



Evaluation of the Cooperation Programme "Interreg VA Greece – Cyprus 2014-2020"

Web Link to the full text of the Evaluation [[greece-cyprus. eu](http://greece-cyprus.eu)]

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[May, 2019]

1. Summary

[up to 300 words]

[Write a short text in plain language style, including the purpose of the evaluation, the evaluation methods and plan, the main outcomes or trends and the main conclusions]

The Evaluation is a significant tool of the Cooperation Programme. During the CP's implementation, its aim is to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the CP, by establishing a valid and objective image of the implementation progress and the degree of achievement of the CP's goals.

The Evaluator was faced with a series of basic questions within the framework of the current evaluation and in relation to the CP's implementation. These questions were related to:

- its Effectiveness
- its Performance Framework
- its Efficiency
- the timeliness of intervention logic within the framework of its Strategy
- its revision
- the preparation of its impact evaluation
- the evaluation of its Communication Strategy

The main methods that were used are the following:

1. processing of the programming documents
2. statistical analysis
3. SWOT analysis
4. affinity matrix
5. surveys
6. interviews

The main outcomes are the following:

- The CP has a weighted effectiveness of 5.93% on the total budget, while the efficiency on the public contribution is 7.25%

- The CP's activation rate of the published calls for proposals has almost reached 80%
- The CP's efficiency on the total budget is estimated at 2.18, indicating a relatively smooth correlation between the physical and economic progress of approved projects
- the low absorption rate as well as the low level of legal commitments – in relation to the total budget of the CP – is considered a weak point

The milestones and objectives selected for the achievement of the final goal are realistic and fully feasible, transparent and relevant and the contribution of interventions to the achievement of the programming objectives is emphasized. As a result, it strengthens the nature of Evaluation as a dynamic work monitoring and improvement of their effectiveness and impact assessment.

2. Evaluation Framework and Plan

[Write a short text in plain language style, including the following:

- a brief description of the Program being evaluated,
- a reference to the evaluation period
- a reference to the evaluation principles]

The CP "Interreg V-A "Greece-Cyprus 2014-2020" covers the cooperation area of Greece and Cyprus, which includes three NUTS II regions for Greece (Regions of Crete, Northern Aegean and South Aegean), while for Cyprus, the eligible region is the whole country (NUTS I), with the exception of the Sovereign Base Areas of the United Kingdom, Britain and Northern Ireland. During the new programming period 2014-2020, the Regional Unit (former prefecture) of the Cyclades (NUTS III) was also added, resulting the participation of the South Aegean Region in total. The geopolitical position of the cooperation area is of the utmost importance for the EU, as it is at the crossroads of major trading routes, with the bilateral CP being an important growth leverage for the

development of the eligible areas so as to create a common European area of cooperation in the area. This will enhance the existing cooperation between the two Member States under the framework of EU Cohesion Policy.

The CP includes actions in the following three Priority Axes:

1. Enhancing competitiveness and entrepreneurship in the cross- border area
2. Efficient use of energy and sustainable transport
3. Environmental conservation and protection and risk prevention

Each of the aforementioned PA is analyzed in Thematic Priorities, Investment Priorities and Specific Objectives.

The time period on which the Evaluator focused, ranges from the beginning of the CP until the end of the year 2018.

The Evaluator was faced with a series of questions, aiming at:

- The effectiveness of the CP
- The CP's Performance Framework
- The CP's efficiency
- The timeliness of intervention logic within the framework of the CP Strategy
- The revision of CP
- The preparation of impact evaluation
- The evaluation of Communication Strategy

The progress of the CP's implementation was assessed according to the programming objectives, the available financial resources and the estimated costs of project implementation. Furthermore, it was examined if new challenges have emerged in the cooperation area, which has common strengths as well as weaknesses. For this reason, the TO and the IP were extensively analyzed, while the socio-economic environment and the main IP of the areas which participate in the CP were taken into account.

3. Main Outcomes

[Write a short text in plain language style, including the main outcomes of the evaluation process regarding the issues of efficiency and effectiveness with emphasis on the achievement of the indicators and the intervention logic with emphasis on the timeliness of the CP strategy and the new requirements that may be arisen. The text will not refer to the Performance Framework issues and Section F of the Assessment]

Efficiency and effectiveness indicators are considered to be crucial for the implementation process of the CP, while the latter is calculated by the ratio of the former to the absorption rate.

In order to measure the effectiveness of the CP's interventions, a bottom-up approach was applied from Project level to supernumerary programmatic levels (TO, PA, CP). This measurement is calculated by estimating the degree of the physical object's implementation for each Project and the reduction to the higher structural levels of the OP using the method of financial weighting. Furthermore, the estimation of efficiency was made by taking into account data from the physical and financial implementation of the approved projects. More specifically:

- The CP has a weighted effectiveness of 5.93% on the total budget, while the efficiency is 7.25% of the project's public contribution
- This efficiency, while proportionate to the absorption of the CP, is considered to be very low (2.72%)
- At the PA level, the highest efficiency on project's public contribution is at the PA3 with 6,00% and 4.98% on the total budget of the CP
- The lowest efficiency on total project's public contribution is at the PA1 and PA2 with 5% and 3% respectively
- The CP's activation rate of the published calls for proposals has almost reached 80%

- The CP's efficiency on the total budget is estimated at 2.18, indicating a relatively smooth correlation between the physical and economic progress of approved projects
- PA2 shows very high efficiency (2.38), while PA1 and PA3 show low efficiency (1.24 and 1.95 respectively)

Furthermore, through the analysis of the CP's internal logic, the most important conclusion is that the strategy of the CP is characterized by satisfactory logic and continuation in terms of programming from the first to the last level of goal determination and programming, while the foreseen actions as categorized in IP are compatible with the SO of the CP. In addition, a satisfying amount of relevance among the CP and the problems and needs of the current socioeconomic status is apparent, while the achievement of the CP output indicators for 2023 is feasible, by taking into account the current macroeconomic, social and environmental framework.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Conclusions and Recommendations of the CP's Evaluation play an important role, as the activities of the approved projects are depicted, and they can be used for the reviewing of the CP, the planning of new interventions and the preparation for the new CP, while they can provide support to the stakeholders in decision and policy-making.

Through a brief critical approach, a fact of utmost importance is that the strategy of the CP is characterized by satisfactory logic and continuation in terms of programming from the first to the last level of goal determination and programming, while the IP are compatible with the SO of the CP.

The positive conclusions of the evaluation include that the CP's activation rate of the published calls for proposals has almost reached 80%. Considering that

the CP has already completed the third year of implementation, its efficiency rate is not considered to be particularly high. However, taking into account the absorption rate of the approved projects, the efficiency indicator is quite satisfactory, which is one of the positive conclusions of the evaluation.

On the other hand, the low absorption rate as well as the low level of legal commitments (in relation to the total budget of the CP) can be considered as a weak point. The delay appearing in the absorption of the certified expenses of CP was clearly reflected in the Performance Framework where most of the financial indicators that are tracking certified expenses per PA, are at a very low level.

Concluding, the Evaluation Recommendations can be used to highlight the added value of the interventions that are included in the CP and are co-funded by the EU, aiming at raising awareness between European citizens.

Abbreviations

CP	Cooperation Programme
EU	European Union
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
TO	Thematic Objective
PA	Priority Axis
IP	Investment Priority
SO	Specific Objective