



Terms of reference for independent External Evaluator



This project is co-funded by the European Union's Health Programme 2014-2020.

Project no. 101018210
Project acronym: IMMUNION
Project title: Improving IMMunisation cooperation in the European UNION
Instrument: European Union 3rd Health Programme
Start date of project: 1 April 2021
Duration: 24 months
Milestone title: M3.2. Terms of reference for independent External Evaluator
Due date of milestone: 31 July 2022
Organization name of lead contractor for this milestone: Institutul Național de Sănătate Publică (INSP)
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Dissemination level		
PU	Public	X
CO	Confidential, restricted under conditions set out in Model Grant Agreement	
CI	Classified, information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC	

DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	NOTE	ISSUED BY
0.1	05 July 2022	First version	INSP
1.0	14 July 2022	Reviewed	EHNet
1.1	18 July 2022	Reviewed	INSP
1.2	19 July 2022	Submitted	EHNet

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Introduction

In the context of the IMMUNION project, co-funded by the European Union (EU) 3rd Health Programme, the Project Coordinator EuroHealthNet (EHNet) seeks to select and sub-contract an independent external evaluator to monitor and provide independent and objective feedback on the project outcomes and potential impact.

An evaluation is the systematic assessment of the success of a project. It is a process planned from the onset of the project and conducted throughout the project period. Overall, the evaluation seeks to understand whether progress towards the overall aims of the IMMUNION project was made, if Work Package (WP) specific targets were met in a timely fashion and if there were any unintended outcomes.

The external evaluation of the project corresponds to task 3.4 of the IMMUNION Grant Agreement - “Final outcomes and impact evaluation”. Its outcome will represent Deliverable D3.3 (Final external evaluation report).

The final outcomes and impact evaluation will be carried out through an external contractor hired through an open tender process organized by the management of the project, based on Terms of Reference developed by the WP3 team (Milestone M3.2). The Terms of Reference will lay out the scope and evaluation questions for the final external evaluation of the project, focused on project outcomes and impact.

This document constitutes the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Independent External Evaluator (IEE). These ToR specify the details for the final technical evaluation of the above-mentioned project implemented by EuroHealthNet and consortium partners, and co-financed by the European Union.

1. IMMUNION Project Context

IMMUNION's overall objective is to support EU efforts to improve vaccine uptake by strengthening joint efforts amongst Coalition for Vaccination member associations and other stakeholders (e.g., media, national health authorities and local communities) in order to deliver better vaccine education to health professionals and better information to the general public.

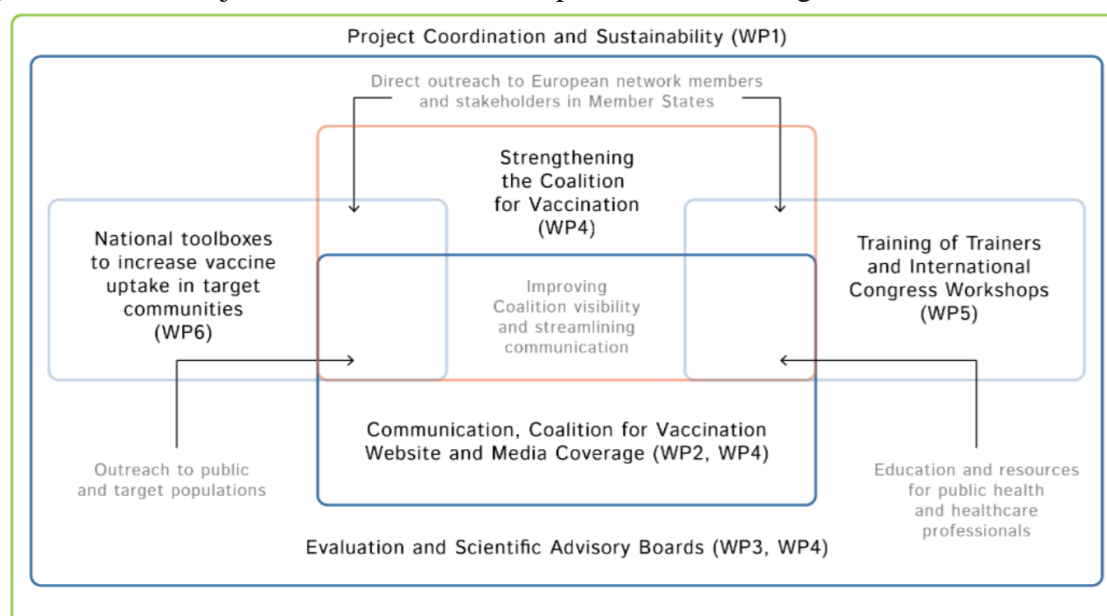
The project has five specific objectives:

