

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mid-term Evaluation of INSPIRE as a Centre of Excellence

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION

The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation of INSPIRE is to assess the project's progress towards the outcomes and long-term goals and ensure that challenges and results are monitored, communicated and acted upon in a timely, efficient and result-oriented manner by a comprehensive assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, of the project intervention.

Whilst, impacts and sustainability cannot be assessed during a mid-term evaluation - it is possible to assess the appropriateness of the governance structure, decision-making, strategic alliances as well as other processes that will contribute towards the impact of the project.

The focus therefore becomes on goal attainment, which includes an assessment of the (scientific) quality of the work done so far as well as its policy relevance. The first achievements (outputs, new knowledge, new networks and contacts), as well as the performance as regards drivers for impact like productive interactions with external stakeholders.

In particular, it will cover three specific objectives:

- To identify challenges, opportunities and lessons learnt and make recommendations that the Consortium and collaborators will use to improve implementation.
- To assess progress towards project objectives and results, identify key challenges and any factors that may have affected the project and its implementation.
- To focus on the sustainability of the CoE and Evaluation and feeds the T7.3 – CoE Exploitation Plan & Nurturing Alliances by identifying key elements for the sustainability and implementation model plan.

The evaluation report is expected to deliver recommendations to improve the capacity of INSPIRE to be effective in its goals and provide recommendations to foster the sustainability of the Centre. The focus is thus on a formative evaluation.

2. SCOPE

The evaluation is expected to cover the project period from the start of the project (1 October 2022) until month 21 (June 2024), by creating an accurate and comprehensive picture of the project implementation, generating findings on evaluation criteria and documenting good practices and lessons learned. Good practice should be defined as: **“strategies, approaches and/or activities that have been shown through research and evaluation to be effective, efficient, sustainable and/or transferable, and to reliably lead to a desired result”**¹. In this case these are those ‘strategies, approaches and activities’ that are carried out with the remit and scope of the project – i.e. to create a sustainable European Centre of Excellence on Inclusive Gender Equality in Research and Innovation.

3. CLIENTS

The primary clients of the evaluation are the management board of INSPIRE:

- The General Assembly which is the decision-making body of the consortium.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/page/what-are-good-practices_en

- The Coordinator which is the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the Parties and the Granting Authority.

The coordinators of the Knowledge and Supports Hubs and the stakeholders involved would use, as appropriate, the evaluation findings and lessons learned.

4. FOCUS OF THE EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation will identify strengths and weaknesses and provide evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the processes to become a sustainable center of excellence. KPIs have been developed for each Work Package - these will be shared with the contractor – as will the data gathered to monitor these.

Dimensions to be covered by the evaluation:

- Issues related to the sustainability of project (Business Model):

Mission
Vision
Management
Governance
Performance KPIs
Staffing and recruiting
Infrastructure Technology
Tools for sustainability (GEP monitoring, GEAM tool)
Stakeholders Database
Strategic Alliances
Community Engagement
Marketing
Synergies
Sponsorship

- Issues related to the Knowledge and Supports Hubs and their COPs:

Application guidelines
Application process
Functioning of the decision-making process
Support packages for CoPs
Participatory Strategies
Level of Commitment
Engagement Strategies

- Issues related to the Scalable training, support and service provision:

Open training units
Change Catalyst
GEP success factors
Inclusive Data Monitoring
GEAM Analysis Handbook
Innovation policy toolkit
Engagement Strategies

5. EVALUATION METHODS

The goal of the mid-term evaluation is to draw a comprehensive picture of the implementation of INSPIRE from the perspectives of all relevant agents involved and key stakeholders built on a set of suitable qualitative and quantitative methods.

The evaluator is free to choose the appropriate set of methods but innovative methods are particularly welcome.

The following method will be used as a minimum to collect information:

DESK REVIEW: Website, technological infrastructure, deliverables, KPIs as well as the relevant data and other documentation of the project.

FIELD VISITS face-to-face project meeting (Vienna, September 2024), INSPIRE Workshops, On-Line Project Progress Meetings (PPM), on-line key meetings of Work Package teams.

INTERVIEWS and/or **FOCUS GROUPS** with at least 40 individuals:

Management Board	Coordinator team General Assembly members External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)
Implementing Board	Work Package Leaders (WPLs) Tasks Leaders (TLs) Quality Assurance Team (QAT)
Knowledge and Support Hubs and COPs members	Knowledge and Support Hubs coordinators Coordinators/facilitators of the COPs COP members/beneficiaries Key members of the institutions who belongs to the COPs (top management positions and end-users' beneficiaries)
Training key actors	Responsible of the training design Responsible of the training implementation End-users of the training
Key stakeholders	Stakeholders database Strategic alliances

6. MAIN OUPUTS

The main outputs of the mid-term evaluation will be comprised of:

- 1) An executive summary of no more than five pages
- 2) A one-page summary
- 3) Evaluation report should be comprised of at least the following chapters –and consist of no more than 40 pages.
 1. Title page
 2. Table of contents
 3. Executive summary
 4. Body of the report:
 - a. aims and objectives of the evaluation

- b. Methodology
- c. Main findings
- 5. Conclusions
- 6. Lessons learnt and emerging good practices
- 7. Recommendations
- 8. Appendices

7. TIMETABLE

The following timetable will be adhered to:

- 1) Written application until month X
- 2) Selection of the service provider month X
- 3) Contract negotiations during month X

Implementation of the evaluation:

Month 1: Inception Report

Month 4: presentation of interim results

Month 6: final report

8. COLLABORATION WITH THE CLIENT

The INSPIRE team attaches great importance to close cooperation with the contractor and expects that emerging risks that could jeopardise the successful implementation of the evaluation are communicated at an early stage.

Consortia are allowed in principle, but there should be a clear contact person for the evaluation who can be approached throughout the evaluation process.

The INSPIRE teams will support to access the relevant documents and potential interview partners. INSPIRE will provide access to our own monitoring data.