TYÖ- JA ELINKEINOMINISTERIÖ
ARBETS- OCH NÄRINGSMINISTERIET
MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY

DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTRACT

APPENDIX 7 TO THE INVITATION TO TENDER:

EVALUATION OF THE 'SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND JOBS 2014 - 2020' – STRUCTURAL FUNDS PROGRAMME OF FINLAND

Euroopan unioni
Euroopan aluekehitysrahasto
Euroopan sosiaalirahasto

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1. STARTING POINTS OF THE CONTRACT

1.1. Summary of the objectives and requirements of the evaluation

The evaluation of Finland's Structural Funds Programme is a statutory task for Finland as a member state. The purpose of the evaluation is to evaluate the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. The objective is to find answers to questions concerning the realisation of the programme's objectives, effectual/ineffectual policies and the functioning of the administration model. In addition, the objective is to effectively communicate the programme's impact to various stakeholders and target groups.

The contracting authority is the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The evaluation is governed by statutory requirements concerning the evaluation of the programme's impact, effectiveness and efficiency. The implementation of the evaluation is based on specific objectives and the associated topics as defined by the client. Other evaluation topics include horizontal principles, low-carbon economy and the management and implementation of the programme.

The client requires a general performance review of the programme as a whole, including indicator-level reviews. In addition, the evaluation should be expanded upon through a qualitative research study. The evaluation is to proceed from the specific objectives to other levels of the programme structure. The final output includes findings on the programme's performance as a whole.

The evaluation implementation schedule is such that the final evaluation report must be ready by 30 June 2019. In addition, the client will use results obtained over the course of the evaluation process in its reporting on the progress of the programme's implementation to the monitoring committee.

The starting points of the contract and the definitions are presented in Chapter 1 of the description of the contract. The client's assignments and the implementation of the evaluation are described in Chapters 2 and 3.

1.2. Structure and operational environment of the Structural Funds Programme

Finland is implementing the 'Sustainable growth and jobs 2014 - 2020' structural funds operational programme, which consists of actions that are partially funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). The managing authority for the structural funds programme is the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment under Article 125 of Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (the Common Provisions Regulation, hereinafter 'the CPR'). The programme document is available online at https://www.rakennerahastot.fi/documents/10179/43217/Ohjelma- asiakirja+valmis.pdf/

The structural funds operational programme is part of the **Partnership Agreement** between the member state and the European Commission. The Partnership Agreement is founded on the objectives and challenges outlined in the Europe 2020 strategy, the associated national action programme and the Council's country-specific recommendations. The document is available online at http://www.rakennerahastot.fi/documents/10179/43217/kumppanuussopimus.pdf/.

The evaluation of the structural funds programme is a statutory obligation for Finland as an EU member state. The obligation is set out in Article 56 of the CPR. According to the

Article, managing authorities should ensure that evaluations are carried out to assess the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of a **programme.** During the programming period, at least one evaluation should be carried out to examine how the support paid from ESI funds has contributed towards the objectives of each **priority axis**.

According to Article 54 of the CPR, evaluations are carried out to improve the quality of the design and implementation of programmes, as well as to assess their impact, efficiency and effectiveness. The impact of programmes shall be evaluated, in the light of **the mission of each ESI Fund**, in relation to the targets under the **Union strategy** for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and, having regard to the size of the programme, in relation to GDP and unemployment in the programme area concerned, where appropriate. Thus, the impact of the programme should also be evaluated on the basis of the missions of the ERDF and ESF Funds by comparison with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the associated national action programme. The missions of the ESI funds with regard to Structural Funds are set out in Article 2 of the ERDF Regulation and Article 2 of the ESF Regulation.

The contents of the programmes included in the Partnership Agreement, including the Structural Funds programme, are derived from the **thematic objectives** of the 2020 strategy as established by Article 9 of the CPR. Therefore, the programme for its part contributes to the achievement of the strategic objectives in Finland.

The thematic objectives of all programmes under the Partnership Agreement are listed in Section 1.3 of the Partnership Agreement, Table 5 *'Intervention logic of ESI Funds'*. Contents in which ESI Funds can be used in a complementary manner are listed in Section 2.1.1, Table 11 *'Examples of areas in which funds can be used in a complementary manner'*. The table is one of the starting points for a cross-programme evaluation, which must consider the programme actions as part of the operational environment. The programme's evaluation as part of the operational environment is the client's choice based on the broader usability of such evaluation and the interaction and complementarity of the programme actions in relation to other actions implemented in the operational environment.

