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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL INFORMATICS

Directorate D - Digital Services  
**DIGIT.D.2 - Interoperability**

Request for services for an

EVALUATION STUDY

supporting the interim evaluation of the programme on  
interoperability solutions for European public  
administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA<sup>2</sup>)

*implementing Framework Contract 575/PP/2016/FC*

*DIGIT/2/2018*

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## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE ISA<sup>2</sup> PROGRAMME

[ISA<sup>2</sup>](#) (Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens) is an EU funding programme which supports the development of digital solutions that enable public administrations, businesses and citizens in Europe to benefit from interoperable cross-border and cross-sector public services.

By identifying, creating and facilitating the reuse of interoperability solutions, ISA<sup>2</sup> aims at promoting a holistic approach to interoperability<sup>1</sup> in the European Union and thus – as a key enabler – it helps the implementation of various Union policies and activities. ISA<sup>2</sup> is also the principal instrument to implement the [revised European Interoperability Framework \(EIF\)](#) and its annex, the [Interoperability Action Plan](#).

The programme's main beneficiaries are the European public administrations, which can provide better – more interoperable, user-centric and digital – European public services reusing the solutions offered by ISA<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the programme may have also positive impact on citizens and businesses. Moreover, as the [interoperability solutions](#), developed by ISA<sup>2</sup> and by its predecessor programme, ISA<sup>2</sup>, are made available to use for free they can reach a broader audience – like researchers, ICT communities or practitioners.

ISA<sup>2</sup> is opened to EU Member States, other countries of the European Economic Area and candidate countries. In addition to the 28 EU Member States, three other countries take part in the programme: Iceland, Norway (since 2016) and Montenegro (since 2018). The programme also encourages cooperation with other third countries and with international organisations or bodies.

The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme has a budget of € 130.9 million and runs for 5 years from 1 January 2016 until 31 December 2020. It has been established by the 'ISA<sup>2</sup> decision': [Decision \(EU\) 2015/2240](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The present specific contract is linked to the interim evaluation of the programme as described in Article 13(3) of the before-mentioned decision.

### 1.1. Policy context

ISA<sup>2</sup> provides and maintains solutions that facilitate the reuse of data as well as its exchange. Its goal is to ease cross-border and cross-sector electronic collaboration between public administrations and with business and citizens in Europe. The programme ensures that the interoperability solutions are well coordinated at the European Union level. Furthermore, ISA<sup>2</sup> solutions contribute:

- To the fulfilment of the principles and priorities of the [Tallinn Ministerial Declaration on e-Government](#) like interoperability by default, high quality, user-centric digital public services for citizens, and seamless cross-border public services for businesses.
- To the modernisation and transformation of public administrations and to the institutional capacity building across the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Interoperability' means the ability of diverse organisations to interact towards mutually beneficial and agreed common goals, involving the sharing of information and knowledge between the organisations, through their business processes and by means of the exchange of data between their respective ICT systems. [Source: Article 2(1) of the [ISA<sup>2</sup> decision](#).]

- To the implementation and monitoring of major frameworks and public administration transformation instruments like the [European Interoperability Framework](#)<sup>2</sup>.
- To the completion of the **Digital Single Market**<sup>3</sup> and related major policy initiatives like [the eGovernment Action Plan \(2016-2020\)](#)<sup>4</sup>, the Single Digital Gateway<sup>5</sup>, the [Public Sector Information \(PSI\) directive](#)<sup>6</sup>, the [Open DATA initiative](#) or the [Once-Only Principle project](#) (TOOP).
- To the implementation of many other EU policies and activities – among others – in the area of the internal market, environment, health, research and innovation or ICT standardisation (see the recital of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision for a more comprehensive list).

ISA<sup>2</sup> also complements other EC programmes, e.g. the [Connecting Europe Facility \(CEF\)](#), the [Structural Reform Support Programme \(SRSP\)](#), the [European Social Funds \(Operational Programmes, administrative capacity\)](#), the [Country-Specific Recommendations \(CSR\)](#), and the [National Reform Programmes \(NRP\)](#).

### 1.2. Intervention Logic of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme

The **overarching objectives of the programme** are to develop, maintain and promote a holistic approach to interoperability; to facilitate efficient and effective electronic cross-border or cross-sector interaction between European public administrations on the one hand, and between European public administrations and businesses and citizens on the other; to identify, create and operate interoperability solutions supporting the implementation of Union policies and activities; and to facilitate the re-use of interoperability solutions by European public administrations.

These objectives were set to address the **perceived needs** to support the completion of the Internal Market, to modernise the European Public Administrations and to facilitate better public service delivery.

To achieve its objectives, the **ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's activities** support and promote:

- a) the assessment, improvement, operation and re-use of existing cross-border or cross-sector interoperability solutions and common frameworks;
- b) the development, establishment, bringing to maturity, operation and re-use of new cross-border or cross-sector interoperability solutions and common frameworks;
- c) the assessment of the ICT implications of proposed or adopted Union law;
- d) the identification of legislation gaps, at Union and national level, that hamper cross-border or cross-sector interoperability between European public administrations;
- e) the development of mechanisms that measure and quantify the benefits of interoperability solutions including methodologies for assessing cost-savings;
- f) the mapping and analysis of the overall interoperability landscape in the Union through the establishment, maintenance and improvement of the EIRA and the

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<sup>2</sup> COM(2017) 134

<sup>3</sup> COM(2015) 192

<sup>4</sup> COM(2016) 179

<sup>5</sup> COM(2017) 256

<sup>6</sup> Directive 2003/98/EC

- EIC as instruments to facilitate the re-use of existing interoperability solutions and to identify the areas where such solutions are still lacking;
- g) the maintenance, updating, promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the EIS, the EIF and the EIRA;
  - h) the assessment, updating and promotion of existing common specifications and standards and the development, establishment and promotion of new common specifications and open specifications and standards through the Union's standardisation platforms and in cooperation with European or international standardisation organisations as appropriate;
  - i) the maintenance and publication of a platform allowing access to, and collaboration with regard to, best practices, functioning as a means of raising awareness and disseminating available solutions, including security and safety frameworks, and helping to avoid duplication of efforts while encouraging the re-usability of solutions and standards;
  - j) the bringing of new interoperability services and tools to maturity, and maintaining and operating existing interoperability services and tools on an interim basis;
  - k) the identification and promotion of best practices, to develop guidelines to coordinate interoperability initiatives and to animate and support communities working on issues relevant to the area of electronic cross-border or cross-sector interaction between end-users.

The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme is implemented by means of [actions](#), i.e. studies and projects as well as accompanying measures, which result then in [interoperable solutions](#) offered for the programme's beneficiaries.

The conceptual link from the programme's inputs to the production of its outputs and, subsequently, to its impacts – addressing the programme's objectives and underlying needs are captured in the draft Intervention Logic in [Annex 1](#).

### **1.3. Implementation of the programme**

In the implementation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, the Commission is assisted by an execution committee called the ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee which consists of national public sector representatives responsible for eGovernment related issues.

For implementation purposes, the Commission has established a rolling work programme covering the full duration of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme. It is to be revised at least once a year. The ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee must deliver a favourable opinion on the ISA<sup>2</sup> Work Programme and any revision thereof before it is adopted by the Commission.

### **1.4. Monitoring provisions and previous evaluations**

#### *1.4.1. Monitoring Provisions*

Article 13 (1 & 2) of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision describes the monitoring provisions of the programme with a view to ensure regular follow-up on the implementation and re-use of interoperability solutions across the Union.

On the ISA<sup>2</sup> website a dedicated page – called [Dashboard](#) – presents these monitoring results.

#### 1.4.2. Previous evaluations and other reports

The interim evaluation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme should duly consider the findings and recommendations of the interim and final evaluations of the ISA programme – which was the predecessor instrument of ISA<sup>2</sup>.

Also, while no impact assessment accompanied the preparation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision, an ex-ante evaluation study was delivered in 2015, which outlined the Intervention Logic of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme. [Annex 2](#) contains the precise references of these documents.

## 2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The **purpose of this evaluation** is to fulfil the legal obligation stemming from Article 13(3) of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision, which says that:

*"The Commission shall carry out an interim evaluation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme by 30 September 2019 ... and shall communicate the results of that evaluation to the European Parliament and to the Council by the same date."*

Furthermore, the evaluation results will be used to improve the implementation of ISA<sup>2</sup> and of its eventual successor programme.

Consequently, the **objectives of the interim evaluation** are:

- Obj1. Evaluate the implementation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme from its start (2016) till the time this evaluation takes place by duly addressing the evaluation requirements described in Article 13(4)(5)(6)(7) of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision (see Chapter 3 for details).
- Obj2. Identify areas for potential improvement and verify synergies, possible overlaps and duplications with other EU initiatives in the area of cross-border and cross-sectoral interoperability, sharing and reuse.

## 3. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

In line with the Commission's [Better Regulation agenda](#), the evaluation will assess how well the programme has performed since its start (2016) until the time this evaluation takes place and whether its existence continues to be justified in terms of **effectiveness, efficiency<sup>7</sup>, relevance, coherence and EU added value**.

In order to duly address the evaluation requirements described in Article 13(4)(5)(6)(7) of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision, the interim evaluation of ISA<sup>2</sup> will – as far as possible – also:

- examine **utility**, including where relevant business and citizen satisfaction, and **sustainability**;
- assess the performance of the programme against the achievement of its objectives laid out in Article 1(1) and compliance with the principles set out in Article 4(b) of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision. The achievement of the objectives shall be

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<sup>7</sup> The efficiency analysis will closely look at the costs and benefits of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme with a view to possibly identify areas where there is potential to reduce inefficiencies, particularly unnecessary regulatory costs, and simplify the intervention.

measured in particular in terms of the number of key interoperability enablers and through the number of supporting instruments for public administrations delivered to and used by European public administrations;

- examine the benefits of the actions to the Union for the advancement of common policies, identify potential overlaps and examine coherence with areas for improvement and verify synergies, possible overlaps and duplications with other Union initiatives, in particular with the [Connecting Europe Facility](#);
- assess the relevance of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's actions to local, regional and national authorities to improve interoperability in public administration and the effectiveness of delivery of public service;
- contain, where applicable, information regarding:
  - the quantifiable and qualifiable benefits that the interoperability solutions deliver by linking ICT with the needs of end-users;
  - the quantifiable and qualifiable impact of the interoperable ICT-based solutions.

Moreover, the interim evaluation will look into the recommendations and follow-up process based on the final evaluation of the ISA programme<sup>8</sup>.

In line with Article 13(8) of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision, the interim evaluation will cover ongoing, suspended and completed actions across Europe.

#### 4. STAKEHOLDERS OF THE EVALUATION

Several main stakeholders groups have been identified as relevant to the interim evaluation of ISA<sup>2</sup>:

- Officials from DG DIGIT – Unit D.2 Interoperability that is commissioning this evaluation, and has the overall responsibility of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme.
- Members of the ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee, ISA<sup>2</sup> Coordination group and ISA<sup>2</sup> working groups that are actively participating to the programme.
- ISA<sup>2</sup> Monitoring & Evaluation Action contractors & project officers that are conducting the ongoing monitoring of the programme.
- Officials from several Commission DGs (e.g.: FISMA, GROW, SG, etc.) that are involved in the implementation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> actions.
- Other stakeholders (e.g.: standardisation organisations, Chief Information Officers, eGovernment experts, IT practitioners, Members of the EP or academia) that are involved in or consulted with regards to the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme.
- Direct beneficiaries of the ISA<sup>2</sup> actions (European public administrations at all level: European, national, regional or local).
- Indirect beneficiaries such as citizens, businesses or non-profit organisations.

The contract may revisit and complete the above list during the inception phase of the evaluation.

