

PARTICIPANT'S HANDBOOK

MODULE: PROJECT MANAGEMENT. PROJECT CYCLE, MONITORING & EVALUATION, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, INTERCULTURAL ASPECTS.

TOPIC 5: PROJECT CYCLE MANAGEMENT. PROJECT EVALUATION.

DURATION OF THE SESSION: 120 MINUTES

TABLE OF CONTENT

- I. Introduction to the subject.
- II. Our approach to evaluation as applied in the PMTC project
- III. The evaluation of the evaluation.

Annexes:

- 1) Project evaluation matrix.
- 2) Improved evaluation matrix of the project.
- 3) Interim and final project evaluation reports.

I. Introduction.

Evaluation is something you can read a lot about and take part in online and stationary courses. We have been learning about evaluation in practice while implementing Erasmus+ projects and we have been facing this issue since the moment of preparing the application, when we want to plan it well and then describe it for the purpose of... evaluating our project proposal.

We decided to show the evaluation in as concrete and practical way as possible, not to give an overview of concepts and methods, but to show our approach to evaluation used in the PMTC project. But we also refer you below to articles worth reading for those who are interested in exploring this issue.

We have decided to approach the topic of evaluation of our project in a maximally "usability oriented" way, as proposed by Beata Ciężka, an evaluator and EPALE ambassador who has conducted a series of trainings on behalf of the Erasmus+ National Agency in Poland for beneficiaries of the programme within the framework of Action 2 - Adult Education.

Beata Ciężka's person is presented as follows on the EPALE Pages:

"Evaluator, author and provider of trainings on evaluation. She has extensive experience in conducting research and evaluation projects for the European Commission. Specialises in educational programmes and projects. Co-founder of the Polish Evaluation Society. Ambassador of EPALE."

All of her articles and a rich bibliography on evaluation have been collected on EPALE in the Polish language version of the platform, but the possibilities of translation into English provided by free Internet tools will certainly make it possible to get acquainted with these valuable resources:

<https://epale.ec.europa.eu/pl/blog/ewaluacja-w-edukacji-doroslych>

II. Our evaluation approach as applied to the PMTC project.

Beata Ciężka, mentioned in the introduction, defines evaluation as follows: "In the shortest terms, evaluation can be defined as an assessment of the value of an activity using specific criteria to improve that activity." (cf. *Beata Ciężka, Why do we need evaluation criteria? Some practical and methodological tips, EPAL Blog 15.10.2020, <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/pl/blog/po-co-nam-kryteria-ewaluacji-kilka-wskazowek-praktyczno-metodologicznych>*).

Transferring this approach to our project we created an evaluation matrix (it is an annex to this material):

ERASMUS+ KA-2 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT IN ADULT EDUCATION					
"Project Management Training Course for Small Non-profit Organisations in Europe"					
Project no: 2019-1-PL01-KA204-065494					
INTERNAL EVALUATION MATRIX					
<u>Activity</u>	<u>Qualitative Indicators</u>	<u>Qualitative Tools</u>	<u>Quantitative Indicators</u>	<u>Quantitative Tools</u>	<u>Impact on</u>

In the field "Activity" we have listed the individual stages of the project, together with the planned dates for the completion of the respective stages:

- TPM 1
- IO/A1
- LTT 1
- IO/A2
- TPM 2
- IO/A3
- IO/A4
- IO/A5
- TPM 3
- E1 / E2 / E3 / E4
- TPM 4

We did not mark milestones, but based on the proposal and the monitoring plan we knew that the milestones were the following project meetings: TPM 1, TPM 2, TPM 3, TPM 4. It is worthwhile in constructing the evaluation matrix to mark these milestones, if only in a

separate font colour. The period of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which we had to implement our project, made it impossible to have real project meetings, we implemented them in the online formula, but in combination with the current online meetings - due to the pandemic even more frequent than usual - the milestones in the form of project meetings although they did occur, they were somewhat blurred in perception, because they were not accompanied by a sense of breakthrough, which occurs when we meet at a project meeting in the headquarters of one of the partners and have time to summarise the results of work, accompanied by a kind of celebration in the form of a shared dinner and a symbolic glass of wine.

We have assigned qualitative and quantitative indicators to each stage and tools to measure them in relation to the desired impact on the different target groups at each stage of the activities.

The main purpose of carrying out the evaluation of the PMTC course **development** was **IMPROVEMENT**. Each activity we undertook marked another stage in the development of the PMTC curriculum and course materials. At the stage of a given activity, we evaluated whether we were at the point of creation that was assumed, whether it met the expectations set, and if it did not, what needed to be improved, enhanced, perfected. In this way we came to the completion of our work.

