HEADING 1A: Competitiveness for growth and jobs

Action programme for taxation in the European Union (Fiscalis 2020)

Lead DG: TAXUD

I. Overview

What the programme is about?

Fiscalis 2020 is an EU cooperation programme enabling national tax administrations to create and exchange information and expertise. It allows developing and operating major trans-European IT systems in partnership, as well as establishing various person to person networks by bringing together national officials from across Europe.

It focuses on improving the proper functioning of the taxation systems in the internal market by enhancing cooperation between participating countries, their tax authorities and their officials. This includes the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning, and the implementation of Union law in the field of taxation, by ensuring exchange of information, supporting administrative cooperation and, where necessary and appropriate, enhancing the administrative capacity of participating countries with a view to assisting in reducing the administrative burden on tax authorities and the compliance costs for taxpayers.

The vast majority of the programme funding (approx. 80 %) is devoted to the implementation, improvement, operation and support to the European Information Systems (EIS) for taxation. The remaining part is used for funding the organisation of joint actions, the cooperation and collaboration side (around 15 %) and the training activities (around 5 %).

The core outcomes of the Fiscalis 2020 programme are the European Information Systems (EIS), which allow the electronic exchange of tax-related information between Member States. Ensuring the business and IT systems' continuity is a major responsibility under the programme since disruptions in the operation of the European Tax IT systems would affect national administrations, citizens and businesses across the entire EU and hamper the functioning of the internal market.

EU added value of the programme

Without intense cooperation and coordination between Member States, unfair tax competition and tax shopping would increase, while fraudsters would exploit the lack of cooperation between national authorities. The added value of the Fiscalis programme, including for the protection of the financial interests of Member States of the Union and of taxpayers, has been recognised by the tax administrations of the participating countries. The challenges identified such as tax fraud cannot be tackled if Member States do not look beyond the borders of their administrative territories or cooperate intensively with their counterparts. The Fiscalis programme, implemented by the Commission in cooperation with the participating countries, offers Member States a Union framework to develop activities through cooperation amongst national tax officials, on the one hand, and IT cooperation, on the other hand. This set-up is more cost-effective than if each Member State were to set up individual cooperation frameworks on a bilateral or multilateral basis.

In particular, the Fiscalis programme supports the highly secured dedicated communication network allowing the exchange of information in the framework of fight against fraud, both for direct and indirect taxation. The programme as such interconnects national tax administrations in approximately 5000 connection points ([1]). This common IT network ensures that every national administration only needs to connect once to this common infrastructure to be able to exchange any kind of information. If such an infrastructure were not available Member States would have to link 28 times to the national systems of each of the other Member States.

According to the conclusions of the Mid-term evaluation of Fiscalis, the programme has been effective in providing solutions for problems with a clear EU dimension. In particular, the programme adds value by providing a forum for discussion, exchange of experiences and networking between Member States that would not be possible without Commission support. Fiscalis also supports the creation of a framework for the exchange of information through a variety of IT systems and activities. These lead to both tangible and intangible benefits of scale and coordination. The clear EU component, and the fact that the same results would be difficult or impossible to achieve without the programme to support them, in particular in terms of necessary maintenance of European Information Systems (EIS), also leads the evaluation to conclude that continued support through funding of the programme is relevant and advantageous from the perspective of EU added value.

Implementation mode

The Fiscalis programme is implemented under direct management, through:

– Procurement contracts: for the European Information Systems expenditure, training activities and studies.
– Grant agreements with the participating countries: for joint actions and expert teams.

II. Programme Implementation Update

([1]) Customs and taxation connection points taken together.

Implementation Status (2017-2019)

The data collected in the performance measurement of the programme (see Section III) show that Fiscalis 2020 is on course to fulfilling its objectives and progressing towards achieving the expected results of the projects planned in the Annual Work Programmes.

During the last four years, the number of IT systems (and their availability), the number of events and participants remained at high levels. The high quantity of deliverables under the programme is the result of a high demand from stakeholders. This aspect has been confirmed by the conclusions of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the programme, which has highlighted a general agreement among the stakeholders consulted that the programme is needed to facilitate secure and rapid exchanges of information, cooperation between tax administrations and enhancement of administrative capacity.

Key achievements

Fight against fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning and administrative cooperation.

