

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EuropeAid Co-operation Office

EuropeAid


**Results-Oriented Monitoring of EC
External Assistance**

**Review of the Ex-Post Results Oriented
Monitoring (ROM) Methodology
for EuropeAid**

Final July 2009

ROM Coordination :
EuropeAid/E5



Project Title	Review of the Ex-Post Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) Methodology for EuropeAid
Reference	EuropeAid EVA / 159 - 987
Contract Supervisor	Unit E5: Agnes Hano
Contractor	 in association with ATOS Origin, Development Associates, QUEST Consult, South Research
Date of report	30 th June 2009
Report authors	Nayra Bello O'Shanahan, Maria Navarro

This document has been validated by the European Commission.
However, the authors take full responsibility of any error or misinterpretation.

PARTICIP GmbH
Merzhauser Str. 168
D-79100 Freiburg
Germany

Phone: +49-761-790740
Fax: +49-761-7907490
E-mail: particip@particip.de
<http://www.particip.de>

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACP	Africa Caribbean Pacific
AIDCO	EuropeAid Co-Operation Office
BCS	Background Conclusion Sheets
CA	Central Asia
CMTP	Centrally Managed Thematic Projects
CRIS	Common Relex Information System
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EDF	European Development Fund
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
Ex-Post-ROM	Ex-Post Results-Oriented Monitoring
EU	European Union
GBS	General Budget Support
LA	Latin America
MED	Mediterranean Region
MR	Monitoring Report
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PIA	Project Implementation Arrangements
PIU	Project Implementation Units
PMU	Project Management Units
ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring
SPSP	Sector Policy Support Programme
TA	Technical Assistance
TACIS	Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TC	Technical Cooperation
WB	Workbooks

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

In the context of international efforts to improve aid effectiveness, the European Union (EU) has approved a *European Consensus on Development* in 2006. Moreover, the European Commission (EC) is committed to the *Paris Declaration* in its bid to deliver more coordinated aid. This implies capacity building assistance through coordinated programmes; channelling 50% of EU assistance through budget or sector wide approaches; avoiding the set up of new project implementation units (PIU) and reducing the number of uncoordinated missions. For this reason, the EC is developing a work programme on accelerating aid effectiveness implemented by EuropeAid in coordination with Directorate General (DG) Development and DG External Relations.

One of the key elements that fosters aid effectiveness is the quality of interventions. In this sense, EuropeAid, through its “quality of operations” Directorate E, and specifically E5, responsible for quality monitoring systems and methodologies, is contributing to improve the effectiveness of development interventions. Its main follow-up system, the Results Based Monitoring (ROM) has recently been updated to respond to these demands. It has to be highlighted that a lessons learned perspective has been introduced in the review of the ROM system and its tools for on-going interventions. This integration is proof of an incipient learning approach within the Commission that is basic for improving the quality of development interventions.

As part of the ROM system, the Ex-Post ROM concentrates on the real impact and sustainability of development measures after external aid has been concluded. It therefore has the potential to draw lessons learned that may help to improve the quality of the design of operations. It will be particularly useful for EuropeAid staff and EC Delegations, in particular the Quality Support Groups (QSG), and other potential users in Directorate E, contributing to the aid effectiveness agenda of the Commission.

The testing phase (2007-2008) of the existing ROM methodology for the Ex-Post measurement of project performance has concluded. In addition to the monitoring tools, which include the Monitoring Report (MR) and the Background Conclusion Sheet (BCS) for Ex-Post ROM, an Ex-Post ROM guide and a reader on how to apply the BCS have been elaborated. Besides, an analysis of the Ex-Post ROM results (Particip et al.: 2007), stressed the importance of lessons learned and the need for them to be accessible, which together constitute the added value of the Ex-Post perspective. An ongoing study about explanatory causes for well or poor performing projects (del Bas/Eguiguren: 2009) that had ex-post ROM reports also supports the need to adapt the Ex-Post methodology to improve the quality of development interventions.

Objectives and methodological approach

The overall objective of the Ex-Post methodology review is to improve the accessibility of lessons learned and best practices from Ex-Post ROM for EuropeAid, in particular for Directorate E, which is responsible, as mentioned above, for the quality of

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operations. It is therefore expected to update the methodology itself and its tools (specific objective), i.e. the Ex-Post-BCS, the MR, the reader and the Ex-Post guidelines, as well as to propose a template to synthesize Ex-Post aggregate information. The expected results include:

1. The review of the Ex-Post methodology, with emphasis on main beneficiaries; impact and sustainability; and lessons learned;
2. The update of Ex-Post ROM tools, e.g. the BCS template, the reader and the Ex-Post guidelines;
3. The proposal of a new tool (template) for presenting Ex-Post aggregate information; and
4. The formulation of general recommendations for an improved use of the Ex-Post methodology and the lessons learned which are being drawn.

The starting point for this review are the results of two key studies related to the Ex-Post ROM. “The Ex-Post ROM Experimental Testing Phase-Assessment of Results”, elaborated by Particip et al. (2007) and supervised by the evaluation unit of the EC, analysed in depth: i) the Ex-Post results, comparing them to the on-going ROM results; and ii) the use of the Ex-Post methodology.

The second, more recent, study on the “Overall characteristics and explanatory causes behind project effectiveness and impact in the EC development portfolio” (del Bas/Eguiguren: 2009), based on a sample of 171 projects with Ex-Post monitoring reports (and 301 monitoring reports), analysed the scope and uses of ROM, including Ex-Post.

Consequently, some methodological decisions have been made. This review does not include any quantitative comparative analysis between Ex-Post monitored projects and on-going ones because the above-mentioned study presented a first attempt, and at this point, it would not aggregate any added value for the current assignment. The following table summarizes the main outputs for the analysis in relation to the activities done and methods/tools used.

OUTPUT	ACTIVITIES	METHODS AND TOOLS
ASSESSMENT OF THE TESTING PHASE OF THE EX-POST METHODOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative review of Ex-Post ROM in terms of volume and coverage, geographic distribution and thematic priorities; Estimation of the relation between Ex-Post ROM and the Ex-Post eligible universe. Qualitative review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data base analysis: ROM CRIS (Online Extraction April 2009); Review of Annual Reports elaborated by ROM Contractors in 2007, 2008; Study review: Particip <i>et. al</i> 2007; del Bas/Eguiguren: 2009.
ANALYSIS OF LESSONS LEARNED TYPOLOGY OF Ex-Post MR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative analysis of project sample (53 Ex-Post monitoring reports (=11% of 461 monitoring reports) with focus on lessons learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data base and MR qualitative analysis.
ASSESSMENT OF EX-POST ROM USE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of assessment study (Particip <i>et. al</i>: 2007). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation review;
TOOLS UPDATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative analysis between new BCS/MR for on-going ROM and “old” Ex-Post BCS/MR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured personal and phone interviews (Annex 1 and 2).

II. ASSESSING THE TESTING PHASE OF EP-ROM

Coverage of Ex-Post ROM

Quantitative coverage

The testing phase of Ex-Post ROM was implemented during 2007 and 2008. This chapter aims to classify, in quantitative and qualitative terms, the typology of Ex-Post projects that have been in these two years in order to underline the potential for drawing lessons learned.

This review, taking the CRIS ROM database (CRIS ROM April 2009) as a starting point, has attempted to calculate in an approximate way how many **Ex-Post projects of the eligible universe** have actually been monitored. Methodologically, the data selection for the **Ex-Post eligible universe** included the following criteria:

1. **Contract level:** The calculation contemplates only the contract, rather than the decision level.
2. **Closure date:** Projects with closure date between 1 and 2 years before Ex-Post ROM took place, which means projects closed in 2005 and 2006 for the calculation of 2007 eligible Ex-Post projects; and projects closed in 2006 and 2007 for the 2008 universe.

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3. **Budget:** All projects with a budget of 1 million euros or more are included, together with a 10% sample of smaller projects.

The **projects monitored** in 2007 and 2008 (testing phase) are those referred to in the regional workbooks. The relation of both results in the percentage of Ex-Post monitored projects according to the eligible universe.

This approach has some constraints, because of data base limitations. Additionally, in 2008 the ROM process has started late. The results are therefore to be analysed with caution. Western Balkan and centrally-managed operations were not taken into account because of the low representativeness of Ex-Post ROM in both regions. Besides, the CRIS ROM data base does not permit to distinguish if the project was evaluated or not. Figure 1 shows the main data for 2007 and 2008 for the five regions: Africa, Asia, Caribbean/Pacific, Latin America and ENPI.

FIGURE 1. ESTIMATION OF EX-POST ROM (EX-POST MONITORED PROJECTS AS A % OF THE EX-POST POTENTIAL UNIVERSE). 2007-2008.

Ex-Post eligible universe							
	Africa	Asia/ Asia-CA	Caribbean/ Pacific	Latin America	ENPI TOTAL	TACIS/ ENPI East	MED/ ENPI South
2007	534	103	83	62	210	97	113
2008	665	162	103	77	307	171	136
N° of Ex-Post monitored projects							
2007	41	18	8	37	94	50	44
2008	11	46	11	29	39	30	9
Coverage							
2007	8%	17%	10%	60%	45%	52%	39%
2008	2%	28%	11%	38%	13%	18%	7%
Average 2007	28%						
Average 2008	18%						

Source: CRIS ROM online extraction April 2009 and Regional Workbooks 2007 and 2008.

While in 2007, Latin America and the TACIS region achieved significant coverage of 60% and 45%, respectively, in 2008, Latin America (38%) and Asia (28%) were once again the regions with the highest percentages. Africa shows the lowest coverage of Ex-Post monitored projects with 8% (2007) and 2% (2008). Nevertheless, the Ex-Post eligible universe of Africa is the largest one, considerably ahead of other regions; by contrast, Latin America shows the lowest eligible universe.

The high level of heterogeneity makes it difficult to formulate a concrete percentage. The global average stood at 28% in 2007 and 18% in 2008. If each region were to increase monitored projects by an additional 10% this year, the global average would reach almost 30% (representing 12% for Africa, 38%, for Asia, 21% for Caribbean/Pacific, 48% for Latin America and 23% for ENPI). If an increase by 20% were feasible, the global average would reach 38%, which demonstrates a huge learning potential.

However, the quantitative importance of Ex-Post should be considered together with a qualitative analysis and strategic vision that would enable learning to be aggregate,

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rather than project-based. It is particularly important for the use of such lessons learned to be promoted and ensured, in order to make use of possible ROM budget increases. Global planning of Ex-Post would enable it to increase appropriately, rather than requiring identical increases in each region. But once again, this can only be done if some learning goals are defined at the beginning of the year, e.g. Ex-Post ROM of agriculture projects, of social cohesion programmes, of NGO social initiatives, etc.

Furthermore, it may be of interest to obtain a picture of **ROM coverage** and the relation of **Ex-Post ROM to on-going ROM**. Based on the regional Annual Reports 2007 and 2008, Table 1 shows the monitored operations (on-going ROM) and the linked ROM coverage as percentage of the overall portfolio. The relationship between Ex-Post ROM and the on-going ROM underlines the significance of Ex-Post in the regional ROM portfolio and helps to dimension it. On average, in 2007 Ex-Post monitored projects constituted 12% of the overall ROM projects and in 2008, 14%.

The ROM coverage in relation to the overall portfolio simply gives information about the importance of ROM in the region. It can be used indirectly to judge the importance of Ex-Post ROM as well.

TABLE 1. GLOBAL OVERVIEW ROM COVERAGE VS. EX-POST PROJECTS

REGION	YEAR	ROM COVERAGE		EX-POST ROM IN RELATION TO ON-GOING ROM	
		No OF PROJECTS MONITORED (ONGOING)	ROM COVERAGE AS% OF OVERALL EC GLOBAL PORTFOLIO	No OF EX-POST PROJECTS	EX-POST PROJECTS AS % MONITORED OPERATIONS
Africa*	2007	463	50%	41	9%
Africa	2008	138	18%	11	8%
Asia**	2007	237	NA	19	8%
Asia/Central Asia	2008	206	11%	46	22%
Caribbean/Pacific***	2007	131	50%	8	6%
	2008	66	NA	9	14%
ENPI****	2007	492	52%	84	17%
	2008	377	34%	39	10%
Latin America	2007	184	37%	38	21%
	2008	173	19%	29	17%
Average 2007					12%
Average 2008					14%

Source: Annual Reports 2007/2008. Notes: *The number of total monitored projects includes number of EDF projects, projects of thematic budget lines and small projects (below 1 M €) for Africa and South Africa (5 cross regional, not included). **Number of monitored projects reflect indicator n° of MR produced (excluding SPSP). ***The data include Caribbean and Pacific. ****The data include TACIS, MED region (2007), ENPI East and ENPI South (2008).

Geographical distribution

Ex-Post ROM was well distributed among the different regions depending on each portfolio (Figure 2 and 3). While in 2007, the TACIS region represented 25% of the Ex-Post reports, followed by MED region, Ex-Post ROM in Pacific/Caribbean achieved 4%

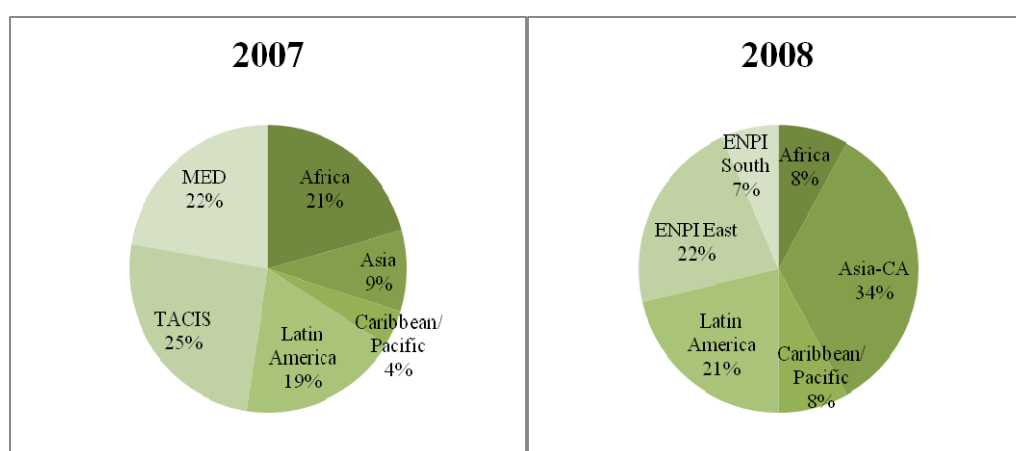
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of the total Ex-Post. In 2008, Asia (34%) and ENPI East (22%) constituted most of the Ex-Post reports. Asia has integrated Central Asia and ENPI East some of the former TACIS countries.

In 2008, ENPI South, Africa and Caribbean/Pacific presented the lowest numbers of Ex-Post reports. This is understandable in the Caribbean/Pacific region, given the reduced size of its portfolio, but Africa's large portfolio should obviously include more Ex-Post ROMs. Nevertheless, the whole ROM has begun significantly behind schedule. For this reason, generalisations cannot be made. The most important element to be emphasised is the geographical richness that Ex-Post can generate facilitating global comparisons of learning with similar interventions.

