



Institute for the Promotion of Innovation
by Science and Technology in Flanders



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Self-Evaluation of Competence Research Centres

A Manual

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Colofon

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Want to know more?

This publication is a summarising report. The complete results of the study can be found on <http://www.iwt.be/diensten/obs/publicaties/index.html> (in dutch).

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PREFACE

This report summarizes the results of a study commissioned by IWT to develop a methodology for self evaluation by the Flemish “Competence Pools”.

For projects in general, but for those financed by public funds in particular, it is required to have and to use professional evaluation tools, in order to assess their added value, in regard to ex ante defined criteria. Thereby, not only a ‘judgement’ of the ‘object’ under evaluation is made, but the process also provides useful knowledge for programme improvement, oversight exercises or stakeholder dialogue.

In evaluation theory and practice, several recent emphasis shifts can be observed:

- from justification towards professional management;
- from legitimization of funding to support fund allocation decisions;
- from control towards stewardship;
- from judging the past to preparing the future;
- from quantitative towards mixed (quantitative + qualitative) approaches;
- from justifying towards learning;
- from reactive towards pro-active points of view;
- from mechanistic to reflective reasoning.

In this general framework of changing basic principles

of good governance, self-evaluation takes a prominent place. These rather innovative concepts can not be neglected, certainly not in evaluation processes carried out for innovation programmes/projects.

The Flemish Government Agency IWT (Institute for the Promotion of Innovation by Science and Technology) doesn’t want to lag behind this ongoing evolution and therefore commissioned a study to Technopolis Group. The main task was to develop a framework methodology to streamline and professionalize self-evaluation schedules for a specific type of publicly funded projects. In this publication, we present the results of the study, which adopted the Flemish ‘competence pools’ (fitting in an international connotation of ‘competence research centers’) as cases.

It is our intention to adapt and adopt the methodology to other project/programme types provided by our agency. In this process, we also hope to learn from the experiences of colleagues tackling comparable challenges on innovation programme (self)evaluations.

‘Sharing knowledge is increasing knowledge’, within this philosophy, we gladly publish and share the results of this study.

Paul Zeeuwts*
President IWT

* In remembrance of Paul Zeeuwts. On the 17th of March 2009 Paul Zeeuwts suddenly passed away. We will remember him as a great and wonderful man.

INTRODUCTION

THE 'MANUAL' IS MERELY A TOOL TO PREPARE AND STRUCTURE A SELF-EVALUATION.

... A STRUCTURED APPROACH FOR SUCH A SELF-EVALUATION.

... VARIOUS COMPETENCE POOLS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORK.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Flemish competence pools is to strengthen the competitive position of business and industry in Flanders. This goal is achieved by a number of measures, including knowledge development, knowledge sharing and the use of testing facilities.

The government supports these competence pools financially. Every two years, competence pools need to report to the government about the policy they followed: a mid term evaluation after two years and a final evaluation after four years looking back on a subsidy period. The basis for these evaluations is always a 'self-evaluation', a systematic consideration and analysis of the activities and results, conducted by the competence pool itself.

On request of competence pool managers and commissioned by IWT, the Technopolis Group has developed a manual outlining a structured approach for such a self-evaluation.

The approach presented in this manual is not made compulsory by IWT. The 'manual' is merely a tool to

prepare and structure a self-evaluation and to facilitate final evaluations (possibly conducted by external parties).

The nature of competence pools is very diverse, with a large variety of activities and stakeholders involved. When developing this method, the wide range of competence pools was taken into account: various competence pools have contributed to the work. In other words, this method has been developed in such a way that it can be used by all competence pools. In addition, other (semi-public) organisations that have been set up for a limited period of time with a specific assignment can also use this method for evaluation.

This manual offers a structure to carry out a complete self-evaluation: from (re)formulating a vision and mission to translated objectives, from collecting information to producing a self-evaluation report. Chapter 1 gives an overview of self-evaluation, identifying and defining the various steps. These steps are then discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

1 THE SELF-EVALUATION METHOD

THE PURPOSE OF A SELF-EVALUATION IS, FIRST OF ALL, TO INCREASE THE INSIGHT INTO ONE'S OWN ORGANISATION.

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS OF A SELF-EVALUATION ARE RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY.

THE LFA METHOD ELUCIDATES THE INTERNAL LOGIC OF THE COMPETENCE POOL BY MAKING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OBJECTIVES, TARGET AUDIENCES AND ACTIVITIES EXPLICIT.

1 THE SELF-EVALUATION METHOD

1.1 The Purpose of a Self-Evaluation

The purpose of a self-evaluation is, first of all, to increase the insight into one's own organisation. A self-evaluation offers the opportunity to reflect on how and to what extent activities have contributed to realising the mission and the objectives of the organisation and to establish if and where there is room for improvement. During a self-evaluation, an organisation 'measures' its direct and indirect results, turns them into a report and provides its own view on it. In other words, a self-evaluation is a way to check whether an organisation manages to achieve its goals and it provides tools to improve and optimize matters (if necessary). For competence pools, a self-evaluation is a compulsory part of a government policy and evaluation cycle. A self-evaluation therefore also serves as a justification: how did we spend the financial means of the government and what was the effect?

1.2 Evaluation Theory

The most obvious difference between a self-evaluation and an external evaluation is in the party performing the evaluation. Rather than having a third party giving its independent judgement, the organisation itself conducts the evaluation and so the opinion is – by defi-

nition – not independent. A self-evaluation as part of a further external assessment process offers a platform for the competence pool to present itself and its results in the best possible way and to address a number of issues that negatively affect its functioning but on which it has no influence.

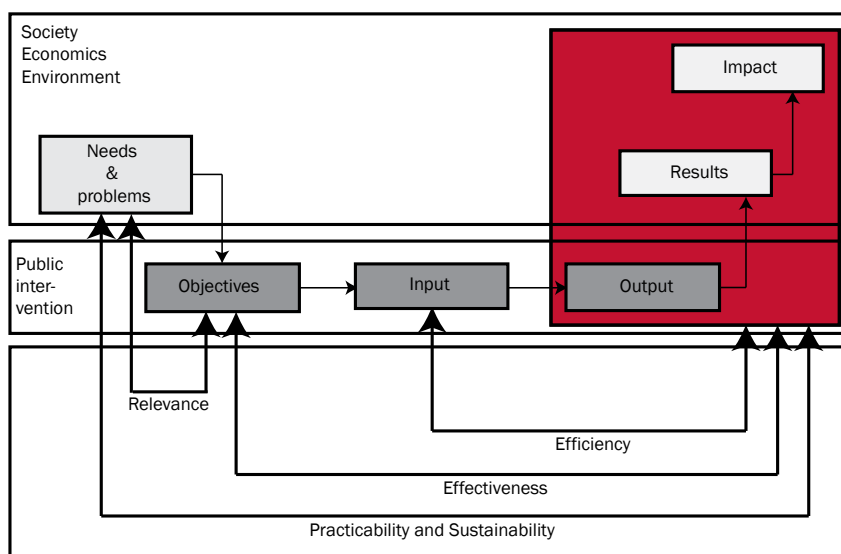
A model is presented below (Figure 1) which is based on the evaluation model for policy evaluation, used by the European Commission.

The underpinning theory can for a large part be used for self-evaluations.

