the Directorate-General for Budget until being transferred to the Secretariat-General in 2009.

The designated evaluation unit in each DG has the responsibility for steering, co-ordinating and monitoring the evaluation function since the planning of evaluations until their dissemination and use, assuring the quality and coherence of evaluation and supporting the central services in the implementation of the general Commission Evaluation Policy (DEVCO, 2014).

1.2 Evaluation process

As explained before, in the Commission each DG is responsible not only for planning but also for conducting/manage its own evaluations, whether they are conducted internally through the Commission services, or entirely outsourced to external contractors[16]. However, in both cases, each DG is accountable for the evaluation compliance with the Commission's evaluation standards and principles, which are designed to ensure the general quality of the evaluations.

Before the evaluation is ready to be commissioned and conducted, it has to be politically validated and been included in the evaluation planning agenda[17], which is annually updated. Based on the evaluation plan and specific contexts[18], each DG defines a pipeline of evaluations to be carried out that year (EC, 2015b). For each evaluation, an evaluation manager is appointed, within the DG's evaluation unit, who is responsible for designing the evaluation by establishing the evaluation strategy, managing the evaluation once it has been commissioned, ensuring its quality by been the liaison between the evaluator and the Internal Steering Group and supporting the dissemination and follow-up of the findings (EC, 2014b).

Another important actor in the evaluation process is the Internal Steering Group (ISG), which is established as soon as the evaluation has been politically validated and included in the evaluation agenda. The ISG's responsibility is to provide support and oversee all phases of the evaluation process (roadmap, consultation[19], studies, Staff Working

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[16] The majority of evaluations in the Commission, about 80% (EC, 2007), are outsourced to external consultants or groups of experts, who collect and analyse the relevant evidence, answer the evaluation questions and draw conclusions and recommendations (Højlund, 2014b).

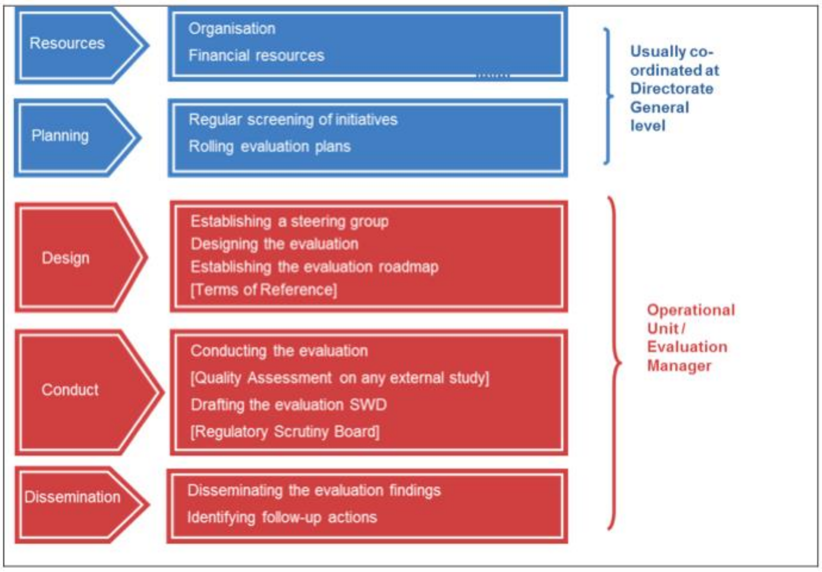
[17] "The planning of evaluation activities of individual Directorates General takes the form of a (minimum) 5-year indicative rolling programme, where the plan is broadly fixed for the first 2 years and stays more indicative for later ones, providing an overview of the structure and coverage of the evaluation policy." (EC, 2015b)

[18] Sometimes evaluations that were planned are cancelled or postponed due to security situations or other factors.

[19] After the evaluation has been included in the DG's evaluation roadmap is compulsory a 12-week open public consultation (EC, 2015b).

Document), providing inputs and quality control that will guarantee the quality, impartiality and usefulness of the final product.

Figure 1. Evaluation Process



Source: European Commission (2015c)

The EC's guidelines recommend the ISG to include people from other Directorates General who work in the same or related areas as the subject of that evaluation[20], plus a representative from the evaluation function of the Directorate General conducting the evaluation and other specialists on the sector (EC, 2015b).

When evaluations are outsourced, the external contractor is selected via calls for tender issued by the DG responsible for the evaluation. Therefore, the Evaluation Manager writes the Terms of Reference (ToR) explaining the required work from the contractor, which include the Quality Assessment criteria defined for the evaluation. The ToR, together with the offer submitted by the winning contractor, becomes part of the contract and sets the legal limits for the contracted work.

During the evaluation period, the Evaluation Manager and the ISG play a key role in overseeing the evaluation at regular intervals (five to seven meetings during the evaluation process), providing comments on whether the work/report(s) meet the

[20] Including someone of the Delegation concerned in the case of a country/region level evaluation (DEVCO, 2014).

requirements from the ToR and the general evaluation standards from the Commission. This is a standard process in the Commission and is meant to secure the independence of the evaluation and quality of the deliverables (Højlund, 2014b). The ISG also has to judge the quality of the contractor's report[21], which will determine the acceptance of the report by the Evaluation Manager.

Lastly, a Staff Working Document (SWD) is draft summarizing the research, analysis, findings and conclusions/recommendations of the evaluation and providing input to the next round of decision making (EC, 2015b). Since it's the document presented to the stakeholders, the Staff Working Document is a key deliverable of the evaluation and particularly in the dissemination of the evaluation findings among all stakeholders.

1.3 General Overview of EC's evaluation activities

This general overview covers the data available concerning evaluation activities over the period 2000-2014.[22] The analysis includes only evaluations started and managed by the Commission, not comprising evaluations in the context of Structural Funds carried out at the regional level or by the Member States.

Since the general framework for evaluation is decentralised throughout each DG, no centralised information on this subject is available at the present. Annual reviews with compiled data about the evaluations carried out are available but only for the period 2000-2009. However, as from 2010, the Reviews were replaced by Reports from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council and they do not have this type of information. The last study with complete and comprehensive data on the Commission's evaluation projects dates back to 2001[23], partially updated in 2007[24].

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[21] The ISG has to fill in the Quality Assessment report, following the template provided by the Secretariat General. This document is important not only for public assessment of the overall quality of the evaluation but also for internal quality reviews done by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB), which is responsible for judging the integrity of the processes.

[22] Data sources: http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm; http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/search/search.do; http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/documents_en.htm

[23] EC (2002a)

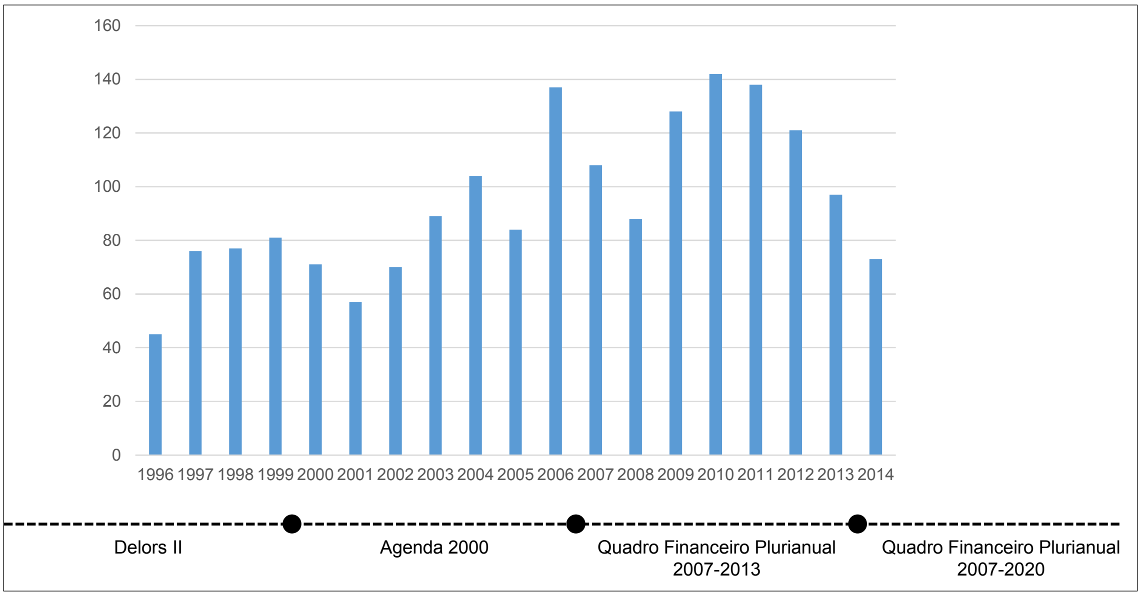
[24] EC (2007)

Therefore, this section presents an overview on the evolution of EC's evaluation activities built from the published evaluations database[25], including only retrospective evaluations according the scope of this report.

