



Key elements of the mid-term evaluation and evaluation plans 21-27

Webinar for the 21-27 HOME funds – April 2023

Initially presented on 19 April 2023

Version revised in May 2023

Purpose and agenda of the meeting

Discuss the general framework for the most immediate evaluation requirements (mid-term evaluation and evaluation plans)

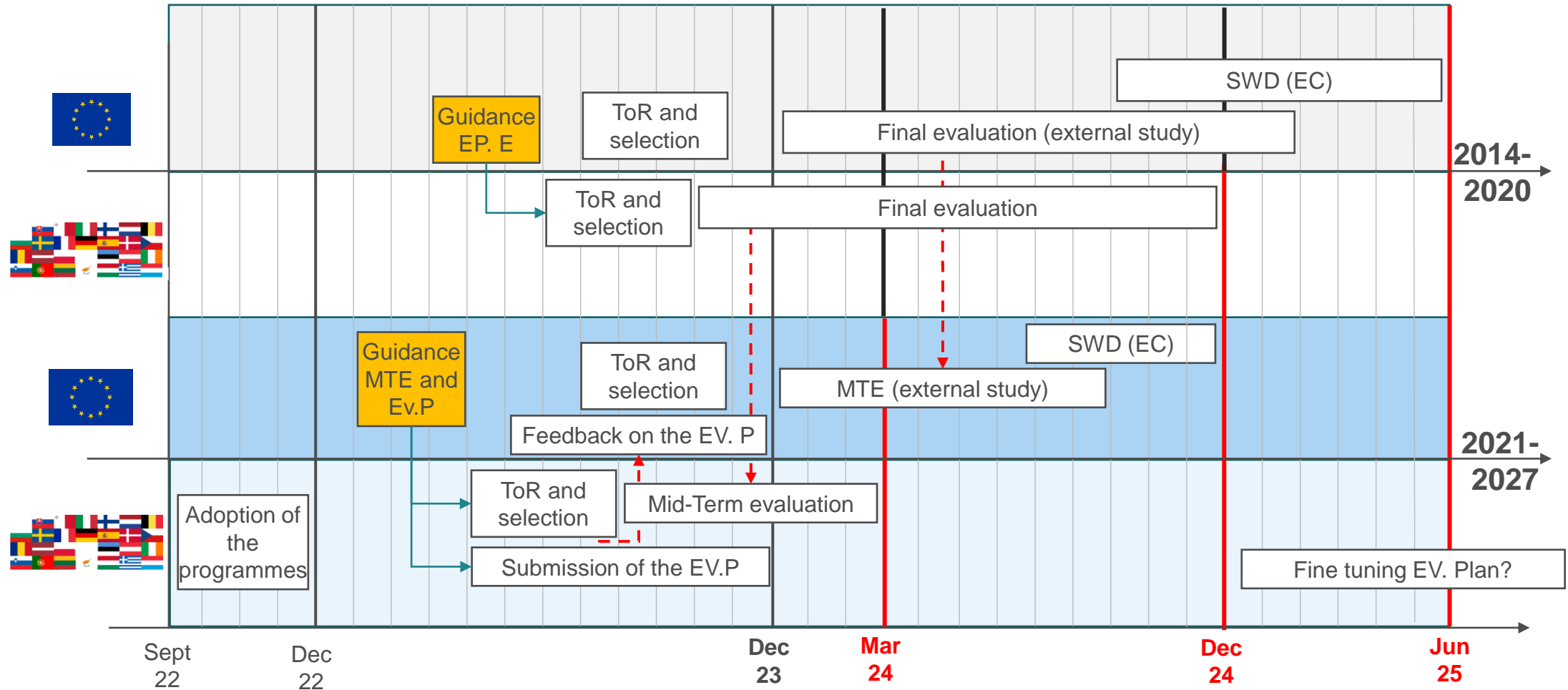
Mid-term Evaluations	Evaluation plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim and scope• Evaluation questions and indicative judgement criteria• Methods• Format and structure• Who does what• Process and next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim and scope• Structure• Who does what• Process and next steps

