MONITORING AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Toolkit

Delivering Good Governance

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
Toolkit

The Toolkit contributes to the enhancement of Human Resources Management by providing concrete tools and procedures to be implemented within the Monitoring and Evaluation of the training programmes delivered to public employees.

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

in cooperation with

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Institute of International Sociology of Gorizia

April 2018

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METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Toolkit

Authors

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE

FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

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CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Since its inception, the Centre of Expertise has operated in a rapidly evolving context of decentralisation and local government reforms: the transfer of functions from the national to the local and/or regional levels has advanced in most member states, and decentralisation policies have captured increasing attention. The tools and methods of the Centre have developed over the course of its mandate to reflect these changes and emerging issues.

In this context, the Centre's capacity building programmes and legal assistance activities support the on-going process of reform of local government but are increasingly aimed not only at local but also at regional and central authorities. The Centre is now in a position to offer cutting-edge expertise on multi-level governance to its partners and beneficiaries.

The practical and impact-oriented "specific projects" are implemented in cooperation with local, regional, national and international stakeholders and are aimed both at improving the legislation and at strengthening the institutional capacity of all tiers of government.

The Centre is uniquely placed to balance the needs of central and local authorities to support multi-level governance. While maintaining an approach that focuses on understanding the needs of local governance actors, the Centre's connection to the Council of Europe's intergovernmental Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) offers it ready access to high-level government officials from the 47 member states with a reservoir of knowledge and expertise in governance reforms.

Today, the Centre of Expertise aims to promote the relevant European standards such as the European Charter for Local Self-Government, and the 12 Principles of Good Governance through legal and policy advice, and through implementation of benchmarks, evaluation instruments and innovative methodologies ("tools").

ISIG – Institute of International Sociology Gorizia

ISIG is an independent research institute in the field of social sciences.

Founded in 1968 in Gorizia (Italy), ISIG envisages a future of peaceful relations fostered by an international understanding, based on the acknowledgment of differences as resources.

ISIG carries out research at national and international levels, gathering knowledge on the problems arising from relations between states, ethnic groups and on the cultural, economic and social development of communities.

Participatory processes and participated local development processes are a key feature of ISIG work. Its research activities focused on the development of research methods and interpretative models that allow the development of innovative strategies and the effective implementation of policies at local level. Within this perspective, ISIG ultimate goal is to facilitate the inclusion of local stakeholders in the policy-making processes.

Through a wide range of participatory approaches and methodologies, ISIG achieves the integration of stakeholders, starting with an analysis and comparison of mediated social variables (i.e. the integrative function of the community, the role of symbolic spaces, the projection into the future and the actions needed to achieve it). This ultimately enables the integrated development of the local context, analysing the factors (internal and external) that may favour or not policy implementation, allowing for ex-ante assessment and project feasibility testing.

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INTRODUCTION

Whether laws, decrees or regulations created by elected representatives (i.e. legislative policies), rules, guidelines, principles or methods created by regulatory agencies (i.e. regulatory policies) or practices established within an organisation (i.e. organisational policies), often policies rest on visions and hypothesis. Policies operate within complex systems, which both influence and are influenced by them. The monitoring and evaluation of any public policy and intervention becomes, therefore, essential to examine their content, implementation and impact enabling the understanding of their quality, significance and usefulness.

Moreover, to monitor and evaluate public policies and interventions is key to ensure their legitimacy and to be considered successful, their outcomes and outputs must be analysed and assessed: compliance to existing norms and administrative frameworks is not enough. Both outputs and outcomes should be assessed as well in relation to the context of implementation (e.g. targeted social group, social and economic background, etc.), considering that their effects are constantly influenced by the reciprocal relations that they imply, that is the interaction between citizens and institutions.

To monitor and evaluate public policies and interventions is key for all actors concerned (e.g. Central Government, donors, beneficiaries, etc.) as it allows to:

a) Understand the policy/intervention context and content;
b) Identify factors hindering or facilitating the implementation of the policy/intervention and determining differences in its effectiveness in terms of both output and outcomes.

Finally, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and intervention should not be considered as a stand-alone process but as an in-built feature of the overall policy process ensuring its sustainability and capacity for advancement, since it allows for:

- Supporting policy/intervention development;
- Apprising and improving implementation;
- Ensuring implementation compliance with relevant frameworks;
- Demonstrating impacts and values of policy/interventions;
- Gathering evidence on specific issues;
- Providing insights for future implementation;
- Benchmarking outputs and outcomes;
- Ensuring accountability for resources invested.

The type of monitoring and evaluation model selected depends on many factors but predominantly on the object of evaluation. The present Toolkit focuses on the Methodology for monitoring and evaluation of training programmes for professional development for local government.

The role of local government is multifaceted and complex; it is evident that they have to face many challenges in order to perform successfully. Among many duties, they have the responsibility of policy advice, management of human, financial and other resources, provision of critical services, as well as interpretation and application of laws, decisions and regulations (Council of Europe & UNDP, 2005). Success depends on several variables that include updating skills and knowledge. In order to ensure that local government units comply with their own functions, training of public employees is a necessary task that has to be provided. Training allows public servants to act according to high quality standards, thus fulfilling their professional potential.

In line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on capacity building at local and regional level[1], the governments of member states are recommended to clearly recognise:

a) The importance of local government capacity to deliver high quality local public services and to engage the inhabitants in the democratic functioning of local authorities;
b) That the capacity of local government hinges essentially on the skills of elected representatives, the corporate management capacity of the organisation, the workforce capacity (its skills, recruitment and retention) and financial and project management skills;
c) The importance of developing this capacity further.

Moreover, the Recommendation invites member states to co-operate, where appropriate, with local authorities and other stakeholders including associations of local authorities in drawing up a strategic approach to the development of the capacity of local government, which identifies needs, devises concrete, practical and targeted programmes and arranges for their implementation.

Enhancing the effectiveness and administrative capacities in local government implies the design, setting up and implementation of coherent public policies targeting (existing or future) professional training system. It is key to acknowledge that the success of the inherent training plans can only be determined if the following a through evaluation is carried out. That is, the evaluation of the training programme (as regards to its implementation, its consequences for the organisation and for individual training) and of the actual training delivered (relevance, effectiveness, cost, satisfaction, direct impact on performance, etc.).

The Council of Europe's 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance represent the road map for any public authority to ensure the responsible conduct of public affairs and management of public resources. Achieving Good Governance is no easy task and living-up to the 12 principles means embracing all of them simultaneously. To assist public authorities in tackling such complexity, the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform of the Council of Europe has developed several toolkits as well as training programmes targeting concepts and issues specific to each principle.

Principle number 7 insists on the Competence and Capacity of those who deliver governance stating that the professional skills of public servants are continuously maintained and strengthened, in order to maintain and improve their output and impact, develop their performance and produce better results.

Good Governance requires the strengthening of the administrative capacity of public authorities, and, hence, of a professional and competent service. Although improving service delivery, making efficiencies, enhancing governance, local accountability and public ethics remain key areas of work, a more stringent focus on people management is necessary. At time of sweeping reforms of the public service, and with such economic pressures on its employees to achieve more with less funding, good human resources practices are becoming essential. The extent to which employees are engaged and motivated, how they are managed on a day-to-day basis, will make all the difference in being able to implement fundamental and long-lasting changes in all other areas[2].

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1 Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)12 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on capacity building at local and regional level. Available at: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805d5271

2 Council of Europe. (2013). Toolkit on Modern and Effective Human Resources Management. Available at: https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=2042691&Site=&BackColorInternet=B9BDEE&BackColorIntranet=FFCD4F&BackColorLogged=FFC679 (April 2018).

Since delivering efficient human resources management at the local level is about changing mentalities and performance, one of the possible tools to achieve this goal is via training[3]. Training activities needs to be responsive to local requirements, but also to a degree generic, to ensure that public servants from different organisations are able to interact effectively with each other.

Training is considered the process of making changes in the particular knowledge, capabilities, skills, attitudes and/or behaviour of employees, with the aim of improving their performance[4]. Training should be designed to meet immediate organisational needs. However, it must also satisfy the needs of staff to undergo an ongoing learning process so as to progress within their jobs improve their performance and, consequently, be in a position to advance their career prospects.[5]

The training plan is used to ensure the consistency of the local authority's strategy in terms of competencies and professional qualifications and the organisation of individual or collective training. It therefore makes it possible to translate the authority's overall strategy at both the collective and individual levels. The development and use of a training programme must accordingly follow a chronological, coherent process.

The training plan is, therefore, developed following the completion of the preliminary stages involved in determining the authority's overall strategy as regards training policy. Generally speaking, the training plan has to respond to the following requirements and situations:

- Diagnosis of the state of the authority's human resources in relation to its current situation and foreseeable future situations in terms of number of staff and competencies, both collective and individual;
- Determination of the main lines and priorities of the training policy;
- Identification of training needs at the individual and collective levels;
- Effective implementation of the training programme.

Within this perspective, the Centre of Expertise has developed, in recent years, a number of tools such as the Toolkit on Modern and Effective Human Resources Management (CoE, 2013), the Training Needs Analysis and National Training Strategy (CoE, 2017) and the Leadership Academy Programme (CoE, 2017).

The Toolkit on Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology of Training Programmes for Professional Development for Local Government intends to contribute to the enhancement of Human Resources Management by providing concrete tools and procedures to be implemented within the Monitoring and Evaluation of the training programmes delivered to public employees.

Although introducing the main notional aspects of monitoring and evaluation of public intervention, the toolkit is not meant as a general theoretical methodology but as a tool to be applied to context and case specific cases.

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[3] The following paragraphs draw from the course material for Principle 7 as presented in the CoE eTool on Good Governance (2018).

[4] UNECE. (2013). Human Resources Management and Training, Compilation of good practices in statistical offices. Available at: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/stats/publications/HRMT_w_cover_resized.pdf

[5] Elnaga, A. and Imran, A. (2013). The Effect of Training on Employee Performance. European Journal of Business and Management, ISSN 2222-1905 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2839 (Online), Vol.5, No.4, 2013. Source web: The Effect of Training on Employee Performance - Semantic Scholar.

In this, the toolkit respects the URSO paradigm of being: Useful, Relevant, Sustainable and ensuring Ownership by the public authorities and practitioners that may wish to implement it. In fact, the toolkit aims to be:

Figure 1 - URSO Paradigm

1. USEFUL - it provides concrete tools for public authorities to monitor and evaluate the implementation of training for professional development both at singles course and programme levels.
2. RELEVANT - it strengthens users' capacity in managing existing monitoring and evaluation systems; as well as providing a standard structure for the setting up a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy for training systems at local and national levels.
3. SUSTAINABLE - it enhances the sustainability of training programmes and training systems as a whole, by introducing a feedback mechanism aimed at improving existing programmes and adapting them to changing contexts and evolving training needs.
4. OWNED - it guides users' step-by-step in its implementation allowing for adaptation to national and local context which ultimately empowers them to use it independently and within context-specific practices and procedures.

