



**ERDF
Investment for Growth and Jobs
Programme
Northern Ireland
2014-2020**

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

November 2020

Contents	
Section	
	Executive Summary
	1. Aims of the Programme
	2. EC Focus of Monitoring and Evaluation
	3. European Commission – Evaluation Requirements
	4. Purpose of the Evaluation Plan
	5. Overview of the Evaluation Plan
	6. Responsibilities and Process
	6.1 Adoption, Review and Follow up of the Evaluation Plan
	6.2 NI Statistics and Research Agency Ex-Ante Evaluation
	6.3 Ad-hoc Evaluation
	6.4 Invest NI – Evaluation of Priorities 1 and 2
	6.5 Evaluation of Priority 3
	6.6 Cross-cutting Themes
	6.7 Sustainability
	6.8 Equality
	6.9 Publicity
	6.10 On-going Monitoring
	7. Expertise and Independence
	8. Evaluation Schedule
	9. Timing
	10. Evaluation Methods
	11. Communication of Evaluation
	12. Human Resources
Annex A	Evaluation and Monitoring Schedule
Annex B	EC Reporting and Evaluation Overview
Annex C	Performance Indicators
Annex D	Glossary

Version Control

Version	Date	Change
2	08.11.16	Annex A Status of evaluation changed for Grant for R&D, FI A2F Techstart and FI A2F Cofund
3	04.12.18	Incorporates PA3 activity and other minor textual changes
4	30.09.19	Annex A status of evaluation changed for Grant for R&D, Design Service, SFA, FI – A2F-Techstart, FI –Co-IF and BRT evaluations. Annex C minor textual changes
5	09.11.2020	Update to Adoption, Review and Follow up of the Evaluation Plan, section 6.1.5 Update to Evaluation of Priority 3, section 6.5.1 Update to Evaluation of Priority 3, section 6.5.2 Update to On-going Monitoring section 6.10 Updates to Annex A

Executive Summary

Aims of the Programme

The EU Investment for Growth and Jobs (IGJ) Programme (ERDF) aims to improve the economic competitiveness of Northern Ireland and contribute to the EU2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, to raise combined public and private investment levels in Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) to 3% of GDP and to continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025.

Regulations and Guidance

The EU has strengthened its focus on the results of policy and the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) requires Managing Authorities to undertake evaluation activity to assess the effects of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programmes. The CPR also requires an Evaluation Plan to be developed for programmes, setting out how evaluations will be organised in order to provide evidence on the effects of policy making.

This Plan does not attempt to replicate details found in guidance. All evaluations will be completed in line with the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE) as well as the following Commission guidance:

- Guidance Document on Monitoring and Evaluation (2014); and
- Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans (2015).

Links to the guidance referenced above can be found on the dedicated Programme website.

Overview of the Evaluation Plan

This document sets out the Evaluation Plan for the NI IGJ ERDF Programme, outlining how the Managing Authority (MA) will ensure effective monitoring and evaluation to support the successful management and delivery of the Programme. It includes the following elements:

- Evaluation Responsibilities and Process;
- Expertise and Independence;
- An evaluation schedule listing evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale. The schedule includes a timetable and an indicative budget for implementation of the Plan (see Annex A);
- Methods to be used for the individual evaluations and their data requirements;
- Provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected; and
- A strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations; and
- Human resources involved. (There is a legal obligation on Member States to provide the necessary resources for carrying out evaluations).

This Evaluation Plan is an evolving document and further detail may be added as the Programme progresses, including details of individual evaluations which become available.

Evaluation Responsibilities

The Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) has overall responsibility for overseeing Programme evaluation, approving the Evaluation Plan and reviewing and commenting on evaluation results.

The MA is responsible for drafting the Evaluation Plan for PMC approval, overseeing and managing the delivery and quality of the Evaluation Plan and reporting evaluation results to PMC throughout the Programming period.

Evaluation Process

Once approved by the PMC, the MA will monitor the delivery of the Evaluation Plan to ensure evaluations (including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact) progress in line with the Evaluation Plan and that each evaluation is subject to appropriate follow-up in accordance with the Fund specific rules.

MA may delegate the delivery of evaluations to an Intermediate Body (IB), where relevant, while overseeing the quality and implementation of the evaluation process. Each evaluation will detail the structures, responsibilities and evaluation process for the review.

All evaluation results will be presented to the PMC, accompanied where relevant, by a response or comment from the Managing Authority. Following PMC, evaluations will be sent to the Commission and published on the Programme's dedicated website.

Results of evaluations will also be included, when available, in Annual Implementation Reports which are approved by PMC and submitted to the European Commission.

An Evaluation Steering Group may be established (with representation from PMC and supported by Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency (NISRA) and / or other independent experts as appropriate) to oversee major Programme evaluations.

Expertise and Independence

To ensure adequate expertise of evaluations, consideration will be given to the make-up (internal / external / mixture) of those assigned to the evaluation and its oversight. Suitable representation will be assigned to individual evaluations to ensure that evaluation is conducted independently of the activity being assessed and will establish arrangements to ensure functional independence of evaluators from the authorities responsible for programme implementation. CPR Art.54 (3)

Evaluation is a specialist field and most evaluations will be conducted by experts and external consultants who are engaged because of their skills in this field. Therefore, significant in-house training in evaluation is not anticipated. Managing Authority will, however, ensure that staff involved in

Programme evaluation are appropriately trained and have the necessary expertise to carry out their responsibilities. Any evaluation training needs will be incorporated into the relevant organisational training plan.