Since the general evaluation framework introduced in 1996, the Commission's departments have completed over 1700 evaluation projects. After the adoption of the systematic evaluation policy in 2000, the average number of evaluations per year has increased, rising from 70 to 100.

As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, a repeated pattern can be bserved following the EC's financial framework cycle. It can be noted that the last years of each cycle are the most active in terms of evaluation activities[26].

Graph 1. Number of evaluations per year



Source: EC's database of evaluation files (http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/search/search.do)

[25] In some cases the numbers do not exactly correspond to those published in the earlier Evaluation Reviews. This is because the reviews have been made based on evaluation conducted in that year and this inventory id based on publication year. Whereas the average time of an evaluation is 11 months, the actual publication data may have been postponed to the next year.

[26] This complies with Niskanen's budget maximizing bureaucrat model (1971) in which it is explained the impact of political cycles in the government spending. According to that, the self-interested politicians and bureaucrats who aim at improving their salary and prestige, maximize the department's budget by expanding their services at the end of the political cycle.

The evaluation practice within the European Commission has being historically concentrated in the DGs responsible for major expenditure programs, which initially was within the areas of development cooperation and research. In 1995, with the development of the MEANS programme in the area of regional development, a boost of the evaluation capacity in this area was noted and latter (in 1998) transposed to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Laat & Williams, 2013).

Nowadays, the DGs mention above, together with Eurostat, ECHO and GROW are still responsible for the highest demand for evaluation in the EC. Within the period 2007-2014, theirs evaluation represent almost half (47%) of all the evaluations in the EC. DEVCO alone was responsible for more than 10% of the total number of evaluation in the EC, having done an average of 12 evaluation per year in that period (see Annex I).

2. EC' Evaluation Process

According to international guidelines[27] the evaluation units should develop and regularly update a common methodology with best practices in evaluation techniques in order to make evaluation results comparable, attest the transparency of the process and, finally, ensure the findings are easily translated into operational adjustments. It is also mentioned that, despite the admittance of specific features, efforts should be made to harmonize performance indicators and evaluation criteria within the adopted evaluation methodology (ECG, 2011).

Over the years, the Commission has followed these principles and set out an assemblage of guidelines and standards that comprises key requirements and obligations concerning the evaluation of its activities. However, no uniform methodology is established either among all the DGs or even consistently within each DG[28]. Though, there is a collective recognition of its relevance and therefore some common methodological practises are been used in some DGs, notably in DEVCO.

As noted previously[29], development cooperation is one of the areas within the Commission where evaluation has begun to be implemented, which alongside with the fact that it generally has a longer tradition in evaluation than other operation areas certainly explains why DEVCO[30] has in place a structured and consistent methodology.

In ECHO[31] evaluations a similar methodology is used, although less stringent reflecting the distinct characteristics between evaluations carried out in the context of

[27] OECD (1991), UNEG (2003) and ECG (2012).

[28] According to Foresti et al. (2007), although most agencies use OECD-DAC criteria and are adopting more unified and consistent approaches to perform evaluations, they still don't use an uniform methodology within their procedures.

[29] See section 1.3.

[30] The tradition in cooperation with developing countries goes back to the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, beginning with arrangements between the EEC and former colonies of some Member States, which progressively developed into a range of agreements, conventions and partnerships. To manage this cooperation in 2001, EuropeAid external cooperation office (AIDCO) was founded and ten years later, it was merged with the Directorate General for Development and Relations with ACP States to form the DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid. Since the beginning of 2015, the Directorate General becomes the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) (https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/).

[31] Confronted with a number of major crises in the early nineties (ex-Yugoslavia, Rwanda etc), the European Commission created a specialised humanitarian service, ECHO (the European Community Humanitarian Office) in 1992. ECHO has rapidly become the largest single humanitarian donor in the world. It has also evolved into the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) (http://ec.europa.eu/echo/).

humanitarian emergencies[32]. Furthermore, only recently the evaluation of humanitarian assistance has become a topic of academic, practical and political concern (Frerks & Hilhorst, 2002).

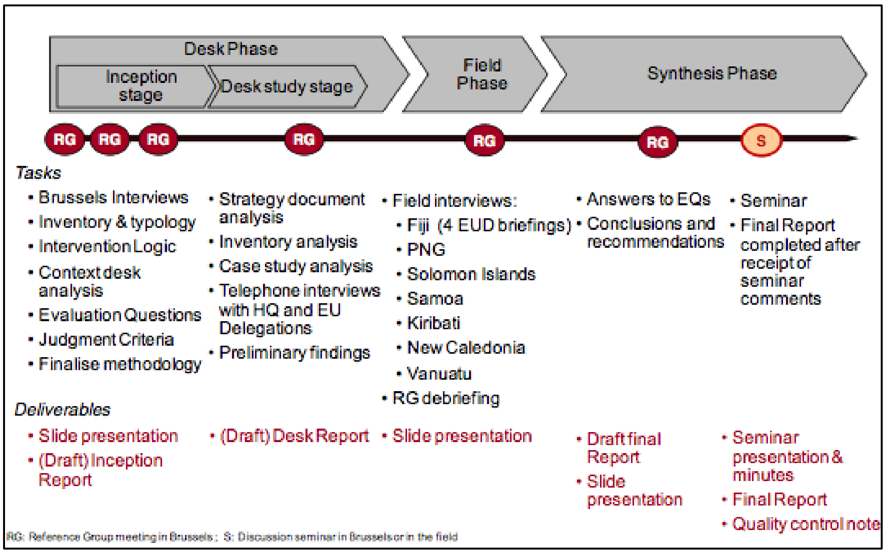
In this context, the evaluation methodology presented in this section is mainly based in the guidelines established by DEVCO but that are commonly used across other operational areas in the Commission.

As explained before, The examples provided herein are not from the evaluations on which I was involved due to the fact they are still ongoing and the respective content is not public.

2.1. Evaluation Phases (chronological approach)

According to DEVCO Evaluation Guidelines (2006a), the evaluation team should structure the evaluations in five phases: inception, desk, field and synthesis that include a dissemination seminar. The figure bellow provides an example overview of activities carried out and the deliverables produced.

Figure 2. Evaluation Phases



Source: ADE (2014a)

[32] ALNAP (2006) indicates that "humanitarian programmes frequently operate under considerable time pressure and in very fluid and fast changing contexts, with lack of security, of authorities (except "non-State" ones) and access, disruption of infrastructures and services, massive displacements and human rights violations. To this, one might also add that humanitarian interventions, as well as evaluations of these, often take place under severely limited human and budgetary resources".

Previously, some preparatory work has to be done by the evaluation manager in order to design the evaluation that is key to subsequently set up the ISG, write the ToR and contract the evaluation team. The design includes mainly identifying the purpose, users and scope of the evaluation (e.g. which interventions, what geographical coverage and over what period of time), which will then influence the set of evaluation questions, intervention logic and research methods used to collect data[33]. At this point, in order to draft the evaluation questions, the evaluation manager does some preliminary data collection of relevant documents concerning the interventions to be evaluated. The evaluation team will after reconstruct the draft evaluation questions and intervention logic during the inception phase.

The inception phase is mainly a period to identify and collect the relevant documentation and statistic data[34] (e.g. inventory), redesign the intervention logic and finalise the evaluation questions. At the end of the inception phase the evaluation team has to submit an evaluation report and present it in a meeting with the members of the ISG, who will provide comments to be implemented in the following phase.