The Toolkit is structured in two main sections:

1. Section 1 - Understanding monitoring and evaluation;
2. Section 2 - The monitoring and evaluation methodology.

Section 1 introduces:

- The rationale for the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation methodology and how it addresses Quality Assurance in the provision of training programmes for local government (Chapter 1);
- The conceptual and concrete aspects relating to monitoring and evaluation in general (i.e. of a public intervention) and specifically of professional development training course and programmes, with reference to (Chapter 2):
    - The object of the evaluation, that is what has to be evaluated;
    - The goal of the evaluation, that is what purpose it has to serve;
    - The criteria of the evaluation, that is the value premises that will guide the formulation of the judgment;
    - The process of the evaluation, that is the procedures needed to collect information;
    - The phases of the evaluation, that is the temporal interaction of monitoring and evaluation with the life-cycle of a public intervention programme.
- The evaluation model for training programmes for local government (Chapter 3), with reference to theoretical and methodological issues.

Section 2 is a step-by-step guide to:

- Setting up the monitoring and evaluation strategy (Chapter 4); and
- Implementing monitoring and evaluation (Chapter 5).

In its annexes, the toolkit provides:

- A list of indicators for monitoring and evaluation with reference to the related criteria (Annex 1);
- A list of indicators for monitoring and evaluation with reference to the tools for data collection grouped by relevant criteria (Annex 2);
- Templates of the tools for data collection (Annex 3).

Finally, the toolkit is coupled with the design and course material of a two-day capacity building training aiming at the brokerage of the toolkit's contents to practitioners and elected representatives (Annex 4). However, besides familiarising participants with the monitoring and evaluation methodology through facilitated debates and hands-on exercises, the training course ultimately aims at facilitating the adaptation of the methodology to local contexts' specificities and needs.

The elaboration of this toolkit draws on two previous Council of Europe projects:

- "Human Resources Management in Local Self-Government in the Republic of Serbia", developed by the Council of Europe (financed jointly by the European Union and by the Council of Europe) to respond to the needs arising from implementation of key priorities of the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy in the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: PAR Strategy) and Action Plan for implementation of the PAR Strategy 2015-2017 (Action plan) - July-October 2017;
- Partnership for Good Governance - Strengthening Institutional Frameworks for Local Governance - Training on monitoring and evaluation of programmes for professional development in Local Self-Government (LSG) - December 2017.

Section 1

UNDERSTANDING MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Improving:

- The understanding of the policy/intervention context and content;
- The capacity to identify factors hindering or facilitating the implementation of the policy/intervention;
- Determining differences in policy/intervention effectiveness, both in terms of output and outcomes.

Allowing for:

- Supporting policy/intervention development;
- Apprising and improving implementation;
- Ensuring implementation compliance with relevant frameworks;
- Demonstrating impacts and values of policy/interventions;
- Gathering evidence on specific issues;
- Providing insights for future implementation;
- Benchmarking outputs and outcomes;
- Ensuring accountability for resources invested.

1 FROM QUALITY ASSURANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The professional development of public employees is a key factor for achieving high levels of performance in local government, and thus for the delivery of quality public services. Although professional development might be dependent on several subjective factors, such as willingness of public employees to broaden their personal and professional careers, individual potentialities, etc., ultimately it depends on the learning environment and opportunities that characterise the local government organisations. In this perspective, it might be said that training programmes are a powerful tool that can influence drastically the overall functioning of the local government. Consequently, the concern of a quality-training offer might be considered, equally, a concern/priority for central and local authorities.

Training programmes must ensure high standards and efficiency, but also a high degree of compliance with specific needs of the context for which they are designed for. In order to ensure both efficiency and compliance with the local needs, Quality Assurance strategies must be considered.

Quality Assurance processes and procedures are key for the delivery of any quality product, which is a product that complies with a set of standards deemed satisfactory for the achievement of a given objective. When considering the case of training programmes, Quality Assurance refers to all processes and procedures that are implemented so to make sure that the set standards (i.e. set by both providers and users) are achieved.

Specifically, Quality Assurance for training programmes refers to:

> *"… making sure that every element of the training programme fits the overall objective. Trainers should be well qualified, programmes and methodologies should be modern, training organization should be professional, and training should meet the needs of both the individuals and the local authorities that they serve"* (Council of Europe & UNDP, 2005).

In the specific case of training programmes, the process of Quality Assurance implies taking into account the following aspects (Council of Europe & UNDP, 2005):

- Creating a favourable environment for the training;
- Establishing the process to meet quality training standards;
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of trainings.

The following paragraphs present the main standards to be considered when dealing with professional trainings for local government and Public Administration (PA) in general, stemming from national and international guidelines represent a good base to start the setting up of a new training scheme. Taking into account these guidelines proves to be useful in order to avoid duplication of services or to incur in mistakes that others already had experienced and could provide guidance about.

1.1 HOW TO ENSURE A FAVOURABLE TRAINING ENVIRONMENT?

Ensuring an adequate learning environment should be a priority for both central and local levels of government.

Ideally, at central level, authorities should encourage the following aspects:

EXISTENCE OF DEDICATED FRAMEWORKS	The presence of a dedicated legal and policy framework that endorses and supports training at local government level is key for creating a favourable environment.
	By means of such frameworks, the importance of the professional development of local government is reinforced by the central government, gaining thus more solidity and recognition among PA.
EXISTENCE OF REGULATORY DOCUMENTS	Accompanying regulatory documents to the legal framework, are key for setting the specific details needed/required for the development of the training programmes.
	Such documents set the perimeter and the paths of the training environment.
CONTEXT AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE	Training environments may vary drastically from one national context to another, or from one Public Administration sector to another. There is no universal formula for setting a favourable environment for local government trainings. This is why, the legal framework and regulatory documents should be the foundations of a National Training Strategy (NTS) of local government.
	Such strategy, is ideally designed based on a thorough Training Need Analysis (TNA), able to identify main needs and topics of training. In this way, an informed and end-user-oriented training process can be set up.
COMPETITIVE AND DIVERSIFIED TRAINING MARKET	In order to promote quality of training, the development of a diversified training market should be facilitated.
	Public procurements for the selection of trainers should be open to both public and private service providers, given that they all meet the set minimum requirements. Moreover, training providers and experts should be considered at national and international levels as well (not only local level).

Ideally, at local level within their organisations, authorities should promote the importance of professional development by committing openly to a learning organisation vision as well as by endorsing the NTS. Moreover, they should empower Human Resource function to directly investigate upon learning needs and priorities for the public employees.

1.2 HOW TO ENSURE QUALITY TRAINING STANDARDS?

Strong training programmes imply a strong implementing expertise. Therefore, in order to ensure high quality standard trainings, Quality Assurance processes should focus on training providers and their implementing processes.

In order to ensure efficient training processes, central authorities should, ideally, endorse/encourage, the following aspects:

ENGAGEMENT OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES	Central authorities should encourage local authorities (i.e. either individually or by means of representing associations) to actively engage in the drafting and implementation of the national training strategy. By doing so, they make sure that the national training strategy reflects concrete local needs.
CENTRALISED COORDINATION	Establishing and/or endorsing a coordinating body that is responsible for setting and monitoring the training delivery, represents an added value, as it may ensure a standard approach towards training delivery at national level.
	Encouraging and/or endorsing the creation of an association for professional trainers, that could cooperate with the coordinating body for the setting-up of the quality standards.
STANDARD ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS	Establishing a common and transparent accreditation process, to be used by companies, training institutions and individual service providers wishing to engage as trainers in the programme.
	Creating a national database, to be updated periodically, with a list of all accredited trainers (be them companies or individual service providers).

At local level, ideally, authorities should demonstrate their commitment to the national training strategy and support the central level in achieving compliance with training needs. Within this perspective, TNA should not be seen as a one-time action. Training needs must be identified and analysed periodically (not only at the beginning of the process), so to ensure that training offers are always up-to-date with training needs.

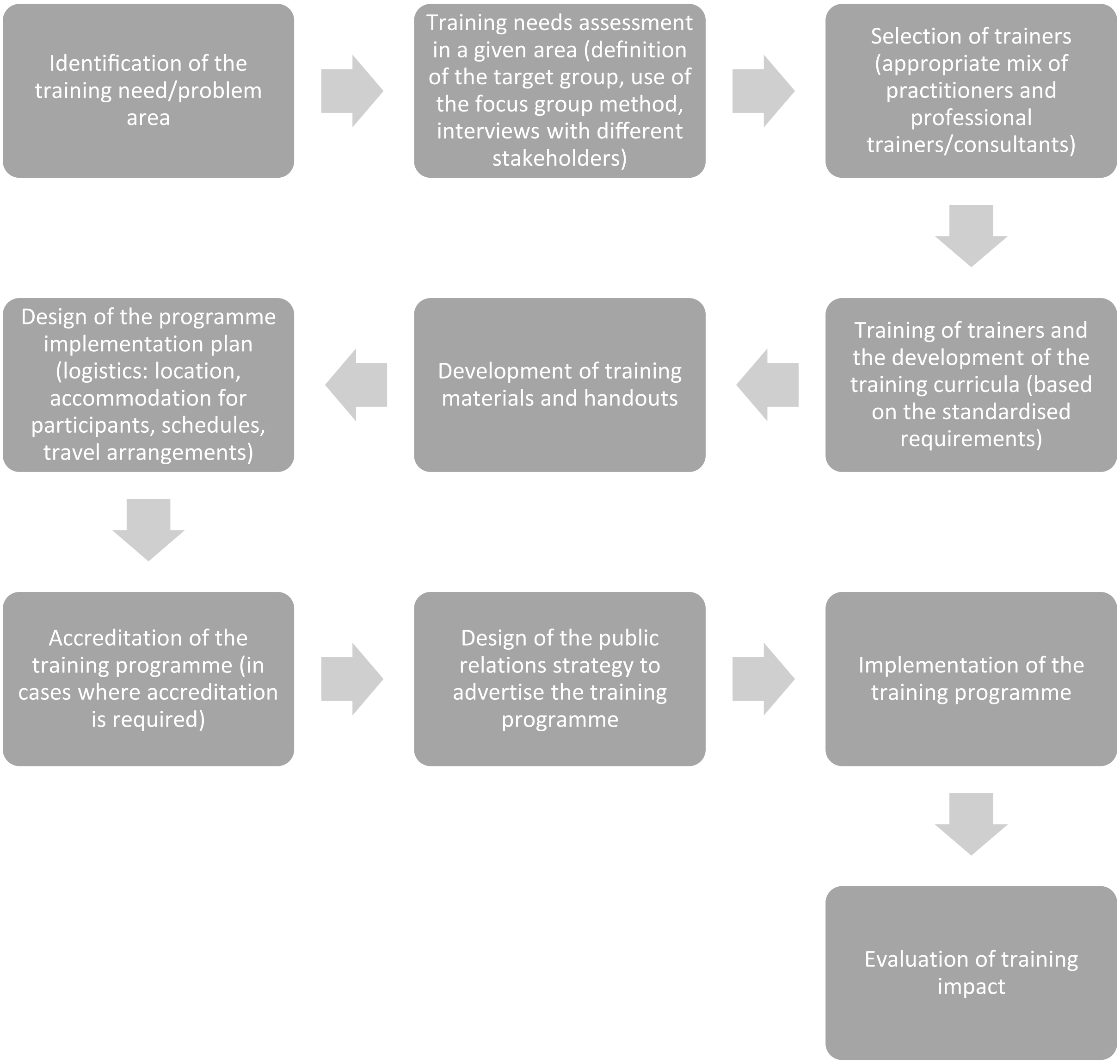
1.3 HOW TO ACHIEVE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN TRAINING?