The thematic objectives have been converted into priorities for each ESI Fund, and they are confirmed by fund-specific rules. With regard to the Structural Funds programme, the priorities are established as **investment priorities** in Article 5 of the ERDF Regulation (1301/2013) and Article 3 of the ESF Regulation (1304/2013). Result indicators action the objectives of the investment priorities in quantitative terms.

Specific objectives are results sought through actions implemented as part of the investment priorities. The expected changes sought by specific objectives are measured by result indicators. Specific objectives form the core of the programme's intervention logic. They are defined at the national level.

The subjects of the study on the impact and effectiveness of the specific objectives have been selected on the basis of the objectives of the National Programme for the Europe 2020 strategy, the focus areas which have been prepared by the client's steering group for the evaluation and approved by the monitoring committee, and the horizontal principles established in law. The focus areas set out in the evaluation plan (Appendix 8) are: The competitiveness of SMEs and especially their growth and internationalisation; Innovations from the point of view of smart specialisation against the background of a diversified economic base; Employment impacts and outcomes including competence development, social inclusion and poverty reduction, productivity and well-being; Low-carbon economy. The subjects of the impact and effectiveness study are presented in Section 2.2.4.2.

Figure 1. Structure of the programme's intervention logic

1.3. Definitions of concepts used in the evaluation

As noted, according to the Common Provisions Regulation, an evaluation must be carried out to assess the programme's impact, effectiveness and efficiency. In this context, impact refers to the outputs achieved as a result of the programme's implementation (interventions). The impact evaluation should explain what results, actions and changes have come about as a result of the programme.

For the purpose of the evaluation, effectiveness means the capability to achieve the intended impacts, i.e. the expected results (see Section 2.1.2). It is based on the setting and achievement of the objectives. In addition, the effectiveness evaluation includes identifying factors which promote or hinder the programme's effectiveness. It answers the question of whether the programme's implementation has led to the intended impacts, i.e. the expected results. On that basis, a judgement can be made as to whether the programme's intervention logic has functioned well.

In this context, efficiency means optimal implementation from the point of view of resources, time, method and means. It comprises qualitative and quantitative efficiency. Qualitative efficiency refers to the functioning of the actions chosen to implement the programme. Quantitative efficiency refers to the cost-output ratio.

In the Structural Funds programme, the implementation methods are the management and implementation of the programme. Qualitative efficiency is evaluated from the point of view of the programme's management and implementation (see Sections 2.3.2. and 3.1.). The evaluation of the efficiency of the programme's management and implementation also includes the quantitative efficiency aspect of evaluating the ratio of the implemented actions and their costs (cost-efficiency).

The performance evaluation refers more broadly to the general performance review and the impact and effectiveness evaluation as a whole. The general performance review covers the programme's universal, indicator-level results and analyses of the programme's operational circumstances and implementation, the functioning of its management, and issues related to, for example, the implementation and outcomes of project applications. (see Section 3.1.).

2. SUBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

2.1. General requirements concerning the evaluation

1. The content of the evaluation is the "Sustainable growth and jobs 2014–2020" programme. The evaluator is required to provide answers relating to the implementation of the programme, fund-specific missions and priority axes as well as outcomes with regard to horizontal principles and the management and implementation of the programme.

   The evaluation should be conducted by comparing the performance of the programme's implementation (interventions) against the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the associated National Programme. These requirements are the statutory requirements concerning the evaluation and as such they are the primary tasks of the evaluation.

2. The supplier must answer the following questions for each level of programme structure:
   - Were the objectives achieved? (Objectives are expressed as outputs/results in the programme.)
     - If yes, how and through what types of actions?
     - If no, why?

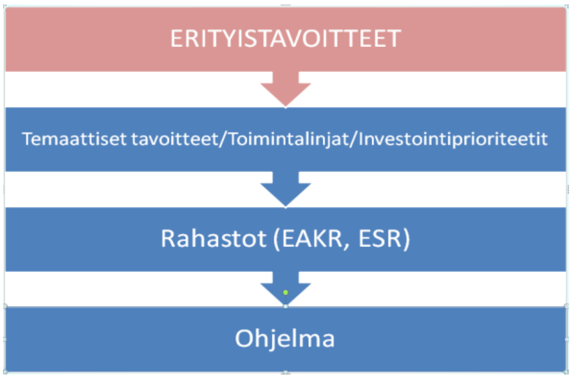
   The answers provided must include an analysis of the reasons behind the findings. The intended results are stated in the descriptions of the specific objectives.

3. The evaluation of the programme's content must include both a national and a regional perspective. In this case, the review should focus on the larger regional level (Eastern and Northern Finland, and Southern and Western Finland). If relevant for the evaluation subject, the review can, alternatively or additionally, be carried out at the level of the four major regions. Depending on the evaluation subject, the evaluation can also focus on a specific area or areas.

