

EVALUATION ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to share any relevant information that they may have.

TITLE OF THE EVALUATION	Setting up an Infrastructure for Spatial Information (INSPIRE) - Evaluation of the Directive
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	DG.ENV - E4 Compliance & Better Regulation
INDICATIVE PLANNING (PLANNED START DATE AND COMPLETION DATE)	Start: Q3 2020 Completion: Q3 2021
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/

The Roadmap is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the document, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Context, purpose and scope of the evaluation

Context

The [INSPIRE Directive 2007/2/EC](#) is the only piece of European Union (EU) legislation that obliges Member States to share geospatial data to support EU's environmental policies and policies or activities which may impact on the environment. INSPIRE is based on the infrastructures for spatial information established and operated by the EU Member States. On the other hand, [Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information](#) implements parts of the Aarhus Convention¹ relating to information that authorities must make available to the public. The provisions in the Directive date almost 20 years back. The development in digital technologies and emerging of new data sources such as citizen science² and environmental sensors justify that we evaluate how it corresponds with the objectives of Directive 2019/1024/EC on open data and the re-use of public sector information.

These two legal instruments are the backbone of the environmental information management covering the whole of the EU environmental policy. The instruments require Member States to provide access to environmental information in an easily understandable, user-friendly manner. This means sharing information between public authorities, for instance when managing cross-border crises (e.g. floods). The framework facilitates public access to spatial information, with a view to involve members of the public further into decision-making.

Both Directives are therefore highly relevant in the context of the [European Green Deal](#) initiative. They respond to the need for better information and more accessible data to support policy development and better implementation.

A mandatory³ evaluation of the INSPIRE Directive is due by 1 January 2022, according to Regulation 2019/1010 on the alignment of reporting obligations in the field of legislation related to the environment. Together with the European Green Deal, the Commission launched its ambitious digital strategy^{4,5,6} initiative to also help deliver on Europe's goals for sustainability set out in the European Green deal⁷. The European Data Strategy recognises the importance of INSPIRE. It announces a 'GreenData4All' initiative that includes as the starting point the assessment of the interaction between the INSPIRE Directive and the Directive on public access to environmental

¹ Council Decision 2005/370/EC - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2005/370/oj>

² Citizen science is scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur (or nonprofessional) scientists whose outcomes are often advancements in scientific research, as well as an increase in the public's understanding of science.

³ Regulation (2019/1010) - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019R1010>

⁴ COM(2020) 64 final, Shaping Europe's digital future - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0064>

⁵ COM(2020) 65 final, White Paper On Artificial Intelligence - A European approach to excellence and trust - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2020:65:FIN>

⁶ COM(2020) 66 final, A European strategy for data - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0066>

⁷ COM (2019) 640 final, The European Green Deal - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2019:640:FIN>

information. The overall objective of the 'GreenData4all' is to:

- modernize both Directives to align them with the contemporary state of technology,
- promote active dissemination and sharing of government- and private-held public data in support of the environmental acquis and the Green Deal objectives, and;
- define and implement interoperable building stones for sharing public data in the Green Deal data space.

Purpose and scope

There is a need to take stock of the experiences gained in the implementation of the Directive and its coherence with other relevant instruments such as Directive 2003/4/EC and Directive 2019/1024/EC. Based on these findings, the Commission will consider possibilities to simplify or upgrade certain provisions of the Directive, in line with recent relevant developments.

The evaluation of the INSPIRE Directive shall be based on, inter alia: (a) the experience gathered from the implementation of this Directive; (b) the information collected by Member States and the Union-wide overviews; (c) relevant scientific and analytical data; (d) other information including relevant scientific, analytical data required on the basis of the Better regulation guidelines.

The evaluation will cover the implementation and application of the INSPIRE Directive and its implementing rules in all EU Member States and the EEA/EFTA countries.

The evaluation will assess the effectiveness (degree by which it reaches its objectives), the efficiency (in terms of costs and benefits), the relevancy for the policy stakeholders, the coherence with other actions and legislation and the EU added value, according to the Better Regulation Toolbox and Guidelines. In particular, it will look at how the current legal framework fulfils the objectives of data sharing between the public authorities and making data publicly accessible in a user-friendly manner.

For the effectiveness criterion, it will be assessed how the INSPIRE Directive delivered on its objectives, in particular how it contributed to different use-cases, such as sharing of data between Member State authorities, public access to spatially enabled environmental information (active dissemination) and regulatory reporting. Furthermore, the evaluation will explore to what extent EU environment legislation and initiatives already benefit from applying the INSPIRE Directive to promote active dissemination of environmental information to gather evidence to assess its implementation and to streamline the monitoring and reporting process overall.

While providing insight on the cost-efficiency of the intervention under the efficiency analysis, the evaluation will also identify potential unnecessary burden of the Directive and its Implementing Rules that could provide guidance towards possible simplification. Furthermore, it will be explored how has the use of INSPIRE for environmental reporting affected the reporting burden.

For the assessment of coherence, the following policy areas, initiatives and legislative acts will be considered:

- Directive 2003/4/EC (in particular Articles 7 and 8 of the latter), how the two instruments complement each other in terms of actively disseminating environmental information to the public;
- The European Green Deal (COM (2019) 640 final);
- The European Strategy for Data (COM (2020) 66 final);
- Directive 2019/1024/EC on open data and the re-use of public sector information, including the implementing act on High Value Datasets that is under preparation;
- EU environment legislation and initiatives;
- EU legislation beyond the domain of environment, that references or depends on the INSPIRE Directive for its implementation.