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<sup>8</sup> COM(2016) 550 - Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - [Results of the final evaluation of the ISA programme](#)



## 5. COMMISSIONING BODY AND USER(S) OF THE EVALUATION

The present evaluation is commissioned by the Interoperability unit – DIGIT.D.2 – of DG Informatics.

The Inter-Service Steering Group (ISSG) contributes to the development of the evaluation project and is part of its management structure. The ISSG for the present evaluation is composed by representative of the following Commission services: CNECT, DIGIT, EMPL, FISMA, GROW, JRC, MARE, OP, REGIO, SANTE, SG, SRSS and TAXUD.

The results may be shared with other interested bodies inside and outside the European Commission.

The evaluation report will be published on the ISA<sup>2</sup> website and possibly on other websites in relation with the evaluated activities.

The results of the evaluation might be discussed with the ISA<sup>2</sup> committee and/or the ISA<sup>2</sup> Coordination Group and will provide input to a Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council.

## 6. RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION

The data collection phase will start with a review of a number of key documents that will provide useful background information to the contractor (see Annex 2). Many of these documents are available on the ISA<sup>2</sup> website ([https://ec.europa.eu/isaz/home\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/isaz/home_en)) or other European Commission websites. Documents not available there will be provided to the contractor during the kick-off meeting at his request. The contractor may also request other documents that will be needed for the execution of the evaluation.

## 7. OBJECTIVES AND TASKS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The study should provide inputs for the Commission interim evaluation of the programme on interoperability solutions for European public administrations, businesses and citizens (ISA<sup>3</sup>).

**In line with chapters 2 & 3 of this document, the overarching objective of the study is to evaluate to what extent the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme has achieved its original objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, EU added value, utility and sustainability from its start until the time this evaluation takes place.** The study shall also examine the benefits of the actions to the EU for the advancement of common policies, identify areas for potential improvement and verify synergies, possible overlaps and duplications with other EU initiatives in the area of cross-border and cross-sectoral interoperability, sharing and reuse.

The specific tasks of the contractor are to identify, test and apply methodologies to collect, analyse, judge and present primary and secondary data that address the main evaluation objectives and answer the evaluation questions, as well as to formulate conclusions in relation to the purpose of the evaluation exercise.

**These tasks shall include** at minimum to:

1. Propose and apply a comprehensive, robust and clear **methodology** to collect and analyse data and information aiming at assessing the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, EU added value, utility and sustainability) and answering the related evaluation questions presented in chapter 8.

In this task, the contractor shall refine and validate the elements of the draft methodological approach to the evaluation available so far, namely the draft Intervention Logic and evaluation questions (see Annex 1) and the draft Consultation Strategy (see Annex 3). This should be done by completing and analysing the evaluation's evidence base (see Annex 2).

The contractor shall bring together the various elements of the evaluation design into the "evaluation matrix"<sup>9</sup>, which breaks down the general evaluation questions into more specific sub-questions and identify for each sub-question:

- the success and judgment criteria,
- the associated indicators and / or targets,
- the data sources from which the data will be collected to measure the indicators and
- the analytical methods for turning data into indicators.

Then the final methodological approach will be submitted for the approval of the ISSG.

2. To collect pertinent information and data in accordance with the methodology agreed. Data collection should cover primary as well as secondary data gathered during the fieldwork. The proposal shall also indicate how the triangulations of different sources will be applied.
3. To analyse the information and data collected in accordance with the methodology agreed. Data analysis shall also include a set of appropriate indicators to support the answer to the evaluation questions.
4. To answer the evaluation questions and present robust and useable conclusions on the basis of the findings. The contract shall also formulate recommendations – stemming from the findings and conclusions – to improve the implementation of the programme.
5. To present the main findings, conclusions and recommendations in the final evaluation report according to the requirements listed below.
6. To present the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Commission services in a final workshop organised by the Commission.

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<sup>9</sup> See Better Regulation Tool #47.

## 8. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The contractor shall propose the best qualitative and quantitative indicators to reply to the evaluation questions (EQ). To do so, it shall first refine and complete the below proposed evaluation questions in order to duly address all evaluation requirements presented in Article 13 of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision.

### **EC1. Relevance: Do the objectives correspond to the current needs?**

The contractor shall determine whether the original objectives of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme are still relevant and how well they still match the current needs and problems. The answer to this question should identify if there is any mismatch between the objectives of the measure and the (current) needs or problems.

**EQ1: To what extent are the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's objective(s) still pertinent in relation to the evolving needs and priorities at both national and EU levels?**

### **EC2. Effectiveness: How effective was the programme in achieving its objectives?**

The contractor shall analyse the progress made towards achieving the global and specific objectives of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme. It should seek to identify the external factors driving or hindering progress and to what extent they are linked to the measure.

**EQ2: How far are the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's results and impacts in the process of achieving the programme's objectives?**

**EQ3: Are there aspects that are more or less effective than others, and if so, what lessons can be drawn from this?**

The achievement of the objectives shall be measured in particular in terms of the number of key interoperability enablers and through the number of supporting instruments for public administrations delivered to and used by European public administrations

### **EC3. Efficiency: Were the benefits achieved at a reasonable cost?**

The contractor is expected to provide an in-depth analysis of the costs and benefits of the measure and to dedicate sufficient efforts on their quantification.

The analysis should identify if these costs are proportionate or not, taking account of the total regulatory/administrative costs of the measure and the overall benefits for all stakeholders.

The contractor shall provide both qualitative information (mapping of the different costs for the different stakeholders) and quantitative estimation. An appropriate methodology on how to obtain such data should be proposed by the contractor (if appropriate, the logic of the [standard cost model](#) should be used). The analysis should make it clear to what extent the cost and benefits can be linked to the measure.

Particular attention should be devoted to cost/benefits for SMEs.

Evaluation findings should pin-point areas where there is potential to reduce inefficiencies (particularly administrative and regulatory burden) and simplify the intervention.

**EQ4: To what extent has the programme been cost effective?**

**EQ5: Which aspects of the programme are the most efficient or inefficient, especially in terms of resources mobilised?**

**EC4. Coherence: Is there any issue of coherence within the measure or with other instruments with similar objectives?**

The contractor shall analyse both internal and external coherence of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, i.e., between its various components and vis-à-vis of other EU measures with similar objectives.

**EQ6: To what extent do the ISA<sup>2</sup> actions form part of a "holistic" approach within the framework of the programme? (internal coherence)**

**EQ7: To what extent is the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme coherent with other EU interventions which have similar objectives? (external coherence)**

Examples of such EU interventions with similar objectives are the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) or the European Social Fund (ESF) (list to be revisited).

**EC5. EU added value: What is the additional EU value added?**

The contractor shall analyse the EU added value of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, bringing together the findings of other criteria (like effectiveness, efficiency and synergy), presenting the arguments on causality and drawing conclusions, based on evidence to hand, about the performance of the measure.

**EQ8: What is the additional value resulting from the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, compared to what could reasonably have been expected from Member States acting at national, regional and/or local levels?**

**EC6. Utility: To what extent the effects of an intervention satisfy (or not) the stakeholders' needs?**

The contractor shall analyse the satisfaction of the intervention's stakeholders with the intervention's result (effects).

**EQ9: How do the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's actions, results and impacts, achieved and anticipated, compare with the needs they are supposed to address?**

**EQ10: To what extent could measures be taken to improve the utility of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's actions, and what measures would these be?**

**EC7. Sustainability: How likely are the effects to last after the intervention ends?**

The contractor shall analyse whether the effects of the intervention will last after the intervention ends.

**EQ11: To what extent is the financial, technical and operational sustainability of the developed solutions – maintained and operated through the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme – ensured?**

The contractor should refine and if necessary reformulate the above questions in the development of the inception report. The contractor is also invited to outline and justify other issues he would intend to address in order to contribute to the purpose of the evaluation. The contractor shall propose the best qualitative and quantitative indicators to reply to the evaluation questions.

## 9. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The methodology shall identify the means to answer the evaluation questions set out in chapter 8.

The contractor is expected to refine the existing evaluation questions and to elaborate further questions in order to duly address all evaluation requirements presented in Article 13 of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision. The final approach will be submitted for the feedback and approval of the ISSG at the inception phase.

The choice and a detailed description of the methodology must form part of the offer submitted. Advantages, limitations and risks involved in using the proposed tools and techniques should be explained. References to other projects where this approach has been proven to be successful could be useful.

The evaluation must be based on recognised evaluation techniques and triangulation methods are required. The contractor shall ensure robustness of information by trying to acquire it from more than one source. In particular findings from consultations should be supported when possible by official statistics and studies.

The methodology shall clearly indicate: () how to identify the baseline/points of comparison () how to identify the causality link with the data/evidence collected () how to estimate the cost/benefits.

The contractor must support findings and recommendations by explaining the degree to which these are based on opinions, analysis and objectively verifiable evidence. Where opinions are the main source, the degree of consensus and the steps taken to test the opinions should be given.

### 9.1. Important aspects to ensure credibility and impact of the evaluation

For the evaluation to be successful it is important that the evaluation fulfils the following requirements:

- **Analytical** - it should be based on recognised research and analysis techniques. The Commission foresees the need both for quantitative and qualitative methodology for data collection and data analysis as well as the consultation of various groups of stakeholders.
- **Systematic** - it requires careful planning and consistent use of the chosen techniques. The Commission foresees the need to collect information among all major stakeholders in Member States (MSs), the Commission services and, as far as possible, at European policy level and the analysis of all activities under the programme.
- **Reliable** - the findings of the evaluation should be reproducible by a different contractor with access to the same data and using the same methods of data analysis. It is important that the method and analysis relies on well proven practice and takes into account the existing state of knowledge and guidelines with regard to evaluation exercises both in MSs and in the Commission.
- **Performance-oriented** - the evaluation should seek to address important performance indicators relating to the programme, including its relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility, sustainability and coherence.

- **User-driven** - this means that the evaluation should be designed and implemented in ways that provide useful information to decision-makers, given the political circumstances, programme constraints and available resources. The evaluation must comply with the Commission's evaluation requirements, standards, rules and procedures.

## 9.2. Data collection tools

The contractor will have a free choice as to the methods used to gather and analyse information and for making the assessment, but must take account of the tools for data collection and data analysis listed below.

### 9.2.1. Desk research/literature review

The contractor should collect data and information from a wide range of publicly available sources, including, among other:

- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of relevant studies and reports from EU Institutions, MSs, national authorities, Stakeholders' Associations, etc.;
- Analysis of existing documents;
- Desk-based case studies of the activities to be evaluated in order to assess the results achieved so far as well as the perception by stakeholders;
- Desk-based comparative analysis of the programme, its objectives, scope, means and instruments;
- Relevant academic research;
- National/international official statistics (Eurostat, OECD, etc...);).

### 9.2.2. Stakeholders consultation

The contractor shall refine and finalise the Consultation Strategy (see Annex 3) and prepare it for the ISSG's endorsement. The contractor shall also design a detailed implementation plan that will allow all stakeholders to be duly consulted. Stakeholders can be consulted either to collect evidence in relation to answering the evaluation questions, or to test/validate already existing analysis or evidence coming from different sources.

Particular attention should be paid to balance coverage of stakeholders consulted (companies (including all sizes), authorities, consumer organisations, etc.), geographical coverage, etc. The Commission guidelines on stakeholder consultation should be followed.

The ISSG shall approve not only the overall Consultation Strategy, but the draft questionnaires as well as the selection of stakeholders.

The Consultation Strategy must include a 12-week internet-based public consultation but should be complemented by other approaches and tools in order to engage all relevant stakeholders and to target potential information gaps.

