



Ipsos MORI  
Social Research Institute



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# Ex-ante evaluation of Eurofound's Draft Programming Document 2017-2020

Final report

(For submission by 31 January 2016, in parallel to Eurofound's Programming Document 2017-2020)

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# Executive summary

## Background and approach

The subject of this ex-ante evaluation is Eurofound's proposed programme for 2017-2020. The ex-ante evaluation refers to the programming process resulting in the most recent draft which has been endorsed by the Governing Board, and circulated to the budgetary authorities on 29th January 2016. With its endorsement, this programme is owned by Eurofound's Governing Board. Eurofound is responsible for its implementation, starting with the first annual programme 2017 which is part of this multiannual programme.

The overall purpose of doing an ex-ante evaluation is to assure that the planned programme will be relevant and feasible and that it can be monitored and evaluated during and after its implementation.

The items that are subjected to the ex-ante evaluation are explicitly mentioned in the Financial Regulation. The role of the ex-ante evaluation is to *ensure that programme decisions are the result of a series of reflections where alternatives, risks and resource effectiveness are considered.*

In this regard, the ex-ante evaluation has a supporting role during the programme development. The objectives of this ex-ante evaluation were therefore:

1. To contribute to the **quality** of the 2017-2020 programme
2. To assist in the establishment of the **monitoring and evaluation framework** which will ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of the multiannual programme
3. To fulfil Eurofound's **obligations** to carry out an ex-ante evaluation of its programming activities, in accordance with the Financial Regulation.

This ex-ante evaluation of Eurofound's proposed multiannual programme of work 2017-2020 in the "Programming Document 2017-2020" was carried out as *formative evaluation*. This meant that the ex-ante evaluation accompanied the programme development process throughout the entire duration, from inception in early 2015, up to the point of the submission of the draft final 'Programming Document' for the 2017-2020 programme, endorsed by the Governing Board by written procedure by 27 January 2016.

For the first time, the new 'programming document' template has been applied by Eurofound<sup>1</sup>. Due to the programme cycle of Eurofound's four-year multi-annual programming, this first occasion of applying the single programming document in Eurofound's case meant the development of a new four year programme for 2017-2020, which requires an ex-ante evaluation. Therefore, not only did the programme development process for the new multi-annual programme have to be adapted to the new programming document requirements, but

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<sup>1</sup> The new template is required to be used by EU agencies as per the European Commission's "Guidelines for the programming document from Commission Communication C(2014) 9641 final, 16 December 2014"

also the ex-ante evaluation process needed to take account of this new situation. This provided an opportunity for this evaluation to be designed as a strongly 'formative' process – even more than on previous ex-ante evaluation occasions, to ensure that it would be timely and useful.

This was achieved by provision of timely and constructive inputs from the ex-ante evaluation team to Eurofound's programme development team, as well as to the Governing Board and Bureau where appropriate, throughout the period of developing the programme. Most of the ex-ante evaluation activities were provided in this formative mode, motivated by providing early and timely input from independent evaluators to help Eurofound to prepare a relevant, coherent and feasible 'good' programme.

As a consequence of this strongly formative and development-oriented design, this final report is only one of the many outputs delivered within the project.

This report provides a transparent account of the formative ex-ante evaluation inputs provided to Eurofound to support it in developing a 'good programme', in fulfilment of the ex-ante evaluation criteria defined in the financial regulation. It also contains a 'summative' evaluative assessment by the ex-ante evaluation team to what extent the proposed programme 2017-2020 meets the ex-ante evaluation criteria of a 'good' programme, and what will be required to ensure feasibility of delivery of the programme and will aid the future planned 'ex-post' evaluation of this programme according to the formal evaluation requirements.

## Summative evaluation assessment of the proposed programme 2017-2020

The following table provides a high-level overview to the assessment by the ex-ante evaluation team to what extent the programme meets the criteria of a good and feasible programme from ex-ante evaluation perspective.

**Figure 1: High level assessment of the 2017-2020 work programme**

Criterion	Ex-ante evaluation assessment	Comment
<b>Relevance</b> - Forward looking? - Outward looking? - Innovative, creative and flexible?	Met to a full extent	<p>Programme is very relevant due to programme development process with frequent and close involvement of stakeholders represented in the Governing Board and wide consultation with other bodies.</p> <p>A large amount of continuity building on the existing strong knowledge base, with two innovative themes of 'digital' and 'convergence' standing out.</p> <p>Flexibility is built into the programme with provision of ad-hoc requests. Tensions between programme delivery and adaptiveness to changing circumstances and new emerging requests need to be managed.</p>
<b>Coherence</b> - Internal coherence - Joined up? -	Met to a reasonable extent	<p>Eurofound's very broad mandate presents an inherent challenge for coherence.</p> <p>The latest version of the programming document is organised around six strategic areas of intervention. The first four are long standing areas of expertise, the remaining two represent 'capture cross-cutting challenges and paradigmatic changes'.</p> <p>Whilst much attention has been spent on relevance and coherence of the topics defined in the proposal for the new programme, more work needs to be done to align the whole organisation of Eurofound at a more operational level. Consideration of appropriate management and organisational structures to deliver cross-cutting objectives was expressed in the risk assessment workshop. The current structure and workflows of the organisation need to be reviewed to ensure they are 'fit for purpose' to</p>

- External coherence		<p>implement and deliver the 2017-2020 programme.</p> <p>External coherence vis-à-vis other organisations (especially EU agencies) is strengthened through improved plans for collaboration.</p>
<b>Cost-effectiveness</b>	Met to a reasonable extent	<p>On the input side, a stable (frozen) budget is forecasted over programming period, along with mandatory staff cuts up to 10%. At the same time, the programme is ambitious in its scope and quantity of scheduled activities. This has been highlighted in the risk assessment. An approach needs to be adopted to maintain Eurofound's ability to implement its ambitious programme with reduced staff and stable budgets.</p> <p><b>Achieving cost-effectiveness will depend on a number of factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Implementation of the proposals in the programming document for optimisation of resources and lowering administrative burden (e.g. Business Process Improvement).</li> <li>- Adoption of ABM approach; and achieving full cost-accounting. Pilots conducted on cost-allocation to in-house research staff during 2015 need to be refined in light of experience and rolled out across the organisation.</li> <li>- Improved planning on project level, to lead to improved programme delivery.</li> <li>- New rules for Financial Regulation and rules for application (for example for procurement procedures)..</li> </ul>
<b>EU added value</b>	Met to a full extent	<p>Stakeholder consultations and rounds of commenting have confirmed continued relevance of Eurofound's work. The agency plans to continue to provide unique service avoiding duplication of work by other organisations active within the landscape for provision of knowledge to assist in the development of social and work-related policies.</p>
<p>- <b>Efficiency</b> Learns lessons?</p> <p>- Review?</p> <p>- Monitoring and Evaluation?</p>	Met to a reasonable extent	<p>Takes into account learning from previous programmes and evaluations.</p> <p>Built into the process, and assured by Programming Document annual review cycles and provision to be a rolling programme.</p> <p>Well established M&amp;E and processes are in place with Eurofound's Performance Monitoring System (EPMS). Evaluation programme is foreseen.</p>

**Recommendations:****For 2016**

1. To assess the readiness and fitness of purpose of the organisational structure to implement the programme by the end of 2016. And if relevant to implement a transition and change management action plan during 2016.
2. To further improve and refine ABM implementation and available Management Information and their use to inform programming proposals relating to more accurately forecasting budgets for delivery of specific activities.
3. To implement further adaptations to EPMS and evaluation at activity level during 2016 reflecting current objectives and strategic areas of intervention of Eurofound (e.g. how will success of closer integration of research and communication functions be measured?).
4. To provide supportive evidence (in the form of resource intensity of tasks based on previous experience when) risks to not achieving an activity within budget or within time are identified

**Ongoing**

1. To review and update of the understanding of changing stakeholder needs on continuous basis and adjust annually through continued and changed needs prompted by the annual Programming Document development process.
2. To continue ongoing monitoring of adequacy of flexible capacity versus core programme delivery. It may be necessary to increase or decrease the set target of 5%, depending on stakeholder needs.
3. To use the annual Programme review as a tool to update and refine activity planning, and informing annually reviewed 'negative priorities'. The list of negative priorities will evolve over time and there needs to be a transparent decision-making process to what gets dropped and what remains in the list.



# Context

The subject of this ex-ante evaluation is Eurofound's programme for 2017-2020, and refers to the most recent draft of the programming document 2017-2020 which has been endorsed by the Governing Board, and circulated to the budgetary authorities on 29th January 2016.

With its endorsement, this programme is owned by Eurofound's Governing Board. Eurofound is responsible for its implementation, starting with the first annual programme 2017 which is part of this multiannual programme.