4. The programme's implementation must be reviewed as part of its operational environment. The evaluation findings must reflect the programme's operational environment and assess the role of the programme actions in each set of content.

5. The next chapter presents the evaluation subjects at different levels of the programme structure and with regard to the horizontal principles, the realisation of a low-carbon economy, and the evaluation of the programme's management and implementation. The evaluation questions proceed from the general level to the private level in the programme structure. However, it should be noted that the specific objectives level represents the core of the programme's intervention logic, and as such is the starting point of the work at hand. The evaluator should provide answers to the evaluation questions by proceeding from the private to the general level, i.e. starting from answers concerning the achievement of specific objectives towards questions that are of a more general nature. The breakdown of the evaluation process provided in Section 3.1. must also be taken into account.

Figure 2. Evaluation levels



2.2. Evaluation questions

2.2.1. Programme

The main evaluation questions concerning the successful and effective delivery of the programme are:

1. How has the programme contributed to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy, which promotes smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and the associated National Programme?
2. How well has the programme achieved its targets?
3. What are the impacts of the programme actions as part of the operational environment?
4. Does the programme strategy function well?

When evaluating the implementation of the programme, the evaluation and the subsequent findings must meet the requirements set out in Article 56 of the CPR with regard to the evaluation of the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of programmes. **The evaluation questions must be answered as instructed in Section 2.1.2.**

The programme's investment strategy is presented on pages 20–21 of the programme document.

2.2.2. Priority axes, funds and thematic objectives (low-carbon economy)

In accordance with the requirement set out in Article 56 of the CPR, the evaluation must answer questions regarding the implementation of **priority axes. The evaluation questions must be answered as instructed in Section 2.1.2. The objectives of each priority axis are presented in the** priority axis headings of the programme.

1. In what ways has the competitiveness of SMEs improved as a result of the actions of priority axis 1?

   The priority axis is funded by the ERDF. The priority axis is designed to deliver the following thematic objectives: (3) Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, and (4) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.

2. In what ways have the actions of priority axis 2 improved the creation and utilisation of the latest knowledge and skills?

The priority axis is funded by the ERDF. The priority axis is designed to deliver the following thematic objectives: (1) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, and (4) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.

3. In what ways have the actions of priority axis 3 promoted employment and labour mobility?

   The priority axis is funded by the ESF. The priority axis delivers the following thematic objective: (8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.

4. In what ways have the actions of priority axis 4 promoted education, professional skills and lifelong learning?

   The priority axis is funded by the ESF. The priority axis delivers the following thematic objective: (10) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.

5. In what ways have the actions of priority axis 5 promoted social inclusion and poverty reduction?

   The priority axis is funded by the ESF. The priority axis delivers the following thematic objective: (9) Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.

6. The thematic objective relating to a low-carbon economy applies to all priority axes. The supplier must answer the following question: in what ways has the programme supported the shift towards a low-carbon economy?

In addition to the evaluation of the priority axes, when evaluating the specific objectives (Section 2.2.4.), findings should also be provided with regard to the realisation of the thematic and fund-specific objectives.

As the responsible party of the Partnership Agreement, the client is responsible for cooperation related to the agreement with the managing authorities of other programmes under ESI Funds. The supplier's task is to evaluate the realisation of **thematic objectives** from the point of view of the evaluation of the Structural Funds programme. The client will use the provided conclusions to produce a summary report on the realisation of the objectives of the Partnership Agreement. **The evaluation question must be answered as instructed in Section 2.1.2.** The evaluation question is:

> How have the thematic objectives included in the Partnership Agreement been realised?

In addition, the evaluation must answer the following questions regarding the realisation of **fund-specific objectives**:

1. How have the fund-specific objectives been realised through synergies between the funds?
2. How have the ERDF objectives been realised?
3. How have the ESF objectives been realised?

The objectives are established as the **funds' missions** in the fund-specific regulations. **The evaluation questions must be answered as instructed in Section 2.1.2.** The programme's impact must be evaluated based on the missions of each ESI fund by using the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the associated National Programme as the baseline. Detailed evaluation questions related to question 1 are presented in Section 2.2.4.2.

2.2.3. Investment priorities

2.2.3.1. General points

The thematic objectives are specified as investment priorities in the fund-specific regulations. In this evaluation, the realisation of result and output indicators is evaluated at the investment priority level as well as at the other levels of the programme structure. The evaluation of indicator outcomes is part of the general performance review. The client will report the indicator data in its annual reports and progress reports per individual investment priority. The result and output indicators are listed in Programme Appendixes 2 and 3. The requirements concerning the analysis of indicator data are presented in Section 3.1.