FIGURE 2 AND FIGURE 3. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF EX-POST



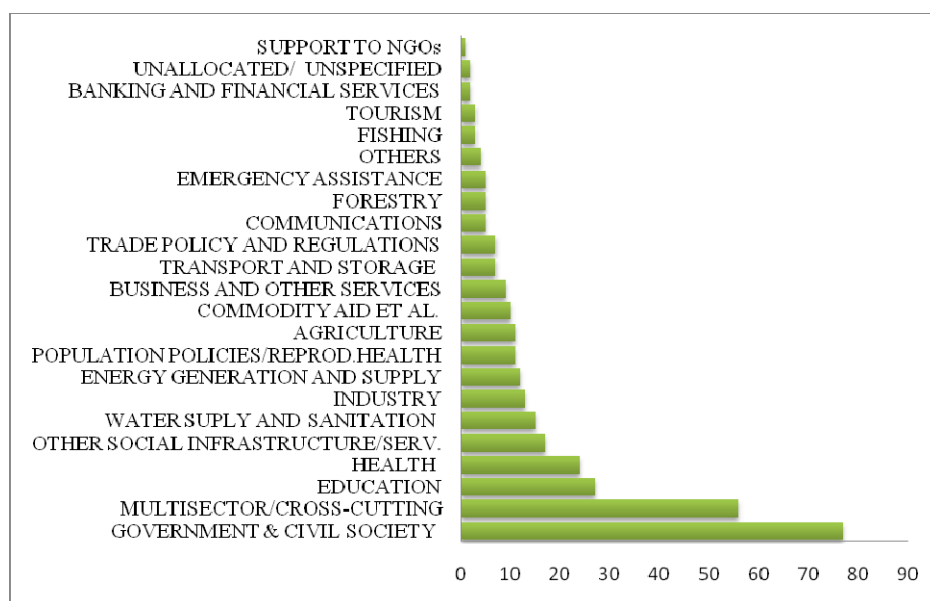
Source: Annual Reports 2007/2008.

Thematic distribution

In the thematic dimension, in 2007 and 2008, Ex-Post ROM has covered all the possible thematic areas, measured by the sector categorisation of CRS-codes. The importance of aggregation on a geographic level should be highlighted because of the high dispersion of areas/topics. If a regional or global approach is used, there is a critical mass of projects to aggregate sector specific/thematic lessons.

Figure 4 shows the overall picture of the thematic distribution, underlining the government and civil society (24%), multisector-cross cutting (17%), education (8%) and health (7%) areas as those sectors where most of Ex-Post reports are found. However it has to be remembered that these are global categories. The Annex 3 shows a thematic distribution with a regional focus.

FIGURE 4. THEMATIC DISTRIBUTION OF EX-POST ROM. 2007-2008. CRS CODE. (IN NUMBER OF PROJECTS)



Source: CRIS ROM. Online extraction March 2009.

For instance, in the area of government and civil society, Ex-Post projects fall mainly into the categories of human rights, economic and development policy, and democratic participation and civil society. As for the multisector/cross cutting area, most of the initiatives were Ex-Post monitored in rural development, environmental policy and administrative management, bio-diversity and multisector aid.

Although there is a high level of thematic dispersion, and almost 50% of the 27 sector categories only present 5 or fewer Ex-Post reports in different regions, the existing Ex-Post reports would enable aggregate (thematic) learning outputs to be generated in some selected areas. Nevertheless, the format of the Ex-Post reports does not yet present a unified structure to facilitate such analysis. Besides, the perspective still continues to focus on comparing Ex-Post to on-going ROM (in quantitative terms), rather than emphasizing a learning (more qualitative) perspective.

Budget, budget line and implementing modalities

Most of the Ex-Post monitored projects have a budget of one million Euros or more (73%), while in 27% of the cases, the budget is lower (CRIS ROM: 2009, projects monitored in 2007 and 2008). This is consistent with the selection criteria of Ex-Post ROM that require projects with budgets of one million and more, and a 10% sample of smaller projects. In this sense, the vast majority of the Ex-Post monitored projects are part of the financial and technical cooperation and thematic lines, but are not NGO co-financed (Source: Sample of EP). In terms of the project authorities, the vast majority are also public institutions of the partner countries. The exact number at an aggregate level for budget line and project authority cannot be defined, because of the data base limitations. Both the budget line and the project authorities could be interesting as variables in the drawing of lessons learned linked to implementation modalities.

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Nevertheless, recently introduced requirements in monitoring reports for project and implementing partner typology will help to improve categorization quality for learning purposes.

Uses of Ex-Post ROM

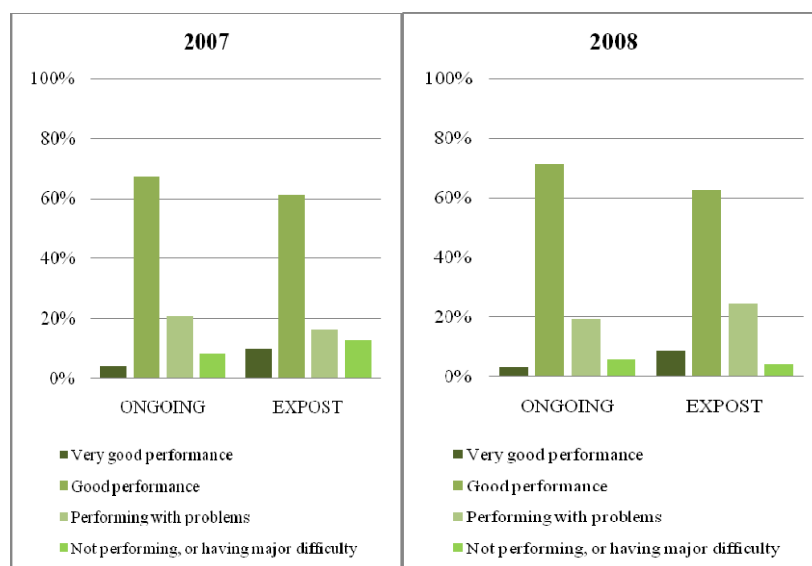
The assessment of the Ex-Post experimental testing phase, coordinated by Particip (Particip at al.: 2007) confirmed the main findings as to uses of Ex-Post ROM. Although in theory, the majority of stakeholders agree with its potential use, in practice, EC-Delegations are basically those that are most familiar with the tool.

Nevertheless, **EC Delegations** are not making sufficient use of it. The main use, although it is not generalised, seems to be the design of new interventions in the same area and/or region or the assessment of implementing partners, e.g. in new calls for proposals. The main obstacles for a more extended use are: i) the timing of Ex-Post missions (which are not synchronized or articulated to strategic programming); ii) the depth of reports (EC Delegations use evaluations to formulate lessons learned); and iii) the relevance of recommendations (most Ex-Post reports confirmed known results or formulated non-relevant recommendations in terms of the time at which the mission was carried out). EC Delegations are principally interested in having access to better aggregated lessons learned that would be appropriate in terms of time for designing similar projects.

On the other hand, **EC Headquarters**, especially **Directorate E**, makes partial use of Ex-Post ROM. The Quality Support Groups (QSG), the key structure in the design of new interventions, do not use Ex-Post ROM in the context of their quality support tasks, i.e. in the identification and formulation of new projects. On the one hand, there is a need to promote this tool among these actors. On the other hand, Ex-Post ROM is not considered to be a source for lessons learned, but rather a management tool with few differences from on-going ROM. In addition to this, access to Ex-Post reports is a key mentioned obstacle, which is also linked to a low knowledge of CRIS-ROM possibilities.

Since the beginning of ROM, the emphasis has been put on quantitative analysis. Nevertheless, in the case of Ex-Post ROM, the assessment of the experimental phase stressed the weak relationship between on-going and ex-post scores, especially for impact and sustainability. Therefore, it has shown the volatile character of the scores, which makes comparative analysis difficult. The study also emphasized the increase in frequency of “a” and “d” ratings in the Ex-Post reports for the five criteria, responding also to the above-mentioned comparison problems. Figure 5 and 6 confirmed the tendency of the previous year (with the sole exception of “d” in 2008). Nevertheless, the Ex-Post ROM decreased globally by 30% because of the delays in the ROM contracts. 2008 data should be analyzed with caution.

FIGURE 5 AND FIGURE 6. FREQUENCY OF SCORES IN ON-GOING AND EX-POST ROM 2007-2008.



Source: Regional workbooks. 2007-2008.

Annual reports also included a quantitative comparison with scores of the on-going sample. Qualitative analysis was integrated in a very heterogeneous way, depending on the region, which makes it very difficult to aggregate lessons. Some reports focus on project performance; some underscore individual project experiences or individual lessons within a project; others are related to the Ex-post methodology itself and are principally aimed at EC Headquarters. Ex-Post ROM should be used for qualitative analysis in order to draw lessons learned in a more systematic and aggregate way. One recent effort in this direction is presented by the study “Explanatory causes behind project effectiveness and impact in the EC development portfolio”, promoted by E5 (del Bas/Eguiguren, 2009). Because projects with Ex-Post monitoring reports (MR) permit overall conclusions about impact and sustainability, the selected sample required as criterion an Ex-Post MR. Summing up some of the main findings, the project concluded that the following issues were necessary for successful project performance: i) Solid analysis state/design phase; ii) relevance at two levels, strategic (policy level) and level of target groups; iii) realistic project formulation; iv) demand-driven service provision; v) adequate risk management arrangements and internal results oriented M&E systems; vi) good teams (with proactive management) and implementing partners with technical/organisational capacity; as well as vi) strong adaptation capacity and communication among partners.

Directorate E is promoting the diffusion of such results to integrate them in the EC operations cycle. This potential use has not yet been exploited to improve the quality of operations but represents a high added value.

Other potential users, the **geographical directorates** are familiar with the tool, but think of it as a management instrument that can generate comparisons with on-going results as well as serving as a mechanism to get rapid feedback on a project picture.

They underline the fact that the EC Delegations are its main users. Although EC Delegations stressed the difference and complementarities of Ex-Post ROM and evaluations, some of the stakeholders here raised the potential use of Ex-Post ROM as an alternative to evaluations. Nevertheless, this is not a generalised opinion at this stage.

Because the **evaluation unit** was directly involved in the design of the ROM system, they are familiar with the ROM tools. Its work, more focussed on country or instrument evaluations with a long term perspective, is complementary to ROM, which they use to obtain an overall picture of the EC portfolio in a specific country. They understand that a high coverage of Ex-Post ROM would reduce evaluation needs, while fulfilling the following basic criteria: i) high quality of reports; and ii) access to aggregated information.

It can be concluded that Ex-Post ROM has been used until now in a limited way. Although it is coherent to a certain extent with the testing phase, the use of this tool can be enhanced in terms of reaching key users and for focussing purposes. It seems to be confirmed that EC Delegations are main users of Ex-Post ROM. Although there is no consensus as such as to use of Ex-Post ROM, most of the resource persons agreed on the value of lessons learned for better design of new interventions as main purpose. In this sense, the use of Ex-Post ROM as a learning instrument could be strengthened.

Besides, Ex-Post ROM can be used as a vehicle to mainstream a learning approach within EC supported development interventions. It would help to improve their quality and would therefore contribute to making external aid more effective. For this reason, Ex-Post ROM has to generate usable lessons and make them accessible for key stakeholders. Until now, the analysis of external use of Ex-Post ROM has not been included in previous assessments. Nevertheless, partner governments, implementing institutions, NGOs, member states and/or other donors could be potential users of lessons learned, if they have access to Ex-Post ROM results or aggregate lessons learned.

III. RATIONALE OF EX-POST ROM: MAINSTREAMING A LEARNING APPROACH?

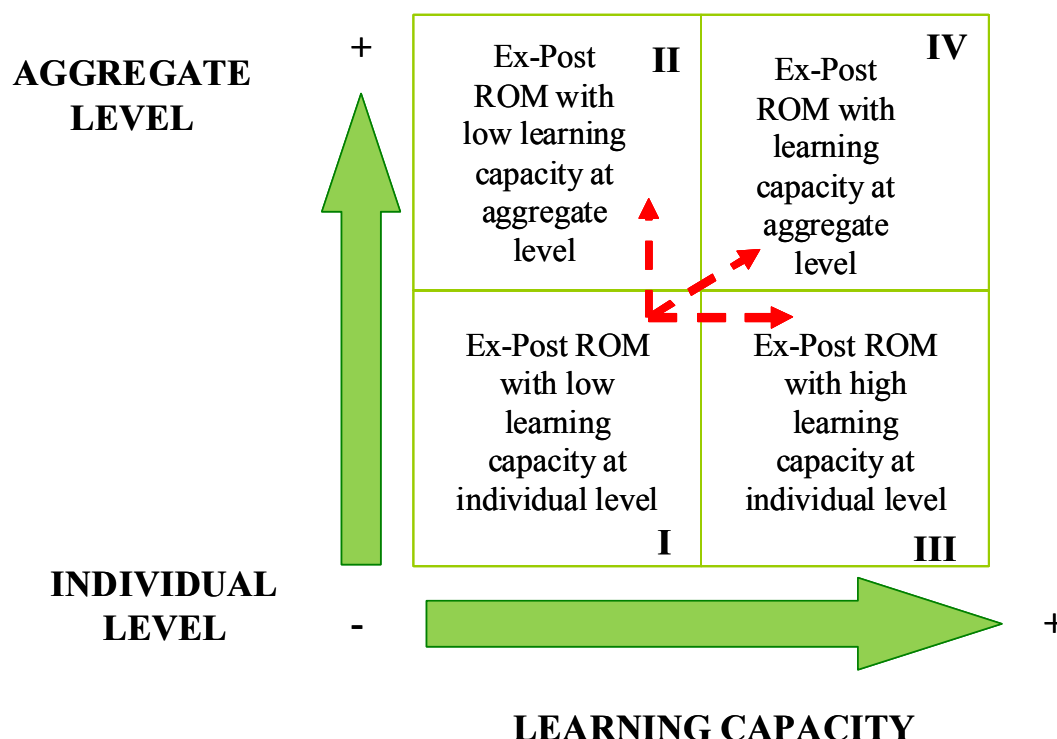
Ex-Post ROM challenges

This review of the Ex-Post methodology identifies two strategic dimensions that help to define possible paths to further develop Ex-Post ROM and its tools. According to the current challenges (Figure 7) that are, on the one hand, to deepen the learning capacity of Ex-Post ROM, and on the other one, to learn beyond the individual project level at a more aggregate level.¹ Both driven forces respond to the main objective of Ex-Post ROM, improving the quality of development interventions. Thus, the use of a matrix

¹ This can be also framed in the third level of ROM purposes (the first: to think in results oriented terms (micro level); the second: to have a statistical base for management decisions in AIDCO (macro level), the third: qualitative learning. Del Bas, J./Eguiguren, R. 2009.

produces an in-depth assessment of different measures to develop the Ex-Post methodology.

FIGURE 7. DECISION MATRIX FOR EX-POST ROM



Source: Report author.

Taking the decision matrix into account, and depending on the articulation of both dimensions, the results can be grouped in four quadrants.

- I) **Ex-Post ROM with low learning capacity on project basis:** Currently, the Ex-Post ROM is decided at country level, and the Ex-Post tools facilitate the drawing of lessons learned at project level. Lessons learned, if compiled, are not always being exploited.
- II) **Ex-Post ROM with low learning capacity on an aggregate basis:** Measures such the development of a tool that aggregate lessons learned from different Ex-Post monitored projects would fall into the left upper quadrant.
- III) **Ex-Post ROM with high learning capacity on project basis:** The third quadrant covers measures that improve the learning focus of Ex-Post ROM (e.g. stimulation of lessons learned formulation, better diffusion of lessons learned), while the analysis still continues at project/individual level.
- IV) **Ex-Post ROM with high learning capacity on an aggregate basis:** In the upper right quadrant, the strategic Ex-Post ROM would involve having Ex-Post tools which facilitate and transfer learning at an aggregate level, making them useful, not only for projects, but also for aid programming.