During the desk phase the evaluation team carries on with the consultation of the available documents and collection of other type of data (e.g. conclusion of the inventory, survey, case studies, etc) alongside with a series of interviews with the managers at the Commission's HQ and partner countries, EU delegation officers, partners and specialists in the sector. As much as possible, the desk report, also presented in an ISG meeting, should provide preliminary findings to be validated after in the field.

The field phase is a very important to test *in loco* the assumptions drafted in the desk phase and to collect additional data. At this stage the evaluators visit the countries and interventions defined in line with the data collected previously and conduct a series of interviews with the Commission's managers in the country, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

In the synthesis phase the evaluation team wrap-up all the information collected using a data collection grid and draw the final evaluation report which includes not only

[33] Narrowing the scope of the evaluation will help identify the users of the evaluation. A clear definition of the users is highly important to define what will be the content of the evaluation and to ensure applicability of the results (see conclusion).

[34] This is by no means a collection or examination of all available information. On the contrary, the evaluation team should focus only on information that is useful for answering the questions (DEVCO, 2006b).

answers to the evaluation questions but also conclusions and recommendations (see following section).

The evaluation team completes their work with a dissemination seminar[35], where they present the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Commission's Services and other relevant stakeholders.

2.2. Evaluation Methodology (methodological approach)

This section will focus on key elements of the evaluation methods, notably on how they are linked in order to achieve the evaluation results. Therefore, it will clarify the structural procedure that links the intervention logic to evaluation questions, which in turn determines the chosen judgement criteria and indicators and the relative data collection tool.[36]

As shown in the previous section, before the evaluation team is contracted, the evaluation manager has already defined the purpose and scope of the evaluation plus explained the intervention logic and drafted a set of evaluation questions (all presented in the ToR), however these two last elements will then have to be revised by the evaluation team.

Thus, the first step of the evaluation process is a review of the **intervention logic** (Annex III), essential to have an overarching understanding of the EU strategy in that field, notably which effects were expected (i.e. what changes did the EU prospect and by what process) and therefore which evaluation questions should be asked and judgment criteria should be selected according to a theory-based evaluation approach.[37] The intervention logic reflects a comprehensive understanding of the engagement planned to be undertaken during the evaluation period (proposed inputs/activities) and the causeways that were expected to prompt the desired changes (expected outputs, outcomes and impact). Most commonly, the intervention logic is presented using a

[35] The evaluation manager will then have to structure a dissemination and follow-up strategy in order to ensure that the evaluation recommendations will be incorporated in the decision making process.

[36] Although this is not a stationary chronological order and it is possible to revise these elements revised the evaluation, they are dependent on each other and linked to the findings, conclusions and recommendations as a dynamic puzzle, so they should be stabilized early in the process.

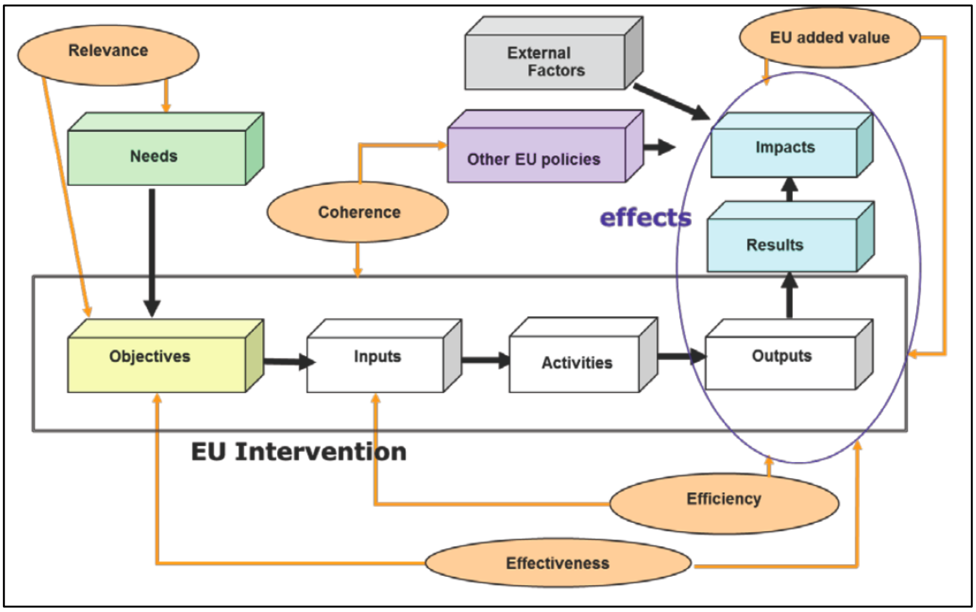
[37] Theory-based evaluation (TBE) explores the how and why of program success or failure, examining the assumptions underlying the causal chain from inputs to outcomes and impact (Weiss, 1997).

diagram of expected effects among other tools (e.g. problem diagram and diagram of objectives).

All the evaluations commissioned by the EC have to access the evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, and EU added value of the intervention (see image below).[38]

The **evaluation questions** are afterwards inferred from a mix of concerns including the intervention logic, the knowledge gaps of the key stakeholders and the sectoral priorities of the programming body.[39] An evaluation should answer a limited number of questions, focusing on key points, identified in the intervention logic. Narrowing the scope of the questions helps ensure an efficient use of the evaluation resources, allowing more target data collection, more in-depth analysis and better implementation of the evaluation findings (Molund & Schill, 2004).

Figure 3. The simplified intervention logic and the 5 key evaluation criteria



Source: European Commission (2015c)

[38] Similar criteria have been formalized by the OECD-DAC: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

[39] The evaluation questions should encourage a critical analysis, examining the link between the undertaken interventions and the changes observed. Typical evaluation questions are: To what extent has [activity X] contributed to [generating effect Z]?; To what extent have [activities X1, X2, X3, etc...] contributed to [generating effect Z]? or To what extent have [activities X1, X2, X3, etc...] contributed to [generating effects Z1, Z2, Z3, etc.]?" (DEVCO, 2006a)

At this point, a standard strategy allows the evaluators to answer the evaluation questions by categorising the evaluation questions according to different judgment criteria, which correspond to different "viewpoints" on what is being evaluated. In practice, each **judgement criteria** has to be complemented by one or more **indicators** and expected data-collection sources[40]. Breaking down an evaluation into each of these elements allows the evaluators to identify the necessary pieces of the evaluation and to ensure a clear connection between them at every step of the evaluation process.

In order to help conduct the research the evaluators build an **evaluation matrix**, which aims to organize the link between evaluation questions, judgement criteria, indicators and the data collection techniques.

Two main approaches are used to collect the data, either by applying data collection tools aiming to obtain 'fresh' information (primary data)[41] or by collecting data that is already available (secondary data)[42].

Once considerable data is compiled, not only at the end of the process, the analysis process begin, where a question-by-question interpretation practice allows the evaluators to convert data into findings that afterwards will drive to draw conclusions, which are usually organised in clusters (e.g. thematic, strategic, long-term, short-term, etc.). If the findings follow only from facts and analysis, the formulation of conclusions involve the interpretation of the facts using the judgment criteria agreed before (first phase of the evaluation). They should provide clear answers to the EQs established in the beginning of the evaluation.

EVALUATION ANSWERS (FINDINGS) ➔ CONCLUSIONS ➔ RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, the recommendations must be inferred from one or more conclusions but without replicating them. They aim to be the most operational deliverable of an evaluation, enabling evidence-based decision-making by providing reference on policies

[40] Each question may comprise several judgment criteria and each judgment criteria may comprise several indicators (see section 2.3).

[41] Fresh (primary) data are collected by the means of tools such as: interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, field visits, direct observation, etc.

[42] In order not to avoid duplications and unnecessary costs, the evaluators rely on existing (secondary) data as much as possible. Main sources to collect such information are: management and monitoring documents, studies and research dealing with the area under consideration, published statistical sources, previous evaluation reports and their annexes.

and strategies alongside with results on performance of funded operations. The recommendations are clustered, prioritized and addressed in order to facilitate their acknowledgment and implementation among the concerned stakeholders (see section 2.3).

