

Assessment of evaluation approaches within the EAHF

Recommendations for improving the commitments evaluation framework

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COWI

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The views expressed herein are those of the consultants alone and do not necessarily represent the official views of the European Commission.

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Introduction

The European Alcohol and Health Forum (hereinafter Forum) is one of the structures for implementing the EU Alcohol Strategy¹. The Forum's objective, as outlined in its founding document, *The Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum*², is to provide a common platform for all interested stakeholders at EU level that pledge to reduce alcohol-related harm.

The Forum supports the implementation of the EU strategy through stimulating and coordinating concrete stakeholder-driven action from across all parts of society. The Forum presently encompasses 70 members with a variety of backgrounds. These include companies and associations in the fields of sales and production of alcoholic beverages, media and advertising; NGOs aiming to minimise alcohol-related harm; research organisations and other professional bodies. Members formally engage by means of one or several initiatives, which are referred to as 'commitments'. Up to May 2013, Members have announced and implemented over 255 commitments to address alcohol-related harm, some of which are still on-going.

The Forum has succeeded in mobilising a broad range of stakeholders and in stepping up action to address alcohol related harm; total membership is up by about 30% since the Forum's creation³. The Forum is also a platform for dialogue and exchange amongst members with different interests and values and has provided an EU-wide approach to address common issues. To maintain and to strengthen this approach, which supports Member States' policy initiatives, continuing action at the EU level is essential.

In this regard, the evaluation phase of members' commitment is critical to the Forum's effectiveness. Despite the overall progress over time of the members' annual monitoring reports (2009⁴, 2010⁵, 2011⁶, 2012⁷) the 'outcome and impact indicators' and 'evaluation details' sections have been identified as those that could benefit the most from further guidance and improvement.

This report provides an overview of the evaluation approaches used in final commitment monitoring reports and identifies examples of good evaluation practices developed by Forum members.

Chapter one discusses the commitment monitoring process as presented in the Forum Charter. It also summarises the assessment framework developed by the external consultants for the evaluation of the quality of the commitment monitoring reports. The main evaluation challenges faced by commitment- holders are likewise discussed.

¹ Communication from the Commission of 24 October 2006, "An EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm", COM (2006) 625 final.

² European Commission (2007), *Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum*, http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/documents/Alcohol_charter2007.pdf

³ Milieu Ltd, COWI (2012), *Assessment of the added value of the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm*, Final Report for the European Commission, DG SANCO http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/report_assessment_eu_alcohol_strategy_2012_en.pdf

⁴ EAHF. First Progress Report on the Implementation of the EU Alcohol Strategy http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/monitoring_progress_en.pdf

⁵ EAHF. Second Monitoring Progress Report. http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/monitoring_progress2_en.pdf

⁶ EAHF. Third Monitoring Progress Report. http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/monitoring_progress3_en.pdf

⁷ EAHF. Fourth Monitoring Progress Report. http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/docs/monitoring_progress4_en.pdf

Chapter two sets out the framework for the evaluation of commitments based on a review of literature on the theory and practice of evaluation. In addition, it examines the role of the intervention logic in facilitating the commitment's planning and implementation and identifies key questions for the evaluation processes.

Chapter three provides an overview of evaluation approaches followed by Forum members. The report reviewed 99 final commitment monitoring reports and 10 separate evaluation reports. Particular areas of focus include: 1) the use of internal/external evaluation; 2) the evaluation methods deployed; and 3) the use of outcome and impact indicators. During the inception phase of this project it was agreed to consider all final reports since 2010.

Chapter four presents a summary of the good practices identified during the desk review. As a first step of the analysis, we reviewed the scores from the Monitoring Progress Reports and the individual feedback forms. We identified the highest scores in outcome and impact indicators and evaluation details sections and made a shortlist which we then analysed further against a specific set of criteria.

Based on the examination of the outcome and impact indicators used in the activities carried in the context of the Forum, the final chapter puts forward suggestions to refine the commitment database relating to outcomes and impacts, as well as some general recommendations to be taken into account as part of the commitment monitoring process.

