
Evaluation Guidance Note for Leonardo Projects

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INTRODUCTION

This Guidance Note on evaluation is intended for promoters running projects under the European Vocational Training Action Programme 'Leonardo da Vinci'.

Evaluation is a key aspect of the Leonardo programme as it is a process which helps to identify areas of weaknesses or strengths within a project, and, as a consequence, contributes to take corrective measures when necessary.

It is essential for all partners within a Leonardo project to understand the concept of evaluation and also to plan an evaluation strategy in order to analyse and interpret data about the projects to identify achievements and areas of weakness.

This Guidance note aims to highlight the importance of evaluation and also to provide practical information to projects that can be integrated into the planning and operation of the project throughout the project life.

The first section of the Guidance Note answers some very basic questions about evaluation. The main body of the Guidance Note then considers four key issues for planning and undertaking an evaluation. These are:

- Who should undertake the evaluation?
- When should evaluation take place?
- What should be evaluated?
- How is an evaluation conducted?

The Guidance Note also contains supplementary information in a series of annexes:

- important tips for evaluation;
- commissioning an external evaluation; and
- a glossary of terms.

Elements of this Guidance Note are derived from documents issued to project managers within the Leonardo da Vinci Action Programme but also from the ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT Community Initiatives.

1.0 BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT EVALUATION

1.1 What is evaluation?

Evaluation is a structured process by which your project's activities are assessed and understood. It involves analysing and interpreting data about the project in order to identify achievements and areas of weakness.

Evaluation is partly a statistical exercise, but statistics (such as 'hits' on a distance-learning web site, or numbers of people enrolled on a pilot training programme) only tell half the story. A good evaluation involves an element of qualitative analysis, such as learners' surveys, discussions with beneficiaries or trainers.

You may also wish to evaluate the management, administrative and technical processes by which you arrived at your products. The value of this aspect of evaluation is that it can give pointers as to how you could improve these features next time, both for your own benefit and for that of other (future) promoters.

1.2 How does evaluation relate to Leonardo?

Leonardo projects are funded to test innovative approaches for improving the access to, and transparency of, vocational training materials, methods, practices and products, and enhancing the dissemination of these outcomes. You need to evaluate your project in order to find out whether the approaches tested have been successful or not. You also need to be able to identify the key lessons which should be passed on to others (policy-makers or practitioners) interested in the same issues.

In particular, projects within the Leonardo programme should make progress towards achieving one or more of the following objectives:

- **Objective 1** – to improve the skills and competences of people, especially young people, in initial vocational training at all levels, with a view to facilitating their integration and reintegration into the labour market;
- **Objective 2** – to improve the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training and the lifelong acquisition of skills and competences;
- **Objective 3** – to promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation, with a view to improving competitiveness and entrepreneurship, and also in view of new employment possibilities.

You may be able to provide quantitative evidence of compliance with these objectives. However, the qualitative analysis provided by a good evaluation will often be of more use in judging the outcomes of your approach – i.e. the learning and process 'successes' of your project which are not necessarily captured by statistics.

1.3 Why evaluate?

The results of your evaluation exercise will:

- identify what worked well and what did not work so well, in terms of both what was done (outputs) and how it was done (processes);
- assist you and others to plan current and future projects (by improving the performance of the project, or identifying new opportunities);
- enable you to build on your successes and develop good practice, and avoid repeating mistakes;
- assist you in monitoring your project; and
- help you to shape your dissemination and mainstreaming strategy.

1.4 How does evaluation relate to monitoring?

Monitoring simply tracks and records hard information such as the number and status of beneficiaries coming onto your project, the number of staff hours worked, or the number of training modules produced. All projects are expected to monitor for quality control and procedural purposes as a matter of course. However, monitoring does not equate to evaluation.

When you monitor, the information you collect does not speak for itself – it has to be interpreted (i.e. evaluated) in some way, if only to steer you to new kinds of questions. Monitoring is therefore a useful starting point and feeds into an effective evaluation. But evaluation can have a far wider scope than monitoring, as it can take in processes, products and outcomes which are less easy to measure quantitatively.

Evaluation makes use of monitoring data to answer questions about what happened, how it happened, why it happened and whether or not it achieved the stated aims. Evaluation may directly interpret the statistics collected for monitoring purposes, or the monitoring data will generate new qualitative questions for evaluation to address. It might also be an entirely separate activity which looks at other types of issues than those that can be addressed by monitoring. For example, the presence of 'soft' learning outcomes (like improved self-esteem, especially where the target group is socially disadvantaged), or the relevance of a learning resource to a given sector as judged by a sectoral expert, are necessarily outcomes that cannot easily be measured through quantitative monitoring.

Leonardo projects also rely on a number of transnational partners working together to produce a common product. An overall evaluation of the partnership's work is useful for supplementing the monitoring and quality assurance measures which each partner should put in place as a matter of course.