2.3. Methodology example

In this section, it will be demonstrated how the methodological process is applied in practice, taking as an example the Evaluation of the European Union’s cooperation with the Pacific Region 2006-2012, that was commissioned by the Evaluation Unit of the Directorate General for Development and Cooperation (European Commission) to ADE’s Evaluation Department.

The scope of this evaluation covered the **EU’s regional cooperation in the Pacific**[43] over the period **2006-2012** and, according to the evaluation report[44], the purpose was:

- to provide an overall independent assessment of the European Union's past and current cooperation and partnership relations with the Pacific Region; and
- to identify key lessons and to make recommendations to improve the EU’s current and future strategies, programmes and actions. (ADE, 2014a)

Although the ToR didn’t specifically identify the users of this evaluation, they were identified by the evaluation team as relevant external co-operation services of the European Union and the wider public[45]. Based on the team’s understanding of the evaluation objectives and scope, it was determined the set of tools used to collect data (see footnote 47).

In accordance with the DEVCO Evaluation Unit methodology (2006a), the IL was reconstructed by the evaluation team during the inception phase. Presented in the form of an expected impact diagram (see Annex III) and based the key EU strategy

[43] This evaluation covers cooperation with 14 Pacific ACP countries (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu), Timor Leste, and four Overseas Countries and Territories (French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Pitcairn Islands and Wallis and Futuna).

[44] A short overview of EU Pacific cooperation activities is provided in Annex II.

[45] In order to address the recommendations, the evaluation team identified more specifically some of the users of the evaluation. They included European institutions and representatives (notably DG DEVCO and DG MARE), EEAS, EU Delegations, Regional and National Authorising Officers, Regional and National organisations representing the Pacific Island Countries and Territories, OCT administrations, European Investment Bank, SPC. However the lack of a clear view of the users from the beginning of the process is something that strongly determines the effectiveness of the evaluation (see conclusion).

documents[46], preliminary interviews with EU geographical desk officers and first analysis of the inventory, the IL summarise the overall strategy of the EU cooperation with the Pacific region. For six intervention sectors, recognised as priority areas in the strategic documents, the inputs and expected outputs, outcomes, intermediate impacts (in a long-medium term) and global impacts (long term) were identified.

Since the evaluation methodology, process and outputs are long and complex, this example henceforward will only focus in one of these areas, education, which also correspond to EQ4.

A total amount of €118M was allocated to interventions in the Education sector through several budget lines/instruments, particularly targeted at three purposes: Basic education, TVET and Human Resources Development (ADE, 2014a). Figure 4 presents the expected effects chain, showing how these inputs should ultimately have led to Economic growth, good governance and security.

Based on the strategic objectives and expected impact pursued by the EU, the evaluation team elaborated an EQ (EQ4) that intend to assess to what extend the provided inputs in this specific sector contributed to the expected impacts for the Pacific region.

In order to answer this evaluation question and ensure all the dimensions are covered, the evaluation designed the evaluation matrix (Annex IV). It identified **6 judgement criteria** that can be explained as approaches through which the EU support to education could have contributed to pursue the defined objectives. The judgement criteria selected for EQ4 were:

- Reinforcement of key regional education institutions;
- Improvement of the ability of students graduate secondary and tertiary institutions;
- Influence in the employment of students;
- Mainstream of the reduction of labour drain and enhanced gender issues;

[46] The core documents used to develop the IL included: the Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) for the Pacific Region for the 9th and 10th European Development Funds (EDFs); the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) for the Pacific ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) countries for the 9th and 10th EDFs; and the Single Programming Documents (SPDs) for the Pacific Overseas Countries and Territories for the 9th and 10th EDFs, including the regional programme for Pacific OCTs (ADE, 2014a).

- Development of complementarities and synergies among similar programmes;
- Coordination and development complementarities with other donors.

Figure 4. Effects chain in Education Sector (extraction from IL)

Source: ADE (2014a)

INPUTS
Education (RSP €8M, CSP €70M, SPD €40M)
▪ Basic Education and TVET
▪ Vocational Training
▪ Human Resources development

OUTPUTS
Skilled and adaptable labour force development

OUTCOMES
Human capacity for service provision and investment built

INTERMEDIATE IMPACTS
Improved livelihoods by capitalising on economics and opportunities

GLOBAL IMPACTS
Economic growth, sus. dev. good governance and security enhanced and stimulated through regionalism

EQ 4: To what extent has the EU support to education and vocational training contributed to the development of employable skills of various sections of the Pacific population?

(+ 6 JC and 17 Indicators)

Under each judgement criteria a set of indicators was established that allowed to collect data under that criteria. For instance, to determine to what extend the **EU interventions reinforced key regional institutions to support basic education and vocational training** (JC 4.1), the evaluation team assessed, among other things, the effects triggered by the **existence of a running regional basic education resource centre** (I 4.1.1) funded by the EU cooperation.

All the information collected[47] to answer this question was compiled in a data collection grid (Annex V), structured by JC and Indicators with mention to the respective data source. A detailed review of those facts allowed the evaluation team to summarise the findings. In the scheme below, there is an extraction of some of the findings determined under JC 4.1 and some examples of the data collected that support those findings[48]. Thus, an analysis of the findings under each JC allowed the evaluation team to produce and justify one conclusion (C13) linked to those findings, which therefore provided arguments to outline a concise recommendation (R17)[49].

For example, the evaluators found that the resource centre established under the PRIDE project had overall positive effects in the reinforcement of education at a regional level, however evidence of their effects at natural level was rather thin. Together with other findings allow the evaluation to conclude and recommend that education or TVET should not be a focal sector in 11th EDF regional programme but rather be addressed at national level (NIPs). In this particular example, the recommendation suggest practical repercussion in the context of the preparation of the 11th EDF (and related NIPs) and was directed specially towards DG DEVCO and the National Authorising Officers. The urgency and importance of each recommendation has been estimated respectively on the basis of the need for follow-up before the next regional strategy is agreed or on the severity of the problems that it addresses (see annex VI). R17 have been defined as

[47] The set of tools used to collect information to answer this EQ included the review of strategy documents (RSPs, CSPs, SPDs) interviews (HQ, sector and field) and particularly the review of the main funded projects under this sector, highlighted by the inventory.

[48] This extraction refer to a small selection that intend to show in a simple manner the link between the data collected, the findings, the conclusion and the recommendation. Should be noted that the findings presented here refer only and partially to JC 4.1 and, therefore, are don't contextualise completely the following conclusion and recommendation. The detailed information is available in the final report of the evaluation.

[49] Although in this example the focus will be in Conclusion 13 and therefore Recommendation 17, the findings from EQ4 provided inputs to more than one conclusion (e.g. C3 focus on the alignment & effective implementation through regional organisations and C4 about Building regional capacity to supplement national resources)

medium urgency and high importance given the degree to which this problem has impacted on the beneficiaries of EU support.

SOME FINDINGS *(under JC 4.1)* Source: ADE, 2014c
EU support focused on the reinforcement of regional institutions through the PRIDE project, with overall positive effects.
University of the South Pacific stakeholders stated that PRIDE was managed effectively and the resource centre remains live and useful for University of the South Pacific beneficiaries. It has been integrated into University of the South Pacific and continues to be run by them. *Meeting Note 502 (Interview)*
PRIDE established an online regional education resource centre to encourage best practice, knowledge and dissemination, as a means of strengthening regional educational capacity in Pacific ACP countries.
The main vehicle for implementing the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) was the PRIDE project, ran from 2003 to 2011 and was funded under EDF9 (€8 million, representing 28% of the EDF9 RIP) and through the New Zealand Agency for International Development funds (NZD5 million). *Source: Inventory and Project Documents* In March 2009 PRIDE has organised a regional conference and exhibition to showcase best practice in education, back to back with the Forum EducationMinisters Meeting (FEdMM) in Tonga. *External Assistance Management Report 07/2009 (Project Documents)*
EU interventions also targeted capacity-strengthening at national level. Evidence of their effects is rather thin.
Project was only consistent with national TVET policy because the policies were very wide ranging. In the earlier TVET Plan 'Education for Living' (2005), there were 21 policy areas, with no priorities. The later TVET Action Plan (2010) was less general but allowed much scope for a variety of sub-projects, several of which could be hardly described as high priority areas. *Meeting Note 509 (Interview)*

CONCLUSION 13 *(based on EQ4)* Source: ADE, 2014a
EU support for education was successful in building regional capacity but had only partial success at country and territorial levels.

