

Procedure for the evaluation of the impacts of municipal development strategies

Procedimiento para la evaluación de impactos de las estrategias de desarrollo municipal

Procedimento para avaliar os impactos das estratégias de desenvolvimento municipal

Pedro Álvarez Velázquez¹; Carlos Cesar Torres Paez²; Luis Gustavo Marín Cuba³



¹ Consejo de la Administración Municipal de Consolación del Sur. Pinar del Río, Cuba.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4524-9259>

 vice1@cs.gobpr.co.cu

² Universidad de Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Facultad de Ciencias Económicas. Centro de Estudios de Dirección, Desarrollo Local, Turismo y Cooperativismo. Pinar del Río, Cuba.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7956-5079>

 carlosc@upr.edu.cu

³ Universidad de Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Facultad de Ciencias Económicas. Centro de Estudios de Dirección, Desarrollo Local, Turismo y Cooperativismo. Pinar del Río, Cuba.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2476-0026>

 marin@upr.edu.cu

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ABSTRACT

Local development in Cuba has become a public policy of strategic importance as a complement to the National Plan for Economic and Social Development until 2030, as well as a central and articulating axis of the public agendas of governments at the municipal and provincial levels. The general objective of the research is to design a procedure for the evaluation of the impact of municipal development strategies, which contributes to timely decision-making for their continuous improvement. Based on theoretical and empirical methods, procedures and techniques (abstract and concrete, analysis and synthesis, bibliographic review, standardized individual interview, semi-structured group interview and survey), the theoretical and methodological foundations associated with the evaluation of municipal development strategies are identified and the current situation of this process in the municipality of Consolación del Sur is characterized. On this basis, the proposed procedure is elaborated with its premises, the creation of a working group and six stages with their respective steps and techniques to be applied.

Keywords: evaluation; impacts; strategy; municipal development

RESUMEN

El desarrollo local en Cuba ha pasado a constituir una política pública de importancia estratégica como complemento al Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Económico y Social hasta el año 2030, así como un eje central y articulador de las agendas públicas de los gobiernos a nivel municipal y provincial. El objetivo general de la investigación es diseñar un procedimiento para la evaluación de impactos de las estrategias de desarrollo municipal, que contribuya a la toma de decisiones oportunas en función de su mejora continua. A partir de métodos teóricos y empíricos, procedimientos y técnicas (abstracto y concreto, análisis y síntesis, revisión bibliográfica, entrevista individual estandarizada, entrevista grupal semiestructurada y encuesta), se identifican los fundamentos teóricos y metodológicos asociados a la evaluación de las estrategias de desarrollo municipal y se caracteriza la situación actual de este proceso, en el municipio de Consolación del Sur. Sobre esa base se elabora la propuesta de procedimiento con sus premisas, la

creación de un grupo de trabajo y seis etapas con sus respectivos pasos y técnicas a aplicar.

Palabras clave: evaluación; impactos; estrategia; desarrollo municipal

RESUMO

O desenvolvimento local em Cuba tornou-se uma política pública de importância estratégica como complemento do Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social até o ano 2030, bem como eixo central e articulador das agendas públicas dos governos nos níveis municipal e provincial. O objetivo geral da pesquisa é traçar um procedimento de avaliação dos impactos das estratégias de desenvolvimento municipal, que contribua para a tomada de decisão oportuna com base na melhoria contínua. A partir de métodos, procedimentos e técnicas teóricos e empíricos (abstrato e concreto, análise e síntese, revisão bibliográfica, entrevista individual padronizada, entrevista em grupo semiestruturada e levantamento), são identificados os fundamentos teóricos e metodológicos associados à avaliação das estratégias de desenvolvimento municipais. E caracteriza a situação atual desse processo, no município de Consolación del Sur. A partir daí, é elaborada a proposta de procedimento com suas premissas, a criação de um grupo de trabalho e seis etapas com suas respectivas etapas e técnicas a serem aplicadas.

Palavras-chave: avaliação; impactos; estratégia; desenvolvimento municipal

INTRODUCTION

The question of "development" is of concern to various specialists in the contemporary world. One of its notable features, because it is becoming more acute, is that it does not occur homogeneously between countries, but also within each one of them. Hence the existence of inequalities, whose eradication or mitigation become essential objectives to be achieved by the territories. Thus, various management models have been developed in theory that seek to activate territorial potentials.

The local development arises fundamentally towards the end of the 20th century, in Europe and later in other regions of the world, as a response to the macroeconomic crises and representing an alternative development model to the predominant neoliberal one in a globalizing environment that was just incipient.