1.5 Who is it for?

An important part of Leonardo project activity is to get your successful activities, outcomes, products and lessons taken up on a wider basis. This is termed 'mainstreaming' or 'capitalisation'. It involves policy-makers and practitioners at local, regional, national or European level using your project's outcomes to inform their actions. Your dissemination activities will play a large part in enabling this to take place. An important function of evaluation, therefore, is to be sure that the lessons you are passing on to your audience are relevant and valid, and attributable to the way in which the project has been carried out. Your project may also build on the achievements of previous projects (termed 'valorisation'). In this case, an evaluation shows your target groups, previous beneficiaries and policy-makers how your current project builds on previous work.

In addition, a good evaluation validates your conclusions and gives credibility to your products. Evaluations often have as their goal the generation of good practice and learning points for the sector. But it is also worth remembering that an evaluation of areas which have been less than successful can be equally valid. While it is an unfortunate fact that some projects do not achieve all their aims and objectives, a 'failed' project can be useful in informing future developments, so that pitfalls can be avoided and success maximised. In any case, for all projects, whether of a good or of a bad quality, a frank and independent evaluation of the processes and products is vital. The results of this evaluation also need to be set out and disseminated in such a way as to have the greatest possible impact on policy-makers, other project promoters, target groups and practitioners in the sector addressed in the project.

Your evaluation will be of interest to a wide audience, including:

- your beneficiary groups;
- your transnational partners;
- social partners (representatives of employees and employers);
- your local, regional and national partner organisations;
- other Leonardo projects, the Leonardo National Agencies and the European Commission; and
- policy-makers and representatives from intermediary organisations in a variety of fields – not only connected with training and employment, but also with other key features of your project (e.g. equal opportunities, information technology in training delivery). The findings of your evaluation help not only in shaping policy, but may also influence the way in which policy is implemented (for example, ways of training target groups in new sectors).

2.0 WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE EVALUATION?

There are two types of evaluation activity:

- **self-evaluation** – an evaluation exercise conducted by the project promoter or any other organisation involved in running the project; and
- **external evaluation** – an evaluation undertaken by an individual or organisation from outside the project. Both types of evaluation can be applied to the same project, though they may be carried out at different points, or address different questions or issues.

This Guidance Note is designed to provide useful advice for projects undertaking self-evaluation and external evaluation.

2.1 Self-evaluation

Most projects will probably conduct some self-evaluation (often in conjunction with external evaluation). It is important to ensure that your self-evaluation is done properly, and that staff undertaking this task feel skilled enough to do so. Staff carrying out the evaluation must be provided with the time and resources to be able to draw out the important lessons from your project. The person undertaking the evaluation needs to know what data are available, have a basic understanding of research methods and data analysis, and be able to reflect on the progress of the project against its stated objectives. The skills to interpret this information and report it in a clear and useful manner are also required.

The person appointed to evaluate your project should be as independent from its management as possible. In the case of large organisations such as universities or local authorities, this should not pose a problem. Other types of organisation may find the separation of evaluation and management more difficult. If this is the case, you should consider an external evaluation.

2.2 External evaluation

The key considerations for using an external evaluator are ‘why do I need one?’, and ‘when would the evaluator’s inputs be most useful?’.

The answer to the ‘why?’ question is relatively straightforward. The external evaluator can offer expert services. Some evaluation questions are harder than others; an expert can often provide a more cost-effective solution than burdening project staff with work they may not have the time or skills to carry out. External evaluators can also offer a more objective evaluation of your project. They may also (depending on your project) be able to undertake the evaluation of the project within a wider context. This may help you to address evaluation questions relating to mainstreaming and multiplier effects.

The answer to the 'when?' question depends on the circumstances surrounding your particular project. You need to decide what the evaluator is going to be asked to do, and when the task would be timely. For example, if your project is piloting a methodology to be taken forward in the rest of the project period, you might want an external evaluator to evaluate the pilot. In other cases, it might be sufficient for the external evaluator to undertake a final evaluation. Since your Leonardo project is divided into work packages for the purposes of work planning and budgetary control, this provides a number of ready-made topic areas and milestone points for evaluation. Assessors look very favourably on projects that plan evaluation and monitoring into every work package.

Box 1 provides additional information on the role of external evaluators.

Box 1- TIP : The role of external evaluators

It is up to you to decide whether or not to use an external evaluator. However, you should bear in mind that the levels of expertise and resources required for thorough evaluation are likely to be greater in external organisations with wider experience of evaluation techniques. In addition, the perceived independence of the external evaluator can help to ensure that other organisations take the results more seriously. Coming from outside the project, the external evaluator may also elicit more honest information from the staff and the beneficiaries of your project. If you do use external evaluation, you need to provide a thorough brief to ensure that the evaluator understands your project and is clear that the purpose of the exercise is to identify learning points, not just good practice.

Please also refer to Annex 2 which contains some guidance on appointing an external evaluator.

3.0 WHEN SHOULD EVALUATION TAKE PLACE?

3.1 Planning for evaluation

Planning for your evaluation should begin as early as possible. Before you apply for Leonardo funding, you should bear in mind a number of basic questions:

- What are the products of this project?
- What critical success factors can I define for these products?
- What processes could I use to measure progress against these factors?
- Who will carry out these processes (and will I need an external evaluator)?
- What will be the outcome of the process (e.g. a report, a presentation)?