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RECOMMENDATION 17 *(based on Conclusion 13)* Source: ADE, 2014a
The EU should not include education or TVET as a focal sector in 11th EDF regional programme, but should rather promote the development of good quality EMIS, tracer studies and institutional capacity at national level through its national indicative programmes.

3. Description of activities

The work developed during the internship period was very diverse and, although evaluation was the subject of all the activities, it also included other activities besides the evaluations themselves. Though, I was directly involved in (1) four strategic evaluations,

- Evaluation of Blending
- Evaluation of the EU cooperation with Pakistan
- Evaluation of the Use of Different Transfer Modalities in ECHO Humanitarian Aid Actions
- Evaluation of the ECHO response to the Syrian crisis

(2) one tender preparation

- Review of Evaluation Systems in Development Co-operation, commissioned by NORAD on behalf of OCDE/DAC

and (3) a consultation project, alongside with other minor activities[50]

- Certification of Cooperation Technique Belge (CTB) in M&E, commissioned by CTB

In line with the scope of this report the description of the activities in this chapter will be organised in two sections. The first will review the activities within the evaluations contracted by the European Commission in close relation with the content of the two previous chapters and organised in a way that illustrates the evaluation tools used in those evaluations (i.e. (1) above). The second section will describe the activities related with the other projects that, although they don't fit in the context previously presented in this report, took an important part in the internship and therefore have to be detailed here (i.e. (2) and (3) above).

3.1. Evaluation activities

In order to produce operational recommendations based on solid information, the methodology to be applied has to rely on appropriate and rigorous evaluation tools. The selection of such tools should be based not only on the tasks to be achieved and the

[50] Included small participations in evaluations for other donors for less than a week and a consultancy work for DEVCO doing content quality control in the migration of their new capacity4dev website (http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/).

context of the evaluation but also on logistic and implementation constraints (e.g. security) and consequently diverge in each evaluation (DEVCO, 2014).

This section is not intended to present a detailed list of the evaluation tools[51] available but presents details of the ones in which I was involved during the internship. However, since these tools are frequently used in most evaluations, the selection presented below constitutes a representative sample of the most common evaluation tools, particularly focused in data collection and analysis.

3.1.1. Literature review

The documentary collection and analysis is a very important part of every evaluation and normally takes part in an early stage, even starting during the proposal preparation. It allows the evaluators to acknowledge the context of the evaluation.

Although I was not directly involved in this activity in any of the evaluations, which had already taken place when the internship started, I had to do an in-dept review of the most important documents for each evaluation in order to have a complete understanding of the subject and scope of the evaluations I was involved in. That allowed me to better perform the tasks entrusted to me and furthermore it also allowed me to quickly take over any task within those evaluations.

3.1.2. Inventory

Another important data collection/analysis tool is the inventory, which is usually prepared during the inception phase and, if needed, completed later on during the desk phase. An inventory is a compilation of all the EU funded operations within the scope of the evaluation and it is used either only to have a comprehensive understanding of the EU response using quantitative data or also to develop in-dept quantitative analysis (e.g. as a base for a cost-efficiency analysis).

[51] A more detailed list of evaluation tools is available in DEVCO Evaluation Guidelines (2006d) (http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/evaluation-methods-guidance-vol4_en.pdf)

The inventory is usually directly extracted from the EC's database(s)[52] and includes key information about each project[53]. However, in some cases (e.g. Evaluation of Transfer Modalities /Blending) the data available in the databases is not enough to build the indicators proposed in the methodological approach. In those cases, for a selection of projects[54], the inventory has to be completed with additional data from other sources.

During the internship at ADE's evaluation department, I was responsible to compile and manage a basic inventory for all four evaluations I was involved in (inception phase), which often included the combination of information from more than one database into one document, the selection of projects within the scope of the evaluation and also the re-design of some indicators.

Additionally, for some evaluations, particularly the Evaluation of Blending and the Evaluation of Pakistan, I was also responsible to write the inventory section, part of the Inception Report, which is intended not only to generally describe the EU response in that particular context, with quantitative data accompanied with graphic illustration, but also to relate those results with the guidelines appointed in documentary sources available.

Furthermore, for the Evaluation of Transfer Modalities, I was responsible to complete the inventory with information manually extracted from other official documents [55] (desk phase). This information was afterwards used to perform a cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness analysis, in which I also took an important role (see section 3.1.3). The extraction was made for a selection of 163 projects grouped in four categories, which corresponded with four extraction phases, and took place for several weeks. It was extracted quantitative (e.g. financial info) and qualitative data (e.g. context). Under this activity, I also wrote a description of the methodology used for the data extraction, part of the Desk Report.

Finally, during the synthesis phase of the Evaluation of Transfer Modalities I was responsible to collect, directly from the partners, additional information to cross-check

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[52] The databases used in the internship include ECHO's database (HOPE) and two DEVCO databases (CRIS and Data Warehouse).

[53] The relevant information available in those databases are year, benefiting country, sector, EU total funded amount, EU funded amount by year, partner modality, financial instrument, ect.

[54] This selection is made in close relation with the evaluation strategy defined and with the purpose of fulfilling the majority of specificities. This selection will also be in line with the interventions and countries visited during the filed phase.

[55] Single form, which is a compilation of the documents submitted by the implementing partner, and FicheOp, which correspond to ECHO's appraisal.

with the data previously extracted during the desk phase. To accomplish this task I had firstly to gather a list of contacts from the partners (HQs officers and country directors)[56] and then contact them to request the data. Meanwhile, the internship period ended up and I couldn't do the analysis of the collected data.

3.1.3. Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness analysis

Under the Evaluation of Transfer Modalities, I was involved, together with the team leader, in the implementation of a cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness analysis of the use of the different modalities (cash, voucher and in-kind) in programmes supported by ECHO. These types of analyses allow the evaluators to compare the resources allocation strategies, to assess the economically most efficient way to fulfill the objective and therefore, to provide recommendations on how to design the policies.

Thus, using an indicator and context variables, the objective of these analyses was to determine which transfer modality presents a better response and under which circumstances. This analysis was performed based on the data collected in the inventory and the preliminary findings were presented in the desk report.

3.1.5. Interviews

The interviews are an important information collection tool within any evaluation because they allow the evaluators to collect qualitative data (e.g. facts, points of view, analysis or opinions) from people that had a strategic role in the programme/policy implementation (e.g. donors, partners, beneficiaries and specialists on the area)[57].

The interviews can be used at different stages in the evaluation and with different purposes. At the inception phase, preliminary interviews (mainly with Commission mangers at the HQ) are carried out to help the evaluators setting out the programme/policy purpose and intervention logic. During the desk and field phase, in-dept interviews are conducted with a wide range of respondents in order to investigate how the different stakeholders perceive the relevance and impact of the programme/policy. These interviews are conducted using an interview guideline that is

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[56] No contact list from the partners is provided from the DG.

[57] Another important tool used to collect this type of data is the survey. However as I was not involved in any activity related to any survey, it is nor presented in this section.

structure in a set of questions inferred directly from the evaluation matrix, but the evaluator has some freedom to slightly modify it. Having this guide will enable a comparative analysis of the interviews set. Finally, some interviews can be conducted during the synthesis phase to assemble feedback from the first findings/analysis (DEVCO, 2006c).

Due to the fact that these interviews are confidential I could only participate, with the authorisation of the interviewee, in one interview during the desk phase of the Evaluation of Transfer Modalities where I was responsible to take notes. However I could afterwards review notes from other interviews, which allowed me to fully understand how the information collected in the interviews links directly with the evaluation questions. Another related task concerned the field interviews for the Evaluation of the Syrian Crisis in Turkey, where I was responsible, under a very limited timeframe, to arrange the meetings with the DG ECHO field officer, EU delegation officers and a wide range of partners (country directors) operating in the field.