It is assumed that local development is a "process of social construction and structural change that from a territorial innovative environment develops local capacities to manage public policies, strategies, programs and projects, oriented to take advantage of endogenous and exogenous resources, promoting economic, social, natural and political-institutional transformations, on the basis of inter-actor, inter-territorial and multilevel articulation, in function of raising the quality of life of the population" (Torres Paez et al., 2018).

This concept recognizes the need to encourage citizen participation in local development processes, identifies the need to ensure the introduction of innovations to improve productive processes, recognizes that even when local development has an essentially endogenous character, external resources play an important role in the dynamization of the area. The importance of articulating local interests with national and sectoral interests is handled, the need to build or strengthen capacities in a broad sense is defined as part of the strategy, four dimensions of local development are defined that function in an interrelated and interdependent manner (economic, socio-cultural, natural and political-administrative and institutional).

It is agreed with Díaz-Canel, Núñez and Torres (2020) when they point out that: "local development in Cuba has become a public policy of strategic importance as a complement to the National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030, as well as a central and articulating axis of the public agendas of the governments at the municipal and provincial levels".

It highlights the need to provide local governments with management methods and tools that favor the performance of their functions, in order to take advantage of their development potential in combination with exogenous and endogenous flows to achieve the objectives defined in their municipal and provincial development strategy (EDM in

Spanish) depending on the scale, articulated with national planning instruments (Cardoso Carreño et al., 2016).

Decree 33 (2021) "For the Strategic Management of Territorial Development" defines that: "The municipal development strategy is an integrating instrument to guide municipal management, which has, among its purposes, to achieve the satisfaction of local needs, contribute to the economic and social development of its territory and to other purposes of the State".

In the methodological and practical conception of the design of municipal development strategies, the following basic concepts that must be articulated in the same are taken into account: strategic alliance, government-university-enterprise system-community; capacity building for the management of local development (Arias Gilart et al., 2019); articulation of local state and non-state actors (Flores Lóriga et al., 2017); financing management for local development (Capote Pérez et al., 2017, 2018); export promotion and diversification (Barrios Cruz & Torres Paez, 2019); knowledge and innovation management; public management of the population's quality of life (Mirabal Sarria et al., 2018). However, there is a lack of instruments that allow for the monitoring and evaluation of EDMs.

In the particular case of this paper, it focuses on the evaluation process understood as: "...a rigorous and independent assessment of completed or ongoing activities to determine the extent to which the stipulated objectives are being achieved and to contribute to decision-making..." (UNDP, 2009, p. 8).

When analyzing its characteristics, it can be stated that: 1) it is deeper than monitoring and takes more time; 2) it provides elements for programmatic improvements and strategy redesign; 3) it contributes to organizational learning and accountability.

In Cuban municipalities, strategic planning is worked on, however, the monitoring and evaluation functions that are indispensable in any development management process are not carried out, which limits the deployment of coordination and control actions and the focus of these on the results of a strategic nature for local development. In addition, information systems do not favor the performance of these functions, showing the

existence of traditional control systems that are based on indicators that are not related to the quality of life of the population (González Torres, 2011).

The general objective of this work is the following: to design a procedure for the evaluation of the impacts of the municipal development strategy, which contributes to timely decision making in terms of its continuous improvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The theoretical framework was developed using the following theoretical methods

Different instruments were applied such as the use of the abstract and the concrete. The abstraction is used in search of the essence in the process of impact evaluation of the municipal development strategies, which allow the identification of its main regularities and essential elements for its financing from the scientific observation of the objective reality. The step to the concrete happens when the visible, corporeal, practical expression is analyzed in the municipality of Consolación del Sur of the elements that underlie in its most essential levels.

An important place within the dialectical-materialistic method is occupied by the methods and among them, analysis and synthesis, which is significant for the diagnosis. In it, the totality of the process of impact evaluation of municipal development strategies is taken and mentally decomposed into its component parts, the levels and their reciprocal relationship are investigated, identifying the place and significance of each one and revealing the dialectical contradiction that arises in it and the way to resolve it. Once this is achieved, the synthesis is in charge of mentally recomposing the totality, having now a clear vision of the laws that rule or govern such totality, which allowed identifying the methodological foundations for the evaluation of impacts of municipal development strategies.