A government intervention (such as a competence pool) usually has one or various objectives based on an analysis of needs and problems of society. By means of intervention (in this instance financing a competence pool) the government provides an input to the target audience: in this case it provides the initiators of the competence pool with the means to achieve these objectives). These means are used by the competence pool for activities resulting in:

- *outputs*: a direct consequence of using the policy instrument, such as new products and additional knowledge. In the case of a competence pool this includes specific research projects, meetings and publications.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model for the Evaluation of a Competence Pool



Source: Technopolis Group

- *results*: this is the effect on the competencies of companies and others benefiting from the instrument, as a consequence of using the outputs (specific knowledge in a certain field, strengthening the Flemish network in a certain area, effect on the economic performance of companies benefiting from the output by taking part in meetings, making use of new knowledge, etc.);
- *(socio-economic) impact*: this is the ultimate effect of ‘externalities’ influencing the economy and society as a whole, often in the longer term (e.g. increasing a sector’s ability to innovate or finding solutions for social problems such as ageing, traffic jams, etc.).

1.3 Evaluation Approach

The self-evaluation for competence pools uses the theory outlined above. The most important questions of a self-evaluation are:

- *relevance*: is the problem analysis on which the programme is based (still) correct?;
- *effectiveness*: to what extent does a programme contribute to achieving its objectives?;
- *efficiency*: how cost effective the inputs are transferred into outputs and eventually results? This question is related to developing and structuring the best possible organisation.

Questions about practicability and sustainability are less suitable for self-evaluations (e.g. is the programme

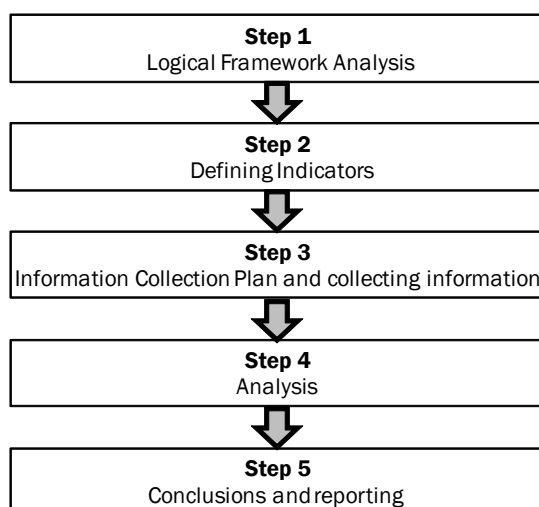
a practical instrument to solve the outlined problem? What would have happened if the programme had not existed or had been cancelled?).

To answer the key questions mentioned above, we have developed a model with 5 steps (Figure 2). Rather than starting by haphazardly collecting information, this well-thought out approach guarantees maximum benefit of the outcome with a minimum of effort invested.

First of all, an analysis using the LFA (Logical Framework Analysis) makes the external relevance of the competence pool visible. This analysis considers the extent to which the objectives of the competence pool are in line with the (changing) needs of society. Secondly, the LFA method elucidates the internal logic of the competence pool by making the relationships between objectives, target audiences and activities explicit. This makes the LFA an ideal instrument to decide which indicators are suitable to measure the success of a competence pool (Chapter 3).

Such an LFA is preferably conducted at the beginning of the self-evaluation process. Collecting information is labour intensive and if clear guidelines and criteria for relevant data are lacking, additional information gathering can be difficult or costly and the chance of useless data gathering is very realistic. In a so-called ‘Information Collection Plan’ it is determined which information will be gathered and how (Chapter 4). Once it has been drawn up, the Information Collection Plan will be carried out (the actual collecting of informa-

Figure 2: The Self-Evaluation Process



tion). During the next step, the data are analysed and interpreted (Chapter 5) and conclusions are drawn as to programme logic, effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation (Chapter 6). Pointing out room for improvement and better alternatives and generating a report are the final steps of the self-evaluation.

2

USING LFA TO DESCRIBE AN ORGANISATION

DO THE ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE OBJECTIVES AND EVENTUALLY TO THE MISSION?

AN LFA CAN BE USED TO LOOK BACK, TO ANALYSE THE PRESENT AND TO LOOK AHEAD.

THE LFA METHOD IS A TOOL FOR ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY FORMULATION.

SYSTEMATICALLY ORDERING AND LINKING THE MISSION, THE OBJECTIVES AND THE ACTIVITIES.

2 USING LFA TO DESCRIBE AN ORGANISATION

2.1 Using LFA

Originally, the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) or objectives analysis is a tool for the strategic planning process. It assists in designing and translating social issues into objectives of an organisation and subsequently from objectives into practical actions and envisaged results. This method explicits the external relevance and programme logic as well as visualises it (the envisaged relationship between the resources invested – money, people, expertise, etc. – and the objectives).

An LFA focuses on the reasons behind the activities chosen; the objectives and the needs these objectives address; the inputs that can lead to activities; the achieved outputs leading to results; and eventually to impacts. An LFA offers the chance to explicit the coherence between all these elements and to analyse it. The key questions are: do the activities contribute to the objectives and eventually to the mission? Are all the objectives supported by (a set of) activities? In other words, is there a programme logic? The various components and the way they are interrelated are presented in Figure 3.

During the evaluation stage an LFA can be used in a number of ways:

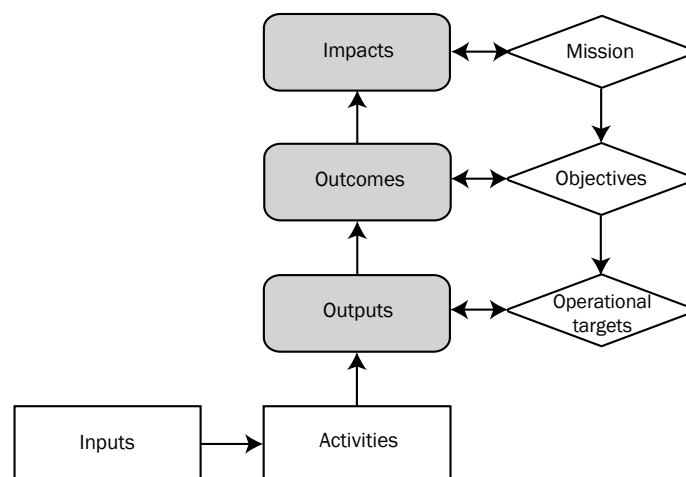
- *to look back*: often, when a competence pool is set up an explicit LFA analysis is not part of the proc-

ess. Even though problems and opportunities in society have been identified and objectives and activities of a competence pool have been formulated on that basis, a systematic analysis is usually lacking. Using LFA to analyse written sources dating back to when a competence pool was founded, it is often possible to decide in hindsight to what extent the formulated objectives were realistic and to what extent they were proportionate to the allocated resources. Based on this analysis, it becomes clear whether the success or failure of a programme is the result of either wrongly formulated objectives or the malfunctioning of a competence pool;

- *to analyse the present situation*: during the existence of the competence pools one or more aspects of the environment in which they operate have usually changed (putting objectives into a different perspective) or insights have developed (for example in terms of effectiveness of activities). This often leads to adjusting objectives and cancelling or adding activities which means that the original LFA is no longer (entirely) valid and relevant for analysing achievements and performance.
- *to look ahead*: finally, an evaluation is also a moment to consider the future, at a strategic level. External developments (opportunities and threats) and an internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses may lead to strategy adjustments. An LFA can be a useful tool.