1. MONITORING COMMITMENT AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides an overview of the commitment monitoring process as presented in the Forum Charter. It also summarises the assessment framework developed by the external consultants for the evaluation of the quality of the commitment monitoring reports. The main evaluation challenges faced by commitment holders are likewise discussed. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the rationale for adopting an evaluation-oriented approach when implementing commitments.

By becoming member of the Forum, organizations subscribe to the Forum Charter, which includes an obligation to report regularly on the implementation of their commitments.

Monitoring of members' commitments is an essential part of the Forum's Charter, requiring that *'there is sufficient outside involvement in reviewing progress and outcomes to create trust in the processes'*.⁸ Forum members are expected to monitor the performance of their individual commitments in a *'transparent, participatory and accountable way'*, and to *'report on the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the commitments'* by presenting them on a website.⁹ As part of this process, all members submit yearly monitoring reports to DG SANCO on the progress of their commitment(s).

The benefits of monitoring commitments are twofold. First, it can help enhance transparency and accountability with regard to Forum members' commitments, which in turn contributes to building trust amongst Forum members. Second, it facilitates the improvement of the quality of monitoring reports, especially in terms of their clarity is instrumental in communicating on the work of the Forum towards the reduction of alcohol-related harm to the general public. This mechanism also contributes to developing and sharing good practice; systematic monitoring is crucial to ensure that Forum members are able to assess on-going initiatives and timely adapt them in the face of unexpected challenges or constraints.

To follow the implementation of the Forum commitments and to assess to what extent there is a transparent, participatory and accountable approach to monitoring, Monitoring Progress Reports were prepared in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012. These annual assessments carried out by external consultant focus on the quality of the monitoring report and not on the actual impacts of the commitments. As will be explained in the next chapter, this report goes beyond the monitoring approach and tries to shed light on the importance to adopt an evaluation approach that would ensure a better implementation of the commitment and ultimately ensure effectiveness.

In the monitoring process, Members submit their monitoring reports in a standardized format comprising 12 sections that relate to the main requirements stated in Annex 2 ("Monitoring Commitment") of the Forum's Charter¹⁰, including summary; implementation description; objectives; relevance to the aims of the Forum; input; output; outcome and impact indicators. Where the implementation of a commitment has been completed, the annual report is also a final report: in this case, Forum members are also requested to present information regarding their evaluation and dissemination activities (sections that are not mandatory for intermediate monitoring reports).

The Monitoring Commitment in Annex 2 to the Forum Charter provides guidance to Forum members on how to take forward the monitoring of their commitments in the context of this specific

⁸ Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum, European Commission, 2007.

⁹ Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum, European Commission, 2007. Annex 2.

¹⁰ A copy of the 'Monitoring Commitment' as presented in the Forum Charter is offered in Annex 2 of this report

process. The Annex defines that **outcome and impact indicators** “measure the quality and the quantity of the results achieved through the actions in the commitment”. In other words they are meant to indicate how successful a commitment has been in relation to the original objectives. The Annex also states that, “indicators related to outcome are not part of the minimum requirements and may be provided by those who are in a position to do so.” It stresses, however, that this information is crucial to build up confidence and shed light upon the commitment’s effectiveness. This is why, regardless of the status of the monitoring report, Forum members are encouraged to complete this section, despite the fact that the section is not considered as mandatory according to the Charter of the Forum¹¹. The Charter also distinguishes between “short term outcomes (such as increased knowledge), intermediate outcomes (such as change in behaviour towards more responsible alcohol consumption) or long term outcomes (such as reduction in road traffic accidents, or in the incidence of liver cirrhosis, due to reduced alcohol consumption)”¹².

Annex two does not provide any guidance on ‘**evaluation details**’, leaving it open to different interpretations. Evaluation details could, in fact, refer to both an evaluation of the effectiveness of the commitments (i.e. an outcome or impact measure) and/or of the implementation cycle of the commitment as a whole, including activities performed. In the commitment form it is simply required that the commitment holder describes the tools and methods used in the evaluation of their commitment, including references to both internal and external evaluators.

The four Monitoring Progress Reports were based on an assessment of the quality of individual members’ monitoring activities.¹³ This assessment provides an opportunity to compare the quality of the information provided in the monitoring reports. In line with the Forum’s Charter, the overall framework for evaluating the quality of members’ monitoring reports is based on the use of “SMART” indicators: information provided in each section of the reports is assessed on the basis of criteria on specificity, clarity, focus and measurement. These criteria are explained in the Box 1 below.