Not covered -> Mid-Term Review 21-27 and ex-post evaluation 14-20

MS to indicate one Monitoring and Evaluation correspondent and one back-up

Evaluation of HOME affairs funds

Overall planning



Context

- For the 21-27 MFF, great attention attached to strengthening M&E (ECA, COM spending review etc)
- Empowerment to COM to adopt a delegated act to reinforce M&E requirements as necessary + performance framework on all indicators – HOME is choosing to favour a gradual approach to the harmonisation of M&E practices across programmes and MS
- Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox to define a framework for the evaluation of EU programmes
- Main legal references detailed in the background note:
 - Common Provisions Regulation art. 44 (MS level evaluation and evaluation plan) but also art. 40 on the role of the MC, 41 on the performance review meetings, Article 8 and the ECCP on the involvement of partners, art. 9 on horizontal principles, art. 36 on the use of technical assistance
 - Fund-Specific regulations defining in more detail the scope of the EU-level MTE

1. Mid-term evaluation of 2021-2027 Home Affairs Programmes

Member State level

Mid-Term Evaluation

Rationale

“Aim to improve the quality of the design and implementation of the programme” – art 44 CPR

Given the context and early stage, focus is on:

- **Process**-related aspects and areas for revision, simplification, improvements
- Continuing **relevance** of the strategy and related needs-assessment, targets, implementation measures
- **Early evidence on progress** and **whether the current set-up is conducive to effectiveness**
- Review of specific aspects (e.g. partnership, horizontal principles, communication, indicators)
- EU added value, in coherence with other funding sources and modalities

To properly inform the policy cycle any policy suggestions/ **recommendations** need to be **underpinned by solid evidence**, clearly addressed, **realistic** and rooted in a review of what is (not) possible based on the Treaties

Mid-Term Evaluation

Scope

- Entire programme (including top-ups)
- Cover the **five mandatory evaluation criteria** in the [Better Regulation Guidelines](#)
- **Cover from the beginning of the programming period until Dec 2023**
- Granularity: as much as possible by specific objective
- Critical analysis – no “yes or no” answers
- Importance of descriptive aspects too i.e. “HOW” not just “IF”

Mid-Term Evaluation

Evaluation questions and indicative judgement criteria

- MAs **strongly encouraged** to:
 - address in their mid-term evaluations the evaluation questions identified in the background note
 - Make use of the indicative judgement criteria identified in the background note (assumptions to be demonstrated by the assessment in answering the ev. Questions)

Some customisation is natural (also to cover fund-specific or programme specific issues), **but** key to have a **sufficiently streamlined and coherent approach across MS**

This is part of the **evaluation matrix** – the core of the evaluation exercise, as explained in the note

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Relevance

- To ultimately assess whether the programme is still '*fit for purpose*'
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - To what extent the strategy is rooted in a needs analysis that is still up-to-date (correct target groups, adequate resources, adequate targets, adequate implementation measures)
 - To what extent is the programme responsive to changes (adequacy of built-in flexibility, procedures for non(substantial) amendments, evidence of adaptation in case of specific emergencies etc.)

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Effectiveness⁽¹⁾

- To ultimately assess whether the programme is **contributing to the achievement of the stated objectives (early progress), and it is respecting the horizontal principles in so doing**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Implementation has started across the board, early progress ok
 - Challenges have been identified timely and adequate remedy actions in place
 - Types of interventions supported are known to be effective / embed good practices

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Effectiveness₍₂₎

- Focus: **monitoring framework**, can it really inform on effectiveness?
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Reliable data exchange system and no over/under reporting
 - Based on the intervention logic, main achievements are captured either through common or programme specific indicators
 - The evidence generated paves the way for an assessment of the impacts

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Effectiveness₍₃₎

- Focus: **partnership principle**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - A strategy for the identification and involvement exists – balanced representation
 - Relevant partners involved since the beginning
 - Where necessary, supporting actions to enable relevant partners to participate

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Effectiveness₍₄₎

- Focus: **horizontal principles**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - **Fundamental rights:** suitable arrangements in place and claims non existing or addressed
 - **Gender mainstreaming:** suitable arrangements in place and positive action where necessary
 - **Non-discrimination:** suitable arrangements in place and claims non existing or addressed
 - **Sustainable development/environmental:** suitable arrangements in place