These four quadrants should serve as a guide to categorize the analyzed measures and proposals while at the same time providing an overall strategic vision for further developments. This review is based on the idea that one of the main objectives of the Ex-Post ROM is to stimulate learning processes within development interventions. Besides, the learning at an aggregate level permits the value and applicability of such learning to be increased. However, although this review underlines the importance of developing Ex-Post ROM into quadrant IV, other strategic decisions may be also reasonable depending on the specific goals Ex-Post ROM aims to achieve.

The learning approach in the Ex-Post ROM

Originally, Ex-Post ROM was based on the regular ROM approach to looking at the real impact and sustainability of the EC-financed development actions after the external aid has concluded. The focus has been put on comparing both moments (during and after project lifetime) to identify the explanatory causes of project performance. For that reason, it has been important to ensure that the methodology applied is comparable.

Although useful learning is implicit in this analysis, no learning approach was subsequently integrated in the Ex-Post ROM methodology. For this reason, there is a need to emphasize lessons learned in order to ensure that Ex-Post ROM can be used to improve the quality of development interventions. In comparison to the on-going ROM, the Ex-Post perspective ensures the inclusion of other external elements to make a longer term analysis of the intervention performance. Therefore, this **learning potential constitutes the Ex-Post added value**.

It is interesting to analyze whether and how lessons learned have been included in the Ex-Post methodology to date to make improvement suggestions. Given the need to compare project performance during and after project lifetime, the key ROM tools, the Background Conclusions Sheets (BCS) and the Monitoring Report (MR), have maintained the same format as the on-going ones since the beginning of the Ex-Post pilot phase. Although the Ex-Post BCS integrated the changes of perspective through adapted guiding sub-questions, the MR has maintained the same structure. The last section of “key observations and actions recommended” was the only place to compile lessons and/or learning results.

After the initial pilot phase, followed by an update of the BCS and MR in order to clarify the Ex-Post perspective, Ex-Post guidelines were developed. The tools had integrated additional changes in guiding sub-questions and the last MR section was converted to “key observations and lessons learned”. The Ex-Post guidelines clearly helped to better define Ex-Post ROM, its potential uses (and users) as well as its scope.

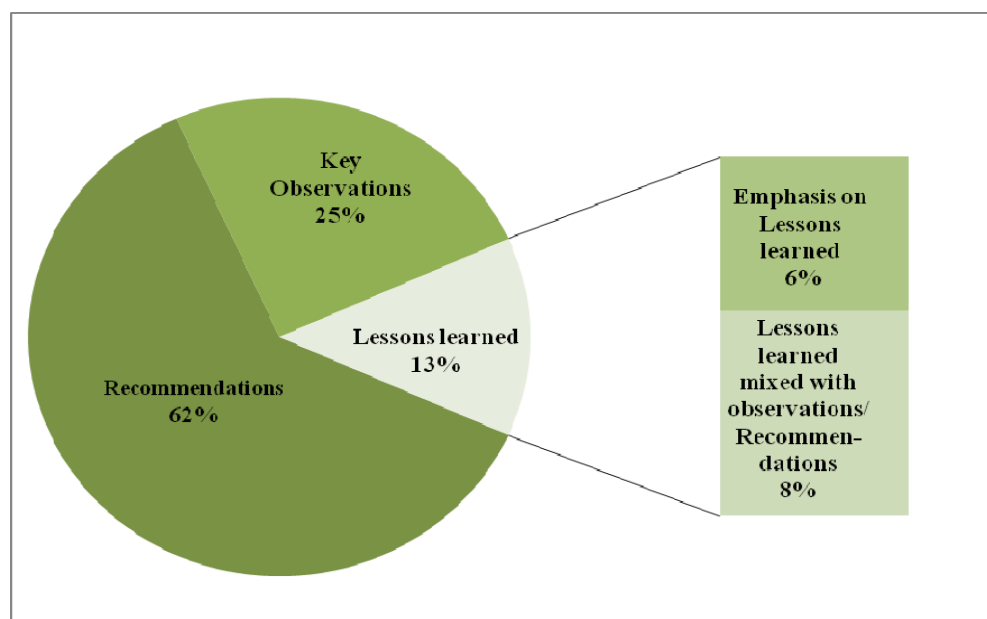
A qualitative analysis of a sample of 53 ex-post monitoring reports² (Annex 4) should focus on the contents of the “lessons learned” box in order to answer the following questions: i) What kind of comments do the monitors introduce (are they lessons

² 53 project reports are part of a stratified sample, representing 11% of the total ex-post monitoring reports (461) of the CRIS data base (online extraction April 2009).

learned or not? if not, what are they?); ii) What is the quality of lessons learned?; and iii) What kind of lessons learned do they present? These answers will inspire the adjustments for the Ex-Post tools.

The results have confirmed (figure 8) that the majority of the reports included recommendations (62%), followed by key observations (25%) and lessons learned (13%).

FIGURE 8. CONTENTS OF LAST SECTION IN EX-POST MONITORING REPORTS



Source: Ex-Post monitoring reports. CRIS ROM. Online extraction April 2009.

The most relevant findings regarding the reports with emphasis on recommendations and observations are: i) high heterogeneity of comments; ii) the different target groups who are expected to apply recommendations (especially EC and counterparts); and iii) the diversity of purposes regarding recommendations and observations (project design and management, project closure, and design of new interventions, etc.).

In reference to the reports that include lessons learned, it should be highlighted that these are not always formulated as transferable conclusions.³ Most of them are related to:

- Concept approach of the specific sector, thematic area or topic of the project;
- Intervention strategies in the sense of methodological approaches; and
- Project management issues.

³ The DAC definition of lessons learned: generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.

Lessons learned are often presented in a very brief way and are too specific or too general. They are too specific when monitors formulate observations and lessons based on the specific stakeholders (e.g. mentioning the concrete institution), and too general, if they stressed global issues in an abstract way (e.g. sustainability strategy) without linking it to the project context. The reports present a high number of “lessons” that are not always well identified. For all these reasons, their potential for being replicated in other contexts remains vague. The most relevant issues seem to be the unclear definition of:

- The context from which the lesson was derived;
- The purpose of lessons learned (*what it is relevant and useful for*);
- The users or target groups of lessons learned (*who can make use of the lesson*);
- Some guiding elements if the lesson is to be replicated.

Several factors make it difficult to formulate lessons learned appropriately. Some are related to Ex-Post methodology, especially the lack of time for mission preparation and implementation and the difficulties related to accessing resources (information and persons) for the drawing of useful lessons. Besides, the fact that the learning purpose is not included as a cross cutting approach in an Ex-Post mission does not help to ensure a focus on lessons learned.

Difficulties in identifying lessons learned are linked, not only to the short length of missions, but also to the lack or weak nature of learning tools as part of internal M&E project systems. Difficulties in formulating structured lessons may be related to the non-existence of recommendations in the Ex-Post guidelines and Ex-Post BCS reader.

At a more strategic level, Ex-Post ROM must define its learning purpose and its main target groups better in order to clarify use and users of such lessons learned. It is necessary to prioritize both uses and users. In addition to this, an Ex-Post ROM needs a more strategic justification and therefore must be linked to a strategic planning of Ex-Post that goes beyond the project level. An aggregate approach to responding to prioritized issues should be helpful. Consequently, the linkage between Ex-Post ROM and identification and formulation phase (in the operations cycle management), on the one side, and to the evaluation phase on the other, needs to be strengthened.

Other elements are related to the monitors’ practice because they are used, as in the ongoing missions, to formulating recommendations for the Delegations and/or counterparts. The tendency to make recommendations can clearly be seen in the reports analysed. Although they are reasonable given the report conclusions, they are usually not relevant in terms of time (projects are already closed). The attention given to recommendations may distract monitors from a learning perspective.

Concept and methodology implications

The design of Ex-Post ROM was based on the original ROM, to be used with closed projects. The main objective was to generate information on how a project performs in

terms of impact and sustainability after the EC financial support has concluded. In addition to this, Ex-Post ROM aims to define explanatory factors for project performance, especially those related to project design, and formulate lessons learned for other future or on-going interventions.

The strengthening of a learning perspective in the Ex-Post ROM becomes relevant when taking into account the need to improve quality of development operations (aid effectiveness). Given the general consensus to keep on-going and Ex-Post ROM comparable, the mainstreaming of the learning approach can be promoted with some minor changes in the Ex-Post concept and methodology, including its tools. Although on-going ROM has recently included the issue of lessons learned as an element of analysis, Ex-Post ROM maintains its added value due to the overall perspective provided by a closed project. Nevertheless, the coordination of Ex-Post ROM with Ex-Post evaluations is of strategic importance.

The first element that needs clarification is the **main purpose** and main **target groups** of Ex-Post ROM. After the testing phase, it is important to prioritize use and users to strengthen its added value and make better use of it.

According to this review, the **Ex-Post added value** lies in its **learning potential**, especially in comparison to the on-going ROM that is designed as a project management instrument. Ex-Post ROM is neither a tool for project management nor an evaluation instrument. Ex-Post-ROM generates valid information about project design, real impact and sustainability once external assistance has ended. Besides, it helps to relate relevance, efficiency and effectiveness to project performance in an appropriate time perspective. The lessons that can be drawn should represent the most important strategic interest. The learning potential is evident.

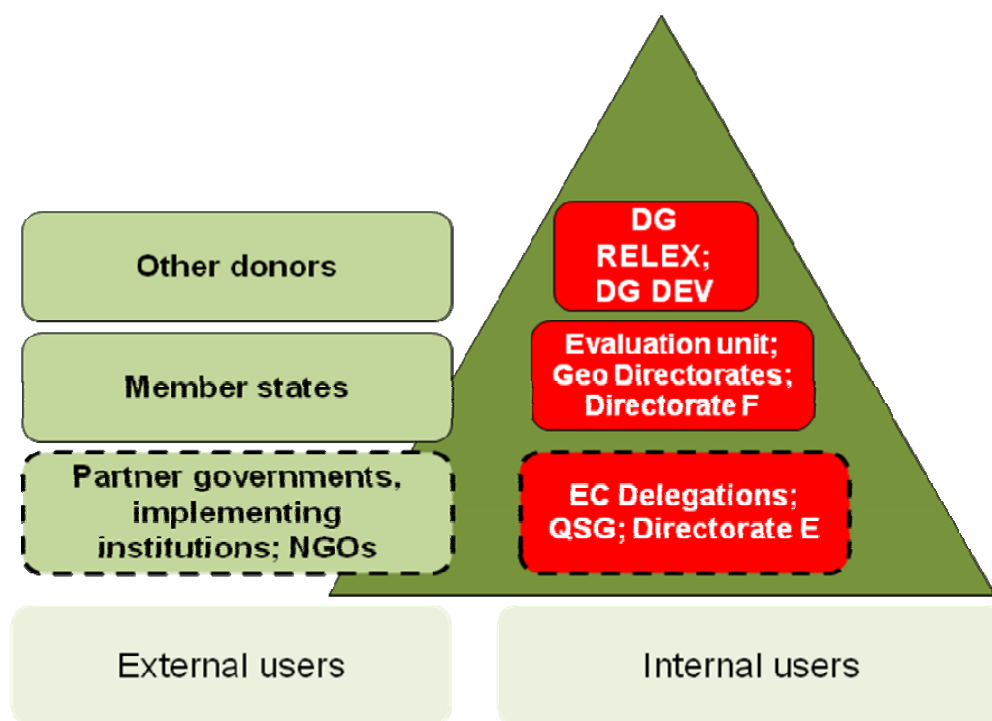
For these reasons, one **key purpose** of Ex-Post ROM may be summarized as “to formulate usable lessons learned for designing new interventions (specific objective) in order to improve the quality of operations and contribute to the aid effectiveness agenda (overall objective)”. Other uses are not excluded, but play a secondary role. The feedback function of Ex-Post ROM in the project cycle is one of its main features. The strategic role of Ex-Post ROM is linked to this as well as to the identification phase of the operations cycle within the EC.

Some of the stakeholders recognize the complementarities of **Ex-Post ROM and Ex-Post evaluations**; both are key learning instruments that could be used to improve design quality. In comparison to **final evaluations**, Ex-Post ROM can play a sort of “update of evaluation results” role, if there is a need to design a new intervention in the sector/country. In order to make complementary use of Ex-Post ROM and **Ex-Post evaluations**, the planning of those instruments should be carried out together by ROM and evaluation responsables. The decision should be based on main objectives. While Ex-Post ROM can play a “signal function” role of lessons learned, an Ex-Post evaluation is prepared to generate an in-depth analysis of project performance after closure.

Main users of Ex-Post ROM lessons (figure 9) should be defined as the stakeholders who are directly involved in the project design, especially EC-Delegations and the Quality Support Groups. While EC-Delegations have the final responsibility to identify

and formulate new interventions, QSGs are directly involved in both phases with a quality control function. It is the main phase where internal stakeholders can make use of lessons learned.

FIGURE 9 EX-POST ROM LESSONS LEARNED: MAIN USERS



Source: Report author.

At this stage, the most important external users are partner governments, implementing institutions of partner countries and NGOs which execute EC financed interventions. For this reason, they can make use of project and aggregate lessons learned as inputs in order to design new initiatives, strategies or policies. Member states as strategic stakeholders to coordinate cooperation actions are potential users of lessons learned. On the one hand, they should have access to action fiches where lessons learned are already integrated. On the other hand, they could use aggregate lessons for designing their own initiatives.

Further internal users are AIDCO units (e.g. Geo-Directorates; F: Design of call for proposals) and others who are also related to learning processes of development actions, such the Evaluation Unit (AIDCO). Consequently, Ex-Post ROM should include them in the planning and implementation of Ex-Post ROM as well as in the distribution of Ex-Post Reports. Other potential users are not excluded, but in order to make better use of Ex-Post ROM added value, a prioritization has to be established. At a later stage, after obtaining aggregate Ex-Post lessons, additional users, such DG Relex and DG Dev could be included as target groups to get inputs for the programming phase. Other donors as external stakeholders could be potential users of aggregate lessons learned in order to design new initiatives or collecting inputs for on-going ones.

Although the EC can and should directly encourage the use of lessons learned among internal users to improve its learning capacity, AIDCO can develop strategies to

promote the use of them among external users. Especially the partner governments, implementing agencies and NGOs which are involved in the design and implementation of EC financed measures should have ensured access to these lessons in the earliest stage. Member states have to be included as strategic stakeholders to coordinate and look for coherence in European development strategies. AIDCO can define strategies to promote the use of lessons among other donors through coordination platforms, e.g. the Development Assistance Committee.

In strategic terms, the emphasis should be put on the generation of usable lessons and their use. First efforts should focus on the use of lessons among EC Delegations and QSG (in coordination with partner governments and other implementing partners). The improvement of the internal use of lessons should be prioritized involving the evaluation unit, the geographical Directorates of AIDCO, and, in a further step, DG Relex and DG DEV. In addition to this, strategies should be implemented to promote access to lessons learned to member states, other donors and other potential users.

Based on these premises, **the change in perspective** between Ex-Post ROM and on-going remains as defined in the Ex-Post guidelines of 2008 (an update is given in 7). This implies that the monitor has a different perspective on the information determined by the time of an Ex-Post mission, i.e. once a project has ended. The change in emphasis between on-going and Ex-Post ROM is sustained with the focus on impact, sustainability and quality of design (Ex-Post guidelines 2008). Although the emphasis on lessons learned was already included in the Ex-Post guidelines, a more strengthened focus on the learning purpose should be underlined.

Regarding the methodology, the 2008 Ex-Post guidelines include the main differential aspects in comparison to the on-going ROM. Because both instruments have to be comparable, changes in the criteria or sub-criteria are not feasible. The BCS reader and the Ex-Post guidelines are support instruments to stress the learning perspective in the application of the five criteria. Changes in the structure of the section “lessons learned” as well as guiding principles to formulate usable lessons learned should be assumed.