2.2.3.2. ESF longer term result indicators

Indicator data provided by monitoring systems will be analysed as specified in Section 3.1. In addition, the supplier must use a representative sample to produce longer-term result indicator data for ESF-funded projects whose participants include individuals. The data must be generalisable at the investment priority level. The data must be broken down by gender. The data will have to be produced a maximum of four times during the agreement period. The client will determine the detailed schedules for each of the (up to) four work packages. The work packages will be spaced evenly across the agreement period. The supplier must utilise the data it produces in a broader performance review.

The supplier must ascertain possible changes in the situation of each sampled individual within six months of the date on which the individual stopped participating in the ESF-funded action. The items to be determined are set out in Section 4 of Annex I of the ESF Regulation and in the Commission guidelines: "Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy, European So- cial Fund, Guidance document, June 2015" Section 3.1.3.; Annex B Section 2.2.

The client will decide the methodology to be used by the supplier (by telephone or an online survey). The supplier will be responsible for the progress of the assignment, unless otherwise agreed. In addition to the reporting of possible changes in participants' circumstances, the work includes the processing of the obtained data, an analysis and findings. The supplier must be prepared to re-perform the sampling and survey, if sufficiently long-term result indicator data cannot be obtained from the participants of the first sample. The rights to the method of data production will be retained by the client. The client will describe the data collection method in the final report.

The supplier undertakes to pay special attention to data protection, since the data sets may contain sensitive information whose disclosure is strictly prohibited by law. For data protection reasons, the client has the right to require the supplier to carry out work under supervision in the client's premises and using the client's equipment. No separate compensation will be paid for the performance of the work. The costs are to be included in the total price. Regardless of whether the premises and equipment used to carry out the work belong to the supplier or the client, the supplier has the obligation to return all material related to information on the participants without delay once the material is no longer needed for the performance of the assignment. Because the data contains sensitive information, it must be returned in the way specified in the project plan.

2.2.3.3. ESF result indicators which require a separate review

The ESF result indicators include four (4) indicators which require separate review. The client will provide the numerical values for the indicators at the investment priority level. Of these, the numerical values of three (3) indicators will be produced based on information provided by participants. The information will be collected using a set of forms (Appendices 9.1. – 9.7.). The supplier must use these indicators to produce a content analysis, which, together with the numerical data, forms the performance evaluation of the actions in question. The indicators are

32 Improvement in the well-being of workplace organisations that participated in the projects,
35 Improved accuracy of education among the participants in relation to workplace requirements, and
36 Improvement in the working capacity and functional ability of participants.

The evaluation questions on the result indicators are:

32 Which factors presented in the question list of the notice of conclusion have the greatest effect on improved workplace well-being in the organisation? Do the factors have similar weightings in all types of organisations? Which organisation types benefit best from these types of projects?

35 Which target groups have had the most accurate education offering?

36 Which actions have the most significant effect in terms of improving the working capacity and functional ability of the participants? Are there differences between age groups and educational backgrounds? In this context, the supplier must utilise the material produced by the national development project, which is funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

The final formulation of the evaluation questions and the final methodology choices will be undertaken during the evaluation work once the availability of the data sets in relation to the evaluated subjects becomes clear.

During the evaluation work, the chosen supplier must, without delay, communicate any proposals regarding changes to the above questions, if it expects that the intended results cannot be achieved with the above formulation from the available data sets or for another reason. Changes to the formulation of the questions could mean expanding or limiting the evaluation subject or proposing a different subject altogether. The changes and the reasons must be submitted to the client for approval. Any proposed and approved changes will not affect the total price of the contract. They are treated as clarifications rather than as additional work or additional orders.

The client will produce the numerical values for the indicators as part of the 2018 annual report, which is due by 30 June 2019. The values are cumulative and apply to the period 2014 – 31.12.2018. However, in order to facilitate the answering of the evaluation questions which are part of the assignment, the work can be started in the latter half of 2018. This means that the work will be done on the basis of the values available at the time. If there are substantial changes to the values after the actual results for the second half of 2018, the supplier will be required to revise its findings in 2019. The supplier must utilise the data it produces in a broader performance review.

With regard to indicator 33 "Projects which have received validation for a developed product that promotes equality", the client will produce a numerical value which can be used by the supplier in the review of specific objective 8.1. and in the evaluation of the horizontal principle of equality. The client will provide the value by the end of 2018.

2.2.4. Specific objectives

2.2.4.1. General points

The specific objectives form the core of the programme's intervention logic.

When evaluating the realisation of the specific objectives, conclusions must be made regarding the realisation of the programme objectives, priority axes, fund missions and thematic objectives in comparison with the Europe 2020 strategy and the associated National Programme. At the investment priority level, an analysis of result and output indicator data must be produced as part of the general performance review.