In order to ensure the achievement of the set training objectives, there is the need for assessing both short and long-term results of the training intervention. Such an assessment may be carried out by means of a training impact analysis, that should be:

- Established before the training programme implementation (since impact assessment also implies the need to gather data on the situation ex-ante, i.e. prior to training).
- Connected to both Training Needs Assessment - TNA (in the sense that results from the impact assessment should be used as terms of reference for a comparative analysis with TNA, to see if the needs expressed where met through implementation of the training) and National Training Strategy (NTS) (in the sense that the latter should be always informed and updated according to the results of the impact assessment).
- Conducted on the same methodological premises used for the final evaluation analysis (conducted at end of the training programme).

The above-mentioned guidelines and recommendations offer a set of useful preliminary requirements to keep in mind when setting up a training programme at national level, that might be summarised in the following steps:

Figure 2 - Training development stepladder (Council of Europe&UNDP,2005)



Concluding, given the great relevance of training programmes for the overall performance of local government, proper tools and frameworks for Quality Assurance are needed. The monitoring and evaluation methodology is, in fact, one of such tools, and proceeds from the need for the training process to benefit from a standard evaluation system, both for what concerns courses and providers.

2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES

Why is evaluation needed?

> *"Monitoring and evaluation aim to provide the main parties with timely information about the progress, or lack thereof, in the production of outputs and the achievement of outcomes. This serves as a basis for decision-making to improve the performance of the programme or project and to feed into the learning processes"*[6].

According to the EC, "to evaluate a public intervention is to judge its value according to explicit criteria and on the basis of information specifically gathered and analysed[7]".

But why are evaluation processes a necessity for public sector organisations? Among the main reasons for implementing evaluation processes, there are[8]:

- To verify the rationale of a public intervention (e.g. why is the public intervention structured as it is proposed?);
- To identify reproducible successes and/or failures not to be renewed (e.g. what lessons have been learned from this intervention?);
- To be accountable to citizens (e.g. giving account to citizens on the public intervention in terms of implementation, costs and results).

Evaluation processes are part of an accountable approach to public management. In this sense, evaluation processes may respond to a number of concerns, as follows[9]:

- To estimate as objectively as possible the effects of interventions on society and to understand the logics of their operation (i.e. cognitive aim);
- To assist policy-makers and all stakeholders in making judgments about the value of such interventions (i.e. normative aim);
- To contribute substantially to the improvement of interventions by enlightening their different stakeholders on the meaning, conditions and consequences of their actions and decisions (i.e. instrumental aim).

A public organisation provides services to recipients, users, subordinates. If the people involved in a public action are satisfied with it, this is usually not enough to say that the action is successful. On the contrary, public organisations often seek to produce far-reaching and global effects (such as e.g. "improvement in a competent and well-trained public administration"), which are not synonymous with recipients' satisfaction. The evaluation makes it possible to know and judge all the effects of a specific public action[10].

The evaluation gathers information into a coherent whole in order to increase the knowledge of those responsible about the social and economic realities within which public interventions operate. In

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6 UNDP. (2003). UNDP Programming Manual, Chapter 4: Formulating Programmes and Projects, 18.

7 [To evaluate a public intervention is to judge its value according to explicit criteria and on the basis of information gathered and analysed (Translated from French by the authors)] Fonds structurels communautaires (1999), Évaluer les programmes socio-économiques. Conception et conduite d'une évaluation. Volume 1, Commission Européenne, 17 [Evaluating socio-economic programmes. Design and conduct of an evaluation. Volume 1, European Commission, 17 (Translated from French by the authors)].

8 Ibidem

9 Idem, 18

10 Idem, 19

addition, evaluation is an instrument for policy and operational decision-making: its practical usefulness can be defined as linking the objectives, means, outcomes and effects of interventions with a view to improving the effectiveness and efficiency.

Finally, the evaluation introduces the notion of value, and of value judgment, into administrative practices. This dimension, which can be described as political, makes all the originality of the evaluation.

Analysing the basic definition of evaluation offered by the EC, its constituent elements need to be stressed, since they provide also the guidelines for actions to be planned and performed "To evaluate a public intervention is to judge its value according to explicit criteria and on the basis of information specifically gathered and analysed". That is to say that:

- Evaluation is the formulation of a judgment;
- The judgment concerns the value of an intervention, that is, the value of an intentional action developed using specific resources in order to achieve a specific result;
- The judgment must be formulated using explicit, clearly stated criteria;
- The judgment must be formulated in relation to information systematically collected for the purposes of the evaluation.

This implies that a clear idea is needed about:

- The object of the evaluation, that is what has to be evaluated;
- The goal of the evaluation, that is what purpose it has to serve;
- The criteria, that is the value reference that will guide the formulation of the judgment;
- The process, that is the procedures needed to collect information.

2.1 OBJECTS OF EVALUATION

What is the focus of evaluation? Generally, when considering public interventions, there can be envisaged four different objects (i.e. focuses) of the evaluation that depend on the level of complexity/spread of the evaluation.

The table below shows the potential objects of evaluation in public interventions, illustrating a concrete example related to the healthcare system.

Table 1 - Objects of Evaluation: an example on the health care system[11]

Conceptual object of evaluation	Conceptual definition	Example – healthcare system
Service	Provision of direct services to specific groups of users, carried out continuously by organised and stable structures, to meet well-identified needs.	The set of services/interventions provided by a specific hospital ward.
Project/s	Defined sets of activities aimed at achieving specific goals over a given period of time by using certain resources and whose managerial responsibility is sufficiently identified.	Set of activities aimed at reducing the incidence of a specific disease in a fixed span of time.

[11] The list in the table is not to be considered exhaustive. However, it represents the most important levels and objects which are applicable in most cases.

Programme	Coordinated sets of actions/projects with defined operational goals, realised in a defined time-span using specific resources.	National programmes aimed at erasing specific diseases, such as TBC, polio, etc.
Policy	Intended as an overall plan/strategy including the overall goals and procedures of an organisation.	The implementation of a national healthcare system.

2.1.1 Objects of evaluation in the case of training programmes for local government

When considering the case of training programmes for local government, the following objects of evaluation might be identified:

Figure 3 - Objects of Evaluation for training programmes

SERVICE

- Single training courses

PROJECT

- A set of sectoral training courses
- A set of intersectoral training courses
- The totality of the training courses for taking the State professional exam

PROGRAMME

- The totality of training courses

POLICY

- The National Training Strategy

For the purpose of this toolkit, the concept intervention will be used as a general term that refers to both service, project and programme, when discussing the evaluation methodology in general.

It must be stressed that, at any level – service, project, programme, policy – and for any field of applicability (e.g. training programmes for local government, healthcare system, education system, etc.) the methodology for evaluation remains conceptually the same, while indicators, criteria and implementation responsibilities have to be determined in accordance with the operational level.

2.2 GOALS OF EVALUATION

The evaluation of a public intervention may have several practical and political goals, such as:

- To decide on the merit of a public intervention;
- To improve a public intervention;
- To increase the knowledge about the mechanisms that are generated by the implementation of a public intervention;
- To increase the learning ability of the actors involved in the public intervention.

2.2.1 Goals of evaluation in the case of training programmes for local government

When considering the training programmes for local government (as a concrete example of public intervention), the evaluation processes may have the following practical and political goals:

- To decide on the merit of the training programme:
    - To decide on the opportunity to start, continue, expand rather than suspend or limit the programme at stake, while making stakeholders aware of the decision and the reasons motivating it.
- To improve the training programme:
    - That is to introduce finalised changes in its implementation process.
- To increase the knowledge about the operating mechanisms of the training programme
    - That is to increase the knowledge about processes of social change; and
    - Indirectly, to verify the application of theoretical concepts about social change that underpinned the formulation of the intervention.
- To increase the learning ability of players:
    - That is to increase the learning ability of all those who participated in the programme or were involved in it, through reflections on the actions performed and the consequences that have arisen, with specific reference to those who implemented the intervention.

2.3 PHASES OF EVALUATION

The life-cycle of public intervention programmes develops usually through three crucial steps (i.e. planning, implementation and closing of the programme).

Ideally, the evaluation processes should be carried out for all three steps, as follows:

Table 2 - Evaluation within a training programme life-cycle

Training programme life-cycle	Evaluation phase	Goal
Planning	*Ex-ante* evaluation	Evaluation of the public intervention design, in order to estimate how well it could respond to the needs it has been designed for.
Implementation	*In-itinere* evaluation (monitoring)	Monitoring of the operations related to the implementation of the public intervention, with the main purpose of providing information to improve the training programme during its implementation.
Closing	*Ex-post* evaluation	Evaluation of the whole process of implementation of the public intervention, including, specific activities, the mechanisms at work in producing the results and also the merit of the achieved results.

2.3.1 Phases of the evaluation in the case of training programmes for local government

When considering the monitoring and evaluation of training programmes for local government, the following phases might be considered:

1. *Ex-ante*;
2. *In-itinere* (or monitoring);
3. *Ex-post*.

2.3.1.1 *Ex-ante evaluation*

It should be performed before the beginning of the single course and/or the training programme, during the planning phase. *Ex-ante* evaluation implies the understanding of the state of the art of pre-existing situation (in terms of training needs within the local government, expectations from trainees as well from trainers, knowledge of future trainees on topics of the course, etc.). Only if the pre-existing situation is mapped it would then be possible to evaluate the programme's impact (which is done through a comparative analysis between the pre-existing state of the art and the final achievements).

2.3.1.2 *In-itinere evaluation (or monitoring)*

Considering a single training course:

- It implies the identification of course attendance frequency, as well as collection of feedbacks from trainers and participants, during the implementation of the course. This monitoring allows to keep track of the regularity at which each course is attended, thus enabling the implementing body to adopt the necessary measures to prevent drop-out (dialogue with trainees to identify reasons for un-attendance of classes could for instance lead to the definition of a more appropriate calendar of lessons allowing all to attend regularly). It also allows both trainees and trainers to ask for improvements in order to make the course more fruitful for all.

Considering a training programme:

- It implies gathering the in-itinere evaluation of each training course included in the cluster, at fixed intervals during the implementation of the training programme. Similarly, with what seen above, this monitoring phase allows for joint potential solutions to emerging problems (e.g. following the previous example, the need to reschedule classes according to working timetables of trainees might be a common issue to different courses. Thus, the solution could be found only taking into account monitoring outcomes from each course).