Some of the data for your evaluation may come from routine monitoring data. What you measure on a routine basis is partly shaped by, and linked to, your longer-term evaluation needs. It is therefore important to know at the outset precisely which aspects of your project you need or intend to evaluate, before data monitoring routines are fully established. However, a strong evaluation will draw on a research and analysis process entirely distinct from your monitoring processes.

There are two important points when you might conduct an evaluation of your project: at an interim stage, and at the end of the project.

3.2 Interim evaluation

Interim evaluation is undertaken during the life of the project, usually at a milestone stage. The aim is to track progress and to adjust and improve aspects of your project as it progresses. For this reason, it is also sometimes referred to as 'formative' evaluation. It also reflects on whether the project's processes (such as management and monitoring systems, and partnership working) are effective and how they might be improved. Interim evaluation addresses whether your project:

- has achieved its objectives by the dates set out in the workplan; and
- is on track to achieve its objectives by the end of the project.

3.3 Final evaluation

The timing of a final evaluation is scheduled to take place during the last phase of your project's life. The primary purpose of this evaluation is to assess the overall lessons from the project. It is therefore sometimes referred to as a 'summative' evaluation.

The purpose of final evaluation is to:

- draw conclusions on the design, implementation and degree of success of your project in the light of your objectives and indicators;
- inform funding bodies and other stakeholders of your results, and the actual and potential impact of your project;
- stimulate support for transfer and mainstreaming of your innovation;
- form the basis of the final report and other publications; and
- stimulate new ideas for innovation.

4.0 WHAT SHOULD BE EVALUATED?

4.1 Evaluating Output and Process

Two elements of your project should be evaluated:

- the **output** – what was done; and
- the **process** – how the output was achieved, including how you managed the project (including the transnational element).

Both elements are of fundamental importance in gaining a full understanding of your project. As already indicated, the monitoring data you collect are a key source of information. In addition, your evaluator may wish to attend transnational meetings; participate in the trialling of products; interview partners, beneficiaries and other stakeholders; or conduct 'market research' with the target group.

Box 2 below provides you with additional information on the evaluation of outputs and processes.

Box 2- TIP : Evaluating Output and Process

Most evaluations tend to focus on output – what was achieved by a project and whether or not this represents success or failure. As Leonardo projects are often testing new methodologies and models, it is crucial that evaluation should also cover processes, i.e. it should draw out the learning points from your project's overall approach. Process evaluation may include looking at how the transnational/ national partnership operated and whether or not this co-operation was useful and beneficial to your project and the beneficiaries. It may also look at how your project was managed.

4.2 Topics for evaluation

You need to decide what you want to evaluate. However, there are some criteria of fundamental importance at programme level, against which your Leonardo project was originally assessed and accepted for funding, and against which you should try to evaluate. They are:

- **Innovation** – whether your products, processes or target groups are genuinely new/ innovative;
- **Transnationality** – the success of transnational working and the effectiveness of partners' contributions;
- **Partnership** – the overall management and administration of partnership working;
- **Validity** – whether some of the needs described in your justification have been met;
- **Dissemination** – whether you have reached a wide audience; and
- **Valorisation** – whether you have achieved multiplier effects through mainstreaming activity.

When evaluating these aspects, you may need to consider particular questions. Table 4.1 gives some examples.

Table 4.1: Examples of questions relating to particular topics for Evaluation

Topics for Evaluation	Questions
<p>Innovation</p> <p>Transnationality</p> <p>Partnership</p> <p>Validity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is new about the project and did that aspect of the project work? • What were the transnational activities and how did they work? • What was the added value of the transnationality? • How effective was the transnational partnership? • Did you meet the needs set out in the justification? • Did you identify new needs and attempt to address them? • Were the products appropriate to the needs of the target groups/ beneficiaries described?

Different topics are more important at different times, and you need to focus on some more than others at various stages in the project. Your evaluation should also cover other areas of the project, including:

- project design and methodology;
- project management and delivery mechanism;
- feasibility of the project/products; and
- number and quality of outputs and outcomes.

5.0 HOW IS AN EVALUATION CONDUCTED?

5.1 Planning the evaluation

In planning your evaluation, the key points for consideration are the same whether you are planning self or external evaluation. However, the focus and nature of the activity will vary, depending on whether you are conducting an interim or final evaluation. The key points are as follows:

- **Focus of the evaluation** – you cannot hope to evaluate everything your project did. You therefore need to be selective and have clearly defined issues and questions you want to address. This is important if you are undertaking self-evaluation, but crucial for giving a good brief to an external evaluator. A clear, focused brief should go some way towards ensuring that you get the information you need from the exercise;
- **Project objectives** – what you evaluate depends obviously on your original goals and targets. However, as an example, the level of attainment of your project objectives could be evaluated.
- **Project products** – It might be very interesting to carry out an evaluation of the products resulting from your project, i.e. their quality or their relevance to the end-users. Such an evaluation could be very useful especially if the products are innovative, of a good quality or are considered to be transferable to other sectors or areas.
- **Project processes** – Processes can also be evaluated, in particular when these are functioning well or are very relevant to your project. As examples, processes related to partnership arrangements and decision-making, project management and monitoring systems could be evaluated.
- **Subject, purpose and audience targeted** – the focus and scope of your evaluation depend on these factors.