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Effectiveness₍₅₎

- Focus: **communication**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Strategy in place with stakeholders mapping, monitoring arrangements and targets
 - Evidence of good results on the ground (audience reached, interactions, appropriate mix of channels)
 - Good advertisement of funding opportunities

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Efficiency₍₁₎

- Focus: **cost-effective measures**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Based on available evidence/ literature, cost-effective measures are planned
 - Unit cost in line with existing benchmarks, or justified factors

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Efficiency₍₂₎

It reviews the relationship between the changes generated by the programme and the resources used to that end

- Focus: **efficiency of the management and control system**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Administrative burden proportionate compared to benchmarks (previous p.p., similar services offered without the support of the programme) and for the different actors (MAs, beneficiaries, end users)
 - No gold plating at various levels
 - TA used where necessary to smooth the administrative work
 - SCOs help reduce adm burden

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Efficiency₍₃₎

- Focus: **further simplification achievable?**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Evidence of legal requirements, rules and practices that create disproportionate adm burden
 - Possibility of a broader scope for SCOs
 - Evidence of lack of coordination among actors that could be fixed
 - Evidence of issues with IT system which could be solved

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Coherence₍₁₎

How well different interventions work together, both within the same domain or programme (internal coherence), as well as with other instruments and funds (external coherence)

- Focus: **internal coherence (thematic facility)**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Existence of structures/arrangements/coordination mechanism
 - Use of such mechanisms
 - No/ only justified overlaps
 - Coherence with relevant agendas in the same policy field
 - Inter-agency cooperation

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

Coherence₍₂₎

- Focus: **external coherence (other EU funds)**
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Existence of structures/arrangements/coordination mechanism
 - Use of such mechanisms
 - No/ only justified overlaps
 - Support to cross-cutting policy agendas

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

EU added value

Changes that are due to the EU intervention, over and above what could reasonably have been expected from national actions by the Member States

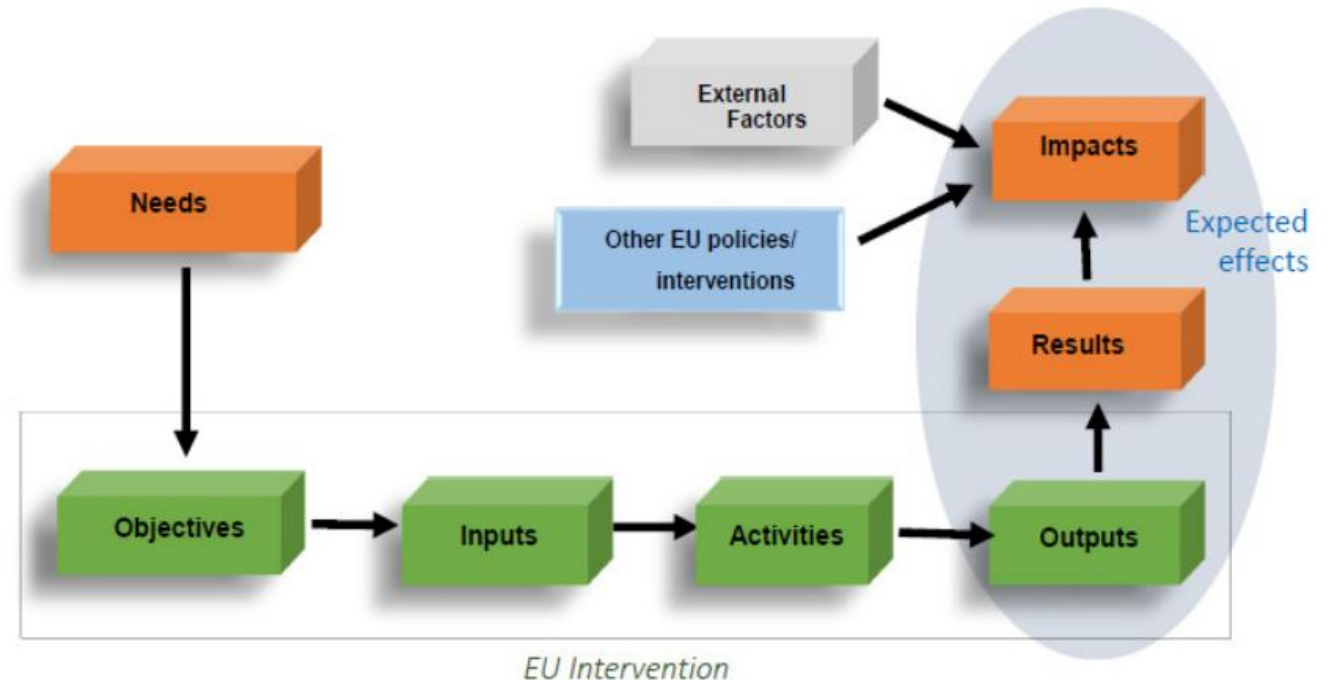
- Key angles for the analysis (summary – see background note):
 - Focus on areas where there are scope, scale and function effects
 - No dependency