2.3.1.3 *Ex-post evaluation*

It should be performed at the end of the single course: the sum of all courses' evaluation will contribute to defining the evaluation of the overall training programme. The final evaluation, as seen above, is based on a data gathering that is then compared with the evaluation of the situation *ex-ante* (for instance, participants' achievements and knowledge improvements are evaluated based on their starting level; efficiency of the trainers' work is evaluated based on what trainees have learned that they did not know before, etc.). *Ex-post* evaluation also looks at the impact of the performed activity on a broader scale, for instance taking into account the way the trainees have integrated the training experience in their daily working environment.

2.4 CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Criteria are value references that guide the evaluation judgement (e.g. useful/not-useful; good/bad, etc.). Such judgements are formulated in reference to the object of the evaluation (e.g. a training programme for local government) based on empirical evidence (i.e. data). Such data is structured based on specific indicators (i.e. that describe different aspects of the intervention, such as the training programme for local government) collected by means of tools and procedures of the overall monitoring and evaluation methodology.

Moreover, criteria are the value references that are used so to analyse these gathered data, and thus to decide, whether or not the intervention/training programme is achieving its foreseen objective/aim, under certain aspects (i.e. that is in reference to a given criteria).

Selecting the criteria under which the evaluation will be performed means to select the angle/perspective/spectacles through which the evaluator will look at a set of data (indicators) describing the intervention (e.g. training programme). The choice of the criteria for the evaluation is rather a political choice, and not purely a scientific one. In fact, the choice of the criteria itself is operated by a body or agency which operates either at the national or local level to coordinate the design and implementation of training programmes.

When considering the case of training programmes for local government, several criteria might be used, such as the ones listed in the table below (the table also links the criteria to the relevant empirical evidence/data that needs to be collected).

A specific evaluation does not need to apply all the possible criteria. As stated above, the selection of the criteria depends on a political decision.

Table 3 - List of potential evaluation criteria

Criteria	Empirical references for the *ex-ante* evaluation	Empirical references for the *ex-post* evaluation
Input	• Amount of allocated resources	• Amount of actually used resources
Output	• Amount of scheduled activities • Planned number of beneficiaries	• Amount of performed activities • Actual number of beneficiaries
Internal consistency	• Logical connection between the envisaged activities	• Logical connection between the performed activities
Outcome	• Expected benefits for the beneficiaries • Expected changes in the situation in which the intervention has to be implemented	• Effective benefits for the beneficiaries • Effective changes in the situation in which the intervention has been implemented
Effectiveness	• Potential of the intervention to produce the outcome	• Outcome actually produced by the intervention
Impact	• Total expected effects – positive, negative, intended, not intended - in the situation in which the intervention has to be implemented	• Total effects – expected, not expected, positive, negative, intended, not intended - in the situation in which the intervention has been implemented
External consistency	• Logical connection between the objective and the policies the objective is supposed to improve	• Logical connection between the achieved objective and the policies the objective is supposed to improve
Efficiency	• Costs/output ratio • Costs/outcome ratio	• Real costs/real output ratio • Real costs/real outcome ratio
Adequacy (utility, external effectiveness)	• Level of coverage of the total needs achievable by the expected outcome	• Level of coverage of the total needs achieved by the real outcome
Compliance	• Capability of the intervention to meet the beneficiaries' expectations	• Achieved level of coverage of the beneficiaries' expectations
Reliability	• Trustworthiness of the structures responsible for the	• Proved trustworthiness of the structures that implemented the intervention

	implementation of the intervention	
Sustainability	• Expected duration of effects over time	• Expected duration of achieved effects over time
Sinergy	• Added value obtainable by co-ordination with other activities at the same level	• Added value obtainable by co-ordination with other activities at the same level
Process	• How and why, given the inputs in a specific context, outputs and outcomes are expected to be produced (expected cause-effect chains)	• How and why, given the effective inputs in a specific context, outputs and outcomes have been produced (logically sustainable cause-effect chains)
Transferability	• Replicability in other contexts	• Replicability in other contexts

3 AN EVALUATION MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

An evaluation model is defined as a systemic, organic and coherent set of reflections that single out the essential and constitutive elements of the object of evaluation and the expected interaction among those elements.

Among theoretical evaluation models there are:

- Experimental (classical experimental, theory grounded, realistic);
- Pragmatist (goal-free, utilization focused);
- Constructivist (responsive-constructive).

Among these, the realistic model could be identified as the most suitable for the case of professional training programmes for local government.

The evaluation design is the set of reasoning, decisions and activity plans that define and structure the sequence of activities and actions to be performed through the overall evaluation exercise.

It is obvious that such a design, while corresponding to the methodological requirements of the adopted model, has to be tailored considering the phases and goals of the evaluation to be accomplished, as well as the criteria to be applied, in order to adequately consider all the necessary fieldwork details when subsequently preparing the research design.

One of the most demanding tasks, at this step, is the selection of the indicators deemed to be essential for building the indexes upon which evaluation criteria will be applied.

The research design consists of the definition and identification of the sources for the empirical data (the indicators, as clarified above) and of the strategies, tools, responsibilities, timing and procedures for the data collection.

This is the typical task of the field social research, where the research questions are broken up into the constituent concepts, concepts in turn are broken up into the constituent possible empirical evidences (indicators), needed empirical evidences are translated into questions to be directed to the informants or to the documentary information sources.

This reasoning sequence is crucial because the reverse path has to be followed – from answers to indicators to indexes – to build up the empirical references upon which the judgments have to be formulated.

It is worth to underline that, even if an *ex-ante* evaluation is not planned, information about some indicators has to be collected before – or at the very beginning of – the intervention implementation (e.g. the initial knowledge level of the participants, their expectations, etc.), in order to be compared with the *ex-post* information for determining the outcome of the intervention.

Therefore, an accurate research design must include a very careful timing design.

3.1 THE REALISTIC MODEL

The realistic model of evaluation assumes that the outcome of the intervention (e.g. training programme for local government) is dependent on the interaction between the mechanisms that characterise the intervention and the specific context where this intervention takes place.

Mechanisms do not operate in a vacuum: an intervention works (i.e. achieves the expected outcome) only if it is tailored for the context for which it is foreseen. An intervention (e.g. training programme) is context specific when it transmits the appropriate ideas and opportunities to social groups living under certain social and cultural conditions.

The evaluation task is to analyse both the context in which the intervention takes place, and the outcome.

Evaluation criteria help in carrying out this task, as they provide the focus for posing relevant questions about the context-mechanisms-outcome chains (e.g. Is the level of outcome depending on the level of input? Is the level of outcome depending on the participants' expectations? etc.).

Figure 4 - Mechanisms and Context - Definition

What are mechanisms?	What is the context?
• Mechanisms are the underlying theoretical assumptions, coming from different disciplines (psychology, sociology, pedagogy, etc.) that legitimise the intervention logic (e.g.: the mastery of IT will improve the job efficiency; interactive training techniques will facilitate the learning; etc.); • Mechanisms can be considered the rationale on which intervention content and intervention design are grounded.	• The context is composed by: • the features characterising the intervention design and implementation; • the participants attitudes and experiences; • the environment where the intervention takes place.

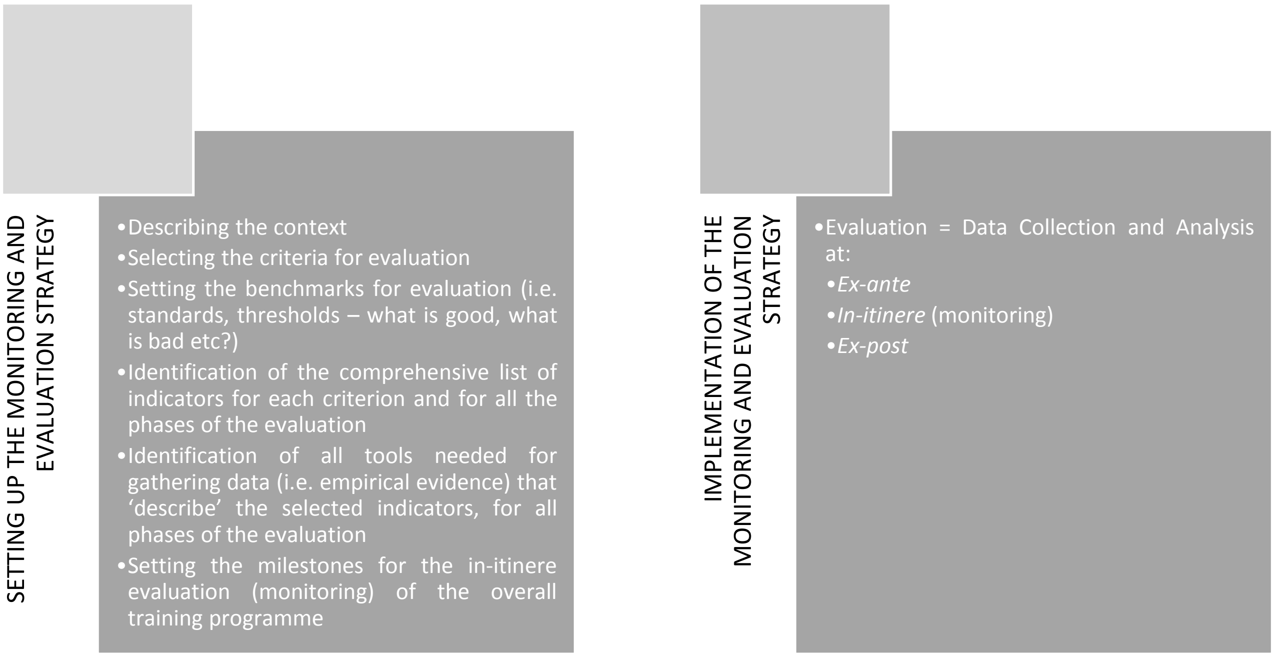
Operationally, the realistic model of evaluation implies:

1. Laying out the evaluation design[12] - To be prepared before the start of the intervention, ideally to be built-in the intervention planning;
2. Identifying criteria - Careful, analytical identification of the features that are deemed to describe adequately the context dimensions and the outcome components;
3. Identifying indicators - Identification of the indicators representing empirically the identified dimensions and components and allowing the data collection;
4. Identifying relevant empirical references (i.e. data sources);
5. Laying out the data collection design[13] - Taking into consideration all the identified indicators and the data sources.

The proposed methodology for monitoring and evaluation of training programmes for local government, rests on two main operational stages as follows:

1. Setting-up the monitoring and evaluation strategy;
2. Implementation of the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

Figure 5 - The two operational stages of monitoring and evaluation



[12] i.e. decisions and activity plans that define and structure the sequence of activities and actions to be performed through the overall evaluation exercise.
[13] i.e. strategies, tools, responsibilities, timing and procedures for the data collection.

Section 2

THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Improving:

- The capacity at national and local levels to use a range of research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of training programmes, their implementation, outputs and outcome;
- The capacity to determine the effects and impacts of the training programme on the beneficiaries, local government and the context as a whole.