The functioning of the interconnections between the funds, priority axes and specific objectives must be evaluated. In particular, the question about the realisation of fund-specific objectives through synergies between the funds must be reviewed at the level of the specific objectives; as a minimum, the questions set by the client in Section 2.2.4.2. must be used.

The bidder should provide a proposal for the evaluation implementation procedures and methods for each specific objective. The final formulation of the evaluation questions and the final methodology choices will be undertaken during the evaluation work once the availability of the data sets in relation to the evaluated subjects becomes clear.

During the evaluation work, the chosen supplier must, without delay, communicate any proposals regarding changes to the questions set out above in Section 2.2.4.2., if it expects that the intended results cannot be achieved with the above formulation from the available data sets or for another reason. Changes to the formulation of the questions could mean expanding or limiting the evaluation subject or proposing a different subject altogether. The changes and the reasons must be submitted to the client for approval. Any proposed and approved changes will not affect the total price of the contract. They are treated as clarifications rather than as additional work or additional orders.

The evaluation questions for the qualitative impact and effectiveness study are set out in the following section. This excludes specific objectives 1.2 and 8.1 and the employment effects of priority axes 1 and 2; for these, the client requires a general performance review.

2.2.4.2. Evaluation questions for the specific objectives

The evaluation questions must be answered as instructed in Section 2.1.2.

According to the Commission's definition, small and medium-sized enterprises include micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. This definition must also be used in the evaluation.

Priority axis 1 Competitiveness of SMEs

The following questions must be used to evaluate the specific objectives of this priority axis:

In what way have the actions promoted employment?

Employment impacts must be evaluated on the basis of the general performance review.

In what way has new or improved enterprise activity diversified the economic base?

In what way have the actions promoted business growth?

Specific objective 1.1 Generation of new enterprise activity
What types of actions have promoted the creation of new enterprises that help diversify the economic base and in what way?

What types of actions have promoted the regeneration of existing enterprises and in what way?

Specific objective 1.2 Improvement of transport and logistics links which are important to SMEs (Eastern and Northern Finland only)

The performance of actions must be evaluated at the general level with regard to the specific objectives. In particular, the review should examine any bottlenecks that have been resolved through the actions.

Specific objective 2.1 Promotion of the growth and internationalisation of SMEs

What types of actions have promoted the growth of SMEs and in what way?

This topic is the focus of the evaluation of priority axis 1.

What types of internationalisation actions have promoted the growth of SMEs and in what way?

What types of actions have promoted SMEs' prerequisites for internationalisation and in what way?

Specific objective 3.1 Promotion of the energy efficiency of SMEs

Have there been any ERDF- and ESF-funded dual projects that promote a low-carbon economy or other mutually supportive undertakings? If yes, in what way have they promoted the objective of a shift towards a low-carbon economy?

What types of actions have promoted the energy efficiency of SMEs and in what way have they done so?

Priority axis 2 Producing and using the latest information and knowledge

The following questions must be used to evaluate the specific objectives of this priority axis:

In what way have the actions promoted employment?

Employment impacts must be evaluated on the basis of the general performance review.

In what way has new or improved enterprise activity diversified the economic base?

In what way have the actions promoted business growth?

In what way have the actions promoted innovation from the point of view of smart specialisation?

The evaluation subjects must be defined geographically.

Specific objective 4.1 Development of centres of research, expertise and innovation on the basis of regional strengths

In what ways have the actions promoted the realisation of objectives related to the environmental business sector?

What impact has there been on the initiation of research and development projects by enterprises as a result of projects supported under this specific objective (other than company-specific projects)?

What types of actions in the development of research, expertise and innovation centres have resulted in innovations that help to generate new enterprise activity, and in what way have they done so?

What types of actions in the development of research, expertise and innovation centres have influenced the development of SMEs' operational prerequisites, and in what way have they done so?

What types of actions have strengthened centres of research, expertise and innovation, and in what way have they done so?

Specific objective 5.1. Strengthening of innovation activity among enterprises

What types of enterprise-specific actions have helped to create innovations that generate new business opportunities, and in what way have they done so?

Specific objective 3.2. Developing solutions based on renewable energy and energy efficiency

Have there been any dual projects that receive ERDF or ESF funding? If yes, in what way have they promoted the objective of the shift to a low-carbon economy?

What impact has there been with regard to the initiation of projects that promote a low-carbon economy by enterprises as a result of projects supported under specific objective 3.1?

What types of actions have led to the development of energy-efficient solutions that help to generate growth and new business opportunities?

