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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL  
REGIONAL POLICY  
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EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS and EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

19 January 2012

**GUIDANCE NOTE ON INDICATIVE CONTENTS AND  
STRUCTURE FOR THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC REPORTS  
2012**

***DISCLAIMER:***

*This is a document prepared by the Commission services. On the basis of the applicable EU Law, it provides technical guidance to the attention of public authorities, practitioners, beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries, and other bodies involved in the monitoring, control or implementation of the Cohesion policy on how to interpret and apply the EU rules in this area. The aim of this document is to provide Commission's services explanations and interpretations of the said rules in order to facilitate the implementation of operational programmes and to encourage good practice(s). However this guidance note is without prejudice to the interpretation of the Court of Justice and the General Court or evolving Commission decision making practice.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The background to the requirement for national strategic reports in 2009 and 2012 was set out in Information Note 08/0018/EN of 18 May 2009 on the preparation of the 2009 national reports. ([LINK](#)).

Following the submission of the national reports of 2009 and the adoption of the Commission report of 30 March 2010<sup>1</sup> the European Parliament<sup>2</sup>, the Council of Ministers<sup>3</sup> and the Committee of the Regions<sup>4</sup> adopted conclusions on the first strategic reporting exercise.

In the light of the 2009/2010 exercise, the conclusions of the different EU institutions and the fact that by 2012 we are at a different, more advanced point in programming, the 2012 Strategic Reports should focus primarily on the following:

- Giving a clear picture on programme implementation and of the achievements of Cohesion policy in this programming period compared to its objectives. Evidence on the performance and effectiveness of cohesion policy should form the main content of the Reports, as well as analysis of progress against core indicators, and any significant changes in Programme targets. The Commission's Annual Growth Survey 2012 makes a specific call for such a focus<sup>5</sup>.
- Assessing the multiple and varied impacts of the economic and financial crisis that started in 2008/2009 on the programmes and on the programming context.
- Providing examples of the contribution of the programme strategies to the Europe 2020 strategy and, where relevant, to country specific recommendations under the European Semester exercise.
- The national reports should be one of the sources on which the preparation of the next round of programming will be based, to the extent that they identify what has worked well and less well and what needs to be done to improve future programming. It is therefore important that Member States provide analysis data and assessments of good quality.

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<sup>1</sup> Communication COM(2010)110 of 31.03.2010 – link  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/archive/policy/reporting/cs\\_reports\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/policy/reporting/cs_reports_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> EP resolution reference number: P7\_TA-PROV(2011)0283 FULL 23 June 2011  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegistreWeb/search/advanced.htm?relName=NUPE&reference=454.716&language=EN>

<sup>3</sup> Council [http://www.consilium.europa.eu//uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/115149.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu//uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/115149.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Committee of the Regions reference CDR 159/2010 adopted 1/12/2010 –  
[http://coropinions.cor.europa.eu/CORopinionDocument.aspx?identifier=cdr\coter-v\dossiers\coter-v-007\cdr159-2010\\_fin\\_ac.doc&language=EN](http://coropinions.cor.europa.eu/CORopinionDocument.aspx?identifier=cdr\coter-v\dossiers\coter-v-007\cdr159-2010_fin_ac.doc&language=EN)

<sup>5</sup> ANNEX to AGS 2012, Progress report on the Europe 2020 strategy, 23.11.2011, COM(2011) 815 final - "... all Member States should report by end 2012 on outputs and results and the progress in achieving the objectives of cohesion policy and of its contribution to Europe 2020." Link:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2012\\_annex1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2012_annex1_en.pdf)

The legal provisions of Article 29 of the Regulation No 1083/2006 make it clear that the Member States shall define the content of these concise strategic reports (the proposed revision of Art 77 of Regulation EC 1083/2006 specify certain new reporting requirements see section 2.1.2).

The objective of this information note, in that context, is to encourage the National authorities to produce concise, strategic national reports that will report on the progress towards the objectives of the funds and the NSRFs and provide a useful strategic input to the preparation of the next round of programmes.

These reports provide the Member States with an important tool to make public and communicate their assessment of how their strategies, and the related EU co-financing, are being implemented.