The learning perspective implies compiling and collecting information which can help to formulate lessons learned (e.g. evaluation reports, good practices publications or other systematization efforts) and interviewing resource persons who have a certain degree of project memory. Other key informants could be stakeholders related to the specific sector or topic who are familiar with the “learning effects” of similar or related interventions. Secondary sources of information are also very useful, although attribution of results and impact remains more difficult than in on-going ROM. For this reason, the drafting of a working hypothesis with project stakeholders and the validation with beneficiaries and other actors can be of some use. A learning emphasis in the Ex-Post ROM confirmed the need for more preparation time (in order to make contacts and arrangements that are usually more difficult) and field visits.⁴

In terms of the **eligibility criteria** of Ex-Post ROM, it seems that timing and representativeness part of a general consensus among ROM implementing stakeholders. Regarding timing, it is generally confirmed that a period of between 12 and 18 months

⁴ Ex-Post guidelines underline the need to aggregate (up to) three extra days in Ex-Post missions.

after project closure is more suitable to the nature of Ex-Post ROM and the available resources than two years. This also makes more sense according to a strengthened learning focus. The budget significance has also found acceptance as well as the sample of smaller projects, especially if there is a link to new programming or a call for proposals. In reference to the criterion that projects are only eligible if they are not selected for evaluation, this could be handled with more flexibility. In cases where an Ex-Post ROM is used to update some evaluation results in order to link them to a new programming action, it could be useful to include the project as eligible. If an Ex-Post evaluation aims to identify priority study areas, an Ex-Post ROM could be justified. This criterion can only be handled flexibly if this articulation between evaluations (final or ex-post evaluations) and Ex-Post ROM takes place. EC M&E tools for development actions should be seen as a “toolkit” to be specifically applied depending on “research” purposes.

It is extremely important to add a new criterion, covering the **strategic coherence** (and relevance) issue. It is necessary for Ex-Post ROM to respond to a strategic question, in order to make full use of its advantages. The planning and selection of Ex-Post ROM projects should be carried out in conjunction with EC Delegations looking for aggregate issues regarding e.g. new programming, current portfolio or new intervention designs in the sector, in the country, with the same or similar instruments, implementation modality or partner. Preferably, the selected projects should share a common criterion (e.g. sector, country, and/or instrument).

Global planning could enhance the use of Ex-Post ROM results. This would imply that actors such as the evaluation unit and the thematic QSG as well as those responsible for the design of thematic line proposals (or others, e.g. Geo-coordinators) would be involved in the selection of projects for Ex-Post missions or, at least, give comments on their selection and obtain the results at the end. A regional/sub-regional, rather than a country-based, approach in the Ex-Post-ROM planning would facilitate the aggregation of lessons learned and the promotion of knowledge within a region.

Key criteria for Ex-Post eligible projects/programmes	
Timing	1 or 2 years (maximum) to the technical closure of the project (can be applied flexibly according to nature of project considering the question of learning potential).
Strategic coherence	The selection of eligible projects for Ex-Post ROM should respond to strategic question (thematic interest, aggregation of results, update of evaluation results or stakeholder/institutional analysis). Preferably, the selected projects should share a common selection criterion (country, sector, or instrument).
Budget significance	All finished projects with an EC contribution above €1,000,000 and a sample of the smaller projects.
Complementarity to (Ex-Post) evaluations	All finished projects that do not clash with evaluations. If there are any strategic questions which can be supported by Ex-Post ROM and complement evaluations, it should be possible to combine both instruments.

Ex-Post ROM Tools with a strengthened learning perspective

The learning focus that has been discussed in previous chapters has to be mainstreamed, not only in the overall Ex-Post methodology, but also in the Ex-Post ROM tools. The proposals refer to the main ROM working instrument, the BCS, as well as its reader; to the Ex-Post guidelines and to the MR.

Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS) and BCS reader: The new BCS and its reader are based on the updated BCS (and reader) for on-going ROM which recently integrated “lessons learned” as an element of analysis. Besides, horizontal and cross-cutting issues are included with an Ex-Post perspective. The main changes refer to a strengthened focus on the section of lessons learned in order to promote the above-mentioned learning perspective. The BCS reader includes a proposal to structure the lessons in order to make aggregate analysis easier. Additionally, some sub-questions guide monitors in the identification and formulation of lessons learned. The new Ex-Post BCS also tries to emphasize the importance of “quality of design”, impact and sustainability, as key criteria. According to the 2008 Ex-Post guidelines, the differences in the Ex-Post perspective are underlined. This attempt to update these tools has considered the draft study on explanatory causes behind project effectiveness and impact in order to generate valuable information about the identified key variables (*e.g. ownership, policy support; institutional set up; stakeholder involvement; communication; risk management; and financial viability; M&E systems, relevance, etc.*).

Monitoring Report (MR): The MR maintains the same format as usual, the only difference being the “lessons learned” section. It will be expected to have a more structured section with categories of well formulated and usable lessons learned. The quality of the design, impact and sustainability as well as the learning perspective should be made more visible. Monitors should therefore have this focus clearly in mind from the very beginning of Ex-Post missions.

Ex-Post Guidelines: Ex-Post guidelines present an overall view of Ex-Post ROM, and therefore include a concept definition, its users and uses, as well as practical recommendations for the planning and implementation of an Ex-Post mission. The Ex-Post guidelines have been elaborated in 2008. For this reason, they have only been updated with some minor changes derived from focussing on a learning perspective. They complement the *Handbook for Monitors 2008* and the *Regional Programme Monitoring Guidelines 2008*.

Aggregate Ex-Post analysis and regional ROM annual reports: The template for an aggregate analysis of Ex-Post reports is proposed with two objectives: i) to facilitate aggregation of lessons learned according to EC programming needs, and ii) to make Ex-Post results more usable and accessible to stakeholders related to development programming and designing. Nevertheless, the use of this template implies that Ex-Post reports are to some extent well structured and contain usable lessons learned. Moreover, the template could inspire some additional changes to the Ex-Post analysis to date included in the regional ROM Annual Reports. The distribution and promotion of

access to such information would be a precondition to deepen the Ex-Post analysis. Other donors as well as partner governments and NGOs could be included as strategic stakeholders to get access to aggregate lessons learned.

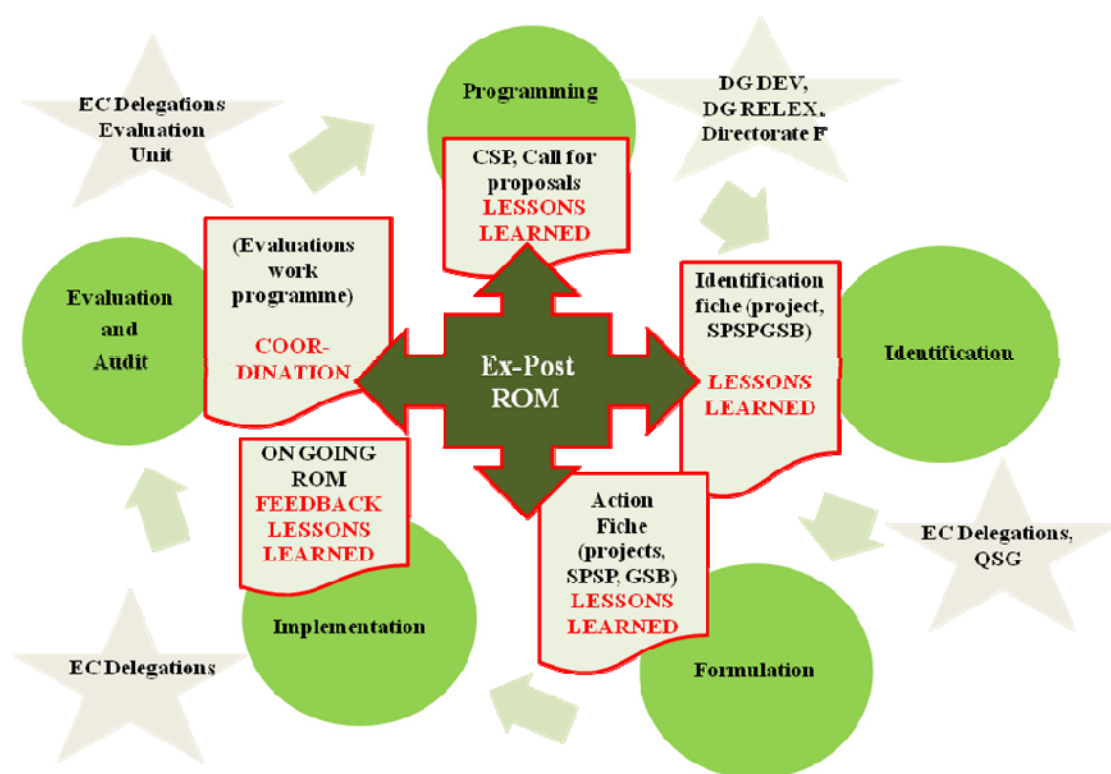
The annexes include the changed proposals for the BCS template (Annex 5), the BCS reader (Annex 6), and the Ex-Post guidelines (Annex 7) as well as the template for an aggregate Ex-Post analysis (Annex 8).

Ex-Post ROM in the context of the EC operations cycle management

It must be highlighted that this review proposes strengthening the added value of the Ex-Post ROM, i.e. its learning potential. The impact of this learning approach in the Ex-Post instruments would increase if the linkages between Ex-Post ROM and other EC instruments for developing aid management were strengthened. An improved articulation of Ex-Post ROM would ensure a learning process beyond the individual project level, contributing to the mainstreaming of an overall learning approach with in EC development operations.

The **operations cycle** within the EC including the main stakeholders and how Ex-Post ROM inputs are and could be linked is shown in figure 10. This figure, which does not claim to be exhaustive, covers not only the linkages that already exist (identification/formulation phase), but also theoretical links that are only presented as potential steps that could deepen the learning potential of Ex-Post ROM.

FIGURE 10. EX-POST ROM (POTENTIAL) LINKAGES TO THE OPERATIONS CYCLE



Source: Report author.

Regarding the existing linkages during the **identification and formulation** phase, it is evident that mechanisms e.g. identification fiche and action fiche, used primarily by EC Delegations and QSG, are a good vehicle for making use of Ex-Post lessons learned. The fiches and checklists include a “lessons learned” section which requires the description of previous lessons. However, the formulation and action fiches as well as their checklists do not explicitly mention Ex-Post ROM or ROM as a potential information source. The same thing occurs with the different fiches regarding projects, general budget support (GBS) and sector policy support programme (SPSP). Although until now Ex-Post ROM has only been applied to projects and programmes, the lessons could be used for the design of other interventions with different approaches (e.g. thematic lessons, partner lessons, institutional arrangements, etc.).

It should be underlined that Ex-Post ROM is most closely associated with the evaluation phase; nevertheless it shows an enormous potential as an instrument for identification purposes. Its features would permit evaluation and formulation to be linked, e.g. updating the results of a final evaluation or analyzing earlier similar or complementary interventions.

During the **implementation phase**, Ex-Post ROM can be articulated with on-going ROM, when feedback is needed for on-going projects. Because of the recent introduction of lessons learned in on-going ROM, the links between both ROM methodologies will permit lessons to be updated.

At the **evaluation and audit phase**, Ex-Post ROM does not currently have any links to other EC evaluation instruments. Comparing their purposes, Ex-Post ROM is complementary to final evaluations and Ex-Post evaluations. To date, projects eligible for Ex-Post ROM were not supposed to be selected for evaluations. Although this represents the easiest way to make a differentiation, if the management decisions on evaluation and Ex-Post ROM were carried out in a coordinated way, the results of Ex-Post ROM and evaluations would mutually reinforce one another. The complementarity of these instruments can only be proven on a case-by-case basis. Ex-Post ROM can generate key inputs to better design an ex-post evaluation or can update results of previous evaluations. On the other hand, evaluations usually generate information that can be used as project baseline for a good Ex-Post ROM.

Therefore, the EC could make all its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tools available and disseminate their specific features, producing a toolkit of “instruments” which offers a diversity of roles depending on demand needs. Therefore the link between evaluation and ROM could be strengthened, improving its articulation.

The most important stakeholders in the **programming phase**, DG DEV and DG RELEX are directly involved in programming the mid-term aid strategic documents (Regional/Country Strategy Papers). In these documents, a “lessons learned” section is also required. By aggregating Ex-Post ROM results, links between Ex-Post ROM and programming stakeholders could be forged. At a later stage, these actors should probably be informed of Ex-Post ROM’s potential. In reference to the design of calls for

proposals on thematic lines, EC-Delegations and Directorate F should also have access to Ex-Post ROM as a source of lessons for the improvement of operations quality.

In the context of the current strategy to strengthen the learning focus and the accessibility of the lessons learned of Ex-Post ROM, efforts should be firstly aim to deepen the articulation in the formulation and identification phase (with EC-Delegations and QSG). Afterwards, the evaluation unit should be a strategic stakeholder to coordinate evaluation and Ex-Post ROM purposes. In a last strategy phase, when Ex-Post ROM produces aggregate lessons, the stakeholders of the programming phase could use it as a source of lessons learned.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Some recommendations can be derived from the analysis seen in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, in order to obtain an overall vision of the strategic framework for adopting recommendations, they are categorised in line with figure 7 (decision matrix), i.e., those which promote learning capacity and those which support an aggregate learning. The combination of both lines of recommendations would lead to an enhanced learning capacity at aggregate level.

As a **cross cutting recommendation**, the importance of **access to information** related to Ex-Post ROM should be stressed, differentiating EC Delegations on the one side, and AIDCO units on the other (QSG, Geo-coordinators; evaluation unit). External users of lessons learned, e.g. partner governments, implementing institutions, NGOs, member states and other donors should be included as beneficiaries of this activity:

1. Promote Ex-Post ROM and its features, as well as the accessibility of Ex-Post reports and their results by.
 - Making key (internal) stakeholders aware of the CRIS ROM database and the search function to access Ex-Post ROM.
 - Informing AIDCO staff periodically about selected Ex-Post ROM and/or about the availability of Ex-Post reports in CRIS-ROM.
 - Encouraging the use of Ex-Post ROM and/ or lessons learned among partner governments, implementing institutions, NGOs, and member states during meetings and discussions
 - Ensuring access to aggregate lessons by other external stakeholders such as other donors, e.g. through DAC meetings.

Recommendations for improving learning capacity of Ex-Post ROM:

1. **Mainstreaming a strategic vision of Ex-Post ROM and its learning perspective.** A learning perspective should be emphasized more in the Ex-Post ROM in order to strengthen its added value. In this context, prioritizing stakeholders (EC Delegations, QSG) and uses (design of new interventions) of Ex-Post ROM will help to ensure that better use is made of it.

2. **Adjustment of Ex-Post methodology to learning perspective.** A lessons learned approach in the methodological adaptation will facilitate the planning and implementation of Ex-Post missions. Furthermore, monitors will get a clearer idea about purpose and users of transferable conclusions, i.e. lessons learned.

