

EVALUATION AND FITNESS CHECK (FC) ROADMAP			
TITLE OF THE EVALUATION/FC	Ex-post evaluation of the European Refugee Fund for 2011-2013		
LEAD DG RESPONSIBLE UNIT	HOME E.2	DATE OF THIS ROADMAP	10 / 2015
TYPE OF EVALUATION	Evaluation	PLANNED START DATE	10 / 2015
	Ex-post	PLANNED COMPLETION DATE	12 / 2016
	Mixed	PLANNING CALENDAR	http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/index_en.htm
This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and is subject to change.			

A. Purpose
(A.1) Purpose
<p>The purpose of this ex-post evaluation of the European Refugee Fund for 2011-2013 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to meet the legal obligations for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Fund (please see section A.2); to ensure transparency and accountability for the implementation of the European Refugee Fund, the general objective of which is to support and encourage the efforts made by the Member States in receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons; to contribute to making the future implementation of EU financial instruments in the field of asylum more relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable and coherent.
(A.2) Justification
<p>According to Article 18(3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012¹, all programmes or activities where the resources mobilised exceed EUR 5 000 000 shall be subject of an interim and/or ex-post evaluation in terms of the human and financial resources allocated and the results obtained in order to verify that they were consistent with the objectives set.</p> <p>The legal basis for the evaluation of the European Refugee Fund actions for 2011-2013 is Articles 49 and 50 of Decision No 2007/573/EC² according to which the Commission shall submit by 31 December 2015 to the European Parliament, to the Council, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions ex-post evaluation report. Article 31(5) and (6) of the Regulation (EU) No 516/2014³ confirm this obligation.</p> <p>The deadline of 31 December 2015 cannot be met as the Commission's ex-post evaluation report has to take account of the national (ex-post) evaluation reports to be submitted by the Member States. The deadline for those, provided in the legal basis is 30 June 2015. Considering that the eligibility period of the 2013 annual programmes for the European Refugee Fund ends on the same day (30 June 2015), it is not feasible to finalize national ex-post evaluation at the same moment of time as the implementation ends. The national evaluation reports will, therefore, be provided to the Commission by 30 November 2015. Consequently, also the ex-post evaluation report of the</p>

¹ Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1.

² Decision No 2007/573/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' and repealing Council Decision 2004/904/EC, OJ L 144, 6.6.2007, p. 1.

³ Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC, OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 168.

Commission is prepared with a delay in comparison with the deadline set in the legal basis. The targeted date for the submission of the report to the European Parliament, to the Council, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions is 31 December 2016.

B. Content and subject of the evaluation

(B.1) Subject area

The European Refugee Fund was established for the period 2008 to 2013 as one of four funds under the General Programme "Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows".

The European Refugee Fund has been implemented via actions under annual programmes of all EU Member States, except Denmark⁴ (shared management – 93% of the funding) and Community actions (direct and joint management – 7% of the funding). The European Refugee Fund annual programmes of the Member States (referred to in Article 20 of Decision No 2007/573/EC) were drafted on the basis of the European Refugee Fund 2008-2013 multi-annual programmes of all participating Member States, and implemented by the authorities of these under the shared management mode. Article 3 of Decision No 2007/573/EC lays down the actions eligible under the European Refugee Fund annual programmes which, among others, include:

- reception conditions and asylum procedures;
- integration of target group persons;
- enhancement of Member States' capacity to develop, monitor and evaluate their asylum policies;
- resettlement and transfer activities.

The European Refugee Fund allocations for the annual programmes were determined on the basis of a methodology defined in Article 13 of Decision No 2007/573/EC.

In addition, Article 5 of Decision No 2007/573/EC lays down the emergency measures eligible under the European Refugee Fund which are aimed at addressing situations of particular pressure. Such situations are characterised by the sudden arrival at particular points on the borders of a large number of third- country nationals who may be in need of international protection, which place exceptionally heavy and urgent demands on the reception facilities, the asylum system or infrastructure of the Member State(s) concerned and may give rise to risks to human life, well-being or access to protection provided under EU legislation.

The European Refugee Fund Community actions were implemented under the direct management mode and joint management mode. The direct management mode projects were supported by grants awarded by the Commission or via contracts for services concluded following the calls for tenders published by the Commission. Article 4 of Decision No 2007/573/EC lays down the Community actions eligible under the European Refugee Fund, which, among others, include:

- further Community cooperation in implementing Community law and good practices;
- support the setting-up of transnational cooperation networks and pilot projects based on transnational partnerships designed to stimulate innovation, facilitate exchanges of experience and good practice and improve the quality of asylum policy;
- support transnational awareness-raising campaigns;
- support studies, dissemination and exchange of information on best practices and all other aspects of asylum policies;
- support pilot projects, including innovative projects, and studies exploring the possibility of new forms of Community cooperation and Community law in this area;

⁴ Denmark does not participate in Title V 'Area of Freedom, Security and Justice' in the Treaty on the European Union

- support development and application by Member States of common statistical tools, methods and indicators for measuring policy developments in the field of asylum;
- offer to networks linking non-governmental organisations which assist refugees and asylum seekers and which are present in at least 10 Member States structural support intended to facilitate exchanges of experience and sound practice and to ensure that the development of Community asylum policy and practice takes into account the experience gained by non-governmental organisations and the interests of refugees and asylum seekers;
- provide Member States with support services in the event of duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action.