When a competence pool uses an LFA for a mid-term

Figure 3: An LFA Diagram



self-evaluation, the results can be used for the next stage. In a new LFA analysis new objectives, activities and the focus of an organisation can be made explicit and visualised. An LFA can also serve as a powerful communication tool to support a new or adjusted strategy. The LFA is not a goal in itself. The **LFA method** therefore does not provide the only 'correct' picture in which resources and objectives are related to each other: it **is a tool for analysis and strategy formulation**. The Logical Framework Analysis both supports the thinking process with respect to external relevance, internal consistence and communication about a chosen strategy.

2.2 The Steps of the LFA Method

An LFA consists of four steps which are briefly described below.

Step 1: Identifying the formulated mission and objectives

The starting point of an LFA analysis is to make the mission and objectives more explicit. The mission consists of general effects (e.g. increasing the innovative strength of Flemish business and industry) and the objectives relate to the more specific effects (e.g. the availability of advanced knowledge, sufficient human capital and more cooperation between businesses).

The basis for identifying the mission and objectives are the descriptions of this in official documents (e.g. an agreement, the website, etc.). It is important to look at the previously documented mission and objectives, those being the starting point for the competence pool. If it becomes apparent that the formulated mission

and objectives are incomplete, not explicit enough, or not (completely) up-to-date, the mission and objectives can be reformulated and communicated by using an LFA of the current or future, desired situation (see also step 3).

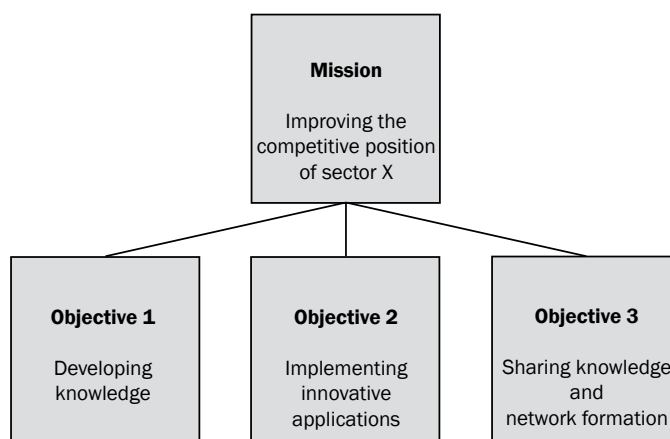
- Agreements offer an important basis for identifying objectives. However, it turns out that the objectives in competence pool agreements have often been defined at various levels, overlap or lack in clarity. This means that certain objectives have to be reformulated in the light of the present situation.
- Objectives related to the governance of the organisation are not included in the LFA (e.g. financial goals, objectives with respect to self-funding, etc.).

Step 2: Identifying the implemented activities: outputs

The next step is to systematically identify which activities have been carried out in the previous years and what the direct results of these activities are. In the case of competence pools this includes: conducting research, arranging training courses, organising networking sessions, organising seminars and conferences and developing specific tools.

- Indicate the most important activities and cluster the activities (e.g. those that are strongly related).
- Describe the outputs (direct results) briefly and qualitatively and do not quantify them (which hap-

Figure 4: An Example of a Goal and Objectives



pens in the next step of the evaluation, when the indicators are determined). Cluster the outputs where possible.

- Do not include activities in the LFA that are related to how the organisation works. The results of these activities do not directly contribute to the objectives defined in step 1 (e.g. meetings with the Executive Board, preparing annual reports, etc).

Step 3: Relating the activities, the outputs and the objectives

The third step is systematically ordering and linking the mission, the objectives and the activities with each other. In other words, the programme logic is made clear. The purpose of this step is to explore whether the mission and the objectives can actually be put into practice in concrete activities and, vice versa, whether the activities that have been implemented all contribute to the formulated objectives and mission. All the objectives should be covered by (a number of) activities and all the activities should contribute to at least one objective. However, a certain objective may not yet be (completely) filled with activities, many activities may be aimed at one single objective, or there may be activities that do not really contribute to a (strategic) objective. By systematically ordering and relating them, a clear overview is generated of the coherence within the programme and any gaps will become visible.

The analysis also incorporates the question whether the mission and objectives that were once the starting point are still valid. Particularly for programmes that run for a long period of time, the goal and objectives may well have evolved with time but these adjustments may not have been explicitly recorded. Because the competence pools were founded relatively recently, this is not likely to be the case. However, the LFA may

reveal the need to fine-tune the objectives, add new objectives or cancel them, initiate new activities, etc. and to subsequently record this in a new LFA.

- This step is the core of the LFA and practice shows that it is the most difficult step. The outcome is in fact a visualisation of the competence pool, providing a clear overview of the competence pool's mission, the objectives it has set and the activities it has implemented.
- For various competence pools it proved difficult to distinguish between the activities themselves and their outputs. In other words, adding the output level does not always lead to a clearer picture. This level may then be left out.

A number of practical tips are listed below for visualising an LFA in a tree of objectives. Some suggestions are optional depending on what the LFA is required to communicate.

- Limit yourself to the most important matters.
- Cluster activities and objectives that belong together.
- Use brief descriptions; additional information can be given in an explanatory text.
- Try to avoid crossing lines (if at all possible) to connect various levels in a tree of objectives with each other.
- A 'staircase' may be used to visualise the coherence between objectives (the staircase shows the interdependency of the various objectives and suggests a certain 'hierarchy' without actually expressing it at a different level in the tree of objectives).
- Use various lines (wide/narrow/broken/continuous) to show what is more or less important.
- A dimension of time can be added on the horizontal axis.

Figure 5: Activities (below) and Outputs (above)



Step 4: Ordering by Target Audience

A final step is to order the objectives and activities by target audience. This step considers which effects are envisaged for which target audiences and whether the activities actually serve the intended target audience. By adding this step to the analysis it becomes clear which target audiences are served by the competence pool. Furthermore, it will become clear whether these target audiences are served sufficiently.

This step consists of three sub-steps:

1. **defining** the target audiences. Categories that can be used are: companies in a specific sector, citizens, knowledge centres, governments or international players;

2. **deciding** what the most important target audiences are: these are the target audiences to which the mission and objectives are related. The primary target audience of competence pools is often the business community. This target audience can be divided into members and non-members, different sectors, different company sizes or SMEs, etc. Many competence pools also cooperate with knowledge centres. These are generally not one of the target audiences (in the sense of consumer of knowledge) but more of a partner or subcontractor (assisting with knowledge devel-