For each proposed consultation tool and for each category of stakeholder the contractor shall analyse the potential gaps and propose a mitigation strategy. An analysis of possible overlap between the different tools shall also be put forward (in particular between the public and targeted consultation).

- **Online Public Consultation (OPC)**

The contractor shall prepare a questionnaire for the mandatory internet-based public consultation which has to be agreed with the ISSG. This OPC is open to all – anyone interested to provide input and so it is able to reach a broad range and large number of stakeholders.

The questionnaire will be available in all EU languages. The contractor shall finalise the questionnaire in English and the Commission will provide for translation. The duration of the translation shall be taken into account in the planning of the OPC.

The consultation will run on the Commission's Consultations website on Europa – using EU survey – and the answers received (in the original language) will be forwarded to the contractor for analysis.

The minimum time period for public consultation is 12 weeks (additional time should be given in case they run during major holiday periods) and is planned for Q4 2018. It must cover, at least, the five mandatory evaluation criteria.

The contractor shall respect the European Commission standards for data protection when processing responses.

- **Targeted consultation / Surveys**

The targeted consultations will collect the specialist view of the different categories of stakeholders. It can take place at any time point during the evaluation but must cover, at least, the five mandatory evaluation criteria. There is no minimum mandatory period for target consultation, but sufficient time should be given in order to reach as many replies as possible.

Questionnaires shall be customised to different stakeholder categories taking into account their different level of engagement and experience with the measure, such as:

- The ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee members as well as EEA and acceding/candidate countries representatives;
- EU officials involved in the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme;
- Possibly NIFO contact points or CIOs;
- Targeting other stakeholders where deemed relevant, including representatives of regional and local administrations.

The contractor shall propose mitigation strategies in case of low number of replies. The contractor shall also ensure that the same person is contacted only once – even if this person is the member of several groups listed above.

Targeted stakeholders can be consulted via specific questionnaires within the OPC that will be run on Europa. Alternatively the survey will be conducted by the contractor with an appropriate internet based tool to be agreed upon by the ISSG.

Any other operational works related to the survey itself will be the responsibility of the contractor. The contractor remains the sole responsible for the analysis. The contractor shall respect the European Commission standards for data protection when analysing responses.

- **Interviews**

The contractor shall carry out a number of structured/semi-structured interviews. Whereas most interviews could be done via the phone or video conferencing, face to face interviews will be needed at an early stage to get a good understanding of the sector. Further interviews may be needed when analysing the information received via the targeted and public consultation.

The Commission may issue a Recommendation Letter that the Contractor will be able to present to approached stakeholders

In conducting the interviews the Contractor shall respect data protection and privacy standards of the Commission<sup>10</sup>.

The selection of interviewees should be based on their knowledge of the subject and should be agreed with the Commission service.

Interviews should be conducted with:

- EU officials in the European Commission
- Members of the ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee and the ISA<sup>2</sup> Coordination Group
- Other stakeholders where deemed relevant, including representatives of regional and local administrations

The approximate overall number of interviews that the contractor is expected to conduct is around 30, either as face-to-face or as remote interviews.

- **Other tools**

On 29 November 2018 a conference is planned to take place on the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme. The contractor may consider organising a workshop on the following day for interested participants on the ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation. The purpose and added value of such a workshop should be clearly explained. It should be also ensured that the target audience of such a workshop does not overlap with the audience of the targeted surveys mentioned above.

Any other tools deemed appropriate for the purpose of the evaluation.

### **9.3. Data analysis**

Considerable emphasis should be placed on the analysis of the information/data collected. The contractor will have a free choice as to the methods used to analyse information and for making the assessment, but must, at least, take account of the following.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2001:008:0001:0022:EN:PDF>



### ***Indicators***

The contractor is requested to propose a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators that can be used to empirically assess the evaluation questions and more generally to quantify the effect of the measure.

There should be a clear link between the evaluation questions addressed, the proposed indicators, the corresponding methodology and the relevant sources of information.

In addressing the evaluation questions quantitative indicators should be sought and used as far as possible.

In order to assess the effect of the measure it is important to compare the value of indicators before and after the measure was in place. It should therefore be possible to construct the proposed indicators for a sufficiently long time period.

### ***Cost-effectiveness, cost- benefit analysis***

The contractor is asked to map regulatory and administrative costs and benefits stemming from the measure. Costs should be disaggregated to specific actions necessary. For the quantifications the contractor should follow as much as possible the logic of the cost-benefits analysis and more generally the methods described in the Better Regulation Toolbox.

The contractor shall try to estimate benefits of the initiative, at minimum by estimating cost saved due to the harmonisation. The contractor shall try to estimate other benefits of the measure that will emerge during the course of analysis. In this respect, the benefits of ISA<sup>2</sup> actions identified in the ISA<sup>2</sup> rolling work programme shall be looked at.

### ***Case study***

The contractor may also develop a case study in order to provide practical examples of issues with implementation of the measure; or to present examples of costs and benefits for success stories or best practices.

## **10. REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES**

### **10.1. General reporting requirements**

The contractor shall provide the required reports and documents in accordance with the timetable below. Any discrepancies should be agreed with the ISSG.

The contractor must ensure that all deliverables under this contract are clear, concise and focused on their purpose. All deliverables shall be written in English and reviewed and corrected by a native speaker before submission.

Electronic files must be provided in Microsoft ® Word format. Additionally, besides Word, the Final Evaluation Report must be delivered in pdf format.

All deliverables are presented as draft documents to be discussed with the ISSG and finalised based on the comments received from the Commission services.

The quality of each deliverable will be assessed and rated according to the models provided in Annex 4. The Commission shall have 30 days to approve or reject the final

report. The contractor shall have 30 days in which to submit additional information or a new report.

## **10.2. Deliverables**

For the purpose of this specific contract, the contractor shall produce the following deliverables:

### *10.2.1. D1 Inception Report*

**At the latest 4 weeks after signature of the contract.**

The **inception report** (max 20 pages) will specify the detailed work programme and planning for the study and describe the methodological approaches and working assumptions to be used for the tasks defined. The report will also identify any additional needs. The inception report will take the form of a draft document to be discussed with the ISSG in order to finalise the evaluation methodology in a meeting that will take place maximum 2 weeks following the delivery of the inception report.

Inception report will include, at least:

- a detailed work plan for the evaluation;
- the Intervention Logic (in a form of a diagram or table),
- draft evidence table (relying on Annex 2) cross-referencing evaluation questions, indicators and data sources;
- Description of the methodological and empirical approaches to be used for the tasks defined (in particular, for the data collection, the definition of the baseline scenario, the methodology for cost/benefits quantification);
- an outline of the main risks/challenges to the assignment and of the concrete ways to address them;
- the identification of any additional need for information to be collected during the evaluation.

### *10.2.2. D2 Progress report*

**At the latest 12 weeks after signature of the contract.**

The progress report (max 10 pages) summarises progress of the evaluation work made with reference to the work plan. It does not enter in the content. It reports on the results from the desk research (not on content), on the difficulties encountered on data collection, propose mitigation measures taken or suggestions to changes required to the work plan to ensure that the required results of the evaluation are achieved. The ISSG might call for a meeting if the Progress Report raises concerns about progress of the works.

The report shall clearly indicate:

- any problems experienced and corresponding corrective actions, taken or proposed;

- any action to be taken by the Commission;
- an update schedule, if required, including next steps.

#### *10.2.3. D3 Interim study*

##### **At the latest 16 weeks after signature of the contract.**

The interim study is to be produced after the desk and field research are (close to be) completed. It should include the initial findings the results of the data gathering (i.e. from desk research, existing database, etc.) and of the stakeholders' consultations. To the extent possible it should also include some preliminary results/conclusion.

It shall not exceed 50 pages, annexes excluded.

#### *10.2.4. D4.1 Draft Final study*

##### **At the latest 22 weeks after signature of the contract (not later than January 2019).**

The **draft final study** will deliver the results of all tasks covered by these Terms of Reference, and must be clear enough for any potential reader to understand. It will be circulated and presented to the members of the ISSG for comments.

The **draft final study** will take into account the comments made earlier on in the process by the Commission and it will cover all points of the work plan and shall include sound analysis of findings and factually based conclusions, in line with the purpose and objectives described above.

This document will follow the structure of the final study and will include the following parts:

- **Main study:** The main study must be limited to **70** pages and present, in full, the results of the analyses, conclusions arising from the evaluation. It must also contain a description of the subject evaluated, the context of the evaluation, and the methodology used (including an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses). It must follow the same format as for the final report.
- **Annexes:** These must collate the technical details of the evaluation, and must include questionnaire templates, interview guides, summary of responses to consultation activities and relevant statistics, any additional tables or graphics, and references and sources.

#### *10.2.5. D4.2 Final evaluation study*

##### **At the latest 28 weeks after signature of the contract (not later than 15 March 2019).**

The final study (of max 80 pages + Annexes) will deliver the results of all tasks covered by these Terms of Reference. It shall include sound analysis of findings and factually based conclusions and, in line with the purpose of and objectives described above.

The document must take into account the feedback from the ISSG on the Draft Final Report (Do4.01), insofar as these do not interfere with the autonomy of the contractor in respect of the conclusions they have reached and the recommendations made.

The final study should respect [EC visual identity](#) and shall conform to the following basic scheme:

1. *Title page*

2. *Table of Contents*

3. *Abstract*

The abstract should be of no more than 200 words in English, French and German. The purpose of the abstract is to act as a reference tool helping the reader to quickly ascertain the evaluation's subject.

4. *Executive Summary* (including the conclusions/recommendations) of no more than 6 pages<sup>11</sup> in English. The Executive Summary should be a reader-friendly (for the unfamiliar reader) stand-alone document. The Executive Summary summarises the evaluation's main conclusions and the main evidence supporting them. After being agreed with the Commission Services, it should be translated into French.

5. *Introduction*

Purpose and scope of the evaluation.

Indicative length: 2-3 pages

6. *Background of the measure*

*6.1. Description of the intervention and its objectives*

Description of the measure and its objectives (Intervention Logic), and how it fits in the wider policy framework.

*6.2. Baseline and points of comparison*

Describe here or in Section 7 what the situation was like before the intervention started, how it was expected to develop and other relevant points of comparison.

Indicative length: 3-5 pages

7. *Implementation/ State of play*

Describe the current situation in quantitative and qualitative terms. Describe how the intervention has been implemented, summarising what Member States have done and whether there have been problems. Concentrate on aspects which are linked to the intervention. Identify any unexpected or unintended changes.

Indicative length: 3 – 5 pages

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<sup>11</sup> 1 page = 1500 characters

## 8. *Method*

Provide a short description of the methodology for each relevant task (i.e. desk research, analysis of existing database, stakeholder's surveys). Provide a transparent account of what has been done list any known limitations (e.g. data, timing, geographical coverage, repetitiveness of the results, etc.) any mitigating measures taken. An overall analysis of the reliability of the available data should be included. Add detailed information in the annex.

Indicative length: 2-3 pages

## 9. *Analysis and answer to the evaluation questions*

This section should be analytical, using tables/graphs/pictures to illustrate the analysis. Answer all evaluation questions through specific sub-sections.

Use the information collected to analyse how far the outputs and outcomes observed match the expectations stated when the initiative was adopted. Ensure triangulation of data: bring together different sources of data (clearly referenced so that the reader can investigate further if they wish) and provide unbiased and critical judgements of what has/has not been achieved. If there is insufficient data or evidence to do so, this should be clearly stated. Text and arguments should be self-standing and accessible to non-expert readers.

Indicative length: 10-25 pages

## 10. *Conclusions (including recommendations)*

This section of the document should summarise the main conclusions of the evaluation by evaluation criteria. There should be a clear and logical progression between the results presented, the answers to the evaluation questions provided and the conclusions being drawn.

