

Capacity Building in Impact Evaluation: Counterfactual and Theory Based Approaches

Barcelona (ES), 30 November - 1 December 2017



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What is this course about?

This training course aims to enhance participants' understanding of how to commission, manage and monitor evaluations. It will increase your ability to design, manage and monitor the evaluations – funded with or without EU funds – conducted by your organisation.

The main aim is not to train participants as expert practitioners, but to put them in a position where they are confident to commission and manage evaluations, understand the basics of certain tools and approaches, and are able to consider the advantages and disadvantages that justify the use of some above others. Consequently, they will be able to design briefs for (internal or external) evaluators, interact with them competently and assess the quality of their work.

In particular, the seminar should help participants understand the two most prominent approaches to evaluation today: counterfactual (also known as experimental or quasi-experimental) approaches, and theory-based approaches. The seminar will demonstrate in practical terms what counterfactual approaches can and cannot do and the conditions in which they can be used. It will also show how theory-based approaches can provide a good alternative when such conditions are not met and discuss ways in which the two approaches can be combined.

How will it help you?

Does your organisation have qualified experts who are willing and able to design, manage and monitor evaluation activities? Will you be able to ensure high quality evaluation? Will evaluation results really provide evidence for decision-making and improve policies and programmes?

In recent years, both contracting authorities and practitioners have been learning and growing together. The EU Member States have launched and implemented evaluation capacity-building projects and today we can say that most of them have a well-developed evaluation culture. However, many challenges remain: we must still build capacity at all levels, ensure better dissemination of evaluation results and generate buy-in for the benefits of evaluation and integrate evaluation better into the policy and programming cycle so that it is actually used.

The seminar aims to help build capacity by offering an overview of policy, programme and project evaluation. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of two families of evaluation approaches and, through the use of practical examples, improve their skills in the design and monitoring of evaluations. As part of this, participants will receive coaching and advice from our experts on their own evaluation projects and challenges.

Who will benefit most?

This two-day seminar is aimed at public officials from EU Member States, candidate countries, EU institutions and Agencies, Managing Authorities, auditors, consultants, staff of NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in the management of evaluation procedures for policies, programmes and projects. The seminar is aimed at those working with or without European Funds.

Programme

THURSDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2017

- 09.00 **Registration**
- 09.15 **Introduction to the seminar: presentation of the methodology to be followed**
'Tour de table' – participants and experts present themselves
Gracia Vara Arribas, Expert, Project Leader, EIPA Barcelona (ES)

- 09.30 **Needs assessment of the audience – evaluation on knowledge level**

I. What is an evaluation and how to manage it

Gracia Vara Arribas

- 10.00 **Strengthening the impact evaluation culture in the European Union - the lessons from the European Commission**

- 10.30 Coffee break

II. Introduction to theory-based evaluation approaches and how to use them in practice

Bradford Rohmer, Senior Analyst, Oxford Research

- 11.00 **Different evaluation approaches and their practical use**

All evaluations should be systematic, objective and evidence-based. But in other respects they differ depending on the issues and problems at hand. This session gives an overview of different evaluation approaches, their key features and how and why to use them. The discussion revolves around real-life examples to show the strengths and weaknesses of various evaluation approaches and ways to design and apply them in practice.

- 13.00 Lunch break

- 14.30 **Theory-based evaluation: What is it, how does it work, and how can it be used to evaluate impact?**

Theory-based evaluation (TBE) is versatile but is only useful inasmuch as it is tailored to the intervention in question. This session runs through the different approaches to TBE (e.g. realist evaluation, contribution analysis, qualitative comparative analysis), the circumstances they are suited to and tools used to employ them. Again, the focus is on practical examples that participants can apply as commissioners or practitioners of evaluations.

- 15.30 **Practical Session 1: a practical example of a theory-based evaluation**

- 17.00 **End of the first day**

- 20.00 Welcome dinner

FRIDAY 1 DECEMBER 2017

III. Introduction to counterfactual evaluation approaches and how to use them in practice

Stephen Morris, Professor of Evaluation, PERU, Manchester Metropolitan University

- 09.30 **Counterfactual approaches to causation**

Early on in the process of designing an evaluation you will need to consider how a counterfactual will be identified and estimated. This session will show you that once having identified a potential counterfactual you will then need to consider how you will measure counterfactual outcomes and possibly collect control data from them. This will set ground for the next session of the programme.

- 10.30 **Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) as a way of identifying counterfactuals**

A randomised controlled trial is an evaluation methodology which aims to draw an objective picture of the difference that a project, programme or policy makes by comparing its effect on separate groups. There is a real need to gain a clearer understanding of who requests and uses RCTs, and this session will provide that knowledge.

- 11.30 Coffee break

- 12.00 **Practical Session 2: designing an experiment**

Participants design an experiment and solve problems from a Commissioner's perspective.

- 13:00 Lunch

- 14.30 **Quasi-experimental approaches**

Overview of quasi-experimental methods and techniques to quantitatively evaluate the impact of an intervention. Using ample examples, the approaches covered include regression, difference-in-differences and matching. ITS and regression discontinuity will also be discussed.

- 15.30 **Practical Session 3: using quasi-experimental approaches**

Participants discuss the practical application of quasi-experimental approaches, also in cases where randomisation is not possible.

