



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
**DG EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION**

**Mutual Learning Programme**  
**Summary guidance on the Peer Reviews**

***Aim of the Peer Review***

Peer Reviews are one of the main tools of the Mutual Learning Programme (MLP), central to working towards the goals of the European Employment Strategy. The main objectives of the Peer Reviews are to:

- Provide a focused and dynamic opportunity for Member State government representatives to exchange information, experience and good practice in relation to a specific policy issue, thematic priority or country-specific recommendation of the European Employment Strategy;
- Stimulate critical reflection, assessment and benchmarking between the Member States, informed and supported by independent academic expertise; and
- Encourage Member State government representatives to network and identify further opportunities for mutual learning and policy influence.

***Approach***

The Peer Review approach is based on a dynamic dialogue between a 'host country' who presents and wishes to gain feedback on an effective policy, programme or measure and 'peer countries' who are interested in

- Learning from the host country example and using these lessons to inform – and potentially influence - policy development in their national setting; and
- Sharing their own policy experiences with the host and other participating countries.

The overall result is a rich, multi-lateral exchange between all the countries involved.

***Participation<sup>1</sup>***

The Peer Review takes place in the host country, with representatives from up to 10 peer countries. Each country is represented by a national government official, along with an independent expert appointed by the MLP team. Another independent expert is also appointed to prepare a Thematic Discussion Paper, which presents the topic in a wider policy context, drawing on country experiences beyond those represented at the Peer Review.

Delegations from the Commission and the MLP team also attend the Peer Review, making the total participation between 25 and 35 people.

***Agenda***

The Peer Review takes place over one and a half days, involving presentations on the host country policy example, a brief round table of the peer countries' experiences, followed by a number of working group discussions to facilitate mutual exchange and learning. Overall, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Participation in the Peer Reviews is open to the Member States, as well as EEA, accession, candidate and pre-candidate countries.

event is highly focused and interactive, which can lead to networking and follow-up after the Peer Review has taken place, including the organisation of Learning Exchanges.

Where appropriate, the Peer Reviews also include a study visit organised by the host country, whereby participants can see the *direct* application and impact of policy on the ground.

### ***Key features of the host country policy example***

The policy example of the host country should ideally have the following key features:

- Directly relevant to the thematic priorities of the European Employment Strategy and Europe 2020;
- Supported by evaluation results, studies and/or monitoring data; and
- Where appropriate, relevant to use of the European Social Fund.

The host country summarises the policy example in a one-to-two page 'fiche', which is then circulated with the invitation.

### ***Key tasks of the host country***

In addition to the preparation of the fiche, the main tasks of the host country are to:

- Contribute to the development of the thematic content and agenda of the Peer Review, in collaboration with the Commission and MLP team;
- Provide a venue and support the practical arrangements on site, such as the catering and audio-visual equipment;
- Give presentations and chair the proceedings, where appropriate, on the day.

### ***Key tasks of the MLP team***

The MLP team provides significant assistance to the host country in organising every aspect of the Peer Review. This support covers:

- Assisting the host country in developing the thematic content and agenda of the Peer Review;
- Appointing, briefing and quality assuring the work of the independent experts;
- Liaising and coordinating with the participating Member States, including the collection of relevant background materials;
- Providing logistical support, which includes financing the travel and accommodation of two representatives for each participating Member State;
- Assisting all the contributors in preparing their inputs and presentations;
- Chairing and/or facilitating the discussions on the day, if needed; and
- Preparing and circulating a final report of the discussions and findings.

### ***Examples of Peer Reviews***

The MLP has a long, successful history of organising Peer Reviews. Further information on these Peer Reviews can be found on the [MLP website](#).

### ***Next steps***

Should you be interested in organising a Peer Review and would like further information and support, please contact the MLP team: [mlp@icfi.com](mailto:mlp@icfi.com).