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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Directorate G. Markets and Observatories  
Director

Brussels,  
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**NOTE TO**

**THE EXPERT GROUP FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETS CONCERNING ASPECTS FALLING  
UNDER THE CMO REGULATION, ANIMAL PRODUCTS**

**THE COMMITTEE FOR THE COMMON ORGANISATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL  
MARKETS, SECTION ANIMAL PRODUCTS**

**Subject: EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme: guidelines for the  
Member States' evaluation.**

Dear delegates, experts

Please find enclosed guidelines for the Member States' evaluation of the implementation of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme (hereafter, "school scheme").

They were presented to the Committee at its meeting on 21 June 2018 and discussed at the Expert Group meeting of 20 September 2018<sup>1</sup>.

I would like to thank again all those who contributed to the guidelines, through written comments and input to the discussions.

Yours sincerely,

Jens SCHAPS

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the meeting of 21 June: Note Ares(2018)3388848 of 26.6.2018; minutes of the meeting of 20 September: Note Ares (2018)4964434 of 27/9/2018.

## Guidelines for the Member States' evaluation of the implementation of the EU school fruit, vegetables and milk scheme (“school scheme”)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are designed to assist Member States in their evaluation of the school scheme<sup>2</sup>.

They provide

- **Definitions** and examples, for a shared understanding of the evaluation requirements on the school scheme;
- **Common evaluation questions and indicators**, as well as an outline for the **evaluation report**, for consistent and comparable results among Member States.

They focus on key elements of the school scheme as implemented in the EU. The guidelines do not replace specific evaluation requirements set out at national or local level. Additional or more detailed information may be necessary to capture implementation of the school scheme in any given country.

The guidelines are, by their very nature, **non-binding**.

They will underpin possible amendments to the legal provisions on evaluation in the school scheme delegated and implementing act that the Commission may consider adopting in due time for the submission of the Member States' evaluation report in 2023. The Commission's legislative proposals on the future of food and farming, adopted on 1/6/2018, include a new performance framework for all the future CAP instruments, including the school scheme, as part of a drive for enhanced focus on performance<sup>3</sup>. Due attention will be paid to consistency with developments in those proposals that will result from Interinstitutional discussions.

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<sup>2</sup> Article 9(2) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) [2017/40](#) of 3 November 2016 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments and amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 907/2014, OJ L 5, 10.1.2017, p. 11–19 and Article 8 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) [2017/39](#) of 3 November 2016 on rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments, OJ L 5, 10.1.2017, p. 1–10.

<sup>3</sup> Article 115, point 3(b) of [COM\(2018\) 392 final](#) of 1 June 2018, Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the Common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

*This internal working document expresses the view of the Commission services and does not commit the European Commission. In the event of a dispute involving Union law it is, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, ultimately for the Court of Justice of the European Union to provide a definitive interpretation of the applicable Union law.*

## **2. THE BASICS**

### **2.1. What is evaluation?**

In the Commission guidelines on better regulation<sup>4</sup>, evaluation is an *evidence-based judgement* of the extent to which a specific EU policy or activity has been

1. *Effective* ⇒ it has reached its objectives and achieved intended results;
2. *Efficient* ⇒ it has ensured the best relationship between the resources used and the results achieved (= could more results have been obtained with the same resources or could results have been obtained with less resources?);
3. *Relevant* ⇒ it has addressed the identified needs (= the objectives have been appropriate to address the needs and problems; the design of the policy or activity has been justified);
4. *Coherent* ⇒ it has been working well, internally (= in its main components) and with other EU policies or activities;
5. and of the extent to which it has achieved *EU value* (= has brought value in addition to the one that would have resulted from policies or activities at national or regional level, by reason of its scale or effectiveness).

### **2.2. What is the difference between monitoring and evaluation?**

In terms of content, monitoring and evaluation are complementary but different exercises:

- Monitoring is a *continuous task of reviewing information on implementation*. For example, for the school scheme, monitoring will generate data on the number of children and schools participating in each school year, the quantities of fruit, vegetables and milk supplied to those schoolchildren, the types of educational activities carried out, etc.
- Evaluation involves a *judgement*. It goes beyond what happened (for example children's participation in the school scheme) to consider why something happened (for example did children's participation in the school scheme bring

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<sup>4</sup> Chapter VI of [SWD \(2017\) 350](#) of 7 July 2017, Better Regulation Guidelines.

about changes in their consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk? How much did consumption change because of the school scheme?).