## **2. CONTENT OF THE STRATEGIC REPORT 2009**

Under Article 29 Member States are required to address a range of issues in a concise report.

The Commission proposes that Member States retain the indicative structure for the national reports used in 2009 (Annex I).

The basic structure proposed in Annex I is derived from Article 29.3 where the Regulations states that the Member States shall define the content with a view to identifying the following:

- The socio-economic situation and trends;
- Achievements, challenges and future prospects in relation to implementation of the agreed strategy; and
- Examples of good practice.

Within that basic structure it is proposed that the strategic report provide information on the issues raised in Article 29.2. Following on the experience with the 2009 national reports the Commission recommends for the 2012 report that:

- The public version of the strategic report should include at least the written text of the report and good practices examples.
- The reports should ideally not be longer than 50 pages, including a 2 page executive summary or citizens summary. But not including "technical" annexes. This means that the reports should be concise and strategic while being based on solid analysis and avoiding excessive descriptive material.
- The **aggregate data** on programme indicators, financial spend (interim expenditure) and cumulative "allocations to selected operations" should be presented in the body of the text (i.e. in boxes and or graphs with a written commentary). The detailed tables could be presented in "technical annexes".

### **2.1. SOCIO ECONOMIC SITUATION AND TRENDS**

The NSRF's were called upon to present "*an analysis of development disparities, weaknesses and potential, taking into account trends in the European and world economy*".

The 2012 Strategic reports should focus on major socio-economic changes following the 2009 report. The section dealing with the socio-economic situation should, in particular, focus on those elements most relevant to the objectives of the programmes including changes in the business environment, the labour market and the social situation (in particular with regard to the promotion of equality between men and women and the situation of the most vulnerable groups and people), as well as addressing the development of socio economic disparities at the regional level.

Major developments in national and regional policies and any responses to the changing socio-economic conditions should also be summarised and reported.

The Commission's summary of the Strategic reports in 2013 will draw on the analysis of Member States but will focus on Eurostat data to ensure comparability and consistency in the analysis.

### **2.1.1. IMPACT OF AND RESPONSE TO THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS**

As part of the analysis of important changes in the socio-economic context, Member States should assess how the financial and economic crisis, starting in late 2008, has had an impact on their overall strategies and affected the implementation of programmes, and what responses they have made.

This specific section should, in particular address the following questions:

- What implications has the economic and financial crisis had for the context in which Operational Programmes are being run?
  - What cumulative effects has the crisis had on Programme targets and achievements?
  - How has the strategy of the programmes been adjusted and to what extent have the programmes been modified to reflect these changes in strategy?
  - To what extent have Member States made use of the special measures brought in by the European Commission as a result of the crisis (e.g. advance payments, increased liquidity, frontloading of expenditure)?
- Please also complete the questionnaire in Annex II and submit it with the national report.

The emphasis in this section is to address the response or adjustments made.

### **2.1.2. SUPPORT MEASURES FOR MEMBER STATES UNDER ARTICLE 77 (2)**

This section concerns only those Member States that can benefit from the temporary measure to increase the payments by an amount corresponding to ten percentage points above the co-financing rate, in accordance with Article 77(2).

The General Regulation modification (2011) concerning Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability provided for an increase of the payments by an amount corresponding to ten percentage points above the co-financing rate. In addition a provision contained in article 77(9) envisages that the Member States concerned shall provide the Commission with appropriate information on the use of the increased amounts and that this information shall be taken into account by the Commission in the preparation of the strategic reporting provided for by Article 30(1).

The information to be provided should include

- The justification of the necessity to make use of the measure with reference to the unavailability of national resources to provide the national counterpart for the programmes;
- Details on the specific use of the increased amounts resulting from the measure, with a view to establish how the increased amounts have contributed to promoting competitiveness, growth and jobs in the Member State concerned.
- The complementary measures taken by the Member States in order to concentrate the funds on competitiveness, growth and employment, including, where appropriate, a modification of the operational programmes.