1. Improving the dissemination of validated vaccination training materials and resources to health professionals across Europe.
2. Strengthening the Coalition for Vaccination and its long-term sustainability and visibility.
3. Increasing training opportunities for health professionals and students on vaccination communication.
4. Enhancing collaboration with the media on vaccination.
5. Understanding drivers of vaccine inequalities within countries and addressing vaccination coverage issues in vulnerable and underserved populations.

The expected outcomes and benefits of the project are the following:

1. Increased awareness and use of validated training and information materials on vaccination by health professionals and students.
2. Increased uptake of the mission deliverables of the Coalition for Vaccination among individual health professionals and increased awareness of the Coalition.
3. Increased ability and confidence of health professionals and students in communicating on vaccination with patients.
4. Enhanced media reporting on vaccination through closer collaboration with (public) health professionals and students.
5. Improved overall equity in vaccination and increased vaccination coverage rates in specifically vulnerable and underserved populations.

IMMUNION outcome and impact indicators are presented in Annex 1 of this document. IMMUNION is structured around six Work Packages. WP1, WP2 and WP3 are focused on coordination, dissemination, monitoring and evaluation. They direct the course of the work to ensure the expected outcomes are reached and that the three core work packages (WP4, WP5 and WP6) achieve their objectives. The workflow is provided in the diagram below.



2. Evaluation rationale and objectives

The evaluation of IMMUNION is led by WP3 lead the National Institute of Public Health (INSP) of Romania. Overall, the evaluation aims to: monitor the implementation process and provide systematic information on the status of activities; deliver the results of these findings; and improve the work in progress. An evaluation plan was elaborated in an early phase of IMMUNION (delivered M3). It outlined the process for a systematic assessment of the success of the project, to be conducted from the onset and throughout the project period, including both internal and external evaluation.

To date, project partners have carried out two internal evaluations. A final internal evaluation will be completed at the end of the project. These evaluations help the project management team and partners understand how the implementation of the project could be improved.

In parallel, the project's work plan includes two external evaluations, which focus on project outcomes and impacts. A mid-term external evaluation was carried out by the project's Scientific Advisory Board, covering the period M1-M12. Its outcome allowed partners, including the IMMUNION project managers, to fine-tune activities and tasks, and to reflect on how the implementation of the project could be improved in order to increase the visibility and future impact of project outcomes.

The final outcomes and impact evaluation will be carried out through an external contractor hired through an open-tender process organised by the management of the project, based on these ToRs. The Independent External Evaluator will produce a final Evaluation Report at M24 – March 2023 (Deliverable 3.3). The final external evaluation will cover the entirety of the project (M1-M24), assessing project outcomes at all levels: including all result areas, and with consortium partners, beneficiaries and project stakeholders. The final external evaluation will also analyse best practices for future engagement.

Specifically, the objectives of the final external evaluation are as follows:

1. To evaluate the project in terms of its effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, with a priority on assessing the project's expected results, objectives and overall goal;
2. To identify key lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations;
3. To assess the challenges and best practices and document the outcomes for future processes.

