

## Chapter II

### Guidelines on planning

#### *Key requirements*

- Political validation at the appropriate level<sup>14</sup> is required before substantive work on an initiative can start in earnest and for stakeholders to be engaged. In most cases, this requires a valid entry in Decide<sup>15</sup> (c.f. point 3 below). No public consultation or interservice consultation should be launched for initiatives which have not been politically validated.
- "Major" new initiatives require political validation from the lead Commissioner, Vice-President and First Vice-President following an entry created in Decide. In principle, this should be at least 12 months prior to the envisaged adoption date. Once the initiative is validated, a roadmap or inception impact assessment should be prepared, agreed with the Secretariat-General, and published as rapidly as possible.
- "Other" initiatives also require a Decide entry and they are directly validated by the responsible Commissioner or the Director-General of the lead DG. This should happen at least 3 months ahead of adoption with the exception of evaluations and fitness checks which need to be validated 12 months ahead of the envisaged completion date. As a general rule, evaluations and fitness checks also require the publication of a roadmap.

#### 1. WHEN CAN POLICY PREPARATION BEGIN?

The identification and delivery of the political priorities of the Commission are carried out in the context of the strategic planning and programming cycle<sup>16</sup> and on the basis of the political priorities<sup>17</sup> of the Commission President and the Commission work programme (CWP)<sup>18</sup>.

Effective and efficient EU action starts with good and timely planning. New initiatives including evaluation work must receive political validation *before* the substantive work can start and resources are allocated. Policy planning and implementation are always steered by the political level. **The political validation must be understood as giving the green light to start the substantive preparatory work. It should not be interpreted as a decision on a particular initiative or course of action that prejudices the outcome of any impact assessment process or later political discussion in the College.**

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<sup>14</sup> More detailed information is provided in the Toolbox and GoPro about the classification of initiatives and the planning and political validation processes.

<sup>15</sup> Decide is a tool designed to help the Commission screen and manage the flow of initiatives in line with the President's Political Guidelines  
[https://intragate.ec.europa.eu/decide/sep/entrance?Lizard\\_v3.0.28.10251-2016-12-14T09:38:52.639+01:00#/welcome-screen/](https://intragate.ec.europa.eu/decide/sep/entrance?Lizard_v3.0.28.10251-2016-12-14T09:38:52.639+01:00#/welcome-screen/)

<sup>16</sup> <https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/sg/spp/Pages/index.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/docs/pg\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/priorities/docs/pg_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/key-documents/index_en.htm)

**Substantive work may start and the necessary resources attributed only if political validation has been obtained from the appropriate level.**

## 2. POLITICAL VALIDATION FOR THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF INITIATIVES

It is the responsibility of each Directorate-General to consider carefully if its envisaged initiative needs corporate validation (either as a "major" or "other" initiative - see Table 1 below) and whether the initiative needs a Decide entry or not.

If a Decide entry is created, the lead DG needs to set out clearly the key aspects of any proposed initiative, such as the political importance and sensitivity, the magnitude of the expected impacts, relevant links with other policy areas and prior knowledge about divergent or sensitive stakeholder views. The scope of the information to be provided (via the relevant fields in Decide) and the required level of detail depends on the type of initiative and the required political validation. The information entered into Decide should be concise but sufficiently detailed to support the political validation process.

<i>Table 1. Political validation of initiatives and linked requirements</i>				
Initiative type		Who validates?	Roadmap or inception IA?	ISG needed?
"Major" initiatives (Decide entry at least 12 months prior to adoption)	All major initiatives	FVP & VPs & Commissioner in close collaboration with the President	Yes	Yes
"Other" non-major initiatives (Decide entry)	Initiatives which are neither "major" nor evaluations or fitness checks (Decide entry at least 3 months before adoption)	Commissioner	No	No
	Evaluations & fitness checks (Decide entry at least 12 months before completion)	DG (Management plan)	Yes	Yes
Initiatives handled outside Decide		DG	No	No

When creating a Decide entry with a view to submitting the envisaged initiative for political validation at the appropriate level, the following questions should be answered in each case:

- Is the initiative "**major**" or "**other**"?<sup>19</sup> This information is the starting point to guide the level of the ensuing political validation. In case an initiative is entered as "other", a clear and meaningful justification should be provided;

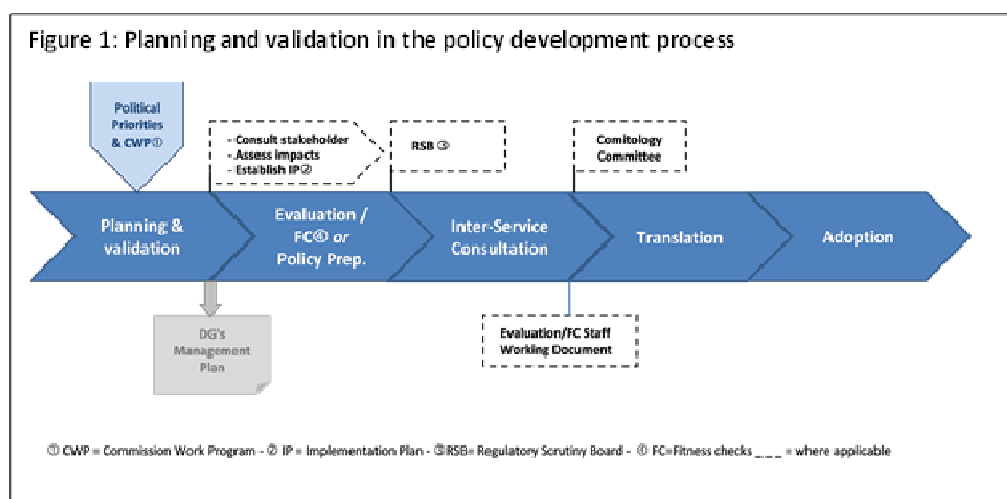
<sup>19</sup> More information is provided on the handling of "major" vs "other" initiatives in the Toolbox and in GoPro.

- What are the **key characteristics** (type) of the initiative? (evaluation or new initiative, legislative/non-legislative/or not yet determined, legal basis, Commission work programme item or not, envisaged adoption date, etc.);
- What are the **scope and the objectives** of the initiative? What is the problem the initiative seeks to tackle and the objectives it aims to achieve? What is the political context and how would the initiative contribute to established political priorities?;
- Why **should the EU act**? Why can the Member States not achieve the objectives by themselves? What is the value added of EU action (subsidiarity principle)?;
- Which **better regulation tools** are envisaged (evaluation, impact assessment, implementation plan and public consultation)? Which tools are not envisaged and why?

Methodological advice regarding the selection of the appropriate type of act can be sought via the functional mailbox SG HELPDESK PROCEDURES. For advice concerning the inclusion of an initiative in Decide, either as "major" or "other" initiative, questions can be addressed to the functional mailbox SG PLANNING. GoPro and the Secretariat-General's planning website (MyIntracomm) also provide useful information.

The scope and format of roadmaps and inception impact assessments are further explained in the Toolbox.

In addition to selecting the right procedure, good planning also implies taking account of the time needed to meet the various procedural requirements including scrutiny by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board, political validation to launch the interservice consultation and the time needed for translations<sup>20</sup>.



<sup>20</sup> C(2016) 2000 sets out the page limits, language regimes and translation deadlines.