Evaluation Schedule

The evaluation schedule (which can be found at Annex A) outlines the evaluations planned for the Programme. All schemes / activities will be evaluated at least once during the programming period to assess how support from the Programme has contributed to the objectives of the related priority.

The timing of the Evaluation Plan will also ensure that the essential material is available in time for the Managing Authority to meet the regulatory requirement laid down in article 114.2 (CPR) to submit to the Commission a report summarising the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period, by 31 December 2022 (Article 114(2) CPR). Annex B provides an overview to the EC's reporting and evaluation timeframe.

A suite of performance indicators (see Annex C) has been developed for the Programme which will be used for on-going monitoring to track the implementation and delivery of the OP and highlight any changes due to external factors that may impact on the deliverables (results, targets). This will enable the MA to react to any changes identified by taking corrective action if necessary as well as complement monitoring activity and aid decision making.

The Commission has primary responsibility for the ex-post evaluation in collaboration with the Managing Authority. The aim of the ex-post evaluation will be to compare the expected objectives with those actually achieved by looking at the impact and utilisation of resources to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the assistance.

Evaluation Methods

A full range of evaluation methods will be employed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activity within the Programme. All evaluations will be completed in line with the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE) as well as the following Commission guidance:

- Guidance Document on Monitoring and Evaluation (2014); and
- Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans (2015).

Methodology will be developed for each scheme or activity in the Programme which builds on the previous evaluations of those activities, where available.

Managing Authority will monitor the quality of evaluations which will be required to be completed in line with the guidance referenced above. This includes the need to draft good terms of reference for assignments and, where relevant, the important role that contract management plays in delivering quality evaluation results.

Provision of Data

Key monitoring systems have been established to ensure performance information is both accurate and timely. The source of data to be used for performance monitoring is included in the performance indicator table at Annex C. The establishment of a Central Database for recording all project level information will ensure key data is collected to provide monitoring and reporting information for Progress Reports, Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) and evaluations.

Communication of Evaluations

Once approved by the Programme Monitoring Committee, the Evaluation Plan will be uploaded to the EC's SFC database and published on the dedicated Programme website.

All individual evaluations will be presented to the PMC and subsequently uploaded to SFC and published on the Programme's dedicated website.

Opportunity for co-ordination of evaluations will be facilitated through publication of this Evaluation Plan, the results of individual evaluations and the involvement of DoF (as Member State) for all NI EU Structural Funds Programmes and NI Statistics and Research Agency in evaluations and as representatives at PMC.

Human Resources

As provided for in the Regulations, evaluation activity may be funded from the Programme's technical assistance (TA) budget. The Evaluation Plan identifies the resources required to implement the plan. Where technical assistance is used to fund evaluation activity, this is included in the TA budget.

All information relating to the Programme can be found at the dedicated website – www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk.

1. Aims of the Programme

1.1 The EU Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme (ERDF) aims to improve the economic competitiveness of Northern Ireland and contribute to EU2020 objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, to raise combined public and private investment levels in Research, Development and Innovation (RD&I) to 3% of GDP and to continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025.

1.2 The Programme aims to address Northern Ireland's key development needs which have been identified as follows:

- To increase research and development activity and business expenditure on Research and Development;
- To address low levels of business growth, and comparatively few high growth companies, and to increase employment levels;
- To address historic failures in the provision of risk capital and an over-reliance on bank financing for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);
- To address the poor energy efficiency of much of the social housing stock in Northern Ireland in order to contribute to energy efficiency and fuel poverty targets; and
- To contribute to the rapid transit system for Belfast by investing in complementary activities which will aim to reduce journey times and facilitate a modal shift from car to low carbon public transport thus reducing carbon emissions and encouraging more active, sustainable public transport options.

1.3 Further information about the Programme can be found on the dedicated Programme website www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk, including:

- detailed information in the Operational Programme document; and
- a Citizen's Summary of the Operational Programme.

2. EC Focus of Monitoring and Evaluation

2.1 In the 2014-2020 programme period, the EU has implemented an increased focus on **results oriented policy** and created a significantly greater emphasis on monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation have been more clearly defined and there is a requirement for methodical rigour in capturing the effects of interventions. Evaluation is a valuable programming tool which adds to the Structural Funds implementation and management processes. With timely, accurate and appropriate monitoring data, evaluation can be used to ensure Programmes are meeting their objectives. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation help to:

- deliver the Programme in an efficient manner (the management of the Programme);
- assess whether the Programme has produced the required results; and
- provide learning points for future actions and policy decisions.

3. European Commission - Evaluation Requirements

3.1 The 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) regulations represent a radical change for operational programmes. The Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) emphasises programme objectives, the logic intervention to achieve expected results and the evaluation and effectiveness of impacts. The CPR requires an Evaluation Plan to be developed for programmes, setting out how evaluations will be organised in order to provide evidence on the effects of policy making. In addition, it requires annual reporting on outputs and results including findings of evaluations where available.

