

Session 16: Evaluation of public investments in France
November 27, 2019 10:45 to 12:15
MS001

Chair

Roger Guesnerie

Professor emeritus at Collège de France and chairman of the French Committee of experts on methods for socioeconomic evaluation of public investment

Performing *ex-ante* socioeconomic assessments of public investments is a legal obligation for public civil investment project sponsors. Article 17 of Act no.2012-1558 of 31 December 2012 created the obligation for prior socioeconomic evaluation of civil investment projects funded by the State, its public institutions, public health institutions or health cooperation structures, all sectors included. Decree no.2013-1211 of 23 December 2013 specifies that this obligation concerns projects for which funding provided by the State and its public institutions exceeds 20 million euros. For the largest projects, i.e. those for whose funding by the State and its public institutions exceeds 100 million euros, the General secretariat for investment (GSFI) oversees an independent counter-expert assessment of the *ex-ante* socioeconomic evaluation carried out by the project sponsor. To coordinate this counter-expert assessment, the GSFI mandates a group of independent experts for a period of one to four months; its composition varies depending on the projects in question. The experts concerned have proven professional experience and present sufficient guarantees of independence with respect to the project sponsor.

Furthermore, since Act no.82-1153 of 30 December 1982 bearing on guidelines for internal transport, *ex-post* assessment is compulsory in the transport sector five years at the latest after infrastructures have been put into service, in particular for the largest-scale projects, i.e. those whose cost exceeds 83 million euros. Although each sector has its own specificities, the methodology for evaluation must still rely on common principles. The main purpose is to determine the real impacts of an investment once it is completed, compare these impacts to forecasts, and analyse the differences between forecasts and achievements. Apart from the transport sector, in which *ex-post* assessments have been compulsory since twenty years, generalisation to all sectors of public investments of such a virtuous feedback practice, comparing an investment's actual results to its objectives, should be facilitated by the existence of harmonised guidelines to socioeconomic evaluation.

First, a report on the socioeconomic evaluation of public investments was published by France Stratégie under the supervision of Émile Quinet¹. The Committee of Experts on Methods for Socioeconomic Evaluation of Public Investment was set up in January 2017 by the GSFI and France Stratégie in order to specify the socioeconomic calculation rules for each sector, based on the general methodology. To do this, the Committee of Experts guides discussions on the methodologies of socioeconomic evaluation and their sectorial application, in particular by setting up working groups involving figures from the academic world and actors from the sector in question. The Committee of Experts on Methods for Socioeconomic Evaluation of Public Investment is chaired by Roger Guesnerie, professor at the Collège de France and Honorary President of the Paris School of Economics. Vice-Chairman is Jean-Paul Ourliac, and Secretary-General is professor Luc Baumstark.

¹ [*L'évaluation socioéconomique des investissements publics*](#), France Stratégie, report published under the supervision of Émile Quinet, 2013.

Among its members: Dominique Bureau, Jean Michel Charpin, Joel Maurice, Emile Quinet, Lise Rochaix.

Our session will be focused on the works of the Committee of Experts and organized as follows:

- Why this Committee? by Roger Guesnerie, professor emeritus at Collège de France and chairman of the Committee of Experts on Methods for Socioeconomic Evaluation of Public Investments
- The Guide to Socioeconomic Evaluation of Public Investments in France, by Jean-Paul Ourliac, vice chairman and Jincheng Ni, expert at France Stratégie
- Organizing an independent counter-expert assessment of the prior socioeconomic evaluation carried out by the project sponsor, by Professor Luc Baumstark, in charge of counter-expert assessment of socioeconomic evaluation at General secretariat for investment
- Works in progress : the case of higher education and universities, by Pierre Courtioux, Research Director, EDHEC Business school

Emile Quinet, professor at Paris School of economics, member of the Scientific Committee for SBCA European Conference 2019 will be the discussant.