## **2.2. LINKS TO NRPS AND EU OBJECTIVES**

The Strategic Report should include information about the link between the current National Reform Programmes and the implementation of cohesion policy programmes 2007-2013. In particular:

- Member States are invited to give an assessment of how cohesion policy programmes are addressing the targets, structural bottlenecks to growth and policy objectives of the current National Reform Programmes and how the funds underpin or contribute to the implementation of structural reforms. In particular, this would involve addressing the issue of the extent to which the adoption of the Europe 2020 Strategy in March 2010 - with the headline targets and flagship initiatives, as well as the new European semester process - re-oriented programme strategies and objectives.
- The contribution of the funds, in particular the ESF, to the implementation of the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion and Social Protection.

## **2.3. UPDATE ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN RELATION TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED STRATEGY**

### **2.3.1. EVIDENCE ON ACHIEVEMENTS**

The Strategic reports should provide evidence on achievements of Cohesion policy in the current programming period, using qualitative and quantitative data and the findings of evaluations and other analyses. Such evaluations may also relate to specific implementation issues and / or may provide useful insights into performance.

The Strategic reports should use three primary sources of quantified data – see below - which form part of the monitoring systems of the Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment programmes and European Territorial Cooperation programmes. These three sets of data are an essential source of information for the Member States to be able to report in a quantified way on the progress – both financial and physical (indicators on outputs and results) - towards the different objectives to be covered by the Strategic reports in the context of the objectives of the NSRFs. However, qualitative commentary analysing the quantitative data is essential to understand the progress made. In this regard findings from evaluations (see section 2.3.2 below) should be integrated into the analysis where necessary to explain the performance reported.

The Member States are invited to:

- Summarise and analyse the relevant quantified measures of progress in relation to key NSRF and/or programme indicators and progress in allocating EU financing to selected operations (see (c) below) in order to provide an up to date image of progress in the implementation of Cohesion Policy on the ground;
- Provide the Commission in parallel with more detail (i.e programme detail) on the physical indicators, financial progress and priority themes.

**a) REPORTING AGAINST CORE AND OTHER INDICATORS AND ANALYSIS**

The NSRFs and each programme have an agreed set of NSRF or programme indicators. Member States are invited to present relevant quantified data on the actual and expected contribution of the overall NSRF and OPs under the agreed indicators.

**The date for the extraction of the indicators data is proposed as 31 December 2011 (Those Member States that can extract later indicator data - as at 30 June 2012 - are encouraged to do so and clearly indicate the extraction date).**

Member States should provide aggregated information on progress towards each indicator target for the programming period. MS must state whether targets for any of the indicators have been changed during the programming period. This information could be summarised in a table in the main body of the Strategic report, as below.

Name of Indicator, including core indicators	Target value	Aggregate achievement as at 31/12/2011	Description of changes made to Target value

Whenever relevant and where possible, information should be aggregated at national level.

For the ERDF and Cohesion Fund the core indicators should be reported upon. In order to ensure complete and usable reporting against the ERDF / Cohesion Fund core indicators the data should be presented as set out in the structured format presented in Annex IV of this information note (three tables should be provided, where relevant, one each for the Convergence, the Regional Competitiveness and Employment and the European Territorial Co-Operation Objectives).

While the ESF does not have core indicators the Annex XXIII indicators (Implementing Regulation) should be reported upon (the Commission notes that targets may not have

been set for these ESF indicators). Whenever relevant and possible, information should be broken down by gender. A commentary on achievements against targets and key objectives is encouraged, in particular where indicators have significantly over/undershot their target values.

#### **b) PAYMENT PROGRESS**

The Member States' reports should comment on the aggregate information on financial implementation at OP level.

**In early October 2012 the Commission will provide each Member State with an extract from its database on the financial implementation of the OPs.**

#### **c) ALLOCATIONS TO OPERATIONS SELECTED**

This data, reported in the annual implementation reports on "allocation to operations selected" (projects selection data), provides an insight into the programme "project pipelines"<sup>6</sup>.

The Member States have already provided data on the *commitment of EU financing to operations selected* in the 2009 national strategic reports and (by programme) in the Annual Implementation Reports. The lack of a common date for the extraction of the 2009 data was commented upon critically by certain opinions from the EU institutions on the 2009/2010 exercise.

