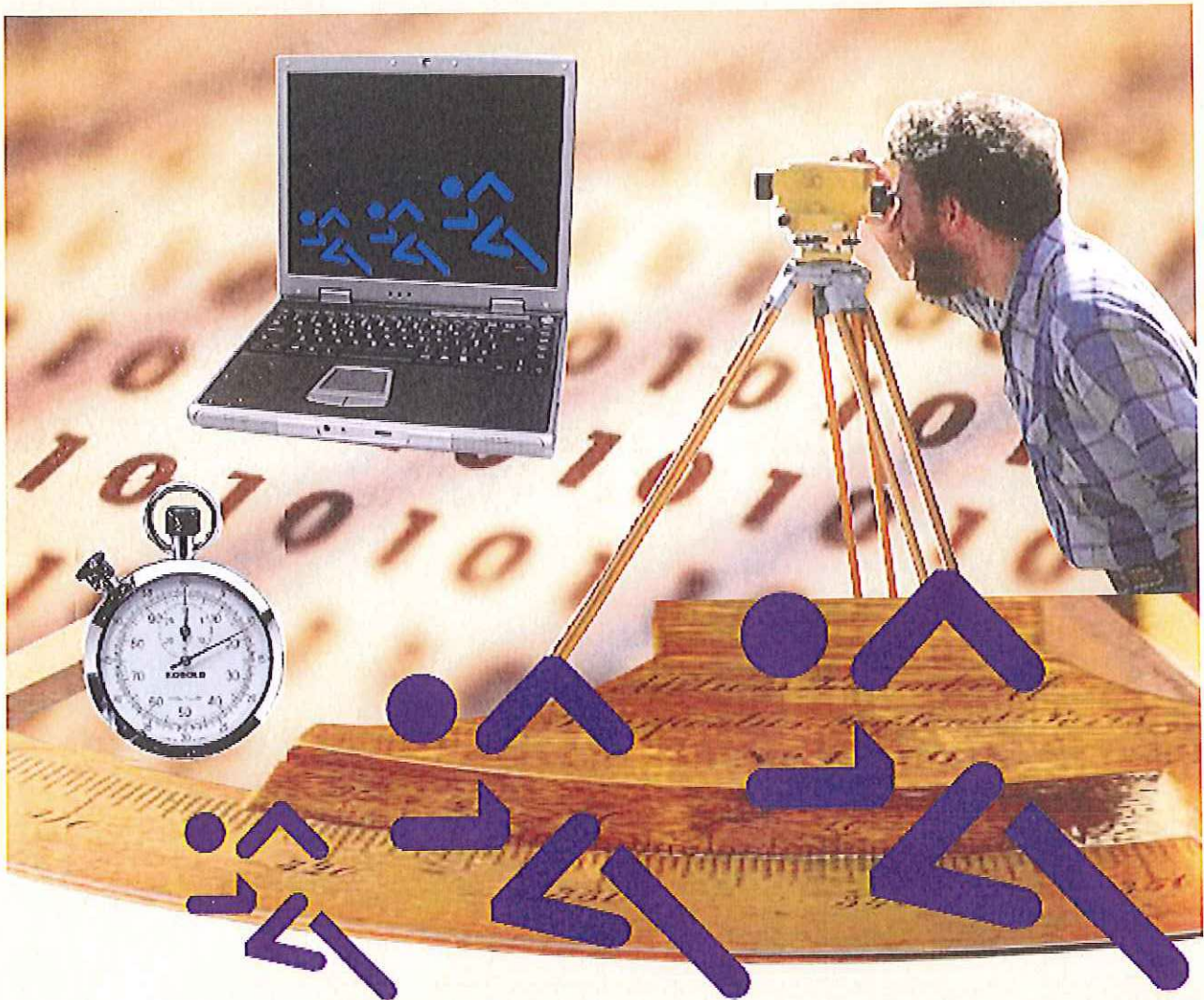




VAN DIJK  
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS



# Services of performance evaluation

Evaluating the performances of projects or policies is a particularly useful approach in the decision-making process.