For the **planning and implementation of Ex-Post missions**, the following activities must be insisted on:

- Active involvement of *key stakeholders* in selection of Ex-Post projects, especially EC-Delegations and AIDCO task manager, to promote an aggregate view preferably at regional/sub regional level (and/or at global level, if there is a strategic interest);
- Promotion of an appropriate adjustment of *time and resources* for Ex-Post missions (considering a desk phase and potential difficulties in having access to information and/or stakeholders);
- Define clear *Terms of Reference* (ToR) that include purpose of Ex-Post ROM mission (new programming, comparison of results, new call for proposal, etc.) and users (EC Delegation or others);
- Insist on experienced *monitors* who have country and sector experience to ensure quality in such a reduced mission time;
- Update *Ex-Post ROM tools* with a learning focus (see Annex 5-8), including the BCS and its reader; the MR and the Ex-Post guidelines, which should be also applicable for the Regional Programme Monitoring Guide. The MR will be based on the BCS. The Ex-Post MR should also be based on the recently-updated MR for on-going interventions which includes aid modality, project management and type of implementing partners. These categories could help to aggregate interesting lessons regarding implementation modalities. Ex-Post guidelines should be complementary to the Handbook of Monitors 2008 and to the Regional Programme Monitoring Guidelines 2008.

After the Ex-Post mission, diffusion of Ex-Post ROM outputs, which includes the following post-mission tasks, has to be ensured (considering strategic stakeholders e.g. partner governments, implementing institutions, NGOs):

- Distribution of information about availability of Ex-Post reports (publication date in CRIS ROM) and how to access reports.

3. **Promotion of Ex-Post ROM articulation to the EC operations cycle:**

- Ex-Post ROM and identification/formulation phase: Although the main identification and formulation documents include a “lessons learned” section, they do not include information sources. Explicit mention of Ex-Post ROM as an information source (and how to access it), will stimulate its use. The only instrument that explicitly mentions ROM (not Ex-Post ROM) as an information source is the action fiche for the project approach.

Therefore, the recommendation to make an explicit mention of (Ex-Post) ROM for the following documents is valid: the *identification fiches* (2006) for project approach; GBS, and SPSP; their *guidelines* for preparation (GBS; and SPSP); the *PCM* guidelines 2004; the *checklists* for identification/formulation (2007) of project approach; GBS and SPSP; the *action fiches* 2008 for call of proposals; GBS and SPSP; and the practical handbook on the office Quality Support Groups.

- Ex-Post ROM and implementation: If the selection of Ex-Post projects responds to a strategic question, i.e. a real interest of primarily EC-Delegations to use Ex-Post ROM outputs, the feedback to on-going interventions could have positive results. Promoting the articulated use of Ex-Post and on-going ROM would help to deepen learning from interventions. With the new BCS for on-going projects, lessons learned are a key element, which can be proved afterwards by an Ex-Post ROM.
- Ex-Post ROM and evaluation: The coordinated exchange with EC-Delegations of planned evaluations and Ex-Post ROM may enhance use of Ex-Post results. AIDCO should promote synergies between Ex-Post ROM and evaluations and its articulated use (depending on purposes). While final evaluations and Ex-Post ROM show clear complementarities, Ex-Post evaluations and Ex-Post ROM show more similarities, although there is a logical difference in the depth of each approach. The promotion of an M&E toolkit among EC Delegations would support appropriate instrument selection.
- Ex-Post ROM and programming: Stimulate exchange of information between stakeholders involved in programming activities (DG Dev, DG Relex and AIDCO) about Ex-Post ROM, its uses and feedback potential programming tasks.

Recommendations for improving degree of aggregate learning of Ex-Post ROM:

1. Ensuring coherent coverage of Ex-Post ROM:

- In quantitative terms: According to the calculated average of Ex-Post monitored projects for the whole eligible universe (28%: 2007 and 18%: 2008), 30% seems to be a realistic global goal. This would mean monitoring an additional 10% of the total eligible projects (to reach 28%). Nevertheless, the analysis should be made regionally, because of regional divergences. Although Africa, ENPI South and Caribbean/Pacific seem to be the regions where an effort to increase Ex-Post ROM should be made, Latin America, Asia and to some extent ENPI East show good coverage (2008). For that reason, it is important that the decisions are accompanied by learning purposes to ensure coherence.
- The learning purposes should help as decision criterion in adjusting Ex-Post ROM coverage. Ex-Post ROM should be adjusted according to priority

sectors, intervention strategies or implementation modalities. For example, if a new call for proposal (e.g. in human rights) is going to be updated, or the programming phase (in education sector) enters a new stage, the Ex-Post ROM should include this as criterion to increase the eligible sample according to the questions raised.

2. **Inclusion of “learning perspective” in the Ex-Post analysis of the regional Annual Reports.** On an annual basis, regional ROM contractors formulate regional reports which include a chapter with “special analysis” (Ex-Post ROM). However, the emphasis is usually on a score comparison with the on-going ROM. The learning perspective could be introduced in this chapter, based on the proposed structure for lessons learned in the BCS. Thus, the reports would facilitate the aggregation of lessons.
3. **Testing of an aggregate Ex-Post analysis.** The way the reports are currently written leads to a high level of heterogeneity in the aggregation of lessons learned. The testing of a new template is structured based on the proposed Ex-Post BCS. For this reason, it would be necessary to have access to a certain critical mass to ensure successful application.
4. **Strategic planning of Ex-Post ROM with other stakeholders.** This suggestion has already been mentioned. However, it has a direct effect on improving aggregate learning. Although the selection of Ex-Post has been done jointly by the task manager, ROM Contractors and EC Delegations, the key factor in this phase is to decide strategically and not on individual or quantitative basis. The selection of Ex-Post projects should ensure that they share a thematic area, a sub-region, an instrument or a similar partner. If it entails serious coordination challenges, the selection of Ex-Post projects should be strategically justified, in order to promote ownership among the main users.
5. **Better linkages of on-going and Ex-Post lessons learned.** In a further phase, when the new working tools for on-going ROM are tested, the idea of sharing the same structure of lessons learned would help to increase the degree of depth of Ex-Post analysis.
6. **Adaptation of project database to aggregate search.** In order to promote aggregate learning, Ex-Post results should be accessible in an aggregate, and not only at project level. For this reason, the inclusion of the following search variables would be an advantage: region (and not only country); aid modality; project typology; type of implementing partner and budget line. Although the thematic search is the most feasible and easiest way of obtaining lessons learned, these other characteristics could reinforce the search for lessons referring to implementing modalities. Parallel work is needed on the requirements in the Ex-Post MR. Recent efforts to update (on-going) MR included almost all the mentioned ones (except budget line).

These suggestions reinforce each other because they have all focused on improving: i) the learning capacity of Ex-Post ROM and ii) the accessibility of such lessons. The final goal, to improve the quality of operations and therefore to increase aid effectiveness, must guide the adjustment process. While the mainstreaming of a learning perspective in Ex-Post ROM and the consequent definition of main users and uses seem to be the strategic axis to begin with, the adaptation of tools would be the next natural step in the implementation strategy, followed by the deepening of the use of Ex-Post ROM in the context of the whole EC operations cycle.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Guiding questions for ROM stakeholder

		AIDCO Task Managers	ROM CONTRAC TORS	EC- DELEGATI ON	MONI- TORS	OTHERS (QSG, evaluation, etc.)
I	CONCEX-POST/DEFINITION					
1.	Ex-Post ROM Volume: % Ex-Post of overall portfolio vs. of Ex-Post eligible universe					
2.	Opinion of Ex-Post main users					
3.	Comment on eligibility criteria					
4.	Strategic importance of Ex-Post-ROM?					
II	USEFULNESS/BENEFITS/ STRENGTHS					
1.	Experience during pilot phase: Effective instrument for what?					
2.	Any positive/negative feedback of stakeholders?					
III	DIFFICULTIES/LIMITS/WEAKNESS					
1.	In the methodology design					
2.	In the Ex-Post ROM application					
3.	In the use/follow up of lessons learned					
IV	SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT					
1.	More Ex-Post ROM for better learning in the EC?					
2.	Eligibility criteria?					
3.	In the mission preparation: More resources, more time, adequate monitors? Others?					
4.	Tools-Need to compare on-going and Ex-Post BCS?					
5.	Post mission tasks: Diffusion and/or follow up of lessons learned?					
6.	Comments on a new aggregate Ex-Post analysis instrument (regional, country or sector approach?)					
7.	Linkage to other instruments of PCM process (QSG, evaluations, etc.)					

Annex 2. Resource persons

Name	Position	E-mail address
AIDCO HQ		
Susanne Wille	O3: Evaluation Officer - Evaluation manager	Susanne.Wille@ec.europa.eu
Enrico Pironio	E6: Quality Management Officer Wildlife mgmt. and forest	Enrico.Pironio@ec.europa.eu
Begoña Bravo Hevia	E3: Operations Quality Support for Social and Human Development (Education)	Begona.Bravo-Hevia@ec.europa.eu
María Razquín	E3: Quality Management Officer – Health sector	maria.razquin@ec.europa.eu
Erik Eriksen	E2 Quality Management Officer-Private sector development, trade and regional integration	Erik.ERIKSEN@ec.europa.eu
Thierry Barbé	C2: Head of sector	Thierry.BARBE@ec.europa.eu
Jos Jonckers	D1: International Aid / Cooperation Officer	Jos.Jonckers@ec.europa.eu
Erik Habers	D1: Geographical coordination and supervision for Asia and Central Asia	Erik.Habers@ec.europa.eu
Agnes Hano	E5	Agnes.Hano@ec.europa.eu
Fernando Cerutti	E5	Fernando.Cerutti-Gil@ec.europa.eu
ROM Task manager		
Anastasia Spentza	C3 ROM Task manager ACP	Anastasia.Spentza@ec.europa.eu
Stefania Pantazi	F1 ROM Task manager CMTF	stefania.pantazi@ec.europa.eu
Maria Luisa Andrade	D1: ROM Task manager Asia	Maria-Luisa.Andrade@ec.europa.eu
Angelo Borgogni	A1: ROM Task manager ENPI East	Angelo.Borgogni@ec.europa.eu
Mariano de la Sen Cardenal	A2: ROM Task manager ENPI South	Mariano.Delassen-Cardenal@ec.europa.eu
José Villagra Barrio	B1: ROM Task manager LA	Jose.VILLAGRA-BARRIO@ec.europa.eu
EC Delegations		
Juan José Almagro	EC Delegation Angola	Juan-Jose.ALMAGRO-HERRADOR@ec.europa.eu
Natividad Lorenzo	EC Delegation Vietnam	Natividad.Lorenzo@ec.europa.eu
Soledad Suárez	EC Delegation Chile	Soledad.SUAREZ@ec.europa.eu
Marco Venegas	EC Delegation Ecuador	Marco.VENEGAS@ec.europa.eu
Maria Rosa Sabbatelli	EC Delegation China	Maria-Rosa.SABBATELLI@ec.europa.eu
Murielle Guillemois	EC Delegation Bolivia	murielle.guillemois@ec.europa.eu
Johnny Ariza Milanes	EC Delegation Colombia	Johnny-Cesar.ARIZA-MILANES@ec.europa.eu
Clelia de la Fuente	EC Delegation Uruguay	Clelia.DELAFUENTE@ec.europa.eu
ROM CONTRACTORS		
Monika Zabel	Team leader ROM Lot Africa	CrossXculture@aol.com
Markus Wilke	Team leader ROM Lot Asia/Central Asia	marcus.wilke@ecorys.com
Frans Geilfus	Team leader ROM Lot Caribbean/Pacific	geilfus@eptisa.be
Marc Raeymaeckers	Team leader ROM CMTF	MRaeymaeckers@ROMCMTF.eu
Konstantinos Missirlis	Deputy team leader ROM CMTF	kmissirlis@romcmtf.eu
Alex Frenz	Team leader ROM Lot ENPI	afrenz@integration.org
Fabrizio Mencarelli	Team leader ROM Lot Latin America	mencarelli@eptisa.be
Juan Manuel Santomé	Deputy Manager Lot Latin America	santome@eptisa.be
Roberto Canessa	Quality control Lot Latin America	canessa@eptisa.be
OTHERS		
Mary Hall	Particip-Support ROM Coordination Office	mary.hall@particip.com
Serani Siegel		serani.siegel@particip.com
María Navarro		maria.navarro@particip.com
Marta Zubko		marta.zubko@particip.com
Iosu Arizkorreta	ROM monitor	iosu_arizk@hotmail.com
Rafael Eguiguren	ROM team leader and consultant	rafachan@tamarinda.net
Martin Steinmeyer	Consultant Particip	m.steinmeyer@gmx.net

Annex 3. Thematic distribution of Ex-post ROM by region

	SECTOR	REGION*	AFRICA	ASIA	CARIBBEAN	LATIN AMERICA	ENPI EAST	ENPI SOUTH	ENPI
110	EDUCATION		12%	1%	17%	9%	6%	13%	
120	HEALTH		10%	4%	9%	10%	8%	6%	
130	POPULATION POLICIES/ PROGRAMMES AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH		7%	5%	4%	3%		2%	
140	WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION		2%	4%	9%	4%	6%	6%	
150	GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY		24%	26%	17%	22%	27%	15%	100%
160	OTHER SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES		2%	5%		3%	5%	13%	
210	TRANSPORT AND STORAGE		10%				2%	4%	
220	COMMUNICATIONS							10%	
230	ENERGY GENERATION AND SUPPLY			1%			14%	4%	
240	BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES			1%				2%	
250	BUSINESS AND OTHER SERVICES			1%		1%	6%	6%	
311	AGRICULTURE		7%	5%	9%	1%		2%	
312	FORESTRY		2%	4%		1%			
313	FISHING		5%		4%				
321	INDUSTRY		5%	1%		3%	11%	2%	
322	MINERAL RESOURCES AND MINING								
323	CONSTRUCTION								
331	TRADE POLICY AND REGULATIONS		2%	1%		3%	2%	2%	
332	TOURISM		0%		4%		3%		
400	MULTISECTOR/CROSS-CUTTING		7%	23%	26%	33%	9%	4%	
500	COMMODITY AID AND GENERAL PROGRAMME ASSISTANCE		5%	3%		4%		6%	
600	ACTION RELATING TO DEBT								
700	EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND RECONSTRUCTION			5%			2%		
880	OTHERS		0%	5%					
910	ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF DONORS								
920	SUPPORT TO NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)							2%	
998	UNALLOCATED/ UNSPECIFIED			1%				2%	
			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: CRIS ROM. Ex-post reports 2007-2008. Online extraction, April 2009. The region of Western Balkans shows 3 ex-post reports (2: Human rights; 1: Trade policy and regulations).