3.2 For the 2014-2020 programming period, there are new regulatory requirements for impact evaluations to be carried out. Art. 54- 56 of the CPR stipulates that: *During the programming period, the managing authority shall*

ensure that evaluations, including evaluations to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact are carried out, for each programme on the basis of the evaluation plan At least once during the programming period, an evaluation shall assess how support from the ESI Funds has contributed to the objectives for each priority. All evaluations shall be examined by the monitoring committee and sent to the Commission."

4. Purpose of this Evaluation Plan

4.1 The purpose of this Evaluation Plan is to improve the quality of the evaluations carried out through the programming period. This plan aims to:

- Improve the quality of evaluations through proper planning, including through identification and collection of necessary data (Article 54(2) CPR);
- enable informed programme management and policy decisions on the basis of evaluation findings;
- provide a framework to plan impact evaluations (Article 56(3)CPR)
- ensure that evaluations provide inputs for annual implementation and progress reports;
- facilitate the synthesis of findings from different Member States by the Commission and the exchange of available evidence; and
- ensure that resources for funding and managing the evaluations are appropriate.(Article 54(2) CPR).

5. Overview of the Evaluation Plan

5.1 The remainder of this document sets out the Evaluation Plan for the NI IGJ ERDF Programme, outlining how the MA will ensure effective monitoring and evaluation to support the successful management and delivery of the Programme. It includes the following elements:

- Evaluation Responsibilities and Process;
- Expertise and Independence;

- An evaluation schedule listing evaluations to be undertaken, their subject and rationale. The schedule includes a timetable and an indicative budget for implementation of the Plan (see Annex A);
- Methods to be used for the individual evaluations and their data requirements;
- Provisions that data required for certain evaluations will be available or will be collected;
- A strategy to ensure use and communication of evaluations; and
- Human resources involved. (There is a legal obligation on Member States to provide the necessary resources for carrying out evaluations).

6. Responsibilities and Process

6.1 Adoption, Review and Follow up of the Evaluation Plan

6.1.1 This Evaluation Plan has been drawn up in line with the requirements of the Common Provisions Regulations (CPR) and having regard to the European Commission guidance note for the programming period 2014-2020 entitled 'Guidance Documents on Evaluation Plans' (February 2015) and the Guidance Document on Monitoring and Evaluation (March 2014). Both documents can be found on the Managing Authority website.

6.1.2 The Evaluation Plan for the Programme must be drawn up and submitted to the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) by 11 December 2015 (no later than one year after the adoption of the Programme: 12 December 2014). The PMC is required to approve the Plan and subsequent updates. In line with EC recommendations, the Evaluation Plan will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, once a year.

6.1.3 The PMC will also examine progress in the implementation of the Evaluation Plan and the follow up given to findings of evaluations (Art 110 (1) (b)). This shall be reported in each annual implementation report (Art 111(4) (a) CPR).

6.1.4 The Evaluation Plan will be uploaded to SFC 2014 when approved (or amended) as recommended by the EC. In addition, individual evaluations will be uploaded to SFC 2014, when complete, to allow the EC to analyse the content for reporting purposes and to share best practice across Member States.

6.1.5 This amended Evaluation Plan was submitted to the Investment for Growth and Jobs (IGJ) Programme Monitoring Committee for consideration by written procedure on 16th November 2020 and will be uploaded to SFC 2014 on agreement.

6.2 NI Statistics and Research Agency Ex-ante Evaluation

6.2.1 The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) undertook the ex-ante evaluation for the IGJ Programme. The ex-ante evaluation started at the beginning of the Programme planning process and the evaluators worked closely with the Programme development team. The ex-ante was an iterative process and the evaluators provided feedback and guidance, both informally and through written reports.

6.2.2 The ex-ante evaluators found the socio-economic analysis, associated SWOT analysis and subsequent further exploration by the Managing Authority to be a sound basis for the economic and ERDF strategies. The ex-ante evaluator was content that the proposed Northern Ireland ERDF thematic concentration was adequately focused to reflect and address the needs in Northern Ireland and also meets the requirements of the ERDF regulation, the country-specific recommendations and aid in the contribution to EU2020 targets.

6.2.3 The strategic objective for the Programme aims to improve the economic competitiveness of Northern Ireland and contribute to EU2020 objectives. The evaluators highlighted the need for coherence with the other EU Programmes

and the relevant regional and national policies if the ERDF Programme is to maximise its effectiveness.

6.2.4 The Ex-ante Evaluation (which can be found on the dedicated Programme website) informed the development of the Operational Programme (OP).

6.3 Ad-hoc Evaluation

6.3.1 The Managing Authority recognises that it may be necessary to undertake ad-hoc evaluations at a Programme or priority level. The necessity for these will be dictated by a range of factors resulting from, for example, the annual review process or under-performance of a priority. The MA is committed to monitoring progress and initiating such evaluations as appropriate.

6.4 Invest NI - Evaluation of Priorities 1 and 2

6.4.1 As the Intermediate Body (IB) with responsibility for the implementation of priorities 1 and 2 and circa 80% of the Programme's allocated funding, Invest Northern Ireland has an established evaluation strategy for its funded schemes. The Managing Authority taps into these plans to ensure that there is ongoing evaluation of the innovation and competitiveness projects. This helps ensure that the outcomes for these interventions are evaluated and recommendations made about future progress, therefore, strengthening the potential for the Programme to achieve its main aim.