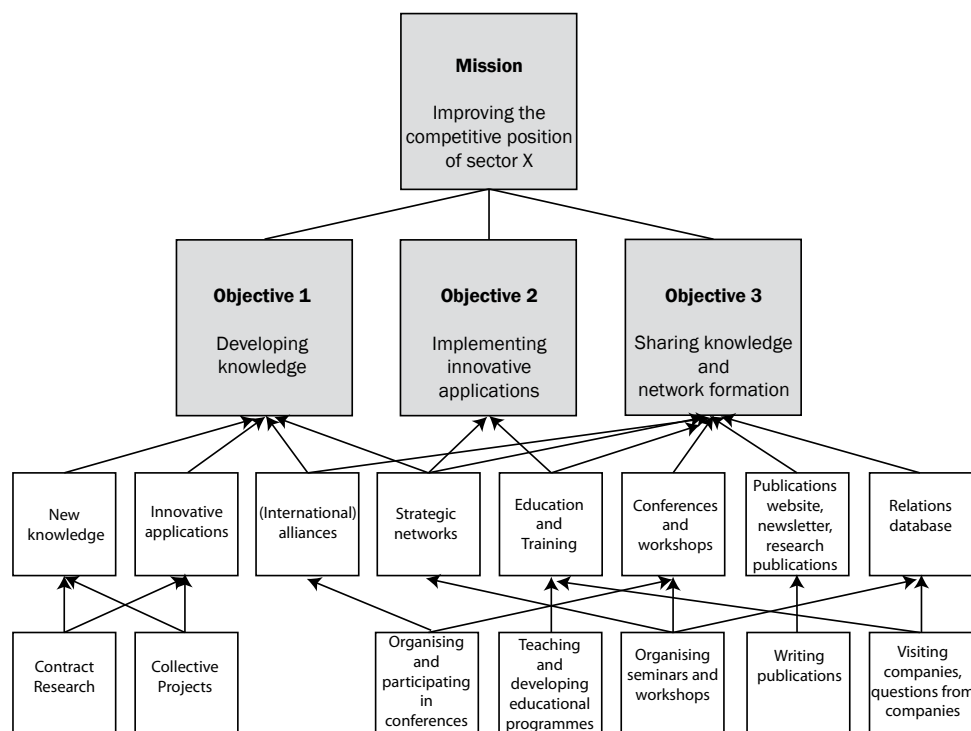
opment);

3. **order** the activities by target audience. The key question is : 'who is this activity aimed at?'. This will lead to clarity about whether the target audiences are indeed served.

One way of visualising this in the LFA analysis is by using different colours.

- Place the target audiences above the mission/objectives to which they are related and choose a colour for each target audience.
- Then give the activities belonging to the target audiences the same colour. It may be difficult to order the activities by target audience, for example because only a limited number of target audiences can be distinguished or because the activities are aimed at different target audiences. A solution can be to define the target audiences in more detail (divide them into sub-target audiences) or to develop activities that are more clearly aimed at specific target audiences.

Figure 6: Coherence in the Logical Framework



3 DEFINING INDICATORS

INDICATORS MUST INDICATE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE MISSION AND OBJECTIVES ARE BEING REALISED.

INDICATORS NEED TO BE FORMULATED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ACCORDING TO SMART CRITERIA

INDICATORS THAT CAN NOT BE LINKED TO AN ELEMENT OF THE LFA ARE NOT RELEVANT BECAUSE THEY DO NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE EXTENT TO WHICH EFFORTS AND RESULTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE MISSION AND OBJECTIVES.

3 DEFINING INDICATORS

3.1 Categories of Indicators

The LFA can serve to define indicators in order to measure the efforts and results. These indicators must indicate the extent to which the mission and objectives are being realised (and possibly how efficiently this is done). As mentioned above, there are input, output, results and impact indicators. These correspond with the levels distinguished in the LFA:

- **Input Indicators** indicate what effort is made (e.g. number of lectures given; number of meetings held; expenditure on certain activities, etc.) and need to be linked to activities. Input indicators are generally quantitative.
- **Output Indicators** are related to direct results of the activities. These indicators can be quantified relatively easily (e.g. the number of visitors of an event, percentage of SMEs, number of meetings leading to follow-up meetings, average appreciation of an event by the participants).
- **Outcome Indicators** are related to the objectives from the LFA (e.g. the number of innovation projects initiated by SMEs who attended the events, etc.). Indicators at this level can be quantitative as well as qualitative.
- **Impact Indicators** are related to the mission and mainly present effects on society that are achieved (e.g. to what extent have innovative SMEs improved their competitive position and to what extent has this led to additional employment). Impact indicators are the hardest to establish because it is often impossible to describe impacts in quantitative terms. What's more, there are a number of more conceptual problems with impact indicators:
 - timing: impacts often don't become visible until many years after the organisation has been founded, which makes it hard to say anything about the impacts after a short period of time.
 - attribution: it is difficult to determine to what extent the changes can be attributed to the competence pool – the impacts could also be the result of changing external factors. The line between the direct results of the organisation and the impacts on a sector or society is long and complex. Other parties often pick up on the direct results

and use them as their own.

- inequality/unfairness: one result can have a lot more impact than another due to strange (often political) coincidences. These factors are outside the influence of the competence pool.

Measuring inputs, outputs, results and impacts is essential in order to determine the effectiveness (to what extent does a programme contribute to its objectives?) and efficiency (how cost effective are the results achieved?). A number of input and output indicators have already been included in the current RAPsystem (the internal IWT reporting tool). Naturally, these can also be used for the self-evaluation. Incidentally, indicators are not only intended for an evaluation, they are also ideal to use as a basis for permanent quality control. The set of indicators becomes, as it were, the 'dashboard' where information can be found to decide whether adjusting is necessary and improvements are possible. This is mainly the case with input and output indicators.

3.2 Determining indicators

The interactions described in the LFA are made operational by determining indicators. The different elements of the LFA are systematically considered and indicators are determined for each element (including input, output, outcome and impact indicators). During this process of making the LFA interactions operational two aspects are important. Firstly, only indicators doing justice to the mission and objectives should be determined. In other words, there is no ready for use set available – every competence pool will have to determine its specific indicators. Secondly, there is no need for a very long list. A maximum of 3 indicators is usually sufficient for each box of an LFA.

Indicators need to be formulated as much as possible according to the **SMART** criteria:

- **specific**: the indicator must be clearly observable; be as clear and concrete as possible;
- **measurable**: make sure that the necessary information can be collected, making it possible to express a value for the indicator;
- **approved**: is there support for this indicator? The

'A' in SMART is sometimes explained as Activating referring to the fact that the indicator should encourage action;

- **relevant:** is this a good indicator for this objective?;
- **time-bound:** include a period of time to which this indicator relates.

As mentioned above, outcome and impact indicators are harder to determine than output indicators. As a consequence of this, one will also experience that these are harder to define SMARTly.

The set of indicators is not fixed for an indefinite period of time. If the objectives or the portfolio changes, then the set of indicators needs to be changed too. Various competence pools are already using a set of indicators (with or without target values). Indicators that can not be linked to an element of the LFA are not relevant because they do not say anything about the extent to which efforts and results contribute to the mission and objectives of the competence pool.

Figure 7 shows a number of examples of indicators related to various elements of an LFA.

Figure 7: Examples of Indicators

LFA building block	Examples of indicators
Collective Projects <i>Input Indicator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of collective projects • total number of project partners • background partners: knowledge centre, SME, Member, Non-member • number of projects on a specific theme • budgets per theme
Company Contacts <i>Input indicator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of questions from companies • number of visits to companies • number of network meetings
New Knowledge <i>Output Indicator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of scientific publications • number of studies • number of presentations • number of publications in professional journals • number of international research projects
Strategic networks <i>Output Indicator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of thematic networks • number of partners in a network • number of project ideas • joint activities
Conferences and workshops <i>Output Indicator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of events • number of participants at events • quality of the events • background of the participants: knowledge centre, SME, international
Diffusion of Knowledge and Network Formation <i>Outcome Indicator</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of new cooperation projects • number of new alliances • use of knowledge and tools by target audiences • average number of visits of relations
Strengthened position of a sector <i>Indicators on the goal level</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new companies: spin-offs • increase in the number of companies involved in the network in terms of FTE (full-time equivalent jobs)/ turnover • growing innovativity in the sector in terms of new products • increase in export of the sector • growing competencies in companies

4 DRAWING UP AN INFORMATION COLLECTION PLAN AND COLLECTING INFORMATION

IN SOME CASES THE INFORMATION IS READILY AVAILABLE, IN OTHER CASES THE DATA WILL HAVE TO BE COLLECTED, WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION.