At EU level, the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning is materialised by setting-up IT systems and other mechanisms of cooperation such as joint audits. The European Information Systems (EIS) allow tax administrations to exchange information by secure electronic means. The information exchange is enabled by a closed and secure Common Communication Network/Common Systems Interface (CCN/CSI) – one of the main outcomes of the programme. This platform has performed, since the launch of the programme, with high availability and reliability. The CCN/CSI network registered over 6 902 million messages exchanged during the period January 2019 – December 2019, compared to 5 790 million messages exchanged during 2018. This represents a 19.2 % growth of number of messages. In terms of traffic, the CCN Network registered around 32.23 TB during the period January 2019 – December 2019, compared to around 29.08 TB during 2018. This represents an increase of 10.8 % of traffic volume. The European Information Systems supported by Fiscalis 2020 interconnect tax authorities and thus facilitate the coexistence of different national taxation systems in the Union. At the end of 2019, there were a total of 27 European Information Systems and related applications in operation for taxation. In the observed period, they allowed information to be exchanged rapidly and in a common format that can be recognized by all Member States. The high volume of information channelled via CCN/CSI and the other tax related IT systems (e.g. VAT Information Exchange System-VIES, Excise Movement Control System-EMCS) shows that the programme is a solid and robust enabler for the information exchange amongst tax (and customs) authorities.

In the area of direct taxation, the programme funded different activities to support the automatic exchanges of information under the Council Directive 2011/16/EU on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation (DAC1) and its subsequent revisions ([2]).The last of these revisions (DAC6, transposition deadline was 31/12/2019 ([3])) provides for reporting of potentially aggressive cross-border tax planning schemes. The implementation of DAC2 and the technical developments were supported under the programmes in since 2016 to 2018 by an expert team.

The tax officials exchange views and best practices to fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning in the joint actions organised under the programme. For example, the Tax Administration EU Summit of the Heads of Tax Administration (TADEUS) took place in September 2019, Helsinki. As a result of this summit, the Heads of Tax Administration endorsed the findings of the ‘Digital and data’ project – about possible tax reporting requirements for the sharing and gig economy.

Accelerated exchange of information between VAT anti-fraud units continued to be supported via Eurofisc ([4]). The programme also finances multilateral controls actions (MLC), coordinated controls of the tax liability of one or more related taxable persons, organised by two or more Member States with common or complementary interests. Approximately EUR 3,26 billion of tax amount due was identified through multilateral controls under Fiscalis 2013. This amount is very significant compared with the programme investment (EUR 2,41 million actually spent on MLCs under Fiscalis 2013). From 75 multilateral controls actions (MLC) registered during the first year of the programme, we have reached 180 MLCs in 2019. Activities under the programme were also organised to secure an effective methodological, financial and organisational set-up for the presences in the administrative offices and participation in administrative enquiries (PAOE): in 2019, 25 of such activities were registered.

Enhanced administrative capacity

The use of IT systems, such as the CCN/CSI platform, EMCS, VAT Refund, SEED-on-Europa, VIES-on-the-web and e-forms builds towards the development of an e-administration. They limit the resource-extensive paper-based procedures. For example,

([2]) In 2014, first automatic exchanges of information took place on non-financial items (e.g. income for employment) took place under the Council Directive 2011/16/EU on administrative cooperation in the field of taxation (DAC1). The second revision of the Directive (DAC2) provided for the automatic exchange of tax information on financial items as of 2016; Fiscalis financed in 2014 and 2015 the definition of the tool. Taking into account the international context around this initiative (namely, the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act – FATCA and the OECD global standard), the developments registered under the programme in this area had a strong international resonance. The third revision of the directive (DAC3, transposition deadline 31/12/2016) provided for the automatic exchange of information on tax rulings and advance pricing arrangement. The fourth revision (DAC4, transposition deadline 4/6/2017) provided for country-by-country reporting, while the fifth revision (DAC5, transposition deadline 31/12/2017) for access to mechanisms, procedures, documents and information as regards beneficial ownership.

([3]) Council Directive (EU) 2018/822 of 25 May 2018 amending Directive 2011/16/EU as regards mandatory automatic exchange of information in the field of taxation in relation to reportable cross-border arrangements.

([4]) Network for the swift exchange of targeted information between Member States to enhance multilateral administrative cooperation in combating organised VAT fraud and especially VAT carousel fraud. Eurofisc legal base is under Chapter X of Council Regulation EU No.904/2010 on administrative cooperation and combating fraud in the field of VAT.

due to VIES-on-the-web, economic operators no longer have to use the intermediary national administration to validate the VAT numbers of their trading partners, directly reducing the lead-time and the administrative burden and compliance costs for traders and national administrations.

