Supporting the preparation of future European Partnerships

Monitoring of European Partnerships: how to ensure complete data on proposals, projects and results for all calls under European Partnerships

Objective

- All European Partnerships will need to establish a monitoring system that can track progress towards objectives, impacts and key performance indicators.
- In order to simplify and standardise this at the level of the individual projects funded by the partnerships , the data on proposals, selected projects, their outcomes and results will need to be integrated in the central IT tools (eGRANTs Data Warehouse, dashboard).
- It will require that all European Partnerships under Horizon Europe develop/adjust own (central) IT tools to common data standard, ensure that IT tools are fit for purpose, and run a test programme prior to the launch of the first call.
- The workshop will allow to understand the overall approach and involve users in early stages of the process.

Legal base: Common understanding on Horizon Europe

Annex III, Monitoring criteria for European Partnerships

a) *A monitoring system in line with the requirements set out in Article 45 to track progress towards specific policy objectives, deliverables and key performance indicators allowing for an assessment over time of achievements, impacts and potential needs for corrective measures;*

b) *Periodic dedicated reporting on quantitative and qualitative leverage effects, including on committed and actually provided financial and in-kind contributions, visibility and positioning in the international context, impact on research and innovation related risks of private sector investments;*

c) *Detailed information on the evaluation process and results from all calls for proposals within partnerships, to be made available timely and accessible in a common e-database.*

Why having data on proposals and projects centralised?

Having this data is key in:

- Assessing impacts of the future European Partnerships and the underlying activities, individually and collectively;
- Assessing the effectiveness of the new policy approach (compared to traditional calls under the Framework Programme);
- Identify weaknesses in the implementation, e.g. insufficient openness and accessibility of partnerships;
- Support exploitation and valorisation of results,
- Provide input to policy making for the Commission Services, and subject to further clarifications, to national administrations.

Current Situation (Horizon 2020)

- **Public-Private Partnerships (Article 187 Joint Undertakings and contractual PPPs)**
  Data is available in CORDA, since they are collected via the common IT tools. A limitation exists for e.g. ECSEL (and possibly for EuroHPC (Grant Agreements still in preparation phase)), where data on the nationally funded part of project funding is not centrally available.
- **Public-Public Partnerships (Article 185, ERA-NET and EJP co-fund actions)**
  They use their own IT systems for proposal submission, and (with few exceptions) national IT systems for grant management. Minimum data on funded projects is currently collected via ERA-LEARN
  ➔ Pilot exercises to import data have been launched.
- **EIT-KICs and their activities**
  Data is only available at the aggregated level, due to the different way data in each EIT-KIC is collected compared to Horizon 2020 / Partnership projects.

Pilot exercises (Horizon 2020)

- **Import of ERA-LEARN data**
  - Subset of data has been imported into CORDA and is accessible internally via dedicated business Objects universe, via eCORDA by Member States / Associated Countries.
  - Main issues: data quality and completeness, difficulties in attributing unique identifiers.
  - PIC: it was possible to attribute around 2/3 of the beneficiaries to an existing and validated PIC ➔ majority of these beneficiaries are applicants under the FP.

- **PRIMA pilot:** An attempt to provide access to our IT tools for proposals submission and evaluation for the Article 185 initiative PRIMA has not been successful.

- **EMPIR pilot:** In a further pilot with the Article 185 initiative on Metrology, EMPIR, data quality issues have been largely resolved, by adjusting the data structure in the IT tools of the implementing structure to the exacting standard of our data requirements.

Monitoring and evaluation of European E&I partnerships

Dr. Effie Amanatidou, ERA-LEARN / University of Manchester

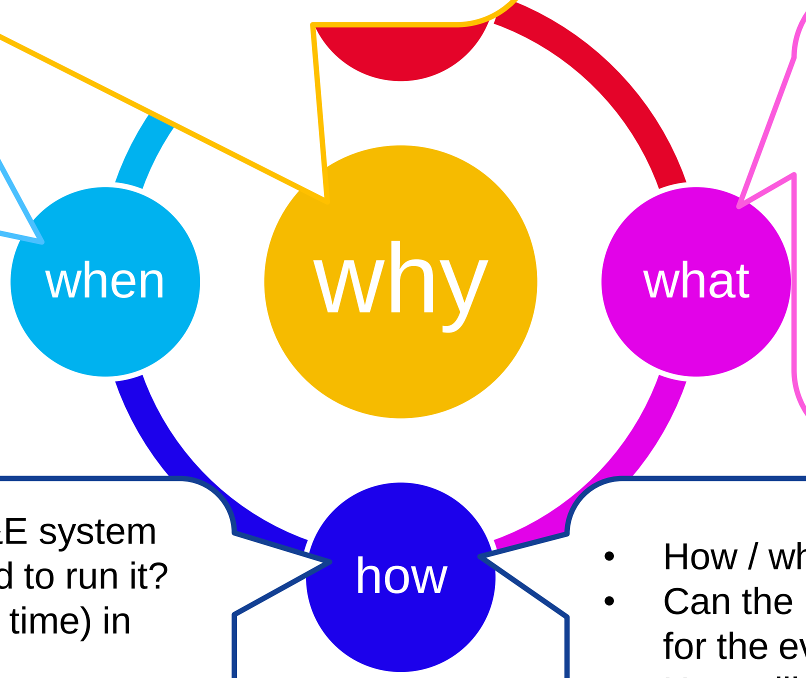
“Monitoring of European Partnerships: how to ensure complete data on proposals, projects and results for all calls under European Partnerships”,
ERA-LEARN workshop, Brussels, 9-10 March 2020