5.2 What you need to do – the four stages of conducting the evaluation

You now have a plan for evaluating your project and an outline of the topics to be included. There are four main stages to conducting the evaluation:

- i. define your performance indicators (process and output indicators, quantitative and qualitative indicators);
- ii. gather the data;
- iii. analyse the data; and
- iv. report the findings.

i) Defining performance indicators

There are two types of performance indicator:

- **Output indicators** – these tend to be quantitative measures, and are based on your project's key targets and objectives (such as numbers of beneficiaries, number of output/products).
Quantitative indicators allow for easy comparison between different groups or different methods, and between different time periods.
- **Process indicators** – these can be quantitative or qualitative; they aim to discover how or why targets were achieved or not achieved with reference to a project's overall objectives, principles, philosophy and standards. Qualitative indicators are often concerned with 'soft' factors, such as confidence, attitudes, 'prospects' or opinions, and are often difficult to measure directly. Qualitative indicators are derived from techniques such as interviews, feedback questionnaires or sessions, and trainers' observations. Their value is increased if they are designed to have some quantitative element – for example, the number of participants citing improved confidence in job interviews, in answer to an open question on a questionnaire. Examples include the number of tutors/beneficiaries citing improved confidence in work-related training, or in using e-learning tools, confirming a change in attitude towards training as a way to enhance employability of staff, to improve SMEs competitiveness, or to enhanced /more coherent standards of work. Qualitative indicators require skilled interpretation in order to avoid subjectivity.

Your evaluation will be based on a mixture of output and process indicators, so you need to identify and define a suitable range of indicators. When defining the indicators, you need to consider whether they will tell you something about the:

- project's effectiveness in meeting your objectives;
- project's efficiency in meeting your objectives;
- relevance of your project activities to the needs identified;
- impact of your innovation;
- impact of activity at different levels (individuals, groups, systems); and
- value added to the project as a result of transnational activity.

ii) Gathering the data

Key questions to ask at this stage are:

- Is the information already available? – for example, from monitoring data such as training attendance records, feedback from beneficiaries, beneficiaries' characteristics from their personal records, minutes of management meetings.
- Do you need to establish a baseline? – i.e. do you need to have some information in place at the start of your project, so that you can compare it with data collected during the project to establish if there has been a change?
- What gaps are there in the data? What do you need to collect in addition to what exists? Do you need to conduct a special survey, say of beneficiaries, or hold interviews with key contributors, such as delivery partners?
- How will the information be gathered and recorded, and by whom?

- Are these procedures feasible? – for example, will the data collection exercise place an undue burden on internal staff/partners, and will the items you are trying to measure or explain be manifest at the point in time when you are conducting the evaluation?

You also need to ensure that the methods of collecting the data are appropriate to the subject of the evaluation. Table 5.1 outlines the advantages and disadvantages you need to consider when choosing appropriate methods for the kind of information you are seeking. In most evaluation exercises, a variety of methods are used to gather the data.

Table 5.1: Approaches to data collection

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Record-keeping	Systematic, readily available, produces analysable data	May 'miss' feelings, impressions and ideas. May be unable to answer key questions.
Observation of participants	Examines behaviour rather than subjects' own views about behaviour	Requires high level of skill by observer. Danger of observer bias. Danger that observer will influence the behaviour being observed.
Self-administered questionnaires	Cheaper than individual personal interviews, thus allowing a larger sample. Easy to process and analyse (if well designed)	Less flexible than interviews. Require reading and writing skills to complete, thus may be inappropriate for some respondents. People may be unwilling to commit views to paper. May have poor response rate.
Individual personal interviews (face to face or by telephone)	Structured questions can yield quantitative data (yes/no and scoring-type questions). Also allow probing of responses (e.g. Why do you say that? What is the main reason you think x is the case?) to yield more qualitative data	Time-consuming and costly. Face-to-face interviews much more expensive than by phone. Phone surveys need to be more structured, with less scope for probing. Phone surveys inappropriate for some kinds of respondent (those with low telephone ownership, e.g. unemployed people), or not feasible because database of phone numbers for the sample does not exist or is difficult to assemble (e.g. young people living at home, prisoners). Interviewers must be appropriate and skilled. Qualitative aspects of interviews can be difficult to analyse.
Group discussion/ focus groups	May bring out 'difficult' but shared views and feelings; may improve input from those with poor reading and writing skills	Requires expert facilitation and recording skills. Danger that sessions are dominated by the most confident or articulate. Cannot easily probe individual feelings. Unsuitable for producing quantitative data as groups need to be fairly small.

iii) Analysing the data

By this point you will have generated a large amount of paperwork in the form of monitoring information, interview notes and completed survey questionnaires. This material needs to be made accessible, so that it is possible for you to revisit the information for different purposes later on. Therefore it makes sense to transfer data into a computer-based project database. Table 5.2 gives you some ideas about how the data collected could be analysed.

