



Charter for the Evaluation Function of Eurostat

1. INTRODUCTION

Eurostat's mission is to provide high-quality statistics for Europe. It is in this context that the evaluation activities of Eurostat are placed, described and aligned with the general evaluation standards of the Commission.

The objective of this document is to define the corresponding tasks and responsibilities of the entity in charge of evaluation in Eurostat (the "Evaluation Function"). It thus lays down the definition of evaluation in the context of Eurostat's activities, organisational aspects, working methods, roles of actors involved and the approach to evaluation. The document was approved by Eurostat's senior management in September 2015, updated in October 2017 following the adoption of the revised Commission [Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox](#) and again in 2018 and in 2019 after the reorganisations of Eurostat.

2. EVALUATION IN THE COMMISSION CONTEXT

2.1. Definition of evaluation

Evaluation is defined as an **evidence-based judgement** of the extent to which an intervention has:

- Been **effective and efficient**,
- Been **relevant** given the needs and its objectives,
- Been **coherent** both internally and with other EU policy interventions and
- Achieved **EU added-value**.

Evaluation is a tool to help the Commission learn about the functioning of EU interventions and to assess their actual performance compared to initial expectations.

Evaluation is required where:

- The legal basis of the relevant intervention so requires (e.g. a "review" clause where sufficient operational/implementation experience has accumulated to permit evaluation and/or specific evaluation requirements);
- Indicated by the Financial Regulation and Rules of Application (i.e. for all programmes and activities entailing significant overall spending (over €5 million));
- Indicated by Council Regulation (EU) 2015/323 on the financial regulation applicable to the 11th European Development Fund.

In short, evaluations are an essential step to manage and revise the existing body of EU legislation and policy and should, wherever possible, precede the impact assessment.

Other studies with evaluative content are subject to the much lighter [requirements for studies](#).

2.2. Approach to evaluation

An evaluation must answer the following key questions:

1.	<i>What is the current situation?</i>
2.	<i>How effective has the EU intervention been?</i>
3.	<i>How efficient has the EU intervention been?</i>
4.	<i>How relevant is the EU intervention?</i>
5.	<i>How coherent is the EU intervention internally and with other (EU) actions?</i>
6.	<i>What is the EU added value of the intervention?</i>

The evaluation process includes many administrative obligations and steps, in particular:

1. **Political validation:** generally evaluations to be conducted by a Directorate-General are confirmed during the management plan process. At an appropriate point in time, each individual evaluation is introduced and validated in Decide;
2. Drafting of the **evaluation roadmap** by the lead DG, for agreement with the Secretariat-General. This roadmap provides a first description of the evaluation design, communicating the context, purpose and scope of the evaluation and outlining the proposed approach. The roadmap is published as early as possible by the Secretariat-General on the [Commission's website](#). Publication of the roadmap will provide greater transparency and enable stakeholders to provide their feedback;
3. Establish **an interservice group (ISG)** to steer the evaluation. The ISG must be involved in all the key steps of the evaluation after the publication of the roadmap up until the launch of the interservice consultation on the staff working document (design and conduct). The ISG may also be consulted on any associated report/communication to the European Parliament and Council. The ISG must include a representative from the lead DG's evaluation function and a representative of the Secretariat-General;
4. Agree a **consultation strategy with the ISG**, complying with the requirements set out in the guidelines, **including a 12 week internet-based public consultation**;
5. Prepare the **staff working document which responds to the issues in the roadmap, presents the analysis and answers the evaluation questions**. Its length is likely to around 50-60 pages (excluding annexes but including tables and figures). As an annex it will include a synopsis report, maximum 10 pages, on the consultation process. A short **executive summary** (2 pages) presenting the findings of the evaluation process may also be written. For those **evaluations selected for scrutiny by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB)**, the draft evaluation staff working document (SWD) must be submitted to the RSB and the Board's comments

incorporated into the SWD. For external evaluations the SWD will explain whether the Commission agrees with the contractor's report, which will also be published. If legally required, prepare **a report to the EP and the Council**, by expanding the SWD executive summary.

6. Launch **an inter-service consultation** for the SWD and the report to EP and Council (only one for the two documents).
7. **Publish** the staff working document and any supporting contractors' (final) study report with associated terms of reference (or technical specifications). **Where required by the basic legal act**, transmit the staff working document to the Parliament and the Council together with a short Commission report/communication;
8. **Disseminate the evaluation findings** and encourage active discussion and debate on the findings with stakeholders;
9. Identify any **appropriate follow-up actions** to put into practice the lessons learned and feed the evaluation findings into the next step of the decision-making cycle. Some of this information may already be included in the report to the legislator where this is necessary.