6.5 Evaluation of Priority 3

6.5.1 The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) have been designated for the purpose of delivering priority 3 objectives and have an established evaluation plan in place.

DfI evaluation summary

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Belfast Rapid Transit scheme.

The Post Project Review structure for BRT Project was outlined in the 2015 Outline Business Case Addendum. This is a two-stage process, with the first review being undertaken within one year of the operational date and the second review within three years. The first review was completed in December 2019 and focuses on BRT project delivery. This Evaluation can be found at: [http://www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk/downloads/DFI - Milewater Service Centre PPE.pdf](http://www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk/downloads/DFI_-_Milewater_Service_Centre_PPE.pdf)

The second review will focus on the wider set of operational impacts of the BRT Project and will be completed by September 2021 by DfI's Public Transport Division

The schedule of evaluations of each Programme activity can be found at Annex A.

- 6.5.2 The designation of The Department for Communities (DFC) as an IB was completed on 29th March 2019 under Priority 3. The COVID19 lockdown has delayed the programme works by approximately 19 weeks and changing Covid19 restrictions continue to hamper a return to full working.

DfC in conjunction with the NI Housing Executive (NIHE) are currently conducting a review to ascertain what impact this delay as well as any potential future delays resulting from ongoing COVID19 restrictions could have on the Projects ability to spend its full allocation and meet its performance targets. On receipt of this information, Managing Authority will analyse and identify any appropriate corrective action that can be taken to

ensure that the Programme utilises its maximum allocation. Once this is complete and evaluation plan will be put in place for inclusion.

- 6.5.3 The Managing Authority will use these evaluations to determine the success of the ERDF intervention.

6.6 Cross-cutting Themes

- 6.6.1 Equality and Sustainability are two cross-cutting themes of EU funding. However, the Programme impact on these was considered ex-ante and determined to have neutral effect. Therefore specific evaluation is considered unnecessary. Individual evaluations will incorporate equality and sustainability, where relevant.

6.7 Sustainability

- 6.7.1 All schemes are subject to NICS requirements for Sustainability Impact Assessments. Sustainability will be most relevant under priority 3 (supporting a shift towards a low carbon economy) and this will be incorporated into the evaluation of this priority when determined.

6.8 Equality

- 6.8.1 There is a strong legislative structure present in Northern Ireland and given the macro-economic focus of the Programme interventions, the ex-ante evaluator is content that the objectives and actions do not have a gender focus. The representation of the Equality Commission on the Consultative Partnership Group during the development the Programme and on the PMC provides input to equal opportunities and non-discrimination issues. The LED measure, which provides support to individuals, will be monitored for equality.

6.9 Publicity

- 6.9.1 There is a regulatory requirement to undertake publicity and communication activity which includes the development and subsequent evaluation of a Communication Strategy for the Programme. The NI IGJ ERDF Communication Strategy was presented to and agreed at the spring 2015 PMC. This strategy built on findings of the evaluation of the previous Programme's Communication Plan.
- 6.9.2 Publicity is monitored throughout the lifetime of the Programme. The Managing Authority monitors publicity actions as stipulated within the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Intermediate Bodies, Letters of Offer to project promoters, the Communication Strategy and Action Plan, a designated Communications Officer for the Programme and management verification checks.
- 6.9.3 In addition, the Managing Authority has developed a dedicated website (www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk). This is updated regularly with case studies and news to promote success stories of the Programme. IB(s) will be required to submit regular reports to the Managing Authority detailing all publicity activity undertaken in the previous period; this "compliance" record is supported by Press Releases, photographs etc clearly showing all steps taken by IBs and Projects to comply with and promote regulatory publicity requirements. Selected articles and case studies will be published on the Programme website and reported in the AIR.
- 6.9.4 In April 2011, the MA undertook an evaluation of the Communications Plan for the 2007/13 ERDF Programme. The evaluation resulted in a range of recommendations for further improvement with a particular emphasis on the need to "sell the benefits, not the funding". In response the Managing Authority adopted a "results orientated" communication strategy. Action was taken on the main findings and these were implemented for the IGJ Programme. A further evaluation was undertaken by the MA in December

2018 and it was found that these recommendations were on track. The MA will continue to monitor progress against the agreed IGJ Communication Strategy.

6.10 On-going Monitoring

6.10.1 Alongside the development of the Programme, and the ex-ante evaluation, work was carried out to produce a suite of indicators to enable on-going monitoring of the Programme. These indicators, and their targets, were informed by a number of pieces of research and a range of processes, the experience gained in monitoring the Sustainable Competitiveness Programme, the Ex-Ante Evaluation for the Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme and consultation responses to the draft IGJ Operational Programme (OP). Some of these indicators were revised when the Programme was modified in November 2017. A modification was also approved by the Commission in November 2018 to priority 3 following the Grenfell Tower disaster. The formal designation of the Department for Communities (DFC) as an IB responsible for the energy efficiency in social housing project was completed on 29th March 2019. A further modification was approved by monitoring committee members on 22nd April 2020 and was subsequently adopted by the EC on 25th May 2020. This resulted in the re-allocation of a total of €13.735m ERDF from Priority Axes 2, 3 and 4 into Priority Axis 1. The Managing Authority took this approach in the knowledge that, in due course, a full programme modification would be required to adjust the targets to reflect the fact that the assumptions the original targets were based on have proved to be incorrect. This work has been undertaken recently and is now being presented to Monitoring Committee members in a separate paper for their consideration.