The conclusion should make clear:

- what is/is not working and why or how that links to the intervention;
- the lessons learned;
- if actual performance matches expectations; and
- if issues need to be addressed or will resolve over time.

The conclusions should summarise and qualify the performance of the intervention against the criteria used for the evaluation and make recommendations to improve the programme's performance.

As the conclusions text is often read independently of the preceding text, there should be a short recap of the scope and limitations of the evaluation.

Indicative length: 3-5 pages

## 11. *Annexes*

The study shall be accompanied by any relevant annexes deemed necessary by the contractor and must include the following two mandatory annexes:

### 11.1 Synopsis report of the different consultation activities

The consultation synopsis should include, at least:

- A key outline of the Consultation Strategy, referring to the consultation objectives as defined, identified stakeholders and selected consultation methods and tools.
- The documentation of each consultation activity undertaken and, if applicable, reasoning as to how and why the original Consultation Strategy has been altered.
- The information on which stakeholder groups participated, which interests they represented and whether all identified stakeholder groups have been reached.
- The description of the results of each consultation activity and a comparison of their results including interdependencies, consistencies or contradictions.
- For ad hoc contributions received outside the formal consultation context, a separate paragraph should be added describing the origin of the contributions received including identification of the type of stakeholder and their represented interests.
- Explanation on how the information gathered in the context of the consultation work as well as feedback received has been taken into account into the further work on evaluation. Where relevant, this should include explanation on why certain widely supported views were not or not entirely considered.

Indicative length: 10 pages

### 11.2 Methods and Analytical models used in preparing the evaluation

A dedicated annex presenting the following information should be included:

- A description of the methods and approaches which have been deployed during the evaluation. This should include as a minimum the evaluation matrix applied. Any differences between the actual evaluation matrix used and the one created at the start of the evaluation should be used to inform the section on limitations.
- Where appropriate, include a brief description of any models used which addresses:
  - Model structure and modelling approach with any key assumptions, limitations and simplifications;
  - Model validation and peer review with relevant references;
  - Citation of input data following good practices for data citation for maximum transparency;
  - Explanation of the likely uncertainty in the model results and the likely robustness of model results to changes in underlying assumptions or data inputs;
  - Explanation as to how uncertainty has been addressed or minimised in the modelling exercise with respect to the policy conclusions;

- The steps taken to assure the quality of the modelling results presented in the report;
- A concise description of the baseline(s) used in any modelling exercise in terms of the key assumptions, key sources of macroeconomic and socio-economic data, the policies and measures the baseline contains and any assumptions about these policies and measures (such as the extent to which they are deemed implemented by the Member States, or their estimated impact following implementation). Where the baseline deviates from the one identified in a prior impact assessment, the reasons for this should be clearly explained, including any related to changes introduced during the adoption process.

#### 10.2.6. Workshop

#### **At the latest 30 weeks after signature of the contract.**

The contractor will present the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Commission services in a final workshop.

### **11. PUBLICATIONS**

The study (including executive summary, abstract, the annexes and the Quality Assessment) will be published on the [ISA<sup>2</sup> website](#), [EU Bookshop website](#), on the [Interinstitutional Database of EU studies](#) and on other web-sites in relation to the study.

In view of its publication, the final study must be of high editorial quality. In cases where the contractor does not manage to produce a final study of high editorial quality within the timeframe defined by the contract, the contracting authority can decide to have the final study professionally edited at the expense of the contractor (e.g. deduction of these costs from the final payment) according to Article II.16 of the framework contract. The study shall not contain any confidential data.

### **12. WORK ORGANISATION**

#### **12.1. Meetings with the Commission**

The contractor is expected to take part in at least 5 meetings with the Commission which will take place on Commission premises in Brussels, except for the meeting on the progress report (D2) that could be handled via conference call or videoconference.

- M1: A kick off meeting after one week from the contract signature at the latest.
- M2: A meeting with the ISSG discussing the inception study; this meeting will allow for the discussion of the draft outline approach and work programme elaborated by the contractor for the execution of the contract.
- M3: A meeting with the ISSG to present the interim study.
- M4: A meeting with the ISSG to present the draft final study. It will allow an in-depth discussion of the draft final study and requirements for the completion of the final study.
- M5: A meeting with the ISSG to present the final study.

- Any other meetings deemed necessary by the Commission in case of Commission refusal of the final study (either at the Commission's premises or via web).

### 12.2. Work Plan

The offer must include an estimated work plan for the main activities (desk research, methodology design, data collection, data analysis, etc.). Deadline for the deliverables and indicative times for meetings should be reported in the following table. Please note M1, D1 and M2 cannot be modified. Meetings shall indicatively take place 2 weeks after the deadline for the corresponding deliverable.

Weeks after contract signature	Meetings (M) and deliverables (D)
1 at the latest	M1: Kick off meeting
4	D1: Inception report
6 (but not later than end October 2018)	M2: meeting on D1 with ISSG
	D2: Progress report & conference call or videoconference
	D3: Interim study
	M3: meeting on D3 with ISSG
	D4.1: Draft Final study
	M4: meeting on D4.1 with ISSG
	D4.2: Final study
	M5: meeting on D4.2 with ISSG (approval of the final study)

### 12.3. Proposed team

The offer must include a description of the proposed team, its composition, its expertise and the work effort planned for each member in terms of man/days for each task of the project.

Task	Name	Role in the team	Staff Category	Education	Expertise	Languages	Unit price	Man days
			Cat. I - Team Leader					
			Cat. II - Senior Consultant					
			Cat. III - Junior Consultant					
			Cat. IV					
Total days:								



When setting up the proposed team, due attention should be given to avoid any situation, which may constitute professional conflicting interest – as defined in chapter "II.1. Definitions" of Framework Contract 575/PP/2016/FC. For your information, subcontracting a company which is currently working on the implementation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme would qualify as professional conflicting interest.

### 13. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

#### 13.1. Price

The maximum budget available for this project is € 200 000.

The offer must include a detailed proposed budget. The tenderer should provide a quote of the total cost of the services to be provided (fixed price) in its financial tender following the table below:

<i>Price component</i>	<i>Staff category</i>	<i>Unit price</i> <i>(= daily rate for Human Resources including the travel and subsistence expenses linked to the five meetings with the Commission on its premises in Brussels)</i>	<i>Quantity</i> <i>(= number of man days devoted to the project by person XY for Human Resources)</i>	<i>Total</i>
Human resources				
Person X (name and a role)				
Person Y (name and a role)				
.....				
Subtotal (1)				
Other				
Item X				
Item Y				
.....				
Subtotal (2)				
<b>TOTAL (1+2)</b>				

#### 13.2. Payments

The payment scheme will consist of:

- **one interim payment**, corresponding to a **maximum of 30 %** of the price specified in article 3.1 of the specific contract on receipt and approval by the Commission of D3 Interim study;
- a **balance payment** corresponding to **no less than 70 %** of the amount specified in article 3.1 of the specific contract.

The schedule and the procedure for the approval of payments and the documents to be submitted are described in Articles I.6, II.21, II.22 and II.23 of the framework contract.

#### 14. AWARD OF THE SPECIFIC CONTRACT

As specified in the tender specification for this Framework Contract, the offers submitted within the re-opening of competition must contain:

- a) **A technical part**, detailing the methodology, the composition and skills of the team and the responsible team leader for the specific agreement;
- b) **A financial part** detailing the number of man-days to be multiplied by the man-day price as defined in the Framework Contract, and other cost items.

The Specific Contract will be awarded according to the qualitative award criteria specifically adapted for each invitation to re-open the competition.

The award criteria cannot be further supplemented during the evaluation procedure.

- a) Technical award criteria

No	Qualitative award criteria	Weighting (maximum points)
1	<p><b>Clarity, relevance and coherence</b></p> <p><i>This criterion will assess whether the offer is written in a clear language, whether it is well and logically structured, whether all the information requested in the specific contract is duly covered.</i></p>	0-10
2	<p><b>Quality of the proposed mechanisms for project management, including quality control, risk management and reporting</b></p> <p><i>This criterion will assess the quality control system proposed for the services foreseen in the offer concerning the quality of deliverables, the language quality check, continuity of the service in case of absence of a member of the team, as well as the overall project management (organisation of work, contacts with the contracting party etc.). This quality control system should be detailed. A generic quality control system will result in a low score.</i></p>	0-20
3	<p><b>The quality of the manpower allocation and work schedule proposed</b></p> <p><i>This criterion will assess how the roles and responsibilities of the proposed team and of the different economic operators (in case of joint tenders, including subcontracting if applicable) are distributed for tasks specified in this Terms of Reference for specific contract. Also, it will assess the proposed work schedule too.</i></p>	0-20
4	<p><b>The quality of the proposed methodology to collect and analyse data and to provide conclusions</b></p> <p><i>This criterion will assess how the tenderer will collect data and how he will analyse the available and collected data.</i></p>	0-50
<b>Total number of points</b>		<b>100</b>

Only bids that have reached a total score of a minimum of 60% and a minimum score of 50% for each criterion will be taken into consideration for awarding the specific contract.

b) Price

The contract will be awarded to the tender which is the most cost-effective (offers the best value for money) on the basis of the ratio between the total points scored and the price using the following formula:

Score for tender X	=	$\frac{\text{Lowest price}}{\text{Price of tender X}}$	*	100	*	Price weighting (30%)	+	Total quality score (out of 100) for all award criteria of tender X	*	Quality criteria weighting (70%)
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## 15. GENERALLY APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS, TOOLS AND STANDARDS

Ref. Code	Title	Description	URL
<b>ADSo1</b>	Relevant framework contract	575/PP/2016/FC	<a href="http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:322103-2016:HTML:EN:HTML&amp;tabId=1&amp;tabLang=en">http://ted.europa.eu/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:322103-2016:HTML:EN:HTML&amp;tabId=1&amp;tabLang=en</a>
<b>ADSo2</b>	Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox	Especially those chapters and tools which concern evaluations and related methodologies and consultation activities.	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en</a>
<b>ADSo3</b>	How to write clearly	DG Translation guidelines on clear writing	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/clear_writing/how_to_write_clearly_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/translation/writing/clear_writing/how_to_write_clearly_en.pdf</a>
<b>ADSo4</b>	Regulation (EC) 45/2001 on the collection and processing of personal data	Description of "data protection" methods and statements to be used when personal data is involved, i.e. in case of surveys.	Template to be provided by the Commission
<b>ADSo5</b>	EC Visual Identity	In order to use the European Commission's logo and visual identity correctly.	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/info/resources-partners/european-commission-visual-identity_en">https://ec.europa.eu/info/resources-partners/european-commission-visual-identity_en</a>