Under the relevance criterion, the evaluation will also check if the INSPIRE Directive and the articles 7 and 8 of the Directive on public access to environmental information are still technologically sound in view of the current state of technology.

The following questions will be analysed:

1. **Current situation** (what is the current situation?)
 - Answering this question will provide an overview of how the implementation and application of INSPIRE has evolved in the period between 2014 and 2020 and how it affected the different stakeholders. Such an overview of the current situation will help to explain the key issues and/or external factors that have influenced the current situation.

- To what extent have the recommendations from the 2016 INSPIRE REFIT been implemented?
2. **Effectiveness** (to which extent have the objectives been achieved?)
 - What progress has been made over time towards achieving the objectives and targets set out in INSPIRE in various Member States?
 - Which main factors have contributed to – respectively stood in the way of achieving these objectives? (for example, specific provisions of the INSPIRE legislative framework or other environmental sectoral legislation, gaps, complexity or inconsistency in the measures or working methods of INSPIRE)
 - Is the progress made in line with the initial expectations and the INSPIRE implementation roadmap?
 - Is the geographical coverage of implementation consistent?
 - What are the qualitative and quantitative effects of INSPIRE?
 - To what extent is INSPIRE used for reporting under the environmental acquis?
 - How has the fact that INSPIRE was not applicable to the European institutions affected its effectiveness?
 - To what extent does the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive in the Member States build further on the obligations of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information (specifically the provisions under Articles 7 and 8)?
 3. **Efficiency** (have the objectives been achieved at reasonable costs?)
 - To what extent has the intervention been cost-effective?
 - Can any specific provisions in INSPIRE be identified that make cost-efficient implementation more difficult?
 - Can the INSPIRE Directive and implementing rules be made more cost-efficient? What is the simplification potential?
 - Are results achieved so far commensurate with the resources put forward and in line with the ones expected from the ex-ante evaluation of INSPIRE?
 - How proportionate were the costs of the intervention for different stakeholder groups (enterprises including SMEs, private citizens ...)?
 - Have the resources needed to implement INSPIRE been available?
 - How has the use of INSPIRE for environmental reporting affected the reporting burden?
 - How would further streamlining of the provisions in Articles 7 and 8 of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information with the active dissemination provisions of the INSPIRE Directive impact the administrative burden on the Member States.
 4. **Relevance** (objectives and actions still pertinent to the needs?)
 - To what extent does INSPIRE still match current needs and do they continue to require action at EU level?
 - To what extent are the general and specific objectives of INSPIRE still relevant to the issues (obstacles) they address?
 - To what extent is INSPIRE future-proof?
 - Are the articles 7 and 8 of Directive 2003/4/EC on public access to environmental information still relevant in view of the current state of technology?
 5. **Coherence**
 - To what extent is INSPIRE coherent internally?
 - To what extent is INSPIRE coherent with other EU environmental policies and initiatives?
 - To what extent does EU environment legislation and initiatives already benefit from applying the INSPIRE Directive to promote active dissemination of environmental information to gather evidence to assess its implementation and to streamline the monitoring and reporting process?
 - To what extent is INSPIRE coherent with wider EU policies and other interventions that have similar objectives?
 6. **EU added value**
 - What is the EU-added value of INSPIRE in comparison to what could be achieved at Member States national and/or regional level activities?
 - To what extent do the issues addressed by INSPIRE continue to require action at EU level?

The outcome of the evaluation will provide an important evidence base for possible follow-up actions under the European Strategy for Data (COM (2020) 66 final) and its function as a digital enabler for the European Green Deal initiative (COM (2019) 640 final). Therefore, the findings of the evaluation may lead to further EU action,

such as revised legislation subject to the results of a possible impact assessment.

B. Better regulation

Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

The evaluation will include a public consultation and a targeted stakeholder consultation aimed at testing the general knowledge and use of the INSPIRE related services both from a user perspective and from the perspective of data providers. The latter group will further be asked to identify and possibly quantify issues that can be improved to ensure continued provision of environmental data in the best resourceful way.

The public consultation will be conducted over 12 weeks with an expected start towards the end of 2020. The consultation will be conducted in all official EU languages and will be published on 'Have Your Say' portal. The targeted stakeholder consultations will be carried out by means of bilateral phone interviews, meetings and digital consultation tools.

Data collection and methodology

The evaluation will be supported by a study contract. The contract is expected to be running during the evaluation from Q3 2020 to Q3 2021. The INSPIRE Directive was subject to an evaluation in 2016, see [Commission Report \(COM\(2016\)478/2\)](#) and [Staff Working Document on the REFIT evaluation of the INSPIRE Directive \(SWD\(2016\)273\)](#). This previous evaluation will be used as input for this evaluation. The evaluation will identify and where possible quantify progress since 2014. It will analyse the underlying mechanisms that have either contributed to or hindered the attainment of the initially defined objectives to be achieved. The evaluation will also build on studies prepared in 2019, in particular, the study on the [Promotion of good practices for national environmental information systems and tools for data harvesting at EU level](#), the 2019 [Communication on Environmental Implementation Review](#) and the study on INSPIRE Directive Article 17 on data-sharing. The evaluation will in particular focus on those implementation issues that contribute to poor performance of making data available and accessible. Furthermore, the evaluation will gather views from users of the data services to identify whether the appropriate data is available in a user-friendly format and in sufficient quantity to meet their needs.