



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Impact Assessment Board

Brussels,
D(2011)

Opinion

Title **DG ESTAT - Impact Assessment on the European Statistical Programme 2013-2017**

(draft version of 21 September 2011)

(A) Context

This Impact Assessment accompanies the proposal for the European Statistical Programme (ESP) 2013-2017 which is meant to be a logical and necessary follow-up of the current Community Statistical Programme (CSP) that covers the period 2008-2012. In accordance with Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics, ESPs provide the framework for the development, production and dissemination of European statistics. ESPs lay down priorities concerning the needs for information for the purpose of policy development and carrying out the activities of the European Union.

The IAB has focussed on the policy choices not yet fixed in the MFF June package.

(B) Overall assessment

The report requires considerable further work on several important aspects. Firstly, it should improve the presentation of the underlying problems and their drivers by using relevant evaluation findings and by clearly explaining the shortcomings of the current programme. On that basis the report should better demonstrate the concrete need for and value added of an EU programme. Secondly, the report should differentiate objectives into categories (general, specific, operational), clarify their content, express them in S.M.A.R.T. terms, and link them to robust monitoring indicators. Furthermore, the report should improve the intervention logic by clearly linking the objectives to the identified problems and the relevant options. Thirdly, the report should analyse the different options individually and in greater detail. It should clearly describe the comparative advantages of the preferred option, using a clear set of comparison criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, coherence). Finally, the report should more extensively outline the monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

(1) Strengthen the problem definition and the discussion of subsidiarity. The report should explain the current statistical programme in more detail, including its content and objectives. Against this background it should present a more precise and evidence-based analysis of the problem drivers. This should include representative examples, further detailed evidence and quantitative data where possible. The baseline scenario should be clearly indicated. The report should also include a more detailed subsidiarity discussion and should more explain thoroughly the concrete need for an EU intervention. It should explain in more detail the value added of an EU intervention.

(2) Clarify the objectives and improve the intervention logic. The report should clarify the objectives by differentiating them into the standard categories of general, specific and operational objectives. The objectives should be designed according to the S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed) criteria. The report should present the objectives as a benchmark to be later used for the comparison of the options. Furthermore, the report should link the objectives presented in the context of option 3 ("New five year programme") to the general objectives of the initiative. In this context the report should also explain possible trade-offs between the improvement of the quality of statistics and administrative burden reduction. The report should strengthen the intervention logic by clearly linking the objectives to the identified problems and by creating a stronger link between the objectives and policy options. This should be supported by presenting realistic options that can deliver on the redefined objectives. The content of all options should be clearly defined. The report should link the objectives closely to appropriate monitoring indicators.

(3) Improve the analysis of impacts and the comparison of options. The report should provide a more substantive impact analysis of the options by including a detailed description of the available evidence and the underlying assumptions. In this respect, the report should also extend the analysis and assess the impacts (at EU and Member State level) of each of the different options for all three pillars (economic, social and environmental), including impacts on affected stakeholders. This should include an analysis of the cost-effectiveness of the options. The arguments should be based on robust evidence; and any lack of such evidence should be clearly explained. The report should then compare the policy options against the baseline scenario using a clear set of comparison criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, coherence). Furthermore, the report should better explain and justify the choice of the preferred option using more quantitative/qualitative analysis.

(4) Better present the monitoring and evaluation arrangements. The report should provide a more extensive explanation of the monitoring and evaluation arrangements, for instance by including a set of concrete monitoring indicators and by clearly linking them to the preferred option.

Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report

(D) Procedure and presentation

In terms of presentation, the structure of the report should follow more closely the impact assessment guidelines. Relevant information should be presented in the standard chapters, particularly regarding the presentation of objectives, options and the analysis and comparison of impacts.

The IAB secretariat will be available to give technical advice on improving the impact assessment report.

(E) IAB scrutiny process

Reference number	2010/ESTAT/003
External expertise used	No
Date of IAB meeting	19/10/2011 (Written procedure)