In terms of process:

- monitoring may be carried out by the body implementing the activity (for example, the competent authority for the school scheme);
- evaluation must be functionally *independent* ⇒ evaluators should carry out their tasks without influence or pressure from those in charge of the policy/activity they are evaluating and have full autonomy in conducting and reporting their findings.

### 2.3. Who shall carry out an evaluation?

- The Commission shall regularly evaluate activities intended to have an impact on society or the economy, according to the Financial Regulation (= all activities with significant spending<sup>5</sup>) and to sector-specific requirements (= activities for which the legal basis so requires)<sup>6</sup>.
- Member States shall provide the Commission with the information necessary for that evaluation activity, by putting in place the structures and arrangements to collect data and by delivering the necessary reports.

For the school scheme, the Member States' evaluation on implementation in the first five school years (first reports due by 1 March 2023)<sup>7</sup> will feed into the evaluation of the scheme that an external contractor will carry out under the Commission responsibility. The process will be organised to exploit synergies and avoid overlaps.

## 3. PURPOSE OF THE MEMBER STATES' EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL SCHEME

- Improve the quality of implementation of the school scheme by identifying areas for improvement ⇒ the strategy may be amended accordingly<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Article 34 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) [2018/1046](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1–222.

<sup>6</sup> For the school scheme: Article 110 of Regulation (EU) No [1306/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008, OJ L 347 20.12.2013, p. 549.

<sup>7</sup> Article 8(2) of Regulation (EU) [2017/39](#).

<sup>8</sup> Article 23(8) of Regulation (EU) No [1308/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007, OJ L 347 20.12.2013, p. 671.

- Foster transparency and accountability towards stakeholders and citizens ⇒ the Commission shall publish the Member States' evaluation reports<sup>9</sup>.
- Provide evidence for EU policy-makers' consideration on possible reforms of the school scheme.

#### **4. SCOPE OF THE MEMBER STATES' EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL SCHEME**

##### **4.1. Criteria**

Member States should evaluate the effectiveness of the school scheme (= whether it has been successful in achieving or progressing towards its objectives, and to what extent).

The school scheme legislation does not explicitly mention other typical evaluation criteria: efficiency, relevance, coherence and, for the Commission, EU added value<sup>10</sup>.

The evaluation questions and indicators in these guidelines therefore target effectiveness.

At the same time, Member States' evaluation reports should provide the Commission with the information necessary for its evaluation activity, which is broader in scope. Member States should therefore also include in their evaluation report an appraisal of the functioning of the school scheme (details in the draft outline of the evaluation report).

##### **4.2. Activities and beneficiaries**

Member States should evaluate the activities carried out under the three main parts of the school scheme:

1. distribution of school fruit and vegetables and of school milk<sup>11</sup>,
2. accompanying educational measures - namely as regards their role and impact in connecting children with agriculture, increasing their consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk and shaping healthy diets;
3. information and communication activities and monitoring and evaluation arrangements - namely as regards their influence on the awareness and uptake of the school scheme and their contribution to the good functioning of the scheme.

Member States should evaluate the results and impacts of the scheme on the whole age-range of children participating in the school scheme, corresponding to the target group set out in their strategies.

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<sup>9</sup> They will be posted in the country sections of the Europa webpage on the school scheme [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/school-scheme/eu-countries\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/school-scheme/eu-countries_en).

<sup>10</sup> Article 24(2)(b) of Regulation (EU) [1308/2013](#); Article 9(2) of Regulation (EU) [2017/40](#).

<sup>11</sup> Throughout this document, school fruit and vegetables refers to fruit and vegetables and bananas; school milk refers to milk, cheese, curd, yogurt and other fermented and acidified milk products.

### 4.3. Period

The evaluation report should cover the implementation of the school scheme in the period from 1 August 2017 to 31 July 2022.