Table 5.2: Approaches to data analysis

Method	Form of record	Analysis	Reporting
Record-keeping	a) simple paper record book b) computer database – compliance with data protection regulations required	a) complex analysis of paper records is time-consuming b) a good database makes standard and ad hoc analysis, fast and easy reporting, but requires the right skills and equipment	summary report of key or requested statistics, with accompanying narrative
Observation of participants	a) scoring sheet for ‘closed observation’ – b) tape-recorder or notebook for ‘open’ observation – summarised transcript c) trainer/ counsellor/ employer diary	a) periodic analysis – either manual or via computer b) analysis of key issues and events c) analysis of key issues and events	brief narrative report
Self-administered questionnaires	completed paper sheets filed – scores may be keyed into database	manual or computer analysis of scores, summary of themes, selection of quotations	summary report of key or requested statistics, with narrative
Individual interviews (face to face or by phone)	a) for structured elements, completed sheet filed – scores may be keyed into a database. b) for unstructured elements, audiotape or interview notes – summarised transcript	a) manual or computer analysis of scores b) summary of themes (by keyword), selection of quotations	summary report of key or requested statistics, with accompanying narrative
Group discussions	use one or more ‘rapporteurs’ (not the facilitator of the discussion), review and clarify the notes immediately afterwards, type up and file	summary of themes (by keyword), selection of quotations	brief narrative report

iv) Reporting

Format and content of the report

The format of your evaluation report largely depends on whether it is an interim or a final report.

An interim evaluation report is likely to cover:

- project background;
- achievements to date and problems encountered;
- trends and issues; and
- action needed.

The final evaluation report needs to encompass:

- the background to the project, its context, the initial rationale or justification for undertaking the project, and the objectives set;
- how the evaluation exercise was undertaken, the methods used to gather and analyse the information you are presenting in the report; and
- the results of the evaluation. This includes a project overview of the work undertaken and the outcomes of its activity, supported by quantitative and qualitative evidence. It will also identify problems encountered and explain how they were addressed.

Your report should make recommendations in light of the overall picture that emerged from carrying out the evaluation exercise, highlighting the main lessons to guide future work and policy decisions. The recommendations need to take into account all the different kinds of audience for your report. You may decide to produce several formats of the overall report, targeted at different kinds of audience. Bear in mind also that the traditional 'final report' is not the only option in terms of evaluation outputs. Depending on the thematic area or target group for your project, you may wish to give a presentation of your evaluation findings at key sectoral events. Or you might develop a display based on your findings, which can be used at exhibitions as part of your dissemination activity. A long, paper-based report is not always the best medium for reaching those you wish to be influenced by your project's results, so consider alternative methods if appropriate.

Dissemination requirements

Your evaluation report is an important tool for your dissemination and mainstreaming work. Make sure it is written and presented in a way that will really enhance this work. Think carefully about who you want to distribute it to for maximum policy impact and make sure that you:

- tailor the contents of your evaluation report to your audience;
- only include the information and evidence necessary to 'tell the story', and focus on key findings for making the case for recommendations.
- be transparent – say where your evidence came from, how the data were acquired and if there are any 'health warnings' about the data.
- Reference all external sources; and
- provide a summary, even if the report itself is quite brief.

6.0 HOW THE LEONARDO UK NATIONAL AGENCY CAN HELP

The Leonardo UK National Agency aims to assist projects in implementing their activities. The primary aims of our work, in relation to evaluation, are to:

- ensure that the results from individual projects are disseminated to appropriate audiences; and
- communicate the lessons from the programme to key policy-makers, in order to influence the development of future policy.

The Leonardo UK National Agency can assist your projects in your evaluation work in the following ways:

- providing you with advice and support;
- providing access to contacts through our project database and mailing list;
- promoting your evaluation reports and findings through our events, publications and Website (<http://www.leonardo.org.uk/>);
- assessing the results of your evaluation reports to draw conclusions which will be disseminated as examples of best practice among participating countries in the Leonardo programme; and
- informing funding bodies and other stakeholders of your results, and the actual and potential impact of your project.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Leonardo UK National Agency if we can help in any way. Also, do not forget to send us information on your evaluation materials.

7.0 RELEVANT SOURCES

1. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Unit V/B/3 (1997) 'ADAPT Community Initiative: Guide to Self-Evaluation for Project Promoters. Copies obtainable from DG V Unit B/3, Rue de la Loi 200, B 1049 Brussels, Belgium or downloadable from web page: www.europs.be/publica/gsea-en.doc
2. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Unit V/B/3 (1997) 'EMPLOYMENT Community Initiative: Guide to Self-Evaluation for Project Promoters. Copies obtainable from DG V Unit B/3, Rue de la Loi 200, B 1049 Brussels, Belgium or downloadable from web page: www.europs.be/publica/gsea-en.doc
3. European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Leonardo da Vinci programme, Pilot projects, Language competences, Transnational networks and Reference materials, 'Administrative and Financial Handbook for Promoters'.
4. A currently running Leonardo project (2000 call), promoted by KnowNet Ltd, specifically addresses evaluation, by producing a prototype ICT based evaluation tool for Leonardo and other Vocational Education and Training projects. This project, entitled "Electronic Evaluation System for Vocational Education and Training (EVAL)" will provide project managers with access to an on-line interactive knowledge base and resources on evaluation and with computer-based tools for designing evaluation systems. This project is also using the Internet to create a 'community' of funded project promoters who are interested in contributing to, and learning from, a corpus of knowledge on evaluation. For further information on this project, please consult www.theknownet.com or contact graham@theknownet.com
5. Simon Blackley, Margaret Goddard and Helen Seymour, (June 1997) 'Project Monitoring and Evaluation: A Practical Guide', published by ICOM. ISBN: 1 870018 25 7, Tel.: 0113 246 1738, Fax: 0113 244 0002. Email: icom@icom.org.uk