Annex 4. Project sample for lessons learned analysis

PROJECT	COUNTRY	SECTOR	REPORT DATE
EVALUATION OF 7.ANG.71 - TRAINING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS	Angola	11130 - Teacher training	19/02/2007
KIRIBATI TRAINING PROGRAMME II	Kiribati	11330 - Vocational training	09/10/2007
Training Action for the Balkans, three intensive seminars on Asylum and International Protection for 120 civil servants.	Dominican Republic	12110 - Health policy and administrative management	18/05/2007
EUMEDIS (Euro-Mediterranean Information Society)	Mediterranean Region	12110 - Health policy and administrative management	19/12/2007
Refurbishment of Health Facilities, Provision of Medical Supplies and Health Education Materials for Kakheti Region.	Georgia	12220 - Basic health care	31/10/2008
Assistance to hospital rehabilitation following cyclone Heta	Niue	12230 - Basic health infrastructure	10/11/2008
Safe Motherhood Innovation Project	Nepal	13000 - POPULATION POLICIES/PROGRAMMES AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	03/10/2008
MODELO DE LICENCIAS SOCIALES DE SALUD REPRODUCTIVA EN NICARAGUA	Nicaragua	13000 - POPULATION POLICIES/PROGRAMMES AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	01/10/2007
Investment facility for the Black Sea : Georgia, Russia and Ukraine	Georgia	14015 - Water resources protection	06/05/2008
NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR UZBEKISTAN - Action Programme 2002	Uzbekistan	14050 - Waste management /disposal	30/12/2006
STRATEGIC PLANNING IN PUBLIC SERVICES	Caribbean Region	15110- - Economic and development policy/Planning	12/01/2007
Promotion of the Association Agreement EU-Egypt	Egypt	15110- - Economic and development policy/Planning	12/11/2007
Municipal Investment Support Programme - Russian Federation	Russia	15111 - Management of public finances	24/08/2007
Civil and commercial judiciary project NIS, Moldova at Chisinau	Moldova	15130 - Legal and judicial development	31/05/2007
WORKPLANS	South Africa	15130 - Legal and judicial development	20/07/2006
Reinforcement des systèmes de cartographie du territoire colombien	Colombia	15140 - Government administration	04/12/2008
Development of standards for civil service provision	Kazakhstan	15140 - Government administration	03/11/2008
Deregulation of the economy and removal of administrative barriers	Russia	15140 - Government administration	19/12/2006
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN NEGEV BEDOIN COMMUNITIES - ISRAEL	Israel	15150 - Democratic participation and civil society	26/09/2007
2005/2006(a) - MIGRAMACAU (Migration Macao)	Macao	15160 - Human rights	04/02/2009
SUPPORT TO HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE, RULE OF LAW & GOOD GOVERNANCE	Uganda	15160 - Human rights	23/05/2007
Support to the development of the accident insurance system in Ukraine	Ukraine	16010 - Social/welfare services	15/11/2007
Appui à la création d'emploi (MAR/B7-4100/IB/99/0130)	Morocco	16020 - Employment policy and administrative management	01/06/2007
PASO A PASO: FINANCIAMIENTO SUCESIVO PARA VIVIENDA PROGRESIVA-PERU/ECUADOR	Peru	16030 - Housing policy and administrative management	10/07/2007
Joint Environment Programm II - NIS/MONGOLIA	Tacis Region	21010 - Transport policy and administrative management	08/01/2007
AMELIORATION DE LA VOIRIE DE LA VILLE DE PARAKOU	Benin	21020 - Road transport	22/05/2006
ADDIS ABABA - MODJO - AWASA ROAD REHABILITATION PROJECT	Ethiopia	21020 - Road transport	01/03/2007

TELECOMMUNICATIONS PAR SATELLITE AERONAUTIQUE AFR CENT OUEST	Nigeria	22020 - Telecommunications	15/06/2006
Programme Euromed Audiovisuel (phase I: 6 projets)	Israel	22030 - Radio/television/print media	17/11/2006
Programme Euromed Audiovisuel (phase I: 6 projets)	Morocco	22030 - Radio/television/print media	17/11/2006
Programme Euromed Audiovisuel (phase I: 6 projets)	Morocco	22030 - Radio/television/print media	17/11/2006
PROTOTYPE DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM	Belarus	23064 - Nuclear power plants	18/05/2007
Support to the Azerbaijan Investment Promotion and Advisory Fund	Azerbaijan	25010 - Business support services and institutions	19/06/2007
EUMEDIS (Euro-Mediterranean Information Society)	Mediterranean Region	25010 - Business support services and institutions	19/06/2007
eKarelia	Russia	25010 - Business support services and institutions	19/06/2008
Business infrastructure in Odessa oblast, lower Danube Euroregion at Odessa, Ukraine	Tacis Region	25010 - Business support services and institutions	13/11/2007
PROGRAMME D'APPUI A L'INSERTION ECONOMIQUE ET SOCIALE DES POPULATIONS DEPLACEES A LA PERIPHERIE DE POINTE NOIRE	Congo (Brazzaville)	31120 - Agricultural development	13/09/2006
Community Forestry Support Project 2000 for Southeast Asia	Asia	31210 - Forestry policy and administrative management	17/10/2006
PROYECTO DE APOYO A LA GENERACION Y GESTION DE MICRO-EMPRESAS JUUVENILES Y TERCER SECTOR EN SANTIAGO-CHILE	Chile	32130 - SME development	07/04/2007
Trade Enhancement Programme B, Tex-Post-B	Egypt	33110 - Trade policy and administrative management	19/06/2008
Protection and Promotion of forest for economic security among tribes, Jharkhand State, India	India	41000 - General environmental protection	29/10/2007
CARIBBEAN REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME	Caribbean Region	41010 - Environmental policy and administrative management	21/12/2007
Development of National Environmental Strategies for Sustainable Development - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Kazakhstan	41010 - Environmental policy and administrative management	17/12/2008
Development of National Environmental Strategies for Sustainable Development - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan	41010 - Environmental policy and administrative management	17/12/2008
Services - MVV Energie (Module E - Environnement).	Lebanon	41010 - Environmental policy and administrative management	08/12/2006
REQUETE SYSMIN II:EXAMEN ELIGIBILITE ET PROJETS MINIERES	Dominican Republic	42000 - Women in development	31/07/2008
Capacitacion integral para comunidades rurales de alta concentracion Mapuche, Villarica, IX Region, Chile	Chile	43010 - Multisector aid	23/06/2008
Cross-Border Co-operation at Ungheni - Moldova	Moldova	43010 - Multisector aid	28/01/2008
1996/01 - CATO MANOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME	South Africa	43010 - Multisector aid	26/06/2007
Renewable Natural Resources Extension Support	Bhutan	43040 - Rural development	14/07/2006
PROGRAMA DE DESARROLLO RURAL EN LA REGIÓN DE TIERRA ADENTRO.	Colombia	43040 - Rural development	15/11/2007
Forest conserv. & developing rural areas Phongsaly	Laos	43040 - Rural development	11/12/2006
TAREG 7.03/97 Regions Affected by Chernobil	Ukraine	73010 - Reconstruction relief and rehabilitation	25/10/2007

Annex 5. BCS Reader

See attached documents.

Annex 6. BCS template

See attached documents.

Annex 7. Ex-Post Guidelines

This DRAFT guideline on ex-post ROM has to be read as an extension to the Handbook for Monitors of April 2008.

1. EX-POST MONITORING

1.1. What is Ex-post Monitoring?

The results-oriented monitoring (ROM) system, originally designed exclusively for on-going projects, has been adapted to allow for its use on finalised projects also. The result of this adaptation is called *Ex-post results-oriented monitoring* (Ex-Post-ROM) system.

Ex-Post-ROM allows the gathering of solid information on projects' *design*, real *impact* and *sustainability*, aspects that can only be fully appreciated after the external assistance has come to an end. It also facilitates a better understanding of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness as explicative causes of project performance. Lessons drawn from this exercise are mainly useful for programming, the design of new interventions and for reasons of accountability towards the wider public. The learning purpose of Ex-Post ROM should get an emphasis especially for improving the quality of development operations design. Other potential uses of the information derived from Ex-Post-ROM may range from the rapid provision of feedback for other similar on-going projects to a greater general understanding of development dynamics.

1.2. Ex-post Monitoring in contrast to on-going Monitoring

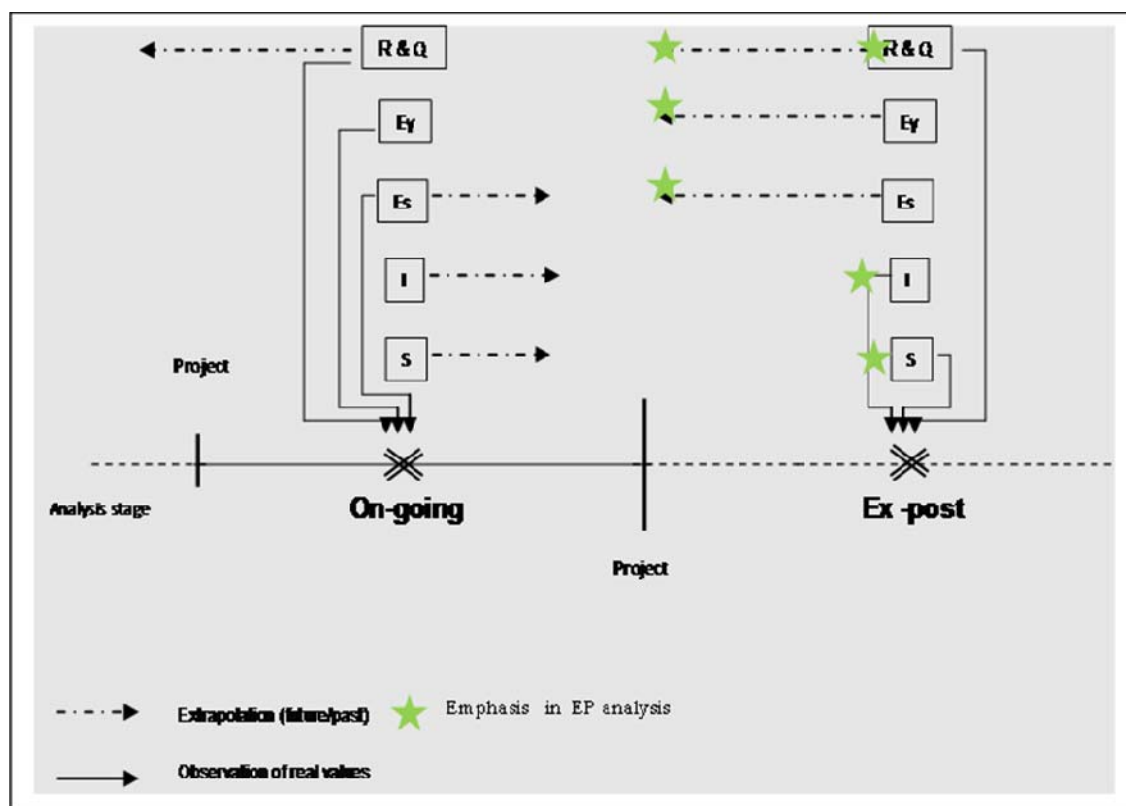
Although the Ex-Post-ROM methodology originates from and is based on the original ROM, it presents considerable distinctive features,⁵ mainly in its *perspective, emphasis and methodology*.

The **change in perspective** between on-going ROM and Ex-Post-ROM is objectively determined by the different position of the monitor vis-à-vis the information (Figure 1), and the ensuing substantial change in the quantity and quality of this information.

In an on-going ROM visit, the monitor can usually obtain most information on *relevance, efficiency and effectiveness* to that date by the use of different “observation techniques” of real values or facts, whereas *impact* and *sustainability* are, for the most part, not yet present which means that their assessment can only constitute mere prospects or opinions, the product of “intellectual extrapolation techniques”.

⁵ This section on Ex-Post-ROM focuses only on these distinctive characteristics, avoiding the unnecessary repetition of those general aspects that are common to both on-going ROM and Ex-Post-ROM, and which can be found in the corresponding chapters of the Handbook for Monitors, April 2008.

FIGURE 11 CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE VIS-À-VIS THE FIVE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA ACCORDING TO THE MONITOR'S POSITION IN TIME.



Source: Ex-Post guidelines 2008.

The inherent changes produced by the change in perspective mean that the same monitor in an Ex-Post-ROM visit faces a very different situation in terms of the quantity and quality of the information available. Indeed, the fact that the ex-post visit is carried out at a point in time when the project as such has ended, means that the monitor can, for the first time, use “observation techniques” to confirm the presence (or not) of *impact* and *sustainability*, whereas *efficiency* and *effectiveness* are no longer observable; they no longer present real values and their assessment becomes, in turn, the product of retrospective “intellectual extrapolation” (Figure 1). Finally, the change in perspective also affects the *quality of the design* which can, for the first time, with the benefit of hindsight, be assessed in comparison to the project’s real performance. It is important to stress that this perspective contributes to achieve a learning purpose which should be emphasized in Ex-Post ROM.

There is also a **change in emphasis** between on-going ROM and Ex-Post-ROM. All five criteria remain the object of Ex-Post-ROM analysis; however, the approach and emphasis differs: whereas *impact*, *sustainability* and *quality of the design* become the focus of the Ex-Post-ROM analysis, *efficiency*, *effectiveness* and *relevance* are primarily analysed in their capacity as explicative causes of *impact* and *sustainability*.

The change in emphasis between on-going ROM and Ex-Post-ROM is, in part, objectively determined by the different position of the monitor vis-à-vis the information

(*impact* and *sustainability* observable as facts for the first time) and its inherent advantages and limitations. However, it is also purposely or strategically chosen based on the fact that *impact* and *sustainability* correspond to the ultimate goals of development projects and constitute the ultimate yardstick of accountability. On the other hand, the emphasis on the analysis of the *quality of the design* is explained by the direct significance of its potential application to new project designs.

Finally, there is also a change in emphasis and attitude towards the box containing *Key observations and actions recommended*, which is replaced by *Lessons learned and key observations (if any)*. The emphasis is no longer on recommendations to support the management of the project during implementation, but on lessons learnt for future or on-going similar interventions.

Regarding the **methodology**, although Ex-Post-ROM constitutes a part of ROM and it retains the basis of the methodology, there are important distinctive characteristics that need to be taken into account as they may, in some cases, imply methodology changes.

The most important aspects influencing methodology requiring attention are as follows:

- The perception of beneficiaries is important in every version of ROM; however, in Ex-Post-ROM a significant sample of beneficiaries becomes absolutely indispensable as they are the fundamental “bearers” of *impact* and *sustainability*.
- The likely absence of the project management at the time of the Ex-Post-ROM visit affects the approach towards preparation (more time is necessary) and field visit (it further reinforces the importance of the beneficiaries as a source of information).
- Beneficiaries may have dispersed in which case the process of compiling valuable raw data becomes more difficult and resource-consuming.
- Ex-Post-ROM considerably increases the need for retrospective extrapolation, which results in more time being required for the collection and analysis of existing secondary sources of information.
- Attribution of observed effects to the monitored project is more difficult in Ex-Post-ROM.

1.3. Ex-post Monitoring in contrast to Evaluations

Ex-Post-ROM, being a part of the ROM system, still primarily constitutes a rapid assessment of performance and a rapid tool to draw lessons learnt. For all the advantages afforded by its flexibility, rapid availability of its conclusions and low cost, it would be erroneous to expect an in-depth analysis that would require further time and resources. Ex-Post-ROM maintains the modesty that characterises the ROM system as a whole, and acknowledgement of the scope of the tool and of its limitations, both by monitors and by all users, enhances its usefulness.

In this regard, it is important to distinguish between ex-post ROM and the different forms of ex-post evaluation, such as impact evaluation or final evaluation.

Main differences between ex-post ROM and Evaluations:

- Evaluations have at their disposal greater resources in terms of field visit time, preparation, number of experts involved, report scope and size, etc. Also the cost of an Evaluation is much higher (up to five to ten times the cost of an Ex-Post-ROM mission);
- Evaluations are more ambitious and in-depth i.e. they provide a more thorough analysis of impact, explicative causes, cost-efficiency or lessons learnt; they can even provide a comparative analysis on whether the project could have been approached differently; in addition, evaluations allow a longer timeframe (subsequent to the project's closure) in which to undertake the analysis; even though Ex-Post-ROM can occasionally provide very valuable information on some of these areas, in-depth investigation should as a rule not be expected from this exercise.
- Ex-Post-ROM offers significant virtues such as the speed of its conclusions which allows the sometimes crucial rapid feedback required for decision-making processes. Other advantages in comparison to Evaluations are a greater flexibility that allows the analysis of projects at relatively short notice.
- The significant lower cost of Ex-Post-ROM permits the analysis of a much larger number of projects. The ensuing wealth of data forms a sample that constitutes the basis for its potential processing to draw overall conclusions and to compare interventions on a large scale.
- Final evaluations rarely contain substantial information for a final analysis of sustainability because they usually take place at the project's closure, when it is usually still too early to measure real sustainability and impact.
- Despite the fact that evaluations and Ex-Post-ROM focus on the same five general criteria, Ex-Post-ROM offers a much higher degree of *uniformity* and *permits to compare* different project moments. Ex-Post-ROM ensures uniformity through the use of BCS that guide all monitors to consider the same prime issues, whereas evaluations do not. Comparability is further sought in Ex-Post-ROM through the requirement of representativity in the sample, a characteristic that is absent from evaluations. Also, the more standardised format and size of Ex-Post-ROM monitoring reports contributes to uniformity and comparability.