EXPRESSING A 'VALUE' FOR EACH INDICATOR (EITHER QUANTITATIVE OR QUALITATIVE).

IF THE RELEVANT INDICATORS ARE CONSIDERED VERY IMPORTANT, THEN ARRANGEMENTS WILL NEED TO BE MADE TO KEEP TRACK OF DATA FOR THESE INDICATORS.

4 DRAWING UP AN INFORMATION COLLECTION PLAN AND COLLECTING INFORMATION

4.1 Drawing up an Information Collection Plan

Having determined the indicators, empirical material needs to be collected for the various indicators. In some cases the information is readily available, in other cases the data will have to be collected, within and outside the organisation. This section explains how to draw up a collection plan.

After listing all the indicators in a table, it needs to be determined what kind of information is necessary for expressing a 'value' for each indicator (either quantitative or qualitative) and where and how this information will be acquired.

Most information (particularly at the level of activities and outputs) is usually available within the organisation as a result of regular management and/or ongoing monitoring activities. Other information will have to be collected externally (particularly for indicators at the level of outcomes and impacts). In the next section of this chapter we will elucidate on how to acquire this external information.

4.2 Determining stakeholder groups for questioning

Information can be collected in a number of ways (surveys, workshops, interviews, etc.). However, it is important to determine who is going to be questioned and what information is needed from these stakeholders. After that, it needs to be decided how best to approach these various groups.

When the elements of the LFA have already been clustered by target audience, it is relatively easy to determine which information can be asked from each stakeholder group. In the case of competence pools, the following stakeholder groups are often considered:

- direct relations: members of the Executive Board, IWT, etc.;
- partners: knowledge centres and member companies;
- target audiences (users): knowledge centres, companies or governments;
- indirect target audience: particularly companies that are not related yet but who are potential users

When determining the stakeholder groups for questioning, a clear distinction needs to be made between the target audiences and the stakeholders. For example, knowledge centres and IWT are stakeholders but they do not belong to a target audience. If one wants to find out something about the effects on the target audience, the knowledge centres and IWT do not need to be interviewed. The extent to which each group is asked for information does not only depend on the objectives of the self-evaluation but also on the extent to which the opinion of the stakeholders is already known and the budget available for self-evaluation.

Furthermore, it is important to realise that stakeholders can not be asked for information too often. As a guideline, there should be a period of at least two years between subsequent interviews or surveys. Experience shows that the response rate would be too low

Figure 8: Structure of an information collection plan (example)

Category	Indicator	Nature of the Information	Information Source
Input Indicators	Budget per theme	quantitative	Internal: Project files / Management system
	Number company visits	quantitative	Internal: Management system
Output Indicators	Number of events	quantitative	Internal: Event files
	Quality of events	qualitative	Internal: Event files
Outcome Indicators	New relations of relations	quantitative	External: questioning stakeholders
	Use of tools by target audiences	quantitative	External: questioning stakeholders Internal: number of requests
Impact Indicators	Growing innovativity of the sector in terms of new products	quantitative	External: questioning stakeholders

if stakeholders are questioned more often than that. Depending on the agreement period and the number of planned evaluations, this guideline will have to be taken into account. Another important point is the confidentiality of the information. Companies may well be reluctant to share confidential information particularly if the number of companies involved is relatively small. This may be solved by signing a confidentiality agreement.

4.3 Methods for questioning stakeholders

Three methods for questioning stakeholders are described in detail in this section: surveys, interviews and review meetings. Which method should be used when, depends on a number of factors:

- *the relationship with the target audience*: partners are questioned differently compared to indirect relations. It is often more appropriate and desirable for stakeholders who are closely involved with the organisation to provide feedback in an individual conversation (interview) rather than a relatively superficial survey;
- *the size of the stakeholder group*: in case of large groups of stakeholders it seems obvious to conduct a survey;
- *the complexity of the questions*: a survey is particularly suitable for answering closed questions. Open questions, aimed at improvements or positioning, should be asked during interviews or meetings;
- *time available*: logically, individual interviews take up most time (it takes on average 2-3 hrs for a telephone interview including preparation and processing time and 4-6 hrs for a face-to-face interview). If there is little time, it can be far more efficient to invite the most important stakeholders for a workshop, particularly if interaction between the different stakeholders is required to get the necessary answers (it takes an average of 2-3 days to organise a workshop that lasts a couple of hours). Conducting a survey takes the least time. However, the quality of the response is often insufficient to make an evaluation analysis solely based on a survey (it takes an average of 2-4 days for a survey that is not too complex if all the e-mail addresses of the target audience are available).

These methods, combined or not, can be used to measure customer satisfaction. The satisfaction of customers and other stakeholders is an important, quantitative indicator for the quality of the competence pool. Insight into the level of customer satisfaction can be used for concrete improvements of the programme. By not only measuring the level of satisfaction of customers about various elements of the programme but also mapping the importance of these elements, it will also become clear which aspects deserve the most attention.

4.3.1 Survey

A survey is a popular method to measure the results of activities and the satisfaction of target audiences. A survey can be conducted among relations, but also among parties that are indirectly involved in the competence pool. This will provide an insight into the outcomes and the actual impact of the programme, as well as into new needs or suggestions that have not been revealed so far. Depending on the number of stakeholders, either everyone can be involved in the survey or a representative sample can be selected from the group.

Response rates usually vary between 10 and 50%, depending on the nature of the target audience (surveys to knowledge centres usually have a higher response rate than surveys to companies).

The various steps in setting up and conducting a survey are:

1. identifying the information that is required and clustering it into a number of themes (the rough outline of the survey);
2. making an inventory of the information that is already available, the feedback that has already been received, etc;
3. determining the target audiences and deciding whether the various target audiences will receive the same survey or whether more than one survey is needed;
4. developing a detailed list of questions (the questions need to relate to individual elements of the LFA);
5. testing the survey, adjusting it if necessary and finally sending it out.

Drawing up a list of questions

Drawing up a good list of questions requires professional expertise. The questions in the survey depend on the programme, the parties involved and the situation, making it practically impossible to use a standard list of questions. The quality of the collected information very much depends on the questions and the way they are formulated. This task can be outsourced to an external expert, which will increase the cost of the survey. Surveys usually consist of a mixture of closed and open questions. Answer scales are often used for closed questions. The table below shows various scales that can be used, including their advantages and disadvantages.

In addition to closed questions, open questions can also be asked in a survey. An advantage of open questions is that they allow more depth, because respondents can explain their answers. A disadvantage of open questions is the fact that these are often experienced as difficult, causing respondents to stop completing the survey. Too many open questions are known to have a negative effect on the response rate. What's more, analysing the answers of open questions, particularly in the case of large numbers of respondents, is very labour intensive. Surveys are often concluded with one open question to give respondents the opportunity to add information or make comments.