The current list of monitoring indicators can be found at Annex C.

6.10.2 Managing Authority, in conjunction with IBs, will monitor performance against the indicators as the Programme progresses and be alert to external factors which could impact on the continued relevance of performance indicators.

- 6.10.3 Progress reports will be produced for each PMC meeting. These describe, for each Priority, the progress that has been made as well as analysis of where progress is either notably good or below expectation.
- 6.10.4 Annual monitoring information is used to complete the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs), which must include the progress made in implementing the OP in relation to the specific objectives and targets, using the indicators.
- 6.10.5 Additionally, the MA regularly monitors financial forecasts, allocations, commitments and expenditure for the Programme. Combined with an analysis of the exchange rate, this proactive management of the Programme allows the MA to respond to emerging issues with early identification of any gaps in funding and therefore the potential for additional activity to be included in the Programme, enabling the full drawdown on funds to remain on track.

7. Expertise and Experience

- 7.1 Art 54 (3) CPR stipulates that: *Evaluations shall be carried out by internal or external experts that are functionally **independent** of the authorities responsible for programme implementation.* In accordance with this requirement, evaluations will be carried out by experts or bodies (internal, external or mixed) that meet this requirement.
- 7.2 The independence of evaluation can also be enhanced by the presence of steering groups in which various stakeholders are represented. The principle role of a Steering Group is to ensure a high quality and useful evaluation. This involves facilitating the work of the evaluators through, for example, providing access to information and contacts, and elaborating evaluating questions and key issues that they feel should be informed. A Steering group should not attempt to influence the evaluators to omit certain evidence or to come to conclusions they would prefer to hear that are not substantiated by the evaluation evidence.

- 7.3 Evaluation Steering Groups will be established for all major evaluations carried out under this plan. Membership for these steering groups will be drawn from the Programme's Monitoring Committee. For example, in the previous programme an Evaluation Steering Group was established to advise on the midterm evaluation, overseeing the evaluation process from inception through to the final report. Its principle role was to ensure a high quality and useful evaluation. The Group's responsibilities included agreeing the terms of reference for the review and overseeing and facilitating the work of the evaluators. The Steering Group provided an appropriate mechanism for controlling the performance of the evaluator at interim stages and assumed responsibility for approving the final report. Similar arrangements are envisaged for any major evaluations of the IGJ Programme.
- 7.4 Managing Authority, in conjunction with the relevant IB, will ensure that individual evaluations are conducted by evaluators that are functionally independent of the authorities responsible for programme / scheme implementation.

8. Evaluation Schedule

- 8.1 The evaluation schedule (which can be found at Annex A) outlines the planned evaluations for the Programme. As required by the regulations, the plan covers all funded schemes ensuring that all activity will be evaluated at least once during the programming period to assess how support from the Programme has contributed to the objectives of the related priority. In addition, ad-hoc evaluations may be added as the Programme progresses and the need arises.

9. Timing

- 9.1 The anticipated timing of proposed evaluations is included in the Evaluation schedule at Annex A. The evaluation and reporting schedules at Annex A

together show timing and how this fits into the wider Commission reporting framework at Annex B.

- 9.2 The Evaluation Plan will ensure that the essential material is available in time for the Managing Authority to meet the regulatory requirement laid down in article 114.2 (CPR) to submit to the Commission a report summarising, for the Operational Programme, the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period, by 31 December 2022 (Article 114(2) CPR).

10. Evaluation methods

- 10.1 The Commission provides guidance on evaluation methods through an online portal 'EVALSED' which is maintained and updated on the website of the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban policy. A full range of evaluation methods will be employed, as relevant, to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of activity within the Programme.

- 10.2 Methodology will be developed for each evaluation undertaken which builds on the previous evaluations of those activities, where available.

- 10.3 Managing Authority will monitor the quality of evaluations which will be required to be completed in line with the guidance referenced above. This includes the need to draft good terms of reference for assignments and, where relevant, the important role that contract management plays in delivering quality evaluation results. EC 'Guidance Document on Evaluation Plans' (February 2015) includes, at Annex 1, guidance relating to Terms of Reference (TOR) for Impact Evaluations. This section is included to assist national authorities in preparing TORs for impact evaluation with the main objective of improving the quality within Cohesion Policy programmes. Annex 2 provides guidance on quality management of external evaluations. All evaluations will apply relevant aspects of this guidance, in conjunction with national expert advice from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The EC guidance can be found on the Programme website.

- 10.4 All Programme evaluations will be required to adopt the EU methodology and adhere to evaluation guidance.

11. Communication of Evaluation

- 11.1 All major evaluation reports, at Programme or priority level or a thematic evaluation are reviewed by the Managing Authority and provided to the PMC. When requested by the PMC, the MA will provide further updates on these recommendations.
- 11.2 In the interest of transparency and in order to stimulate public debate on evaluation findings, all evaluation reports are published. The most effective method for this is to use the dedicated Programme website. This aims to promote interest in evaluation and strengthen its credibility.

