



**ISFOL**  
**National Evaluation Unit**  
**for the**  
**European Social Fund**

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(ESF 2000-06 – Objective 3 Community Support Framework)

# The Isfol ESF Evaluation Unit (1)

- ISFOL is a research institute on human resources development counseling the Italian Ministry of Welfare
- The **Esf National Evaluation Unit** was established at ISFOL in 1995 to evaluate the co-financed programme and policies of the 1994-1999 European Social Fund in Italy
- Its scope has been confirmed and broadened for the following 2000-2006 EFS programme

# The ESF National Evaluation Unit (2)

- The Esf National Evaluation Unit represents the core of the National Monitoring and Evaluation system for the assessment of the **European Social Fund** programme in Italy
- Its mission is to support the European Commission, the Italian Institutions (Ministry of Welfare, Managing Authorities and other ministries) in the evaluation of ESF programmes

# The ESF National Evaluation Unit (3)

## ESF structure in Italy

ESF is defined by the regulation 1784/99 as the financial instrument that “shall support measures to prevent and combat unemployment and to develop human resources and social integration in the labour market”

### Centre-north Regions

- **Objective 3** Community Support Framework
- 14 Regional Operational Programmes
- National Operational Programme managed by the Ministry of Welfare

### South-Regions

- **Objective 1** Community Support Framework
- 7 Regional Operational Programmes
- 5 National Operational Programmes managed by the various Ministries

# Institutional role

## **The institutional role the Community Support Framework (CSF) has given to the ESF National Evaluation Unit**

The scientific and methodological aspects of the Operational Programmes' evaluation activities are coordinated by the ESF National Evaluation Unit operating at ISFOL since 1995.

The Esf National Evaluation Unit is also responsible for:

- ▣ proposing the indicators, strategies and methodological standards for OP evaluation, taking into account the models and standards developed by ERDF and EAGGF (national and European level) and by EC and OECD for evaluations;
- ▣ implementing, in itinere, specific evaluations on topics and policies of strategic importance;
- ▣ analysing the ESF impact on national/regional human-resource and labour development policies within the framework of the European Employment Strategy and NAPs;
- ▣ implementing, on the basis of specific OP evaluations and other specific analyses, the evaluation of the CSF (mid-term and final);
- ▣ participating in the Objective 1 National Evaluation System in cooperation with the Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of the Economy and Finance.

# Internal structure

- The Esf National Evaluation Unit is composed of about **20 professionals and support staff** with expertise ranging from human sciences to labour affairs, statistics, economics, IT, communications and dissemination
- The Unit's annual budget amounts to 1.6 million euro

# Approach to Evaluation

Our Evaluation Strategy is founded:

*on a multidimensional approach....*

- 1. *Multilevel:*** different levels of programming – central and local
- 2. *Multifocus:*** input, process, output and outcomes
- 3. *Multidisciplinary:*** different disciplinary fields
- 4. *Participatory:*** involvement of stakeholders and policy makers

# Approach to Evaluation

## *... based on three key tools...*

1. A central/local monitoring system
2. A common set of indicators
3. A classification system for policy-based interventions

## *... entailing a three-stage process*

1. Preparatory actions for constructing the monitoring and evaluation system
2. Implementing specific evaluations
3. Actions for disseminating an evaluation culture

# The activities undertaken

## The Esf National Evaluation Unit operates at two levels:

### STRATEGIC

- standardizing surveys as programme implementation responsibilities are shared
- defining common standards to produce coherent physical indicators at central and local level
- creating basic knowledge at central and local level to monitor programmes and to assess the effects generated by their implementation
- defining evaluation and monitoring methods
- developing and disseminating the evaluation culture on a national and European level

### OPERATIONAL

- scientific and methodological coordination of evaluations implemented at regional and central level
- mid-term and final evaluation for Objective 3 CSF
- implementation of Objective 1 evaluation within the Esf National Evaluation System
- evaluation of occupational impacts, impact analysis of ESF vocational training system
- quality assessment for the vocational training system

# National Working Groups

The Esf National Evaluation Unit manages the

## **PLACEMENT WORKING GROUP**

to set up a common framework for retrospective studies on ESF beneficiaries including:

- ❑ a format for intervention applications
- ❑ a questionnaire for surveying employment outcomes
- ❑ a questionnaire for evaluating employment outcomes of continuing education
- ❑ a model to estimate the net impacts of training policies

# National Working Groups

The Esf National Evaluation Unit is running the

## **QUALITY WORKING GROUP**

to assess the quality of Regional Training Systems through:

- ❑ defining evaluation methods
- ❑ testing evaluation methods developed on selected pilot areas to identify critical drivers and dimensions
- ❑ identifying Regional Occupational Training Systems strengths and weaknesses

# Main results at system level

- **Evaluation system operational** at both a central and local level
- Evaluation system **tailored to policies and effects** to be considered (input, output, outcomes, impacts)
- Evaluation activities based on the **partnership principle** (*national working groups*)
- Promotion of an **evaluation culture** among all actors involved

# ESF 2000-06 Mid-Term Review

- The ESF 2000-2006 programme for Italy amounts to 8.7 billion Euro of which, at 31-12 2002, the Objective 3 MAs had committed 39.5% and spent 17%
- At 31-12-2002 over 70 thousand interventions had been launched
- In the same period around 1.4 million beneficiaries had been involved

# ESF 2000-06 Mid-Term Review

## □ **Analysis of the target**

49.2% of women participated in the interventions implemented in 2000-2002. There was a lower percentage of women participating in social inclusion policies and in continuing training.

The European Social Fund provides opportunities for different users:  
People from 19 to 44 years of age (over 80%)  
People with low educational standards (over 50%)  
Students, the unemployed and workers

## □ **Coverage Rate**

Interventions involved 18% of job-seekers and 21% of young people at risk of drop-out

## □ **Placement Analysis**

One year after the interventions had ended, the number of participants who had found jobs ranged from 60% (the disadvantaged) to 75% (women)

## □ **First Impacts**

Increasing job opportunities for people involved in ESF initiatives