Furthermore, the Mini One Stop Shop (MOSS) system contributes to reducing the administrative burden on tax administrations and compliance costs for those taxpayers active in the telecommunications, broadcasting and electronic services and established within the Union, as it allows fulfilling their VAT obligations in a single place of compliance instead of in each country of the economic activity. MOSS was extended during 2019 because of the new measures needed to simplify VAT rules for sales of goods online. As a result, the portal will allow companies that sell goods online to their customers to deal with their VAT obligations in the EU through one easy-to-use online portal in their own Member State and their own language. Without MOSS, VAT registration would be required in each Member State into which they want to sell – a situation cited by companies as one of the biggest barriers for small businesses trading cross-border. The statistics of MOSS, covering the period from 2015 to 2018 ([5]), show a positive result in terms of VAT collection for all EU countries. Overall, the VAT revenues collected under MOSS show a constant growth from € 3 billion in 2015 to more than € 4.5 billion in 2018. In 2018, the VAT collected even increased by more than 20 % compared to 2017 figures. The number of traders using the MOSS to declare and remit cross-border VAT has also shown a moderate increase in this period. An intermediary evaluation of the MOSS system showed that the use of MOSS can reduce the administrative burden for businesses by up to 95 %.

During 2019, four expert teams were operational in the taxation area. The Managed IT Collaboration (MANITC III) till September and its successor (MANITC IV) from October 2019 continued to promote, support and coordinate Member States collaborative initiatives in IT area. Two expert teams started to develop IT applications amongst Member States in parallel: the expert team for Excise Duty Calculator (EDC), and the expert team for Mobile Application on Excise Movement and Control System (m-EMCS). The objective of the m-EMCS is to build a mobile app for helping the Member States to check the duty-suspended excise goods (tobacco, petrol, alcohol, etc.) during road controls. The EDC objective is to create an Excise Duty Calculator at EU level to help the citizens, traders and administrations to calculate the excise duty in each individual Member State. The tool is using data from the Taxes on Europa Database, managed by the Commission. Finally, the Transaction Network Analysis expert team (TNA) was created to group Member States' resources to assist the Commission in the development of the Transaction Network Analysis software, a custom built tool to facilitate information exchange and data analysis within the Eurofisc network, in order to enhance Eurofisc capability to use VIES and Eurofisc data to build networks around known risky traders and detect fraudsters.

Training and human competency building

Fiscalis 2020 continued to support throughout 2018/2019 a coherent implementation and application of tax policies (VAT competency/tax compliance building). This happened specifically through the realisation of a major technical up-grading and content-updating project of the EU VAT eLearning programme in 2018 (composed of 12 VAT process-specific eLearning modules in 17 EU languages, a total of 204 modules) that makes this EU competency building training material fit for use by the national public and private sector across the EU for the years to come. By end 2019, this full EU eLearning portfolio was reproduced in a content-updated and technically innovated format (also allowing for use on mobile devices). In 2018 an EU-wide survey on Human Capacity Building Maturity in national tax administrations was performed and resulted by end 2019 in the availability of the first common EU TAX Competency Framework (TaxCompEU), that provides national tax administrations with a common reference standard for optimal staff performance, based on identified common tax values, operational tax competencies, professional and management competencies and tax career paths. Implementation in national tax administrations' HR structures will be further accompanied and supported as of 2020.

Evaluation/studies conducted

In the framework of the Commission Action Plan of April 2016 'Towards a single EU VAT area', the studies under Fiscalis 2020 mainly focus on VAT and cross-border issues such as studies on VAT aspects of cross-border e-commerce, the provision of effective tax rates and the measurement of aggressive tax planning. Two important evaluations have been adopted by the College in 2017: Evaluation of VAT administrative cooperation and fight against fraud (Nov-2017) and Evaluation of Directive 2011/16/EU on the administrative cooperation in the field of taxation (Dec-2017).

In the area of excise duties, TAXUD has conducted different studies. For instance, in 2018, TAXUD conducted an evaluation of the administrative cooperation tools under Regulation 904/2010 and supported the legal initiative proposing new means of cooperation in the field of e-commerce. The evaluation examined to which extent Regulation (EU) 904/2010 met the overall objectives of contributing to a closer cooperation between Member States, of avoiding budget losses, of fighting VAT fraud and of preserving the principles of fair taxation, when considering e-commerce.

In September 2019, the Commission published the evaluation of the Energy Taxation Directive (ETD), which lays down rules for the taxation of energy products used as motor or heating fuels and for electricity. Clearly, EU rules on energy taxation no longer deliver the same positive contribution as when they first came into force in 2003 since technology, national tax rates and energy markets have all evolved considerably over the past 15 years. The evaluation points out that the high divergence in national energy

([5]) Last available data for MOSS: 2018 year. There is no legal obligation for Member States to provide these statistics. Figures for 2018 were published in Sept-2019.

tax rates is not in line with other policy instruments and can lead to fragmentation of the internal market, a problem exacerbated by the widespread use of optional tax exemptions.