12. Human Resources

- 12.1 The Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 on common provisions (art. 54- 56) stipulates that: "...*Member States shall provide the **resources** necessary for carrying out evaluations and shall ensure that procedures are in place to produce and collect the data necessary for evaluations, including data related to common and where appropriate programme specific indicators....*
- 12.2 Article 58 (CPR) allows for evaluations to be funded from the budget for technical assistance. An indicative budget is set out at Annex A. Impact assessments, which are required by the regulations, generally require greater depth testing and as such cost more to undertake. Specialist resources will be secured from NISRA and external consultants, as required, to deliver the Evaluation Programme.

EVALUATION SCHEDULE

Implementing Body	Thematic Objective	Priority	Scheme/Project	Impact assessment (Theory based or Counterfactual)	Data collection requirements	Status of Evaluation	Indicative Budget
Invest NI	TO 1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation	1	Grant for R&D			The evaluation is in progress, SQW have been appointed and are currently developing their primary research tools. Final report expected early April 2021.	£50k-£70k
		1	Design Service			The evaluation has been complete with a draft report issued to Invest NI for initial review. It is expected that final report will be issued in November 2020.	£20k-£30k
	TO 3 Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)	2	SFA			The next evaluation of SFA was delayed due to Covid-19. The initial survey will now proceed in November 2020 and will review the level of SME investment and delivery of the jobs promoted across projects, and will include the 'SME Capital Build' projects that have been designated under ERDF.	£50k-£70k
		2	FI - A2F – Techstart			The most recent evaluation can be found here: https://secure.investni.com/static/library/investni/documents/techstart-funds-evaluation-nispoimpact-assessment.pdf . There will be a thematic evaluation of Invest NI's equity based interventions either 2019/20-Q4 or 2020/21 Q1 which will include Techstart. There will be a thematic evaluation of Invest NI's equity based interventions it is anticipated to commence 2020/21 Q4 which will include the Techstart.	£25k-£30k

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

		2	FI - Co-IF			There will be a thematic evaluation of Invest NI's equity based interventions either 2019/20-Q4 or 2020/21 Q1 which will include the Co- Investment Fund.	£25k-£30k
		2	FI - A2F – Crescent Capital Development Fund			There will be a thematic evaluation of Invest NI's equity based interventions it is anticipated to commence 2020/21 Q4 which will include the Crescent. The timing of this may change as we transition to the Thematic approach to Programme Evaluations.	£25k-£30k
		2	FI - A2F – Kernel Capital Development Fund			There will be a thematic evaluation of Invest NI's equity based interventions it is anticipated to commence 2020/21 Q4 which will include the Kernel. Again the timing of this may change as we transition to the Thematic approach to Programme Evaluations.	£25k-£30k
		2	LED Measure			The final evaluation of LED is scheduled for FY2024/25 Q1 as the final deadline for claims is December 2023.	£50k-£70k
DfC	TO4 Supporting a shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	3	Energy Efficiency in social housing			TBC	
DfI	TO4 Supporting a shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors	3	Belfast Rapid Transport 1 st evaluation 2 nd evaluation			1 st evaluation completed 2019 Q4 Link to Evaluation report http://www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk/publications/evaluation 2 nd evaluation 2021 Q3	Cost £2,500 tbc
						Total	£272k-£363k

ON-GOING MONITORING SCHEDULE

Regulation	Requirement	Annual	2015	2016	2017	2019	2022	Responsibility
CPR Art 50 & 111	Annual Implementation Reports (except 2017 and 2019) Includes a synthesis of all evaluations in the Programme.	31 May						MA
CPR Art 46(1)	Report on FEIs to be included as an annex to AIR	31 May						MA
CPR Art 116	Communication Strategies to be submitted to PMC for approval no later than 6 months after adoption of programme + progress report at least once a year.		12 June					MA
CPR Art 50 (4) and (5)	Annual Implementation Reports for 2017 and 2019 Includes additional assessment of progress towards achieving objectives of the Programme and contribution of Programme to result indicators.				30 June	30 June		MA
CPR Art 46(1)	AIR to included report on FEIs				30 June	30 June		MA
CPR Art 50(4) + 111(4)	AIR to include report on actions taken to promote sustainable development				30 June	30 June		MA
CPR Art 52(1)	Progress Report on implementation of PA				31 Aug	31 Aug		MS
CPR Art 114	Evaluation Plan to be submitted to PMC within one year of adoption of programme		11 Dec					MA
CPR Art 114(2)	Report on Evaluations carried out within programming period						31 Dec	MS

Annex B EC Reporting and Evaluation Overview

Who?	What?	When?	Reference
Member State/Managing Authority	In the AIR: Synthesis of the findings of all evaluations of the programme	By 31 May each year from 2016 until 2023, by 30 June in 2017 and 2019	CPR Art. 50
Commission	Summary report based on the annual implementation reports of the Member States; as well as a synthesis of the findings of the available evaluations of programmes	Each year from 2016	CPR Art. 53
Member State	In the progress reports: Progress made towards achievement of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as of the Fund-specific missions	By 31 August 2017 and by 31 August 2019	CPR Art. 52
Commission	Strategic report summarising the progress reports of the Member States	By 31 December 2017 and 31 December 2019	CPR Art. 53
Member State	Report summarising the findings of evaluations carried out during the programming period	By 31 December 2022	CPR Art. 114

Performance Indicators

Note: Performance indicators highlighted in blue are part of the Performance Reserve