**In order to have available more reliable data it is proposed, that the 2012 national strategic reports use as a reference the aggregate data from the 2011 programme annual implementation reports (even if this data is 15 months old by the time of publication of the Commission report).** In other words no extra reporting requirement is proposed on "operations selected" in order to simplify data collection (in contrast to the 2009 exercise). (In any event the Commission estimates that by end 2011 the "project selection" rate will on average be between 65% and 75%).

All OPs should be made aware of the importance of the accuracy and completeness of the 2011 AIR data. Also they should avail of the opportunity to complete and correct the cumulative data in the 2011 reports. (During the 2010 AIR exercise a minority of OPs showed significant data shortcomings that compromised the aggregate data and led to delays in OP approval and in data analysis.)

Following the submission of the 2011 AIRs by 30 June 2012 the Commission will engage in quality checks and seek to correct with the programmes the clear inaccuracies. **The Commission will present the Member States with a harmonised analysis of the data from the AIR in early October 2012.**

Based on the spending allocated to selected operations by priority theme, and under the other dimensions, the Member States will:

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<sup>6</sup> COCOF information note 2009 – SFC Home page link: and FAQ: [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/sfc2007/sfc2007\\_help/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/sfc2007/sfc2007_help/index.htm)

- be in a position to report on the relative progress in meeting the earmarking targets set during the negotiations (in particular the EU-15) compared to the full range of priority themes;
- be able to draw conclusion on the trends in progress in key themes in the implementation of the OPs.

### **2.3.2. EVALUATIONS**

Each Member State should provide a list of evaluations (if necessary in a technical annex) carried out during the period to date, their date and title, summary of major findings and emphasise any actions taken to respond to the findings and recommendations of evaluations. Important findings could be referred to in the body of the report.

In view of the opinion of the European Parliament and Committee of the Regions on the 2009-2010 exercise the Member States are invited to highlight evaluations, assessments or important initiatives linked to the following subjects:

- The objective of equality between men and women and the implementation of the principle of gender mainstreaming;
- The application and / or respect of the partnership principle;
- Coordination and complementarity between the Structural and Cohesion Funds and between those funds and other forms of EU funding (i.e. EAFRD - Rural development, EFF – Fisheries Fund, Research Framework programme);
- The extent of co-operation and capacity building across different level of government (multi-level governance);
- The contribution of the programmes to the objective of territorial cohesion (value of ETC, contribution to urban development, to urban /rural linkages, evaluations or initiatives linked to specific territorial challenges). This could include national studies of how the objective of territorial cohesion has been respected, in particular how the territorial dimension has been taken into account.

The Commission will look in particular for these elements and endeavour to present a synthesis of the picture from the Member States reports.

### **2.4. IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION AND OF THE ETC PROGRAMMES**

The Commission proposed that ETC programmes be assessed from two points of view:

1. All Member States are invited to comment on the contribution of cooperation activities to the objectives of cohesion policy in their Member States.  
Where relevant, the Member States directly affected should assess the contribution or influence of the EU Baltic Sea Strategy and the EU Danube Strategy on their national strategies and programmes (contributions or adjustments made / planned).
2. The Member States hosting the Managing Authority (and Certifying Authority) of the relevant ETC programmes on their territory should collect and provide the aggregate data on core and other indicators (using Annex IV - the relevant core indicators for



cooperation programmes are indicated under numbers 42 – 56). This quantitative information should also be accompanied by a qualitative assessment on the contribution of cooperation activities by these Member States.

As for the Convergence and RCE objective programmes the Commission will provide harmonised project selection data and expenditure data in early October 2012 based on the 2011 AIR and the latest expenditure declarations.

## **2.5. POTENTIAL CHANGES IN THE PRIORITIES OF THE NSRF IN THE CONTEXT OF A CHANGED SOCIO ECONOMIC SITUATION**

There is no express legal obligation to update the NSRF in the light of strategic modifications to the OPs linked to a changed socio-economic situation.

OPs may be modified during the programming period. Such modifications will in any case need to be agreed with the Commission in the light of the strategy defined in the NSRF and the changes that have occurred since its approval (Art 33 of Regulation 1083/2006). Therefore, during the life-time of the programmes, there could be changes in the priorities outlined in the NSRF brought about by changes in the socio-economic situation, the labour market and the wider business climate.