Eurofound's Programming Document 2017 – 2020 was developed during the course of 2015 in close cooperation with Eurofound's Governing Board and Bureau. The programming document follows the structure of the template and guidelines indicated in the Commission's communication of 16 December 2014 (C(2014) 9541 final).

The ex-ante evaluation is a separate process, to fulfil the requirement to perform an ex-ante evaluation of Eurofound's programmes and activities according to the Financial Regulation. It was conducted by an independent ex-ante evaluation team, which is responsible for this report.

This ex-ante evaluation final report is submitted alongside the Programming Document to which it refers. Due to this synchronicity, the summative evaluative assessment of the quality and feasibility of the programme 2017-2020 is based on the state of development at the cut-off point of 27 January 2016, on the draft final version of the Programming Document 2017-2020 endorsed by Eurofound's Governing Board, prepared on 20 January 2016. Consequently, any changes adopted at later stages cannot be reflected. This should be borne in mind when reading the report.

## Assumptions:

The ex-ante evaluation team based its assessment on the *assumption of continuity* of the broader EU and institutional context and framework within which Eurofound operates. The programme document itself has also been developed on the same assumption.

There is acute awareness both in Eurofound, its governing structures, and the ex-ante evaluation team of ongoing and future external challenges that may affect the execution of Eurofound's programme potentially in the future. Uncertain and unforeseeable developments may affect the EU, its institutions and institutional contexts in the future, which would also have repercussions on Eurofound. Some other developments are already known: for instance, a revision of Eurofound's founding regulation is already under preparation, and expected to come in effect during, or even prior to the commencement of the programming period 2017-2020. There continue to be discussions concerning the future of EU agencies at inter-institutional level, which may impact on Eurofound. Future inter-agency developments may include initiatives such as shared services between agencies.

As none of these developments are within the control of Eurofound, they are acknowledged, but remain outside the scope to be addressed within this ex-ante evaluation.

Operationally, the annual review cycle built into the programming cycle and prompted by the Programming Document template provides a frequent (annual) opportunity to reflect any required changes to ensure the programme remains flexible and adapts to external changes and changing circumstances.

# Methodology

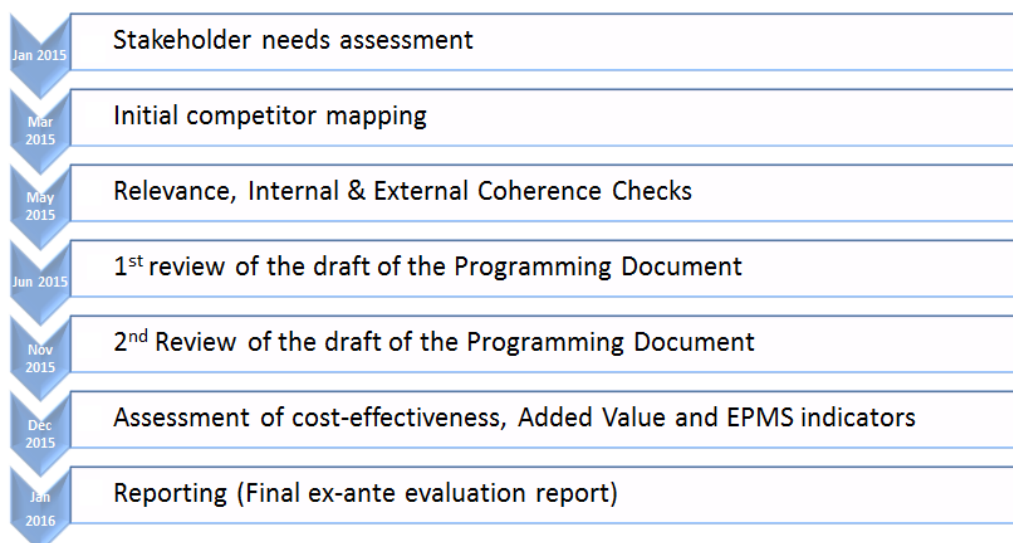
The guidance document on monitoring and evaluation published by the European Commission defines an ex-ante evaluation “... as a theory-based analysis, assessing the strength of the theory of change and the logical framework before the programme is implemented... in order to improve the quality of its design.... It is a useful supporting process and advice from the evaluators should be fully considered”.

The purpose of doing an ex-ante evaluation is to assure that the planned programme will be relevant and feasible and that it can be monitored and evaluated during and after its implementation. Specific objectives of the ex-ante evaluation are (a) to contribute to the quality of the 2017–2020 programme, by ensuring that it can meet the performance criteria as set out in article 21 of the implementing rules of the Financial Regulation; (b) to assist in the establishment of the monitoring and evaluation framework which will ensure effective monitoring of the implementation of the multiannual programme; (c) and to fulfil Eurofound’s obligations to carry out an ex-ante evaluation of its programming activities, in accordance with the Financial Regulation, and the European Commission’s ex-ante evaluation guidelines to support the process leading to the proposal for a multiannual work programme.

Timing of the ex-ante evaluation, delivered by a team of internal and external evaluators, was designed to complement the development of the 2017–2020 work programme as a separate process. It was delivered by a team combining external evaluation services contractor and the internal evaluation officer. This final ex-ante evaluation report is intended to provide a concise description of the predominantly ‘formative’ evaluation approach, for the purpose of transparently documenting the process. It presents a high-level ‘summative’ evaluative assessment on the overall quality and feasibility of the proposed programme at the final stage of work programme’s development – January 2016, in parallel to the finalisation of the written procedure for endorsement of the Programming Document 2017–2020 by Eurofound’s Governing Board, and the submission to the budgetary authorities by the obligatory deadline of 31 January 2016.

The timeline of the ex-ante evaluation is presented in the diagram below.

**Figure 2: Ex-ante evaluation timeline**



The approach to this assignment involved a mixed methodology which in the main part consisted of a document review alongside limited qualitative data collection and analysis. In addition to this exercise, the ex-ante evaluation team (both internal and external parts respectively) provided continuous support and intervened at specific points during the programme development process to ensure that those involved gave consideration to the questions about coherence and relevance of the developing programme.

The list below briefly presents each of the key ex-ante evaluation tasks delivered by Ipsos MORI under the evaluation service contract:

- Stakeholder needs assessment (What do stakeholders want from Eurofound?) – The contractor summarised wider stakeholder input to the development of the programming document in the form of feedback from stakeholders on what they need from Eurofound over the next programming period. This deliverable in January 2015 gave an early indication of stakeholder needs based on nearly 50 stakeholder consultations conducted in September-October 2014 and the User Satisfaction survey ran alongside the qualitative research component.
- Competitor / collaborator analysis (How can Eurofound enhance its unique value proposition?) – the contractor conducted a mapping exercise which explored the positioning of Eurofound relative to other organisations operating with complimentary mandates/remits. This work was based on a review of documents and relevant other organisations' websites.
- An appraisal of the programming document – The contractor performed the initial review of the activity fiches, which included conceptualisation of themes in relation to existing research areas. Specific comments contributed towards the strategic planning under a number of themes.
- A number of quality and coherence checks – The members of the ex-ante evaluation team have conducted a number of quality and coherence checks over the course of the evaluation. Findings from these exercises were fed to the central Eurofound secretariat leading the programme development process, to the governing board and the executive bureau.
- Risk assessment workshop - The ex-ante evaluation team designed and ran a workshop with members of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) to identify the key risks in implementing the work programme over the next 4 years. During this workshop the group discussed and analysed the best course of action to mitigate the most significant and likely of these risks. A specific deliverable relating to this task was fed back in form of a note detailing the risks and ideas on their mitigation.

In addition to these externally sourced ex-ante evaluation inputs, ongoing evaluation capacity support was provided to Eurofound's programme development process by close interactions with Eurofound's Monitoring & Evaluation officer as ex-ante evaluation team member internal to Eurofound.

When assessing the quality of the programming document the ex-ante evaluation team reviewed the various versions of the document against a number of criteria resembling good programming iteratively as progressive programme drafts became available throughout the process. The framework used to assess the programming document was an adaptation of guidance from a number of national governments on 'guides for good policy

making<sup>2</sup>. The criteria and more specific questions within allowed the ex-ante evaluation team to address all standard ex-ante evaluation questions specific by the EC<sup>3</sup>. These are summarised in Text box overleaf.

## Criteria of good programming

**Forward looking:** Does the programme design process clearly define outcomes that the programme is seeking to deliver against a long term view?

**Outward looking:** Does it take into consideration influencing factors across Europe and internationally (i.e. activities of Agencies with adjacent remits).

**Innovative, flexible and creative:** Has the design process ensured flexibility and innovation? (alternative ways of brainstorming solutions used, structures in place to promote new ideas etc) Was there questioning established of ways of dealing with things?