Such evaluation should therefore not be limited to a snapshot of the situation at two points in time, respectively the beginning and the end of the period because that would only allow measuring “what” changes have occurred and not whether they are due to the school scheme. The evaluation report should assess the main *trends* in implementation *throughout the five school-year period* and any significant changes that affected the results over time.

### 4.4. Geographical coverage

The school scheme legal provisions require an evaluation report per Member State.

The Member States that implement the school scheme at regional level and evaluate separately the implementation of each of the regional strategies should accompany the evaluation report of those strategies with a summary of the key findings and conclusions at Member States level.

## 5. METHODOLOGY FOR THE MEMBER STATES' EVALUATION

The evaluation of the school scheme should entail a combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods for credibility, reliability and robustness of results.

Quantitative methods or approaches measure the results and impacts.

Results ⇒ direct and immediate effects on beneficiaries, for instance changes in children's consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk, in frequency or quantity; changes in children's awareness of the health benefits of fruit, vegetables and milk consumption.  
Impacts ⇒ effects in the longer term, linked to the wider objectives of the school scheme, for instance contribution to fruit/vegetables and milk current and future supplies.

To measure the results and impacts of the school scheme:

- The evaluation should entail at least two measurements in the five school years: one at the beginning of the period (=baseline or zero measurement) and one as recent as possible before the submission of the report (=follow-up).
- Those measurements should ideally be made for a statistically representative sample of participating schoolchildren (=intervention group) and a statistically representative sample of non-participating schoolchildren (=control group).

The size of the sample should ideally be statistically representative in terms of socio-economic factors (age, gender, region, rural/urban areas, socio-economic status in terms of household income) and ensure sufficient accuracy of estimates.

- To measure children's consumption of school fruit, vegetables and milk, Member States may use any of the following tools or a combination of them:

- *food frequency questionnaires*, adapted to the different age of children = list of food and beverages items with response categories to indicate the usual frequency of consumption (e.g. how often do you eat fruit? Once per day, Once per week, etc.), in collaboration with parents or school staff for younger children;
- *24 hours recall* = recall the actual food intake in the immediate past 24 hours through questions on the food and beverage items consumed, listed by categories, and accompanied by indications or pictures for portion sizes;
- *food diaries or records* = record of all food and beverage items consumed during the period (usually from 1 to 3 or 4 consecutive days), grouped by categories and accompanied by indications or pictures for portion sizes;
- *weighed measure* = record of the amount of the food items consumed by weighting them to obtain a more accurate measurement;
- *direct observation* = recording, by trained observers, of actual behaviour (=food consumption) as opposed to reported or recalled behaviour (=food diaries).

A core set of standard questions in food frequency surveys or 24-hour recall or diaries may be considered, for the purposes of the evaluation of the school scheme, to have comparable results. They would be developed in discussions with Member States' experts.

Qualitative methods will investigate the context, gather the reasons for developments and examine, compare or contrast and interpret patterns through direct observations or participants' observations via interviews/surveys, focus groups, case studies.

- Surveys allow gathering information, which may be both quantitative and qualitative, from selected samples of the beneficiary and non-beneficiary population (e.g. children's reasons for consuming/not consuming fruit and vegetables or milk, children's preference for the different types of fruit and vegetables and of milk and milk products, etc.);
- Focus group consist of a small number of individuals brought together to discuss a topic of interest, with the facilitation of an external moderator. They allow verifying the collected evidence with various types of stakeholders. Example: a group of parents brought together to discuss further the reasons for children's attitudes towards fruit, vegetables and milk; a group of suppliers to explore the constraints and synergies in distribution of school fruit/vegetables and of school milk;
- Case studies are detailed or in-depth examinations of the situation, in the particular context of the evaluation, when quantitative data are not available or scarce.

Member States' evaluations should pay attention to the careful interpretation of all types of data and analysis (= how information from different sources is complementary or, if not consistent, what are the possible reasons and what are the limitations in terms of the ability to support the findings and conclusions).

Some non-dietary information may be useful to complement the data gathered for the evaluation: this is for instance the case of children's body weight and height wherever possible.