Empirical methods were used to obtain the information

The Bibliographic Review is used to a great extent and as the main technical resource of the research. This is used to study the evolution of the concepts of local development

and evaluation, in function of the theoretical foundation of the criteria to take into account to design the procedure for the evaluation of impacts of municipal development strategies. The Documentary Analysis technique was used to study the existing experiences in relation to the field of action.

For the development of the diagnosis, primary and secondary sources of information were used, as well as the methods and techniques of scientific research. Its arrangement is based on a methodology that facilitates the collection, processing and analysis of relevant information for the empirical diagnosis of the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy in Consolación del Sur. The elements of the methodology are detailed below:

Step 1. Identification of information needs

The set of information needs is identified in function of determining regularities of the field of action for which it is important to know:

- Projection that on the subject is defined in the official documents that regulate the updating of the Cuban economic and social model
- Reference to monitoring and evaluation in the methodological instruments established by the Ministry of Economy and Planning (Mep in Spanish) and the Institute of Physical Planning (IPF in Spanish) for territorial planning
- Current status of monitoring and evaluation of EDMs in Pinar del Río
- Criteria and practical evidence on how the process of impact evaluation of the EDM is conceived from the Municipal Assembly of People's Power (AMPP in Spanish) and the Municipal Administration Council (Cam in Spanish) in Consolación del Sur
- Criteria and practical evidence on the way in which the process of evaluation of the programs that make up the EDM is conceived, from the companies and budgeted units of Consolación del Sur
- Perception of the limitations and strengths that exist in the municipality of Consolación del Sur for the evaluation of the impacts of the EDM and the way in which this process is currently being developed

Step 2. Definition of information sources and units of analysis

- Secondary information sources: they are used to characterize the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy, from a set of available reports and documents that allow a first approach to the problem. For the study of the field of action from methodological instruments of national scope and its particularities in the municipality of Consolación del Sur, secondary sources of information are consulted. As a complement to the information provided by the secondary sources, primary sources are used through interviews and surveys
- Primary information sources: they are used in a first moment to complement the characterization of the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy, applying standardized individual interviews to directors of the Mep, the IPF, the Provincial Government, as well as the AMPP and the Cam in Consolación del Sur, as a preliminary exploration of the studied phenomenon. It is also analyzed how the scientific problem of the research is manifested through a semi-structured group interview and a survey

The realization of the standardized individual interview facilitated the comparative analysis between individuals and the consequent generalizations and classifications from what each one expresses. The semi-structured group interview is applied to the members of the Municipal Group of Local Development of Consolación del Sur. The survey is applied to the members of the Consolación del Sur Cam.

Step 2.1 Sample design

In the case of the standardized individual interview, it was carried out with directors of the Mep, IPF, the Articulated Platform for Integral Territorial Development, the Provincial Government of Pinar del Río, the AMPP and the Cam in Consolación del Sur. For the semi-structured group interview, a participative workshop was carried out with the 37 members of the Municipal Group of Local Development with the objective of deepening in the criteria or valuations of the specialists, which provides a greater richness of qualitative data. The survey was applied to 100% of the 21 members of the Municipal Administration Council.

Step 3. Developing techniques to collect information

For the documentary analysis, a set of reports and documents that are available in an orderly and coherent manner were consulted and are listed below:

- National Plan for the Economic and Social Development of Cuba until the year 2030
- Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy of the Party and Revolution (2016-2021)
- Procedure for the design of the Municipal Integral Development Plan (PDIM in Spanish)
- Methodology for the design of the General Land Use Plan (PGOT in Spanish)
- Methodological guide for the design and management of the EDM
- Methodological guidelines of the Mep to develop the plan of the economy 2019 and 2020
- Work system and minutes of the meetings of the Cam and the AMPP in Consolación del Sur
- Working system of the Municipal Directorates of Economy and Planning, Physical Planning, Labour and Social Security, National Statistics and Information Office and Municipal University Centre, all of Consolación del Sur

For the application of the interview, the following were taken into consideration: objectives, the elaboration of the interview guide, the way to record the information and the necessary conditions for its realization, as well as the introductory, development and closing moments. Based on these elements, the individual and group interview guides to be applied were designed.

For the design and implementation of the survey, consideration was given to: (1) clarity and precision of the survey objectives; (2) instructions on how the questions should be answered; (3) the content and number of questions in the questionnaire; and (4) the design of the questionnaire.

