



# Drugs Policy evaluation - Experience and benefits

## Webinar

"Drug Policy evaluations: opportunities to support inclusive, effective and evidence-based public policy"

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## ■ Scope

### **2011**

- evaluation of National Drug Strategy 2006-2012

### **2012**

- estimation of Drug related public expenditures

### **2013**

- assessment of public expenditure efficiency

### **2014**

- research project on the evaluation of Social Reintegration Project

### **2016**

- assessment study on Drug Treatment system

### **2017**

- evaluation of National Drug Strategy 2012-2017
- evaluation of the OST treatment



# ■ Evaluation questions – what we want to know?

## **Implementation**

- To what extent have the actions been implemented and what are the main outputs?

## **Relevance**

- To what extent the priorities and the objectives address the challenges of the drugs policy and situation in country?

## **Influence**

- To what extent taken action changed behaviour as consequence of the drugs strategy and/or action plan?

## **Added Value**

- Assessment of the value resulting from national interventions



## 2017, Evaluation of NDS

### Key conclusion

- Continue the current approach and direction of the NDS, and maintain the basic principles on a 'balanced approach', policies based on 'evidence, health and human rights', and international developments and the overall guiding coordination and cooperation structures
- Current NDS and APs are considered effective and successful in addressing the majority of key priorities and issues that were set at the beginning of the NDS period
- A final key recommendation focuses on streamlining and strengthening the overall policy making system and process. Review and revision of the current policy making process



## 2017, Evaluation of NDS

### Key recommendations

- Include **addictive substances and addictive behaviors in one overarching National Strategy**
- Develop **synergy and strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration between mental health sector and addiction sector**
- More **target and focus on the areas Prevention and Education**. Stimulate ongoing innovation in the prevention sector
- Invest in **early interventions and diversification of treatment options**. Stimulate ongoing innovation in the prevention sector
- Increase **access to reliable and factual information** on the nature and content, (mental) health effects, preventive and other demand reducing measures for (potential) consumers, media and the general public on substances including illicit ones
- Take into consideration the growing availability and demand for NPS; **increase the quality and effectiveness of the Early Warning system (EWS)** for practical use by public and experts
- A **thorough review of the current OST system** is highly recommended in order to update the treatment methods and practices



## ■ Single programs/intervention evaluation

### **Assessment Study Drug Treatment/ OST**

to assess the state of the play of the drug treatment system

Why?: signals on the diversion of OST treatment and of inconsistent implementation of the guidelines for OST provision.

*Do the available treatment interventions cover the needs of their clients?*

*Do the treatment interventions match the professional standards and quality as described in guidelines and quality management systems?*

*Are there organisational challenges and needs?*

*What is the nature and extent of the misuse and diversion of OST medication in Croatia, and are there regional differences?*

*What should be done at national and/ or local level to reduce the misuse and diversion of OST medication?*

a mixed-methods approach was used; desk review, fixed set of focus groups, key stakeholders as well as clients in OST and HRDU not in OST

**Key recommendation - need for revision OST system and for diversification of treatment options**



## ■ How to use evaluation findings and recommendations

- for improvement of quality of implemented measures/interventions - **existing OST guidelines are in the process of revision according to the OST evaluation recommendations**
- for direction on setting future strategic priorities – should they be less or higher ambitious - **for drafting new NS which is not reflecting only drugs issues but also all other substance (alcohol, tobacco, gambling, addiction behavior)**
- for indicate the areas that required further strengthening, guidelines and protocols, quality standards - **strengthening the prevention standards, setting tools for improving skills in QP**
- maintain the good practice as guidance – **Social Reintegration Project**
- clarifying main direction, setting clear targets
- support on planning future objectives: specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely
- budgeting



## ■ Approach

What obstacles can you expected and how to overcome these?

**budget, time (evaluation planning and phases), engagement**

- consensus on evaluation needs (scientific or political/external or internal evaluation?)
- communication strategy before starting the evaluations
- justify the reasons for evaluation
- get a political support
- responsible institution not always in favor to evaluate there work (feels like control), discomfort due to possible evaluation results





## Lessons learned - independent evaluation

- with a aim to develop the evaluation process and related tools, Croatian experts were part of the evaluations that have been done in the frame of the EMCDDA project in Montenegro and Serbia, as well as in TAIEX project in BiH
- Methods that were used
  - *collecting and reviewing background reports*
  - *interviews with key stakeholders*
  - *questionnaire among group of stakeholders*
  - *site visit*



## ■ Benefits - independent evaluation

Independent analysis of the Croatian drug policy or how can you benefit from evaluation process

- quality of strategic documents
- process of its implementation
- outcomes
- cost benefits
- to serve policy relevant information
- to serve input for the future strategic documents and programs on drugs policy
- evidence-based policies



## ■ Guiding principles

- the evaluation process should be transparent to all stakeholders
- all relevant parties should be able to participate in or contribute to the evaluation process
- parties must feel free to express their opinions
- the evaluation is meant to formulate concrete recommendations that could lead to improvement of the quality, efficacy and efficiency of the drug policy
- the evaluation should not take a stand in the political debate
- use quantitative and qualitative methods



**Thank you for your attention**

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