In addition to technical studies and evaluations, the mid-term evaluation of Fiscalis 2020 was launched in 2017 (finalised in 2018) and the final evaluation of the programme is planned for 2020 ([6]). The key findings of the latest evaluation (SWD(2019)59 final) have been presented in the Programme Statement DB2020.

The studies and evaluations financed under the programme Fiscalis 2020 can be found on the TAXUD EUROPA website: https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/calls-tenders-grants-calls-expression-interest_en and on the EU Bookshop on https://bookshop.europa.eu/en/home/ (author: Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union).

Forthcoming implementation

In the coming years, emphasis will continue to be put on further improving the administrative capacity of Member States, be it through IT capacity building, traditional and innovative forms of cooperation or human competency building initiatives. The capacity of tax administrations is indeed instrumental to ensure they run efficiently their tax systems within the internal market and to address cross-border tax fraud and evasion. In the medium-term, the implementation of the following programme's main outcomes will be pursed to achieve the EU tax policy objectives:

Ensuring business continuity of existing European IT systems and development of new ones. In the field of Indirect Taxation, the major activities will consist in implementing the e-commerce package by 1st January 2021, following the possible adoption of the CESOP (Central Electronic System Of Payment data exchange) proposal in the area of VAT administrative cooperation, and proceed with its implementation. The implementation of the legislative package will require the Commission collaboration with both Member States' and payment service providers (PSPs) experts to cover both the collection and transmission of data from PSPs and the development of CESOP for the storage and processing of the data. The programme will support this process by the creation of a new expert team during 2020, which will last 24 months.

The proposal for a definitive VAT regime may also lead to IT implementation. In the field of Excise, the activities will concern mainly the implementation of Excise Movement and Control System (EMCS) Phase 3.4 and B2B duty paid changes. Different forms of IT collaboration, such as expert teams or project groups in the area of IT systems, will be put in place, increasing the number of shared IT activities and reusable components among Member States. This approach should reduce the costs for deploying EU wide tax IT systems, both at EU and national level while responding in a more agile way to EU tax policy needs.

Under the programme, activities are put in place to further strengthen the operational cooperation through the use of expert teams, allowing for pooling expertise to perform tasks in specific domains, mainly for the European Information Systems. In the years 2020 and 2021, TAXUD will continue to provide support to the ongoing expert teams with an additional new expert team on Central Electronic System of Payment Information (CESOP) to fight VAT fraud in cross-border e-commerce, and highlighted collaboration opportunities for Member States. Also in the area of VAT, the TNA expert team is expected to continue its work in a second phase (TNA 2) turn to more practical exercises using the Transaction Network Analysis software in the daily work of the tax administrations.

Enhancing the traditional collaboration between tax officials to ensure high standards of administrative capacity. Effective and efficient tax administrations are key for collecting the taxes due. Tax administrations should be solid in terms of structural mechanisms and all should be brought on the same level playing field to ensure a smooth cooperation and the co-existence of diverse tax systems in the internal market. To support tax administrations, TAXUD will continue to work on the newly established strategic dialogue and cooperation among the Heads of tax administrations (TADEUS –Tax Administration European Union Summit). Different actions are foreseen to support TADEUS in the coming years, mainly plenary meetings (High-Level Summit, one per year), deputy meetings (approx. three per year), and additional meetings at technical level (working groups) in specific domains.

In relation to training and human competency building, the continuous implementation of an established common multi-annual customs & tax training and staff development Action Plan (2017 – 2020) will until 2020 provide the necessary policy back-up and national engagement for common EU training & staff development measures in the field of taxation for the years to come. It will allow for a most impactful EU Training support, such as through the EU tax eLearning initiative and EU tax training delivery in the form of innovative formats like tax training webinars and/or structured EU-wide delivery of nano-learnings and similar. The establishment of a first EU Tax Competency Framework (TaxCompEU) by end 2019 (in all EU languages) will as of 2020 further contribute specifically to the Administrative Capacity building initiative for taxation. National tax administrations will be further supported in the national implementation of the TaxCompEU through the 2019 launched development of a staff competency assessment application (EU CAT), once finalised by Q2/2020.

Outlook for the 2021-2027 period

The proposal for the future Fiscalis programme is included in the 2021-2027 MFF Heading 1 'Single Market, Innovation and Digital' as an independent programme in view of its specificities, under the name 'Cooperation in the field of taxation'. The new programme is the continuation of the existing Fiscalis 2020 programme and its predecessors, which have proven their added value.