- Significantly, ROM uniformity and possibility of comparison entails a unique feature, i.e. the possibility of multiple observations of the project performance over time (MR₁, MR₂...MR_n and Ex-Post-MR). This multiplicity of vantage points serves as a privileged basis for the extraction of lessons learnt on the key factors contributing to the success of development interventions.

Ex-Post-ROM and Evaluations can also be highly complementary:

An Ex-Post-ROM mission can identify aspects of great interest and may include among its key observations the suggestion of carrying out an evaluation to further explore these aspects that are beyond the scope of the Ex-Post-ROM mission. On the other hand, a final evaluation report may provide extremely valuable baseline information for an Ex-Post-ROM mission. Finally, both exercises can be complementary. The combination of both can provide a more comprehensive ex-post overall coverage of projects in both quantitative and qualitative terms.

1.4. Who benefits from Ex-post Monitoring?

According to the Ex-Post-definition, the following users will ultimately benefit from Ex-Post-ROM:

- EC Delegations for designing new interventions, for a rapid provision of feedback for other similar on-going projects, the drafting of the Country Strategy Paper, or understanding the dynamics and factors behind real impact and sustainability;
- EC Headquarters (i.e. EUROPAID, DG RELEX, DG DEV) for programming, institutional learning and accountability towards the wider public, etc. More specifically, the Quality Support Group can use Ex-Post-ROM analysis and lessons learnt for a better assessment of new projects.⁶ Furthermore, the possibility to compare within ROM together with the fact that many projects will receive more than one monitoring visit during their lifetime (sometimes one per year) will make it possible for the Commission Services to compare the performance of the same project over time (MR₁, MR₂...MR_n and Ex-Post-MR). This places the EC in the privileged position of drawing lessons learnt based on a multiplicity of comparable observations combined with the benefit of hindsight.

Monitors should consider the EC Delegations as main Ex-Post ROM users. According to the Ex-Post-definition, it should be put an emphasis on learning purposes for improving quality of design of new interventions. In this sense, QSG should be the main Ex-Post ROM users in EC Headquarters because of its role in assuring quality of development interventions. These stakeholders can be considered as direct beneficiaries of Ex-Post ROM. Indirect beneficiaries could integrate the rest of the mentioned stakeholders (Geographical Directorates, DG Relex, DG Dev, other units related to desing of call for proposals, evaluation unit).

In addition to them, further potential users could be:

- Partner Governments for programming, project design, accountability and lessons learnt;

⁶ Quality Support Group: see “Project Cycle Management Manual 2004”, section 4.1.6, p. 21 at http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/qsm/index_en.htm

- NGOs or other donors for lessons learnt and a better understanding of development in general and of the outcomes of intervention outcomes in particular;
- EU Member States for accountability and lessons learnt for their own programmes;
- Academic institutions: the wealth of data and the possibility to compare within Ex-Post-ROM constitute the basis for analysing general trends in development aid and understanding the development dynamics.

The mere prospect of Ex-Post-ROM reaching the vast majority of projects to which the EC has contributed provides a **breakthrough in accountability** in all its aspects:

Impact and sustainability correspond to the ultimate goals of development projects, and therefore constitute the ultimate yardstick of accountability. The fact that Ex-Post-ROM enables, for the first time, observation on a large scale of the real impact and sustainability of EC development projects, also provides the basis for full accountability of the EC towards its taxpayers.

Ex-Post-ROM offers a rapid feedback channel for partner countries to express their perception on aid outcomes or approach and, in this regard, it links them with the last stage of the Project Cycle. In this capacity, Ex-Post-ROM offers an important channel for participation, enhanced partnership and accountability between partners in development.

Until the launching of the Ex-Post-ROM exercise, project managers and personnel worked in a context where, though regular internal or external monitoring could take place to regulate performance, they would rarely be held accountable vis-à-vis ultimate project objectives (i.e. *impact* and *sustainability*) as it was a common fact that after project closure, the project outcome would, in practical terms, remain restricted to the private sphere of the beneficiaries.

With Ex-Post-ROM in place the various parties involved in a project will work with the prospect that one day an independent assessment will analyse and document the outcome of the project and its explanatory reasons.⁷ This has two immediate implications: firstly, it involves moving away from narrow activity-oriented management approaches into more outcome-oriented approaches. Secondly, it fosters a higher degree of accountability among the personnel towards the work performed and the objectives expected.

Additionally, the conclusions may contribute to shedding light on good strategies and consistently effective implementing agencies, thereby facilitating the accountability of implementing partners towards the EC. This will help the EC to make well informed decisions on partners, but it is also in the interest of good performing partners, and ultimately in the best interest of the beneficiaries.

2. PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING THE EX-POST MISSIONS

⁷ An important **moral effect** can also be expected on workers and managers: in the form of a positive incentive for those who care about the outcomes of their work, and in the form of a negative incentive for those who are not concerned, since these will lose the comfort provided by the practical lack of accountability.

2.1. Formulation of an Ex-Post-ROM Work Plan

This section is still to be completed, based formal acceptance of the Ex-Post methodology by AIDCO and subsequent input from the Contracting Authorities and the ROM Contractors. For the testing of the ex-post methodology EuropeAid Management had requested that a sample of 30% of all technically closed down projects be monitored ex-post. The figure of 30% was considered statistically valid to indicate general trends or evolutions).

2.2. Identification of projects for Ex-Post Missions

There are three key aspects to be considered in determining whether an intervention is eligible for Ex-Post-ROM: timing, representativity and efficiency.

Timing: The appropriate timing for an Ex-Post-ROM mission depends to a large extent on the nature of the project. The sustainability or impact “window period”⁸ varies from project to project, with extreme cases extending from projects that are supposed to begin showing their impact only five or ten years subsequent to their end, to projects that are designed to have a strategic impact at a specific moment in time, without sustainability of the benefits as such. A reference time-framework for Ex-Post-ROM missions is set from one year to two years subsequent to the technical closure⁹ of the project. However, it must be borne in mind that usefulness and technical accuracy continue to be the main purposes of the Ex-Post-ROM exercise, and, in this line of thinking, justified proposals showing the usefulness of a mission outside the aforementioned time-framework should always be considered unless methodologically unacceptable. Conversely, projects that due to their nature are bound to show their impact or sustainability outside the given time-framework must not be forced to undergo Ex-Post-ROM. Once these primary issues have been duly considered, it should also be taken into account preparation-wise that the further from the project’s end an Ex-Post-ROM visit takes place, the more difficult it becomes to attribute observable effects to the project.

Representativity: The final aim is to undertake ex-post ROM on all finished projects having an EC contribution above €1,000,000 and a sample of the smaller projects. Until this aim is achieved, the identification process must seek balanced representativity of the different sectors and priority areas, of the different geographical regions, and of the different levels of project performance. Without detriment to the general balance, biases are recognised as desirable in the case of preference for projects whose analysis is considered imminently useful or projects with particularly interesting or innovative approaches.

Efficiency: Projects that have been selected for an ex-post evaluation should, in principle, not be considered eligible so as to avoid duplication. On the other hand, projects that have already been the object of a final evaluation are, in principle, not incompatible with Ex-Post-ROM. The fact that a project has been previously submitted (or not) to on-going ROM, MTR or a Final Evaluation will objectively affect the

⁸ In Ex-Post-ROM “window period” designates the time after project closure during which impact or/and sustainability are not significantly present or not significantly observable due to the nature of the project.

⁹ A project is considered technically closed when there are no longer activities undertaken with EC financing.

approach and difficulty of the Ex-Post-ROM monitor, but it does not prejudge the suitability or not for a project to undergo Ex-Post-ROM.

Strategic coherence: It is needed that Ex-Post ROM responds to a strategic question, in order to make fully use of its advantages. The planning and selection of Ex-Post ROM projects should be made in conjunction with EC Delegations looking for aggregate issues regarding e.g. new programming, current portfolio or new design of interventions in the sector, in the country, with similar instruments, implementation modalities or the same partner. A regional/sub-regional approach in the Ex-Post-ROM planning (and not at country level) would facilitate the aggregation of lessons learned and the promotion of knowledge within a region.

2.3. Mission Planning

During the process of selection of projects, the Monitor's Brussels Office and EC Delegations need to verify in particular the following fundamental aspects prior to launching an Ex-Post-ROM visit:

- Definition of objectives of Ex-Post mission: It would be very useful for all Ex-Post ROM stakeholders (including the monitors) and especially for the main users (EC Delegations and/or AIDCO) to know the purpose of the Ex-Post mission (design of new intervention; learning related to sector/instrument/modality/implementing partner; EC programming; inputs for a similar intervention). If the ToR integrate the mission purpose and users of the results, the Ex-Post missions could really add value. A regional focus and an active involvement of the EC Delegations would be highly recommended.
- Verification of the project **closure**. The Task Manager is the best source for this step.
- Verification of the lack of **duplication** of missions (Ex-post Evaluation, etc.).
- Verification of appropriate **timing** for the visit according to the nature of the project (i.e. appropriate timeframe to observe impact and sustainability).
- Verification of **strategic coherence** of project selection, i.e. that the selected project responds to the thematic priorities for the yearly Ex-Post focus.
- Exchange of information on potential **sensitivity** of the Ex-Post-ROM visit. The Contractor needs to be informed by the EC Delegation in the following cases: (i) when the visit might be perceived by the partner country as interference or as a control of its performance once the external assistance has ended; (ii) when the visit is prone to the specific interests of a stakeholder; (iii) when the visit may raise unfounded expectations on projects' second phases in politically sensitive areas; (iv) when projects, potentially eligible for ex-post, are not yet administratively or financially closed. This information may just be given to the Mission Leader and relevant monitor to ensure their prudence during the visit or, in cases in which the visit risks generating more problems than advantages, the visit may be deferred.
- **Representativity** in project selection. This aspect does not need to be achieved in each Ex-Post-ROM visit, but in the long-term. EC Headquarters are in a better position than EC Delegations to verify this particular aspect.
- The Monitor's Brussels Office will request the EC Delegation to **liaise with Government** implementing agencies to ensure their involvement and prearrange availability for meetings.
- The added difficulties including access to information, the absence of project management and the possible dispersion of beneficiaries should be taken into account in the form of **earlier preparation arrangements** than the usual for on-going ROM visits.

It is proven that systematic transparency regarding the selection criteria and the timely sharing of information during the preparation period with the different stakeholders

involved in the visit (in particular those receiving the Ex-Post-ROM visit), is not only due out of respect, but it also greatly contributes to the success of the missions. The contrary gives rise to, in the best of cases, misunderstandings and difficulties in the monitors' field work, and it may even jeopardise the mission or relations with partners.

2.3.1. Collection of Materials for Ex-Post ROM Missions

The Monitor's Brussels Office is responsible for collecting core documentation for monitors prior to the mission. Given the likely absence of project management during the visit, the role of the Delegations in providing the documentation and helping identify counterparts becomes extremely important. The Monitor's Brussels Office will request the EC Delegation to examine their archives and to liaise with the Implementing Agencies to collect available relevant information.

In Ex-Post missions, useful documents are those related to the end/closing phase of the interventions, such final reports (narrative and financial) and the last audit, last progress reports (last MR; and lessons learned of other MR, if any), final evaluations, hand over strategy document (if any), goods and equipment inventory (if any) or other closure reports (*for relevance, quality of design, efficiency and effectiveness*). To some extent, planning documents are useful to analyze relevance and quality of design, especially if there is a need to validate some changes during project's lifetime. On the other hand, documents that systematize experiences after project's end (e.g. publications, brochures, videos, press articles, policy documents, etc.) or existent documentation which include current references to supported interventions are relevant to make conclusions on *impact and sustainability*. Sources such sector ministries, public or private institutions, other donors and NGOs which work in the sector/thematic area should be helpful. Stakeholders who adopted some of the project outputs are also part of the key institutions to interview.

In the cases when the preparation phase does not succeed in collecting a significant part of the main documents, the monitor will require extra time to collect and study the documentation prior and subsequent to the field visit.

2.3.2. Selection of Monitors for Ex-Post Missions

Ex-Post-ROM requires more experienced monitors (not necessarily senior, but experienced in ROM) given the added complexity of the exercise. Sector specific and/or previous experience in the country would be desirable to make the learning process more usable in the short Ex-Post mission.

The involvement of local monitors¹⁰ and/or junior experts can be of great assistance in the preparation and/or co-execution (in tandem with experienced monitors) of Ex-Post-ROM missions.

¹⁰ Local monitor understood as resident in the country object of the visit, or accessing regularly the country and understanding its particularities and present situation (different from regional monitor).

3. EX-POST MISSIONS IN THE FIELD

The Ex-Post-ROM visit in the field follows similar steps to those of an on-going ROM visit; however, there are significant differences.

Larger sample of beneficiaries: In Ex-Post-ROM, beneficiaries¹¹ (which include target groups and final beneficiaries) become absolutely crucial as they are the primary source of information on *impact* and *sustainability*. Meeting a sufficient sample of the project's *target group(s)* is undoubtedly indispensable to assessing sustainability (and also impact) since they embody the groups or entities supposed to be immediately affected by the project at the Project Purpose level. Moreover, the likely absence of the project management at the time of the Ex-Post-ROM visit further reinforces the importance of the target groups as they may be the only source of the project's memory.

However, in Ex-Post-ROM, solely meeting the target group(s) will often not be sufficient to obtain a complete overview of the project's impact. For a complete overview, the monitor will also need to obtain information about (i) those supposed to benefit from the project in the long term at the level of society or sector at large (final beneficiaries) and (ii) those - other than beneficiaries - that might have been affected either positively or adversely by the intervention (assessment of the project's unplanned positive and negative effects). These requirements, together with the added difficulty of attribution in Ex-Post-ROM, result in practical terms in the need for the monitor to count on a sufficiently large and representative sample of the different groups of beneficiaries and to rely on sufficient secondary information on impact to formulate the Ex-Post Monitoring report.

More time required for arrangements and explanations: The added difficulties resulting from the possible dispersion of beneficiaries and other stakeholders should be taken into account, as should be borne in mind the fact that their stake in the project will presumably be less clear since its closure, which may affect the willingness of stakeholders to collaborate. These factors have two main consequences: the need for more time and notice for arrangements, and the need for an additional effort in explaining the visit both in the preparation and in the field visit phases. The time devoted to a clear explanation of the role and purpose of the Ex-Post-ROM mission is also paramount to avoid raising false expectations among the beneficiaries of the type "the project will come back".

Furthermore, data collection methods in an ex-post situation may require techniques such as group discussions or participatory appraisal methods (e.g. wealth rankings, mapping techniques) which imply longer preparation and implementation timings than the semi-structured interviews generally used in on-going ROM. Nevertheless, all involved stakeholders should be conscious of the methodological limits of Ex-Post-ROM, especially scarce time and resources, which do not permit to apply such appraisal methods rigorously (Annex 1).

Other Donors: The focus on impact, coordination or lessons learnt, the difficulty posed by impact attribution and the renewed interest in aspects such as quality of design or

¹¹ For a definition of beneficiaries see page 142 of the Project Cycle Management Guidelines, March 2004.

cost-effectiveness increase the pertinence and usefulness for the monitor to meet key donors in the project sector.