**Joined-up:** Is there a consideration of the appropriate management and organisational structures to deliver cross-cutting objectives?

**Learns lessons:** Does it demonstrate learning from experience of what works and what does not in previous programming periods?

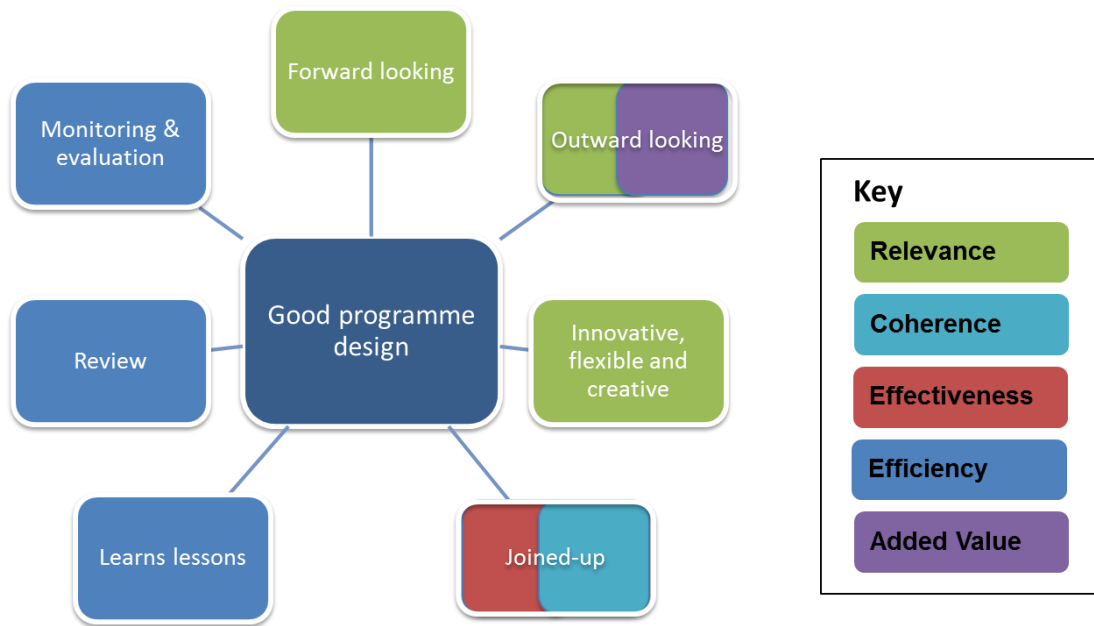
**Monitoring & evaluation:** Does it have clear plans in place to effectively monitor progress towards the work programme objectives and the progress of specific activities? Is there transparent documentation of choices implicitly made as part of work programme design in order to inform any ex post evaluation strategy to evaluate the work programme in place.

**Review:** Are there clear plans identified to review the work programme progress and design on an ongoing basis to ensuring that it is flexible and addressing need, and taking into consideration responses to external shocks or influences.

These criteria closely correspond to the mandatory ex-ante evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence effectiveness, efficiency, and added value as presented in the diagram overleaf.

<sup>2</sup> See for example <http://docplayer.net/7731028-A-practical-guide-to-policy-making-in-northern-ireland.html>

<sup>3</sup> (a) the need to be met in the short or long term; (b) the added value of Union involvement; (c) the policy and management objectives to be achieved, which include measures necessary to safeguard the financial interests of the Union in the field of fraud prevention, detection, investigation, reparation and sanctions; (d) the policy options available, including the risks associated with them; (e) the results and impacts expected, in particular economic, social and environmental impacts, and the indicators and evaluation arrangement needed to measure them; (f) the most appropriate method of implementation for the preferred option(s); (g) the internal coherence of the proposed programme or activity and its relations with other relevant instruments; (h) the volume of appropriations, human resources and other administrative expenditure to be allocated with due regard for the cost-effectiveness principle; (i) the lessons learned from similar experiences in the past.

**Figure 3: Good programme design criteria (by evaluation criteria)**

Source: Adaptation of guidance from a number of national governments on 'guides for good policy making'

#### Limitations

Limitations of the ex-ante evaluation resulted mainly from the timing of the programme development process and the completeness of the draft versions of the programming document. The criterion that was affected the most by this limitation was the assessment of cost effectiveness.

# 1. Rationale

## Mandate

According to its founding regulation (EEC, 1975), Eurofound is mandated to support European policy makers in their endeavours “to improve the working conditions and living conditions in Europe, assisting them in the development of social and work-related policies”. In section 2 “Eurofound’s mission and vision”, the draft programme quotes the key paragraphs of the founding regulation relating to Eurofound’s aim (p. 6), and summarises its main activities to address it under the six strategic areas of intervention (section 2.1): “Eurofound endeavours in this programming period to contribute knowledge that will assist policy makers in achieving upward convergence of living and working conditions in the EU. To achieve this objective, Eurofound has selected six strategic areas of intervention in which it will implement a series of activities:

1. Working conditions and sustainable work
2. Industrial relations
3. Labour market change
4. Quality of life and public services
5. The digital age: opportunities and challenges for work and employment
6. Monitoring convergence in Europe.”

Eurofound’s governance involves the representatives of the social partners and national governments of all Member States, as well as the European Commission in its quadripartite Governing Board and Bureau, which direct its work.

## Programme logic

The starting point in designing any public programme is identification of a problem and designing a programme / intervention of how the need will be addressed. The programme logic is a model or a visual representation of steps that need to occur for an intervention to meet its desired outcomes. This consists of a process of identifying the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. This logic constitutes the basis for planning, implementing as well as monitoring and evaluation of the programme, and is therefore its backbone.

The proposed programme logic for the 2017-2020 period assumes a large extent of continuity of the well-developed programme logic of the current and previous programmes. This section attempts to outline the main changes in the way the Agency’s well developed programme logic is developing.

### Inputs

The programme logic for the 2017-2020 programming period will be driven by changes in the programming document and translate into instruments for its delivery. The main differences in the early part of the logic

model, in comparison to previous periods is the reduction of objectives to one core strategic objective reflecting the overall aim, which is almost synonymous to the Agency's mandate. As the organisational structure and governance of the Agency remain currently unchanged, very little is assumed to change from the previous period in terms of inputs into the Agency's activities at the time of writing<sup>4</sup>. However, the ex-ante evaluation team is aware of the expectation that there are formal plans for reduction in staff numbers in relation to the input side. As noted in the programming document, Eurofound has developed a strong knowledge base over the years in the area of working conditions and industrial relations, in-depth knowledge of labour markets and structural change and a deep understanding of issues related to living conditions and quality of life. This stock of knowledge and expertise serves as one of the key inputs into activities delivering the programme.

### Activities – impacts

A key change in the programme logic from the previous period is the way in which communication activities will be interlinked more fully and directly with the other activities the Agency delivers. The importance of the communication and liaison activities (incl. anticipation of policy) have been recognised since Eurofound's inception and are grounded in its founding regulation the integration of communication efforts within all research activities and throughout their duration.

The recent user satisfaction survey, completed in 2015, provided a deeper understanding of how different user groups interact with their outputs. For example a download of a paper by a policymaker does not necessarily mean that they have read the publication and that the policy that they work on will be somehow informed by the comparative study prepared by Eurofound researchers. The more active the engagement, the more likely is the transfer of knowledge and perceived added value of Eurofound's research. All of the outputs that will be engaged with actively or passively to some degree raise awareness of the reached target audiences and a proportion of them will translate into better informed policies leading to improvement of living and working conditions of European citizens. This, amongst other drivers, has increased the impetus for greater collaboration between research and communication across all levels of the organisation's workflow.

Eurofound's Performance Monitoring System (EPMS) implements the programme logic in operational terms; see section 6 of this report. The updated logic model for the 2017-2020 programming period is presented in Annex 1.

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<sup>4</sup> However, a revision to Eurofound's Founding Regulation (from 1975, last updated in 2005, is expected to be taking place during, or even before the implementation of the programme 2017-2020. Depending on the provisions in this revised Founding Regulation, a further revision of the programme logic may be required, to review whether any of the current assumptions underpinning this logic may need an update.



## 2. Relevance

The ex-ante evaluation team worked to provide feedback on relevance and coherence of the overall programme throughout 2015. The contractor applied standard criteria for good programme design presented in methodology section.

Conversations with a wide range of stakeholders during the fieldwork of the latest ex post evaluation during 2014 (which incorporated a prospective part designed to feed into this ex-ante evaluation) and the annual user satisfaction exercise raised a few upcoming policy challenges which they believed that Eurofound should respond to. These inputs have been summarised in the 'stakeholder needs assessment' input provided in January 2015.