The impact of the global economic crisis which began in 2008 will clearly have had implications for the priorities of the NSRFs. The Strategic reports provide an opportunity to provide high level, political conclusions on topics such as:

- How the strategies set out in the NSRF and OPs are contributing to economic development and address particular economic difficulties (i.e. counterbalance the social and economic implications of the crisis).
- Highlighting changes to the OPs that have already been made that have implicitly changed the priorities of the NSRF (e.g. in the case of ESF OPs has there been more focus on activation measures or generally in relation to growth enhancing measures).
- Highlighting important areas where reprogramming is potentially foreseen still in this period.
- To identify what has worked well (even in the light of socio economic situation, changes or tendencies) and less well during the implementation of the current programmes.

## **2.6. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

This section – which could be annexed to the main report - should present examples of good practice from projects, measures or policies co-financed by the Structural and Cohesion Funds from the 2007-2013 programmes. At this stage in the period the good practices examples should exclusively be selected from operations that have already been completed (or are ongoing) and show outputs and early results, avoiding purely prospective projects.

In a departure from the 2009 information note, the Commission proposes that each Member State present at least one good practice example linked to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy (even if there is a strong link to the key pillars of the 2006 Community Strategic Guidelines):

- Smart Growth  
(strong link to 2006 CSG theme "Improving knowledge and innovation for growth")
- Sustainable Growth  
(strong link to 2006 CSG theme "Making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work")
- Inclusive Growth  
(strong link to 2006 CSG theme "More and better jobs")
- The territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy.

The Commission invites the selection of examples which demonstrate how funding from Cohesion Policy operations (or sub-programmes) are contributing to Europe 2020 headline targets or identified common objectives. The description should include information on expected and achieved outputs and results.

In relation to the good examples under the fourth pillar, the objective would be to highlight a good practice that addresses integrated urban development, rural development or other geographic or territorial circumstances or that highlights an important contribution made by an ETC project or programme.

If a Member State wishes to propose additional projects the Commission proposes that they give a good practice example illustrating:

- The promotion of gender equality through gender mainstreaming or a specific targeted action;
- The prevention of discrimination of marginalised groups or the promotion of accessibility for disabled persons.

In Annex III an indicative template is presented which, if followed, would allow the Commission to make the good practice examples available more widely to all interested regional and national authorities, with a view to increasing the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy throughout the Union.

### **3. PREPARATION, COMMUNICATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC REPORTS**

Each Member State is asked to nominate a contact point in order that the Commission can efficiently communicate the material mentioned in the text above.

**Please send the contact details of your nominee to**  
[\*\*REGIO-HEAD-OF-UNIT-D2@ec.europa.eu\*\*](mailto:REGIO-HEAD-OF-UNIT-D2@ec.europa.eu)  
**by 31 January 2012.**

All Member States are encouraged to publish the National strategic report - along with a citizens summary or synthesis - and to communicate on the implementation of the agreed strategies through this report and through other means.

The body of the reports (word document, etc) should be presented electronically through SFC, by not later than end-December 2012. It should be accompanied by relevant supporting documents.