The first step….Setting up a M&E system

- Monitoring is a **continuous and systematic process** of data collection about an intervention. Monitoring and evaluation are **complementary** activities; ideally the design and requirements for each should be considered together. In the absence of a clear data collection strategy an evaluation may not be possible or be limited.
- Some monitoring indicators can only be developed while the activity is implemented, because you need the cooperation and agreement of stakeholders in developing them and in collecting the relevant information. Never underestimated the need to **make others deliver the information you need!**
- Synthesizing the findings and writing a **high-quality report** that meets the requirements of the key stakeholders is key.

- We ultimately monitor and evaluate to draw useful **lessons on how to improve**
- Thus we not only need to **estimate what** but also to **understand why and how**
- Numbers and shares monitor things but do not evaluate – **evaluation is about critical** judgement based on synthesis of indicators, synthesis of findings, accumulated intelligence, benchmarking, counterfactual exercises, etc.
- **Engaging** the relevant **stakeholders** is key in this process

By whom should the required data be collected (e.g. central management team, project team, a centralised P2P systems)?
Is the required capacity available?
Who will verify the data for accuracy and consistency with requirements



- When should the relevant data be collected (during the monitoring phase, reporting phase, ex-post, how often, etc.)?
- When should ad hoc data be collected? (ex ante, ex-post, other?)

- What data needs to be collected (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts)? What additional data needs to be collected (ad hoc)?
- What are suitable methods for collecting, storing and analysing data? What are the necessary data protection protocols to be applied?

- How much will the setting up of the M&E system cost and what resources will be needed to run it?
- Are these resources (human, financial, time) in place or can they be ensured?
- Can this M&E system be aligned with other existing systems (e.g. national level?)

- How / where will required data be gathered and stored?
- Can the process be aligned with the reporting schedule for the evaluation/impact assessment?
- How will the data be verified for accuracy and consistency with requirements?

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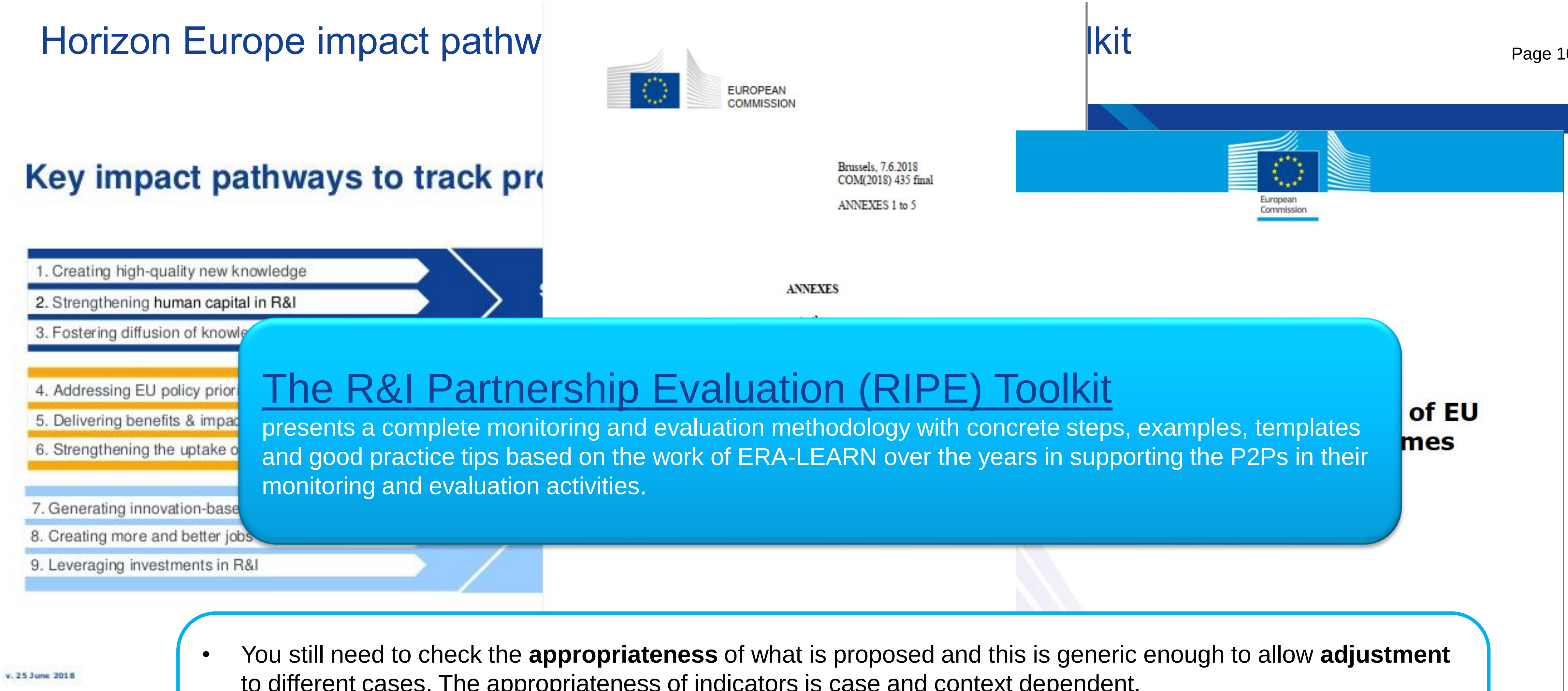
Horizon Europe impact pathw lkit