Priority axis 3 Employment and labour mobility

The following questions must be used to evaluate the specific objectives of this priority axis:

In what way have the actions promoted employment rates and the availability of jobs?

Specific objective 6.1 Promotion of employment among the young and other groups that are in a weak position in the labour market

What types of actions have responded to the labour needs of SMEs developed with support under priority axes 1 and 2, and in what way have they done so?

What types of actions have promoted the employment outcomes of young people and their seeking of education opportunities, and in what way?

What types of actions have promoted the employment outcomes of young immigrants and their seeking of education opportunities, and in what way?

What types of actions have promoted the employment outcomes of senior citizens and their seeking of education opportunities, and in what way?

Specific objective 7.1 Improving productivity and workplace well-being

What types of actions have promoted workplace well-being and productivity in SMEs, and in what way?

Specific objective 8.1 Reducing gender segregation in education and work

As a minimum, the performance of actions should be evaluated at the general level with regard to the realisation of the specific objectives.

Priority axis 4 Education, skills and lifelong learning

The following questions must be used to evaluate the specific objectives of this priority axis:

In what way have the actions responded to the competence needs of SMEs developed with support under priority axis 1?

In what way have the actions promoted employment rates and the availability of jobs?

Specific objective 9.1 Improving services supporting transitional periods and equality in education

What types of actions have helped to promote the labour market status of young people, and in what way?

What types of actions have helped to improve competencies and educational attainment among senior citizens, and in what way?

Specific objective 9.2 Improving the availability and quality of education in growth sectors and sectors affected by structural change

What types of measures have promoted the relevance of education in growth sectors and sectors affected by structural change, and in what way?

Priority axis 5 Social inclusion and combating poverty

The following questions must be used to evaluate the specific objective of this priority axis:

In what way have the actions promoted the creation of employment paths?

Specific objective 10.1 Preventing exclusion

What types of actions have helped to prevent exclusion and promote employment outcomes among young people, and in what way?

What types of actions have helped to prevent exclusion and promote employment outcomes among young immigrants, and in what way?

What types of actions have helped to prevent exclusion and promote employment outcomes among senior citizens, and in what way?

Priority axis 6

Specific objective 11.1 Ensuring effective implementation of the structural fund programme

The evaluation questions of this objective are included under Programme management and implementation.

Priority axis 7

Specific objective 12.1 Ensuring effective implementation of the structural fund programme

The evaluation questions of this objective are included under Programme management and implementation.

2.3. General evaluation questions

The client requires the supplier to provide a general-level performance review of the programme as a whole.

The evaluation questions must be answered as instructed in Section 2.1.2.

2.3.1. Horizontal principles

The horizontal principles on gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination are set forth in Article 7 of the CPR and Articles 7 and 8 of the ESF Regulation. The principle of promoting sustainable development is set forth in Article 8 of the CPR.

During the evaluation work, the chosen supplier must, without delay, communicate any proposals regarding changes to the questions set out above in Sections 2.3.1.1. - 2.3.1.3., if it expects that the intended results cannot be achieved with the above formulation from the available data sets or for another reason. Changes to the formulation of the questions could mean expanding or limiting the evaluation subject or proposing a different subject altogether. The changes and the reasons must be submitted to the client for approval. Any proposed and approved changes will not affect the total price of the contract. They are treated as clarifications rather than as additional work or additional orders.

2.3.1.1. Evaluation questions on the realisation of the gender equality principle

In what way has the gender equality principle been realised in the implementation of the programme? The requirements set out in the regulations specified in Section 2.3.1. must be taken into account in the answers.

In what way has the gender equality principle been realised with regard to each fund and priority axis?

In what way could the evaluation of gender equality outcomes be developed in conjunction with the programme?

2.3.1.2. Evaluation questions on the realisation of the equal opportunities and non-discrimination principle

In what way has the equal opportunities and non-discrimination principle been realised in the implementation of the programme? The requirements set out in the regulations specified in Section 2.3.1. must be taken into account in the answers.

In what way have the non-discrimination principles been realised with regard to each fund and priority axis?

In what way could the evaluation of non-discrimination outcomes be developed in conjunction with the programme?

2.3.1.3. Evaluation questions on the realisation of the sustainable development principle

In what way has the sustainable development principle been realised in the implementation of the programme? The requirements set out in the regulations specified in Section 2.3.1. must be taken into account in the answers.

In what way has the sustainable development objective been realised with regard to each fund and priority axis?

In what way could the evaluation of the sustainable development objective be developed in conjunction with the programme?

In what way have the actions promoted the realisation of the different dimensions (environmental, economic, social) of sustainable development?