**ANNEX I**  
**INDICATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGIC REPORT**

<b>A. The socio-economic situation and trends</b>	
1. Changes in the socio-economic situation (including the labour market and business environment) in particular in so far as the changes are relevant for the agreed objectives and strategies of the OPs.	Art 29.3
2. Developments and trends in socio-economic and territorial disparities, including inter regional disparities below national level.	Art 29.2
<b>B. Achievements and future prospects</b>	
3. Contribution to the objectives of the NSRF, drawing on quantified data on output and result indicators - achieved or expected – based on the agreed programmes specific indicators.	Art 29.2
4. Results of any evaluations undertaken of cohesion policy programmes and any insights they give to analyse progress towards achieving the objectives of the policy.  To include evaluations on qualitative elements such as gender mainstreaming.	Art 29.2
5. Information at national level on expenditure declared by OP and progress in committing planned allocations to selected operations. The information on commitments to selected operation by priority theme (by Objective - Convergence and RCE) will allow an assessment of progress in contributing to the Lisbon integrated guidelines by examining commitments to the earmarked priority themes.	Art 29.2
6. Realised or expected contribution to the tasks of the Funds as set out in Article 3 of the General Regulation and to the priorities detailed in the Community Strategic Guidelines, in particular to the objectives of the strategy as outlined in the National Strategic Reference Framework.	Art 29.2
7. Contribution of the ESF to the implementation of guidelines and recommendations under the European Employment Strategy (as set out in Article 2.1 of Regulation No. 1081/2006)	Art 29.2
8. Contribution of the ESF to the relevant objectives and targets of the National Strategy Reports on Social Protection and Social Inclusion and to other community priorities and objectives in the field of education and training.	Art 29.2
9. Contribution expected or realised to other priorities of the National Reform Programmes under the EUROPE 2020 strategy.	Art 29.2
10. Realised or expected contribution of European Territorial Cooperation to the tasks of the Funds as set out in Article 3.2(c) of	Art 29.2

the General Regulation.	
<b>C. Progress and challenges in implementation of the agreed priorities and strategy</b>	
11. Summary of the main measures taken, difficulties overcome to accelerate implementation of the 2007-2013 programmes on the ground (e.g. preparation of project pipeline and elaboration of major projects, reprioritisation, reprogramming).	Art 29.3
12. Major developments in relevant national and regional policies (relevant public service reforms, development in public expenditure plans, links to structural reforms and country specific recommendations, etc.)	
13. Contribution of Cohesion Policy OPs to the response to European Economic Recovery Plan. To assist in a consistent presentation to the proposals and recommendations of the Cohesion policy related measures see the list of questions in Annex II.	
14. Contribution of Cohesion Policy OPs to the recovery of Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability	Art. 77(9)
<b>D. Examples of good practice</b>	
15. See Section 2.6 of this note and Annex III for a template.	Art 29.3
<b>E. Conclusions</b>	
16. Overall conclusions on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the anticipated socio-economic trends,</li> <li>b. the real and expected contribution of Cohesion policy</li> <li>c. the continuing relevance of the NSRF / OP strategies and</li> <li>d. coherence of and synergies between agreed priorities.</li> <li>e. Lessons drawn on what works well and bottlenecks that will be addressed in preparation for post-2013</li> </ul>	

**ANNEX II**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE**  
**EUROPEAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN AND**  
**ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL CRISIS**

The following indicative set of questions is presented to help with the consistent presentation of the different national responses to the economic downturn and the follow-up to the European Economic Recovery Plan measures relating to Cohesion Policy – as set out in Commission Communication COM(2008) 876 "Investing in the real economy".

The questions relate to modified provisions under Cohesion Policy (**highlighted in bold**) and other recommendations linked to existing initiatives and flexibilities under existing programmes or related policy areas.

A summary of the main elements arising under the recovery package can be incorporated in Section B of the indicative structure in Annex I of this document. The Member States are invited to provide detailed answers to the questions in this annex, where relevant / possible, separately to the Commission to allow reporting on the "recovery package" and subsequent modifications of the regulations.

1. Financing:

- a. Explain the national policy on the use of advances under Cohesion Policy (2007-2009) to pre-finance operations on the ground? To public authorities? To enterprises or other economic operators? What (estimated) volume of the prefinancing made available was paid out to beneficiaries as advances?
- b. Is expenditure incurred on major projects being declared while submissions to the Commission are pending? What (estimated) volume of financing has been involved?
- c. Are advances under state aid schemes to SMEs paid and declared to the Commission for reimbursement? What (estimated) volume of financing has been involved?
- d. Is frontloading of planned investment over the Period 2007-2013 being implemented? Please estimate the impact.
- e. Is the use of flexibility in the existing programmes to modulate the rate of the EU contribution to projects (up to 100% of the eligible costs) being used? Please estimate the impact.