(B.2) Original objectives of the intervention

According to Article 2 of Decision No 2007/573/EC, the general objective of the European Refugee Fund is to support and encourage the efforts made by the Member States in receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons, taking account of EU legislation on those matters, by co-financing the actions provided for in this Decision.

In addition, Commission Decision No 2007/815/EC (Strategic guidelines) defined the following three priorities for the European Refugee Fund:

- Implementation of the principles and measures set out in the Community acquis in the field of asylum, including those related to integration objectives;
- Development of reference tools and evaluation methodologies to assess and improve the quality of procedures for the examination of claims for international protection and to underpin administrative structures in an effort to respond to the challenges brought forward by enhanced practical cooperation with other Member States;
- Actions helping to enhance responsibility sharing between Member States and third countries (optional).

(B.3) How the objectives were to be achieved

The initial description of the Intervention Logic is based on the general and specific objectives, the priorities (described in the section above) as well as on the types of activities, funded by European Refugee Fund.

In particular, the European Refugee Fund objectives were to be achieved by the implementation of actions supported by the Fund, specified in Article 3/2-6 of Decision No 2007/573/EC. The actions funded included, among others:

- accommodation infrastructure in the reception centres;
- provision of material aid, and medical, psychological and social care;
- social assistance, provision of information and counselling;
- legal aid and language assistance;
- information for local communities as well as training for the staff of local authorities;
- education, vocational and language training for the asylum seekers;
- advice and assistance in areas such as housing, means of subsistence, integration into the labour market;
- transfer of beneficiaries of and applicants for international protection between Member States;
- establishment and development of a resettlement programme;
- collection, compilation, use and dissemination of country of origin information;
- enhancing the capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate statistics on asylum;
- enhancing the capacity to assess asylum applications.

The Intervention Logic will further be developed during the Inception Phase of the Ex-post evaluation in view to elaborate a comprehensive overview on of how different parts of the FUND set-up interacted between each other.

C. Scope of the evaluation/FC

(C.1) Topics covered

The evaluation will cover the following:

- Actions supported under the 2011, 2012 and 2013 annual programmes of 27 participating Member States.

The evaluation will cover the eligibility period 1 January 2011 – 30 June 2015.

- The Community Actions supported under the 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 annual work programmes, i.e.
 - 11 under the 2010 annual work programme (8 implemented after 1 January 2011),
 - 8 under the 2011 annual work programme,
 - 5 under the 2012 annual work programme,
 - 1 under the 2013 annual work programme.

In addition to the projects under the 2011, 2012 and 2013 annual work programmes, also 9 out of 11 Community Actions under the 2010 annual work programme will be covered by the evaluation as they were implemented after 1 January 2011. The period covered by the evaluation will be 1 January 2011 – 31 March 2016.

(C.2) Issues to be examined

The evaluation will examine the implementation of actions co-financed by the European Refugee Fund and assess their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence and complementarity, and EU added value.

Under the relevance theme, the evaluation will examine to what extent the European Refugee Fund objectives implemented by eligible actions in 2011-2013 corresponded to needs related to receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons by the Member States.

Under the effectiveness theme, the evaluation will examine to what extent the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 actions contributed to the achievement of the objectives defined in Article 2 of Decision No 2007/573/EC and to the priorities defined by Decision No 2007/815/EC.

Under the efficiency theme, the evaluation will examine to what extent the effects of the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 actions were achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed.

Under the sustainability theme, the evaluation will examine to what extent the positive effects of the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 actions lasted after the interventions were terminated.

Under the coherence and complementarity theme, the evaluation will examine to what extent the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 actions were coherent with and complementary to other actions related to asylum, financed by other EU financial instruments and from national resources of the Member States, including the activities of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO), supporting EU Member States on asylum.

Under the EU added value theme, the evaluation will examine what is the additional value resulting from the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 actions compared to what the Member States would be able to carry out through investments necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of asylum without the support of the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 actions.

(C.3) Other tasks

The evaluation will include an analysis of national evaluation reports which are submitted by the participating Member States in accordance with Article 50(2) of Decision No 2007/573/EC to the Commission by 30 November 2015. This analysis will be fully integrated into the evaluation work which together with the analysis of other data to be collected will be the basis for answering to the evaluation questions.

Apart from the reporting on the common indicators (please see section D.1 below) and a brief description of the implementation of the national annual programmes, the national evaluation reports will provide answers to a number of common evaluation questions, covering the themes of effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence and complementarity, and EU added value. The analysis of the national evaluation reports will be the main basis for the answering of the evaluation questions at the EU level.

D. Evidence base

(D.1) Evidence from monitoring

The information on the progress against the indicator targets defined in the annual programmes is provided in final reports on implementation submitted by the Member States nine months after the end of the eligibility period for the annual programme concerned (i.e. reports for 2012 were submitted by 31 March 2015, and reports for 2013 are due by 31 March 2016).