Annex 1

Important Tips for Evaluation -
Topics and methods
for evaluating Leonardo projects

Annex 1: Important Tips for Evaluation - Topics and methods for evaluating Leonardo projects

- ***Transnational evaluation.*** It is important to make sure that any transnational evaluation looks at the added value of the transnational partnership, rather than just at the management of the partnership. Observation by participants is one method, which could be used to gather data for evaluation of the transnational element of the project. Transnational evaluations are often constrained by budget. You may also have the problem of the different partners having different agendas and expectations. You will therefore need to produce objectives, which are realistic and achievable. In large transnational partnerships, the partners forming small working groups who each report to the transnational evaluator might facilitate the evaluation.
- ***Evaluating partnership working.*** You need to set objectives and indicators to evaluate the working of the partnership. Think about what the partnership is supposed to achieve and why it improved, what went on before.
- ***Evaluating a partnership event.*** One way of doing this is to determine expectations before the event and check whether these have been met after the event. This can be achieved through making phone calls to a sample of participants prior to the event to find out their expectations and after the event to find out if that is what they did get out of it.
- ***Evaluating innovation and multiplier effect.*** Projects need to devise a realistic time-frame which takes account of budget constraints and prioritise their evaluation activities accordingly. Evaluation should focus on the innovative elements of the project, and the developments resulting in significant changes to the project.
- ***Prioritising between the project objectives and possible new directions of work.*** Leonardo projects are pilot projects, which test innovative ideas, which often are different from mainstream provision and cannot be expected to provide for 100% of their target group. It is recognised that objectives do change throughout the project lifetime. Evaluation is central to showing why objectives changed and what lessons were learned.
- ***Self evaluation and external evaluation should complement each other.*** Their roles within the overall evaluation framework should be clearly defined to avoid duplication and consequent waste of resources.
- ***Exit strategy.*** Evaluation should be a part of your exit strategy. Your evaluation will add weight to your claims about your project outputs and will give you insights into why your project achieved (or did not achieve) those outputs. This information will be useful in securing follow-on funding.
- ***Transferability of model or outputs.*** This is important for Leonardo projects and should be included in the evaluation report.
- ***Taking baseline measures.*** It is important to make sure that you have in place initial measures as well as medium and long term measures. This is especially useful if you do not have an

evaluator in place until some time after the project has started. This can be achieved by taking measures concerning the beneficiaries at the start of the project (i.e. achievement, aspirations, etc.) You will also need to look at mainstream programmes to see whether your results are extraordinary.

- *Piloting evaluation tools.* Evaluation must be carefully managed and you need to make sure the tools you are using are measuring what you think they are measuring and will do this each time.
- *Involvement of beneficiaries in the evaluation process.* Beneficiaries can be more appropriately involved in some parts of the evaluation than others. One or more beneficiary could act as an evaluator as a part of their training. The project steering group could involve one or more beneficiaries who could help to determine the evaluation process.
- *Soft outcomes.* Important to try to include in your evaluation some way of determining these more subtle outcomes. Proposed methods include the use of before and after measures, reflective staff diaries, tutor observations, beneficiary self assessment, profiles/case studies, etc.
- *Document anecdotal evidence/feedback.* Especially evidence which comes from transnational meetings or key stages of the project. New experiences become commonplace very quickly and it is easy to forget that something was once innovative or a new experience.
- *Continual feedback loop.* Apart from a formal formative evaluation, you will be continually gathering evidence about how well the project is working whilst it is being delivered e.g. course evaluation sheets, attendance, informal feedback, etc. This information should be fed back into the project to make adjustments to the project when necessary.
- *Evaluator's diary.* Evaluators could keep a diary to locate themselves in the project and to evaluate the data they are collecting. The diary can be a useful tool to detect any emerging patterns.
- *'Fly on the wall'.* Some projects (with permission of the staff and beneficiaries) use videos to record particular sessions. This can provide useful data for the evaluator.
- *Participant observation.* One project reported using observation of web site interaction to gather data about their project. The "invisibility" of the observer in this instance overcomes any potential problems with the participant's behaviour being affected.
- *Participant feedback.* It is important that participants do see the results of any feedback they give and know that their views and opinions are being acted upon.

