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Country Report for the Project “Assessment of the Current State of DRG Evaluation in Europe” – Serbia

Thessaloniki, October 1-2, 2018

INES – Informal Network of Evaluators Serbia

Report outline

- **Focus group - main information**
- **Overview of the existing M&E practices in the country (supply, demand, and institutionalization)**
- **Brief overview of the DRG evaluations according to the five dimensions**
- **Main findings**
- **Recommendations**

Focus group – main information

- Focus group(FG) entitled “Assessment of the Current State of DRG Evaluation in Serbia” held on 13th September in the premises of the Institute of Economic Sciences (Belgrade)
- Organised by the representatives of the Faculty for Security Studies, SeconS and the Institute of Economic Sciences
- FG gathered 10 participants – (experts from academia, research institutions and civil society organisations)
- Evaluation and DRG Evaluation from the practitioners’ point of view



Overview of the existing M&E practices in the country (supply, demand, and institutionalization)

- **M&E practices in Serbia are, in general, not sufficiently developed.** M&E has been, to the large extent, applied when assessing projects funded by international donors, while public policy evaluation is mainly conducted as an incident rather than regular practice
- Most of the evaluations have been conducted for international donors and for the purpose of evaluation of internationally funded projects that included local experts/institutions as a support - **incentives for local experts to learn on the M&E created solid supply**
- **Civil society and the EU integrations are pushing the M&E practices** (i.e. - master course developed by SeconS and FREN, initiatives, etc.)
- Relatively underdeveloped awareness of the importance of the M&E and potential use of the results – **still low demand**

Overview of the existing M&E practices in the country (supply, demand, and institutionalization)

- Ex-ante assessment of the specific policy effects
- Donor driven – evaluation of public policies
- There could be noticed certain systematic improvements, which might result in a wider use of M&E concepts and practice in the future:
 - **Law on planning system** adopted in April 2018 defined ex-post assessment of the public policy effects as mandatory, including preparation of the official publicly available reports on the conducted activities. It has been adopted as a part of the **Strategy of Regulatory Reform and Improvement of the Public Policy Management System** for the period 2016-2020
 - **Republic Secretariat for public policies** provides solid support for changes – i.e. *Guidelines for the involvement of the research community in the process of creating and implementing public policies adopted by the Republic Secretariat for public policies in 2017*

Brief overview of the DRG evaluations according to the five dimensions:

- **Consensus** - Although there exists overall consensus on the fundamental rules of the game and the EU integration as a foreign policy priority, country is still characterized by the political turbulences and relatively low level of political culture
- **Inclusion** - Important groups of stakeholders (i.e. civil society, think tanks) are still not involved in the policy making process/involved only in a formal manner
- **Competition and Political Accountability** - The extent to which the political system includes competition and existence of free, fair, and inclusive elections, freedom in media, vibrant civil society as well as presence of an adequate political rights and civil liberties is still questionable.
- **Rule of Law and Human Rights** - Poor practice and deteriorations referring to institutional deficiencies, weak rule of law and lack of good governance.
- **Government Responsiveness and Effectiveness** - Satisfying. Improvements resulting from external pressures

Main findings

- **Current DRG evaluation capacities** - Current level of the evaluation capacities is relatively solid. Lack of envisaged resources for conducting evaluation
- **Main opportunities for integrating DRG into evaluating government policies** - EU integration process and related analytical support
- **Main constraints on evaluating democracy, human rights and governance** - Relatively poor culture of evaluation and lack of awareness of the state officials on the potential benefits from evaluation which might result from the evidence based policy making
- **Challenges related to DRG evaluation** - Most of the strategic documents are not linked to the budget framework, nor have a financial framework for implementation nor clearly defined performance indicators; Inability to track progress in implementing the strategy; Resource ministries develop sectoral strategies without considering their involvement in the mid-term or long-term development goals of the state

Recommendations for developing awareness of DRG evaluation in Serbia

- **Improve capacities for the public policy evaluations through development and implementation of comprehensive training programs throughout the public administration** (planning techniques, analyzing effects and using data for measuring results, monitoring and evaluation, etc.);
- **Raise evaluation capacities of the research institutions and civil society organizations** through realization of seminars, workshops, conferences and other capacity building events;

Recommendations for developing awareness of DRG evaluation in Serbia

- Respecting the *Guidelines for the involvement of the research community in the process of creating and implementing public policies* it should be supported the **systematic involvement of the research community and analysts in the process of creating and evaluating public policies**
- **Development of the pilot evaluation projects** with an aim to assess effectiveness of the Government programmes and realization of strategic documents
- Further strengthening of the informal evaluation network (INES)