Complementary data, such as on other nutritional/activity programmes operated at national level and running parallel to the school scheme in schools, would be helpful for context.

## 6. COMMON EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND CORRESPONDING INDICATORS

### 1) *To what extent has the school scheme increased children's consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk and milk products?*

This question aims at capturing the results of the school scheme in terms of children's consumption of fruit, vegetables and milk and milk products.

The answer to this question should go beyond the mere indication or estimation of changes in children's consumption of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products.

It should seek to identify to what extent the school scheme is responsible for the observed changes (= can an observed increase in children's quantity or frequency of consumption be credited to participation in the school scheme?).

If the objectives in the strategy have not been achieved, the answer to this question should include an assessment of the extent to which progress has fallen short of the targets and what factors influenced it (= why the scheme was not successful).

The answer to this question should, finally, also seek to identify if unexpected or unintended effects have occurred (for instance, parents consciously or unconsciously reducing the fruit, vegetables and milk in their children's school snacks).

*Common indicators* (section to be further developed with definitions of the main features of the indicators and with reference to data sources)

- *Change in direct and indirect consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables by children:*

Direct consumption ⇔ consumption of fruit and vegetables at school, linked to distribution of fruit and vegetables under the school scheme (what children consumed, taking into account waste, when distribution took place).

Indirect consumption ⇔ consumption of fruit and vegetables at school, outside the period of distribution of fruit and vegetables under the school scheme (what



children consumed as snacks in the morning or afternoon break); OR consumption of fruit and vegetables at home.

Change in the quantity consumed (e.g. how many more grams on average) or in the frequency of consumption (e.g. at least once per week, twice per week, once per day or more).

- *Change in direct and indirect consumption of drinking milk by children:*  
  
As for the previous indicator.
  - *% of children meeting the recommended intake of five or more portions of fruit and vegetables per day.*
  - *% of children meeting the recommendations by the national authorities for health and nutrition on the intake of milk and dairy products per day.*
- 2) ***To what extent has the school scheme increased children's awareness about the variety of agricultural products and about the health benefits of their consumption?***

The question aims at capturing the results of the school scheme in reconnecting children with agriculture and educating them about healthy eating habits.

#### *Indicators*

- *Change in the knowledge of the type of agricultural products:*
  - ✓ Change in the number of the fruit and vegetables that children can recognise;
  - ✓ Change in the percentage of children who know about the cycle of production of milk and cheese;
  - ✓ Change in the number of children who are aware of organic products.

(to be adapted to the age bracket of participating children).
- *Change in the knowledge of the health benefits of the consumption of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products (to be confirmed or reviewed further to discussions with experts in health/nutrition):*
  - ✓ Change in the percentage of children who know how many portions of fruit and vegetables they should eat per day;
  - ✓ Change in the percentage of children who know about the food pyramid (or other national dietary guidelines);

- ✓ Change in the percentage of children who are aware of the negative effect on health of food rich in added salt, fat and sugar.
- *Change in the attitude to consumption of fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products:*
  - ✓ Change in the percentage of children who like eating fruit and vegetables (and indication of which fruit and vegetables they prefer);
  - ✓ Change in the percentage of children who like drinking milk (and indication of which milk products they prefer);
  - ✓ Change in the percentage of children who would like to consume more fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products.

Accompanying educational measures may involve also parents and teachers<sup>12</sup>. Attention should be paid to assessing the impact of these measures on parents (family perception of the importance of healthy eating habits) and on the school community, as relevant.

The answer to this evaluation question should also include qualitative information on the reasons for children consuming or not fruit, vegetables, milk and milk products.

## **7. DRAFT OUTLINE FOR THE MEMBER STATES' EVALUATION REPORT**

The Member States' evaluation report should present in a self-standing and non-technical manner the evaluation process, the evidence gathered and the analysis.

It should not exceed 100 pages, including tables and figures but excluding annexes.

- 1. Executive summary (maximum 5 pages; EN translation in addition to original language)**
  - Findings.
  - Conclusions and recommendations.
- 2. Introduction**
  - Purpose and scope of the report.
  - Short description of the evaluation process.
- 3. Methodology**

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<sup>12</sup> Article 3(3) of Regulation (EU) [2017/40](#).