([6]) Both evaluations are conducted in accordance with Ar. 18.1 of Regulation 1286/2013.

The proposal comprises tools and budget to support tax policy and tax authorities through administrative capacity building activities (including human competency and the development and operation of the European electronic taxation systems) and operational cooperation (including exchange of tax information, knowledge and experience as well as joint actions). Fiscalis helps address the challenges the Member States' tax authorities are facing as regards insufficient capacity and cooperation both within the EU and with third countries that often prevent them from carrying out effectively and efficiently their missions. The programme can help in providing quick and joint responses to emerging problems such as tax fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance, digitalisation and new business models, while at the same time preventing unnecessary administrative burden.

Negotiations between the co-legislators (Council and European Parliament) regarding the adoption of the programme made excellent progress in 2019 and there is already a partial agreement reached. The final adoption of the programme, which will allow its implementation as envisaged as of January 2021, depends on reaching an agreement on the overall MFF specifying the reference amounts for the EU funding (Fiscalis included).

III. Programme key facts and performance framework

1. Financial programming

Legal Basis	Period of application	Reference Amount (EUR million)
Regulation (EU) No 1286/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing an action programme to improve the operation of taxation systems in the European Union for the period 2014-2020 (Fiscalis 2020) and repealing Decision No 1482/2007/EC	2014 – 2020	223,4

	Financial Programming (EUR million)							
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total Programme
Administrative support	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,7
Operational appropriations	30,8	31,0	31,4	31,8	32,4	32,6	33,0	223,0
Total	**30,9**	**31,1**	**31,5**	**31,9**	**32,5**	**32,7**	**33,1**	**223,7**

2. Implementation rates

	2019				2020			
	CA	Impl. Rate	PA	Impl. Rate	CA	Impl. Rate	PA	Impl. Rate
Voted appropriations	32,670	100,00 %	30,803	99,90 %	33,093	40,97 %	27,500	28,52 %
Authorised appropriations (*)	35,296	98,34 %	33,127	95,66 %	33,763	41,89 %	29,022	27,21 %

(*) Authorised appropriations include voted appropriations, appropriations originating from assigned revenues (internal and external) as well as carried-over and reconstituted appropriations; the execution rate is calculated on 15 April 2020

3. Performance information

Programme performance

The data collected in the performance measurement of the programme from 2014 (first year of the programme's implementation) until 2018 (latest complete measurement of performance indicators), together with the results of the Mid-Term Evaluation, shows that the Fiscalis 2020 programme progressed towards obtaining its objectives and towards achieving the expected results of the projects planned in the Annual Work Programmes for this period. The results measured within the programme's performance measurement framework in the last five years indicate that the overall implementation of the programme is on track, without delays. The programme is a successful and firmly established programme that regularly takes stock of its performance and improves over time. It provides invaluable support to national tax administrations and economic operators, in turn supporting the fight against tax evasion, tax fraud and aggressive tax planning.

Fiscalis 2020 generates benefits over and above what would have resulted from interventions at local, regional or national level, especially in terms of contributions to policy objectives and reduced administrative costs and burdens, complementing the activities and policies of the Member States and making achievements that are sustainable. By supporting, in the service of EU law and policy, fora for all kinds of exchange between administrations, the programme identifies potential solutions for problems with a clear EU dimension. These lead to benefits from economies of scale and improving coordination that would be difficult or impossible to achieve without the programme. The benefits were also found to be long-lasting, though to a large extent dependent on future funding, especially regarding maintenance of the IT systems that administrations rely on every day.

The main conclusions of the Mid-Term Evaluation can be found below:

- RELEVANCE: the evaluators identified clear needs for secure and rapid exchanges of information, cooperation between tax administrations and enhancement of administrative capacity. These needs stem from the growing scope of EU law and initiatives, cross-border nature of problems and persistent need for convergence between countries. There has been universal agreement among the stakeholders consulted that the programme is needed to facilitate this exchange and cooperation, and that ambitious EU policies would not be possible without such support. Thus, the programme's role in fostering convergence of approaches, administrative procedures and rules is highly relevant.