One of the key policy challenges for the 2017 and onwards period that was identified was the need to adjust to a new European 'post-crisis' reality. Policy objectives are shifting from responding to societal issues caused by the crisis to dealing with its aftermath. Second challenge noted was the pertinence and re-definition of the European Social Model with its objective to create a more equal society in Europe. The first challenge is addressed in the section on context in the latest version of the programming document. The latter is mentioned in section detailing strategic area of intervention 'Working life' under the section on Social dialogue (section 2.1 of the programming document).

Stakeholders working in specific policy areas were able to detail specific policy developments which will be relevant for the Agency's future focus. Examples included Integrated European Social Security system, including unemployment insurance, healthcare and pensions; policies relating to improving job quality, especially in relation to technological developments and globalisation; and policies encouraging green jobs taking into account their impact on working conditions. Persistent policy challenge will also include focus on strengthening the social dimension of the EU, notably of the European Monetary Union and the enlargement process.

Eurofound's key stakeholders represented in the governance structures had several opportunities to provide comments on the draft versions of the programming document. These iterations of comments on the first and second draft versions were documented and Eurofound Directorate issued formalised responses, from the second iteration onwards, these were recorded in a form of an 'uptake' table responding to each individual comment, documenting if and how the comment was dealt with in the subsequent revision of the programming document.. This process ensured an additional attention paid to the needs of the key stakeholders of the Agency, and a transparent documentation of how comments were dealt with, and related to subsequent changes of the programme text.

In addition, Eurofound has conducted its own consultation process of a broad range of stakeholders in the context of the Programming Document development process. See Annex 2 for details.

As a result of this iterative and informed process, the programming document addresses the main problems identified by its stakeholders. The main objective remains close to its mandate embedded in the founding regulation (EEC, 1975), which states that Eurofound is to support European policy makers in their endeavours "to improve the working conditions and living conditions in Europe, assisting them in the development of social and work-related policies". Key stakeholders involved in the governance of the agency have identified the need the flexibility to investigate new needs as they come up. This has been dealt with by an indication of a share of

the budget towards such research and a section on negative priorities. In the programming document, Eurofound indicated three areas that had been considered for de-prioritisation as a consequence of limitation of resources. One related to large surveys and their cycles, the second related to the restriction of languages in which some of the outputs are published and the third related to 'mainstreaming' of research areas of migration and youth which are not separate areas of intervention.

The extensive consultation process featured a tightly coupled relationship between the comments and expressed needs by stakeholders. Thanks to this process, the relevance of the programme is deemed to be highly aligned with stakeholders' expressed needs.

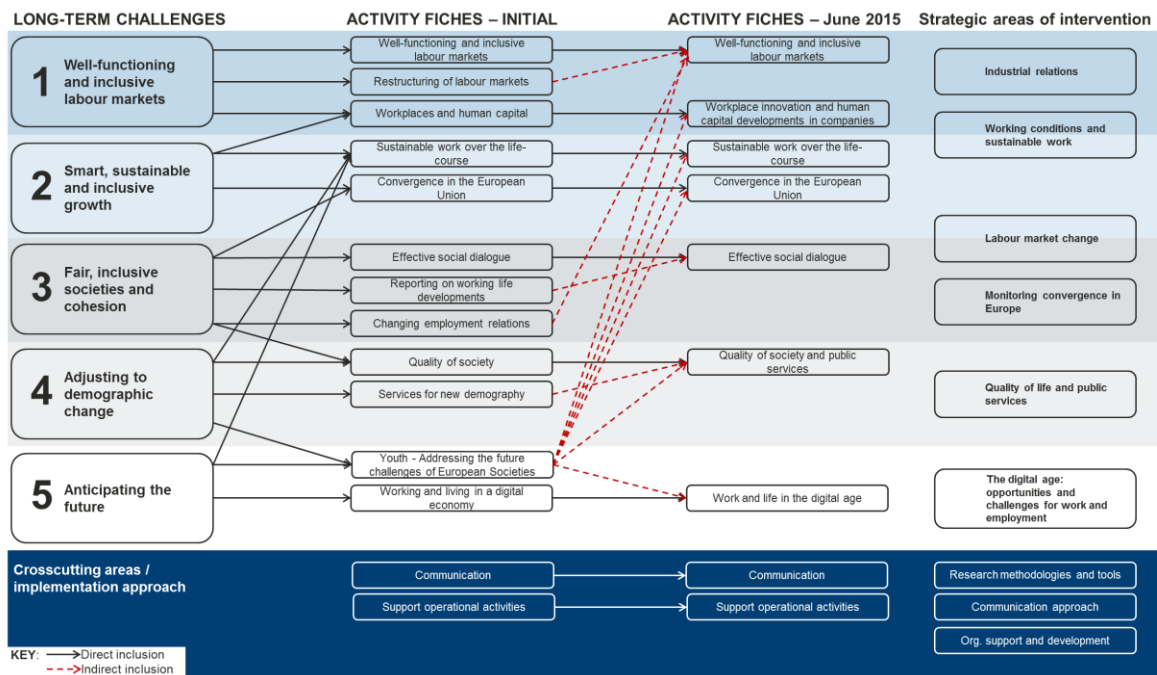
This is however off-set by a large number of activities committed to be undertaken in this programme, which is quite ambitious. Whilst being highly responsive to the needs expressed and accepted, there are tensions and possible consequences on the agency's ability to deliver on all these commitments, and doing so in a sustainable manner. As such it would be advisable for the Agency to have a clear view on how its commitments should be prioritised and to review this against budget on an annual basis. It may be necessary to adapt the proposed work programme based on this review.

## 3. Coherence

### Internal Coherence

This chapter on internal coherence focused on assessing 1) whether the programme structure itself is coherent and 2) whether the organisational structure is coherent and aligned to delivering against it. In June 2015, the external contractor delivered the first high level review of the first draft of the programming document. This review focused on the thematic content i.e. the policy and issues that Eurofound proposed to focus on over this programming period and how these had been structured. This was the element of the programming document which was more thoroughly drafted at this stage. A short summary of the review was delivered to MAC with specific comments any specific gaps in programme development process and the internal and external coherence of the programme.

Eurofound's mandate is very broad which is an inherent challenge for internal coherence, and much more difficult for Eurofound to achieve than for agencies with much narrower mandates and areas of work. In relation to development of the strategic focus, figure 4 illustrates how the two iterations of activity fiches relate to each other and to the long-term challenges identified as most relevant for 2017-2020 period. While some of the activity fiches have remained the same from the initial to next iteration, as shown by the solid lines, others were no longer explicitly included. Most of those that may appear to be lost at first glance were implicitly incorporated into one or more activity fiches, illustrated by the dashed red lines (referred to as mainstreamed in section 2.1 of the current draft of the programming document). For example, although 'Restructuring of labour markets' is no longer in the final set of activity fiches, it is a component of 'Well-functioning and inclusive labour markets'. While there is a plan to include theme of 'youth' as a crosscutting one, this mainstreaming was only explained in the latest programming document circulated on 8th January 2016 (section on Negative priorities). Dashed blue lines were included to represent the planned inclusion of this thematic area in the current setup of activity fiches and their respective working groups.

**Figure 4: Diagram of activity area working group development in relation to long-term challenges**

Source: Ipsos MORI, 2016

The high level findings from the evaluation team's review were delivered in a form of a presentation to the governing board. At this stage the ex-ante evaluation team highlighted that the programme development team made a good start and that the structure reflected all new requirements specified by the Commission but there were a number of gaps. Some of the more noteworthy gaps were in form of underdeveloped section on communication activities. Other high level feedback included that the strategic areas of intervention did not sufficiently reflect the latest understanding of the programme logic and how the agency delivers impact on policy level. External coherence and cooperation were also identified as areas that should be made more prominent throughout the document and not as a standalone add-on. A final high level point made by the ex-ante evaluation team was that the directorate should ensure full transparency about the drivers for changes in organisation of strategic areas of intervention (previously referred to as activity fiches).

Another aspect of internal coherence that has been considered within ex-ante evaluation is the alignment of organisational structure against the current structure of the work programme. From the review of the programming document it was not explicit how the strategic areas align to the current organisational structure and whether there are any plans to adapt it. The only section which mentioned this misfit was the risk assessment. While this comment was communicated by the ex-ante evaluation team to the MAC, the comment was not addressed in version circulated on the January 8<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, the version did not contain any explicit indication on the proportion of staff with expertise in each of the strategic areas of intervention and that the programming document did not allow for determination of appropriateness and proportionality of outsourcing.

## External Coherence

Within the early scoping stages of ex-ante evaluation, the contractor conducted descriptive 'preliminary analysis' of known 'actors' active in the space close to the remit of Eurofound. It included international organisations with European coverage, Eurofound's sister agencies and other relevant actors. The document

defined Eurofound's operating landscape by describing relevant current and upcoming products and services of each of these actors and their current and changing expertise with respect to the Agency.