3.2. Other activities

3.2.1. Tenders

The proposal preparation is a very important moment of the evaluation, since not only is it the first approach from the evaluation team to the theme but also because it's the one that allow them to actually perform the evaluation. Due to the timeframe of the internship I only had the opportunity to be involved in one tender preparation, however it allow me to understand the process and key aspects to achieve a high-quality tender.

Under this project, I was responsible to follow-up contact with the selected experts, to receive all the documentation and also to prepare the CVs according to the offer requirements. This is a major feature because each expert's CV must highlight in a simple and concise way his or her key competences in the subject of the evaluation. Furthermore, I was also in charge of writing the section with a short presentation of the company and key strengths of the team as a whole.

3.2.2. Consultancy activities

Besides from the evaluation projects, which are the main work within the evaluation team, ADE sometimes is also contracted to do other consultancy work. In this context, ADE was contracted by CTB to compile, based in international guidelines, a set of principles/best practices in the evaluation field and to determine to what extent CTB fulfil them. Thus, under this project, I was responsible to do all the research work, which allowed me to identify and better understand the different evaluation systems in the international organisations.

4. Conclusion

In this section, it will be presented from a critical perspective a reflection on a few aspects highlighted in the previous section. It will be structured in three topics: the structural organisation of the evaluation function, the use of evidence of the evaluation's outputs and finally the strength of the results.

As it was described in chapter 1, the evaluation function follows the EC's general decentralized organizational framework. However, a couple of arguments compete with this approach, being more in line with the centralisation of the process. On one hand, the majority of the evaluations are already outsourced, meaning that the evaluation manager acts more as a contact point between the evaluation team and the stakeholders involved than actually as someone with an active role in the evaluation output.

On the other hand, centralisation would allow an easier implementation of a common methodology, which in turn would provide more comparable outputs among evaluations in all DGs and therefore improve the independence of the process. This is important because many objectives and policies are transversal to several areas and this would allow to take advantage from specialized human resources and it would enhance the synergies between them.

Examples as the World Bank, where the evaluation function is centralised at a higher level reporting directly to the Board of Executive Directors, show us that the IEG that acts as a completely independent unit where the management cannot alter study findings or prevent their release. In the EC, even if the evaluation function is separate from the management, they are considerably closer.

This argument leads to another of the topics, which intends to reflect on how to promote the use of evidence from the evaluations by policy-makers, which has been acknowledged as one of the weakest links of the EC's evaluations.

According to several reviews, to improve the use of evaluation findings by policy-makers, it is necessary to allow the supply agents (e.g. evaluators and commissioners) to collaborate and form relationships with policy-makers (e.g. programme managers, senior civil servants and politicians) (OECD, 2015). This argument is potentially in conflict with the one previously appointed because it advocates a closer relation between the management and the evaluation team, endangering the independence of the process.

However, if it is accepted that the main purpose of any evaluation is to provide inputs for evidence-based policy design and implementation, then a more balanced relation between those two groups should be sought, still preserving the objectivity of the evaluators. It is known that people are more likely to use evaluations results if they understand and feel ownership of the evaluation, which it more likely happens if they have been actually involved in the process (Buchanan-Smith & Cosgrave, 2013).

There are several ways to achieve a better engagement from the users of an evaluation[58], however simple things as clearly identifying who they are and finding out what they want to know when the evaluation manager first designs the evaluation are the most important ones. This allows the evaluation team to narrow the scope and to provide more effective recommendations. Furthermore, it would also benefit the access to the information that is often a problem that the evaluation team struggles to overcome because most of the users don't feel ownership of the evaluation.

Finally, the last topic of reflection is related to the quality of evidence of the evaluation results. As it was explained, the answers to the evaluation questions result from information collected from different data sources that then are triangulated between them. However, along the process it often becomes clear that the quality of evidence is not balanced among all the EQs, some evidence being stronger than other. Some evaluations already use an approach that evaluate the quality of the evidence by classifying not the source of information but how well the information collected from that source responds to the judgement criteria that is being analysed. By including this process in the methodology already implemented, the users of the evaluation can easily acknowledge the strength of the information collected and would therefore have a more clear understanding of the evidence available.

In conclusion, the use of a common methodology has its strengths and weaknesses and even the methodology used in DEVCO's evaluations combines approaches slightly different, which only enriches the process and increased the likelihood of finding a balance between the engagement of the target users and the need to preserve independence and objectivity. However, as it is shown by ALNAP (2013), engendering a commitment to evaluation often involves promoting openness to change.

[58] The Pilot Guide for Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (Buchanan-Smith & Cosgrave, 2013) identifies several ways to involve the intended users of the evaluation.

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Annexes

Annex I: Overview of the number of evaluations in the EC

This annex presents an inventory of the number of evaluations carried out by each DG within the period 2007-2014. The data was extracted manually from the EC's database.

Table 1. Evolution of the number of evaluation per Directorate-General (2007-2014)

Source: EC's database of evaluation files (http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/search/search.do)

Directorate-General	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	Average by year	%
International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO)	13	10	14	12	14	16	6	12	**97**	**12**	**10.8%**
Eurostat (ESTAT)	7	1	7	13	14	12	10	8	**72**	**9**	**8.0%**
Research and Innovation (RTD)	3	6	18	17	16	8	0	3	**71**	**9**	**7.9%**
Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)	7	10	10	5	4	10	12	8	**66**	**8**	**7.4%**
Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW)	7	4	9	9	10	8	7	8	**62**	**8**	**6.9%**
Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO)	7	10	8	9	5	10	4	0	**53**	**7**	**5.9%**
Health and Food Safety (SANTE)	4	2	5	12	14	5	5	2	**49**	**6**	**5.5%**
Education and Culture (EAC)	11	3	7	4	6	4	10	2	**47**	**6**	**5.3%**
Communication (COMM)	2	7	6	5	3	12	4	6	**45**	**6**	**5.0%**
Migration and Home Affairs (HOME)	6	1	8	6	12	0	8	2	**43**	**5**	**4.8%**
Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR)	7	4	0	0	4	2	14	7	**38**	**5**	**4.2%**
Justice and Consumers (JUST)	5	3	1	3	10	8	2	0	**32**	**4**	**3.6%**
Mobility and Transport (MOVE)	5	0	1	4	4	4	3	9	**30**	**4**	**3.4%**

Directorate-General	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	Average by year	%
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (EMPL)	2	2	5	6	2	7	4	0	**28**	**4**	**3.1%**
Communications Networks, Content and Technology (CNECT)	8	5	3	5	1	1	1	0	**24**	**3**	**2.7%**
Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN)	2	5	1	5	1	5	4	0	**23**	**3**	**2.6%**
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE)	0	2	2	4	4	6	2	0	**20**	**3**	**2.2%**
Environment (ENV)	1	2	4	5	3	1	0	1	**17**	**2**	**1.9%**
Regional and urban Policy (REGIO)	0	1	6	8	2	0	0	0	**17**	**2**	**1.9%**
Energy (ENER)	4	1	3	1	5	1	0	0	**15**	**2**	**1.7%**
Trade (TRADE)	4	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	**14**	**2**	**1.6%**
Taxation and Customs Union (TAXUD)	1	2	1	1	3	0	1	4	**13**	**2**	**1.5%**
Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA)	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	**6**	**1**	**0.7%**
Interpretation (SCIC)	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	**5**	**1**	**0.6%**
Joint Research Centre (JRC)	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	**4**	**1**	**0.4%**
Budget (BUDG)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**	**0**	**0.2%**
European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**	**0**	**0.1%**
Secretariat-General (SG)	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**	**0**	**0.1%**
Climate Action (CLIMA)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Competition (COMP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Translation (DGT)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Informatics (DIGIT)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
European Political Strategy Center	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
European Personnel Selection Office	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Human Resources and Security (HR)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Internal Audit Service (IAS)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**

Directorate-General	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total	Average by year	%
Infrastructures and Logistics - Brussels (OIB)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Infrastructures and Logistics - Luxembourg (OIL)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Publications Office (OP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Office For Administration And Payment Of Individual Entitlements (PMO)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Legal Service (SJ)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0.0%**
Total	**108**	**88**	**128**	**142**	**138**	**121**	**97**	**73**	**895**	**112**	**100.0%**