The **FINISHED WORK** became ready to be **tested** with partners and thus we had the opportunity for a second level evaluation - how well, with practical training, it meets the objectives. At this stage there was still a possibility to make corrections, changes, additions. It should be added that the testing of the final product was not foreseen at the stage of preparation of the application. It was planned to test the product at the stage of its development through the implementation of an international LTT training course, where each partner was to present the first module of the developed training course and conduct the training course for other partners as participants. Due to the pandemic, when a real meeting was not possible and the European Commission had not yet introduced the formula of online training, the partnership decided to continue the creative work and its evaluation through online meetings where we discussed the individual modules in detail, presented them to each other, and discussed the applied methods, However, with the consent of the Supervisor of the

project of the Erasmus+ National Agency in Poland, we changed the assumptions of LTT, which we planned to complete the work on the course and evaluate the finished product, mainly by testing the product - conducting training sessions and then evaluation sessions.

The moment came when the **PMTC** could be **published** on the project website <https://www.erasmus-pmtc.eu/> and we could start in partnership the dissemination phase of the project results accompanied by the third level evaluation - the impact of the project results on partner organisations and external organisations - the target group for which the PMTC programme was created. Impact evaluation both at local, national and European level. This type of evaluation has also been foreseen in the evaluation matrix by assigning appropriate indicators and tools in relation to the expected impact to the activities E1-E4 and TPM 3 and TPM 4.

In the course of the project, partial and final evaluation reports were produced, which are also included in this course as practical training material (case study).

It should be added that the terms "first/second/third level evaluation" are the result of a logical approach to the types of evaluation used in the PMTC project.

III. Evaluation of the evaluation

"Utility oriented evaluation", which we have tried to apply in our project will be evaluated by experts who will assess the project. The criteria that will guide the experts have been described by Beata Ciężka in the article quoted at the beginning, and we can only hope that the evaluation of our project will show that it has met them at least satisfactorily, which we are convinced of and which we will try to describe adequately in the final report.

"Below I list the most frequently used evaluation criteria in the context of educational projects and activities:

Effectiveness - this criterion allows us to assess to what extent the objectives of the evaluated project have been achieved. Thus, if a project has achieved its goals, we can say that it "has been implemented effectively" or simply that it "is effective".

Effectiveness - this criterion allows us to assess the level of "economy" of the implemented project, including training, i.e. the ratio of the expenditures incurred to the results obtained. Expenditure is understood here as financial resources, human resources and time devoted to the implementation of activities leading to the achievement of the objective. Thus, if the outlays were properly balanced (neither too high nor too low) and the objectives were achieved, we can say that "the activities were carried out effectively". If, on the other hand, the same results could have been achieved with less resources, then we say "ineffective action", and the same is true if, with the same resources, better results could have been achieved.

Utility - this criterion makes it possible to assess to what extent the implementation of the evaluated measures actually contributed to solving the identified problem in the intervention area and/or brought benefits to the beneficiaries. Thus, if the project brought benefits to the recipients of the activities - we can say that it was useful. What is important, the usefulness is not always defined by the objectives of the activities - my experience shows that in many training projects the usefulness focuses not only on gaining new knowledge or skills, but also on establishing contacts or social activation (which is not included in the project objectives, but which should be shown when indicating the project effectiveness).

Relevance - this criterion assesses to what extent the adopted objectives and methods of project implementation correspond to the identified problems and/or real needs of beneficiaries. Thus, if the methods of activities were well chosen to solve a specific problem - we speak of their relevance.

Sustainability - this criterion assesses whether the positive effects of the evaluated project/intervention are likely to continue after the external support/stimulation ends, and whether the impact of the intervention is likely to be sustained in the longer term.

Taking into account the above criteria and defining the value of the evaluated project, we can say, for example, that a training/development project is effective, because it produces the

assumed effects, but ineffective, because it is carried out with enormous, incommensurate to the effects effort and resources, and moreover, unstable, because the problem was not solved to the end; although it shows usefulness for the addressees, but not all methods of intervention turned out to be equally accurate."

(cf. Beata Ciężka, Why do we need evaluation criteria? Some practical and methodological tips, EPAL Blog 15.10.2020, <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/pl/blog/po-co-nam-kryteria-ewaluacji-kilka-wskazowek-praktyczno-metodologicznych>)

Here you can record important findings and thoughts for improving our evaluation method, especially in the context of your project.

Notes