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
1	Common Output	CO01	Number of Enterprises Receiving Support	<p>Number of enterprises receiving support in any form from Structural Funds (whether the support represents state aid or not).</p> <p>Number of GfRD and Design Service</p>	Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) (collated from Client Contact Management System (CCMS) and Offers and Claims Management System (OaCMS))	Enterprises	0	N/A	973	2,361
1	Common Output	CO02	Number of Enterprises Receiving Grants	<p>Number of enterprises receiving support in forms of non-refundable direct financial assistance conditional only to completion of project (grants).</p> <p>Number of GfR&D projects</p>	Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) (collated from Client Contact Management System (CCMS) and Offers and Claims Management System (OaCMS))	Enterprises	0	N/A		566

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
1	Common Output	CO04	Number of Enterprises Receiving Non-Financial Support	<p>Number of enterprises receiving support that does not involve direct financial transfer</p> <p>Design Service</p>	<p>Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) (collated from Client Contact Management System (CCMS))</p> <p>Targets verified by Grade 7, Design, Grade 7, Access to Finance and ongoing project monitoring.</p>	Enterprises	0	N/A		2,150
1	Common Output	CO026	Number of Enterprises Cooperating with Research Institutions	<p>Number of Enterprises that cooperate with Research institutions in R&D projects. At least one enterprise and one research institution participates in the project. One or more of the cooperating parties may receive the support but it must be conditional to the cooperation. Relates to GfR&D</p>	<p>Invest NI R&D Division</p> <p>Data will be verified by Grade 7, Invest NI R&D Division.</p>	Enterprises	0	N/A		68
1	Common Output	CO027	Private Investment Matching Public Support in innovation or R&D projects	<p>Total value of private contribution in supported innovation or R&D projects, including non-eligible parts of the project.</p> <p>Relates to GfR&D</p>	<p>Data collated and verified by Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) and Financial Management Team (FMT).</p>	EUR	0	N/A		€72.53m

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
1	Common Output	CO028	Number of Enterprises Supported to Introduce New to the Market Products	The indicator measures if an enterprise received support to develop a 'new to the market' product in any of its markets. Includes process innovation as long as the process contributes to the development of the product. Projects without the aim of actually developing a product are excluded. Relates to GfR&D	Invest NI R&D Division Data will be verified by Grade 7, Invest NI R&D Division.	Enterprises	0	N/A		321
1	Common Output	CO029	Number of Enterprises Supported to Introduce New to the Firm Products	The indicator measures if an enterprise is supported to develop a 'new to the firm' product. Includes process innovation as long as the process contributes to the development of the product. Projects without the aim of actually developing a product are excluded. Relates to GfR&D	Invest NI R&D Division Data will be verified by Grade 7, Invest NI R&D Division.	Enterprises	0	N/A		343
1	Result	SO1	NI BERD as % of GVA	Macro-economic result indicator See Supplementary Paper for more details on source, frequency and timing of data capture.	DfE ASU: Northern Ireland R&D Survey Reports Regional Gross Value Added (Balanced Approach) Reports	£ (expressed as % of GVA)	1.40%	2012		1.8%-2.1%

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
1	Result	SO2	Number of Enterprises Engaged in R&D	Macro-economic result indicator See Supplementary Paper for more details on frequency and timing of data capture and lead individuals responsible.	DfE ASU: Northern Ireland R&D Survey Reports	Enterprises	495	2014		700
1	Programme specific output	PO11	Number of Enterprises Engaged in R&D for the first time		Invest NI CIT (collated from CCMS)	Enterprises	0	N/A	66	200
1	Financial	2	Priority 1 Expenditure		Database, physical records	EUR	0	N/A	€61.9M	€189.16M
2	Common Output	CO01	Number of Enterprises Receiving Support	Number of enterprises receiving support in any form from Structural Funds (whether the support represents state aid or not). Relates to SFA, FIs and LED activity	Invest NI CIT (collated from CCMS)	Enterprises	0	N/A	191	710

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
2	Common Output	CO02	Number of Enterprises Receiving Grants	Number of enterprises receiving support in forms of non-refundable direct financial assistance conditional only to completion of project (grants). Relates to SFA and LED activity	Invest NI CIT (collated from CCMS)	Enterprises	0	N/A		235
2	Common Output	CO03	Number of enterprises receiving support other than grants	Number of enterprises receiving non-grant type financial support, in forms of loan, interest subsidy, credit guarantee, venture capital or other financial instrument. Relates to Financial Instruments (FIs) activity	Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) (collated from Client Contact Management System (CCMS)) Targets verified by Grade 7, Design, Grade 7, Access to Finance and ongoing project monitoring.	Enterprises	0	N/A		475
2	Common Output	CO05	Number of New Enterprises Supported	Number of enterprises created receiving financial aid or assistance (consultancy, guidance, etc) from Structural Funds or Structural Funds financed facility. The created enterprise did not exist two years before the project started but the Managing Authority or national legislation may restrict the time criterion. A pure change of legal form does not matter. Relates to LED and FIs	Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) (collated from Client Contact Management System (CCMS)) Targets verified by Grade 7, Design, Grade 7, Access to Finance and ongoing project monitoring.	Enterprises	0	N/A		102
2	Common Output	CO07	Private investment matching public support to enterprises (non-grants)	Total value of private contribution in assistance that qualifies as state aid where the form of support is other than grant. Relates to FIs	Data collated and verified by Invest NI Corporate Information Team (CIT) and Financial Management Team (FMT).	EUR	0	N/A		€62.36M