Annex II: EU Pacific Cooperation Activities

The EU committed a total of €794 million to projects and programmes in the Pacific region over the evaluation period 2006-2012, either through regional or country interventions. As described below, 70% (€552.7 million) of the support provided was directed towards specific Pacific ACP countries. Just under one fifth (€149.4 million) was designated as benefitting the Pacific Region or OCTs as a whole, whilst the remaining 12% (€91.9 million) was directed towards Pacific OCTs. (ADE, 2014b)

Figure 5. EU-Pacific Cooperation by beneficiary zone

Source: ADE (2014b)

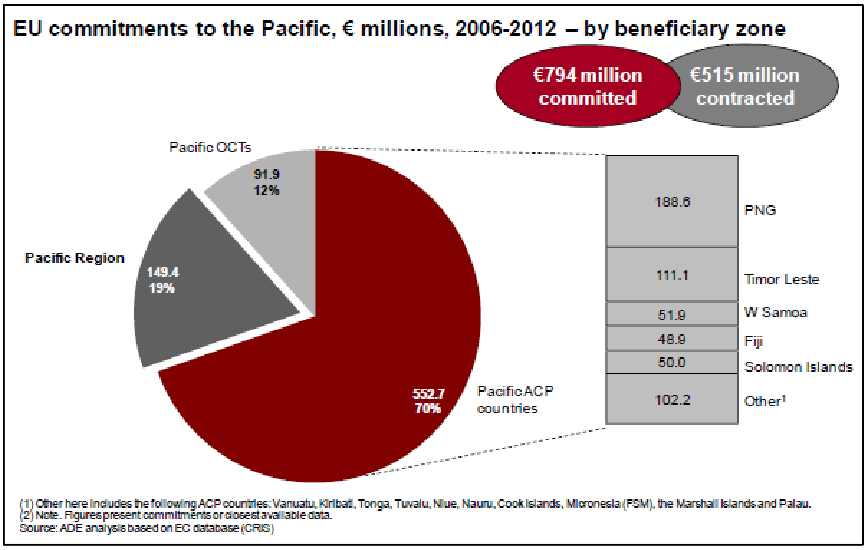


Table 2. Total commitments by funding source

Source: ADE (2014b)

	Geographic instruments	Thematic instruments		Thematic programmes				Total funding
	EDF	EIDHR	IfS	DCI-ENV	Investing in People	DEV COM	DCI-SUCRE	
Regional €m	136.9	1.0	-	11.4	-	0.1	-	149.4
# Regional interventions	22	1	-	1	-	1	-	25
PACP €m	488.4	4.2	2.1	19.0	1.5	0.0	37.5	552.7
# PACP interventions	136	21	5	6	2	1	5	176
OCT €m	91.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	91.9
# OCT interventions	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
Total €m	717.2	5.2	2.1	30.4	1.5	0.1	37.5	794
Total # interventions	171	22	5	7	2	2	5	214

Figure 6. Commitments to Pacific regional interventions by sector

Source: ADE (2014b)

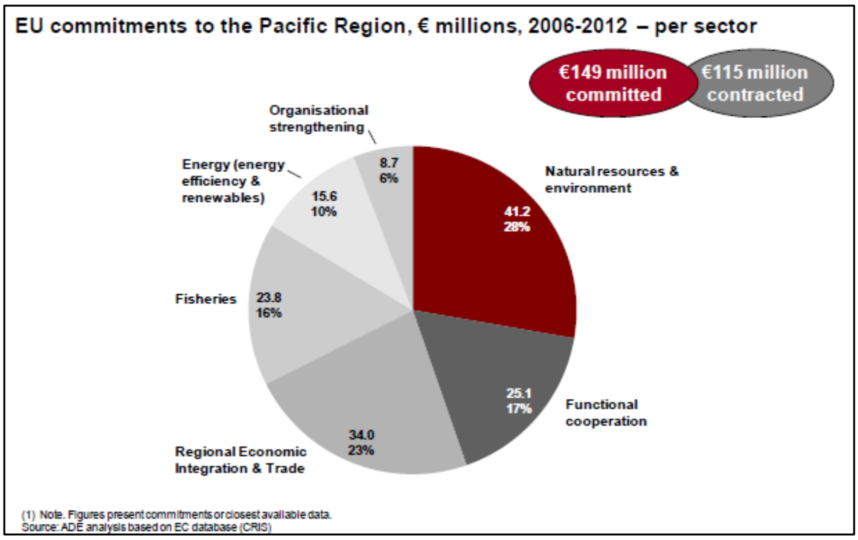


Figure 7. Commitments to Pacific ACP countries interventions by sector

Source: ADE (2014b)

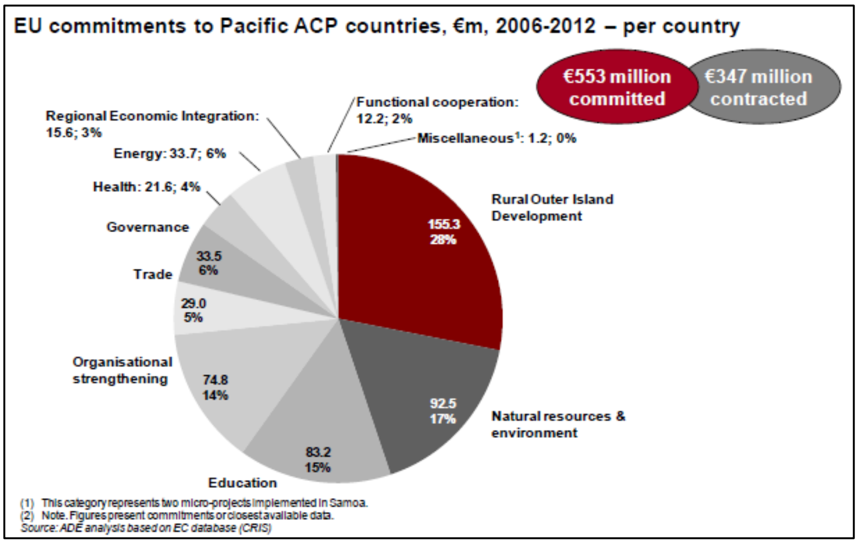
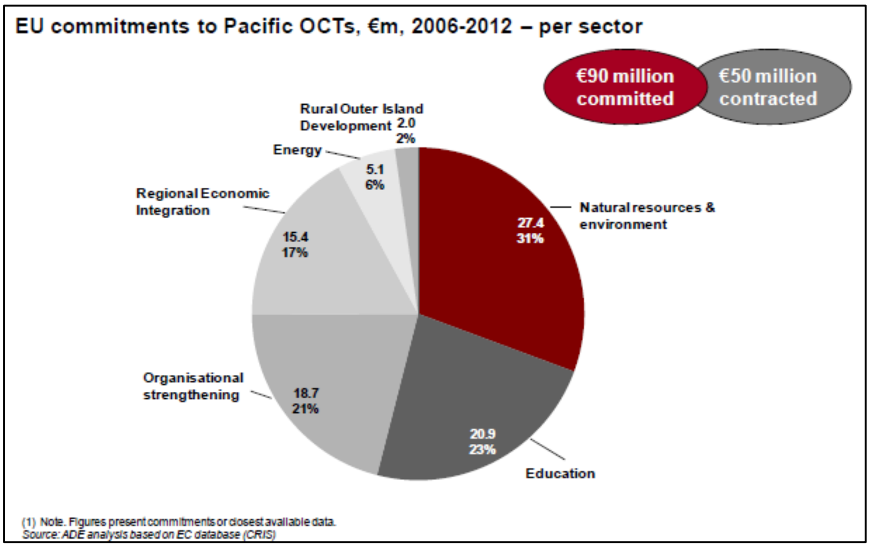