- 16.00 **Wrapping up and closing of the seminar**

Experts

(In alphabetical order)

Stephen Morris (UK)

He is Professor of Evaluation in the Policy Evaluation and Research Unit (PERU) at Manchester Metropolitan University, Research Associate at NatCen Social Research, Visiting Fellow at the Policy Studies Institute and Honorary Fellow at the Institute for Employment Studies. He specialises in impact evaluation including RCTS and quasi-experimental designs; he also uses theory-based approaches in his work. He is responsible for the design, delivery and execution of evaluation studies in a range of different areas, such as, work, education, employment and skills, welfare, crime and justice, business support, innovation, youth transitions and health. For over 20 years he has designed and delivered studies for a range of different central government departments, local government and not-for-profit clients. In 2013, he co-authored a study for the European Commission, offering a practical guide for managing authorities to design and commission counterfactual impact evaluations.

Bradford Rohmer (SE)

He recently relocated to Stockholm, where he leads the European evaluation market for Oxford Research as a Senior Analyst. Until then, he was the Principal for EU evaluation at Coffey. Over the last 9 years he has led and contributed to many public policy evaluations and research studies, mostly for the European Commission, but also for the European Parliament and British Department for International Development. A political scientist by training, he has worked across a variety of subject areas, from citizenship, education, health, fisheries, sport and customs to gender equality and security sector reform. Much of this work has concerned finding ways to structure and present large, often disorganised masses of information effectively through a rigorous approach to research design, execution and analysis. This has encompassed the use of a range of evaluation methods and a number of data collection tools including focus groups, interviews, case studies and surveys. Before joining Coffey, Bradford worked in various capacities on European policy in the non-profit and public sector and studied political science and economics. He speaks French and Swedish fluently in addition to his native English.

Gracia Vara Arribas (ES)

She is a Lawyer, working as expert project-leader and consultant in EU Law at the European Institute of Public Administration-EIPA. She holds an LLM degree in comparative, European and international law from Maastricht University (1995-1996). After practicing law for 10 years in Spain, she became at EIPA the Deputy Director for Europe at the Cefir Programme of the European Commission in Uruguay (1996-1998). Since 2000 she works at the delegation of EIPA in Barcelona. For over 20 years, under her direction, several impact assessment and evaluation studies have been carried out commissioned by the EU Presidencies (UK 2006 and SE 2009) and for different Member States (SE, NO, UK, FR, NL, DE). She has led different commissioned studies for the EU institutions ("The Scoreboard on Multilevel Governance", "The division of Powers in the EU" "The Role of Regional Parliaments and subsidiarity" etc). In 2014 she led and co-authored the study by the European Parliament analyzing the cost of non-Europe in the Sharing Economy. She has authored several policy reports and published numerous articles on Public Procurement Law, being at present the consultant for the City Council of Barcelona in the promotion of Public Procurement of Innovation.

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General Information

Programme

The programme will commence on Thursday 30 November at 09.00 and will finish on Friday 1 December at 16.00.

Seminar venue

Grupotel Gran Via 678
Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes 678
ES - 08010 Barcelona
Tel. +34 93 3417000
www.grupotel.com

Working language

The seminar will be conducted in English.

Fee

EIPA members' fee*: €900
Regular fee: €1000

The participation fee includes documentation, two coffee breaks, two lunches, a welcome dinner and a certificate of attendance. Accommodation and travel costs are at the expenses of the participants or their administration. For more information, please visit EIPA's website: <http://seminars.eipa.eu> (Training courses - Discount policy)

* EIPA members can take advantage of a reduced fee; this is available to all civil servants working for one of EIPA's member countries (i.e. AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, SE, UK), and civil servants working for an EU institution, body or agency.

Hotel reservations

EIPA Barcelona will be pleased to make reservations for you at the same hotel where the seminar will take place, and where special rates apply for EIPA participants:

Grupotel Gran Via 678
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ES - 08010 Barcelona
Tel. +34 93 3417000
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Rates of room with breakfast buffet included:

- Single room: € 80 + 10% VAT + €1.21 tax
- Double room for single use: € 100 + 10% VAT + €1.21 tax
- Double room for two pers.: € 120 + 10 % VAT + €2.42 tax

Should you wish to make use of this possibility, please indicate the dates of arrival and departure on the registration form as well as the type of room required. Payment is to be made directly and personally to the hotel upon checking out. Please note that if you register after the deadline, hotel reservations cannot be guaranteed.

Meals

Should you require a special menu (e.g. vegetarian, diabetic), please inform the Programme Organiser so that this can be arranged.

Registration

Kindly complete the online registration form which can be found on EIPA's website <http://seminars.eipa.eu> before **16 November 2017**.

Programme Organiser

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Your name and address will be part of EIPA's database for our mailing purpose only. If you do not want to be included in our mailing database, please tick the box on the registration form.

Confirmation

Confirmation of registration will be forwarded to participants on receipt of the completed registration form. Moreover, when it is confirmed that the seminar will take place, the participant will receive a confirmation letter by e-mail from the Programme Organiser, with some other details.

Payment

Prior payment is a condition for participation. Please indicate the method of payment on the registration form. For cancellations received within 15 days before the activity begins, we will have to charge an administration fee of €150 unless a replacement participant is found.

Cancellation policy

EIPA reserves the right to cancel the seminar up to two weeks before the starting date. EIPA accepts no responsibility for any costs incurred (travel, hotel, etc.). For more information: <http://seminars.eipa.eu> (Training courses - Cancellation policy).



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