2.3.2. Programme management and implementation (priority axes 6 and 7)

In addition to the programme content, the evaluation must provide answers to the following questions on the efficiency of the programme's management and implementation and its successful performance at a general level.

Is the programme managed successfully? Are there any bottlenecks in the management functions, such as the selection of projects, in relation to the programme's objectives?

Is the programme managed and implemented efficiently? Which implementation models have or have not been found to be well-functioning and cost-efficient? Is the project-based channelling of funding an efficient way to deliver the programme actions?

In what way are consistency and the customer perspective realised in the programme's management and implementation? Are there any differences between areas or funds? In what way has the administrative burden of fund beneficiaries been reduced?

The evaluation of the programme's management and implementation must provide answers regarding the realisation of the specific objectives of priority axes 6 and 7.

During the evaluation work, the chosen supplier must, without delay, communicate any proposals regarding changes to the above questions, if it expects that the intended results cannot be achieved with the above formulation from the available data sets or for another reason. Changes to the formulation of the questions could mean expanding or limiting the evaluation subject or proposing a different subject altogether. The changes and the reasons must be submitted to the client for approval. Any proposed and approved changes will not affect the total price of the contract. They are treated as clarifications rather than as additional work or additional orders.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION

3.1. Review design and methods

The programme evaluation must be based on the following two starting points:

1. The data sets produced by the monitoring systems covering the programme as a whole, which are used to monitor the programme delivery at the indicator level, and other supporting materials to be used in the evaluation of the programme's delivery and performance. The overall evaluation of the programme's performance must cover the programme as a whole.

2. A more narrowly focused counterfactual and/or theory-based analysis that supports the above evaluation. Other evaluation methods can be used, provided that they deliver the required findings as specified in Section 2. This in-depth evaluation component is part of the broader performance review of the programme as a whole.

The programme's evaluation should primarily be done as a combination of the two starting points described above.

1. The supplier will review the programme's delivery and outcomes on the basis of the monitoring systems at the programme structure levels and higher levels specified in Section 2. The supplier must produce information about the programme's progress in relation to the objectives.

   The supplier will carry out a general performance review and an evaluation of the programme's implementation to describe how the programme has progressed and in what ways and in what types of settings the programme has been delivered. At this stage, the information provided by indicator-based data sets must be supported with analyses of the programme's operating conditions, implementation and management, and issues related to, for example, the implementation and outcomes of project applications. The evaluation of the programme's implementation should mainly focus on qualitative efficiency (see Section 2.3.2).

   As noted above, the first component must provide information about the progress of the programme as a whole, whether progress has been made in line with the objectives and in which areas the programme appears to have performed well or poorly. The operating conditions and any related bottlenecks must be taken into account. The review provides the general level evaluation and the basis for a more detailed study.

2. The counterfactual and theory-based review component must provide a more detailed analysis. The client has specified the subjects for detailed analysis in Section 2.2.4.2. This stage must produce a more detailed analysis of the logic of different actions, the problems and successes encountered in connection with the actions and the underlying reasons.

The client's objective for the evaluation is to obtain a performance review through a combination of components 1 and 2 specified above.

3.2. Data sets

The client is responsible for the EURA 2014 structural fund process management system. The system is used to collect data sets on projects which are partially funded from structural funds. The data also include final reports and monitoring data including indicators, excluding indicator data collected on individuals participating in ESF projects.

Complementary systems to EURA 2014 include Tuki2014, EVAL and the ESR Henkilö service. The Tuki2014 system is used to administrate projects under the Aid to Business Act. The EVAL system is used to administrate projects funded by the TEKES Funding Agency for Innovation. The ESR Henkilö service is used to administrate information on individuals participating in ESF projects.

In addition to data provided by the EURA 2014 system, the client will provide raw data from available databases as required. The supplier will be responsible for processing the raw data to be used in the general performance review. The processed data will also be used as background information in the subsequent, more detailed evaluations.

In addition to the data sets provided by the systems, the supplier must also use other available data such as assessments of the contents of the studied subjects as well as other studies, reports and statistical reviews.

3.3. Evaluation work plan

The evaluation will be carried out on the basis of the project plan to be annexed to the contract. The project plan will be drawn up in cooperation between the client and the supplier on the basis of the supplier's work plan proposal. The work plan must cover the following: proposals for the evaluation methodologies (evaluation and data collection methods to be used), a quality assurance plan, resources, an estimate of the work volume, a work breakdown and schedule and a communications plan.