**Table 1: Applicable documents and standards**

# ISA<sup>2</sup> Interim Evaluation:

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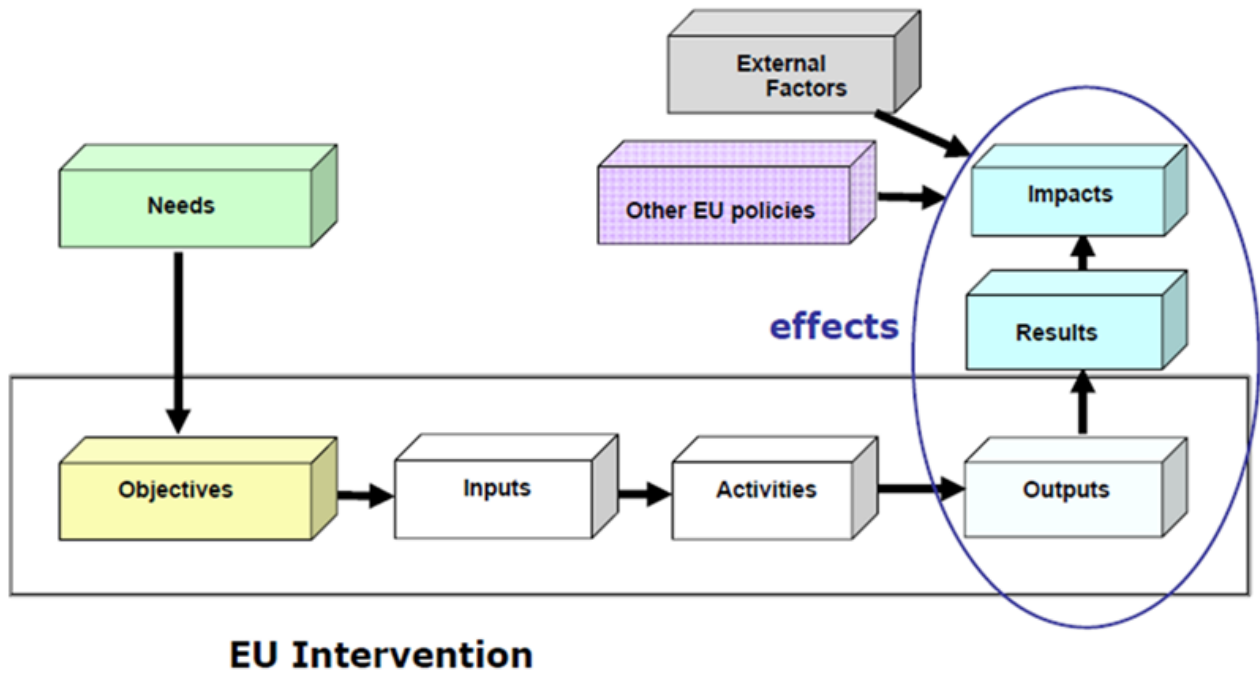
## Intervention Logic

&

## Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

*Draft of 07/06/2018  
with comments of the ISSG of 08/06/2018*

# ISA<sup>2</sup> Interim Evaluation: Intervention Logic



## Needs

### **Need 1: Completion of the Internal Market**

Global objective 1: Holistic approach to interoperability in the Union (Article 1(a))

### **Need 2: Better public service delivery**

Global objective 2: Support the implementation of Union policies and activities (Article 1(c))

### **Need 3: Modernisation (including digitalisation) of EPAs**

Global objective 3: Contribute to the development of a more effective, simplified and user-friendly e-administration (Article 1(b))

## Global objectives

### **Global objective 1:**

Develop, maintain and promote a holistic approach to interoperability in the Union in order to eliminate fragmentation in the interoperability landscape in the Union (Article 1 (a))

### **Global objective 2:**

Identify, create and operate interoperability solutions supporting the implementation of Union policies and activities (Article 1(c))

### **Global objective 3:**

Contribute to the development of a more effective, simplified and user-friendly e-administration at the national, regional and local levels of public administration (Article 1(b))

## Intermediate objectives

### **Intermediate objective 1:**

Facilitate efficient and effective electronic cross-border and cross-sector interaction between European public administrations on the one hand, and between European public administrations and businesses and citizens on the other (Article 1(b))

### **Intermediate objective 2:**

Facilitate the re-use of interoperability solutions by European public administrations (Article 1(d))

## Specific objectives

### **Specific objective 1:**

Support and promote the assessment, improvement, operation and re-use of existing cross-border or cross-sector interoperability solutions and common frameworks (Article 3(a))

### **Specific objective 2:**

Support and promote the development, establishment, bringing to maturity, operation and re-use of new cross-border or cross-sector interoperability solutions and common frameworks (Article 3(b))

### **Specific objective 3:**

Support and promote the assessment of the ICT implications of proposed or adopted Union Law (Article 3(c))

### **Specific objective 4:**

Support and promote the identification of legislation gaps, at Union and national level, that hamper cross-border or cross-sector interoperability between European public administrations (Article 3(d))

**Specific objective 5:** Support and promote the development of mechanisms that measure and qualify the benefits of interoperability solutions including methodologies for assessing cost-savings (Article 3(e))

### **Specific objective 6:**

Support and promote the mapping and analysis of the overall interoperability landscape in the Union through the establishment, maintenance and improvement of the EIRA and the EIC as instruments to facilitate the re-use of existing interoperability solutions and to identify the areas where such solutions are still lacking (Article 3(f))

### **Specific objective 7:**

Support and promote the maintenance, updating, promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the EIS, the EIF and the EIRA (Article 3(g))

### **Specific objective 8:**

Support and promote the assessment, updating and promotion of existing common specifications and standards and the development, establishment and promotion of new common specifications and open specifications and standards through the Union's standardisation platforms and in cooperation with European or international standardisation organisations as appropriate (Article 3(h))



**Specific objective 9:**

Support and promote the maintenance and publication of a platform allowing access to, and collaboration with regard to, best practices, functioning as a means of raising awareness and disseminating available solutions; including security and safety frameworks, and helping to avoid duplication of efforts while encouraging the reusability of solutions and standards (Article 3(i))

**Specific objective 10:**

Support and promote the bringing of new interoperability services and tools to maturity, and maintaining and operating existing interoperability services and tools on an interim basis (Article 3(j))

**Specific objective 11:**

Support and promote the identification and promotion of best practices, to develop guidelines to coordinate interoperability initiatives and to animate and support communities working on issues relevant to the area of electronic cross-border or cross-sector interaction between end users (Article 3(k))

**Specific objective 12:**

By...; the Commission shall develop a communication strategy, aiming to enhance information and increase awareness with regard to the ISA<sup>2</sup> Programme and its benefits, targeting businesses, including SMEs, and citizens, and employing user-friendly means on the ISA<sup>2</sup> Programme's webpage. (Article 3)