It is crucial to phrase the questions in a neutral way to avoid influencing the answers of the respondents.

Avoid for example: 'Would you agree with the fact

that...', instead use 'What is your opinion of...' Experience has shown that respondents often find it very difficult to give an exact figure or to quantify matters. That's why it is usually much better to ask for developments and trends in more qualitative terms.

Topics that are generally part of surveys are:

1. characterisation of the respondent;
2. importance (and usage) of the competence pool for (by) the respondent;
3. reasons to cooperate with / participate in the competence pool;
4. importance of types of activities and content themes of the competence pool for the respondent;
5. experienced and expected effects of the cooperation / participation for the respondent;
6. assessment of the competence pool by the respondent.

An example of a survey with a number of issues that are important to competence pools has been included in Appendix B.

Then the survey needs to be sent out. Specific software is available (e.g. SurveyMonkey: www.surveymonkey.com¹) making it possible to collect well-defined factual information and a representative opinion within a short time span. The advantages of using web-based-surveys are: availability of the information in a form that is easy to analyse, the costs and the time required from respondents are kept to a minimum.

With a web-based-survey the target audience of the

Figure 9: Scales for questions in a survey

Type of Scale	Advantages	Disadvantages
Likert scale 5 points: completely agree – completely disagree	easy to understand	little nuance
Semantic differential scale 7 points: strong – weak	nuanced comprehensive	tendency towards the middle
Stapel scale 11 points: +5 to -5	clear zero point easy to offset	elaborate
Ordinal scale 5 or 10 points: 1-5 or 1-10	familiar because of school grades	no zero point
4-point scale Excellent, good, insufficient, poor	forces a choice between positive or negative appreciation	limited nuance
Nominal scale yes/no	short and clear	no nuance no zero point

¹ Survey Monkey is a cheap application (it costs approx. \$200/year) that is very user-friendly, allowing competence pools to draw up and send out their own surveys

survey is first informed via e-mail about the questionnaire. Respondents can access the survey via a link in this e-mail. The questionnaires remain open for approximately two weeks, depending on the response rate. During this survey period, the potential respondents may be sent a reminder via e-mail in order to increase the response rate. The survey results can be saved in an Excel file and analysed.

4.3.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews are conducted instead of or in addition to a survey. If the interview is additional to a survey, the underlying reasoning and motivations of the respondents from the survey are discussed. Alternatively, one or a few interviews can be conducted before sending out the survey in order to 'test' the survey and to establish whether the right topics are included and whether it is necessary to add or reformulate matters.

'Direct relations' and 'partners' are stakeholder groups that are usually questioned in a round of interviews. Compared with a survey among target audiences, different topics are discussed. It is crucial to prepare these interviews well by drawing up a rough list of interview questions. The topics discussed will usually be related to the way the cooperation is experienced, the efficiency of the organisation and the strategy selected by the organisation (why these specific activities rather than others?).

4.3.3 Review Workshops

In a workshop a number of key stakeholders can be brought together. In this setting, the stakeholders are asked about their needs and to what extent the competence pool meets these needs with its current activities. A workshop of this kind can be organised in different forms and sizes. It is crucial to make a good selection of participants. Both the composition (which knowledge is required) and the balance (which combination of opinions, visions or backgrounds is required) are important.

This workshop has to be well-prepared (with a clear agenda) and a good chairman is essential. It is recommended to work with an independent facilitator in order to increase the openness among those who are present. The advantage of a workshop is that it takes less time than separate interviews (lower costs, easy to conduct) and that the participants will enter into a joint discourse during the meeting getting to know each other's opinion. A disadvantage is that the power

of expression of the group sometimes gets in the way of individual expressions. There are, however, techniques to minimise this. This is another reason why working with an independent facilitator is recommended.

4.4 In conclusion

It can prove difficult to effectively collect empirical material. If the relevant indicators are considered very important, then arrangements will need to be made with e.g. employees to keep track of data for these indicators. It is important to explain to the employees why specific indicators are recorded and followed. Where possible, it is useful to involve staff in naming and making these indicators operational. Generally, it is wise to determine at the beginning of a new policy cycle, which indicators are crucial for the mission and the objectives and to make sure that employees keep them up to date.

5

ANALYSING ON EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

THE SELF-EVALUATION SHOULD REVEAL REASONS WHY TARGET VALUES HAVE EITHER BEEN ACHIEVED OR NOT.

CASE STUDIES CAN BE USED TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE PROGRAMME LOGIC WORKS.

HOW GOOD IS THE COMPETENCE POOL COMPARED TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS WITH SIMILAR GOALS?

THE ULTIMATE GOAL'S A PICTURE OF THE ORGANISATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS ENVIRONMENT AND A SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC DECISIONS.

5 ANALYSING ON EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

Having collected the data, the information will have to be analysed and interpreted. There are a few different types of analyses that can be part of a self-evaluation. The LFA or objectives analysis has already been mentioned as an essential part due to the implications that the outcomes may have on the data collection strategy. Other essential analyses are the financial analysis and the activities analysis connected with an impact analysis. If target values have been defined beforehand, the outcomes of the information collection have to be checked against these target values. The self-evaluation should reveal reasons why these target values have either been achieved or not. Other components that are not essential but may be part of a self-evaluation are: a network analysis, an environmental analysis, a benchmark with other organisations and a peer review. Eventually, the analyses can be combined into a SWOT analysis.

The various types of analyses are described below:

5.1 Financial Analysis

Analysing the organisation's financial data is an important component of the self-evaluation. This is not so much checking the accounts, but rather making an analysis to be able to assess the financial health and the transparency as to the use of resources related to the output. The following key questions need to be addressed in this analysis:

- *Is the competence pool financially healthy?* A healthy financial state of the organisation is - as for any organisation - an important basic condition to be able to function. A financial analysis of the liquidity, cash flow, reserves, etc. every year will provide an insight into the financial state of the competence pool. Moreover, important fluctuations in spending patterns and their financial risks will become visible, for example if a large conference is organised every two years.
- *Is the use of resources clear?* Is it clear which resources are spent on which project, in other words: is the financial side of managing the activities in good shape?¹

¹ It may be the case that the financial administration does not allow for the input resources to be attributed to the various activities.

- *Is the use of resources logical with respect to the goal / effect of the activities?* The financial analysis needs to show as clearly as possible what resources are spent on which activities. Only then can be determined, after the activities analysis and the impact analysis, to what extent the costs of an activity match the benefits, to what extent expenditure has been 'fairly' divided between the target audiences, what the organisation's overhead is, etc.

The results of the financial analysis can be reported in the chapter 'Input' of the final report (see chapter 6). In addition, data concerning the expenditure for each activity are one of the elements to determine the organisation's efficiency.

5.2 Activities Analysis

Answering questions on the effectiveness and cost efficiency subsequently requires a thorough analysis of the organisation's activities. The following information needs to be identified: activities that have been carried out; efforts of the organisation per activity and the most important results per activity. After that, the analysis needs to focus on the division of efforts regarding the different objectives and results achieved in different areas. The results achieved must be offset against the envisaged objectives.