The bidder must propose an evaluation method for each specific objective. In addition, the work plan should state which types of data collection methods will be used depending on the nature of the evaluation subject. The proposed evaluation methods must provide findings on the impact, effectiveness, efficiency and performance of the programme. Theory-based and counterfactual methods are the primary methods. Other methods may be used provided that they can deliver the required findings. The bidder must describe any alternative methods and provide reasons for its choices. The final choice of methodology will be made during the evaluation process once the availability of data sets for the evaluated subjects becomes clear.

The quality assurance plan must describe how the quality of the service will be assured in the administration (organisation, allocation of responsibilities) and risk management of the evaluation process. The bidder must describe the administration and risk management arrangements from the point of view of quality assurance.

The bidder must specify the work volume and the required resource allocations. The work volume estimate should be given in terms of person months. Resources refers to the project personnel, including key and other personnel. The human resources must be specified as a whole. The expertise of key personnel should not be described in detail in this section; instead, the description should cover the allocated human resources as a whole. The work volume of each member of the project team must be specified. The work volumes of key personnel must correspond with the estimate provided under Item 1 of the CV form (Appendix 13).

The work volume and resources must be described both for the evaluation as a whole and separately for each evaluation component. The bidder should divide the evaluation into components as it sees fit. Possible alternatives are division by the components required by interim reports or division on the basis of priority axes/horizontal principles/management and implementation.

With regard to the implementation of the evaluation components, the bidder must provide a plan for the task stages and scheduling. Regardless of the bidder's chosen method of breaking down the evaluation components and resource allocation, the task staging and scheduling must follow the content requirements on interim and final reports as provided in this document. The reporting schedule and requirements are specified in the invitation to tender document.

Communications must support the usability of the evaluation findings. The primary stakeholders are the Commission, the programme monitoring committee and its secretariat, and the evaluation steering group set by the client. Evaluation target groups include, for example, parties that implement and manage applicable content in the national setting, organisations involved in structural fund programme work and the beneficiaries of actions funded by structural fund programmes. The managing authority has the duty to make the evaluation findings available to the general public. The managing authority's communications strategy is available at http://www.rakennerahastot.fi/viestinta.

The bidder must include a communications plan for the dissemination of its findings in the work plan. In the communications plan, the bidder should state how it intends to disseminate the findings of the evaluation for its part. Communications on the evaluation findings must be consistent with the managing authority's communications strategy. The communications strategy will be revised as part of the project plan to be annexed to the contract as agreed with the client. The client will be responsible for the coordination (contents and schedules) of the measures proposed by the bidder in its communications plan.

3.4. Travel and expenses

Travel expenses will not be reimbursed separately; they must be included in the total contract price. Upon the client's request, the supplier must give presentations on the progress and outcomes of the work to stakeholders and target groups and be prepared to attend the following meetings which may involve travel costs:

- up to 15 meetings with the client in the client's premises, upon the client’s request. It may be possible to organise some of the meetings by technological means. The named project manager must attend all meetings.
- up to five (5) meetings with the steering group.
- up to 15 meetings to give progress updates to the monitoring committee and evaluation steering group, upon the client’s request. The monitoring committee will primarily meet every six months, alternately in Helsinki and other locations in

Finland. The steering group meetings will be held in the client's premises.

- up to five (5) meetings for presentations during the evaluation process and at its conclusion with other stakeholders or target groups. The events can be organised in Helsinki or in other locations in Finland.
- The production of ESF's longer-term result indicator data in the client's premises if required by the client. This work can include a maximum of four work packages, since the data is to be produced up to four times during the agreement period as specified in Section 2.2.3.2. If the sample in any of the work packages is found to be insufficient for providing the required number of answers, the client will re-sample and the evaluator will be required to repeat the survey for the work package in question. In addition to carrying out the survey, the supplier must process the data and produce the findings in the client's premises if requested to do so by the client.

If the client sees a need for other meetings in addition to those described above, the additional meetings will be agreed upon separately, and the client will cover the associated travel expenses.

3.5. Background material

Programming period 2014 – 2020, Guidance document on Monitoring and Evaluation, European Cohesion Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Concepts and Recommendations, March 2014.
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/wd_2014_en.pdf

Programming period 2014-2020, Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy, European Social Fund, Guidance document, June 2015.
ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=7884&langId=en

Guidance document, Annex D – Practical guidance on data collection and validation, September 2015.
https://ec.europa.eu/sfc/en/system/files/ged/Annex%20D%20-%20Practical%20guidance%20on%20data%20collection%20and%20validation.pdf

Design and commissioning of counterfactual impact evaluations
http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=7646

Evalsed Sourcebook, Method and Techniques
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/guide/evaluation_sourceboo k.pdf

Europe 2020 strategy http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/1_FI_ACT_part1_v1.pdf

Europe 2020 strategy, Finland's National Programme
http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/nrp2015_finland_fi.pdf