

Online course ‘Knowledge Sharing on Costing of Structural Reforms’

Reading material

TRICKS AND TIPS FOR WRITING A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURAL REFORM

This paper is aimed at contributing to improvement of the structure and quality of Economic Reform Programmes (ERPs) with the focus on description of structural reforms measures (SRMs) outlined in the Chapter 5 of ERP document. It is intended to serve as a support for the editors and writers of SRMs by providing them a guidance on how to ensure the SRM description is clear, concise and focused to the content that enables better-informed decision-making processes.

When writing a SRM description as a starting point, its writer or editor should have in mind the two basic guiding principles:

a) Who will read this?

The main readers of ERP document are policy makers, social partners, politicians, EU counterparts, journalists, engaged citizens, etc. That is why you should ensure the language used is understandable also to them. In particular, pay attention to the following:

- Design the structure understandable and clear to general public audience.
- Readers want straight information, therefore avoid long introductions and get straight to the point.
- Majority of readers will not read the whole document, but only what is of their interest.
- Many readers only scan titles and bolded keywords.
- Use abstracts and executive summaries to provide key information.
- Use clear and simple structured table of contents.

b) What am I trying to say?

- Provide a short description of a problem to be addressed.
- Be exact on the solution and expected result.
- Avoid telling too many details, historical data, legal acts....

To ease the process of designing of a SRM, you can follow the structure as referred in the »[Info sheet template for preparation of a structural reform measure](#)«.

Title of a measure

- Design a clean and concise title, using keywords.
- Title should be telling, understandable and short.

For example:

| | |
|-----|--|
| NO | Improving the link between education and labour market |
| YES | Education linked to labour market needs |

| | |
|-----|---|
| NO | Establishing more efficient management system of scientific research and innovation potential |
| YES | Efficient management in science and innovation |

| | |
|-----|--|
| NO | Improving the communication and information society sector along with the regulatory alignment of regulatory framework with EU standards |
| YES | Efficient communication and information sector |

Description of a measure

- Start strong: place the main point of your idea up front.
- The opening sentence and paragraph should tell the reader what you are writing about and why it is significant.
- Provide a concise description of a measure by indicating the issue targeted objective, and relationship with national strategic documents and/or sector strategies and broader reform efforts.
- Use the principle of a lead sentence with key word and content.
- Use short sentences.

For example:

| | |
|-----|--|
| NO | The main obstacle in the road infrastructure sector is the underinvestment in the construction and reconstruction of roads and motorways over the past three decades. Namely, in the mentioned period there was a multiple increase in the number of vehicles on the roads, i.e., transport of goods and passengers by roads, and at the same time this was not accompanied by the construction of new roads and reconstruction of existing roads to the extent needed. In addition, according to the construction standards, the planned useful life of the newly constructed road is about 20 years, after which it is necessary to carry out reconstruction or rehabilitation of the road, depending on its condition. All this results in the fact that the existing road network on the main motorways and regional routes with high traffic loads (PGDP) does not provide a high-quality level of service, i.e., there are congestions, traffic jams, significant delays in traffic of passengers and goods. The consequence of this is the high number of road accidents in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to official data for 2017, there were 170 fatalities in road traffic accidents, and 6,809 persons were injured. |
| YES | The road infrastructure sector is underinvested. A multiple increase in the number of vehicles has been recorded and the needed reconstruction and investment in road |

| | |
|--|---|
| | infrastructure has not been carried out. The existing road network does not provide a high-quality service i.e., congestions, traffic jams, delays in traffic of passengers and goods. This also results in number of road accidents with 170 fatalities and 6,809 injured were recorded in 2017. |
|--|---|

- Simplify the wordings; be critical to the text that can be deleted without loss of meaning.
- Avoid long and hard-traceable sentences that loose point.
- Be aware that well-articulated measure is basis for good calculation of its costs.
- Use well formatted tables and graphs. There is no need to repeat in text the contents of tables and graphs).

For example:

| | |
|-----|---|
| NO | With a view to full implementation of the Law on Electronic Signature and implementation of electronic signature for public administration, citizens and business entities throughout the country in the previous reporting period, the Ministry of Communications and Transport of established the Office for the Supervision and Accreditation of Verifiers in accordance with Article 20 of the Law on the electronic signature of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which officially started work on 15 January 2018. Activities in the field of electronic signature conducted by the Ministry of Communications and Transport in the past period are..... |
| YES | Electronic signature would enable citizens and business to improve communication to public administration and enhance productivity and transparency. |

| | |
|-----|---|
| NO | The objective of this measure is to set up a legal framework for establishing basic principles in order to move towards a circular economy, and to create infrastructure for adequate management of particular types of waste, i.e. to adopt implementing regulations that will contribute to the establishment and strengthening of circular economy mechanisms, and a system for monitoring the use of economic instruments in the field of waste management. |
| YES | The goal is to establish basic principles towards a circular economy. This will be started by creating infrastructure for management of different types of waste and a system for monitoring the use of economic instruments in of waste management. |

- Do not overburden text with detailed data and description of past facts.

For example:

| | |
|-----|--|
| NO | According to the Labour Force Survey 2018, the employment rate increased relative to the previous year and stands at 34.3%. Administrative data shows that in 2018 there was an average of 804,497 employed persons, of which 341,521 were women. This is an increase compared to the previous year, when 784,094 persons were employed (of which 329,922 were women). Other survey indicators – the unemployment rate and activity rate – also recorded a positive trend. Despite this, the high long-term unemployment rate still poses a major challenge (68.6% of the total unemployment rate comprises persons unemployed for more than two years). The inactivity rate in 2018 was 57.9%, which means that only 42.1% of the working age population is employed or looking for employment. |
| YES | Employment rate has increased to 34.3%, measured by Labour force survey 2018. Administrative data show there were 804, 5 thousand employed persons, of which 341, 5 thousand were women. This is an increase of 2.6% over a year for total employment and 3.5% for women. Although unemployment rate and activity rate have improved, long term unemployment remains challenge, since 68.6% are unemployed for more than two years. Inactivity rate remained high at 57.9%. |

- Avoid referencing laws and legal background if not essential (use the footnotes and references, links...).

For example:

| | |
|-----|--|
| NO | Activities planned in 2020-2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adoption of the Law on Tourism ○ Adoption of the Law on Catering in order to harmonize regulations, with the aim of adopting systemic solutions so as to improve the quality of services, and better promotion of available resources in order to increase the number of tourists. ○ Adoption of the Law on the Tourist Tax with the aim of increasing the income from tourism. ○ After the prepared legislation has been adopted, they will be followed by the activities on drafting the by-laws arising from the proposed laws. ○ Implementation of laws and by-laws |
| YES | Increase the number of tourists, tourist overnight stays and incomes from tourism by improving the quality of services and better promotion of available resources, also with the introduction of tourist tax. |

- Use stronger action verbs.

For example:

| | |
|-----|---------------------------|
| NO | to perform an analysis of |
| YES | to analyze |

| | |
|-----|-------------------------|
| NO | to come to agreement on |
| YES | to agree |

- When the text is finished, read the contents carefully.
- Ask a colleague to read it for you.

Enjoy your writing !