The analysis highlighted that some of the large international actors have shifted towards a clearer European focus in some of their research, an example being the ILO which in April 2015 published a book on *The European Social Model in Crisis: Is Europe losing its soul?*<sup>5</sup>. Another notable development in ILO's case is that the organisation now has an employment-oriented Investment Strategy for Europe which brings it much closer to Eurofound's remit. The other large international organisation active in this area, OECD, prepares conferences on topics close to those of Eurofound (e.g. Ageing and Employment Policies) but the comparative elements remain truly international in their focus. Therefore from this analysis it appears that the OECD shares a much more limited overlap than the ILO (see Figure 5 for a visual representation).

Decentralised sister EU agencies are of similar or smaller size to Eurofound and therefore tend to have lower or equal internal research capability. There are specific areas of research, well known to Eurofound where the overlaps can potentially occur and were considered during the development of the work programme. For example, there are areas shared with Cedefop in research around VET feeding into improvement of living and working conditions (e.g. skills mismatch); with ETF in areas where vocational education and training feed into labour market policies; and with EU OSHA in areas in which a safer, healthier and more productive workplace is the one with better working conditions.

Collaboration between Eurofound and these EU Agencies is already in place for a number of years. 'Memoranda of understandings' have been in place for some time between Eurofound and Cedefop, ETF, EIGE, FRA and EU-OSHA. This cooperation has further advanced in recent times, with more extensive formal 'cooperation agreements' between these EU Agencies. These include several joint projects. As there are signs of greater convergence of some of the topics high on the EU policy agenda, this offers the potential for much closer real collaboration than in the past. This partnership approach has been described in the latest version of the multiannual programming document (section 2.1).

European Social Partners have their own agendas and their main outputs are position papers and conferences but some of them commission research studies complementary to Eurofound's focus. ETUC has a specific channel for undertaking the research internally through the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). The European Social Partners are however organisations that do not benefit from the tripartite governance structure or the ambition to produce unbiased research with comparative policy elements. The studies they fund or conduct tend to therefore be smaller and have an underlying agenda.

European Commission carries out or commissions directly studies in policy areas common to Eurofound's remit. Often such studies reference Eurofound's work and therefore this overlap can be considered complementary or even a positive outcome of delivering relevant research as opposed to competition. An example of such effort is addressing youth unemployment in the EU – The European Commission recently run a public consultation on tackling long-term unemployment, one of the most urgent challenges that Europe faces today.

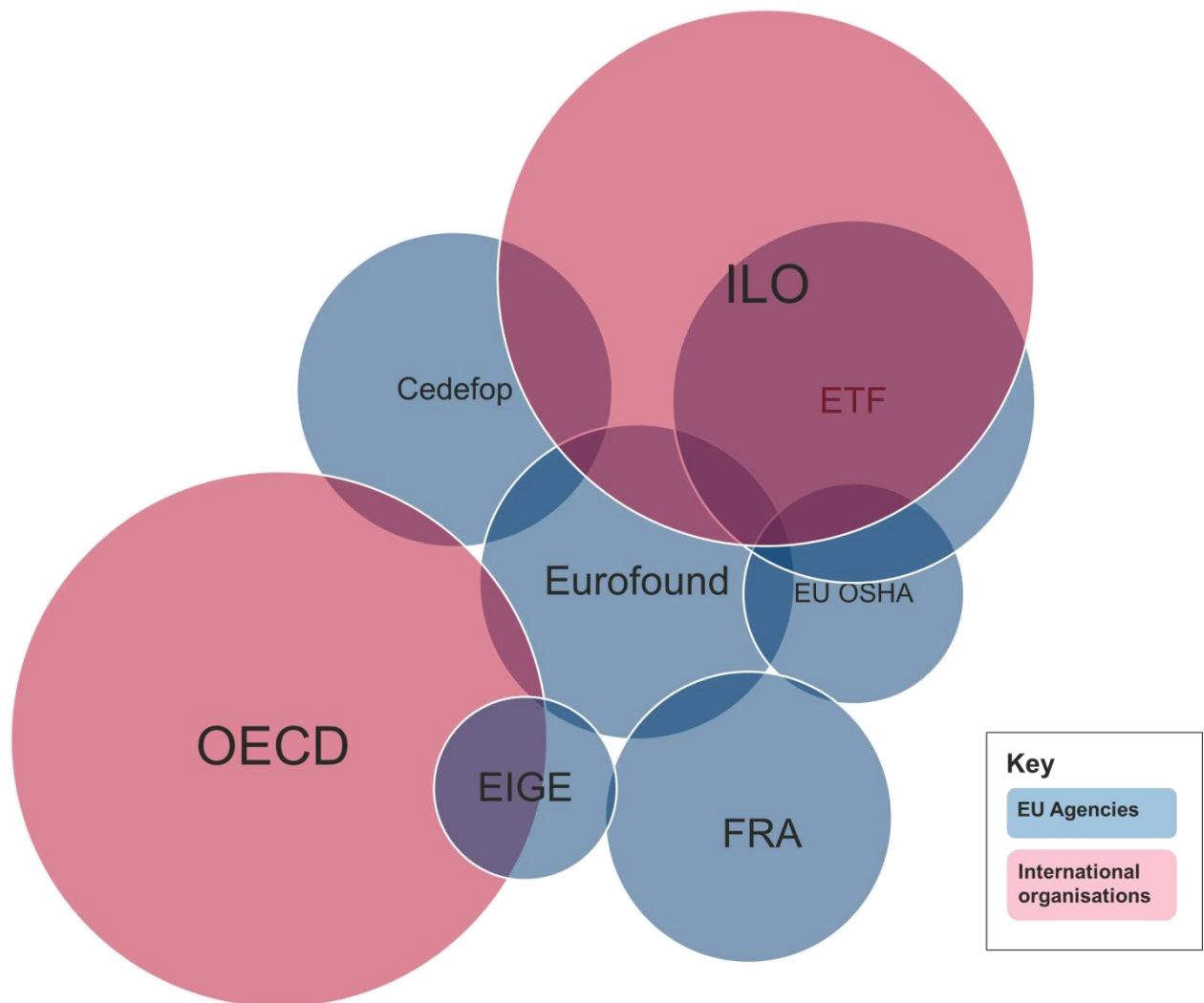
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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_314465/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_314465/lang--en/index.htm)

The landscape for provision of knowledge to assist in the development of social and work-related policies is illustrated overleaf. It suggests, same as our analysis, that the boundaries are blurred with some of the other EU agencies (in specific topics) and that ILO has moved closer to the Agency's remit. Nevertheless the great majority of what Eurofound does is unique and valued by its stakeholders.

:

**Figure 5: illustrative representation of landscape for provision of knowledge to assist in the development of social and work-related policies**



Source: Ipsos MORI competitor mapping, 2015

The ex-ante evaluation team were informed throughout 2015 about the evolution of the high level research themes which are linked to the long term challenges in living and working conditions throughout the programming document development. Therefore there is a reasonable confidence in internal coherence of the programme structure. However for Eurofound to deliver on its objective, this structure must be operationalised accordingly. Such operationalisation will require strong plans for activity level cooperation in order to generate efficiency savings and effective delivery.

## 4. Alternative Approaches and Risk assessment

### Alternative approaches

As part of the work programme development process Eurofound was faced with a number of choices but the programming document itself does not clearly describe the process of selecting one over the other. The most notable alternative approaches can be summarised in form of the following bullet points:

- The extent to which budget allocation should be withheld by Eurofound to allow flexible response to stakeholder needs as they arise over time – The Agency decided to dedicate a relatively modest proportion of resources (5%) to the topical projects.
- The extent to which the budget should be weighted in favour of delivering bigger and better surveys vs other activities.
- The extent to which all stakeholder priorities should be addressed explicitly in the programme or make some negative priorities – The Agency decided to 'mainstream' a number of research topics.
- The extent to which communications activities would be integrated within the research areas.
- The extent to which the Agency will in-source vs outsource research activities for the programming period.

### Risk Assessment

Eurofound's own assessment of the high level risks as expressed in Annex VIII of the Programming Document was informed by a risk assessment workshop held on 16 December 2015 with the members of the MAC. The workshop was designed by the ex-ante evaluation team and had a key objective to identify a long list of risks and analyse them according to their impact and likelihood of occurrence over the programming period. The workshop began with an exploration of what would have success of the programme look like after its delivery was completed in 2020.

This resulted in the identification of a list of critical success factors for the programme, ranging from high level impact indicators (such as informing relevant policy debates) to more operational and concrete measurable indicators (better efficiency and cost of delivery).