Box 1 SMART indicators (Forum Charter)

- **Specific** (connected to the action(s)) – clear about what, where, why and when the situation will be changed;
- **Measurable** – able to quantify or qualify the achievements, changes or benefits;
- **Attainable/achievable** – able to attain the objectives (knowing the resources and capacities at the disposal of all those concerned);
- **Realistic** – able to obtain the level of change reflected in the objective;
- **Time bound** – stating the time period in which the objectives will be accomplished.

Each section receives a maximum score of five if all applicable criteria are fulfilled. The assessment criteria for the sections ‘outcome and impact indicators’ and ‘evaluation’ are presented in the Table 1a and 1b Assessment criteria of specificity, clarity, focus and measurement for section ‘outcome and impact indicators’ and ‘evaluation’ below.

Table 1a and 1b Assessment criteria of specificity, clarity, focus and measurement for section ‘outcome and impact indicators’ and ‘evaluation’

Outcome and impact indicators

¹¹ In case a commitment is at an early stage of implementation, Forum members should at least identify and indicate the expected outcome(s)

¹² Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum, European Commission, 2007. Annex , p. 11

¹³ The overall framework for evaluating the quality of members’ monitoring reports is based on the use of “SMART” procedure. Each report field was assessed on a scale from 0 to 5; 0 being no (sufficient response, 5 being excellent. See for instance EAHF, Third Monitoring Progress Report

They go above the minimum agreed requirements to monitor a commitment. They measure the quality and the quantity of the results achieved through the actions in the commitment how successful was the commitment in relation to the original objectives?		
Assessment criteria	Question	Explanation
Specificity	<i>Does the report describe the outcomes?</i>	The evaluation will focus on whether the report provides all the relevant information on the outcomes and impacts. The scoring only assesses whether the relevant information is included (the manner in which it is described and the level of detail are scored by the other criteria).
Clarity	<i>Does the report link the outcomes to the original objectives?</i>	The quality of the information provided is evaluated here. The evaluation focuses on whether the report provides, where relevant, links (between objectives, input, output, etc.) to ensure a better overall understanding.
	<i>Are the outcome and impact indicators set out in an understandable manner for a reader?</i>	It assesses whether the information is provided in a clear and understandable manner, and provides a good overview for the reader.
Focus	<i>Is only relevant information included? (not superfluous)</i>	The evaluation focuses on whether the report includes sufficient (but not superfluous) detail and, where necessary, provides contextual information.
	<i>Is sufficient contextual information provided to understand the outcomes of the commitment?</i>	
Measurement	<i>Are relevant quantitative data provided?</i>	The evaluation assesses whether the report provides sufficient quantitative data.

Evaluation details		
Tools and methods used, internal or external evaluators		
Assessment criteria	Question	Explanation
Specificity	<i>Are the evaluation details provided specifically linked to the commitment/different parts of the commitment?</i>	The evaluation will focus on whether the report provides all the relevant information regarding the evaluation. The scoring will only assess whether the relevant information is included (the manner in which it is described and the level of detail are scored by the other criteria).
Clarity	<i>Are the Evaluation details set out in an understandable manner for a reader?</i>	It assesses whether the information is provided in a clear and understandable manner, and provides a good overview for the reader.
Focus	<i>Is only relevant information included? (not superfluous)</i>	The evaluation will focus on whether the report includes sufficient (but not superfluous) detail and, where necessary, provides contextual information.
	<i>Is sufficient contextual information provided to understand the outcomes of the commitment?</i>	
Measurement	<i>Are relevant quantitative data provided?</i>	The evaluation will assess whether the report provides sufficient quantitative data wherever relevant.