The R&I Partnership Evaluation (RIPE) Toolkit

presents a complete monitoring and evaluation methodology with concrete steps, examples, templates and good practice tips based on the work of ERA-LEARN over the years in supporting the P2Ps in their monitoring and evaluation activities.

- You still need to check the **appropriateness** of what is proposed and this is generic enough to allow **adjustment** to different cases. The appropriateness of indicators is case and context dependent.
- Results span **different levels** (project level & network level, national & trans-national level).
- Indicators are subject to a number of **limitations** but don't fall into the trap that 'Impact is only what we can measure'. The **combination of quantitative and qualitative** information is invaluable.
- You still need to select the **appropriate methods** for collection and elaboration of data and indicators.

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Some more tips

Continuously running ERA-LEARN central survey for project impact assessment based on harmonised questionnaire developed by ERA-LEARN in consultation with P2Ps.

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ERA-LEARN Guide for P2P Impact Assessment (Guide and Background document) downloadable at https://www.era-learn.eu/support-for-p2ps/monitoring-and-assessment.

All ERA-LEARN Policy briefs on impacts on P2Ps and their projects https://www.era-learn.eu/support-for-p2ps/monitoring-and-assessment

ERA-LEARN Data Import Experience

Workshop: *Monitoring of European Partnerships: how to ensure complete data on proposals, projects and results for all calls under European Partnerships*

Current Data Collection Activities / Process

ERA-LEARN has been contacting networks (coordinators or call secretariat) to request data at various points throughout the year. This data relates to:

- Calls (dates, participants, committed budget, requested funding, number of proposals submitted, subject area, etc.)
- Funded projects (project details, start/end dates, beneficiaries, funding organisation, total costs and requested funding for each beneficiary)

The data collected is used by ERA-LEARN and the EC for analysis at an aggregated level

- e.g. within the ERA-LEARN annual report, to support country briefings prepared by ERA-LEARN, to aid the EC in underlining the relevance and impact of P2Ps

All data is collected, used and stored in strict adherence to GDPR

The provision of data on funded projects is a contractual obligation for all ERA-NET Cofund calls that are cofunded by the EU

Difficulties and Limitations of the Process

Difficulties in collecting the data

- Timing of ERA-LEARN data collection does not usually match the timings for the call
- The data and the required format does not always match the data collected by the networks / call secretariat
- The quality and completeness of the data is sometime lacking
- Some concerns around GDPR from networks
- Some distrust of ERA-LEARN as the ‘processor’ of the data
- Frustration from networks in providing data to multiple sources in different formats
- Time consuming to check all data (and fix or go back to the network for more) before uploading to the secure system
- Time consuming to chase networks for data over a period of months or years (and frustrating for them!)

Limitations in the process

- Only have access to project data, not for proposals submitted to the calls - analysis, therefore, limited by the data available
- Lack of complete/quality data sets means that some assumptions need to be made within the analysis
- The limitations mean only a partial picture of the P2P landscape and the impacts is possible

EURAMET / EMPIR Experiences

Workshop: *Monitoring of European Partnerships: how to ensure complete data on proposals, projects and results for all calls under European Partnerships*

Experiences

EURAMET has been a Dedicated Implementation Structure for the last decade - fully responsible for its own call processes, evaluation processes, project monitoring and impact assessment of completed projects. It has its own bespoke databases for holding this data and generating reports.