Step 4. Application of diagnostic tools and data processing

For the documentary analysis, the listed documents were reviewed. The data collected from the primary sources (surveys and interviews) were processed using descriptive statistics, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of an impact evaluation system for the municipal development strategy, as part of the municipal management process of local development, is of great importance because of its capacity to contribute to timely decision-making by the local government in terms of the continuous improvement of this territorial planning tool. It should be an integral part of the development strategy, so as to generate feedback processes to guide the programs towards the final achievement of the objectives and the evaluation of these and their impacts.

Diagnosis of the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy in Consolación del Sur.

When analyzing the documents associated with the work system of the Municipal Assembly of People's Power, the Municipal Administration Council and the Municipal University Center (Cum in Spanish), it was found that:

- No point is included in the AMPPs to check the progress of the EDM design process and its implementation
- Follow-up to the EDM design and implementation process is not incorporated in the work plans of the Cam cadres
- In the minutes of the official meetings of the Cam, it can be seen that the issue of the progress of the design and implementation does not appear as an item, but rather points have been made about the process as part of the general issues that are analyzed in this body
- The actions foreseen in the Cum's work objectives and measurement criteria are aimed at developing training and advisory services for the completion of the EDM until 2030 and the management of local development projects. There is no reference to any aspect associated with the impact assessment process

When reconciling the opinion of the interviewees, the elements that coincide in the standardized individual interviews are found to be the same:

- In the methodology for the elaboration of the General Land Use Plans, evaluation is declared as a stage, but it is not defined how this process is carried out. Monitoring is not explicitly stated
- The procedure for the design of the Municipal Integral Development Plan does not define a specific stage for monitoring, it only states the evaluation of the process and does not define instruments for its operationalization
- The methodological guide for the design and management of the EDM includes the "Monitoring and Evaluation" stage, but does not provide methodological elements for its management
- Lack of orientation, from the planning instruments that are currently applied at national, provincial and municipal levels, towards the impact assessment process
- In the 11 municipalities of Pinar del Río province that have strategies approved by their AMPP, they are working on their implementation, but they have not designed an impact evaluation system
- The AMPP and the Cam de Consolación del Sur do not have a system for evaluating the impacts of the municipal development strategy
- The companies that are responsible for the implementation of programs contained in the EDM do not have a system in place to evaluate their impacts

The main results of the structured group interview conducted coincide with the elements shown in the individual interview.

The survey was applied to the members of the Council of the Municipal Administration of Consolación del Sur and the following additional results were obtained:

- 71.4% consider that the impact assessment of the EDM is "important" for the development of cooperative and private enterprises, while the rest consider it "very important"
- There is no clarity on which actor should manage the EDM impact assessment process, although all identify municipal actors and most agree that it should be the Municipal Administration Council. Among those selected by the respondents

are: Municipal Directorate of Economy and Planning (14.3 %); Municipal University Center (9.5 %); Municipal Assembly of People's Power (23.8 %) and Municipal Administration Council (52.4 %)

- 76.2% consider that the impact of the Cam on the impact assessment process of the municipal development strategy has been low or very low, which shows that priority attention has not been given to this process
- 90.5% consider that the incidence of the AMPP in the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy has been low or very low, demonstrating that this process has not been sufficiently incorporated in the analysis topics of this body
- 95.2% consider that the incidence of companies in the impact evaluation process of the programs that make up the municipal development strategy and are within their competence has been low or very low

After applying the instruments and consulting the sources of secondary information, we proceeded to triangulate the elements that confirm the research problem. For this purpose, the Ishikawa diagram or cause-effect diagram was used, since it makes it possible to determine the causes that hinder the process of evaluating the impacts of the EDMs.

For its elaboration, the main effect "Insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the municipal development strategy" is placed at the tip of an empty arrow. In a workshop held with officials of the institutions belonging to the Municipal Group for Local Development of Consolación del Sur, they were given a sheet with a summary of the results and were asked to mark with a cross the five probable causes that, in their opinion, could be influencing this effect. From this exercise, the list was reduced, selecting the probable causes with the highest degree of coincidence.

Then the definition of the causes to be stated in each of the thorns is carried out, for which a brainstorming session is used to graphically present an initial proposal. Starting from the primary thorns, an exercise is carried out with the 14 members of the Municipal Group of Local Development to give an order of importance of the causes in the effect, which makes it possible to hierarchize the solutions and their level of influence in the intended change.

Based on the proposals of Mirabal, Torres and Iglesias (2018), each member is asked individually, through sheets where the causes are numbered, to give an order of importance from one to n , being one the most important cause, two the next in importance, up to n , the least important. Once the answers have been processed, a matrix of judgments is elaborated as shown in table 1, where R_j means the sum of the values given by each of the 14 specialists (E); deducting from the lowest R_j the most important cause and from the highest R_j the least important cause.