- EFFECTIVENESS: the programme has been effective in reinforcing cooperation between tax authorities in the EU Member States and other participating countries. The programme has provided the framework and technological means necessary to work together and share information in the service of implementing EU tax law and fighting tax evasion, fraud and aggressive tax planning in an increasingly mobile Europe. Evidence of this was most compelling in the field of indirect taxation (particularly VAT and excise) where the EU competence is strongest, and the level of programme activity is correspondingly high.
- EFFICIENCY: the programme's overall structure and processes for taking decisions and setting priorities are time-tested and broadly appropriate in the eyes of stakeholders both in the European Commission and in participating countries' administrations. While the programme's benefits cannot be monetised, holding up the findings on effectiveness alongside spending data and the positive findings on operational efficiency makes a strong case that the programme overall is cost effective. The joint actions, IT systems and training activities clearly generate value for the EU and national tax administrations, by helping them to pool resources (and thereby generate economies of scale), increase revenue collection and compliance and function more effectively.
- EU ADDED VALUE: the programme has been effective in providing solutions for problems with a clear EU dimension. In particular, the programme adds value by providing a forum for discussion, exchange of experiences and networking between Member States that would not be possible without Commission support. Fiscalis 2020 also supported the creation of a framework for the exchange of information through a variety of IT systems and activities. These lead to both tangible and intangible benefits of scale and coordination. The clear EU component, and the fact that the same results would be difficult or impossible to achieve without the programme to support them, in particular in terms of necessary maintenance of the IT tax systems, also leads the evaluation to conclude that continued support through funding of the programme is relevant and advantageous.

The numbers of actions, events and participants remained during the period at high levels (the total number of events increased from 536 in 2018 to 551 in 2019), demonstrating a strong demand from business owners and national administrations for programme activities. In 2014, a score of 3,13 was achieved on the extent to which programme activities achieved their expected results across the programme, on a scale from 0 to 4 (fully). Over the last three years, this value has increased constantly, reaching 3.56 in 2018. The data on the achievement of results for 2019 is still in the process of collection at the time of writing.

The core outcomes of the Fiscalis 2020 programme are the European Information Systems (EIS), which allow the electronic exchange of tax-related information between Member States. Ensuring the business and IT systems' continuity is a major responsibility under the programme since disruptions in the operation of the EIS would affect national administrations, citizens and businesses across the entire EU and hamper the functioning of the internal market. All the centralised IT tax systems– developed, managed and maintained by the Commission – were available in the 2014-2019 period as scheduled, with more than 99 % of the time meeting the expected targets. The underlying infrastructure (CCN/CSI) had an availability of 99.47 % during 2019, which represents 0.51 percentage points less than in 2018 and slightly below target (99.9 %). The figure of 2019 availability rate reflects planned, agreed unavailabilities to deploy new CCN releases and new applications on the platform, as per the MASP-C Revision 2019, endorsed by the Customs Policy Group in December 2019. This was well communicated in advance to all stakeholders, including national customs authorities, which did not face any negative impact.

The feedback from participants in joint actions collected under the Performance Measurement Framework of the programme shows that the collaboration robustness between programme stakeholders is overall progressing in the desired direction. Over the last three years, an average of 96 % of the responding participants declared that the programme provided them with a good opportunity to expand their network of (and contacts with) officials abroad. These results are well above the target (90 %). Additionally, in the same period, the number of respondents who declared that they have been in contact for work purposes with the officials they met during programme activities (lasting networking effect) has reached 67 % in 2019. This value shows an improvement from 2018 result (62 %), returning to a similar level of baseline but still below target (80 %). It has to be highlighted that the figures on network opportunity and lasting networking effect show some fluctuations over the years, but overall the rates are above/close the baseline and there is a progress towards the targets (already achieved in relation to network opportunity). In order to improve the lasting networking effect, work continues on improvements in the area of communication and to facilitate online collaboration and sharing between the participants of programme activities after the events end. In addition, the decrease in the long-lasting network effect rate may be the result of an unclear understanding of the different possibilities to 'be in contact', which more often includes collaborative tools beyond the traditional contacts (such as physical meetings or direct phone calls). Additional explanations have been included in the form requesting feedback from participants where this information is extracted from.

General objectives

General Objective 1: to improve the proper functioning of the taxation systems in the internal market by enhancing cooperation between participating countries, their tax authorities and their officials

Indicator 1: ease of paying taxes								
Baseline	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Target