Annex 2

External evaluation - Information on commissioning and managing external evaluators

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1. Commissioning an external evaluation

The first stage in commissioning an external evaluation is to develop a clear brief. This necessitates a process of consultation and decision-making in order to:

- decide what will be evaluated (e.g. efficiency, effectiveness, value for money, quality, whether the rationale for the project is valid);
- set the boundaries for the evaluation (e.g. specific aspect of training delivery, time period in question);
- decide whether the evaluation will be formative (evaluation leading to action during the implementation of the project) or summative (retrospective analysis of the project to inform future activities);
- decide the extent of goal-based and goal-free evaluation;
- select indicators for the evaluation;
- choose the best methods to collect information on indicators; and
- state the expected outputs.

Having made decisions on each of the above factors, the resulting parameters, indicators and key features should be specified in the evaluation brief. When formulating a brief it is also important to consider:

- What is the nature and range of existing information (e.g. monitoring measurements, output information)?
- Who needs to be involved (e.g. funders, trainees, trainers, consumers)?;
- How will their participation be secured?
- What would be the best time for the evaluation?
- Who is the audience for the evaluation?

1.1 Role of advisory groups

An advisory group can bring together various stakeholders with differing perspectives. It can act as a forum for consultation on the evaluation process, which helps to ensure that the issues are tackled in a neutral way. It can also help to raise the profile of the evaluation, and provide a way of ensuring the participation of the various stakeholders in the information gathering and reporting stages.

If your project is focused on clients drawn from particular target groups, members of those groups should be involved in planning and implementing the evaluation.

1.2 Resources

It is vital to allocate sufficient resources to evaluation as part of your core project funding. The budget should include resources to disseminate the results of the evaluation.

1.3 Selecting an external evaluator

The evaluator must have a wide range of skills:

- good organisational abilities;
- good communication skills;
- ability to understand the evaluation methodology;
- ability to define objectives;
- ability to interpret existing information (e.g. monitoring records);
- ability to collect new information in an appropriate and consistent way;
- credibility with people taking part in the evaluation;
- good listening and observation skills;
- good analytical skills; and
- ability to formulate conclusions.

When appointing an external evaluator, it is important to consider the following questions:

- What skills does the evaluator have, and do these match the requirements?
- What is the evaluator's previous track-record and experience, and how relevant is it?
- Is the evaluator acceptable to the client group and other stakeholders (e.g. employers)?
- Does the evaluator understand the needs and problems being addressed?
- Will trainees, managers and others be willing to share information with the evaluator?
- What methods will the evaluator use to collect information, and what experience does the evaluator have of these methods?
- How objective will the evaluator be?
- Will the evaluator give value for money?

2. Contracting with an external evaluator

It is a legal requirement to sign a subcontracting agreement with the external evaluator, if the organisation and/or the person are not within the project's partnership. This agreement protects you if the evaluator does not deliver the report or does not comply with your requirements.

The subcontracting agreement must include at least the following information:

- purpose of the agreement;
- dates on which the agreement begins and ends;
- amount to be paid;
- detailed description of the costs on which this figure is based;
- work schedule and completion phases;
- payment arrangements (e.g. one or more advance payments, staggered payments); and
- clauses in respect of non-performance or late completion.

If your subcontracting agreement is more than 10,000 euro, you (with the agreement of your partners) must put it out to tender. It is also important to bear in mind that the subcontracting agreement cannot be more than 30% of the total project budget. Please refer to the Leonardo Administrative and Financial Handbook.

3. Managing an external evaluation

Someone should be responsible for managing the external evaluator, to assist in the work and ensure fulfilment of the brief. The aim of evaluation management is thus to make sure that the evaluation addresses the right issues in the most appropriate way. Note that although you will want to retain control of the evaluation process, this is *not* the same as controlling the result of the evaluation. The questions below need to be raised at the outset.

Implementation:

- What is the project brief/specification?
- What are the SMART objectives?
- Who is leading and who else is involved?
- What are the tasks?
- Are roles and responsibilities clear?
- What is the timescale/deadline?
- What is the critical path?
- What are the dates to review progress and deadlines?

Quality control

- Who needs to be involved in quality control?
- Have you allowed time to incorporate changes/rewrites?

End product

- What is the expected end product?
- Who needs to receive a copy?
- Who will be responsible for distribution?

3.1 Methods and tools

The success of the evaluation rests on developing an appropriate method for information collection, and formulating tools to apply the method. One advantage of external evaluation is that it is usually possible to apply a scientific approach – i.e. develop information collection methods that can be applied to a valid sample group in a consistent way.

A wide range of methods can be used to gather information. People are usually the richest source of information, and generally the evaluation will collect information from individuals involved in all aspects of the project. Whatever method is used, it is important to ensure consistency of approach if more than one person is involved. Using structured questionnaires and formal pro formas to gather information can make the results more reliable because they cut down on interviewer bias.

3.2 Note on objectivity

It is not always possible to completely eliminate bias in the way in which information is collected, measured and analysed. A test for objectiveness is whether the conclusions are reliable – i.e. whether someone else undertaking the evaluation would come to the same conclusions.