This analysis is complemented with the calculation of the concordance (C_c), which reaches a $C_c > 60\%$ for each R_j in all cases, so it is considered that there is a good level of consensus and with the design of the weighted Ishikawa Diagram.

It is observed that the most important cause was: "Lack of a methodological instrument to execute the monitoring and evaluation of the municipal development strategy", followed by "Insufficient capacities of local governments for the monitoring and evaluation of the municipal development strategy" and as the least important cause, "Insufficient articulation of actors and coordination mechanisms for the process of monitoring and evaluation of the municipal development strategy".

Procedure for the evaluation of the impact of municipal development strategies

The instrument associated with the impact assessment of the EDMs is proposed. The elements that make up the proposal are explained, highlighting its main components and describing the main steps and techniques in which it is structured, as well as the premises necessary for its implementation.

1) Premises for the implementation of the Procedure

In order to determine the premises that serve as a basis for the application of the proposed procedure, a workshop was held with the members of the Provincial Council of the Government of Pinar del Río and specialists from different global economic organizations were invited, as well as from the University of Pinar del Río; the result was the following:

- Willingness of the Government to undertake the proposed procedure
- The management process of sustainable local development must be carried out in a participatory manner
- That the municipal development strategy is formulated, at least in its fundamental components (strategic diagnosis, mission, vision, public policies, strategic lines and objectives and general outline of its development programs)
- The existence of a Municipal Group for Local Development (GMDL in Spanish), with a multidisciplinary approach and decision-making capacity in its respective institutions that facilitates the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy

Table 1. Causal Weighting Matrix

	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10	E11	E12	E13	E14	Rj	Cc (%)
Lack of a methodological instrument to carry out monitoring and evaluation of EDM	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	2	21	64.2
There is no professional structure of the municipal government to attend to the EDM management process	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	59	78.5
Insufficient articulation of actors and coordination mechanisms for the	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	1	5	5	5	64	78.5

EDM monitoring and evaluation process																
Insufficient local government capacity for monitoring and evaluation of EDM	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	30	71.4
EDM monitoring and evaluation process is not incorporated into the work system of government and other stakeholders	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	1	36	64.2

The expression for the calculation of the concordance (Cc) is as follows (Cuesta, 2010).

$$Cc = \left[1 - \left(\frac{Vn}{Vt} \right) \right] * 100$$

Where:

Cc: concordance expressed in percentages

Vn: number of specialists against the prevailing criterion

Vt: total number of specialists

The fulfilment of these assumptions will create the necessary conditions to favor the implementation of the procedure presented. Establishing these assumptions adequately and helping to achieve them are mandatory necessities for an adequate coordination of all components of the impact assessment process, for which joint or separate discussions can be held, as long as they give the possibility to create an adequate environment for carrying out the EDM impact assessment.

2) Description of the components of the procedure

The procedure recognizes the importance of enhancing the value of endogenous resources (natural, human and infrastructure resources) as a fundamental tool for promoting the economic and social development of the territory. Exogenous resources (those coming from outside) are not excluded, as long as they play a complementary role to the endogenous.

The above should be taken into account when elaborating the procedure, since the EDM to be evaluated should facilitate the articulation of local actors and national, sectoral and territorial interests in terms of the use of endogenous resources and the improvement of the population's quality of life.

The proposal is structured in six stages and each one of them is made up of steps, describing the corresponding procedures for each one of them and the possible techniques to be used for their implementation.

The main arguments that justify the need for the procedure are evidenced in the results of the instruments used in the empirical diagnosis, which ratify the gap that exists between the public management of local development that is currently being carried out and that which is aspired to with the evaluation of the impacts of the EDM on this management process.

The presentation of the procedure in question begins with an explanation of its structural components:

I. General objective of the procedure.

II. Object of Procedure.

III. Responsible for the implementation and control of the procedure.

IV. Stages of the Procedure. Six stages are determined, with the following elements:

- Specific objective. Each of the steps pursues a specific purpose that contributes to the general objective of the procedure

- Steps. They are designed at each stage and are conceived as general lines of action
- Techniques to be used

In accordance with the structure provided above, the description of the procedure is presented:

General Objective of the Procedure: to contribute to the improvement of the impact evaluation process of the municipal development strategy on local development.

Object of Procedure: the management of the municipal development strategy.