At the workshop 26 specific risks were jointly identified of which 7 were found to be of high impact and potential of occurrence. Ways of mitigating each of the priority risks were discussed. The main risks identified as having a high potential impact and high probability to occur were:

- 10% staff reduction and lack of succession management



- Loss of key staff (caused by a variety of reasons including disengagement)
- Having implicitly included /mainstreamed some of high impact themes such as NEETs and mobility and migration
- Rigidity of activity based budgeting (ABB) – e.g. communication staff now need to record and plan to a much greater detail on an activity level which is viewed as challenging
- Balance between delivering core research tasks and acting flexibly to address topical research
- Integration of research and communication is not delivered effectively over the programming period
- Structure of the organisation not fit for purpose

Following the workshop, another iteration of risk assessment was carried out in Eurofound internally with view to preparing the risk register (Annex VIII in Programming Document). This register only contains the risks requiring mitigating actions, which are described at a high level with reference to the programming period 2017-2020.

In addition to the risk register in Annex VIII of the Programming Document which represents the public presentation of the risk assessment, Eurofound has developed an action plan for 2016 internally containing the mitigation actions required to be implemented in the year of transition prior to the programming period 2017-2020.

Eurofound plans to review and update the risk register in the Programming Document annually, and the current version represents a snapshot in time.

Eurofound has an ongoing risk management approach in place in line with the guidelines for risk management by the European Commission. This ensures regular updating of the risk assessment and manages the risks through the implementation of agreed mitigating actions on an ongoing basis as part of Eurofound's management. Due to these processes being in place, there is in the view of the ex-ante evaluation team reasonable assurance that the identified risks will be actively managed through the mitigating actions, and risk assessment and management becomes an even further embedded management process within Eurofound's organisational practices.

There are some shifts proposed by the programming document which will impact on ways of working and may pose significant yet unidentified risks. For example operationalising the more integrated communications function will require a formal strategy, planning and ownership of the process. Unless these are in place such organisational change might result in a greater risk than anticipated.

## 5. Cost-effectiveness of the programme

The concept of 'cost-effectiveness' refers to the question how Eurofound can implement the new programme in terms of achieving its objectives with the same (or fewer) financial resources than in previous programming periods. In other words, how can the agency meet the increasing demands of its key stakeholders while meeting the requirements for reducing number of staff, and operating within a stable (frozen) budgetary framework over the programming period.

During the formative phase of this ex-ante evaluation, cost-effectiveness of the programme could not be adequately assessed due to the preliminary development of the relevant sections within the programming document. As a result the assessment is based predominantly on the latest version of the programming document and on conversations with Eurofound staff.

### Overall financial and institutional context to Eurofound's budget:

Eurofound's budget available for the implementation of its multiannual programme is fixed over the four years.

The Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2014-2020 (agreed by the EU institutions in 2013) sets the overall financial framework. For this period, the overall expenditure limit of a MFF has been reduced for the first time, compared to the previous MFFs.

Eurofound as EU agency is affected by the following:

"Impact on agencies: new sub-ceilings for agencies in each budget heading; agencies envelop in competition with EU programmes // EU policy priorities; subsidy level: stabilisation/decrease; considerable decrease in heading 5 for administrative expenditures;

DG BUDG messages: changes perspective in budget and activities planning; flexibility used in allocating resources to new tasks/agencies; no opportunity for 'extra-funding'; consolidation/efficiency gains/rationalisation.<sup>6</sup>"

The human and financial resource outlook 2017 – 2020 is described in Section 3 of the Programming Document (presented overleaf).

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<sup>6</sup> Based on slides for MAC 13 February 2013

Figure 6: Financial resources outlook for 2017-2020 (from Programming Document final version): Revenue and Expenditure

Revenue (in thousand EUR)	2017	2018	2019	2020
EU Subsidy	20,371	20,371	20,779	21,195
IPA (Instrument for pre-accession assistance)	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Other grants	-	-	-	-
Revenue from services rendered/other	200	200	200	200
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>20,571</b>	<b>20,571</b>	<b>20,979</b>	<b>21,395</b>

#### *Expenditure*

Expenditure (in thousand EUR)	2017	2018	2019	2020
Title 1 – Staff	12,151	12,251	12,399	12,650
Title 2 – Administrative (Buildings, equipment and misc. operating expenditure)	1,400	1,400	1,450	1,470
Title 3 – Operational	7,020	6,920	7,130	7,275
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>20,571</b>	<b>20,571</b>	<b>20,979</b>	<b>21,395</b>

This overall framework sets the annual draft budgets proposed in the spring every year N -1, and confirmed and operationalised for Eurofound in the autumn. This sets the annual budget, in line with the overall MFF. The annual budget becomes the basis for detailed resource planning for the year concerned.

In addition, Eurofound as EU Agencies is affected by the requirement of the European Commission for all 'cruising speed' agencies to cut staff by up to 10% until 2020 (see section 3.2.2. Human Resources in Programming Document).

This overview of the resources expected to be available to Eurofound raises two key questions relating to cost-efficiency of this programme:

- 1) Will Eurofound have sufficient resources at its disposal to implement and deliver its programme commitments?
- 2) Will these resources be used efficiently?

## Resource sufficiency

The Programme Document states that “the programme is ambitious in the planning of its activities given the limitation in resources”.

The content in this multiannual programme is the result of a long programme development process, with many expectations and demands from stakeholders and users. During this process, proposals from Eurofound management and staff and stakeholder requests had to be accommodated to satisfy the expectations of the quadripartite governance structure. This in turn contributes to high relevance of this programme. On the other hand, the activities have to be affordable and financed with the available, fixed budget outlook over the four year perspective.

The key tools used by the agency to respond to this tension are estimation of proposed activities to fit the available budget (making use of the multiannual budgetary perspective), and the list of ‘negative priorities’ (what the agency cannot (or no longer can continue to) do). The annual review process of the Programming Eurofound’s directorate informed the ex-ante evaluation team that the document is planned to be used as an opportunity to update and refine its planning of activities as a tool to address and manage this tension, which also informs the proposals for negative priorities for the Governing Board to consider. The agency’s expectation is that this annual review and update process should lead to a situation where the Governing Board can make well informed and strategic choices in the coming annual programmes beyond 2017. Choices for future ‘negative priorities’ will have to continue to be made in the coming annual reviews 2018-2020 to maintain a balance between ambitions and available resources.

Another operational question concerns whether the planned budget is realistic. For the 2017 work programme planning, efforts were made by Eurofound to estimate the cost for planned activities in a ‘bottom-up’ process, as in previous years. In this process, the staff members responsible for implementing activities conduct the estimation of future resources needed for planned activities, guided by their knowledge of the activities in the past, their experience, and historical cost information. This process feeds upwards to result into the proposed budget, as was the case for the work programme 2017.

This approach relies to a large extent on the past experience of the people implementing the activities, supporting ‘top-down’ process or supplementary information sources. It is understood by the ex-ante evaluation team that some processes have recently been introduced to make the estimation process more robust and reliable in future. Such efforts, and developing increasingly better management information to support the estimation and budgetary process should be helpful to improve the budget planning processes further.

For work programme 2017, more detailed planning of the planned activities has to commence during 2016. Again, the annual programme review cycle is expected to provide the necessary update opportunity, coupled with progressively refined activity planning.

## Efficiencies

Some references are made throughout the programming document that can be helpful to improve efficiency in the delivery of the programme - if they will be implemented well:

- Optimisation of resources as a cruising speed agency, and proposed efforts to lower administration burdens (e.g. Business Process Improvement), should contribute to better efficiency.
- Implementation of ABM approach; and achieving full cost-accounting. Pilots conducted on cost-allocation to inhouse research staff during 2015 need to be refined in light of experience and rolled out more widely.
- Improvements to planning, to lead to improved programme delivery.
- New rules for Financial Regulation and rules for application (for example for procurement procedures).

## Conclusions

For the reasons explained in the introduction of this section, it has not been possible for the ex-ante evaluation team to do a robust cost effectiveness assessment of what is proposed for the inputs compared to previous programming periods at this point. We have included a high-level reflection on how good cost-effectiveness of the proposed programme could be achieved in principle. It could be recommended that future ex-ante evaluations could provide more direct guidance on what the expectations for a cost-effective programme would look like, and how this could be achieved.

Activity planning and budget estimation processes are in place in Eurofound. These processes can benefit from becoming further refined and improved over the coming years. Using more and further improvement management information can support to improve these processes further. There has been some consideration given to increasing cost-effectiveness by innovative solutions. One such example is development and testing of innovative methodologies for the main surveys conducted by Eurofound, in particular the EQLS. Further creativity is being considered in terms of shared funding models for surveys such as the ECS. Beyond this the majority of the activity detailed in the work programme could be considered as 'business as usual'.