Van Dijk Management Consultants has more than 10 years of experience in such evaluations. The methodologies used are continuously upgraded in the frame of the specific missions carried out. Services are based on the use of qualitative and quantitative indicators and of statistical and other computerised tools for data collection and processing. Van Dijk Management Consultants experience concerns as various areas as R&D, energy policy, programmes for the prevention of violence, consumer policy, etc. This diversity is possible thanks to the presence of Van Dijk Management Consultants within European networks of experts and its privileged access to informational resources.

Being based on customized data collection and treatment, these evaluation missions are fully in line with Van Dijk Management Consultants original core business, i.e. the management of information.

## A FEW TYPES OF EVALUATION

### Performances monitoring

Monitoring the performances of say an activity consists in collecting and analysing at regular intervals - even continuously - information about elements such as the use of the allocated budget, the progress of the activity and of its outputs. This monitoring is based on an information system that includes reports, synthesis, indicators, etc. It contributes to identifying the strengths and weaknesses and to reacting to changing circumstances.

### Mid-term evaluation

Such an evaluation is carried out at the mid term of a project or activity what implies the following two main characteristics:

- ◆ It focuses more on the outputs and results than on the impacts, for the evident reason that impacts mainly appear once the project or the activity is finished;
- ◆ It provides information that the managers can directly use during the second part of the project or activity in order to increase its performances.

This evaluation uses the information provided through the performances monitoring as well as any other information on the context of the project or activity.

### Ex-post evaluation and impact analysis

This evaluation analyses and judges the project or the activity after its end. It concerns elements like efficiency (how economically have the desired effects been achieved?), effectiveness (how the objectives assigned are achieved?) and utility (do the outcomes answer to the needs identified at start?).

The analysis also identifies elements contributing to the success or failure and helps understanding the way they influence the generation of impacts. If the objective is to evaluate impacts that were effectively generated, the ex-post evaluation has to be carried out well after the end of the concerned pro-

ject or activity, taking into account the time necessary for the generation of the impacts.

## METHODOLOGY AND INDICATORS

Van Dijk Management Consultants makes sure that the evaluation methodologies it develops are conform to the state of the art. To that end, it regularly compares them to standards in this area such as 'Evaluating EU Activities, A practical guide for the Commission services', European Commission - DG Budget, 2004, or the 'Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management', OECD, 2002.

The methodologies for evaluation and impact analysis comprise a certain number of critical points to be treated case by case according to each study's specific requirements concerning resources, schedule, objectives, etc. Those critical points are briefly presented hereafter.

### Information collection

Information is the fuel of any evaluation. However the information required is most of the time extremely specific and seldom made public. The information collection is thus primarily ad-hoc: surveys and interviews of participants and other stakeholders in the evaluated activities, grey literature, etc. The dependency on the information provided by participants and stakeholders makes also that the evaluator has to protect from a positive bias of the information delivered; such protection can notably be obtained through a confirmation of the information, a triangulation of the sources of information, a deeper study on a limited number of cases or a quantitative validation based on a large number of cases.

### Indicators

An indicator is a simple and formalised way of representing information related for example to the objectives targeted, the resources used, the results achieved or their impacts. It can be either quantitative - for example a percentage - or qualitative - for example one option among five possible ones - and can concern facts, opinions, performances or impacts. It is of primary importance that the modus operandi of the indicators - in particular the criteria used for scoring - be clearly defined so that there is no room for diverging or even contradictory analysis and interpretation.

### Causality and attribution

It is generally recognised that isolating the specific effects of a project or activity in comparison to the effects due to external factors (for example other projects or activities, the regulatory and legal context, etc.) is a tricky task. This point refers to the attribution issue that consists in allocating an effect to specific factors among which the concerned project or activity. Analysing the chain of causes and effects of a project or activity is thus an ambitious task the usefulness of which will have to be assessed with regard to the time and financial resources available. The more a project or an activity generates its effects in a confined and thus controllable environment, the less the constraint described above will be present.