Responsible for the implementation and control of the Procedure: the responsible for the implementation and control of the procedure should be the Municipal Administration Council, for being the highest executive authority, supported by the professional or non-professional structure to attend the local development that is established to create in Decree 33 (2021) "For the strategic management of local development".

The following stages are established for the evaluation of EDM impacts:

- Stage I: Familiarization with the EDM subject of the impact evaluation
- Stage II: Diagnosis of objective conditions for impact evaluation
- Stage III: Evaluation Design
- Stage IV: Execution of the evaluation
- Stage V: Processing and analysis of the obtained results
- Stage VI: Feedback to the EDM management process

Roles of the technical team for the impact assessment of EDMs:

- Establish the information needs and indicators for the evaluation (which are often determined with the client, using a logical framework approach), outline its terms of reference, select the relevant methodology and identify the evaluation team
- Conduct qualitative and quantitative analysis at the impact evaluation stage, ensuring participatory input and the drafting of the final evaluation report. This

should include economists, sociologists or anthropologists or other specialists depending on the characteristics of the EDM to be evaluated (specific analysis for each program)

- Lead the process of sample selection and calculation for quantitative and qualitative data in coordination with the analysts, taking into account the established indicators, ensuring that the processes guarantee the selection of the correct informants
- Design the data collection instruments. This can be done by one person or a team, who will ensure that these instruments actually produce the data required for the analysis. This person or team should participate in pilot testing and refining the questionnaires
- Oversee data collection actions, from planning routes to forming and scheduling field teams. They are the ones who apply the data collection instruments and are responsible for the quality of the data
- Design data entry programs. This can be done by one person or a team that will enter the data, check its validity, provide the necessary documentation of the data, and produce basic results that can be verified by analysts
- Advise the Government in making decisions that will enable the successful evaluation of the impact of EDM on local development
- Propose to the government which modifications should be made to the different components of the EDM (strategic diagnosis, mission, vision, public policies, strategic lines and objectives, and development programs)
- Elaborate the schedule of actions to be followed for the evaluation of EDM impacts.
- Systematically monitor compliance with the EDM impact evaluation implementation schedule, ensuring the quality of the process
- Establish relevant indicators for the evaluation of EDM impacts
- Control EDM impact evaluation
- Analyze and socialize the results of the EDM impact evaluation
- Constantly update the state of the art on the dynamics and trends of the political, social and economic reality of the country and the region, with the objective of suggesting areas for EDM projection in the short, medium and long term, as well as the institutional designs for its implementation, based on the results of the impact evaluation process

- Design and socialize the mechanisms and instruments that facilitate the evaluation of impacts of the fundamental components of the EDM, aiming to homogenize the application of methodological aspects
- Detect and systematize the best practices of EDM impact evaluation, in order to replicate their use and discard less effective formulas

It is necessary to clarify that depending on the size, scope and design of the evaluation, some of these functions may be shared or other human resources will be incorporated into this core team. EDM impact evaluations, like any other type of evaluation, can be conducted by an internal team of evaluators (the managers and participants directly involved with the EDM) or by an external one (external to the coordination and development of the EDM, i.e., not directly involved with it).

For the selection of the members of the evaluation team, the following requirements, among others, should be taken into account: knowledge of impact evaluation processes, experience in carrying out other types of evaluations, skills and potential offered by the specialty in which he/she is a graduate, according to the sectors prioritized by the EDM, willingness, commitment and impartiality, communication skills and participative leadership, being linked to the management of local development in some of its components.

Stage I: familiarization with the municipal development strategy under evaluation

Particular objective: to study all the documents related to the object of evaluation, verifying if the requirements established in the methodological proposal for each of the stages are followed.

Step 1: Request for evaluation

This request must be made by the President of the Municipal Assembly of People's Power, who is the highest authority of the body that approves the EDM, and the Intendant is responsible for the execution of the evaluation process.

Techniques: official application document

Step 2: Needs' diagnosis study of the impact evaluation of the municipal development strategy

When introducing the procedure, it is necessary to assess the current status of the EDM evaluation process, identifying how it is performing at the organizational levels and in terms of the results it brings to local development. The needs diagnosis helps to define the objective of each of the proposed activities, taking into account the specific EDM programs to be evaluated.

Techniques: interviews will be conducted with those responsible for the implementation of the object of evaluation, in order to know the actions developed. The programs and portfolio of project opportunities established for the achievement of the EDM will be studied.