The final external evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of all consortium partners, in particular the Coalition for Vaccination co-chairs, given their responsibility for ensuring the long-term sustainability of project outcomes. It is intended to be an independent external reflection reflecting on the two years of the project, which will complement internal reflection cycles implemented by the IMMUNION WP teams.

3. Evaluation approach and methodology

Please note that the evaluation is based strictly on the Grant Agreement.

Evaluation principles

The principles underpinning the approach to the evaluation are:

- Impartiality and independence of the evaluation process from the programming and implementation functions;
- Credibility of the evaluation, through contracting an appropriately skilled and independent expert and ensuring the transparency of the evaluation process, including wide dissemination of results;
- Participation of diverse stakeholders in the evaluation process, to ensure different perspectives and views are taken into account; and
- Usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, through timely presentation of relevant, clear and concise information to decision makers.

Evaluation criteria and research questions

The key areas that the final external evaluation is intended to answer are based on [OECD DAC criteria](#) of relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency, and sustainability. Specifically:

Relevance - The extent to which the activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. In evaluating the relevance of a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent are the objectives of the project still valid?
- To what extent is the theory of change / spheres of influence model still relevant?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
- Are the activities and outputs of the project consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Effectiveness - A measure of the extent to which an activity attains its objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of different the objectives? Reflection on various factors: internal and external, operational and programmatic, components of the project, etc.

Coherence - The extent to which other interventions support or undermine the project, and vice versa. This includes internal coherence and external coherence:

- Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between this and other activities carried out by project partners, in particular the Coalition for Vaccination co-chairs;
- External coherence looks at other projects (e.g., EU funded projects on vaccination) and actors for value added perspective.

Efficiency - measuring the outputs - qualitative and quantitative - in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the project uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted. When evaluating the efficiency of a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Impact - The positive and negative changes produced by the project, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors. When evaluating the impact of a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the project?
- What real difference/changes has the activity made to the lives of the target group?
- How many people have been affected?

Sustainability - Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after the funding has ended. When evaluating the sustainability of a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent can the benefits of a project continue after the project is finished?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the sustainability of the project?
- Have the project partners developed (or maintained) strong collaborative working relationships which could facilitate future joint initiatives based on project outcomes?

The evaluation criteria which will be considered for the final external evaluation are presented in Annex 2 of this document.

Evaluation methodology

The methodology for the final external evaluation shall include the following:

1. Preliminary desk reviews of all relevant documents on the project, including project contractual documents, existing internal evaluation reports and other evidence of impact collected by the project, project publications, existing national and international reports on the theme, etc.
2. Preliminary discussions with the project management team from EuroHealthNet.
3. Individual and group discussions, in-depth interviews with key partners: a series of semi-structured interviews and/or focus groups with the project management team as well as other consortium partners, national stakeholders, policymakers and beneficiaries (e.g., health care professionals), etc., are envisaged to be conducted. This can include surveys with both quantitative and qualitative perspectives among participants of various capacity-development trainings and events undertaken by the project since its start. Interviews can be carried out online. The evaluator is expected to engage with stakeholders and partners not only to collect information and insights, but also to make a (collective) sense of that in order to understand the following:
 - Their engagement in the process, how it has been promoted and how it fits with their own work/aims;
 - The difficulties they have faced to engage in the project (internal and external);
 - Their perspectives on the issues covered by the project;
 - The capacity, awareness, relationships and resources developed during their engagement with the project and what they have been able to do with that;

The consultative element of the evaluation is crucial for building up a consensus about the project's overall rationale and desired outcomes. The IEE is expected to conduct a participatory evaluation

providing for meaningful involvement by the project partners, its beneficiaries and other interested parties. Stakeholder participation is to be an integral component of the evaluation design and planning, data gathering, drafting of findings, final external evaluation reporting and results dissemination. Data from different research sources will be triangulated to increase its validity.