In case the project manager of an evaluation considers that not all the standard questions and steps apply, he/she will have to discuss the case directly with SG.

3. EVALUATION IN THE EUROSTAT CONTEXT

Transposing these rules to the Eurostat context, it means:

- The main purpose of evaluation at Eurostat will be to provide stakeholders with information on whether the objectives defined in the **European statistical programme** were achieved by implementing and publishing *mid-term* and *final* evaluations of the multiannual statistical programmes.
- Evaluations need also to take place when there is a **change of statistical legislation**.

When an evaluation is required to support an impact assessment, it may be conducted in parallel or with some degree of overlap with the impact assessment ("back-to-back"). This may happen for political urgencies or timing constraints.

The results of all evaluation activities are published both on the dedicated sites of the Commission for evaluations and studies and on Eurostat's website.

In order to implement the work on evaluation, an Evaluation Function was established in Eurostat.

Evaluation Function of Eurostat

3.1. Objectives

In general terms the Evaluation Function pursues the following objectives:

- to provide evaluations that support decision-making
- to prepare, implement and follow up on evaluations

- to support colleagues in Eurostat involved in the statistical production processes in implementing evaluations in their field of responsibility
- to contribute to the implementation of the Commission's policy on evaluation
- to translate the Commission's evaluation policy into pragmatic and manageable activities at Eurostat level
- to support the Strategic Planning and Programming (SPP) cycle activities with relevant input from evaluations.

3.2. Organisation

The Evaluation Function is organised combining a centralised and a decentralised approach with carrying out some evaluations itself and collecting information on other evaluations from the units implementing them. The Evaluation Function is responsible for:

- (a) the evaluation of the European statistical programme
- (b) support to other Eurostat units, when they have to perform other evaluations or studies with evaluative content
- (c) the evaluation related activities within the SPP cycle in Eurostat
- (d) organising and carrying out Eurostat general user satisfaction surveys
- (e) support for the organisation of other user surveys.

The Evaluation Function in Eurostat is at present placed in Unit A2 “Legal affairs; Document management”, which is part of Directorate A “Resources”.

3.3. Operational tasks

In terms of operational tasks the Evaluation Function focuses its work on the following activities:

- mid-term and final evaluations on the multiannual European statistical programmes in accordance with the Financial regulation
- support to the planning of evaluations within a rolling programme of 5 years in accordance with the general planning instruments on evaluations issued by the Commission (as an annex to the Management Plan)
- coordination of other evaluations performed in Eurostat
- support to evaluations and studies with evaluative content implemented on a decentralised basis by the responsible units themselves, if appropriate
- support to the respective reporting on all evaluations carried out in Eurostat in accordance with the reporting tools provided by the Commission's evaluation unit (the Studies database (StudiesDB))
- dissemination of evaluation reports via the Eurostat website and internally
- follow-up on the recommendations included in evaluation reports of the European statistical programme.

4. ROLE OF DIFFERENT ACTORS IN EUROSTAT IN EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Eurostat's senior management

- approves the annual and the multi-annual evaluation plan as part of the Management Plan
- ensures the necessary resources for evaluation
- discusses and agrees on the business cases of the planned evaluations
- receives the results of evaluations and decides on the appropriate follow-up for improving performance and a better evidence based strategic decision-making.

Eurostat's Evaluation Function

- coordinates the planning of evaluations as input for a better strategic decision-making
- supports operational units of Eurostat in evaluation activities in line with the Commission policy on evaluation as appropriate
- disseminates evaluation results externally (on its website) to increase transparency and accountability of the results
- implements evaluations within its competence
- supports the European Commission policy on evaluation and translates it into the context of Eurostat, inter alia by participating in the evaluation network at the level of the European Commission
- follows up on and monitors the evaluation recommendations and proposals for improvement coming from the evaluations of the European statistical programme.

Eurostat's units

- contribute to the evaluation planning by providing information
- carry out evaluations for legislation in their domain with the support of the Evaluation Function
- carry out studies in their domain
- draft impact assessments whenever required
- transmit the finalised reports to the Evaluation Function for dissemination.

5. PRINCIPLES AND RULES OF EVALUATION

The work of the Evaluation Function is based on the principles and rules detailed in the following documents:

- the Commission [guidelines on evaluation](#)
- the evaluation [toolbox](#).

Further information on any of the activities described can be requested from Eurostat's Evaluation Function at **ESTAT EVALUATION**.