

EPATEE



European Peer Learning Workshop Paris

Date: 3rd October 2017

The presentations can be downloaded from the project website:

<https://epatee.eu/events/1st-european-peer-learning-workshop-evaluation-practices-energy-efficiency-policies>

The aim of EPATEE's European Peer-Learning Workshops is to provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange knowledge and discuss existing practices of the evaluation of energy efficiency policies. The workshops serve at achieving one of EPATEE's main targets: to share user-oriented experiences and to enable capacity building.

On 3rd October 2017 evaluation experts and evaluation users met in Paris to learn about EPATEEs plans, latest results and to discuss issues related to the evaluation of energy efficiency policies.

Results of EPATEE

A **knowledge base** covering 160 references, including 60 evaluation reports was built up in the first months of the project. The knowledge base will be available to interested users via an interactive online tool. To increase user friendliness this online tool will include different selection criteria and a keyword search function. In order to keep the knowledge base a living document, reports and references will be added throughout the project fostering synergies with other projects (e.g. ODYSSE-MURE, IEA).

In the course of EPATEE, about 30 **case studies** on evaluation practices will be prepared. The aim of those case studies is to make information easily accessible by using a common template, provide data as transparent as possible and to give information on why evaluation is used and how it is performed. By now, most case studies focus on the residential sector and financial incentives as those policies are usually more thoroughly evaluated. Case studies to come will focus on other sectors and policy instruments. The finalised case studies are available on the EPATEE website at <https://epatee.eu/case-studies>.

25 **interviews** and a **survey** among 35 energy efficiency policy stakeholders provided EPATEE with feedback on the challenges and needs of stakeholders (evaluation customers, evaluation users and evaluators) related to policy evaluation. Presently evaluation – although considered as fundamental to improve energy policy – is not yet adequately included in the policy cycle in many cases. The main barriers for evaluation are (1) insufficient financial resources, (2) lack of interest from policy makers and top management and (3) lack of reliable data. The full report on the outcomes of the interviews and survey will be published on the EPATEE website.



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Evaluation experiences

The evaluation of the French “**Investment for the Future**” program includes both econometric and qualitative analyses. One conclusion of the experiences made so far with the evaluation is the importance of keeping in mind which data and tools will be needed for the ex-post evaluation method planned, already from the start of the program. Using two methods made it possible to compare their advantages and drawbacks, confirming that they are complementary: qualitative analyses provide a more detailed understanding of the causal chain, but rely on self-declarations. Econometric analyses are built on more “objective” data but are more demanding in terms of data collection, and building large enough samples and/or finding a relevant control group is not always possible.

The evaluation of the energy efficiency related **national targets in Italy** contains both the analysis of energy savings as well as additional important key indicators for policy effectiveness evaluation and benchmarking. The main emphasis is put on the detailed evaluation of the measures notified for the implementation of Article 7 (White Certificate Scheme, tax deduction scheme and thermal account). Issues of interest include the calculation methods for energy savings, how costs are monitored and how additionality is ensured by the rules to define the eligibility criteria of the actions and the baseline.

Highlights from interactive discussions

Based on the interviews and the survey done within EPATEE the following topics of interest for stakeholders have been identified:

- Cost-effectiveness of policies
- Non-energy impacts
- Energy and CO₂ savings
- Baseline and additionality

The discussions at the workshop highlighted additional and complementary issues that are summarised below.

In addition to a methodologically sound evaluation it is also important to understand the perspective of the evaluation user who usually has limited time and budget and is not always an expert in evaluated field. That points out the importance of **communicating evaluation results in a user friendly and clear way**. The documentation of all data used and assumptions made is essential to understand evaluation results and to be able to interpret numbers appropriately.

A good evaluation should be objective and based on sound scientific methods, even if the outcomes are not in favour of the client. Thus the **evaluator should be independent** from the policy and not involved in its administration. However this does not necessarily mean that the evaluation should be fully external. For example, the evaluation may be done by a separate service within the same organisation. External evaluators may not know the background and specificities of the policies they evaluate, particularly when they are from another country and/or not familiar with the energy efficiency field. This may lead to misinterpretations of the data.

Concepts like **additionality and free-riders** are central in defining the scope of evaluations and interpreting their results. Each evaluation should be clear on how these concepts were taken into account when defining baselines against which the results of a policy are compared. EPATEE will not contribute by defining standardised concepts but rather describe different approaches in use.

The **costs of evaluation** are a great concern of evaluation users. Before starting the evaluation one should clarify and prioritise what questions should be answered by the evaluation. The inputs from this discussion have to be used to define the methodology of the evaluation.

The **timing of evaluation** was another issue raised by evaluation users. Early evaluation can help overcome possible difficulties during the first phase of a policy. It was also pointed that it may be difficult to assess decisions several years after they were taken.

Stakeholders would appreciate support or guidance on

- The **design of tenders for evaluations**. What are minimum criteria that such tender should include?
- The **choice of evaluation methods** depending on some criteria like the evaluation objectives, the resources available etc.
- How to design an evaluation so that the **evaluation is protected from political changes/political influences?**
- The **interpretation of the data/results?** What caution to take when analysing the results and drawing conclusions?
- Communicating the **benefits of evaluations** to policy makers.

Finally stakeholders agree that a complete harmonisation of evaluation methods is not possible and not needed. An alternative to that could be to **harmonise the documentation of evaluations** in order to make them comparable on a set of defined criteria.

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