The proposed approach and methodology have to be considered as flexible guidelines rather than final requirements; and the IEE will have an opportunity to make hers/his inputs and propose changes in the evaluation design. It is expected that the IEE will further refine the approach and methodology and submit the detailed description in their proposal and Inception Report.

4. Expected outcomes and timeline

The final evaluation of the project is to be conducted externally by the IEE. It is planned to be completed between October 2022 and March 2023. The evaluation will cover (almost) the 24-month project implementation period of April 2021– March 2023.

The IEE is expected to deliver at least following outcomes / deliverables:

1. An **inception report**, to be submitted six weeks after the beginning of the evaluation, explaining the methodology (including: evaluation objectives and scope, description of evaluation approach and methodology, data collection tools, data analysis methods, key informants/agencies, evaluation questions, performance criteria, issues to be studied), work programme and timetable for the evaluation. The IMMUNION Executive Board (composed of WP leads) will be provided with the opportunity to comment on the inception report. The final approval will rest with EHNet.
2. A **final report** to be submitted at the end of the evaluation (approx. 20 pages, excluding annexes), which will contain the results of the desk review as well as interviews. A possible structure for the report could be as follows:
 - Executive summary
 - Introduction
 - Description of project and project context
 - Evaluation objectives and methodology
 - Presentation and analysis of the findings of the evaluation
 - Lessons learned
 - Conclusions and recommendations
 - Annexes (e.g., list of interviewed stakeholders, literature and documentation consulted, etc.)

The contract agreement between EHNet and the IEE will be based on these deliverables. The proposed framework of the evaluation can be subject to change based on the agreement between EHNet and the IEE.

The external evaluation will last 6 months and it is expected to be carried out between 1st of October 2022 and 31st of March 2023. Should the process of contracting the IEE be delayed for any reason (e.g., insufficient number of applications, etc.), the schedule can be slightly adapted, condensing the work of the first four months into three.

The tentative schedule is highlighted below:

- **Months 1-2** (October 2022 - November 2022): Drafting of the Inception report, to be submitted by the end of week 6. Initial desk review and meetings with EuroHealthNet.
- **Months 3-4** (December 2022 - January 2023): Interviews.
- **Months 5-6** (February 2023 - March 2023): Finalising interviews and drafting the external evaluation report, to be summarized and discussed at the final IMMUNION General Assembly (mid-February 2023); debriefing with EHNet and Coalition for Vaccination. Final external evaluation report (deliverable D3.3.) to be submitted by 15th March 2023 to Project Coordinator (EHNet) and to Evaluation work-package lead (INSP).

5. Tender Submission procedure

Potential independent external evaluators are expected to submit a detailed offer on the basis of the Terms of Reference defined in this document.

The following documentation should accompany each tender:

- Curriculum Vitae of the proposed independent external evaluator
- A list of past Horizon 2020 and FP7 projects that the tenderer has or is evaluating

Tenders must be submitted electronically (email to d.hargitt@eurohealthnet.eu).

The maximum amount foreseen for the sub-contracting of an external evaluator for the final external evaluation of the project is €8,000.

The deadline for the submission of tenders is September 9th, 2022.

6. Annexes

Annex 1: IMMUNION OUTCOME/IMPACT INDICATORS

Specific Objective ID	Specific Objective Title and Description	
1	Professionalize dissemination strategies to health professionals across Europe on validated training and information materials on vaccination	
Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)		Target value
Number of times health professionals and students access materials and insights collected on the website to deliver accurate and transparent information to patients, caretakers and the general public, and promote understanding and uptake of vaccines among the wider public		At least 1000 unique visitors access the site per year. As visitors access the site, a pop-up window will ask if the visitor is a health professional, student or other. A website facility will allow counting the number of downloads of each material. This number is a proxy indicator to assess if health professionals and students had accessed the materials. The assessment will be by comparing the number of downloads with the number of health professionals and students that visited the site.