Step 3: Awareness-raising and training of those involved

In this step, the evaluation is planned and organized from the point of view of the cooperation of the participants and their training. For this purpose, meetings are held with all the actors who will be directly or indirectly involved in the impact assessment of the EDM.

A work chronogram is detailed where the activities to be developed for the design and execution of the impact evaluation, the time programmed and the people in charge are consigned.

It also includes all activities related to the creation of working materials for the participating actors involved in the field work. The amount of equipment (human resources) needed for field work should be assessed here. The group of specialists from the evaluation team will train interviewers and surveyors to apply the evaluation instruments and work with the EDM beneficiary population.

Once the human resources are guaranteed, the pertinent adjustments will be made to ensure the financial and material resources related to transportation, lodging (if necessary), food, premises and means of work for the processing of data and

information, among other materials necessary for the application of the evaluation instruments. This information can be summarized in an estimated budget.

An important aspect to keep in mind in this step is that the applicants for the evaluation should be sufficiently involved in the evaluation to ensure that the legitimacy of the process is produced and that the results obtained are relevant to their information needs. This means that among the participating actors, there should be representation from EDM coordinators and/or program managers.

Techniques: work schedule, estimated budget, conduct information meeting, agreement and assignment of responsibilities with evaluation applicants and stakeholders involved in the EDM impact evaluation, conduct interview with actors involved in the evaluation.

Step 4: Determining the objectives of the EDM impact assessment process

In this aspect, the nature and essence of the structure of each activity should be taken into account and, based on the needs, determine the aspiration that the evaluative process is intended to reach. At this point, it is necessary to deepen the results of the diagnosis and establish the necessary connections between the different actions so that they do not overlap.

Techniques: Documentary review, interview, group work, brainstorming.

Stage II: diagnosis of the objective conditions for the evaluation

Particular objective: to diagnose the objective conditions for the execution of the EDM impact evaluation.

Step 1: Gathering existing information and documents

Once the first stage has been completed, the objective conditions for carrying out the EDM impact evaluation are diagnosed.

Whether the necessary and sufficient information is available for the evaluation process, which is essential for the subsequent development and application of the evaluation

instruments. As well as to know the possible obstacles that could exist in the evaluation and to plan their treatment.

Analyze the reports of evaluation processes (follow-up, monitoring and results) carried out prior to the EDM.

Techniques: written and oral communication, action-research-participation, observation.

Step 2: Review of essential aspects of EDM design and implementation

Review the essential aspects in the design of the EDM for a detailed knowledge of it: start and end period, definition of the EDM programs, responsible and participating institutions, background and justification, target population (baseline), problem(s) to be solved, general and specific impact objectives, actions to be developed based on the implementation schedule, results to be achieved, possible effects identified, assumptions considered.

Techniques: interviewing managers, coordinators and/or heads responsible for the EDM and its development programs, analyzing work priorities and problem bank of the municipality and for each program.

Stage III: Evaluation design

Particular objective: to design the EDM impact evaluation tools.

Step 1: Development of the evaluation proposal to be applied

In this step, it is begun to design the evaluation, showing objectives and impact, the variables, dimensions and indicators that will be used to evaluate the impacts, and the sources of verification for the variables. For this purpose, a logical framework matrix is proposed that can be used later as a reference for preparing and reviewing questionnaires, as well as for analytical work.

Techniques: designing and selecting samples, pilot testing, group discussion, consensus techniques.

Step 2: Identification of variables and indicators for the evaluation

This step considers that the impact evaluation was planned from the design of the EDM. This means that the variables and impact indicators should be established, as well as possible exogenous factors that could have an effect on the results of the EDM and its development programs. However, if they have not been foreseen at this stage, they can be selected based on the collective discussion and contribution of EDM actors and the evaluation specialist team, which will lead to satisfactory results. The territorial development index and its complementary indicators are projected: the intermunicipal cooperation and complementarity index and the territorial governance index. Other specific indicators may be defined to evaluate impacts and provide relevant information for local decision making.

Techniques: group work, survey, interview.

Step 3: Finding solutions to difficulties

This step also includes the search for solutions to the difficulties identified in the previous steps that may hinder the implementation of the evaluation. The samples and instruments to be used to assess the impacts of the EDM are selected. The selection of samples and instruments can be a cumbersome process, as well as the selection of impact indicators, but it will undoubtedly contribute to evaluating the progress achieved and desired satisfaction. It is proposed that this process be carried out for each development program and at the EDM level in general.

Techniques: design and select samples, conduct pilot tests.