## PROPOSED SERVICES

To assist businesses and organisations in optimising their evaluation activities, Van Dijk Management Consultants proposes a wide scope of consultancy and assistance services as presented hereafter.

### Monitoring, mid-term and ex-post evaluations

Carrying-out of monitoring, mid-term or ex-post evaluations of projects or groups of projects: such missions allow the heads of the organisation getting an independent and expert view on the projects and their achievements. In case a monitoring or evaluation system does already exist within the organisation, the mission can develop into a comparison of the results of such system with those delivered by the external expert.

### Audit of the evaluation activities

The managing direction of an organisation gains an important added value - strategic and operational - from the audit of its own evaluation activities. Based on methods like benchmarking, such an audit provides a diagnosis and recommendations e.g. concerning the methods used, the practical use of the results, the adequacy to the culture of the organisation or the cost-effectiveness of those activities.

### Assistance to the implementation of an evaluation system

The implementation of an evaluation system is always an investment, implying the mobilisation of material, human and organisational resources. Our expertise allows indicating if and on which conditions - technical, organisational, financial, etc. - such an investment is worthwhile to be done. In the positive case, Van Dijk Management Consultants can assist by providing services such as the identification and the specification of the needs, the preparation and the testing of the evaluation system, the mobilisation of the human resources and their training.

## REFERENCES OF VAN DIJK MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Van Dijk Management Consultants participated as an independent expert in two evaluations of the European Energy Framework Programme and its six programmes *Etap*, *Synergy*, *Altener*, *Save*, *Carnot and Sure*. These evaluations aimed at assessing the implementation of those programmes, their efficiency, relevance, effectiveness and sustainability. The results of those evaluations included operational recommendations about the content and procedures of the programmes.

For the Directorate-General Energy and Transport, Van Dijk Management Consultants also evaluated:

- ◆ The *Trans-European energy networks* programme, concerning its own added value, effectiveness, efficiency and utility (mid-term evaluation) for the years 1998 to 2003;

- ◆ The *Synergy* programme, with the aim to formulate operational recommendations concerning notably the size of the projects and the related procedures.

For the Directorate-General Health and Consumer Protection, Van Dijk Management Consultants carried out in 2004 an ex-post evaluation of the *Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001*.

For the Directorate General Health and Consumer Protection, Van Dijk Management Consultants carried out an ex-post evaluation of the *Consumer Policy Action Plan 1999-2001 (2004)*, an impact analysis of the *Consumer Policy Strategy 2002-2006* on national consumer policies (2006), an ex-post evaluation of the *Community Animal Health Policy 1995-2005 (2005-2006, in consortium)*. It is currently in charge of an interim evaluation of the *Community Plant Health Solidarity Regime*.

In 2005, Van Dijk Management Consultants evaluate the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) about its efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and added value.

For the Directorate General Personnel and Administration, it conducted the evaluation of four European schools in 2005 and 2006.

In 2003, the Directorate-General Justice and Home Affairs assigned to Van Dijk Management Consultants the final evaluation and impact analysis of the *Daphne programme* and *Daphne Initiative*, which target the prevention of the violence against children and women.

Van Dijk Management Consultants coordinated the ex-post evaluation of more than 1500 *European research projects*, during the year following the end of the projects and in areas like industrial technologies, materials or measurement and testing. It also acquired a solid experience in impact analysis, through the impact analysis of 600 *European research projects*, four years after their end. It conducted five in-depth case studies of *high impact research projects* in the area of information technologies and it participated to the impact analysis of the *Recommendation 97/489/CE of 30 July 1997* about transactions made with electronic payment instruments.

For each of those missions, customised tools and methodologies were developed: achievements and impacts were identified, described, qualified and quantified thanks to indicators. Factors in favour or against successful achievements and impacts were also analysed. In those exercises, Van Dijk Management Consultants always endeavoured to evaluate the added value of the support in a critical way and to formulate operational recommendations for future actions.

## CONTACTS

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