

**SEMINAR**

**ON**

**RESULTS BASED BUDGETING:  
OBJECTIVES, EXPECTED RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Strasbourg, 25 September 2012

Summary of sessions by Virginie Besrest

**Session one "Objectives, expected results and performance indicators – agreeing on terms and understanding why they are important"**

- Introduction (Ms Besrest's background and approach, based on sharing the fruit of her experience)
- Why this need for clear objectives, expected results and performance indicators?
- How long have these practices been emerging and evolving? (a brief history)
- What are the similarities and differences as compared with the private sector?
- Are the existing practices/tools (programming, auditing, reporting, evaluation, etc.) not enough? How do the tools differ or complement each other? Which difficulties are encountered?
- What if this represented a change of culture (a cultural revolution)? (a shift in the focus of decision-making away from resources and towards results)
- What does having clear objectives mean? Why is this so important? Are our objectives not already clear?
- Expected result: a definition that is frequently a source of confusion
- Performance indicators: what are they and what is their purpose?
- Proposed definitions of the terms (objective, result, indicator) for discussion/sharing of thoughts
- Conclusion: the impact of semantics, applicability to the Council's different activity areas, pitfalls to be avoided, a key consideration to be borne in mind: the public policy aim.

**Session three "Building clear objectives, SMART expected results and relevant performance indicators"**

- Introduction: the question is how to go about it
- The classic mistake is wanting to determine the indicators directly.
- One priority need is to have a clear idea of the objectives and the expected results. It is necessary to refer to the theory of action/intervention logic, to get back to basics: the public policy aim. Why are we doing this? What "value" are we seeking to generate? Is it still relevant? Is it consistent with the Organisation's overall strategy?
- A difficulty lies in moving away from the "in-house" context and taking a more open approach, thinking in terms of target beneficiaries and audiences rather than as a manager
- Various tools are available – flowcharts, logframes, etc. – and they primarily reflect a causal conception of production of "public goods"
- Tools well suited to technical assistance programmes/projects, above all if they are devised as dynamic (rather than static) public management tools

- These tools are a little more complex to handle in the case of standard-setting or convention monitoring activities
- Producing relevant performance indicators: what is desirable, attainable and worthwhile
- The boundary between accountability and responsibility (can someone be responsible for something over which they have no control?)
- Conclusion: RBB is a useful exercise provided the focus is more on the underlying aim than on the quantitative results obtained

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Virginie Besrest is a Director with Euréval, a French firm specialising in the design and evaluation of public policies. She has been providing consulting services to French and European administrative entities for some ten years now.

She previously worked in the public sector at regional level, in industry and in strategic consulting for the private and the public sectors.

With her more than 10-year track record, she commands recognition as an experienced consultant in the design, evaluation and performance management of public policies. Apart from conducting many evaluation assignments at the European, national and local levels, she has dispensed training in these subjects to hundreds of French and European officials.

Virginie Besrest is familiar with the Council of Europe and its functioning. In 2004 she carried out an evaluation of the "integrated projects method". These projects, entitled "Making democratic institutions work" and "Responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society", were intended to reinforce co-operation between Council of Europe departments and directorates. In 2009 and 2010 she produced an analysis of the Organisation's project management method (PMM) and evaluation culture and organised focus groups and pilot workshops on the results-based culture. Since then she has been running training sessions in evaluation for Council of Europe staff.