Assessing training programmes in terms of:

- Resources dedicated to the implementation of the programme;
- Produced activities and reached beneficiaries;
- Overall benefits to beneficiaries and local government;
- Effectiveness of the programme;
- Consistency with national policies and international recommendations;
- Efficiency of the programme;
- Compliance with beneficiaries needs and expectations;
- Quality of implementation measures and implementing actors;
- Overall impact of the programme.

4 SETTING-UP THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

The following paragraph provide a step-by-step road map to the setting-up of the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

4.1 DEFINITION OF THE CONTEXT OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

A context of the training programme comprises information about the institutional environment in which the intervention takes place. The context is meant as the sum of the features characterising the training programme design and implementation, the participants attitudes and experiences, the environment hosting the intervention.

In the final phase of evaluation, it is of importance to assess and understand how and how much context features influence the training outcome, so to devise the strategies on how to steer the local and central institutions toward more favourable policies.

4.2 DEFINITION OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION GOALS

The next step includes definition of training programme monitoring and evaluation goals. These goals may include deciding on the merit of a training programme, improving the training programme, increasing the knowledge about the operating mechanisms of the training programme, increasing the learning ability of players etc.

Defined goals serve as the relevant ground for further steps of selecting relevant indicators, criteria and tools – elements which would finally bring to the same goals' achievement.

4.3 IDENTIFICATION OF CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Selecting specific criteria and indicators for monitoring and evaluation of specific training programmes is a political choice/decision and is generally the responsibility of the coordinating body/bodies of the evaluation processes (e.g. Council for evaluation of training programmes for local government, a ministry department, etc.).

The selection of the criteria for the evaluation is very closely linked to the degree of complexity/level of development of the overall training system for professional development local government.

Complex and solid systems, with sufficient resources and capacities (i.e. financial resources, human resources, etc.) might require the use of an extensive list of criteria.

Whereas, for systems that are in an incipient phase of development, the evaluation might be operated based on key criteria, such as summarised in the following table.

Table 4 - Key criteria for Evaluation of training programmes

Criteria	Definition	Empirical references for the *ex-ante* evaluation	Empirical references for the *ex-post* evaluation
Input	Resources dedicated to the implementation of the course	• Amount of allocated resources	• Amount of actually used resources
Output	Amount of produced activities and reached beneficiaries	• Amount of scheduled activities	• Amount of performed activities

		• Planned number of beneficiaries	• Actual number of beneficiaries
Outcome	Benefits of the intervention in terms of beneficiaries and their context of activity	• Expected benefits for the beneficiaries • Expected changes in the situation in which the intervention has to be implemented	• Effective benefits for the beneficiaries • Effective changes in the situation in which the intervention has been implemented
Effectiveness	Link between the initiative and its outcome	• Potential of the intervention to produce the outcome	• Outcome actually produced by the intervention
External consistency	Consistency with relevant policies	• Logical connection between the objective and the policies the objective is supposed to improve	• Logical connection between the achieved objective and the policies the objective is supposed to improve
Efficiency	Ratio between costs and output/outcome of the intervention	• Costs/output ratio • Costs/outcome ratio	• Real costs/real output ratio • Real costs/real outcome ratio
Compliance	Meeting beneficiaries needs and expectations	• Capability of the intervention to meet the beneficiaries' expectations	• Achieved level of coverage of the beneficiaries' expectations
Reliability	Reliability of the implementing/delivering organisation of the initiative	• Trustworthiness of the structures responsible for the implementation of the intervention	• Proved trustworthiness of the structures that implemented the intervention
Impact	Total expected effects (positive/negative, intended/not intended), registered in the context of implementation	• Total expected effects – positive, negative, intended, not intended - in the situation in which the intervention has to be implemented	• Total effects – expected, not expected, positive, negative, intended, not intended - in the situation in which the intervention has been implemented

Evaluation is not static. It evolves alongside with the training system itself. Thus, it might be said that, for the case of new systems, the criteria for evaluation could be added as the system develops.

The choice for the selection of criteria (and of the related indicators), lies always in the power of the coordinating actors. Such decision might reflect/respond to the following aspects:

- The goals of the evaluation;
- The resources for the implementation of the evaluation;
- The existent capacities for implementation of the strategy; etc.

4.4 SETTING THE BENCHMARKS FOR THE EVALUATION

Setting the benchmarks for the selected criteria refers to setting the threshold for the evaluation, and that is the standards within which the evaluation is performed (i.e. what is the value that satisfies the efficiency criteria?).

4.5 IDENTIFICATION OF INDICATORS

Indicators refer to sets of information specifically gathered for evaluation purposes. For each selected criterion (see previous paragraph) available empirical information has to be identified in order to allow to measure the level of achieved by the training programme.

Indicators are grouped in homogeneous sets, which reflect the area within which specific indicators function.

For the purpose of evaluating training courses performed, a set of relevant indicators have been identified and grouped in coherent sets.[14]

Table 5 - Recommended sets of indicators/indicators and their description with reference to the related criteria

Set of indicators	Indicators
1. Financial resources	1.1 Costs for the implementation of the professional training
	1.2 Costs for travel and accommodation of trainers and participants
	1.3 Different sources of financing (e.g. own funds, contribution from public, private, international bodies, etc.)
	1.4 Dedicated heading for potential extra expenses
2. Competence of administrative staff	2.1 Administrative staff preparation (i.e. education)
	2.2 Administrative staff experience in organising/coordinating professional trainings
3. Competence of trainers	3.1 Trainers knowledge and preparation on the topic of the course (i.e. education)
	3.2 Trainers teaching skills and techniques
	3.3 Trainers experience in delivering professional training
	3.4 Trainers work experience in the field of the course
	3.5 Accreditation of trainers
	3.6 External experts among trainers
	3.7 Accreditation of implementing organisation
4. Infrastructure and Equipment	4.1 Class – rooms (e.g. size per number of participants)
	4.2 Furniture (e.g. tables, chairs)
	4.3 Accessibility (e.g. for physically impaired participants)
	4.4 Security and safety requirements (e.g. emergency plan)
	4.5 Venue equipped with video terminals, projector, etc.
	4.6 Venue with Wi-Fi access
	4.7 Availability of consumables (e.g. Flip-chart, post-it, markers, etc.)
5. Sharing of resources	5.1 Sharing of human resources with other activities
	5.2 Sharing of administrative staff
	5.3 Sharing of infrastructures with other activities
	5.4 Sharing equipment with other activities
6. Participants' expectation/satisfaction	6.1 Expectation/satisfaction about outcome
	6.2 Expectation/satisfaction about training activities
	6.3 Expectation/satisfaction about content

[14] *Nota Bene*: in order to facilitate cross-referencing, the numbering of sets of indicators and indicators is consistently used throughout the toolkit (see annexes and relevant tables).

	6.4 Expectation/satisfaction about the applicability of the training issues to the specific work context
7. Participants' preparation/learning	7.1 Level of knowledge/learning
	7.2 Level of experience on the topic
	7.3 Context of participants' job/activity (info about the context/Local Administration where the participants are employed)
8. Participants' motivation	8.1 Interest about content
	8.2 Interest in participation (context of the training)
	8.3 Free vs compulsory attendance
9. Selection procedures	9.1 Level of visibility of the initiative (pre-training)
	9.2 Compliance with the principles of transparency
	9.3 Compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities
	9.4 Leave authorisation/recognition
10. Compliance with the strategic[15] and regulatory framework	10.1 Compliance with strategic and regulatory framework objectives
	10.2 Compliance with the strategic and regulatory framework topics/contents
	10.3 Compliance with the strategic and regulatory framework target groups
11. Logistic organisation	11.1 Hosting environment
	11.2 Accommodation
	11.3 Travel arrangement
12. Didactic organisation	12.1 Ratio administrative staff/participants
	12.2 Ratio trainers/participants
	12.3 Minimum requirement for certification
	12.4 Credits certifications and/or other job benefits
	12.5 Testing procedure to assess the outcome
	12.6 Testing procedure to assess participant initial preparation level
	12.7 Teaching methods/techniques
	12.8 Structure of the course (i.e. calendar, schedule, length, etc.)
	12.9 Availability of materials/handouts supporting the training
13. Attendance registration system	13.1 Attendance register
	13.2 Minimum attendance requirement
	13.3 Attendance of participants
14. Time management system	14.1 Timetable of training course
	14.2 Compliance with foreseen deadlines
15. Internal organisation	15.1 Organigram for the implementation of the course
	15.2 Distribution of tasks among staff
	15.3 Internal communication plan
16. Willingness to apply acquired competences	16.1 Willingness to apply knowledge/information
	16.2 Willingness to apply skills
	16.3 Willingness to apply methods and techniques
17. Applicability of acquired competences	17.1 Applicability of knowledge /information
	17.2 Applicability of skills
	17.3 Applicability of methods and techniques
18. Work environment	18.1 Employees/Ex-Participants performance
	18.2 Employees/Ex-Participants behaviour
19. Context	19.1 Context of participants' job/activity (pre-training)
	19.2 Level of visibility of the initiative (pre-training)
	19.3 Compliance with the principles of transparency (pre-training)
	19.4 Compliance with the principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunities (pre-training)

[15] Currently refers to the Strategy for Professional Development of Employees in Local Self-Government Units in the Republic of Serbia.

4.6 IDENTIFICATION AND PREPARATION OF TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is a necessary step to conduct all the monitoring activities as well as the final evaluation. If data are not collected properly before, during and after the completion of the training process, evaluation at all phases will be impaired. Thus, specific tools should be identified to gather needed data, based on the selected criteria and indicators.

The table below lists the most common tools to be employed to gather relevant information in different phases of monitoring and evaluation process.

Proposed templates of recommended tools are given in the Annex section of the Toolkit; however, such templates should be adapted to the specific context of each training course/programme each time they should been applied.