External Factors  
Other Union Policies

Operational Objectives

Specific Objectives

Intermediate Objectives

Global Objectives

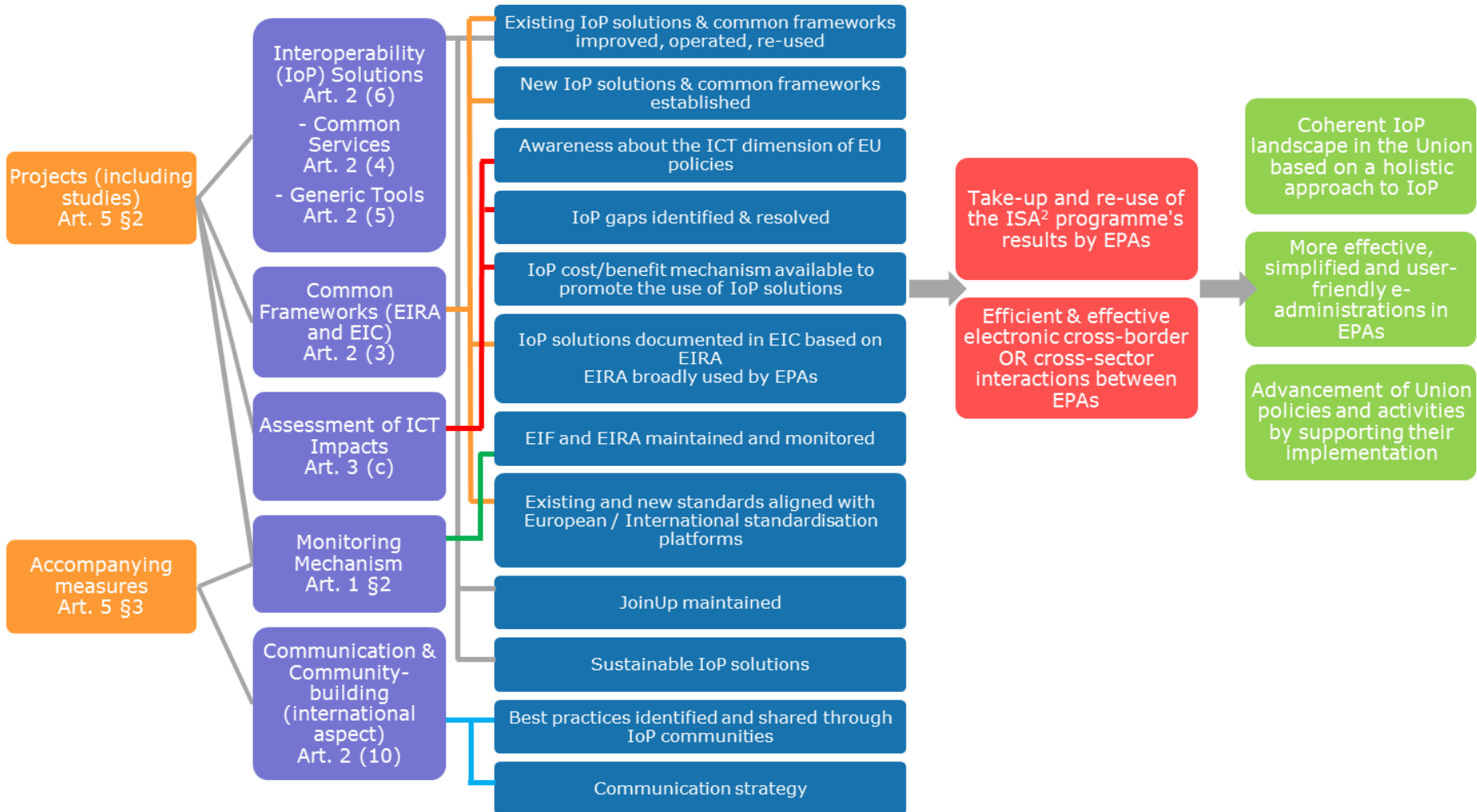
Inputs

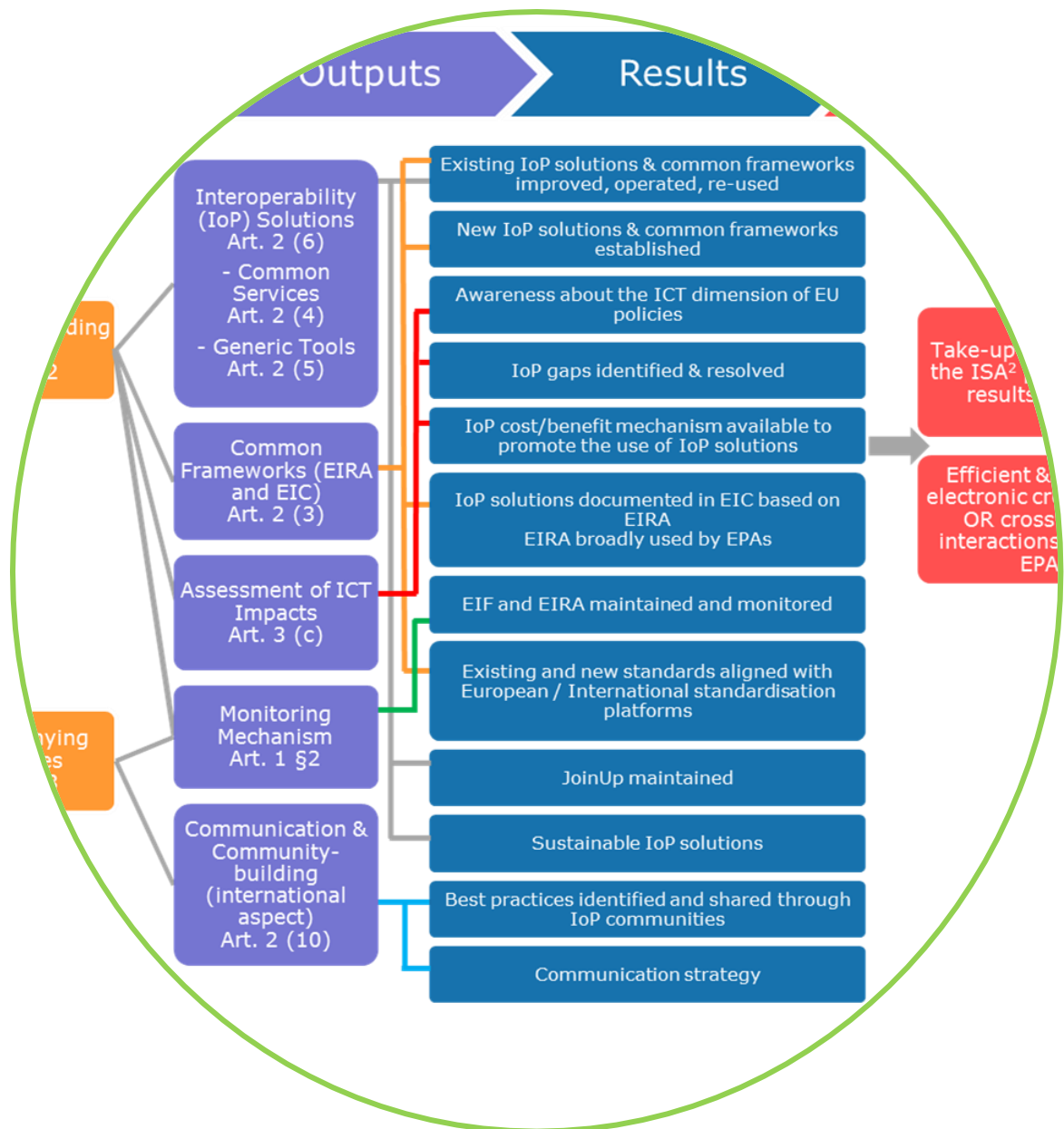
Outputs

Results

Intermediate impacts

Global impacts





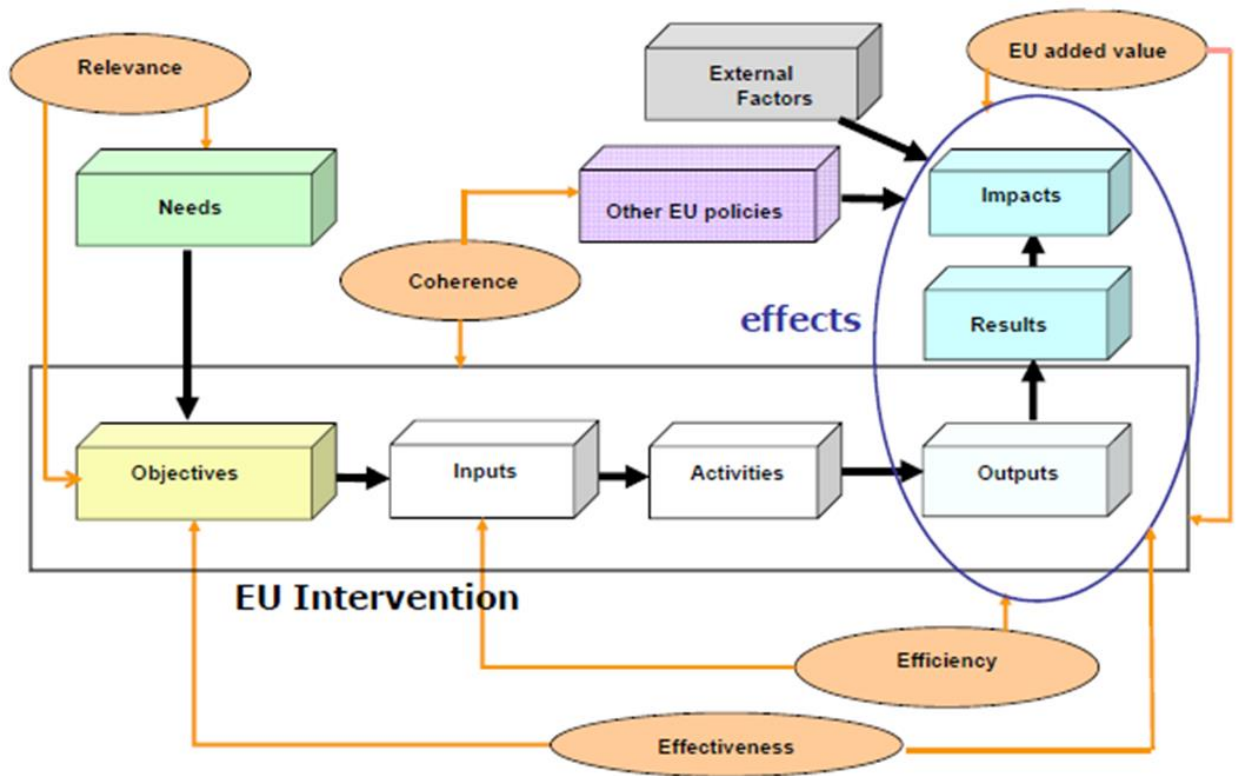
### Abbreviations:

- IoP = Interoperability
- EPAs = European Public Administrations
- EIRA = European Interoperability Reference Architecture
- EIC = European Interoperability Cartography
- EIF = European Interoperability Framework

## Feedback received from the ISSG members after the first ISSG meeting of 08/06/2018:

- Indicate where needs 1 & 2 are coming from.
- Ensure clear links between the needs and objectives.
- Should the specific objectives really stem from the activities listed in Article 3 of the ISA<sup>2</sup> decision?
- Especially specific objective 12 is questionable – the creation of the Communication Strategy is a one-off action.
- Are you sure that the two intermediate impacts are at the same level?
  - In addition the second of those have two aspects, namely cross-border and cross-sector the former of which does not seem overly reflected in the global impacts.
  - The logic is not clear in all aspects, e.g. one can imagine that the advancement of the policy and activities in the area of TAXUD by supporting the implementation of taxation related policies and activities would actually influence the efficient and effective electronic cross-border (and for that matter cross-sector) interactions between EPAs.

# ISA<sup>2</sup> Interim Evaluation: Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions



## Interim evaluation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme

### Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions

#### Requirements stemming from Article 13 of the ISA2 decision:

- Assessment of the 5 mandatory better regulation evaluation criteria:
  - Relevance
  - Effectiveness
  - Efficiency
  - Coherence
  - EU-added value
- Assessment of further two evaluation criteria:
  - Utility (including where relevant business and citizen satisfaction)
  - Sustainability
- Assessment of further aspects:
  - Compliance with the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's principles
  - Benefits of the actions to the Union for the advancement of common policies
  - Potential overlaps and synergies with other Union initiatives, in particular with the [Connecting Europe Facility](#)
  - Relevance of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's actions to local, regional and national authorities
  - Recommendations stemming from the ISA final evaluation

#### Remarks stemming from the Better Regulation guidelines:

- Not too many evaluation questions;
- Start questions with How, Why, To what extent... in order to leave them open;
- Translate general questions to the language of the audience during consultation activities.

#### Feedback received from the ISSG members after the first ISSG meeting of 08/06/2018:

- Add reference to the priorities as established in Article 7 of the ISA2 decision;
- Differentiate between continuation/maintenance of 'old' actions/activities and new ones. The former is mainly an issue of sustainability - in sense of just sustaining e.g. a solution long-term.
  - For example, in the context of efficiency, the maintenance of an old action would normally require less than the creation of a new action. So the efficiency is different.
- External coherence: term needs to be better defined.
  - What about for instance other IT actions promoted by sectoral policies (like Health and Consumer Protection, Environment, Space ...), are they covered?
- Sustainability: It also can be important to see what the Commission has done or intends to do to ensure the sustainability – for instance also for interventions that have been funded again and again under many programmes.

## Criterion 1. Relevance

### Definition:

- Relationship between the needs in the society and the objectives of the intervention;
- Consider how the objectives of the programme correspond to wider EU policy goals.

### Remarks:

- **ISA2 specificity: Relevance of the programme's actions to local and regional authorities**
- At an early stage of the intervention it may not be necessary to judge the relevance in any depth → rely on arguments used in the ex-ante evaluation of ISA<sup>2</sup>
- Usually more qualitative assessment

### Typical questions:

- To what extent is the intervention still relevant?
- To what extent have the (original) objectives proven to have been appropriate for the intervention in question?
- How well do the (original) objectives of the intervention (still) correspond to the needs within the EU?
- How well adapted is the intervention to subsequent technological or scientific advances?
- How relevant is the EU intervention to EU citizens?

### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation questions:

**EQ 1. To what extent are the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's objective(s) still pertinent in relation to the evolving needs and priorities at both national and EU levels?**

### Remarks:

- Any new needs emerged along the recent technological developments?
- Should the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme address those new needs?

## Criterion 2. Effectiveness

### Definition:

- How successful an EU action has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives?

### Remarks:

- **ISA2 specificity: KPIs of 1) number of key interoperability enablers and 2) number of supporting instruments for public administrations delivered to and used by European public administrations.**
- Effectiveness analysis should seek to identify the factors driving or hindering progress and how they are linked (or not) to the EU intervention.
- The analysis should also try to identify if any unexpected or unintended effects have occurred.
- In many cases, performance can be identified from monitoring data covering the relevant period.

### Typical questions:

- What have been the (quantitative and qualitative) effects of the intervention?
- To what extent do the observed effects link to the intervention?
- To what extent can these changes/effects be credited to the intervention?
- To what extent can factors influencing the observed achievements be linked to the EU intervention?
- For spending programmes, did the associated EU anti-fraud measures allow for the prevention and timely detection of fraud?

### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation questions:

- |   |
|---|
| <p><b>EQ 2. How far are the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's results and impacts in the process of achieving the programme's objectives?</b></p> <p><b>EQ 3. Are there aspects that were more or less effective than others, and if so, what lessons can be drawn from this?</b></p> |
|---|



### Criterion 3. Efficiency

#### Definition:

- The relationship between the resources used by an intervention and the changes generated by the intervention (which may be positive or negative).

#### Remarks:

- Efficiency analysis should always look closely at both the costs and benefits of the EU intervention as they accrue to different stakeholders.
- Efficiency analysis will include analysis of administrative and regulatory burden and look at aspects of simplification: evaluation findings should pin-point areas where there is potential to reduce inefficiencies, particularly unnecessary regulatory costs, and simplify the intervention.

#### Typical questions:

- To what extent has the intervention been cost effective?
- To what extent are the costs of the intervention justified, given the changes/effects it has achieved?
- To what extent are the costs associated with the intervention proportionate to the benefits it has generated? What factors are influencing any particular discrepancies? How do these factors link to the intervention?
- To what extent do factors linked to the intervention influence the efficiency with which the observed achievements were attained? What other factors influence the costs and benefits?
- How proportionate were the costs of the intervention borne by different stakeholder groups, taking into account the distribution of associated benefits?
- If there are significant differences in costs (or benefits) between Member States, what is causing them? How do these differences link to the intervention?
- How timely and efficient is the intervention's process for reporting and monitoring?

#### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation questions:

**EQ 4. To what extent has the programme been cost effective?**

**EQ 5. Which aspects of the programme are the most efficient or inefficient, especially in terms of resources mobilised?**

#### Criterion 4. Coherence

##### Definition:

- How well or not different actions work together?
- **"Internal" coherence** means looking at how the various components of the same EU intervention operate together to achieve its objectives.
- **"External" coherence** looks for synergies or inconsistencies between actions in related fields which are expected to work together.

##### Remarks:

- **ISA2 specificity: Coherence with CEF has to be checked** (*Article 13 § 6 of the ISA2 decision*)
- When assessing coherence, comparison with other scenarios is again likely to be predominantly qualitative.