Some level of flexibility to respond to ad hoc requests is included as per previous work programmes (Page 51). There is no discussion on how the level of 5% of the operational budget has been set, for example it may be in line with the level of budget allocated in previous years which was viewed as sufficient to deal with the volume of ad hoc requests.

The level of ambition and requirements by stakeholders need to be further aligned with the available budgets for future programming periods. Cost-effectiveness and feasibility criteria should be more strongly taken into consideration prior to undertaking commitments to satisfy the numerous expectations by Eurofound's quartopartite stakeholders. Staff cuts up to 10% need to be proactively managed and impact on operations minimised as much as possible.

It is the ex-ante evaluation team's understanding and assumption (based in indications from Eurofound's Management team and Directorate) that Eurofound's Management is aware of the required actions to be taken to mediate for this current gap through further preparatory work during 2016 transition period.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

The approach to Monitoring and evaluation in Eurofound is described in Annex VII of the Programming Document. The Eurofound Performance Monitoring System (EPMS) is the way both functions are integrated cohesively to support the monitoring and evaluation of Eurofound's programmes. The EPMS comprises the Key Performance Indicators, a series of metrics, as well as qualitative assessment and evaluation, all linked to Eurofound's programme logic and strategic objectives. As a new element, monitoring and evaluation at operational activity level is introduced into the EPMS 2017-2020 cycle for the first time. Monitoring and evaluation is well established in Eurofound over several multiannual programme cycles, and Eurofound has a mature and adequately resourced evaluation function and capacity within the agency, as well as external evaluation capacity through multiannual framework contracts for evaluation services.

The new element of applying Monitoring and Evaluation at activity-level does however require further refinement, and needs to be rolled out.

### Objectives

Eurofound has set only one strategic objective for the programming period 2017 – 2020:

*"To provide scientifically sound, unbiased, timely and policy relevant knowledge that contributes to better informed policies for upward convergence of living and working conditions in Europe."*

This objective is fully in line with the Agency's mandate and refers to the attributes that are most valued by their key stakeholders groups.

As part of the EPMS, Eurofound is using various instruments to monitor, analyse and report on its performance and results:

- Performance data (metrics) and descriptions on all aspects of Eurofound's multi-annual programme in reporting
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) measure how well Eurofound as a whole performs in areas that are particularly relevant for achieving its corporate strategic objective.
- Analysis and evaluation, to assess the successes and the gaps, as well as to understand the contribution of Eurofound's activities vis-à-vis its strategic objective.

For further details, see Programming Document, section II.1. and Annex VII.

## Findings from review of performance indicator framework

EPMS framework review - Process description:

- A 'bottom-up' internal review of the current EPMS system (applied to the 2013-2016 programme) was conducted by the EPMS Steering Group within Eurofound. Each KPI was tested against the RACER quality framework for performance indicators. The review was initially performed independently by each member of the EPMS Steering group, then results were compared and a group assessment and recommendation for maintaining, dropping or adapting each indicator. This proposal was presented to Eurofound's Management committee (MAC) and discussed in this forum, leading to a proposal for a revised set of EPMS indicators for the 2017-2020 programming period.
- In parallel, a 'top-down' exercise of the EPMS system as a whole was conducted, to analyse to what extent it is fit for its intended purpose as a whole, to serve as a monitoring and evaluation framework for Eurofound's future programme. This assessment was also subjected to a peer review process: monitoring and evaluation officers from four sister EU agencies were invited via the EU Agencies' sub-network 'Performance Development Network' (PDN) to 'peer review' Eurofound's EPMS system. The following agencies provided peer review feedbacks: Cedefop, ETF, EU-OSHA, and FRA.
- The findings of this peer review overall confirmed the advanced state of development and maturity of the EPMS system as a whole, and included some valuable recommendations for further fine-tuning some aspects of the EPMS system in the future period. Detailed recommendations from the peer review process for improvements of the EPMS system are documented. The EPMS Steering Group is committed to addressing the identified improvement suggestions during 2016, to ensure the experience of other agencies which already have experience with using activity-level indicators was a valuable contribution from this peer-review exercise.
- The indicators proposed in the Programming Document 2017-2020 at overall programme level (p. 11) and as part of the 'activities' (section 2 of work programme 2017) reflect the proposal resulting from the internal and peer review process, which was adopted by the MAC.
- The new proposal entails a large amount of continuity from the existing EPMS set. Only one KPI was dropped, by being downgraded as a functional metric. Other changes foreseen concern details of indicator methodology, which needs to be revised and adapted in a number of cases.
- Detailed documentation is available within Eurofound concerning the review process and its results.

However, further work is required during the transition period in 2016 to refine the operationalisation of the revised indicators framework, notably in the cases where modifications to the underlying methodology and data collection processes have been identified. For this purpose, it is envisaged that the EPMS Steering Group will develop a development action plan for 2016, to ensure that the required changes are going to be implemented by the end of 2016, to be ready for data collection with a revised and adapted EPMS system from the start of 2017 onwards.

## Conclusion:

- The practice of combining an internal review focusing on operational details of the indicator set, combined with an external peer review at overall system level was based on a systematic process and criteria based, and combining both internal and external perspectives. This can be recommended as a good practice for such a review exercise.
- The existing EPMS approach has overall been confirmed as being well developed, albeit resource intensive. Based on the internal assessments, some changes to the EPMS system and KPIs have been proposed.
- For the new element of activity based indicators required by the Programming Document template, a pilot test was conducted to three different options, ranging from a very minimalist, to a very extensive approach, and one in middle. Based on the results of the pilot test, the preferred option was proposed and adopted, and applied accordingly to the activities in the Programming Document. This approach is based on a customised 'medium' approach, based on the principle of applying the same indicators to activity level that apply to the corporate level, with some adaptations where necessary. This approach builds on the planned Activity Based Management approach to activity management.
- On the assumption that the envisaged further development and refinement of the EPMS framework will take place as envisaged in a well-managed change process led by the EPMS Steering Group, it can be expected that Eurofound is on track to have an appropriate performance monitoring system in place from the start of the 2017, to replace the current operational system.

The Monitoring system for Eurofound is explained well in the programming document and a subsequent Annex explains the difference between Monitoring and Evaluation and how the evaluation cycle works (Annex VII). The changes being made to the programming document have been captured in a log throughout its versions – evidence that will be helpful for the ex post evaluation process.

High level targets for each strategic area of intervention have been indicated and, in the latest iteration of the report, the programming document included specific measures of efficiency in delivery, e.g. indicators relating to Survey management and development (section 2.1.11).

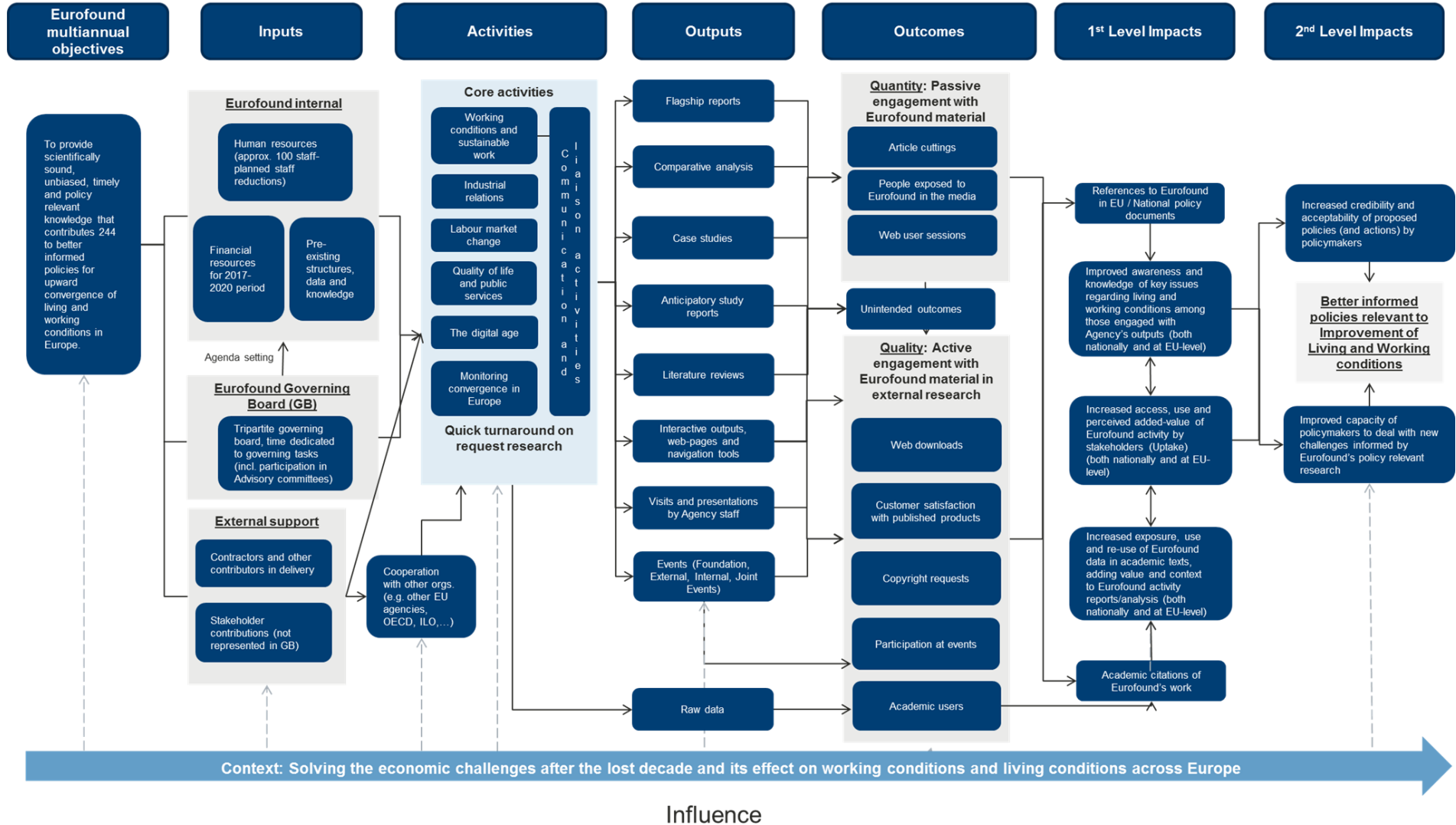
The programming document makes clear references to how previous experience (in particular in the case of the surveys) has been taken up throughout the discussion of strategic areas of intervention.