Table 6 - Recommended tools

Tools	Purpose	Phase
1. TNA Questionnaire	To identify the training needs as a necessary premise to the development of a training programme for local government.	*Ex-ante*
2. Expectations questionnaire	To effectively monitor and evaluate the results of the training programme for what concerns the capacity to meet participants' expectations.	*Ex-ante*
3. Time management tool - ex-ante phase	To plan all the foreseen activities in efficient and effective manner, and monitor if the implementation of the training is compliant with foreseen deadlines and if there is a need to make changes in terms of deadlines, time duration or similar.	*Ex-ante*
4. Time management tool - in-itinere phase	To plan all the foreseen activities in efficient and effective manner, and monitor if the implementation of the training is compliant with foreseen deadlines and if there is a need to make changes in terms of deadlines, time duration or similar.	*In-itinere*
5. Preliminary financial sheet	To identify the foreseen resources and costs, needed for the implementation of the training course/programme and plan accordingly.	*Ex-ante*
6. Financial forms - detail	To enable proper financial monitoring during the programme implementation.	*In-itinere*
7. Final financial form	To evaluate input amount and efficiency of the training course/programme.	*Ex-post*
8. Course fiche	To clearly identify all aspects concerning the organisation of a specific training.	*Ex-ante*
9. Preliminary test on competences of participants	To clearly identify participants' preparation level.	*Ex-ante*
10. Course attendance sheet	To enable monitoring and evaluation of the attendance to courses.	*In-itinere*
11. Participants' satisfaction questionnaire	To collect data on the participants' perception of the training course, in the light of the course/programme evaluation.	*In-itinere*
12. Trainers' satisfaction questionnaire	To collect data on the course implementation from an expert perspective, in the light of the course/programme evaluation.	*In-itinere*
13. Course final test	To assess the level of knowledge of participants at the end of the training course.	*In-itinere*
14. Trainers' reports	To assess the course implementation from an expert perspective.	*In-itinere*
15. Semi-structured interview for PA managers	To assess the impact of the training course on the performance of participants and overall work environment of participants.	*Ex-post*
16. Questionnaire for participants on usefulness/usability of acquired competences	To assess the level of applicability of knowledge and competences acquired during the training course into the work environment of participants.	*Ex-post*

17. Monitoring report	To propose and justify modifications or amelioration to the training programmes implementation strategy. To make the monitoring results available to stakeholders.	*In-itinere*
18. Final evaluation report	To communicate achieved objectives and results of a gap analysis. To make the final evaluation results available to stakeholders	*Ex-post*

4.7 SETTING THE MILESTONES FOR MONITORING

Setting the milestones for *in-itinere* evaluation (i.e. monitoring) refers to setting check points (i.e. dates) within the life-cycle of the training programme. At check points, feedback from participants and trainers should be collected and analysed in order to check whether the activities are implemented according to the plan.

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation methodology implies a 3-steps procedure.

1. Data gathering (to be done before – for the purpose of *ex-ante* evaluation – during and after training programme's implementation);
2. An evaluation *in-itinere* (i.e. monitoring, thus the analysis of data collected before and during the process, so to suggest modifications or amelioration to the implementation strategy);
3. A final evaluation (i.e. the comparison between data collected before and at the end of the project implementation, so to identify achieved objectives and conduct a gap analysis).

5.1 DATA GATHERING - TOOLS, PROCEDURES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPETENCIES

The next paragraphs offer an overview of data gathering process per specific topics, including proposed tools to be used, monitored indicators, related criteria, procedures, responsible actors and needed competencies for implementation.

5.1.1 Training Need Analysis (TNA) - Identifying training needs

Before developing of a specific training programme, it is key to ensure the identification of training needs. This is done in an *ex-ante* phase of the training programme implementation.

Identification of training needs may be performed through the Training Needs Analysis and National Training Strategy tool of Council of Europe[16], consisting of a detailed TNA Questionnaire surveying both the perceived and the actual needs of local government employees. After the survey, a TNA Report is prepared identifying specific trainings to be conducted in the future period.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 7.2 Level of experience on the topic;
- 7.3 Context of participants' job/activity (info about the context/Local Administration where the participants are employed).

5.1.1.1 *Procedures*

As foreseeing by the TNA methodology, quantitative surveys are coupled with focus groups with*, inter alia*, potential participants to the trainings. The focus group methodology implies the organisation of a dedicated meeting with the relevant actors, that are asked to give further insights on their perceived needs and possibilities/willingness to improve their capacity to the purpose of delivering an always more efficient public service. Focus groups are ideally organised with a range of 10-20 participants, and work at their best if specific guiding questions are devised in advance by the facilitator. Guiding questions to be debated in this case should relate to the perceived needs among participants for what concerns their professional training and the improvement of the organisation/service they work for. It would be also important to investigate the willingness of participants to engage in such training

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[16] Council of Europe. (2016). Training Needs Analysis and National Training Strategy tool. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/1680746e54.

process, the relevant identified incentives to promote such an effort and potential benefits, as well as obstacles, of this process.

All the data collected (by means of questionnaire and later through dedicated focus groups) are to be analysed jointly for each specific context, in order to accurately plan the objectives and potential goals of each training programme.

5.1.1.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The collection of data through questionnaires could be done internally (i.e. on-line questionnaire distributed via e-mail by the local government administrative offices to all employees). If the distribution of the questionnaire is to be done through an on-line survey programme, the sender needs to have a certain familiarity with such a programme, and all employees need to have an e-mail to receive such link.

It is also advisable that the expert who will be in charge of analysing the results of TNA questionnaire will also be present during the focus group, so to allow for a comprehensive data analysis that will ultimately become the baseline for the development of the training programme and be used as milestone for comparison between needs and achieved results at the end of the training programme (final evaluation phase).

5.1.2 Expectations questionnaire - Identifying participants' expectations

In order to effectively monitor and evaluate the results of the training programme for what concerns the capacity to meet participants' expectations as well, it is advisable to identify participants' expectations from the training in an *ex-ante* phase, prior to its beginning.

Some of the key questions of the aforementioned questionnaire could be:

- Related to the expectations about the competences to be acquired (theoretical, practical, empirical, related to problem solving methodologies or rather to specific procedures for defined problems, etc.);
- Related to the experience of the participants in previous training programmes (did they attend other training courses? When? What were their expectation? Was their expectation met? etc.);
- Related to participants experiences as local government employees;
- Related to potential incentives to promote local government employees' effort to participate to professional training.

Training participants should fill in *Expectations questionnaire*.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 6.1 Expectation/satisfaction about outcome;
- 6.2 Expectation/satisfaction about training activities;
- 6.3 Expectation/satisfaction about content;
- 6.4 Expectation/satisfaction about the applicability of the training issues to the specific work context;
- 8.1 Interest about content;
- 8.2 Interest in participation (context of the training).

5.1.2.1 *Procedures*

The questionnaire should be elaborated jointly with the training coordinators and trainers. In order to gather insights from the training coordinator and trainers it is advisable that a focus group is organised, where relevant experience could be shared so to devise the appropriate key questions.

After the questionnaire elaboration, a testing phase should follow, where pilot respondents are asked to answer the questionnaire to check for its clarity and responder-friendliness. Evaluation experts should then try an analysis of pilot data, to see if the questionnaire structure as it is devised allows for a relevant data processing and for a sensitive set of results. After the testing and revision, the questionnaire could be put on-line, and the link should be distributed to all future participants via e-mail: filling in the questionnaire should be indicated as a compulsory activity in order to be able to start the training.

5.1.2.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The competences needed in order to elaborate a questionnaire jointly with a group of trainers (within a focus group) and to test it for consistency and feasibility of analysis are those of an expert social scientist.

The collection of data through questionnaire could be done internally (i.e. on-line questionnaire distributed via e-mail by the local government administrative offices to all employees). If the distribution of the questionnaire is to be done through an on-line survey programme, the link sender needs to have a certain familiarity with such a programme, and all employees need to have an e-mail to receive such link.

For what concerns the organisation and facilitation of focus group, this could also be done by an expert facilitator, given that his/her work is always paralleled and assisted by the social scientist in charge of questionnaire elaboration and analysis.

5.1.3 Time management tool - Time management *ex-ante* phase

In order to ensure efficient and effective monitoring of all the foreseen activities within each training, proper time management should be done in an *ex-ante* phase of evaluation.

The *Time management tool* allows for an efficient and effective monitoring of all the foreseen activities within each training.

This tool monitors the following indicator:

- 14.1 Timetable of training course.

5.1.3.1 *Procedures*

Before each training course, all the activities should be structured in a Time management tool, taking into account all phases needed for the development of such activities (planning, implementation, etc.). For each activity, the relevant elements to be identified are:

- Person in charge;
- Milestones;
- Foreseen deadlines.

The most appropriate tool is the GANTT diagram.

5.1.3.2 *Responsibilities and competences*
The training coordinator of the implementing organisation should be responsible for structuring the foreseen activities. If the training programme implementation is outsourced, implementing organisation's training coordinators will perform this task.

5.1.4 Time management tool - Time management for *in-itinere* phase
During the implementation of the training programme, it is of importance to monitor if the implementation of the trainings is compliant with foreseen deadlines and if there is a need to make changes in terms of deadlines, time duration or similar.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 14.1 Timetable of training course;
- 14.2 Compliance with foreseen deadlines.

5.1.4.1 *Procedures*
The time management tool should be updated and filled in according to the actual development of activities, if needed.

5.1.4.2 *Responsibilities and competences*
The training coordinator / administrative staff of the implementing organisation should monitor the compliance of the training with the foreseen deadlines.

5.1.5 Financial management - *Ex-ante* phase - identification of foreseen resources and costs
Before the beginning of the training programme, there is a need to identify and orderly systematise all foreseen costs and resources in a dedicated financial data collection sheet. Such items could relate to:

- Collection of best offers from different service and materials' providers;
- Average salary for a certified professional trainer in the country;
- Identification of potential travelling routes for trainers and trainees and of the costs of transport;
- Identification of best offers from different providers regarding equipment needed in order to start the course;
- Quantification of other management and organisational expenses, based on previous experience or experience of other training's implementing institutions.

The *Preliminary financial sheet* is a planning tool, which allows for the identification of foreseen resources and costs, needed for the implementation of the training programme.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 1.1 Costs for the implementation of the professional training;
- 1.2 Costs for travel and accommodation of trainers and participants;
- 1.3 Different sources of financing (e.g. own funds, contribution from public, private, international bodies, etc.);
- 1.4 Dedicated heading for potential extra expenses.

5.1.5.1 *Procedures*
In order to clearly identify all costs implied and resources available for training programme's implementation, it is important to gather all provisions of expenses. This data systematisation should be paired with a parallel table, detailing all available resources to finance the training programme. The

comparison between the data collected in the 2 grids will ultimately define the feasibility of expenses and consequently of activities. This should be done in *ex-ante* phase of training programme implementation.

5.1.5.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The competences of the data collector for the prevision of expenses are related to:

- The capability to communicate with potential services or materials' providers, so to gather their best offers;
- The capability to foresee all potential organisational expenses;
- The capacity to orderly store all gathered data so to allow for a detailed gap analysis between foreseen expenses and resources.

5.1.6 Financial management - *In-itinere* phase - financial monitoring

The financial monitoring procedures imply the analysis of the periodical financial data collection sheets (in comparison with the initial prevision of costs and resources). This periodical check allows for the redistribution of resources (if some budget items are less exploited than others) or for the moderation of expenses so to meet all needs for the finalisation of the training programme. Over expenditure could also lead the training programme coordinator to seek for extra resources (if needed) in order to allow for the completion of the programme, bearing this in mind for the development of a future prevision of expenses for a new training programme.

It is important that financial data are consistently gathered and accurately stored so to allow for proper financial monitoring on the feasibility of the programme, as well as to evaluate input amount and efficiency.

In order to do so, it is important to have standard financial data collection sheets (*Financial forms*).

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 1.1 Costs for the implementation of the professional training;
- 1.2 Costs for travel and accommodation of trainers and participants;
- 1.3 Different sources of financing (e.g. own funds, contribution from public, private, international bodies, etc.);
- 1.4 Dedicated heading for potential extra expenses.