Stage IV: Implementation of the evaluation

General objective: to carry out the evaluation based on the application of the evaluation instruments and techniques designed.

Step 1: Determine samples and conduct pilot tests

To determine the samples, it is necessary for the specialist to participate from the beginning of the stages described above to review the available information. He or she

must know the characteristics of the place where the evaluation will be applied, what is to be evaluated, the work schedule, the variables, dimensions and impact indicators selected, the target and objective population (essential for stratifying the samples). It should also be involved in the selection of the fieldwork and pilot test sample to ensure that the pilot test is not conducted in an area that will be included in the fieldwork sample.

Actions to be undertaken: address the obstacles in the implementation of the EDM impact evaluation that were identified, design and select samples, ensure staffing for field work, conduct pilot tests, make corrections to the data collection instruments.

Statistical techniques and tests: simple random sampling, Crombach's alpha, Kendall's analysis.

Step 2: Application of the previously designed tools and techniques

In this step, field work begins. The evaluation instruments are reproduced and distributed. Mechanisms for receiving and delivering the information are created. The conditions for data processing are prepared. Different types of instruments can be developed to evaluate the impacts of the EDM, depending on the characteristics of their public policies, programs and local development projects. This process should be duly studied by the group that will be in charge of the evaluation process and the rest of the participants in the evaluation, as mentioned in the previous step.

As explained above, it is important to establish an appropriate mix of instruments to collect both quantitative and qualitative information. Quantitative evaluations can collect and record information in numerical form. While in qualitative evaluations the information is generally presented as descriptive text that might include individuals' responses to interview questions, notes taken at focus group meetings, or the evaluator's observations of events.

Techniques: action-research-participation, interviews, written and oral communication.

Stage V: processing and analysis of the results obtained

General objective: to analyze the data and information obtained in the execution of the evaluation by processing them in the databases created.

Step 1: Processing the results obtained

At this stage, all the information obtained from the work of the teams in the field is collected and processed using the database created for this purpose. Data entry should be carried out simultaneously with data collection.

The analysis of evaluation data, whether quantitative or qualitative, requires the collaboration of the evaluation team, actors and project managers to clarify questions and ensure timely and quality results. For the processing of quantitative data, the *Statistical Package for Social Science* can be used and include analysis techniques based on statistical methods. For the analysis, the evaluation matrix established in the evaluation design should be used.

Techniques: comparative analysis of planned indicators and their actual behaviour, group discussion, consensus techniques.

Step 2: Preparation of the report on the weaknesses and strengths found

Once the results obtained have been processed, a report is drawn up containing the main deficiencies and strengths found in the execution of the evaluation.

Stage VI: Feedback to the EDM management process

General objective: to provide feedback to the management process of the municipal development strategy, based on the maintenance, modification or incorporation of some of its fundamental components (strategic diagnosis, mission, vision, public policies, strategic lines and objectives and development programs).

Step 1: Socialization of the results obtained in the evaluation process

In this step, the results are presented to the applicants for the evaluation. The main difficulties in the impact evaluation process are discussed. Experiences are analyzed, positive and negative lessons are drawn to enrich processes and decision making.

Techniques: group discussion, cause-effect diagram, problem tree, objective tree.

Step 2: Elaboration of actions that contribute to continuous improvement

Depending on the timing of the evaluation, the dimensions, variables and impact indicators of the EDM can be redefined, as well as new elements to be incorporated. The evaluation will be projected at a later estimated time to measure progress.

Techniques: problem tree, objective tree, teamwork and workshops (incorporating the results into the EDM update).

The implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system as part of the process of municipal management of local development is of great importance because of its capacity to assist program management decision-makers and decision-makers. It should be an integral part of the development strategy in order to generate feedback processes to guide the programs towards the final achievement of the objectives and the assessment of these and their impacts.

The empirical diagnosis of the research, based on the consultation of primary and secondary sources of information, showed that the existing methodological tools for territorial planning in the country do not strictly contemplate the process of monitoring and evaluation of municipal development strategies. There is no methodological instrument available to develop the monitoring, and evaluation of the EDM and this process is not incorporated into the work system of the AMPP and the Cam of Consolación del Sur.

A procedure is designed for the impact evaluation of the municipal development strategy with its premises, the creation of a technical group and six stages with their respective steps and techniques to be applied, which contributes to the improvement of local public

management and timely government decision making in terms of continuous improvement of this territorial planning tool.

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Authors declare not to have any conflict of interest.

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All authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.



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