

CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Context

DG COMM is launching an evaluation of the performance of the current generation of the network of Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs) at the mid-point of their five-year (2013-2017) operation. It will provide an assessment of the functioning of the EDIC network in achieving its objectives. It will also identify possible issues and challenges affecting effective and efficient implementation of output and provide precise and practical recommendations for improvement. The results of this evaluation should provide the Commission with evidence-based information which will feed into the design of the next EDIC generation starting at the beginning of 2018.

The evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluation company selected via a procurement procedure. It will be carried out according to the highest evaluation standards, using specific methodology and data collection tools.

Objectives and scope of the consultation

To ensure that general public opinion is well reflected in the evaluation, their views on various aspects of the current EDIC generation and their suggestions for an enhanced future EDIC generation will be gathered. To do so and to ensure the relevant input of the highest possible quality and diverse points of view, the relevant stakeholders groups will be identified and consulted via best-suited different consultation methods and tools.

The consultation will seek opinion on the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the EDICs.

Stakeholders mapping

To be able to define the right approach for consultation, it is necessary to identify the relevant stakeholder groups. Below, a draft mapping of stakeholders is presented to be completed by the contractor selected to carry out the evaluation:

EU citizens/general public can be considered as the most obvious group of stakeholders. Anybody could be reached by the activities of EDICs or could be interested in EDIC services.

EU citizens familiar with EDICs: This group covers EU citizens who were at least once contacted by an EDIC or participated in any of the EDIC activities. The interest of this group of citizens could be potentially high. If they know EDICs, it means they contacted an EDIC on own initiative or agreed to participate in any activity organized by the EDIC.

EU citizens not familiar with EDICs: The interest of this group of stakeholders could vary from people who don't see any interest for them and those who would be interested in participating in EDIC activities.

The following groups of stakeholders are strategic intermediaries to reach the citizens:

Structures currently hosting EDICs: It could be a regional/local/municipal authority, an NGO etc. This group of stakeholders represents rather high interest as they could provide a valuable input based on their experience hosting EDIC.

Regional/local/municipal authorities not hosting an EDIC: These authorities could be potentially interested in providing input valuable for this evaluation.

NGOs: NGOs with a mission close to the one of EDICs could be interested in providing their opinion via this public consultation.

Schools, educational establishments and youth organisations: Young people who tend to be the EDICs' primary target are reached via those establishments. Therefore, they could be highly interested in having their say in this consultation.

Methods, tools and accessibility

The different steps of the consultation process require different types of consultation activities depending on the stakeholder group identified.

- All interested stakeholders will be able to provide feedback during the 4-week consultation on the EDIC Mid-Term Evaluation Roadmap which will be published on the *Your Voice in Europe* website and will stay there throughout the evaluation period. Via this consultation, stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the design of the evaluation. Their input, if relevant, might be discussed during the first meetings with the contractor selected to conduct the evaluation.

- A public consultation in all EU official languages will be published on a consultation website hosted on *Europa*. The questions will be formulated based on the scope of the consultation. The answers will feed in the evaluation process. The consultation will be promoted via the *Your voice in Europe* website. E-mails will be sent to relevant stakeholders to raise awareness about the consultation. In addition, EC Representations and EDICs alike will be requested to promote it among their stakeholders. The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions will be notified as well. The consultation will run 12 weeks, from mid-January to mid-April 2016. The findings from the consultation will be summarized in a synopsis report and published on the consultation website.

The above-referred consultations will be complemented by a mix of other consultation tools and methods. The contractor selected to carry out the evaluation will be tasked with the choice of the most appropriate mix of other consultation methods and tools from the following groups:

- Reactions/perceptions of the audience
- Interviews with relevant actors
- Focus groups with relevant actors
- Survey to be run among managers of EDICs with questions directly related to their activities.
- Expert panels

The contractor can propose other consultation tools not included in the list above.

Website

DG COMM will set up a website dedicated to the public consultation where all relevant information concerning the consultation will be published in due time.