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
2	Common Output	CO08	Employment Increase in supported Enterprises	<p>Gross new working positions in assisted SMEs in full time equivalents (FTE). Essentially a before-after indicator which captures the part of the employment increase that is a direct consequence of project completion (workers employed to implement the project are not counted). The positions need to be filled (vacant posts are not counted) and increase the total number of jobs in the enterprise. If total employment in the enterprise does not increase, the value is zero - it is regarded as realignment not increase. Safeguarded etc jobs are not included.</p> <p>Gross: Not counting the origin of the jobholder as long as it directly contributes to the increase of total jobs in the organisation. The indicator should be used if a change in job numbers is plausibly caused by the support. Typically the indicator will not be used for support of low intensity (but if project reports jobs created - please include). Full time equivalent: Jobs can be full-time, part-time or seasonal. Seasonal and parttime jobs are to be converted to FTE using ILO/statistical/other standards. Durability: Jobs are expected to be permanent ie last for a reasonably long period depending on industrial-technological characteristics; seasonal jobs should be recurring. Figures of enterprises that went bankrupt are registered as a zero employment increase. Relates to FI and LED activity</p>	Collated by Invest NI CIT and staff within relevant Divisions. Verified by G7's in relevant Divisions.	FTE	0	N/A		2,803
2	Result	SO3	Number of High Growth SMEs in Northern Ireland		DfE ASU - based on annual data from IDBR	Enterprises	695	2013		1300-1500

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
2	Result	SO4	Employment in micro and small Enterprises		DfE ASU - based on annual data from BIS Business Population Estimates. High scenario.	FTE	297,000	2013		333,000-339,000
2	Financial	2	Priority 2 Expenditure	Relates to SFA, FIs and LED activity	Database / physical records	EUR	0	N/A	€64.5M	€234.73M
3	Common Output	CO31	Number of households with improved energy consumption classification	Relates to social housing activity – number of households in improved energy class	DfC records	Number	0	N/A		2,697
3	Common Output	CO32	Decrease of annual primary energy consumption of public buildings	Calculations are based on the energy certificate of buildings (see Art.12.1.b of Directive 2010/31/EU). In line with the deadlines set in the Directive, the indicator must apply to all public buildings above 500m2 total useful area and were reconstructed using Structural Funds support. If the construction starts after 9 July 2015, the threshold for public buildings decreases to 250m2 total useful area. The Managing Authority may include buildings in the calculation with less than 250m2 (or 500m2 before 9/7/2015). Value will be calculated from the energy certificates issued before and after the reconstruction. The indicator will show the total decrease of annual consumption, not the total saved consumption.	DfC records	kWh/yr	0	N/A		23,943,682
3	Result	S05.2	Energy efficiency rating of social housing stock	SAP ratings	DfC records	SAP ratings	54	2015		69
3	Result	S05.3	Journey times on key BRT corridors into Belfast City Centre	A key target for BRT is to encourage a shift from non-essential car use by providing a safe, economic and reliable alternative. Key to achieving this is the reliability of journey	DfI records	Minutes	36	2014		27

Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme for Northern Ireland

Priority Axis	Type	Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Explanatory Text / Definition	Source of Data / Verification Method	Measurement Unit	Baseline Value	Baseline Year	Milestone 2018 (if required)	Target 2023
				times for public transport users and the business case forecast that journey times will reduce by an average of 25%, with 9% of this attributable to the off board ticketing systems directly funded by ERDF. This indicator will measure the reduction in journey times against key BRT corridors. Bustrak is a bus tracking system that tracks a vehicle's position using GPRS global positioning device which gives accurate journey time information. DfI use this to provide verifiable information to the managing authority. Information provided via DfI from Bustrak is independent.						
3	Common Output	CO34	Estimated annual decrease in greenhouse gas (GHG)	This indicator is calculated for interventions directly aiming to decrease energy consumption through energy saving measures (see indicators 31 and 32). The indicator will show the total estimated annual decrease by the end of the period, not the total decrease throughout the period. The estimate is based on the amount of primary energy saved through in a given year supported operations (either one year following project completion or the calendar year after project completion). Saved energy is supposed to be replacing non-renewable energy production. GHG impact of nonrenewable energy is estimated through the MS total GHG emission per unit of nonrenewable energy production.	DfC and DfI records	Tonnes CO2 Eq	0	N/A	-	4,211
3	Key Implementation Step	KIS02	Completion of construction of Depot		DfI	Phase	0	N/A		1
3	Financial	2	Priority 3 Expenditure	Relates to low carbon projects	Database / physical records	EUR	0	N/A	€32,967,000	€77.680M

Glossary

AIR	Annual Implementation Report
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation Regulation (EU) 1303/2013
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
DfC	Department for Communities
EC	European Commission
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESG	Evaluation Steering Group
EU	European Union
FI	Financial Instruments
GfR&D	Grant for Research and Development Scheme administered by Invest NI
IB	Intermediate Body
IGJ Programme	Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme
MA	Managing Authority
MS	Member State
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OP	Operational Programme
PMC	Programme Monitoring Committee
SFC2014	SFC European Commissions Database and mechanism for all formal Programme communication
TOR	Terms of Reference
www.jobsandgrowthni.gov.uk	Programme website