In EMRP we had a special arrangement for getting the PICs of partners validated by the EC so we had a common set of information about the beneficiaries. That was discontinued in EMPIR and if a partner did not have a validated PIC then we had to do our own validation - meaning that we may end up using a different PIC than the EC for the same legal entity.

In 2019 we took part in a pilot to see if we could extract data from our databases in a form suitable for the EC to import into their system.

Issues / Learning points

A "mandatory" field can contain "null" data e.g. we do not collect the GPS coordinates of the beneficiaries head offices and it was acceptable to leave those fields empty. Similarly we do not collect information on the "Department" just the Legal Entity, not completing the fields about the Department was acceptable.

We store addresses formatted according to the local custom of the entity, the EC database manipulated individual elements of the addresses - we were not able to break down our data into their sub-fields, but where we used common PICs this could be overcome.

This was also the solution to completing other fields that we did not collect (e.g. were they an SME?)

GOING FORWARD WE NEED TO USE COMMON PICs - and have a common system for validating that data - a return to the EMRP way of doing things.

Questions? Comments?

The way forward

European Partnership candidates with possible MS participation

- EU-Africa Global Health
- Chemical Risk Assessment
- ERA for Health Research
- Innovation & transformation of health systems
- Personalized medicine
- Rare diseases
- One Health/AMR
- Key Digital Technologies
- EuroHPC
- European Metrology
- Geological services
- Clean energy transition
- Sustainable, Smart and Inclusive Cities and Communities

- Sustainable farming
- Animals & Health
- Agriculture of data
- Biodiversity
- Blue economy
- Food Systems for People
- Water 4 All
- Innovative SMEs
- European Open Science Cloud

In addition: R&I partnerships between MS without Union co-funding (preliminary agreement with MS)

Next steps of implementation *(timeline tbc)*

- Identify priority European Partnerships (launch in 2021/22) and Horizon 2020 candidates for voluntary pilots (*May*)
- Definition of data structures, including reporting data (*June*)
- Define approach on unique identifiers (*June*)
- Definition of business process (*June*)
- Development of necessary IT tools to allow automated import and update of data, including quality control (*October*)
- Launch further pilots with ongoing H2020 Partnerships to test the systems (*October)*
- Role out to European Partnerships, and (opt-in) to other R&I initiatives of European relevance (*Q2/2021*)

Important: systems have to be in place and tested before the launch of first call sunder European Partnerships with MS!

Identification of ongoing partnerships to extend existing pilot data import

Minimum requirements:

- A series of calls to be launched in the upcoming years;
- Agreement to make the necessary adjustments including central reporting;
- Agreement to collect the necessary data centrally, including minimum data on results, outcomes and impacts.

Population concerned:

- PRIMA Article 185 initiative;
- Majority of ERA-NET Cofunds from the WP 2018-2020 (around 20);
- EJP Cofunds: Rare Diseases and Soil.

➔ **DG RTD will contact networks in the coming weeks**

Define data structure based on Horizon Europe IT system specifications

- Minimum data requirements and quality to reach Horizon Europe standards;
- Definition of reporting data on funded projects throughout their life-cycle that have to be collected by each partnerships centrally;
- Based on the current version of the Horizon Europe data structure (which is already 85% - 90% stable);
- Ensure the data structure has a format that will allow ease of automatic import / data quality checks;
- Allow for flexibility to incorporate data relevant for Partnerships/Member States/research funders.

Development and deployment of IT tools

European Commission

- Develop IT tools to allow automated import and update of data (including quality control);
- Test / ensure developed IT tools will interface correctly with defined data structure and will support automatic import and data quality checks;
- Run Commission internal checks with test datasets, to ensure IT tools work as foreseen.

Partnerships

- Develop/adjust own (central) IT tools for proposal submission, evaluation, and reporting to common data standard;
- Ensure certification of IT tools (fit for purpose);
- Run test programme prior to launch of call.

Pilot the new system with ongoing Horizon 2020 Partnerships

- Run first tests with all already identified Horizon 2020 Partnerships;
- Identify and correct potential issues;
- Document the pilot system;
- Prepare roll-out of operational system for Horizon Europe.

Guiding questions for Discussion

- Are the milestones complete, what is missing from your perspective? Is the timeline realistic?
- What are in your view the main challenges?
- Can you already identify specific data needs from the perspective of Partnerships, Member States and their research funders?
- For activities other than calls: do you think it is feasible to encode the main direct activities of partners in a similar way?

Questions? Comments?