There is some limited evidence of this in the current version of the document. For example under the Negative Priorities section (Page 31) indicates possible solutions to meeting growing expectations in the context of reduced limited resources.

There is no mention within the document itself of any formal point at which the organisation will take stock of progress, re-evaluate needs and make amends to the programme / planned activities and areas of strategic intervention. This is however inherent in the Commission's overarching guidance on programming.



# Annex 1: Programme Logic



Source: Ipsos MORI, 2016

## Annex 2: Stakeholder consultations

This section includes a description to the approach to stakeholder consultation on this programme, and a list of consultations with the most relevant external and internal stakeholders that took place throughout the programme development process. The individual consultations, feedbacks received and how they have been taken up are documented by Eurofound, and recorded in its document management system. This annex provides a high-level overview over the stakeholder groups that were consulted, and by which means.

The *parties consulted* were informed by Eurofound's governance structure, political considerations, and programme logic.

- Highest priority was given to the *formal stakeholder representatives*: Governing Board and Bureau. *The programme development process* involved *continuous consultations* with Eurofound's Governing Board and Bureau throughout, from the initial stages of brainstorming and first orientations, through the initial draft, followed by first draft, second draft and third draft. For each draft, the Governing Board groups were asked for formal written feedbacks, in addition to discussions at successive Governing Board meetings and Bureau meetings. The feedbacks provided from these governance structures have been transparently documented in 'uptake tables', which were also circulated to the Governing Board, demonstrating how each comment was dealt with (how taken up in next version, and where not, an explanation for the reasons was provided).
- At the next level, priority was given to *representatives of the key EU 'key target audiences'*, foremost the European institutions (European Commission; *European Parliament, ...*). These consultations were held through bi-lateral meetings attended by members of Eurofound's Directorate and the respective heads of the relevant services in these institutions.
- *Other important stakeholders* to be consulted on Eurofound's draft programme included a number of *other EU Agencies* with whom Eurofound already has cooperation agreements understandings' in place which stipulate such mutual consultations (e.g. EU-OSHA, Cedefop, ETF, EIGE, FRA). These consultations are particularly important with view to avoiding potential duplications or overlaps in the respective activities of the agencies, and to rather identify and strengthening possible synergies between them – a frequently expressed concern by EU institutions and budgetary stakeholders, in particular by Members of the European Parliament (esp the Budget committee). The cooperation agreements between Eurofound and these five 'sister' EU agencies explicitly stipulate formal and mutual exchanges and consultations on each other's respective programmes during their development. ETF was the only organisation to provide written feed-back. One of the suggestions was taken up in draft 3 of the programming document accordingly.
- A range of **other organisations and groups** were consulted on the basis that these groups would have some interest in specific thematic aspects of the programme, or possible synergies and collaboration potential between Eurofound and these organisations. A 'brainstorming' seminar was organised on 19 March 2015 involving representatives from several organisations, to have a diversified input.
- Eurofound's **staff** was also consulted throughout the development process in different ways. A group of staff was set up in early 2015 to prepare the brainstorming seminar on 19 March 2015. This was followed by an internal staff seminar on 23 March 2015 to work collaboratively in more depth on the emerging topics identified at the

brainstorming seminar. After these broad inputs, individuals were appointed by the Directorate to develop 'activity fiches', which were to become the basis of developing the iterations of the programming document. During this phase, an online discussion board provided an opportunity for broader staff inputs to the first drafts of the activity fiches. As the process unfolded, the consultations became progressively bilateral between the Programme drafting team, respective Heads of Units, and individuals leading the activity fiches which fed into the 'activities' in Work Programme 2017.

- Eurofound's social partners (Staff Committee and Union Syndicale Eurofound) were also formally consulted on the draft programme, particularly on section 3 (Human and financial resource outlook 2017-2020), and Annexes II – IV relating to Human Resources (previously covered in the Multiannual Staff Policy Plans).
- All staff was provided with frequent updates on feedbacks from the Governing Board and Bureau as the drafting process evolved.

## Consultations over programme development timeline

Date	Event / method	Stakeholder inputs (documented in TRIM)
<b>2014</b>		
12 December 2014	Note on Eurofound's approach to Single Programming Document	Sent to Bureau (cc GB) Discussed at Bureau meeting Feedback at meeting (minutes)
<b>2015</b>		
March 2015	Directorate meeting with key stakeholders in Brussels	Bilateral meetings Minutes
19 March 2015	Brainstorming seminar, Dublin	Attended by invited experts (including international organisations), nominated representatives from all GB Groups, staff  Presentations, notes from plenary and workshops; written contributions from stakeholder groups
23 March 2015	Internal staff seminar, Dublin	Eurofound staff Notes from plenary and workshops
April – May 2015	<i>Drafting of activity fiches</i>	Outputs and comments documented
	<i>Drafting of 'initial draft'</i>	
10 June 2015	Initial draft of Programming Document 2017-2020	Sent to GB – for discussion at GB Group Meetings
25-26 June 2015	Governing Board Group meetings	Discussion in Groups Feedback at plenary session from Groups - Minutes
29 June – 1 July 2015		Written feedbacks from GB Groups
July – August 2015	<i>Drafting of activity fiches for draft 1</i>	
	<i>Drafting of draft 1</i>	Uptake table of comments on initial draft
10 September 2015	First draft of Programming Document	Sent to GB – for Bureau meeting 25 September
25 September 2015	Bureau meeting	Discussion at Bureau - Minutes
Until 7 October		Written feedbacks by Groups
13 October 2015	<i>Drafting of draft 2</i>	Uptake table of comments on draft 1
15 October 2015	Draft 2 of Programming Document	Sent to GB – for GB meeting
27 October 2015	Written consultations on draft 2 programming document with EU Agencies with cooperation agreements	Cedefop, EIGE, ETF, EU-OSHA, FRA – feedback received and response documented
13 November 2015	Governing Board meeting	Discussion at GB meeting -

		Minutes
24- 27 November 2015		Written comments by groups
	<i>Drafting of draft 3 of Programming Document</i>	Uptake table of comments
27 November 2015	Draft 3 of Programming Document	Sent to GB – for discussion at Bureau 11 December 2015
11 December 2015	Bureau meeting	Discussion at Bureau – Minutes
15-16 December 2015		Written feedbacks by Groups
		Uptake table of comments on draft 2
16 December 2015	Risk assessment workshop	GB Groups were invited to participate (one group nominated participant)
<b>2016</b>		
8 January 2016	<i>Final draft of Programming Document</i>	Sent to GB – for discussion at Bureau 15 January 2016 Feedback at the meeting (later in minutes)
20 January 2016	Final Programming Document 2017-2020	Sent to GB - for GB endorsement by written procedure
<i>27 January 2016</i>	Deadline for endorsement by written procedure	
<i>29 January 2016</i>	Despatch to European Commission for inter-service consultation	European Commission inter-service consultation
<i>Summer 2016</i>		Formal adoption

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