Figure 8. Commitments to Pacific OCT countries interventions by sector

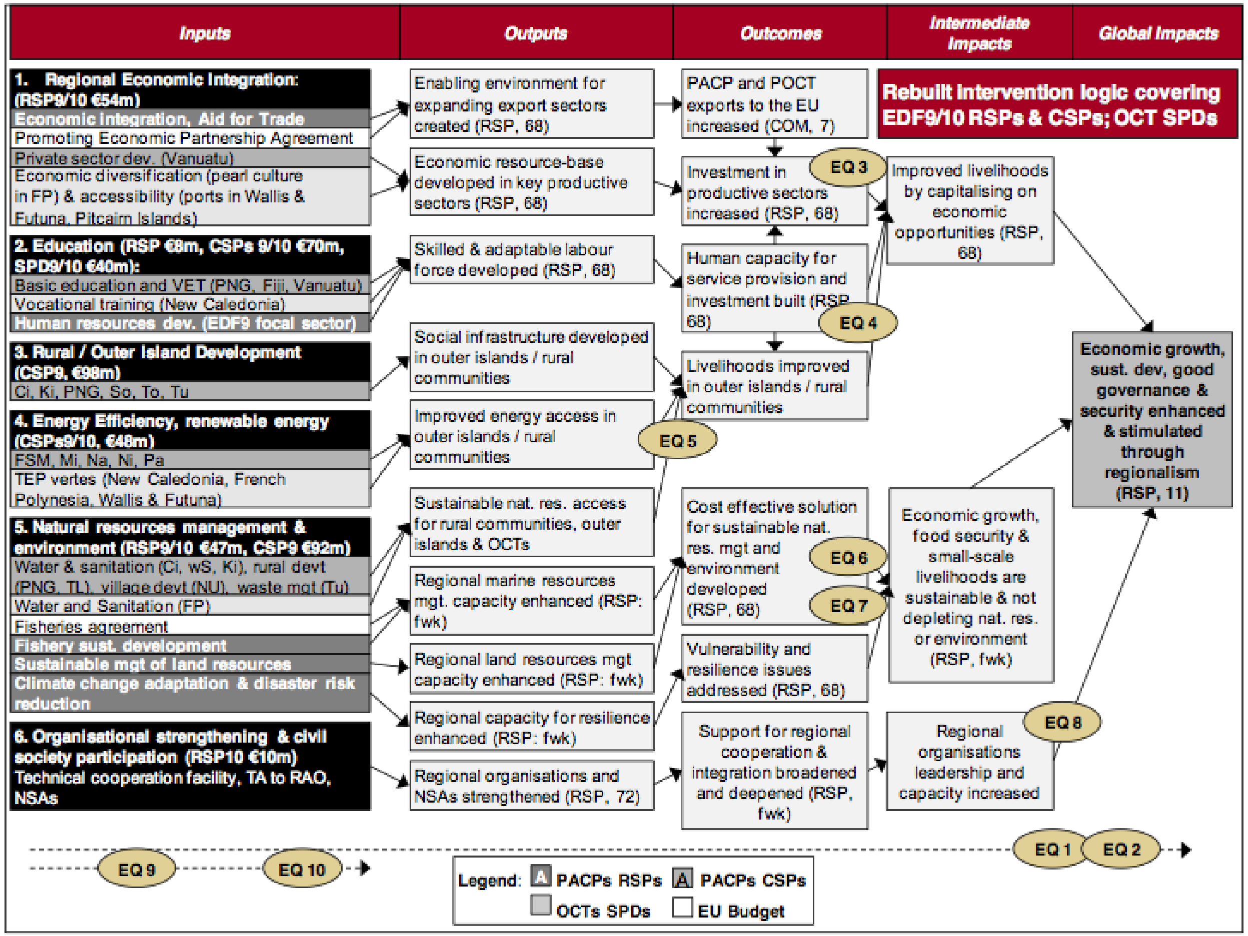
Source: ADE (2014b)



Annex III: Intervention Logic

Figure 9. Intervention Logic of the Evaluation of xxx

Source: ADE (2014a)



Annex IV: Evaluation Matrix

This annex presents an extraction of the evaluation matrix related to EQ4 (ADE, 2015a).

EQ 4 - To what extent has the EU support to education and vocational training contributed to the development of employable skills of various sections of the Pacific population?
JC 4.1 - The EU interventions reinforced key regional institutions to support basic education and vocational work-related training
I-4.1.1 - Existence of a running regional basic education resource centre
I-4.1.2 - Existence of an updated M&E plan at national and regional levels, notably integrating gender issues
I-4.1.3 - Involvement of key regional institutions in preparing national action plans for in strengthening teacher effectiveness, engaging families and communities in Education and ensuring career and college readiness
JC 4.2 – The EU support to basic and rural education programmes improved sustainably and the ability of students (males and females) to reach and graduate from secondary and tertiary institutions
I-4.2.1 - % dropout in primary
I-4.2.2 - % retention rates between primary – secondary – post secondary
I-4.2.3 – Evidence of improved teaching effectiveness; strengthened competence and capacity
JC 4.3 - The EU support to Technical and vocational training has led to the employment of students
I-4.3.1 - % of recruitment of VET students
I-4.3.2 – Distribution of qualification among the employed /unemployed work force
I-4.3.3 – Job creation in relation to TVET
JC 4.4 – The EU interventions mainstreamed the reduction of labour drain and enhanced gender issues in its educational programmes implementation
I-4.4.1 - % of labour drain among secondary and post-secondary students
I-4.4.2 – Gender balance of students in secondary education
I-4.4.3 – Gender balance of students in post-secondary education
JC 4.5 – The EU developed complementarities and synergies among its key cooperation instruments and programmes supporting employable skills development
I-4.5.1 – Alignment (coherence) of EU RIP and NIP/SPD programmes’ specific objectives for Education and TVET
I-4.5.2 – Alignment (coherence) of EU RIP programmes’ specific objectives with nonprogrammable projects
I-4.5.3 – Evolution in the number of bridges set among RIP and non-programmable projects at expected results level
JC 4.6 – The EU coordinated and developed complementarities with Member States and key regional donors in the education and TVET sector
I-4.6.1 – Existence of thematic working groups or regular exchange of information with MS and among donors (at regional and national level)
I-4.6.2 – Share of the EU contribution in DP support to the sector
I-4.6.3 - Intended vs. acknowledged EU added-value by the government and DPs involved in the same sector

Annex V: Data Collection Grid

Annex VI: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This annex presents an extraction of the final report of the Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with the Pacific Region 2006-2012. It combines the findings, conclusion and recommendation related to EQ4 published in the main report (ADE, 2015a).

C13: Education	EU support for education was successful in building regional capacity but had only partial success at country and territorial levels.
Explanation: The EU's regional support for the education sector built up regional capacity for assisting countries in the design and monitoring of educational policies and frameworks. The resulting resource centre has been integrated within the University of the South Pacific and will remain available following project completion. However country-level capacity constraints limited progress in harmonising policies and standards for education across the region. Country and territorial support for education has had mixed results, determined largely by capacity levels in the national/territorial institutions in question and by the ability of the EU to attract quality technical assistance during implementation.	
Supporting arguments: ▪ The PRIDE regional project (9th EDF) was a landmark in raising the level of strategic planning in the region and in building sustainable capacity and resources at the University of the South Pacific. But limited country-level capacity presented a challenge to the roll-out of national-level sub-projects, as well as limiting progress in the harmonisation of policies and standards for education. ▪ Country-level support (as proposed under the 10th EDF) for improving access to education and training has so far had mixed results, depending on the country or territory of implementation. While the human resource development programme in New Caledonia has achieved good results, those implemented in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea faced greater implementation challenges due to the constraints within national administrations and the difficulties of attracting technical assistance.	

Based on EQ4

R17:	**The EU should not include education or TVET as a focal sector in 11th EDF regional programme, but should rather promote the development of good quality EMIS, tracer studies and institutional capacity at national level through its national indicative programmes.**

Basis for the recommendation:

Regional support to the education sector has been provided under the 9th EDF and stopped under the 10th. The findings of this evaluation suggest that the thrust of the support to that sector should indeed take place at national, rather than at regional, level.

Suggested actions:

- Set the priority on the development of good quality EMIS, because in the absence of such instruments it is not possible to properly monitor the results in terms of graduation rates disaggregated by gender, rural and urban populations and other essential indicators.
- Similarly, the EU should supporting tracer studies because their absence limits the ability to monitor employability objectives as well as to design TVET programmes that fit the demand of the labour market.

Recommendation directed towards: DG DEVCO; National Authorising Officers

Based on Conclusion 13

Figure 10. Prioritisation of the recommendations

Source: ADE (2014b)