2010	Milestones foreseen							2020
MS within the top 50: 10	13	Improve the ranking of individual Member States	No member State below the rank of 120	No member State below the rank of 121	No member State below the rank of 122	No member State below the rank of 123	All Member States within the top 100, those Member States which are already in top 100 in 2010 move to the top 50	All Member States within the top 100, those Member States which are already in top 100 in 2010 move to the top 50
	Actual results							
	11	14	20	17	19	18		
2010	Milestones foreseen							2020
MS between the ranks 51-100: 10	13	Improve the ranking of individual Member States	No member State below the rank of 120	No member State below the rank of 121	No member State below the rank of 122	No member State below the rank of 123	Those Member States which are already in top 100 in 2010 move to the top 50	Those Member States which are already in top 100 in 2010 move to the top 50
	Actual results							
	12	12	7	10	8	9		
2010	Milestones foreseen							2020
MS between the ranks 101-120: 2	1	Improve the ranking of individual Member States	No member State below the rank of 120	No member State below the rank of 121	No member State below the rank of 122	No member State below the rank of 123	All Member States within the top 100	All Member States within the top 100
	Actual results							
	2			1	1			
2010	Milestones foreseen							2020
MS below 120: 5	1	Improve the ranking of individual Member States	No member State below the rank of 120	No member State below the rank of 121	No member State below the rank of 122	No member State below the rank of 123	0	0
	Actual results							
	2	2	1			1		

Methodology: This indicator is a composite indicator which is developed by the World Bank Group, IFC and PwC (own methodology). The indicator is usually calculated for countries worldwide in a manner which facilitates international comparison.
Narrative: This indicator measures the time necessary to prepare and pay taxes for the tax payer. A decrease in the time taken to prepare and pay taxes would show a reduction in compliance costs for tax payers.
Comment: This indicator measures the time necessary to prepare and pay taxes for the tax payer. A decrease in the time taken to prepare and pay taxes would show a reduction in compliance costs for tax payers, which does not solely relate to the performance of the tax administrations. For these reasons, it is difficult to rely solely on this indicator when assessing the impacts of the Fiscalis programme.
Source: https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/tax/publications/paying-taxes-2020/overall-ranking-and-data-tables.html
Unit of measure: Number of countries

Specific objectives

Specific Objective 1: to support the fight against tax fraud, tax evasion and aggressive tax planning and the implementation of Union law in the field of taxation by ensuring exchange of information, by supporting administrative cooperation and, where necessary and appropriate, by enhancing the administrative capacity of participating countries with a view to assisting in reducing the administrative burden on tax authorities and the compliance costs for taxpayers

Indicator 1: the Common Communication Network for the European Information Systems

Baseline	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Target
2013	Milestones foreseen							2020
99.94 %	99.90 %	99.90 %	99.90 %	99.90 %	99.90 %	99.90 %	99.90 %	99.90 %

	Actual results							
	99.89 %	99.95 %	99.98 %	99.98 %	99.98 %	99.47 %		

Methodology: Timeliness: for the purpose of monitoring programme's objectives, the frequency is annual. However, availability can be also measured on weekly, monthly or quarterly basis, if needed for specific IT monitoring.
Narrative: The Common Communication Network and Common System Interface (CCN/CSI), are indispensable for the running of the customs related European Information Systems (EIS). In accordance with the Union Customs Code and the e-Customs Decision, the customs EIS lie at the heart of the Customs Union, which is one of the elements supporting the smooth running of the Single Market by allowing the free circulation of goods. This indicator provides a measurement of the programme's results on the effective operation of the CCN/CSI.
Source: IT statistics produced by TAXUD.
Unit of measure: Percentage terms of the availability (time) of the Common Communication Network and Common System Interface (CCN/CSI).

Indicator 2: the feedback from participating countries on the results of actions under the programme (collaboration robustness)

Baseline	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Target
2012	Milestones foreseen							2020
Network opportunity: 0.00 %	95.00 %	90.00 %	90.00 %	90.00 %	90.00 %	90.00 %	90.00 %	90.00 %
	Actual results							
	95.15 %	96.66 %	97.00 %	97.00 %	95.00 %	96.00 %		
2012	Milestones foreseen							2020
Lasting network effect (at least one contact after the end of the programme activity):	68.00 %	80.00 %	80.00 %	80.00 %	80.00 %	80.00 %	80.00 %	80.00 %
	Actual results							
	68.00 %	72.61 %	69.00 %	75.00 %	62.00 %	67.00 %		
2012	Milestones foreseen							2020
Cooperation: Number of face to face meetings: 295	295	295	500	500	500	500	500	500
	Actual results							
	247	632	586	563	556	590		
2012	Milestones foreseen							2020
Number of online groups (taxation and joint groups): 30	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase	Increase	Grow or stable	Increase the annual levels	Increase the annual levels
	Actual results							
	109	126	174	152	177	227		