5.1.6.1 *Procedures*

The procedure for filling in the financial data collection sheets implies tidiness, structure and a clear and organised administrative process.

In order to fill in the table the invoices/receipts and relative proofs of payment should be already stored and classified in the administrative protocol.

It is advisable to create a specific protocol code for each item of budget so to be able to trace the original financial documents easily during financial monitoring procedures.

5.1.6.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The competences of the data collector of financial data are related to:

- The capability to store each payment proof, receipt, invoice etc. orderly, according to standard procedures;

- The capability to fill in all data sheet information correctly, according to national financial rules or the rules specifically applied by the implementing organisation.

Given what stated above, it is advisable that the person responsible for this procedure is the administrative staff of the implementing organisation itself. However, training coordinator and/or financial manager should permanently supervise and control the accuracy of data.

5.1.7 Financial management - *Ex-post* phase - financial evaluation

The final financial evaluation implies a comparative analysis between the prevision of expenses and the final budget (defined by the collection of all *in-itinere* financial data collection sheets).

The *Final financial form* is the summary of all detailed yearly or periodical reports on expenditures incurred during the implementation of the training course.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 1.1 Costs for the implementation of the professional training
- 1.2 Costs for travel and accommodation of trainers and participants
- 1.3 Different sources of financing (e.g. own funds, contribution from public, private, international bodies, etc.)
- 1.4 Dedicated heading for potential extra expenses

5.1.7.1 *Procedures*

Collecting all relevant data for the final financial evaluation implies the collection of all *in-itinere* financial data collection sheets.

5.1.7.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The competences for the filling in of the final financial data collection sheet are those identified for the previous step (i.e. filling in of the *in-itinere* financial data collection sheet). Thus, it is advisable that the procedure should be coordinated by the financial manager of the implementing organisation in close cooperation of the training coordinator.

5.1.8 Course fiche - Organisation of a specific training course/programme

In order to clearly identify all aspects concerning the organisation of a specific training it is important to elaborate a detailed *Course fiche* in which all aspects concerning its implementation are listed. This is done in *ex-ante* phase of the training programme implementation.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 12.5 Testing procedure to assess the outcome;
- 12.6 Testing procedure to assess participant initial preparation level;
- 12.7 Teaching methods/techniques;
- 12.8 Structure of the course (i.e. calendar, schedule, length, etc.);
- 12.9 Availability of materials/handouts supporting the training;
- 13.1 Attendance register;
- 13.2 Minimum attendance requirement.

5.1.8.1 *Procedures*

The document should be sent by the implementing organisation firstly to coordinating body for approval and secondly to all participants.

5.1.8.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

It is advisable that the person responsible for this procedure should be the administrative secretary/referent of the implementing organisation itself, together with the trainer and the coordinator of the training programme.

5.1.9 Preliminary test on competences of participants - Evaluating the preparation of participants

Evaluating the preparation of participants in an *ex-ante* phase facilitates the assessment of what has been acquired during the course, by crossing results against the final test of the training course.

In order to clearly identify participants' preparation level, *Preliminary test on competences of participants* is used. The preliminary test format should be standard for all courses within the training programme, implying:

- (max) 10 specific questions related to the topic/s of the training programme;
- Multiple choice answers.

This tool monitors the following indicators

- 7.1 Level of knowledge/learning

5.1.9.1 *Procedures*

At the beginning of the training course, trainers should assess participants by means of a short test.

Trainers, together with the coordinator of the training programme (if applicable), should prepare a short test to participants in order to assess their level of knowledge/preparation on the topic of the course.

5.1.9.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The entrance test should be developed by each course trainer, according to the competences needed to follow the lessons and the topics of the course. Trainers should also process the data and analyse answers of the tests filled by participants.

5.1.10 Course attendance sheet - Participants' attendance

The monitoring of course's attendance is done through the analysis of signed attendance sheets, compared to enrolment lists. This is meant as an *in-itinere* data gathering procedure as the final training programme evaluation will be done through a joint examination of the results of all the training courses' attendance.

This comparative analysis leads to the understanding of the frequency of attendance of each course: if the frequency seems to be rather low for all participants, further inquiries should be made as to the motivation. Individual calls with participants could reveal if the problem is related to logistics (e.g. room too crowded, insufficient IT equipment, unfeasible timetables, etc.) or to the quality of teaching (e.g. insufficient communication with trainer, topics of teaching perceived as not relevant, etc.).

For this purpose, *Course attendance sheet* is used.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 13.3 Attendance of participants.

5.1.10.1 *Procedures*

The collection of data and signatures of participants should be coordinated by the administration unit of the implementing organisation. The sheets should be made available to each trainer for each training course. The trainer coordinates the gathering of signatures from the participants during the training and returns the sheet to the training coordinator and the administration unit at the end of each training.

All singed attendance sheets should be stored in a dedicated file by the administration unit of the implementing organisation. Scanned copies of attendance sheets and/or originals should be provided to the coordinating body after the training and/or as a part of the final report of the training programme implementation.

5.1.10.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

No specific competences are needed in order to prepare and print the signature collection sheets. However, since it is very important that these sheets are orderly stored and made available for monitoring purposes, it is advisable that the secretary of the training programme is responsible for this task.

5.1.11 Participants' satisfaction questionnaire - Identifying the level of participants' satisfaction

The satisfaction identification aims to collect data on the participants' perception of the training course, in the light of the course/programme evaluation. This is meant as an *in-itinere* data gathering procedure as the final programme evaluation will be done through a joint examination of the results of all the training courses' questionnaires.

For this purpose, *Participants' satisfaction questionnaire* is used.

The tool monitors the following indicators:

- 3.1 Trainers knowledge and preparation on the topic of the course (i.e. education);
- 3.2 Trainers teaching skills and techniques;
- 4.1 Class – rooms (e.g. size per number of participants);
- 4.2 Furniture (e.g. tables, chairs);
- 4.3 Accessibility (e.g. for physically impaired participants);
- 4.5 Venue equipped with video terminals, projector, etc.;
- 4.6 Venue with Wi-Fi access;
- 4.7 Availability of consumables (e.g. Flip-chart, post-it, markers, etc.);
- 6.1 Satisfaction about outcome;
- 6.2 Satisfaction about training activities;
- 6.3 Satisfaction about content;
- 6.4 Satisfaction about the applicability of the training issues to the specific work context;
- 8.1 Interest about content;
- 8.2 Context of participants' job activity;
- 11.1 Hosting environment;
- 11.2 Accommodation;
- 11.3 Travel arrangements;
- 12.7 Teaching methods/techniques;
- 12.8 Structure of the course (i.e. calendar, schedule, length, etc.);
- 12.9 Availability of materials/handouts supporting the training.

5.1.11.1 *Procedures*

The questionnaire should be delivered to participants in class after the final test of each course. It should be anonymous and should be collected before participants leave the classroom.

The collection of data through questionnaire could be also done using on-line questionnaire distributed via e-mail to all participants after the exam.

Filing in of the questionnaire should be made a compulsory requirement in order to be able to receive the certificate of attendance to the course/training. This compulsory measure is useful to ensure that participants return their questionnaires and that monitoring will thus be feasible, having the chance to improve the course for future editions.

The final programme evaluation will be done through a joint examination of the results of all the courses' questionnaires.

5.1.11.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

Trainers will be responsible for distributing the questionnaire at the end of the final exam of each course. Joint examination of the results of all the courses' questionnaires should be done either by the trainers or by the implementing organisation administrative unit.

In case of on-line questionnaire, it should be distributed by the administrative unit of the implementing organisation. If on-line questionnaire is to be done through an on-line survey programme, the link sender needs to have a certain familiarity with such a programme.

Implementing organisation should make available filled questionnaires to the coordinating body.

5.1.12 Trainers' satisfaction questionnaire - Identifying the level of trainers' satisfaction

Identification of trainers' satisfaction***,*** aims to collect data on the course implementation from an expert perspective, in the light of the course/programme evaluation. This is meant as an *in-itinere* data gathering procedure as the final programme evaluation will be done through a joint examination of the results of all the training courses' questionnaires.

For this purpose, *Trainers' satisfaction questionnaire* is used.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 4.1 Class – rooms (e.g. size per number of participants);
- 4.2 Furniture (e.g. tables, chairs);
- 4.3 Accessibility (e.g. for physically impaired participants);
- 4.5 Venue equipped with video terminals, projector, etc.;
- 4.6 Venue with Wi-Fi access;
- 4.7 Availability of consumables (e.g. Flip-chart, post-it, markers, etc.);
- 6.1 Satisfaction about outcome;
- 6.2 Satisfaction about training activities;
- 6.3 Satisfaction about content;
- 6.4 Satisfaction about the applicability of the training issues to the specific work context;
- 11.1 Hosting environment;
- 11.2 Accommodation;
- 11.3 Travel arrangements;
- 12.2 Ratio trainers/participants;
- 12.8 Structure of the course (i.e. calendar, schedule, length, etc.).

5.1.12.1 *Procedures*

The questionnaire should be delivered to trainers at the end of each course (also via e-mail). The questionnaire should be anonymous. Filing in of the questionnaire should be made a compulsory requirement for trainers.

5.1.12.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

Administrative unit of the implementing organisation should send the questionnaire and examine the results received.

If the distribution of the questionnaire is to be done through an on-line survey programme, the link sender needs to have a certain familiarity with such a programme.

5.1.13 Course final test - Assessing the level of knowledge of participants

The final test represents a crucial aspect of the evaluation, as it allows for the assessment of the level of knowledge of participants at the end of the training course (i.e. facilitating this way the assessment of what has been acquired during the course, by crossing results against the preliminary test of the training course).

This is meant as an *in-itinere* data gathering procedure as it serves for the preparation of the *Trainers' report* which should provide comparison between the level of competences at the beginning of the course and at the final test.

In order to clearly evaluate the competences acquired by trainees, *Course final test* is used. Its format should be standard for all courses within the training programme, implying:

- (max) 10 specific questions related to the subject/s of the training programme;
- Multiple choice answers.

This tool monitors the following indicator:

- 7.1 Level of knowledge/learning.

5.1.13.1 *Procedures*

The final test should be developed, taking into account the entry level of the course' participants and aimed at testing the achievement of competences and skills.

At the end of the training course, *Course final test* should be disseminated and filled by trainees. Trainers should collect the filled tests, examine and analyse results.

5.1.13.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The final test should be developed by each course trainer, taking into account the entry level of the course participants and aimed at testing the achievement of competences and skills.

Collection, examination and analysis of results should be done by trainers as well in *Trainers' report.*

5.1.14 *Trainers' report* - Assessing the course implementation from an expert perspective

The *Trainers' report* allows for the assessment of the course implementation from an expert perspective. The report summarises all aspects related to the implementation and focuses on the competences developed during his/her course (i.e. by each participant as well as by the group as a whole).

This report should be standardised among all trainers, according to the same template. The main points should concern:

- Identification of key competences acquired;
- Comparison between level of the competences at the beginning of the course and at the final test (with marks of the final test);
- Identification of key tools/methodologies introduced;
- Identification of the level of familiarity achieved by participants on the above-mentioned tools/methodologies;
- Level of attendance of participants.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 7.1 Level of knowledge/learning;
- 13.1 Attendance register;
- 13.2 Minimum attendance requirement;
- 13.3 Attendance of participants.