- Explanation of the evaluation design and of the methods used.
- Description of the evaluation questions, judgement criteria, indicators.
- Sources of data, techniques for data collection.
- Problems or limitations and solutions found.

#### **4. Assessment of the functioning of the school scheme**

- Appraisal of the intervention logic (= logical links between needs, objectives set out in the strategy, and activities).
- Main patterns or trends in participating schools (e.g. socio-economic environment; turnover or stable participation over time, etc.) and children (if the strategy envisaged priority groups or specific target groups, was this implemented in practice as intended).
- Functioning of the distribution of school fruit, vegetables and milk, drawing upon information in the annual monitoring reports (e.g. priorities in the choice of products, diversity of products, frequency and duration of distribution); whether, and how, priority for fresh fruit and vegetables and for drinking milk was ensured; impact of transfers between the allocation for school fruit and vegetables and the allocation for school milk on the effectiveness of distribution).
- Implementation of the accompanying educational measures to support distribution of fruit, vegetables and milk to children: main types of activities carried out and main themes; were they carried out as intended, if the choice of what and when to implement was left to participating schools; if the strategy envisaged the involvement of parents and teachers, how did this take place; children's (and parents'/teachers') appreciation of the measures.
- Appraisal of the communication and information actions with regard to the visibility of the school scheme (e.g. population reached, clarity of the messages).
- Appraisal of the main arrangements and provisions for implementation, including with regard to the system to ensure value for money under the main activities of the school scheme (e.g. reasonableness of the costs claimed by applicants; methodology for simplified cost options, where present); administrative burden; bottlenecks on the one hand and good practices on the other hand; differences or synergies in the fruit/vegetables and milk part of the scheme.
- Appraisal of the actual involvement of authorities and stakeholders to be associated, according to national provisions, to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the school scheme.

## 5. **Answers to the common evaluation questions**

## 6. **Conclusions and recommendation**

- Effectiveness of the scheme.
- Main lessons learnt.
- Recommendations based on the evaluation findings. Suggested amendments to the strategy should include both changes to the design of the school scheme (for example, target group, products) and to its implementation (for example, procedures to select suppliers, reimburse costs, possibility for synergies with other programmes, etc.).

## 7. **Annexes**

Technical details of the evaluation including questionnaires, references and sources.

## 8. **LEGAL REFERENCES AND USEFUL DOCUMENTS**

Legal references:

- Article 34 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) [2018/1046](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1–222.
- Article 110 of Regulation (EU) No [1306/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008, OJ L 347 20.12.2013, p. 549.
- Article 24(2)(b) and 25(d) of Regulation (EU) No [1308/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007, OJ L 347 20.12.2013, p. 671.
- Article 9 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) [2017/40](#) of 3 November 2016 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments and amending Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 907/2014, OJ L 5, 10.1.2017, p. 11–19.

- Article 8 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) [2017/39](#) of 3 November 2016 on rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union aid for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments, OJ L 5, 10.1.2017, p. 1–10.

Non-exhaustive list of useful reference documents:

- [SWD \(2017\) 350](#) of 7 July 2017, Better Regulation Guidelines.
- [Impact Assessment](#) accompanying the school schemes reform.
- [Evaluation of the European school milk scheme](#), final report, November 2013, AFC Consulting Group<sup>13</sup>.
- [Evaluation of the European school fruit scheme](#), final report, October 2012, AFC Consulting Group<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> “A set of monitoring and evaluation indicators should be defined that allows an assessment of the implementation and impact of the SMS on the milk market as well as on children’s nutrition habits. Clear monitoring and evaluation obligations based on an adequate set of indicators should be introduced at the level of Member States and at the EU level”.

<sup>14</sup> “It is recommended that a more standardised structure and focus of the single national reports should be suggested by the Commission. As the key questions which have to be answered to achieve an adequate evaluation of the scheme (implementation, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency) are already known, they should be formulated explicitly in a common format and should be used as guidelines for the single national evaluations”.