

European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Evaluation: Call for Expressions of Interest

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (Observatory), a partnership hosted by WHO is initiating a review of its work and impact from 2014. It is seeking Expressions of Interest from qualified consultants with the relevant expertise and experience to conduct this review.

Background: The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (Observatory) is a partnership hosted by WHO. It brings together national governments, international organizations and others¹ to provide policy-makers and their advisors with evidence to help them make the best possible decisions for their health care systems. The Partners identify the issues that are most relevant for the European Region and the Observatory's core staff and its expert networks generate and communicate analysis (frameworks, information and comparative evidence) to meet those priorities. The Observatory has four core functions country monitoring; (thematic) analysis; comparative health systems performance assessment; and knowledge brokering and produces a mix of outputs (Table 1).

Table 1: Observatory functions and outputs

Function	Outputs
Country monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health in transition country profiles (HiTs) Health Systems and Policy Monitor on-line updating http://hspm.org/ / network
Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comparative and thematic studies Country case studies Policy briefs and articles
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studies (domain reports) and briefs Country reviews and support to international and comparative initiatives
Knowledge brokering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publications: HiTs, books, Eurohealth, Health Policy series, articles Face to face dissemination: policy dialogues, evidence briefings, presentations Electronic dissemination: web site, E-bulletins, twitter alerts Responses to policy makers.

Purpose: The review is part of the Observatory's commitment to undertaking regular external evaluations that fit with and support the partnership renewal cycle. It is expected to address **positioning** and **policy relevance** and the **quality, impact** and **efficiency** of the Observatory's products and services.

Expected use: The Partners have asked for an evaluation in 2017 (March – October) which will

- Allow them to demonstrate to their respective institutions what the Observatory has achieved (so far) in the current partnership cycle (2014-2018)
- Provide insights into the way the Observatory delivers its functions and products, to inform them as they chose priorities and the direction of development, and
- Feed into the new Development Plan (2019-23).

Scope: The evaluation is expected to cover the partnership cycle 2014-18 to date with some consideration of how far the Observatory has responded to the recommendations in the 2013 evaluation.

¹ WHO European Regional Office for Europe; the governments of Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Finland, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the Veneto Region; the European Commission; the World Bank; UNCAM (the Union nationale des caisses d'assurance maladie France); the London School of Economics and Political Science and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Terms of reference

The evaluator(s) should explore:

A) Positioning and Policy Relevance

1. Whether the Observatory has a well defined and appropriate niche in the international health policy environment
2. How far policy makers and others are aware of its work
3. How policy makers and others use the Observatory's work (and how different policy makers use different products)
4. To what extent they find the different products policy relevant / useful
5. The routes by which the evidence is generated and feeds into policy making.

B) Quality, efficiency and impact of the Observatory's products and services

6. How much resource is invested in the Observatory's different products (this should include both staff / core inputs and the contribution made by networks, external experts and Member States)
7. The perceived quality of its various outputs
8. How effectively the Observatory links its different areas of work
9. The role and value of its networks with respect to the Observatory's objectives
10. Whether the Observatory offers value for money and whether particular products or functions are more or less efficient and offer more or less added value (in terms of use, relevance or impact).

Partners would also welcome advice on

- How far the Observatory has responded to the recommendations in the 2013 evaluation
- The sustainability of a model that depends on networks, external expertise and pro bono inputs
- Any scope for adding more value and impact though efficiency savings (e.g. 'recycling' contents more efficiently as different products or for different audiences)
- Any new approaches to assessing the impact of the outputs against the resources invested
- Steps the Observatory might take in the next development plan to address any areas of weakness, identified.

Methods: Potential evaluators will be asked to propose a suggested approach / methods in a concept note in the second stage of the selection process and to develop detailed plans in an inception report.

Organization: A senior member of staff will act as the review manager and the whole staff team will make time available to support the evaluators. A sub-group of Partners has agreed to support the review process as needed.

Indicative timetable for the evaluation²

Phase	Feb-Mar	Mar-Apr	Apr-Jul	Sept-Dec	Deliverables
Preparation: finalization of terms of reference. Contracting the review team.	X				Terms of reference Contracts
Inception phase		X			Inception report
Data collection			X		
Initial reporting			X		Initial report. Steering Committee presentation
Delivery				X	Final report. Steering Committee presentation

² The details will be discussed with the reviewer but should allow that key stakeholders take their summer break across the period from late June to end and the evaluation should be complete so that it can feed into the Development Plan 2019-23

It is expected that the review team will

- Present initial findings at the June Steering Committee meeting (Thursday 08 June 2017 Dublin)
- Submit the final report in October (date to be agreed)
- Present the implications of the final report for future development at the December Steering Committee meeting (Thursday 30 November 2017 Brussels).

Deliverables: It is expected that the reviewers will deliver

- An inception report detailing the agreed work (March-April)
- A draft evaluation report / presentation (for June)
- A final report (for October with revisions if required in December).

Qualifications and experience required

The reviewer(s) / evaluator(s) will be expected to meet the following criteria:

- 5-10 years experience with evaluation, project appraisal or process / organizational development
- Relevant international experience with health systems and health policy
- Demonstrable understanding of research, secondary research and evidence synthesis
- Expertise in assessing efficiency and value for money
- Familiarity with policy making and the use of evidence in policy making
- Understanding of knowledge brokering

The Partners would like to ensure that the evaluator is demonstrably independent so prefer not to consider individuals or teams who have worked closely with the Observatory during the last 5 years, or intend to do so in the next 2 years.

How to apply

Interested candidates should submit their application by **01 February 2017** to info@obs.euro.who.int with a copy to evaluation@who.int Please specify "Observatory Evaluation 2017" in the email subject line.

The expression of interest should include:

- Cover letter and CV
- Examples of recent, relevant engagements (up to 5)
- Expected daily and total fee (exclusive of expenses)
- Availability between March and December 2017

Short-listed candidates will be invited to a short telephone interview as part of the final selection process. It is likely that short-listed candidates will also be invited to prepare and submit a written concept note outlining a proposed approach and methods to support their application.

For information about the Observatory please see our website <http://www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/partners/observatory> Queries can be addressed to szy@obs.euro.who.int