The key questions that are answered in this analysis are:

- *What were the organisation's activities?;*
- *Has the programme been effective?;*
 - What do the indicators and questionings say about the effects? What are the most important conclusions regarding the effects?
 - Do the activities also contribute to the objectives (answering at a higher aggregation level)?
 - Which adjustments are necessary in the future?
- *Does the programme operate efficiently?²*
 - What is the relationship between input – particu-

However, certain techniques can be used, for example 'activity based costing', to improve this.

² In order to determine the efficiency a benchmark is required. Because a benchmark will not be available in most cases (see section 5.5) this part of the analysis will mainly be about cost effectiveness

larly budget – and the activities in terms of quantity? In other words: how much money for which numbers of activities?

- What is the relationship between input and effectiveness: Is most of the money used for the most effective activities?
- Are all the target audiences served (sufficiently)?

The result of this analysis can be reported in the chapters 'Input' and 'Output' of the final report.

5.3 Impact Analysis

An impact analysis focuses on identifying the programme's impacts. Considering the ultimate goal of competence pools, the ultimate impacts of a competence pool will not be reflected on the competence pool itself, but in the companies and organisations that 'use' the competence pool. This means that the impact analysis is dependent on external data collection. Effects at aggregated level are sometimes visible in statistics, for example for each industry sector, but these will usually not be able to express macro effects. The financial means of competence pools are generally too limited for that. Questioning the target audience will thus provide the basic material for the impact analysis (see chapter 4). Regarding the large differences between competence pools in terms of objectives, the impact analyses will strongly vary between each of the competence pools.

Because of the difficulties mentioned earlier (timing, attribution, inequality/unfairness: section 3.1) it is also very difficult to make reliable quantitative statements about impacts. Impacts usually only become visible many years later and hence require an ex-post evaluation. The measurable effects for companies will mainly be found in qualitative opinions about issues such as strengthening their knowledge position, expanding their network, and contributions to new products.

Economic effects, such as an increase in turnover, larger profits and higher employment rates are generally either not reported at all or only very occasionally. These effects, however, do sometimes become apparent in specific case studies. Case studies can be very enlightening and they can be used to determine whether the envisaged effects have actually been achieved. In other words, they are a way of testing whether the programme logic works.

The outcome of the impact analysis is included in the chapter 'Results & Effects' of the final report.

5.4 Network Analysis

This analysis provides a clear overview of the entire network of relationships surrounding the organisation. What groups can be identified and what is their relationship with the organisation? This provides an impression of the positioning of the organisation with respect to target audiences and other organisations. This analysis will clearly show whether there is an overlap or synergy with other organisations. It can be explored further by means of interviews or a workshop.

The key questions that are answered in this analysis are:

- What are the (potential) clients of the competence pool? To what extent are they actually reached?
- What are the other relevant stakeholders? Is there any (potential) synergy or competition? Who does the competence pool cooperate with and how closely?
- Does the competence pool fulfil the right role in this network? What are the developments / options for improvement?

The answer to the first question mainly relates to output / impact (Results & Effect) and can be reported in that chapter. The last two questions are mainly about efficiency: to what extent is the cooperation with other parties, i.e. universities, sector centres, governments, social organisations of optimal quality so that the mission and objectives of the competence pool can be realised?

5.5 Environmental Analysis

An environmental analysis can be performed instead of or in addition to a network analysis. This analysis is particularly aimed at the future, so it is only relevant if there are plans to continue with the activities of the competence pool after the self evaluation. That's when an environmental analysis provides important input for strategy formation and thus for making a new Logical Framework. A good environmental analysis can reveal what is missing and which unique and specific role your (new) organisation can fulfil. Changes in the environment can include economic developments, policy adjustments and technological developments. An environmental analysis is often performed as part

of a SWOT analysis when the changes are classified as opportunities or threats. See section 6.7 for more details.

The key question of the environmental analysis is: which developments in the environment are relevant for the future of the competence pool?

5.6 Benchmark and Peer Review

The analyses above provide information on the access, results and impact of a competence pool. Based on the value of the acquired indicators it is not always possible to determine whether a competence pool is doing well or not: the absolute values do not always tell. One way to say something in absolute terms on the basis of the values of indicators is to create time series. This way a trend in the competence pool's performance can be shown. Secondly, a benchmark can be created. The performance of the competence pool is then compared to performances of similar organisations. A benchmark with other competence pools, for example, may well be an option for several aspects of a competence pool. Finally, peer reviews can be used. International experts are then asked to assess the work and impact of a competence pool in a specific domain.

The key question for the benchmark and the peer review is: how do I value the performance of the competence pool? How good is the competence pool compared to other organisations with similar goals?

5.7 SWOT Analysis

The results of the analyses above can be summarised in a SWOT analysis, in which strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are systematically recorded.

Figure 10: Example of a SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced knowledge development; The research is demand driven; The members are closely involved; The activities have a clear effect; A wide and active network, both nationally and internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a limited number of companies in the sector are reached; Too little attention for the transfer of knowledge and awareness; Insufficient insight into the use of resources
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra attention and resources from the government for innovation in the sector; New technological breakthroughs in strategically important fields; Opportunities of strategic alliances with Dutch innovation programmes; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitive advantage of companies in the sector is under pressure by the economic crisis; Changing European legislation for public funding

It is an analysis both of the organisation itself (internal: strengths and weaknesses) and of the environment (external: opportunities and threats).

Strategic options can be determined by identifying strengths and weaknesses on the one hand and opportunities and threats on the other hand. The ultimate goal of a SWOT analysis is to gain a structured picture of the organisation in the context of its environment and to support strategic decisions. This is why the SWOT analysis is part of the final steps of the self-evaluation process: to draw conclusions and to determine new strategic directions.

A SWOT analysis consists of the following steps:

- *describing internal factors*: the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. These are related to organisation's resources (people, knowledge, financial means, activities). The sources for this are the analyses mentioned above;
- *describing external factors*: the opportunities and threats in the environment that have an effect on the organisation. These include changes in the policy domain, technological developments and economic factors. The analysis of the environment provides input for this;
- *confronting internal factors (strengths, weaknesses) with external factors (opportunities, threats) in a matrix*: it is important to weigh the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats by using a point system or a qualitative specification;
- *developing ideas on strategic options*: strategy development often occurs on the basis of a matrix in which the factors are presented in four cells based on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (see Figure 10).

6 REPORTING

A REPORT IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A COMMUNICATION TOOL INTENDED FOR THE ORGANISATION ITSELF, FOR THE STAKEHOLDERS AND THE GOVERNMENT.

THE REPORT HAS TO BE WELL-STRUCTURED, READER-FRIENDLY, ACCURATE AND HONEST.

6 REPORTING

The final outcome of a self-evaluation process is a report presenting the findings. The main purpose of this report is to clearly present the findings of the self-evaluation. Please bear in mind that **a report is first and foremost a communication tool** intended for the organisation itself, for the stakeholders and the government.

The **report has to be well-structured, reader-friendly, accurate and honest**. Keeping this in mind, it is important to limit the length of the main document (25 - 50 pages), to structure the text well, to write a consistent argument, to present a message that has been thoroughly prepared and to include important developments in clear figures and tables. A list of contents such as in Appendix A provides a logical structure which, in principle, can contain all the information

(of all the abovementioned elements) in an organised way. It may well prove difficult to include sensitive information in the report. This can partly be overcome by:

- not including precise data in the case of sensitive information but using bandwidths;
- presenting data on a higher aggregate level without revealing the identity of the individual companies.