Methodology: Relevant for each sub indicator (top to bottom of the table):
a) EAFs are filled in online via EUSurvey by participants to an event. Timeliness: annual frequency; data collection for year X takes place between March X and March X+1.
b) EAFs are filled in online via EUSurvey by participants to an event. Timeliness: annual frequency; data collection for year X takes place between March X and March X+1.
c) Query in ART: total number of meetings, minus virtual meetings. Timeliness: annual query.
d) Query in PICS: online groups (total); filter results by programme.
Narrative: Relevant for each sub indicator (top to bottom of the table):
a) The Collaboration Robustness index measures the collaboration generated by the programme, in terms of events where MSs meet and speak for exchanging experiences and best practices, for joint problem solving or for identifying new ways of working and future actions. Working as one, instead as 28 different administrations, is one of the basis of the Customs Union. The lasting networking effect measures whether the programme contributed to establish contact points with officials in other national customs administrations (at least one contact with an official met during a programme activity after the activity ended).
b) The Collaboration Robustness index measures the collaboration generated by the programme, in terms of events where MSs meet and speak for exchanging experiences and best practices, for joint problem solving or for identifying new ways of working and future actions. Working as one, instead as 28 different administrations, is one of the basis of the Customs Union. The lasting networking effect measures whether the programme contributed to establish contact points with officials in other national customs administrations (at least one contact with an official met during a programme activity after the activity ended).
c) The Collaboration Robustness index measures the collaboration generated by the programme, in terms of events where MSs meet and speak for exchanging experiences and best practices, for joint problem solving or for identifying new ways of working and future actions. Working as one, instead as 28 different administrations, is one of the basis of the Customs Union. The number of face-to-face meetings measures the events where customs officials have the chance to meet in person their peers from other countries, thus facilitating cooperation.
d) The Collaboration Robustness index measures the collaboration generated by the programme, in terms of events where MSs meet and speak for exchanging experiences and best practices, for joint problem solving or for identifying new ways of working and future actions. Working as one, instead as 28 different administrations, is one of the basis of the Customs Union. The number of online groups measures the extent to which customs officials collaborates beyond physical meetings.
Comment: Data on networking effect can be obtained from the EAF and from the programme's poll. In order to ensure comparability of results across years and consistency with figures reported in the AAR, the results for 2017 and 2018 have been modified to those obtained from the EAF.

Source: Relevant for each sub indicator (top to bottom of the table):
a) Relevant question on the Event Assessment Form (EAF).
b) Relevant question on the Event Assessment Form (EAF).
c) Activity Reporting Tool (ART). ART is an IT tool used to manage activities carried out under the Customs and Fiscalis programmes.
d) Programmes Information and Collaboration Space (PICS). PICS is DG TAXUD's online collaboration tool for tax and customs professionals working in administrations across Europe.
Unit of measure: Relevant for each sub indicator (top to bottom of the table):
a) Degree of networking expressed in percentage terms of positive replies.
b) Degree of networking expressed in percentage terms of positive replies.
c) Number of face-to-face meetings held under the programme.
d) Number of ongoing online collaboration groups on the Programme Information and Collaboration Space (PICS).

Expenditure related outputs

Outputs	Budget line	Budget 2020	
		Number	EUR million
Number of IT contracts	14 03 01	45	23.09
Number of events organised	14 03 01	500	6.3
Number of training contracts	14 03 01	1	1.483
Number of expert teams projects	14 03 01	2	2.07
Other	14 03 01		0.05
Total			**32.993**

Outputs		Number of outputs foreseen (F) and produced (P)						
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Number of IT contracts	F	20	20	40	45	45	45	50
	P	42	41	53	29	43	30	
Number of events organised	F	295	295	500	500	500	500	500
	P	247	632	586	554	536	551	
Number of training projects	F	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	P	1	2	2	3	1	2	
Number of expert teams projects	F	0	0	2	1	5	1	2
	P	0	0	2	2	4	2	

4. Programme contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

SDG 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

The Commission's general objective is to ensure that tax policy supports wider EU policy objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU. The Fiscalis 2020 programme through its activities contributes to the achievement of the following Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 8 (Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all), Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries), Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (one of the targets includes restructuring of taxation).

Example: The electronic business portal for VAT known as the 'Mini One Stop Shop' (MOSS) is extended by the measures adopted by the Commission in 2019 to simplify VAT rules for sales of goods online. Accordingly, MOSS will allow companies that sell goods online to their customers to deal with their VAT obligations in the EU through one easy-to-use online portal in their own Member State and their own language. Without the portal, VAT registration would be required in each EU Member State into which they want to sell – a situation cited by companies as one of the biggest barriers for small businesses trading cross-border. The system is already in place for telecommunications, broadcasting and e-service providers since 2015.