##### Typical questions:

- To what extent is this intervention coherent with other interventions which have similar objectives?
- To what extent is the intervention coherent internally?
- To what extent is the intervention coherent with wider EU policy?
- To what extent is the intervention coherent with international obligations?

##### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation questions:

**EQ 6. To what extent do the ISA<sup>2</sup> actions form part of a "holistic" approach within the framework of the programme? (internal coherence)**

**EQ 7. To what extent is the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme coherent with other EU interventions which have similar objectives? (external coherence)**

## Criterion 5. EU-added value

### Definition:

- EU-added value looks for changes which it can reasonably be argued are due to the EU intervention, over and above what could reasonably have been expected from national actions by the Member States.
- It brings together the findings of the other criteria, presenting the arguments on causality and drawing conclusions, based on the evidence to hand, about the performance of the EU intervention.

### Remarks:

- The EU added value test is performed on the basis of the following 3 criteria:
  - Effectiveness: where EU action is the only way to get results to create missing links, avoid fragmentation, and realise the potential of a border-free Europe.
  - Efficiency: where the EU offers better value for money, because externalities can be addressed, resources or expertise can be pooled, an action can be better coordinated.
  - Synergy: where EU action is necessary to complement, stimulate, and leverage action to reduce disparities, raise standards, and create synergies.
- The analysis of EU added value should as a minimum provide qualitative, reasoned arguments about the likely role / contribution of the EU intervention, backed by appropriate quantitative and qualitative evidence. It is also important that evaluations clearly state the challenges that have been encountered and resulting limitations in the certainty or accuracy of such findings.

### Typical questions:

- What is the additional value resulting from the EU intervention(s), compared to what could reasonably have been expected from Member States acting at national and/or regional levels?
- What would be the most likely consequences of stopping or withdrawing the existing EU intervention?

### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation question:

**EQ 8. What is the additional value resulting from the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, compared to what could reasonably have been expected from Member States acting at national and/or regional levels?**

## Criterion 6. Utility

### Definition:

- The extent to which the effects of an intervention satisfy (or not) the stakeholders' needs.

### Remarks:

- **ISA2 specificity:** Where relevant, the ISA2 evaluation shall examine business and citizens satisfaction (*Article 13 § 3 of the ISA2 decision*).

### Typical questions:

- To what extent do the changes/effects of an intervention satisfy (or not) stakeholders' needs?
- How much does the degree of satisfaction differ according to the different stakeholder groups?

### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation questions:

**EQ 9. How do the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's actions, results and impacts, achieved and anticipated, compare with the needs they are supposed to address?**

**EQ 10. To what extent could measures be taken to improve the utility of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme's actions, and what measures would these be?**

## Criterion 7. Sustainability

### Definition:

- The likelihood that the effects of the intervention last after the intervention ends.

### Remarks:

- It can be important to test this expectation for interventions which have a finite duration, such as particular programmes

### Typical questions:

- How likely are the effects to last after the intervention ends?

### Proposed ISA<sup>2</sup> interim evaluation question:

**EQ 11. To what extent is the financial, technical and operational sustainability of the developed solutions, maintained and operated through the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, ensured?**

## Aspect 1. Compliance with the ISA2 principles

The evaluation shall assess the compliance with the following principles:

- subsidiarity and proportionality,
- user-centricity,
- inclusion and accessibility,
- delivery of public services in such a way as to prevent digital divide,
- security, respect for privacy and data protection,
- multilingualism,
- administrative simplification and modernisation,
- transparency,
- preservation of information,
- openness,
- re-usability and avoidance of duplication,
- technological neutrality, solutions which, insofar as possible, are future-proof, and adaptability,
- effectiveness and efficiency;

*(Article 13 § 5 of the ISA2 decision)*

**Remark: Check the overlaps with the EIF principles!**

## Aspect 2. Quantified benefits & impacts

The evaluations shall contain, where applicable, information regarding:

- a) the quantifiable and qualifiable benefits that the interoperability solutions deliver by linking ICT with the needs of end-users;
- b) the quantifiable and qualifiable impact of the interoperable ICT-based solutions.

*(Article 13 § 7 of the ISA2 decision)*

### Aspect 3. Addressing the recommendations of the final ISA evaluation

#### Strategic recommendations

Recommendation 1:

- The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme, which serves an EU policy, should continue to **align itself with other relevant EU policies**.

Recommendation 2:

- Support the revision and implementation of the EIS.

Recommendation 3:

- Continue to focus on the current ISA activities but more emphasis on legal and organisational interoperability.

Recommendation 4:

- Update and implement a **communication** strategy for the programme, with a focus on targeted **engagement** including sector-specific stakeholders

Recommendation 5:

- Develop a more systematic **business-case approach**.

#### Operational recommendations

Recommendation 6:

- Respect the targets of the programme's envisaged staff levels

Recommendation 7:

- Build on the improvements in coordination of activities related to interoperability and eGovernment across the Commission

Recommendation 8:

- Continue to document ISA solutions, and their building blocks in EUCart and Joinup.

Recommendation 9:

- Develop a more systematic approach to support the use of common services and generic tools, but also the application and implementation of common frameworks.

## ANNEX 2: REFERENCE DOCUMENTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE EVALUATION

### About the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme in general:

- The ISA<sup>2</sup> legal Decision ([Decision \(EU\) 2015/2240](#));
- [European Interoperability Framework Communication \(COM 2017/134\)](#) and related documents such as the [Annex I: Interoperability Action Plan](#) and the [Annex II: European Interoperability Framework](#);
- The previous ISA Decision ([Decision \(EU\) 922/2009/EC](#));
- The Comitology Decision ([REGULATION \(EU\) No 182/2011](#)) governing the role of the ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee (Article 12 of [Decision \(EU\) 2015/2240](#));
- The ISA Final Evaluation Report and Commission Communication "Final evaluation of the implementation of the ISA programme" ([COM/2016/0550](#));
- The ISA Interim Evaluation report and Commission Communication "Interim evaluation of the implementation of the ISA programme" ([COM/2013/05](#));
- Deliverables of the contract "Transition from ISA to ISA<sup>2</sup>"
- Deliverables of the contract "Final evaluation of the ISA Programme Follow-up"
- The ISA<sup>2</sup> Work Programmes:
  - 2016 - [summary](#) , [detailed description of the actions](#), [financial overview](#);
  - 2017 – [summary](#), [full programme part 1](#) , [full programme part 2](#), [financial overview](#);
  - 2018 - [summary](#), [full programme part 1](#), [full 2018 work programme part 2](#), [financial overview](#);
- The minutes and executive summaries of meetings of the ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee and the ISA<sup>2</sup> Coordination Group (internal documents);
- The descriptions, project charters and deliverables of the actions completed and on-going;
- Various guidelines and templates for potential participants of the programme;
- Information on specific actions, first and foremost project charters and execution reports, information available at the Dashboard on the ISA<sup>2</sup> website as well as reviews of actions conducted in compliance with Article 13(2) of [the ISA<sup>2</sup> Decision](#), if any.

### About some ISA<sup>2</sup> actions in more details:

- NIFO action:
  - [NIFO eGovernment Factsheet 2018](#)
  - [NIFO State of Play Report of Interoperability 2016](#)
  - [NIFO European Semester Report](#)
- [Access to Base Registries' National Factsheets 2017](#)
- Lessons learnt from the assessment of ICT implications action
- Commission IT Rationalisation report from the assessment of trans-European solutions supporting EU policy action (2018)
- Semantic Interoperability:
  - [Handbook for using the Core Vocabularies](#)
  - [Core Public Service Vocabulary](#)
  - Presentation from ISA<sup>2</sup> SEMIC Conference 2018

- [The Sharing and Reuse Framework for IT solutions 2017](#)

#### Policy outlook:

- Digital Single Market Strategy ([COM \(2015\) 192](#)) and its mid-term review ([SWD\(2017\) 155 final](#));
- Annual growth surveys of the European Commission;
- The European Semester and its outcomes;
- e-Government Ministerial Declarations – [The Tallinn Declaration](#).
- Interim evaluation of the CEF programme ([COM\(2018\) 66 final](#))
- [The European Semester and modernisation of public administration 2017](#)
- [Toolbox 2017 edition - Quantity of Public administration](#)
- [Member States' National Reform programmes](#)
- [Digital strategies eGovernment action plans](#)
- [EU eGovernment Benchmark 2017 Report](#)
- Annual Growth Survey
- Screening of Projects (H2020)
- Screening of Projects (Structural Reform Support Service)
- [2017 Gartner publication: Introducing the Gartner government maturity model](#)
- 2017 Gartner publication: CIO Agenda A Government Perspective

#### Better Regulation Methodology:

- Better Regulation Guidelines (especially [Guidelines on evaluation](#) and [Guidelines on Stakeholder Consultation](#)) and [Better Regulation Toolbox](#) (especially tools [#45](#), [#46](#), [#47](#), [#53](#), [#54](#), [#55](#) and [#60](#)) of the European Commission.



## ANNEX 3: DRAFT CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Consultation strategy	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Interim evaluation of the programme on interoperability solutions for administrations, business and citizens (ISA<sup>2</sup>)</b>
<b>Background information:</b>	<p><a href="#">ISA<sup>2</sup></a> (Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens) is an EU spending programme which supports the development of digital solutions that enable public administrations, businesses and citizens in Europe to benefit from interoperable cross-border and cross-sector public services.</p> <p>By identifying, creating and facilitating the reuse of interoperability solutions, ISA<sup>2</sup> aims at promoting a holistic approach to interoperability<sup>12</sup> in the European Union and thus – as a key enabler – it helps the implementation of various Union policies and activities. ISA<sup>2</sup> is also the principal instrument to implement the <a href="#">revised European Interoperability Framework (EIF)</a> and its annex, the <a href="#">Interoperability Action Plan</a>.</p> <p>The primary stakeholders of the programme are the European Public Administrations at union, national, regional and national level. The circle of affected stakeholders is however much broader, as shown in the section "Identification and mapping of stakeholders" below.</p> <p>ISA<sup>2</sup> is opened to EU Member States, other countries of the European Economic Area and candidate countries. In addition to the 28 EU Member States, three other countries take part in the programme: Iceland, Norway (since 2016) and Montenegro (since 2018). The programme also encourages cooperation with other third countries and with international organisations or bodies.</p> <p>The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme has a budget of € 130.9 million and runs for 5 years from 1 January 2016 until 31 December 2020. It has been established by the 'ISA<sup>2</sup> decision': <a href="#">Decision (EU) 2015/2240</a> of the European Parliament and of the Council. According to Article 13(3) of this decision, the Commission shall carry out an interim evaluation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme by 30 September 2019. This interim evaluation was announced by the Commission on 29 May 2018 through this <a href="#">evaluation roadmap</a>.</p>