5.1.14.1 *Procedures*

The *Trainers' reports* should be filled in by each trainer/trainers' team and delivered to the training coordinator and the administrative unit of the implementing organisation, within a month from the course's final test.

5.1.14.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

It will be the role of each trainer/trainers' team to summarise in a report the competences developed during his/her course.

The competences needed to fill in the report are those typically needed by a professional trainer: objectivity, capacity to identify competences developed, to appreciate differential efforts, to summarise key concepts so to allow for an overall course evaluation.

5.1.15 Semi-structured interview for PA managers - Assessing the impact of the training course

The semi-structured interview for PA managers aims to assess the impact of the training course on the performance of participants and overall work environment in which they work. This is done in *ex-post* phase of the training programme implementation - 6-12 months from its end.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 18.1 Employees performance;
- 18.2 Employees behaviour.

5.1.15.1 *Procedures*

The Semi-structured interviews should be planned in the 6-12 months from the end of a training course. The interviews should target supervisors and/or peers of the employees that attended the training course. The interviews may be also easily conducted via telephone, Skype, etc.

5.1.15.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

The interviews should be planned by the coordinating body and may be implemented by professional researchers/evaluators, or by professionals/experts in PA, with a thorough knowledge of: 1. Evaluation processes and 2. PA system.

5.1.16 Questionnaire for participants on usefulness/usability of acquired competences - Assessing the level of applicability of knowledge and competences acquired

Assessing the level of applicability of knowledge and competences acquired aims to assess the level of applicability of knowledge and competences acquired during the training course into the work environment in which participants work (i.e. 1. Potential - is the work setting adequate for the application of the acquired competences? and 2. Effective – are the employees that attended a training course willing to apply the acquired competences). This is done in *ex-post* phase of the training programme implementation - 6-12 months from its end.

It is proposed to use the *Questionnaire for participants on usefulness/usability of acquired competences* for this purpose.

This tool monitors the following indicators:

- 16.1 Willingness to apply knowledge/information;
- 16.2 Willingness to apply skills;
- 16.3 Willingness to apply methods and techniques;
- 17.1 Applicability of knowledge/information;
- 17.2 Applicability of skills;
- 17.3 Applicability of methods and techniques.

5.1.16.1 *Procedures*

The dissemination of the questionnaire should be planned in the 6-12 months following the end of a training course. The questionnaire may be distributed online, by means of a link, sent to the e-mail address of the employees. The questionnaire may be applied as well by an operator, in a face to face meeting.

5.1.16.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

It is important that such assessment should be implemented by experienced professionals with a thorough knowledge of: 1. Evaluation processes and 2. PA system.

5.2 EVALUATION *IN-ITINERE* (MONITORING)

After data collection, monitoring follows resulting with the production of periodical monitoring reports. As already mentioned above, monitoring includes the analysis of data collected before (*ex-ante*) and during the process (*in-itinere*), so to suggest modifications or amelioration to the implementation strategy.

Monitoring reports will ultimately feed into the final evaluation phase, as the basis for the adoption of adaptation strategies, in order to achieve the set objectives and satisfy the identified quality criteria if the implementation plan is adversely influenced by external factors.

It is proposed to use the template *Monitoring report* for this purpose

5.2.1.1 *Procedures*

The financial monitoring procedures imply the analysis of the periodical financial data collection sheets in comparison with the initial prevision of expenses (already calibrated by the resources/income evaluation). This periodical check allows for the redistribution of resources (if some budget items are less exploited than others) or for the moderation of expenses so to meet all needs for the finalisation of the training programme. Over expenditure could also lead the training programme coordinator to seek for extra resources (if needed) in order to allow for the completion of the programme, bearing this in mind for the development of a future prevision of expenses for a new training programme.

The monitoring of course's attendance is done through the analysis of signed attendance sheets, compared to enrolment lists. This comparative analysis leads to the understanding of the frequency of attendance of each course: if the frequency seems to be rather low for all participants, further inquiries should be made as to the motivation. Individual calls with participants could reveal if the problem is related to logistics (e.g. room too crowded, insufficient IT equipment, unfeasible timetables, etc.) or to the quality of teaching (e.g. insufficient communication with trainer, topics of teaching perceived as not relevant, etc.).

Course evaluation proceeds from the analysis of the reports delivered by trainers, as well as from the evaluation questionnaires filled in by participants. The latter provides useful information for what concerns evaluation of the trainer's work and capacity to relate to trainees. The former allows for the identification of competences achieved at the end of each course. The comparison between the two, as well as the evaluation of the number of passes and fails at each exam, allows for the overall course evaluation. Reference should be made to identified criteria to verify if the process complies with the desired outcomes.

Periodical *Monitoring reports* (covering financial, attendance and course evaluation aspects), with eventual adaptation strategy should be sent and presented to the coordinating body for consideration and decision-making on eventual changes to introduce.

5.2.1.2 *Responsibilities and competences*

Training programme coordinator should be responsible to conduct the *in-itinere* financial evaluation, especially needed in a potential re-negotiation phase of contributions/financing or to decide about a budget shifting among different budget items, so to meet all needs. Administrative unit of the implementing organisation should support the coordinator in this process.

Since no specific competence is required to monitor attendance of participants to courses, but an important factor for monitoring and for elaboration of an adaptation plan is played by the possibility to incentivize trainees to attend, the course attendance monitoring is best done if coordinated by the administrative unit of implementing organisation (who could interact with participants on one-to-one basis) and then supported by the training programme's coordinator in the adaptation strategy phase.

The competences needed for this *in-itinere* evaluation are those of experts with a specific expertise in evaluation of training programmes.

The coordinating body is responsible for reviewing periodical monitoring reports and making decisions in relation to eventual adaptation strategy and changes in training programme implementation.

5.3 FINAL EVALUATION

Final evaluation includes the comparison between data collected before and at the end of the training programme implementation, so to identify achieved objectives and conduct a gap analysis. It is done in *ex-post* phase of the training implementation.

In the specific case of training programmes, the final evaluation allows to plan and/or redefine appropriate interventions (e.g. on the organisation of the course, on its structure, on the selection procedure, etc.) in order to improve the achieved outcomes in the future.

Criteria stand at the basis of an evaluation process. They are however subject to an *a priori* selection, usually based on their relevance at a political/policy level, rather than technical level.

Usually, criteria relate to sets of information (i.e. built by means of indicators) specifically gathered for evaluation purposes.

After collecting needed data as explained in above sections, criteria will be able to guide the evaluation process of the training programme implementation with direct reference to specific sets of indicators. Guiding evaluation questions for each criterion could contribute to the formulation of the judgement by the evaluator/s. Where pertinent, the guiding questions are divided in to *ex-ante* and *ex-post*, giving the space for 2-phases evaluation process.

Table 7 - Guiding questions per criterion and phases

Criterion	Phase	Guiding questions
Input	*Ex-ante*	*Are the foreseen resources adequate for the implementation of the course?* *Are the foreseen resources adequate to produce the expected outcome?*
	Ex-post	*Were the used resources adequate for the implementation of the course?* *Were the used resources adequate to produce the expected outcome?*
Output	*Ex-ante*	*Is the minimum attendance requirement adequate to reach the set outcome?*
	Ex-ante/Ex-post	*Is/Was the structure of the course adequate to produce the expected outcome?*
		Is/Were the planned/implemented activities adequate to achieve the goal of the training course?
	Ex-post	*Were the implemented activities adequate to reach the beneficiaries needs?*
		Was the level of attendance adequate to satisfy the set goals?
Outcome	*Ex-ante*	*What is the expected level of change with reference to the knowledge of the participants?*
		What is the expected level of satisfaction of the participants (regarding the course)?
	Ex-post	*Is the change in the preparation/knowledge of participants satisfactory?*
		Is the satisfaction level of participants satisfactory?
Effectiveness	*Ex-ante*	*Are the listed features likely to produce the expected outcome?*
	Ex-post	*How did the listed features contribute to produce the outcome?*
External consistency	*Ex-ante/Ex-post*	*Is the initiative logically connected with the strategic and regulatory framework?*
		Is the objective of the initiative a valid step towards the achievement of the overall strategic and regulatory framework objectives?
Efficiency	*Ex-ante/Ex-post*	*What is the efficiency level of the intervention?*
		Is the efficiency level satisfactory?
Compliance	*Ex-ante/ Ex-post*	*Is/was the initiative able to meet the expectations of the participants?*
		Is/was the initiative able to meet the learning needs of the participants?

Reliability	*Ex-ante*	*Do the credentials assure the reliability of the organisation?*
Impact	*Ex-post*	*How did the performance of participants improve?* *Has the work setting been made adequate for the application of the acquired competences?* *Are the employees that attended a training course still willing to apply the acquired competences, as time goes on?* *How has the working procedure been modified/improved?* *How much users' satisfaction has grown up?*

It is proposed to use the template *Final evaluation report* for this purpose.

5.3.1 Procedures

The final financial evaluation implies a comparative analysis between the prevision of expenses (already balanced by the resources/income table) and the final budget (defined by the collection of all *in-itinere* financial data collection sheets).

All the *in-itinere* evaluations developed for each specific course will contribute to build the final overall programme evaluation. The programme evaluation implies the analysis of all project results and dedicated elaboration on the data gathered by means of questionnaire (sot to build up the specific value of each criteria) in the previous phases

The evaluation should proceed based on all criteria identified.

5.3.2 Responsibilities and competences

The responsibility for preparing the final evaluation lays on the administrative unit. An external consultant/s could be hired to aid the internal staff in conducting all necessary steps. The coordinating body should be in charge of reviewing and approving the Report and deciding on the next steps as recommended in the Report.

Since the programme evaluation implies the analysis of all project results and dedicated elaboration on the data gathered by means of questionnaire (so to build up the specific value of each criteria) in the previous phases, the competences needed include specific expertise in evaluation.

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Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform
https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/centre-of-expertise

Current tools on Good Governance
https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/toolkits

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The Council of Europe is an international political organisation promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Founded in 1949, it has 47 member states including approximately 820 million people. The aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage. Council of Europe member states commit themselves through legal instruments and co-operate on the basis of common values and common political decisions. The most influential instruments of the Council of Europe include the European Convention on Human Rights and, in the field of democracy, the European Charter of Local Self-Government, both ratified by all member states.

The Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform was established by the Council of Europe in 2006. Its mission is to promote Good Governance through legislative assistance, policy advice, and capacity building to public authorities. The Centre currently has a repertoire of about 18 capacity-building tools which take inspiration from the relevant European standards and best practice. These tools enable the reinforcement and evaluation of the capacities of local authorities with respect to the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance. The Centre's connection to the Council of Europe's intergovernmental Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) offers it ready access to high-level government officials from the 47 member states with a reservoir of knowledge and expertise in governance reforms.

CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
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