Mid-Term Evaluation

Reconstruction of the Intervention logic

- To delineate the “causal pathways”
- illustrating how the intervention is expected to work
- By Specific Objective, including external factors and relevant policies
- **Key to fine tune ev. Questions, identify gaps in the implementation measures or monitoring systems**

Figure 1: Simplified intervention logic



Mid-Term Evaluation

Evaluation matrix – extract of a theoretical example

Eval. Criteria	Evaluation question	Judgement Criteria	Descriptors or Indicators	Methodological Approach	Sources
Effectiveness	How was the involvement of the relevant partners ensured across all stages of the programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategy in place to identify, inform and reach the most relevant partners and which aims to ensure their balanced representation in the MC • Relevant partners have been identified and involved at the programming stage • Relevant partners participate in the MC in line with their role as defined by • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a strategy with dedicated outreach activities • Number and types of stakeholders included in the list of MC members and their attendance • Normative judgements from potential and actual partners • Share of relevant organisations responding that they were aware of the possibility to be part of the MC • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed approach covering documentary evidence and normative judgements from stakeholders. • Based on the intervention logic and legal basis, a range of potential partners will be identified. • A survey/ ad-hoc interviews/ a focus group will be carried out to gather the feedback from the relevant actors. • ... 	<p><u>Primary sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews/ Survey/ focus group with potential and actual partners, or relevant experts • Interview with the MA <p><u>Secondary sources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MS programme • MA website (list of committee members) • Annual performance report submitted in 2023 and 2024, section 1.1 • Documentation from the monitoring committee • ...

Mid-Term Evaluation

Needs assessment, stakeholder mapping and consultation strategy

- Importance to review whether the programmes are addressing the key needs of their main stakeholders – **linked with reconstruction of the intervention logic**
- Stakeholders mapping necessary to properly map the relevant needs to also to inform the consultation strategy
- Different techniques available (literature review, focus groups, SNA), but important to
 - Sort stakeholders by their needs (target groups) but also interest, influence, expertise (for the consultation)
 - Always fully triangulate the normative judgements of the stakeholders, accounting for their motives/ vested interests
 - Search for relevant networks, stakeholders lists, experts groups (including via the consultation, e.g. with explorative interviews and focus groups -> evaluation as an iterative approach)

Mid-Term Evaluation

Analysis of financial and physical progress

- To exploit to the extent possible the information generated by the monitoring system, including
 - Data transmitted as per art. 42 and stored in SFC2021 or in the MA monitoring system, but also payment applications/ account data where relevant
 - Any additional programme-specific indicator
 - Annual Performance Reports
 - Programme and other publicly available documents (call for proposals, list of beneficiaries, list of members in the MC)
- Importance of:
 - **Contextualisation and triangulation (no simple “data exports” – these should not find a place in the body of the final report. Need for analysis and reasoned assessments)**
 - Accounting for **time-lags** and underreporting
 - Accounting for the **quality of the information** as well as the adequacy of **milestones and targets set**

Mid-Term Evaluation

Summing up

- **Balanced assessment**, highlighting
 - **main findings**, rooted in the intervention logic of the programme and stemming from a full triangulation of qualitative and quantitative evidence;
 - **any caveats and limitations** to the findings based on a critical review of the methodological approach;
 - **lessons learned** and areas for further research.
- Helpful to **include good practices**, esp. in connection to the lessons learned/recommendations