2. Simplification of categories of eligible expenditure:

Are your authorities using or planning to use

- a. Indirect costs declared on a flat-rate basis?
- b. Flat-rate costs calculated by application of standard scales of unit cost?
- c. Lump sums to cover all or part of the costs of an operation?  
If use has been made of these categories of expenditure, please provide:
  - Information on types of operations where the use of these categories of expenditure is made.
  - Information on the (estimated) amount paid out by the beneficiaries and included in payment claims sent to the managing authority;

3. Enlarging or adjusting the priorities of OPs
  - a. What measures under the four priority areas outlined in the Communication (people, business, infrastructure and energy; research and innovation) are being accelerated or adjusted? Are other adjustments necessary to the initially planned measures in order to meet new or different needs? What is the likely impact of these actions? Higher numbers of beneficiaries than anticipated? New needs identified?  
In particular,
    - b. Are OPs being amended to open the scope of actions to energy efficiency and renewable energies in housing? If yes, what amount has been (will be) allocated to these measures? What kinds of operations are concerned?
    - c. Are JEREMIE-type access to finance instruments to benefit SMEs being accelerated or expanded? What is the expected total financial volume? And the EU co-financing?
    - d. Have capacity building priorities to reinforce within public authorities their ability to plan, implement, monitor and control OPs been modified or reinforced?
4. Simplifying the national / regional implementation mechanisms
  - a. What national measures have been taken to accelerate the implementation of OPs? Clarifying procedures? Revised guidance? Revised national legislation? Simplified procedures?
  - b. Was or is it necessary to simplify provisions in the adopted programmes through formal modification to speed up delivery mechanisms?
5. Use of possibilities under the Temporary state aid framework:  
Was Cohesion Policy funding used to finance
  - a. Schemes implementing the “Compatible limited amount of aid” up to €500 000,?
  - b. State guarantees for loans at a reduced premium?
  - c. Loans interest subsidies, in particular for the production of green products (meeting environmental protection standards early or going beyond such standards)?In each case please estimate the volume of EU financial support.
6. Public Procurement  
Within Operational Programmes, is use being made of accelerated public procurement procedures, reducing the overall time limit of the procedure from 87 days to 30 days?

**ANNEX III**  
**INDICATIVE TEMPLATE FOR EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Country:	
Region:	
Operation, scheme, policy:	Title
Duration:	(Historic or planned)
Objective:	Convergence/ Competitiveness / ETC
Funding:	Total Cost :           €xxx EU contribution :    €xxx National                €xxx Regional               €xxx Private                 €xxx
Contact :	Name: Organisation: Address: Email: Internet:
Operation / policy description:	Overall objectives – description of activities – beneficiaries – expected impact (or actual results)
Strategic Context:	Background information – link to challenge being addressed by operation / policy
Operation / policy design/ implementation:	Design – management - monitoring – innovation or good practice elements

**ANNEX IV: TEMPLATE FOR REPORTING ON CORE INDICATORS  
FOR THE ERDF AND COHESION FUND  
IN NATIONAL STRATEGIC REPORTS 2012  
(SEE ATTACHED EXCEL SHEET)**

**DOs AND DON'Ts**

*Managing Authorities have been reporting against core indicators since 2010, in line with Working Document No. 7. Some errors in inputting data persist, so here we highlight the main issues for Member States to note.*

*Reporting should follow the guidance in Working Document 7, which can be found at:*

*[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/working/wd7\\_indicators\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/working/wd7_indicators_en.pdf)*

- Do report a value for each Core Indicator which was used.
- Do give cumulative figures for progress against targets for each Core indicator.
- Do take the opportunity to report values for what is aimed to be achieved by selected projects *as well as* actual values achieved, *if* your system gathers these data, but be clear which is reported.
- Do check the measurement units in which the Core Indicator is reported.
- Do check figures for Core Indicators which are unexpectedly high or low.
- Do set baselines at zero so that figures can be aggregated to the EU level.
- Do explain the reasons behind over or under performance of Core Indicators
- Provide separate aggregated national tables (where relevant) for the Convergence Objective, the Regional competitiveness and Employment Objective and the European Territorial Co-Operation Objective.
- Don't double count indicators, for example at priority and at operational Programme level, or at national level where Programmes may overlap.

**The cut-off date for reporting should be 31 December 2011 unless a later extraction (i.e. 30/6/2012) is feasible for specific Member States.**