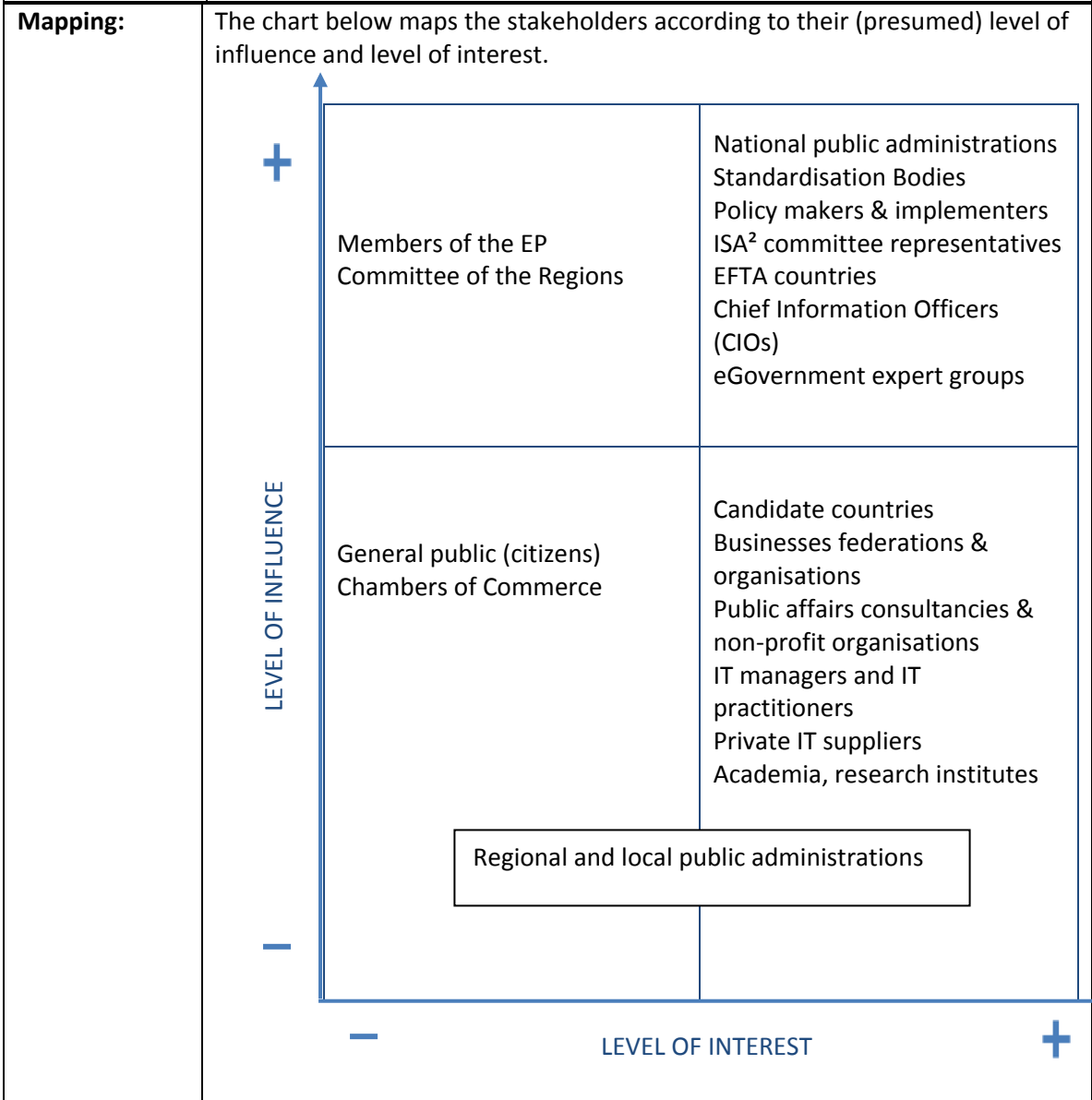
Consultation objectives and scope	
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>During the evaluation process, a number of consultation activities are foreseen in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collect views and opinions on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ how satisfied the European public administrations are with the ISA<sup>2</sup> solutions;</li> <li>○ to which degree businesses and citizens are aware of the programme's existence and benefits;</li> <li>○ in general, how the programme could be improved to bring more value to its stakeholders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup>'Interoperability' means the ability of diverse organisations to interact towards mutually beneficial and agreed common goals, involving the sharing of information and knowledge between the organisations, through their business processes and by means of the exchange of data between their respective ICT systems. [Source: Article 2(1) of the [ISA<sup>2</sup> decision](#).]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gather specialised input (data and factual information, expert views) on specific aspects of the programme (e.g.: take-up and re-use of interoperability solutions by the European public administrations) with the aim of filling the data and information gaps identified in the inception phase of the interim evaluation.</li> </ul> <p><i>Remark of DIGIT.D.2: Future contractor's task: Refine the consultation objectives after studying the available evidence base and identifying existing information gaps.</i></p>
<b>Scope:</b>	<p>The consultation activities will cover the following evaluation criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effectiveness of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme,</li> <li>efficiency in relation to the resources used,</li> <li>relevance in relation to identified needs/problems,</li> <li>coherence with other interventions with related objective,</li> <li>EU added value compared to what could have been achieved at national level,</li> <li>sustainability of the interoperability solutions offered by ISA<sup>2</sup> and</li> <li>utility of the programme's results for public administrations, business and citizens.</li> </ul> <p><i>Remark of DIGIT.D.2: Future contractor's tasks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ensure that this section is transparent about what is in the scope of the consultation and on which topics no consultation activity is foreseen because of available evidence.</i></li> <li><i>Provide a detailed mapping of the stakeholders - consultation activities – evaluation criteria.</i></li> </ul>

Identification and mapping of stakeholders	
<b>Stakeholders:</b>	<p>The ISA<sup>2</sup> programme aims at making public administrations more interoperable, thus enabling them to provide more user-centric and digital public solutions to businesses and citizens. Consequently, besides the European public administrations, the programme may have positive impact on citizens and businesses too. Moreover, as the interoperability solutions, developed by ISA<sup>2</sup> and by its predecessor programme, ISA, are made available to use for free they can reach a broader audience – like researchers, ICT communities or practitioners.</p> <p><u>Stakeholder Categories:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Information Officers (CIOs)</li> <li>ISA<sup>2</sup> committee representatives</li> <li>eGovernment expert groups</li> <li>Policy makers and implementers of the European Commission</li> <li>National public administrations</li> <li>IT managers and IT practitioners</li> <li>Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Committee of the Regions</li> <li>Members of the EP</li> <li>Standardisation Bodies</li> </ul>

- Regional and local public administrations
  - Public affairs consultancies & non-profit organisations
  - General public (citizens)
  - EFTA countries
  - Candidate countries
  - Academia, research institutes
  - Private IT suppliers
  - Businesses federations & organisations
- Remark of DIGIT.D.2:  
Future contractor's tasks: Verify and consolidate the list of stakeholders and adapt the below mapping accordingly.*



Selection of consultation activities & their accessibility	
<b>Consultation activities:</b>	<p>Given the scope and the stakeholder base, the following activities are foreseen in the consultation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a 12-week long internet-based open public consultation, which will most probably take place in Q4 2018 in all official EU languages. It will be accessible in the Commission's central <a href="#">public consultations page</a>, where replies can be made in any EU language (including Irish);</li> <li>• a workshop with the interested participants of the ISA<sup>2</sup> conference in November 2018;</li> <li>• in-depth interviews with relevant officials – involved in or concerned by the implementation of the ISA<sup>2</sup> programme – of some selected Member States and the Commission. For example: ISA<sup>2</sup> action owners, ISA<sup>2</sup> Committee members, members of the Chief Information Officers' (CIOs) network, members of the National Interoperability Framework Observatory (NIFO) network;</li> <li>• a written questionnaire for national, regional and local authorities being in contact with ISA<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul> <p><i>Remark of DIGIT.D.2:</i>  <i>Future contractor's tasks: Propose final list of consultation activities by avoiding overlaps so that the same representative does not influence the evaluation in three different ways while others are "only allowed" to influence in one way.</i></p>
<b>Accessibility:</b>	<p>The open public consultation will be open to everyone and give the respondents the opportunity to – beyond filling in the questionnaire – upload position papers and other relevant documents. The questionnaires will be made accessible to visually impaired respondents. The open public consultation questionnaires will be written in plain language and will be translated into all EU languages.</p> <p>All additional documentation will be provided in English. Written contributions in other EU official languages will be accepted and treated in the same manner as the ones written in English, and this will be clearly indicated on the consultation web page. The open consultation questionnaire will contain at the beginning a statement explaining that answers in other EU official languages will be accepted on equal terms.</p> <p>Targeted questionnaires will be distributed as widely as possible to the interested groups of stakeholders. On the consultation web page, a call for interest will be published in advance to allow stakeholders to express their interest in being consulted through the targeted consultation.</p>

Summary on consultation activities by stakeholder groups and indicative timing	
<b>Stakeholder group 1</b>	
<b>Stakeholder group 2</b>	
	<p><i>Remark of DIGIT.D.2:</i>  <i>Future contractor's tasks: Complete this table if deemed useful.</i></p>

### Consultation website & communication activities

The consultations activities will be promoted at a dedicated consultation page under the [ISA<sup>2</sup> website](#) and through the programme's social media accounts on Twitter and LinkedIn. The very same channels will be used to share the results of the consultation activities with the public. The open public consultation will also be accessible on the [Consultations site of Europa](#).

At the end of the consultation process, a synopsis report will be published, summarising all the consultation activities performed and the outcome of the consultation. This report will be available in all EU languages.

## ANNEX 4: QUALITY ASSESSMENT FOR FINAL EVALUATION STUDY

According to the Commission **Better Regulation Guidelines and toolbox** the Quality Assessment (QA) by the Inter-Service Steering Group (ISSG) judges the external contractor's study and its overall process. It is the final "sign off" by the ISSG of the contractor's work and includes a judgement on whether key aspects of the work conducted meet the required standards and provides any related comments

### 1. Scope of evaluation

Confirm with the Terms of Reference and the work plan that the contractor:

- a. Has addressed the evaluation issues and specific questions
- b. Has undertaken the tasks described in the work plan
- c. Has covered the requested scope for time period, geographical areas, target groups, aspects of the intervention, etc.

### 2. Overall contents of study

Check that the study includes:

- a. Executive Summary according to an agreed format, in the three languages
- b. Main study with required components:
  - Title and Content Page
  - A description of the policy being evaluated, its context, the purpose of the evaluation, contextual limitations, methodology, etc.
  - Findings, conclusions, and judgments for all evaluation issues and specific questions
  - The required outputs and deliverables
  - Recommendations as appropriate
- c. All required annexes

### 3. Data collection

Check that data is accurate and complete:

- a. Data is accurate.

- Data is free from factual and logical errors
  - The study is consistent, i.e. no contradictions
- b. Data is complete
- Relevant literature and previous studies have been sufficiently reviewed
  - Existing monitoring data has been appropriately used
  - Limitations to the data retrieved are pointed out and explained
  - Correcting measures have been taken to address any problems encountered in the process of data gathering

#### **4. Analysis and judgments**

Check that analysis is sound and relevant

- a. Analytical framework is sound
- The methodology used for each area of analysis is clearly explained, and has been applied consistently and as planned
  - Judgements are based on transparent criteria
  - The analysis relies on two or more independent lines of evidence
  - Inputs from different stakeholders are used in a balanced way
  - Findings are reliable enough to be replicable
- b. Conclusions are sound
- Conclusions are properly addressing the evaluation questions and are coherently and logically substantiated
  - There are no relevant conclusions missing according to the evidence presented
  - Findings corroborate existing knowledge; differences or contradictions with existing knowledge are explained
  - Critical issues are presented in a fair and balanced manner
  - Limitations on validity of the conclusions are pointed out

#### **5. Clarity of the study**

- a. Study is easy to read

- Written style and presentation is adapted for the various relevant target readers
  - The quality of language is sufficient for publishing
  - Specific terminology is clearly defined
  - Tables, graphs, and similar presentation tools are used to facilitate understanding; they are well commented with narrative text
- b. Study is logical and focused
- The structure of the study is logical and consistent, information is not unjustifiably duplicated, and it is easy to get an overview of the study and its key results.
  - The study provides a proper focus on main issues and key messages are summarised and highlighted
  - The length of the study (excluded appendices) is proportionate (good balance of descriptive and analytical information)
  - Detailed information and technical analysis are left for the appendix; thus information overload is avoided in the main study

### **Overall conclusion**

The study could be approved in its current state, as it overall complies with the contractual conditions and relevant professional evaluation standards.