



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Europe 2020: Employment Policies  
**Unit C/2 – Sectoral Employment challenges, Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship**

## **Stakeholder Consultation Strategy**

### **EGF mid-term evaluation**

#### **1. Context**

The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) was set up to show solidarity with, and provide support to, workers made redundant as a consequence of major structural changes in world trade patterns. The rules were later amended to respond also to the global financial and economic crisis. The EGF co-finances active labour market policy measures organised by the Member States to help the redundant workers re-position themselves on the labour market and find new jobs.

Evaluations are an integral part of decision-making. On its own initiative, and in compliance with Article 20 of the EGF Regulation, the European Commission therefore intends to carry out a mid-term evaluation of the EGF (2014-2020). The effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value of the results achieved should be assessed. Wherever possible and useful, the economic, social and environmental impact of EGF interventions should be examined. The aim of the evaluation is to assess how and to what extent the EGF fulfils the needs it aims to satisfy, and on the basis of the conclusions of the evaluation, may also foster new ideas for the further development of the EGF.

The evaluation will be carried out by an external contractor.

An Inter-Service Steering Group (ISG), consisting of people from various Directorates-General of the European Commission, has been set up to steer the evaluation during all key phases.

## **2. Stakeholder Consultation – Objectives and Scope**

In order to ensure that the general public interest of the Union - as opposed to special interests of a narrow range of stakeholder groups - is well reflected in the future design of the EGF, the Commission regards it as a duty to conduct stakeholder consultations, and wishes to consult as widely as possible.

The aim of the stakeholder consultation related to the EGF mid-term evaluation is thus to deliver a high quality and credible evaluation by allowing interested parties to provide feedback and to contribute suggestions. This also ensures transparency and accountability.

Consulting stakeholders has been a continuous process in EGF operations. In previous years, for reviews of the EGF Regulation, special stakeholder consultations<sup>1</sup> have been conducted in the form of questionnaires and seminars. However, the range of stakeholders was limited to managing authorities, implementing bodies and social partners. Besides these events, every year, the Member States' EGF authorities participate in the semi-annual Contact Persons meetings. Other stakeholder groups are invited to attend networking seminars, usually conducted twice a year. Member States also conduct national consultations, often in the form of conferences.

However, in the context of the EGF mid-term evaluation for the period 2014 to 2020, it is clear that additional forms of consultation are necessary to ensure that all relevant and interested stakeholders get the opportunity to express their opinions and to contribute to the terms of reference of the evaluation.

Therefore, a more formalised approach will complement the existing forms of consultation so that information gaps can be prevented.

In order to identify the most appropriate mix of consultation methods, it is key to identify the relevant stakeholder groups and the best way to the consult them in order to ensure the

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<sup>1</sup>

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?pager.offset=10&catId=326&langId=en&furtherEvents=yes&limit=no>

reception of relevant input of the highest quality and of diverse point of views.<sup>2</sup> It is important to specifically target groups that run the risk of being excluded, and also to identify needs to consult stakeholders with in-depth knowledge on a specific topic. A certain balance and comprehensive coverage will be ensured.

Therefore, this Stakeholder Consultation Strategy will serve as the umbrella of all consultation methods and tools used.

Furthermore, right timing of the consultations is important to ensure that stakeholders can express their views during all major steps of the evaluation procedure in a way that allows them to influence the outcome of the evaluation.

A website dedicated to the Stakeholder Consultations will be made available from the beginning of the consultations to inform on and bundle the respective consultations.

The Stakeholder Consultations are a dynamic process and the approach might be altered during the evaluation phase if deemed necessary by the contractor and/or the ISG. All changes will be announced on the consultation website.

The findings of the consultations will be summarized in a synopsis report and also made available to stakeholders. Stakeholders who participated will be able to see if – and if not, why – their views have been taken into consideration.

### **3. Stakeholder Mapping**

As a first step, it is necessary to identify possible stakeholder groups who might be concerned by the EGF. This could be stakeholder groups who are impacted by or could impact the EGF, or are relevant for or particularly interested in the EGF in general or in a certain aspect covered by the EGF.

In a second step, the categories of stakeholders will be mapped according to their level of

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<sup>2</sup> Even though they constitute very important stakeholder consultations, Inter-Institutional Consultations between the EU institutions, Inter-Service Consultations between interested and relevant Commission Services as well as Intra-Service Consultations within a Commission Service are not covered by the Stakeholder Consultation Strategy

interest in and their influence on the EGF, in order to be able to define the right approach to consult them.

These differentiations might not always be clear cut, and could depend on the national context in particular.

**Stakeholders' categories:**

**Workers' organisations/(redundant) workers:** Workers' organisations and workers themselves can be directly affected. The EGF's beneficiaries are redundant workers, who are the most important stakeholders on an individual basis, and also the organisations representing the workers. Depending on the Member State, some of these organisations might also be involved in the implementation of EGF measures. The interest of the individual redundant worker (beneficiary) is very high, his/her influence rather low, however. The interest of the organisations representing the workers is also very high. Their level of influence depends inter alia on the Member State and the level of involvement assigned to them in the implementation of EGF measures.