The Member States which requested the payment of a second pre-financing also submitted progress reports, which in addition to the final reports, may provide further details on the implementation of the annual programmes.

<p>Indicators used in the national annual programmes vary between years and Member States, and therefore cannot be aggregated at the EU level. In order to address this issue, DG HOME developed a set of common ex-post indicators in 2014 and requested the Member States to provide values for these as part of their national (ex-post) evaluation reports for 2011-2013⁵ to be submitted to the Commission by 30 November 2015.</p> <p>In addition to the final, progress and evaluation reports provided by the Member States, the Commission has carried out its own monitoring visits. Commission reports from these visits will also be one of the sources of information for the evaluation.</p>
<p>(D.2) Previous evaluations and other reports</p>
<p>The following evaluation reports will also be taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of the national evaluation reports on the results and impacts of actions co-financed by the European Refugee Fund 2008-2010; • Special Report of the Court of Auditors N° 22/2012 "Do the European Integration Fund and European Refugee Fund contribute effectively to the integration of third-country nationals?"; • Special Report of the Court of Auditors No 15/2014 "The External Borders Fund has fostered financial solidarity but requires better measurement of results and needs to provide further EU added value", and especially its observations relevant to this evaluation.
<p>(D.3) Evidence from assessing the implementation and application of legislation (complaints, infringement procedures)</p>
<p>The evaluation will take into account annual audit reports for the European Refugee Fund 2011-2013 annual programmes drafted by the national Audit Authorities, as well as audit reports drafted by the DG HOME auditors and the Court of Auditors.</p>
<p>(D.4) Consultation</p>
<p>DG HOME will carry-out an internet based public open consultation (using a questionnaire) covering all of the main elements of the evaluation in spring 2016. The purpose of the consultation will be to collect opinions of the general public on the importance and EU added value of the funding under European Refugee Fund as well as feedback from the general public (including asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection and refugees) on their experience with participation in actions funded by European Refugee Fund. It will ask if they think that support to the efforts made by the Member States in receiving, and in bearing the consequences of receiving, refugees and displaced persons is a good thing to be done, how strong it should be and identify possible weak points.</p> <p>In addition, during the evaluation, the external contractor will carry out a number of interviews with various stakeholders that have been involved in the implementation of the fund (e.g. European Commission officials in charge of the funds' management and coordination, Member States authorities, international organisations – UNHCR, IOM –, non-governmental organisations – ECRE –, and beneficiaries) in order to collect their views and opinions and to complete the answers to the evaluation questions.</p>
<p>(D.5) Further evidence to be gathered</p>
<p>The following additional documents and data sources will be covered under the desk research stage of the evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant legal acts (Decisions No 2007/573/EC, No 2007/815/EC and No 2008/22/EC); • Joint EU resettlement programme (Decision n° 281/2012/EU of the European parliament and of the Council of 29 March 2012 amending Decision No 573/2007/EC) • Council Directive 2005/85/EC (Asylum procedures) • Council Directive 2003/9/EC (Reception conditions); • Council Directive 2004/83/EC (Qualification Directive) • Council Regulation (EC) No 2725/2000 (Eurodac); • Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 (Dublin Regulation) • Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the evaluation of the Dublin system (COM(2007) 299 final) • Report from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament on the application of Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003 laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers (COM(2007) 745 final) • Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of Directive

⁵ These are submitted by the participating Member States in accordance with Article 50(2) of Decision No 2007/573/EC to the Commission.

2005/85/EC of 1 December 2005 on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status (COM(2010) 465 final)

- Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Application of Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection (COM(2010) 314 final)
- Communication on enhanced intra-EU solidarity in the field of asylum (COM(2011) 835 final)
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the establishment of a joint resettlement programme (COM(2009) 447 final)
- EASO fact finding report on intra EU relocation activities from Malta, July 2012
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and social Committee and the Committee of Regions "Policy plan on asylum: An integrated approach to protection across the EU", COM(2008) 360 final, 17.6.2008;
- European Refugee Fund 2008-2013 multi-annual programmes of the Member States;
- European Refugee Fund 2011, 2012 and 2013 annual programmes of the Member States;
- Descriptions of the Management and Control Systems for the European Refugee Fund in the Member States;
- Annual Work Programmes for the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 European Refugee Fund Community actions;
- Solid Guidance Notes SOLID/2008/16 (The fixed amount for the resettled persons in the European Refugee Fund), SOLID/2009/31 (Clarifications on the qualification criteria for the fixed amount for resettled persons falling within the specific categories under the European Refugee Fund), SOLID/2011/28 (Strategic objectives for the annual programmes 2012-2013 for the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and the European Fund for the integration of third-country nationals (IF)), and SOLID/2011/3 (Manual of the Eligibility Rules of costs – 4th version);
- EUROSTAT statistics;
- Any reports on financial and system audits as well as compliance checks with the relevant provisions of the legal base will also be taken into account.

E. Other relevant information/ remarks

While retaining the responsibility for the evaluation and its management, the Commission will rely on an external evaluation study, in order to ensure the highest possible credibility for the evaluation findings and to mobilise professional evaluation expertise.