Mid-Term Evaluation

Structure of the final report

Unstructured module in SFC2021 -> simple upload of a document

Max length: 100 pages + annexes if relevant -> evaluators to draft a **concise, clear and well-structured doc**

Recommended structure:

- **executive summary**, by evaluation criteria, with key findings and suggestions/ recommendations; **clear and concise, no jargon**
- **Intro and background**, including:
 - **policy background** (literature review, needs assessment and description of the fund)
 - **summary of the methodological approach**: main features of the consultation strategy, analytical methods used and main limitations (the full methodological approach, evaluation matrix, bibliography etc. should normally be placed in an Annex)
- **reconstruction and description of the intervention logic**;
- **state of play** (progress of operations, from a procedural, financial and physical point of view)
- **evaluation findings**, by Criteria, Question and Specific Objective;
- **conclusions**, covering lessons learned and related policy suggestions/ recommendations; and
- examples of **good practices**.

Mid-Term Evaluation

Terms of Reference

Key document defining all aspects of how an evaluation will be conducted -> strong impact on the quality of the related study

Used to hire the independent evaluators on a competitive basis

Typically includes:

- **background**, objectives and audience of the evaluation;
- the **evaluation questions** (and indicative judgement criteria, for further customisation);
- any **required or recommended methodological approach**, also specifying, where relevant, what are the main tasks expected from the and the main deliverables;
- the **available sources** (e.g. monitoring data, annual performance reports, documents of the monitoring committees, previous evaluations or studies, ad-hoc surveys etc.)
- the **timeline** for the main tasks, deliverables and meetings;
- the **management arrangements** (e.g. role and responsibilities of the evaluator and evaluation client, the role and involvement of other parties), **composition of the evaluation team** and required competencies; and **budget/ payments**

Whatever the choice (prescriptive vs open to a broader customization from the independent evaluators) importance of having the **right expertise within the MA** to gauge the proposals and steer the process & **intermediate deliverables**

Mid-term evaluation

Who does what

Actors/ Phases	Planning (Jan – Sept 2023)	Implementation (Sept 23 – Mar 24)	Follow up (mid '24 – mid '25)
European Commission	Methodological support & general framework	Follow up and methodological advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure follow up on MS level evaluations (EU MTE and IA) • Ensure follow up of recommendations at the MS level
Managing Authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare the ToR • Select the independent evaluators • Ensure the involvement of the partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validate the intervention logic • Provide data and feedback • Monitor that the requirements of the ToR are fulfilled 	Follow up on recommendations (including reasons not to do so, if any) to COM and MC
Monitoring Committee/ Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • input and suggestions into the evaluation design • Highlight evaluation needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer information or provide feedback to the independent evaluators as necessary • opinion on the evaluation. deliverables 	Remain vigilant on the follow up of the recommendations
Independent evaluators	Methodological approach to the evaluation	Carry out the evaluation in line with ToR and any relevant requests from the MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May support dissemination • Remain available for clarifications as per the ToR
Beneficiaries		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide feedback during consultation activities • provide data on the operations as per the legal basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be involved in the dissemination activities • May be a target group of a recommendation (e.g. capacity building)
Other stakeholders		To be included in consultation activities according to their different roles	Are involved in dissemination activities

Mid-Term Evaluation

Process and next steps

Discussion today on the draft background note – to **send any remaining comments until Friday 28 April**

Take note of any revisions as a result of the discussions

Work on the Terms of Reference of the mid-term evaluations, leveraging upon the note

Refer to Desk Officers and coordination unit across all phases of the preparation and implementation of their mid-term evaluations in case of doubts or need for clarification

Assess your internal needs (administrative capacity and expertise to manage the evaluation studies) -> TA for training of methodological support?