**NEETs:** By way of a derogation clause, young people who are "Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET)" are eligible for EGF support under certain circumstances. The interest of the NEETs is therefore very high, their influence is rather low, however.

**Citizens/General Public:** The general public constitutes the largest stakeholder group. On the one hand, the general public has an interest in how public funds are spent. On the other hand, even if not directly affected by EGF measures, any active labour market policy measure indirectly affects the general public. Due to the more indirect relation, and as the EGF is one of many active labour market policy instruments, the interest of the general public is often low. The influence of the general public on EGF measures is also quite low.

**Industry/business:** Even though the EGF does not provide any support to industry or businesses, they would have a general interest because of the EGF's nature as an active labour market policy instrument. Some organisations representing local business in an area affected by mass redundancies that fall under the EGF provisions, as well as organisations representing the interest of an industry strongly affected by globalisation or

by the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, might however have a very high interest. The influence on EGF measures generally is usually low.

**NGOs:** NGOs that are not workers' organisations and not representing industry or business might still have an interest in the EGF. This could include special interest organisations such as environmental organisations, organisations focusing on gender issues etc. Their interest would generally be rather low, except regarding the particular causes they represent. Their general influence on the EGF is rather low.

**Private sector bodies and professionals:** Private sector bodies are in most cases involved in the implementation of EGF measures, and so, both their interest and influence is high. They may be training bodies, universities, consultancies, advisers, and various experts such as medical professionals, psychologists, lawyers, engineers, business and financial advisers, etc.

**Public authorities:** Politicians and national governments have, by definition, a major influence on EGF measures. Each EGF case needs to be approved by the national managing authority, usually a senior civil servant or even a Minister, before submission to the Commission. The Commission proposal is then presented to the European Parliament and the Council. Due to the limited scope of the EGF, the overall interest of Member State public authorities is, however, not huge. The national EGF Managing Authorities, i.e. the Contact Persons of the EGF, have a very high interest by definition. They also have a high influence, as they are responsible for the design of EGF measures in their respective Member States, and are in permanent contact with the European Commission. As regards local authorities in areas affected by EGF cases, these have a rather high interest in EGF. Even though they are often involved in the implementation of EGF measures, they usually do not have a major influence on the design of the EGF as such. Their level of influence, however, also varies depending on the Member State.

**Research:** Researchers representing academia or think tanks could have an interest in the EGF, and if they do, their findings might have an influence. These would usually be individual researchers, however, so that it would not make sense to consult "researchers" as a group.

#### **4.Methods & Tools**

The different steps of the consultation process and strategy require different types of consultation activities.

Depending on the stakeholder group identified, different tools and methods will be used in order to conduct the consultation.

During a 4-week period, all interested stakeholders will be able to provide feedback on the EGF Mid-Term Evaluation Roadmap. This is the first step of the consultation procedure in order to receive feedback on the evaluation design. In order to raise stakeholders' awareness about the consultation, the Contact Persons will be informed and asked to forward this information among their network. It should furthermore be announced via DG EMPL's Social Dialogue mailing lists. This consultation will be conducted by the European Commission; a dedicated website will be launched on the Europa website. The consultations are planned for August/September 2015.

In March 2016, a networking seminar will be organized to which relevant stakeholders are invited and during which the planned open consultations will be discussed. Due to the limited number of places, Member States will be asked to nominate two stakeholder representatives each. Only stakeholders who have not attended a networking seminar during the two preceding years will be invited in order to avoid "regulatory capture". Stakeholders attending could come from all stakeholder groups, as the aim of this meeting will be to discuss the upcoming 12-week open consultation. The networking seminar will be organised by the Commission. The external contractor conducting the evaluation will act as the rapporteur.

During the 12-week open consultation, planned for April-July 2016, stakeholders will be consulted on the evaluation criteria, using a questionnaire. It will be the responsibility of the external contractor to conduct these consultations. In order to raise awareness about this consultation, it should be announced and presented during the networking seminar in March and promoted via the Contact Persons and DG EMPL's Social Dialogue mailing lists in order to ensure broad awareness. It will be the contractor's responsibility to propose further channels to promote the consultation, such as social media, direct (e)mailing, etc, in order to ensure the participation of important stakeholder groups that might otherwise be underrepresented. It seems particularly important to make redundant

workers and those threatened by redundancy and their organisations aware of the open public consultation.

In the course of the evaluation field work, the contractor is expected to conduct targeted consultations in the forms of interviews and/or questionnaires. A sample group of beneficiaries will be consulted (in addition to the general questionnaire of the open public consultation), as they represent the most important stakeholder group, but as individuals, do not have much influence. Furthermore, other relevant stakeholder groups will be consulted. During the networking seminar of March 2016, it will be discussed what type of stakeholder organisations should be included in the targeted consultations. The final approach will be agreed by the Inter-Service Steering Group.

The results of the consultations need to be reflected in the contractor's report.

## **5. Website**

DG EMPL will set up a website dedicated to the stakeholder consultation strategy which will serve as the major information tool concerning the consultation. It will contain subpages for the different types of consulting work performed, inform about the envisaged timeframes and all relevant information on the consultation activities planned.