Desk study: The Ex-Post-ROM methodology test phase revealed that there is a remarkable increase in the amount of information to be found in secondary sources as well as a subsequent increase in the need for retrospective extrapolation. Consequently, more time is required to collect and analyse existing secondary sources of information (remaining records such as progress reports or work plans and available data – such as government statistics, etc. – allowing an overview of the impact).

Methodology: The greater difficulty of Ex-Post-ROM (especially when analysing impact), together with the fact that the time available to the monitor is still very limited, creates a situation in which a good choice of the right methodology is very important. The monitor, depending on the scenario, needs to be prepared to decide which methods to use out of a wide range of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) techniques: from direct observation, focus groups or semi-structured interviews to Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or others. According to what has been mentioned before, Ex-Post-ROM users should be conscious of the Ex-Post ROM methodological limits in order to adequate expectations of the instrument.

Budget: The higher degree of complexity of an Ex-Post-ROM visit in comparison to an on-going visit also translates in terms of higher costs. Issues mentioned above such as the likely absence of a project management structure, the need to cover larger geographical areas due to the dispersion of stakeholders or the use of resource-consuming data collection methods have direct implications for an Ex-Post-ROM mission budget. Earlier preparation arrangements are thus critical to ensure accurate budget estimations.

4. OVERALL TIME NEEDED FOR EX-POST MISSIONS

The special requirements of an Ex-Post-ROM visit (see previous chapter: “Ex-post Missions in the field”) determine, in the best of cases, a slightly longer field visit than in an on-going ROM visit and the need for desk study.

On average, it is expected that each monitor will spend from six to eight full days per project in the field, depending on the amount of information previously available, judgement of the monitor and mission leader on the most efficient distribution of time and domestic travel requirements. In-country time requirements will increase in the case that the preparation phases did not include the identification of contact persons at the stakeholders’ institutions. Contacting relevant stakeholders after arrival and arranging meetings and field visits from scratch may increase Ex-Post-ROM visits by up to three extra days.

The rest of the time on the mission will usually comprise briefing at the start of the mission, debriefing at the end, and desk study either before or after the field visit, depending on the timing at which information is made available to the monitor.

5. EX-POST ROM: REPORT WRITING

5.1. Ex-Post Monitoring Report

General remarks: There are no major differences between the on-going and the Ex-Post-ROM Monitoring Report formats. The sections *Project data*, *Financial data* and *Summary of conclusions* maintain the same structure. Under the *Explanatory comments* section the five monitoring criteria undergo a slight change in their titles so as to incorporate the ex-post perspective. Thus, *Relevance and Quality of Design* changes to *Relevance and Quality of Project Design*; *Efficiency of implementation to date* becomes *Efficiency of implementation*; *Effectiveness to date* becomes *Effectiveness*; *Prospects for impact* become *Impact to date* and *Potential sustainability* becomes *Sustainability to date*. Likewise, the so-called “recommendations box” which in on-going ROM was formulated as *Key observations, action(s) recommended and by whom (in order of priority)* becomes in Ex-Post-ROM the “lessons learnt box” and is formulated as *Lessons learnt and key observations (if any)*. A “learning approach” during the whole Ex-Post mission will facilitate the formulation of transferable conclusions.

The length of an Ex-Post-ROM Monitoring Report remains confined to three pages. The length of the text devoted to each criterion continues to be subject to the monitor’s judgement; however, it is expected that reflections on *Quality of Project Design*, *Impact to date*, *Sustainability to date* and *Lessons Learned* will, generally, occupy a larger proportion of the document than *Relevance*, *Efficiency* and *Effectiveness*. It is expected that lessons learned become more important and therefore evident in the MR.

Relevance: Ex-Post-ROM looks at both the historical and present relevance, but it no longer looks at further prospects for relevance. The relevance of a project is defined as “the appropriateness of project objectives to real problems, needs [...]”. The relevance criterion looks at: i) the policy context of the partner government and the EC development strategy in the country (strategic relevance); and ii) at the direct beneficiaries needs (direct beneficiaries relevance).

Ideally, at the project end the problem should no longer exist or, if it is a recurrent need (e.g. basic education), long-term solutions should be in place to enable the partners to handle the need themselves. Ex-Post-ROM should therefore consider the question of whether the problem was solved or whether the recurrent need was adequately addressed through project intervention.

The historical relevance poses the question “was the solution put in place the right one during the project’s lifetime?”. Present relevance seeks for evidence that the problem remains resolved today or that the need remains adequately addressed. Both perspectives are important, the first for assessing the project, the second for drawing lessons.

The monitor should look at both levels of relevance at two different moments, and will reflect on them in the appropriate box in the BCS. It should also be noted, that the second concept (present relevance) is in an ex-post situation intrinsically associated with the continuation of the stream of benefits, that is, with sustainability. Sub-criteria 5.2 in sustainability also address the issue, albeit with a slightly different focus on whether “the target groups continued to make use of relevant results.”

Monitors will not grade any future prospects of relevance.

Quality of the Project Design: Ex-Post-ROM should essentially provide a retrospective analysis of the Design in the light of the project performance. Assessment of the Quality of the Design with the benefit of hindsight enables monitors to draw particularly valuable lessons on project design: what worked, what did not, and if so, why? The monitor should look in particular at explicative links between the Design and the project's *Impact* and *Sustainability*, and reflect on the significance of the potential application of these explicative links to new project designs.

Efficiency: Ex-Post-ROM should aim at a broad review of efficiency avoiding detail, with a focus on major deviations, on explicative links between efficiency and impact & sustainability and seeking to understand the project's cost-efficiency. After project completion, efficiency is no longer a "living" concept, but a historical one. The interest of the Ex-Post-ROM assessment lies not in a detailed historical recreation of what happened, but in the following focal areas:

1. Broad review (avoiding details) of what happened during the implementation, placing the emphasis on major deviations, if any (inputs, activities and results). The focus should be put on the situation at project's end;
2. A general assessment of the actual cost-efficiency of the project by comparing, if possible, overall planned costs and targets with the current ones. The monitor is expected to make a broad comparison to identify major cost-efficiency deviations (both positive and negative), and not a detailed one which is considered beyond the scope of Ex-Post-ROM.
3. Identification and description of how the degree of efficiency explains the level of impact and sustainability to date.

Ex-Post-ROM should additionally provide information on the extent and quality of the results achieved if this assessment was not already complete during the on-going phase. In addition to that, the monitor should pay attention to management structures (institutional arrangements, M&E or learning systems and/or project organization) and their relation to project performance (lessons learned approach).

Effectiveness: Ex-Post-ROM assesses effectiveness until the project end and not beyond. The definition of effectiveness refers to "the contribution made by the project's results to the achievement of the project purpose". Effectiveness under Ex-Post-ROM will therefore attempt to assess the extent to which the project achieved its purpose up to the end of its implementation period, and the quality of this purpose in terms of real benefits to the intended target groups. The monitor is expected to carry out a retrospective extrapolation of what was the degree of effectiveness at the project end on the basis of the information available at the time of the Ex-Post-ROM visit. The presence of a final project report or an end evaluation may help the monitor in this exercise, but does not substitute the aforementioned extrapolation exercise. As at the efficiency criteria, the situation at project's end should get special attention.

The continuation of project benefits from the end of the project until the Ex-Post-ROM visit concerns sustainability, and is therefore dealt with in "sustainability to date" and not in "effectiveness".

Impact to Date: Ex-Post-ROM looks at Impact to date, but it no longer looks at further impact prospects. With information on impact directly observable,¹² the monitor should describe the project's current impact. Ex-post monitoring will not assess any additional future prospects for this criterion. As an exception to this rule, imminent risks potentially hampering impact to date, as measured under Ex-Post-ROM, should be mentioned in order to forewarn partners and the EC Delegation, but should not be attributed any grading. In cases in which previous on-going Monitoring Reports produced during the project lifetime contain *prospects for impact* estimates which substantially differ from the monitor's assessment on real *impact to date* during the Ex-Post-ROM visit, the monitor should comment on such deviations in the MR.

Sustainability to Date: Ex-Post-ROM looks at Sustainability to date, but it no longer looks at further potential Sustainability. With information on sustainability of the intervention directly observable,¹³ the monitor should describe the present level of continuation of the benefits. Ex-post monitoring will not assess any additional future prospects for this criterion. As an exception to this rule, imminent risks prompted by or caused by external factors, and potentially hampering the current sustainability as measured under Ex-Post-ROM, should be mentioned in order to forewarn partners and the EC Delegation, but should not be attributed any grading. In cases in which previous on-going Monitoring Reports produced during the project lifetime contain *potential sustainability* estimates which substantially differ from the monitor's assessment of *sustainability to date* during the Ex-Post-ROM visit, the monitor should comment on such deviations in the MR.

Lessons learnt and key observations (if any): The so-called 'recommendation box',¹⁴ in on-going ROM Monitoring Reports, changes its title in Ex-Post-ROM to *Lessons learnt and key observations (if any)*.

When filling in this crucial section, the monitor is expected to take into account the practical use that different stakeholders will give to the MR: Input for programming, for designing new projects or improving on-going interventions in the same sector or with the same implementing partner. When relevant best practices (successful pilot models, etc.) or cause-effect relationships leading to negative effects emerge they should also be included. Finally, comparison between on-going BCS and Ex-Post-ROM BCS are also a major source to identify lessons learnt through the analysis of major discrepancies between estimated prospects and real values. With the benefit of hindsight the monitor may relate such findings to the quality of the project design.

In this section, the emphasis is put on lessons learned, while key observations should be included only, if there is an urgent/pending need for action. The Ex-Post BCS Reader 2009 includes guiding questions for identifying and formulating lessons learned which should be used to improve the quality of development interventions. The proposed categories to present lessons learned (related to sector/thematic areas; intervention

¹² In order to have a full overview on real impact, the nature of the project needs to be taken into account so as to determine appropriate timing for the Ex-Post-ROM visit.

¹³ In order to have a full overview on real sustainability, the nature of the project needs to be taken into account so as to determine appropriate timing for the Ex-Post-ROM visit.

¹⁴ Monitoring Report, section V): "Key observations, actions recommended and by whom (in order of priority)."

strategies and organization/implementation modalities) should facilitate their access, also in an aggregated way.

5.2. Ex-Post BCS

Specific BCS for Ex-Post-ROM have been newly designed.¹⁵ Although they maintain the same structure and format as the on-going BCS, there are some changes. The main characteristics of the new Ex-Post-ROM BCS by comparing them to the on-going BCS are summarised below:

- Ex-Post-ROM BCS have been designed under the principle that it should be fully comparable with on-going BCS. Therefore, grades within each criterion remain the same and the five criteria have the same weight (20%).
- The number of prime issues under each criterion has been maintained. However, they have been rephrased in some cases to adapt them to the essence of the Ex-Post-ROM exercise: Minor adjustments in this regard have been made to reflect the changes of perspective, emphasis and methodological peculiarities in Ex-Post-ROM.
- Both the number and essence of the questions under each prime issue have not been changed to a large extent, above all in the ex-post monitoring focal criteria, namely *Quality of Project Design*, *Impact to date* and *Sustainability to date*. In fact, it is in the questions under each prime issue that changes in perspective and emphasis are more noticeable.
- Horizontal and cross cutting issues have been adapted to the Ex-Post-perspective. In these sections, an emphasis on lessons learned is also evident;
- The box “Key action(s) recommended and by whom in order of priority” included at the bottom of each criterion has been replaced by “Lessons learnt and key observations (if any)”.
- The section of “persons interviewed and key documents” contains a focus on resource persons and documents in order to respond to knowledge management purposes. In the case of Ex-Post- monitoring, this section becomes more relevant, because it can be difficult to find key informants, and additional secondary information needs to be included. .

¹⁵ A document entitled “Draft Reader for using the Ex-Post Results-oriented Monitoring (Ex-Post-ROM) Background Conclusion Sheets (BCS)” 2009 has been drawn up so as to guide ex-post monitors throughout this newly designed BCS. This document complements the conceptual Ex-Post-ROM framework described in the current guideline.

6. ANNEX 1. OVERVIEW OF RAPID APPRAISAL METHODS.

Rapid appraisal methods are quick, low-cost ways to gather the views and feedback of beneficiaries and other stakeholders, in order to respond to decision-makers' needs for information.¹⁶

They can be used for:

- Providing rapid information for management decision-making, especially at the project or program level.
- Providing qualitative understanding of complex socioeconomic changes, highly interactive social situations, or people's values, motivations, and reactions.
- Providing context and interpretation for quantitative data collected by more formal methods.

ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Low cost. -Can be conducted quickly. -Provides flexibility to explore new ideas.
DISADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Findings usually relate to specific communities or localities—thus difficult to generalize from findings. -Less valid, reliable, and credible than formal surveys.
COST	Low to medium, depending on the scale of methods adopted.
SKILLS REQUIRED	Non-directive interviewing, group facilitation, field observation, note-taking, and basic statistical skills.
TIME REQUIRED	Four to six weeks, depending on the size and location of the population interviewed and the number of sites observed.

Some examples of Rapid Appraisal Methods

Key informant interview—a series of open-ended questions posed to individuals selected for their knowledge and experience in a topic of interest. Interviews are qualitative, in-depth, and semi-structured. They rely on interview guides that list topics or questions.

Focus group discussion—a facilitated discussion among 8–12 carefully selected participants with similar backgrounds. Participants might be beneficiaries or program staff, for example. The facilitator uses a discussion guide. Note-takers record comments and observations.

Community group interview—a series of questions and facilitated discussion in a meeting open to all community members. The interviewer follows a carefully prepared questionnaire.

¹⁶ Extraction of: World Bank: Monitoring and Evaluation. Some Tools, Methods & Approaches. World Bank operations evaluation department. Evaluation capacity development. Washington, DC. (2004). The document also available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/oed/ecd/tools/>

For further information:

1. <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/>
2. http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/methodology/tools/too_chk_en.htm
3. <http://www.worldbank.org/oed/ecd/tools/>
4. <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/sourcebook/sba110.htm>
5. http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34435_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

Direct observation—use of a detailed observation form to record what is seen and heard at a program site. The information may be about ongoing activities, processes, discussions, social interactions, and observable results.

Mini-survey—a structured questionnaire with a limited number of close-ended questions that is administered to 50–75 people. Selection of respondents may be random or ‘purposive’ (interviewing stakeholders at locations such as a clinic for a health care survey).

Annex 8. New template for Ex-Post aggregate information

See attached documents.

LESSONS LEARNED IN **XXXXX**¹⁷. IN **XXXXXX**¹⁸
ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT

I. Introduction

1. Background and objectives
2. Methodology

II. Regional and/or sector context

1. Sector/country specific context
2. EC strategy

III. Findings

1. Concept approach

Review of concept debate and applied approach in specific sector/topic/thematic area. Emphasis in global sector approaches.

2. Specific (sector) intervention strategies

Review of project strategies applied in the different analysed projects. Emphasis in developed “products”/sector related methodologies at project level.

3. Organization and implementation modalities

Review of management arrangements with learning potential (including organization/institutional structure, M&E or learning systems, etc.)

- a. At project level (*Comparison of different project solutions*)
- b. EC instruments (*e.g. Aggregate analysis of NGO-cofinancing, specific thematic lines, etc.*)

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations for design of new interventions (learning and knowledge management purpose).

¹⁷ Sector, thematic area or topic (e.g. health, economic development or poverty reduction, gender, etc.). Depending on the interest, the aggregation could be based on a concept approach (thematic), on a specific intervention strategy/instrument or on an implementation modality.

¹⁸ Country/Sub-region/Region/Globally.