Annex 3

Glossary of Terms

Annex 3: Glossary of Terms

Beneficiaries	Members of the Leonardo target groups (e.g. most disadvantaged people, such as Community groups, disabled people, low-skilled individuals, women, ethnic groups, trainers) who are the clients or the primary target groups of the project.
Bottom-up	Process through which the expertise and experience of a broad base of players who are well-placed to identify problems and needs faced by a particular sector or target group are mobilised. Similarly, these partners can and will contribute to the development of the solutions to the identified problems and needs.
Dissemination	A planned process which aims to actively provide relevant actors with information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the outcomes of projects and transnational partnerships. Once the outcomes have been tested and evaluated, the dissemination process can start. The final objective of dissemination activity is to achieve impact.
Effectiveness	To what extent objectives are achieved.
Evaluation	A structured exercise to collect information about a project or activity, learn from it, judge the degree of progress made against a set of predetermined criteria, review implications for future action, and draw conclusions about how to improve.
Impact	Impact is achieved if and when, as a result of applying the outcomes of projects or partnerships in other settings, changes are brought about in the opinions or attitudes of policy-makers and/or in the day-to-day activities of practitioners. The ultimate aim of projects and partnerships is to convince all within their target group(s) to agree with their policy recommendations, and/or to encourage best practice. There are two main processes through which this aim can be achieved: mainstreaming (essentially a top-down process) or multiplying (largely a bottom-up process).
Innovation	The development and/or introduction of new concepts and/or practices. The outcomes of each Leonardo project have to be 'novel'. This could be testing new approaches to existing target groups, transferring existing tools to new target groups, or developing new networks involving key organisations and individuals in target subjects. Innovative approaches do not necessarily have to be new in the sense that they have never been tried before. They must, however, be new to your participants, trainers, authorities, region and/or the regional or national policy domain. In order to ensure that others benefit from the new approaches, they have to be disseminated.
Key actors	Policy-makers or decision-makers who can influence the decision-making process in the most important organisations and structures which might be persuaded to adopt your approach, methods or materials.

Mainstreaming	A planned process of incorporating successful outcomes of projects or transnational partnerships by appropriate decision-makers into regulated local, regional, national or European systems. Mainstreaming can only be achieved in situations where there is a regulated system. This is because the innovation is spread by using a top-down approach – i.e. regulatory authorities, such as national governments, incorporate your innovation within new policy directives, and therefore ensure that those implementing the policy will adopt it. The innovation then becomes part of the mainstream way of doing things (cf Multiplying).
Monitoring	The process of collecting and recording information <i>systematically</i> to check progress against objectives during the life of the project. It can be defined as a routine information collection process.
Multiplier effect	Replication by other people or organisations of a project's approaches, methods and services, especially where the potential exists for their onward transfer to a further group of people or organisations.
Multiplying	A planned process of convincing individual end-users to adopt and apply the outcomes of projects or partnerships. In this case, the decision to apply the outcomes is taken by individual end-users. The multiplying model is relevant to situations where no overall authority has the power to take decisions on behalf of end-users. This would be the case where SMEs or larger firms are concerned, as the firm's owner/manager is responsible for taking decisions on applying new approaches. In other words, the innovation is implemented through a bottom-up strategy. The ultimate objective of both the mainstreaming and multiplying models is to ensure that all relevant end-users make optimal use of the outcomes of projects and partnerships.
Objective	A project objective is what a project sets out to achieve. In this case, the decision to apply the outcomes is taken by individual end users. The multiplying model is relevant to situations where there is no overall authority to take decisions on behalf of end-users - for example, in private sectors firms, where the decision to adopt your approach or materials is limited to the firm. In this case the spread of the innovation is implemented through a multiplier effect or 'bottom-up' strategy.
Outcomes	The effects or end results of a project for its beneficiaries, clients, staff and other people and organisations – e.g. the number of jobs created, qualifications gained, or the numbers securing employment or entering further training.
Outputs	The effects or end results of the project for its beneficiaries, clients, staff and other people and organisations. For example, the number of jobs created, or qualifications gained, the number securing employment or entering further training.

Policy-makers	Those responsible for designing policies for human resource development, regional and local economic development, labour-market systems, guidance provision and training systems whose ideas, concepts and opinions might be affected by a project's outcomes. Policy-makers may be European MEPs, national politicians, members of local government and their respective public servants – the European Commission, the Civil Service or local government officers.
Practitioners	Those individuals and organisations whose day-to-day activities may be altered or improved in some way by using a project's outcomes. They may be employers, trainers, employees, small business consultants, human resource managers, trade unionists, guidance counsellors, equal opportunities advisers and staff of intermediary organisations.
Stakeholders	The various categories of people and organisations either directly involved in a project or interested in its work – they include direct beneficiaries, delivery staff (trainers, counsellors, advisers), representatives of local, regional or national public or semi-public agencies, enterprises, trade unions, voluntary or professional organisations, and funders.
Targets	Quantifiable expression of what an activity will achieve.
Top-down	The process through which information flows from policy makers in an 'downward' direction to a target group. The target group may not be able to contribute to developing solutions to identified problems and needs.
Transnationality	The principle according to which a project should involve partners from the different participating countries eligible to the Leonardo programme. Transnationality leads to the development of products that integrate best ideas and practices available within the participating countries. Exchange of know-how and expertise and joint product development help to maximise the quality of the innovative models being developed.
Valorisation	The process of enhancing or optimising project outcomes through experimentation and exploitation with a view to increasing their value and impact.