The emphasis in the conclusions of a self-evaluation will be on answering the questions regarding effectiveness and efficiency. If the self-evaluation will also be used for the positioning of the competence pool in the future or from a learner's perspective, then other conclusions need to receive attention as well. It is then recommended to include options for improvement and any policy adjustments that may be required.

APPENDIX A

Indicative List of Contents of a Self-Evaluation Report

Chapter 1: A Description of the Competence Pool

- mission and objectives
- activities (summary of headlines)
- organisation (structure, number of employees, key strategic processes)

Chapter 2: Logical Framework Analysis

Chapter 3: Input

- Financial data from year to year
- A more detailed overview of the activities
- Expenditure per activity

Chapter 4: Output

- Outputs per activity (e.g. consultancy, projects realised, numbers of visitors) and discussing these (linked to output indicators)

Chapter 5: Results and Effects

- Results and effects by activity (e.g. the number of innovation projects started by SMEs that attended events, the use of knowledge by companies) and for the overall mission and objectives (e.g. to what extent innovating SMEs have strengthened their competitive position and to what extent this has resulted in additional employment).

Chapter 6: Summary of performance indicators

- This chapter reports on the agreed list of indicators (from the management agreement). This can be done in the form of a table either with or without a brief explanation (e.g. a trend analysis).

Chapter 7: Findings

- Conclusions
- Options for improvement, suggested changes

Appendix: any appendices with detailed background information

APPENDIX B

Example of survey questions (FMTC, Flanders Mechatronics Technology Centre)

1. Characterisation:

i) What is your name?

Surname

First name

i) What kind of company do you work for?

iii) What is your telephone number?

2. Importance and use of mechatronics:

i) How important is mechatronics for your company?

ii) What was your total R&D expenditure in the previous 12 months? (please put 0 if you didn't spend anything)

iii) What is the estimated percentage of your total R&D expenditure allocated to R&D projects that are specifically aimed at mechatronics? (please put 0 if you didn't spend anything)

3. Participation in FMTC:

i) To what extent do the following issues provide you with a motivation to stay a member of FMTC? (very little - little- medium- large- very large motivation)

- Improving our innovation strategy
- Adding long term research findings to our own R&D portfolio
- Coming up with new ideas for product development
- Realising new product development faster
- Reducing our own technological risk
- Sharing the cost of technology development
- Strengthening our knowledge base
- Keeping up-to-date with technological developments
- Improved access to technological solutions
- Improved access to knowledge institutions
- Developing new patents
- Intensifying cooperation with other companies
- Improving cooperation with research institutions
- Gaining easier access to subsidy programmes
- Other, namely:

4. Current activities of FMTC:

i) How important are the FMTC activities below for your company?

(very unimportant - unimportant- neutral - important- very important)

- Strategic basic research
- Applied research
- Contract research

ii) To what extent do you find the FMTC themes below important for your company? (very unimportant - unimportant- neutral - important- very important)

Highly productive machines:

- Identification methods of dynamic systems
- Design of regulator instruments for dynamic systems
- Actuator technologies
- Sensor technologies
- Integrated system design methods

Modular machines:

- Multi-disciplinary system design and test methods
- Communication technologies
- Embedded real-time software

Machine servitization:

- Control algorithms
- Diagnostic sensors
- ICT architecture for servitization

5. Effects of FMTC for its members:

i) To what extent has FMTC had an effect on your company regarding the topics below in the previous 12 months? (very little- little- medium- large- very large effect)

- Knowledge level
- Innovation strategy
- Design process
- Products

ii) To what extent do you expect FMTC to have an effect on your company regarding the following topics in the future? (very little- little- medium- large- very large effect)

- Knowledge level
- Innovation strategy
- Design process
- Products

iii) Can you give a quantitative estimate of the effects of the previous on your company, e.g. on turnover, profit, exports, investments? (this proved to be a difficult question to answer)

iv) If the FMTC activities have influenced your innovation or technology strategies, can you indicate how?

v) Have you actually used the FMTC technology/knowledge in your company in the previous 12 months? (Yes/No)
If 'Yes':

a. Which technology/knowledge?

b. Could you indicate for each item of the answer to question 5-i what stage the use of this particular technology/

knowledge is at? (Idea -Pilot/Prototype-Production/Market)

vi) Have you undertaken follow-up actions due to FMTC projects or are you planning any follow-up actions (think of internal use of results, contract research, etc.) (Yes/No, If yes, which?)

vii) Do you work (more closely) together with other FMTC members due to FMTC projects? (Yes/No, If yes, who with?)

viii) Do you experience any other effects due to FMTC projects? If yes, which?

6. Assessing FMTC:

i) Can you indicate how satisfied you are with the following aspects? (very dissatisfied- dissatisfied- neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied- satisfied- very satisfied)

- The level of competency of FMTC employees
- Empathy with and understanding of FMTC employees for members' issues
- Effectiveness of FMTC
- Project management by FMTC
- Communication between FMTC and its members
- The interaction between members
- The extent to which members have a say or influence
- The way in which the research programme is determined
- The quality of the research
- The extent to which the research can be applied in practice
- The way in which FMTC knowledge is transferred to your company

ii) What is your overall opinion about FMTC?

I am (very dissatisfied- dissatisfied- neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied - satisfied - very satisfied) with FMTC

iii) What are your future expectations in terms of interaction between you and FMTC?

In the next few years I expect the interaction between my company and FMTC to (decrease strongly – to decrease – to remain the same – to increase – to increase strongly)

iv) Please give your opinion about the following statements: (strongly disagree - disagree- neither disagree, nor agree - agree- strongly agree)

- The FMTC research is of national top quality
- The FMTC research is of international top quality
- FMTC has found the right balance between long, medium and short term research
- FMTC's research programme is relevant for the challenges our company faces
- The FMTC programme has the right focus and coherence
- Our company has become more competitive thanks to the knowledge development realised via FMTC
- FMTC research provides a good return on investment for our company
- FMTC has good arrangements with its members regarding IPR

v) Can you indicate what, in your opinion, the three strengths of FMTC are?

vi) What are the three most important suggestions that you would like to make to improve FMTC?

APPENDIX C

The competence pools that were involved in developing this manual:

We would like to thank the competence pools listed below for their contributions to this manual:

- IncGeo (Incubator for Geoinformation) - <http://www.incgeo.be>
- Flanders Mechatronics Technology Centre (FMTC) - <http://www.fmtc.be>
- Flanders InShape (product development and industrial design) - <http://www.flandersinshape.be>
- Flanders Food (food industry) - <http://www.flandersfood.com>
- Flanders Material Centre (Flamac) - <http://www.flamac.be>
- Flanders Institute for Mobility (VIM) - <http://www.vlaamsinstituutmobiliteit.be>

IWT MISSION

IWT wants to stimulate innovation in Flanders:

- By giving various organizations - particularly SME's - financial support to assist them in their innovation endeavors;
- By stimulating companies, knowledge centers, universities and other innovation actors to cooperate;
- By advising the Flemish government on innovation policy issues.

M&A's mission is to support IWT and its stakeholders to establish and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their innovation tasks.

Want to know more about the IWT and the M&A unit?

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