Specific Objective ID	Specific Objective Title and Description	
2	Strengthen the coalition for vaccination's capacity to reach individual health professionals and improve the uptake of its developed materials and campaigns across the professional membership of the coalition's organizations	
Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)		Target value
Number of individual health professionals who take up materials developed during IMMUNION activities to deliver accurate information to the public and combat myths around vaccines and vaccination		At least 200 individuals as measured by survey indicate that they have used materials or services developed by the project
Percentage of professional membership of the Coalition's organizations who use information developed by the coalition		At least 10% of members surveyed indicate that they have used information developed by the Coalition for Vaccination in their work.
Joint activities with key stakeholders outside of the Coalition (e.g., WHO Europe), or with relevant non-health stakeholders (e.g., Ministries of Education)		At least two joint initiatives or outreach efforts conducted with partners beyond the Coalition and project membership.

Specific Objective ID	Specific Objective Title and Description	
3	Launch educational and training activities for health professionals and students on vaccination communication, addressing specific known issues around vaccination communication in health practice, such as combatting common myths and approaches to increase confidence in vaccination	
Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)		Target value
Increase in confidence of the Trainers in vaccinology (and specifically issues of vaccine communication and vaccine safety) after the Training-of-Trainers (ToT) General and Country Sessions		Pre-/post-tests indicate at least a 25% increase in confidence in training on vaccine communication and vaccine safety after ToT participation

Specific Objective ID	Specific Objective Title and Description	
4	Improve public confidence on vaccination, through enhanced collaboration between organizations of public health professionals, other sector professionals, individual health professionals, students, and the media to improve access and use to reliable and accurate information about vaccination	
Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)		Target value
National roundtables with at least 5 key stakeholder groups represented held to 'co-design' or 'co-select' at least one tool for potential piloting in order to improve vaccination coverage rates.		1 roundtable per country (in Greece, Italy, Latvia and Romania)

Specific Objective ID	Specific Objective Title and Description	
5	Improve overall equity in vaccination and boost vaccination coverage rates in specifically vulnerable and underserved populations	
Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)		Target value
Improved knowledge/awareness of target groups as regards vaccination (benefits, services available, side-effects, etc.) to increase vaccine up-take.		At least 95% of the participants in the pilot study improve their knowledge (pre- and post- test)
Number of roundtables and participants with national institutions, media, target community representatives and health professional associations (plus representatives of education and social sector) to discuss communication, media and peer engagement tools which can be combined and tailored to address to specific population groups		4 national roundtables held
Piloted communication tools result in increased awareness of the benefits of vaccination in targeted communities		Pre-/post-questionnaires or focus groups indicate an increase of awareness of at least 10%

Annex 2: FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Relevance	The appropriateness of project objectives to the problems that it was supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operated. It should include an assessment of the quality of project preparation and design – <i>i.e.</i> the logic and completeness of the project planning process, and the internal logic and coherence of the project design.
Efficiency	The fact that the project results have been achieved at reasonable cost, <i>i.e.</i> how well inputs/means have been converted into activities, in terms of quality, quantity and time, and the quality of the results achieved. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same results, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.
Effectiveness	An assessment of the contribution made by results to achievement of the project purpose, and how assumptions have affected project achievements. This should include specific assessment of the benefits accruing to target groups.
Impact	The effect of the project on its wider environment, and its contribution to the wider policy or sector objectives (as summarized in the project's overall objective).
Sustainability	An assessment of the likelihood of benefits produced by the project to continue to flow after external funding has ended, and with particular reference to factors of ownership by beneficiaries, policy support, economic and financial factors, socio-cultural aspects, gender equality, appropriate technology, environmental aspects, and institutional and management capacity.

Annex 3: SUGGESTED FINAL EXTERNAL EVALUATION MATRIX (for evaluator's use, if desired)

Relevant evaluation criteria	Key Questions	Specific Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data collection Methods / Tools	Indicators/Target value	Methods for Data Analysis