Any possible delays to be discussed *ad-hoc* with COM

2. Evaluation plans for the 2021-2027 Member State programmes

Evaluation Plan

Rationale

Overarching goal: **to make sure that good quality information is available on time for policy makers and programme managers for evidence-based decision making**

Novelty for DG HOME, standard practice in CPR DGs, it aids:

- Reflection on evaluation needs, and **what is needed by when**
- Standardisation & possibility to run meta-analyses
- Strengthening of the M&E system, iteratively identifying gaps and ways to address them
- Participatory approaches and **capacity building**
- Greater efficiency, leveraging on a review of existing evidence

For HOME, **gradual and iterative approach to the planning of the evaluations suggested** -> knowledge is likely to evolve especially with the mid-term evaluations

Evaluation Plan

Points of attention

- to include a conceptualisation of the evaluation strategy as good quality evaluation depends on:
 - Sound review of the intervention logic -> **link to the strategy of the programme**
 - **Relevant data being available on time**
 - Adequate techniques (esp. for impact evaluation and in case of counterfactual approaches where a hypothetical situation need to be reconstructed e.g. based on a control group)
 - **Adequate resources and expertise**
- to update the plan as needs arise -> **‘living document’**
- to **clarify the distribution of roles and responsibilities**
- to pay attention to **follow up and dissemination** activities

Evaluation Plan

Objective scope

- It can cover more than one programme
- It should cover at least the MTE and Ex-post evaluation and the whole programming period
- It can cover additional elements, including:
 - Thematic studies (communication, visibility, simplification, horizontal principles, etc.)
 - Additional interim evaluations
 - Sampling methods to fill in the data for “longer-term” result indicators
 - Ad hoc surveys in case of any gaps in the monitoring systems

Evaluation Plan

Structure₍₁₎

- Objectives, coverage and coordination
 - Purpose of the plan, also to inform all stakeholders
 - Coverage (ev. Criteria to be addressed, priority areas for research based on a review of existing evidence)
 - Coordination and exchanges with other actors, esp. other MAs
- Evaluation Framework
 - Responsibilities and governance (who is in charge, sub-groups, role of partners/ research centres and universities)
 - Overall budget and timetable
 - Criteria to select the independent evaluators

Evaluation Plan

Structure₍₂₎

- Planned evaluations, studies and data collection activities
 - Rationale, scope and evaluation/research question
 - Methods and data requirements (particularly important for impact evaluations)
 - Duration and tentative date
 - Estimated Budget

Level of detail to be proportionate to the current level of knowledge, esp. on the impact evaluation

Important to start reflecting on the aspects above, plan to be revised after the mid-term evaluation process/ methodological advice on impact evaluation

Evaluation Plan

Who does what

Actors/ Phases	Preparation (Up to 12 months from the decision approving the programme)	Review and Acceptance (From 2 months before the presentation of the EV.P to the MC for approval)	Implementation and follow up (From the approval of the MC, until the end of the programming period)
European Commission	Provide methodological support and define the structure	Provide comments on drafts	Monitor implementation of the plan Can request or recommend reviews
Managing Authority	Draft the plan, with the help of technical assistance if necessary	Submit the plan to the EC via SFC and adjust where necessary	Monitor the implementation, report on it at Monitoring committees (MC) and performance review (PR) meetings. Draft action plans in connection to recommendations if necessary
Independent evaluators/ TA	May support the drafting or review of the evaluation plan	May assist MAs in the review of the evaluation plan	Carry out the evaluations/ thematic studies/ data collection activities
Monitoring Committee	May provide inputs and comments on drafts	Approve the first version and any subsequent revisions of the evaluation plan	Monitor progress of the plan during MC meetings and PR meetings, in line with the ECCP Can contribute to the drafting of action plans that are based on the findings/recommendations from the evaluations
Stakeholders	May be consulted ad-hoc to gather feedback on evaluation needs.		Provide ad-hoc input in the evaluation activities Are informed about the conclusions and follow up Should be able to consult or download the latest approved EP

Evaluation Plan

Process and next steps

- EV. Plan to be submitted to the MC within 1 year of decision approving the programme
- COM does not approve/ accept the plan, but provides suggestions in line with practice in other DGs. To this end
 - If possible, draft plan to be uploaded in dedicated SFC2021 module (without ticking the box “approved”) 2 months in advance of the submission for approval -> COM to provide feedback within one month
 - If no time -> submission to MC and upload in SFC2021 at the same time -> COM to provide feedback within one month, bilateral exchanges to agree on a suitable schedule for approval

First EV. Plan should follow the standard structure (objective coverage and coordination, evaluation framework, list of studies) but are not expected to cover in detail the impact evaluation

EV. Plan to be strengthened based on the findings from the MTE

Thank you



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