Notwithstanding the overall improvement in the quality of information provided in the Forum members' annual monitoring reports observed by the Monitoring Progress Reports, some of the shortcomings identified since the 2009 quality evaluation have persisted through 2012. Areas for improvement have been identified, especially for the fields that are the object of this report: 'outcome and impact indicators' and 'evaluation'.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that the number of monitoring reports that provide little or no information concerning the commitment's outcome and impact remains significantly high. This has been a recurring finding in the quality assessments since 2009. This is mainly caused by the fact

that Members have difficulties in distinguishing between outputs and outcomes (or impacts) and very often the little information they have regarding the outcomes is presented in the incorrect section (i.e. short-term outcomes are often presented as outputs). Such inaccuracy, besides misleading the reader, makes the identification of outcomes and impact very challenging.

Concerning the evaluation section, a recurrent problem continues to be that some monitoring reports provide very limited information on the distinction between internal and external evaluation. Information is also scarce for elements, pertaining to different activities in cases where commitments entail multiple components (e.g. methods applied, time, target etc.).

The different Monitoring Progress Reports have also served to highlight that there is room for improvement in terms of relevant quantitative data and linkages between the different aspects of the commitment (objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes). There was a significant proportion of monitoring reports where a description was lacking as to how the objectives, inputs, outputs and outcomes of a commitment link to each other.

As a conclusion, a steady increase in scores from external evaluations suggests that there has been progress towards better monitoring of the implementation of the commitments to action, specifically to those sections that report on the implementation, the definition of objectives, the relevance and the use of input indicators. Evaluation and reporting of outcomes and impacts, however, has been an under-developed area. Although Forum members generally have an interest in documenting the impacts of their commitments, evaluation tends to remain at the level of outputs or short term intermediate outcomes, due to both methodological and resource-related challenges.

As noted before, it is important to keep in mind that the assessment carried out by the external consultant focuses on the quality of the monitoring report rather than on the actual impacts of the commitments. Although the assessment criteria presented above could be used to help commitment holders improve their reporting (and evaluating) of activities, they are not sufficient. Additional criteria and broader guidance should be used.

Many of the shortcomings and challenges identified by the Monitoring Progress Reports with regard to the 'evaluation' and 'outcome and impact indicators' sections could be addressed through more systematic reference to an *intervention logic*. Ways in which the intervention logic can be instrumental in the process of planning, monitoring and evaluating commitments are discussed in the following chapter.

2. SETTING THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

The present chapter firstly provides key relevant definitions and discusses the main purposes and modalities of evaluation. It then discusses the role of the intervention logic in helping develop good evaluation practices to assess outcomes and impacts of commitments in the context of the Forum.

2.1. DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

2.1.1. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

As defined by the Commission, evaluation is a ‘*judgement of interventions according to their results, impacts and needs they aim to satisfy*’¹⁴. It is a systematic tool which provides a rigorous evidence-base to inform decision-making. For many years it has been the main tool used by the Commission to assess the extent to which EU interventions reach the set policy objectives and how their performance can be improved in the future. Evaluations focus on issues such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, utility and added value of EU interventions¹⁵.

In the context of the Forum, evaluation is useful to understand whether the commitment has been carried out in an effective manner, whether the objectives set at the start have been achieved as well as what lessons can be learned for developing new activities and programmes. Evaluation offers a way to determine whether an initiative has been worthwhile in terms of delivering what was intended and expected. However, good evaluation can also answer other important questions of critical importance for the development and the functioning of the Forum process, as presented in Box 2 below.

Box 2 Purpose of an evaluation

1. Measure the programme/activity's effectiveness – document that objectives have been met
2. Inform future programmes planning and design
3. Assist in an efficient allocation of resources
4. Improve the quality of the activity
5. Provide important internal lessons for those implementing the activity
6. To report on the achievements of the activity (i.e. accountability)
7. Ensure transparency
8. Provide broader lessons about good practice

Sources: European Commission (2004); author's own compilation

2.1.2. THE INTERVENTION LOGIC: MONITORING VS. EVALUATING

The role of the evaluation function should be clearly defined and distinguished from the roles of other functions, such as monitoring. Monitoring is a continuous and systematic process carried out during the duration of an activity, which generates quantitative and qualitative data on the implementation of the intervention. This system is designed to provide regular feedback on the implementation of activities (i.e. implementation, input and output sections of the monitoring commitment form)¹⁶. Performance monitoring does not however usually collect data about the results and impacts occurring as a consequence of the activities. Furthermore it does not necessarily provide answers as to why an activity does or does not attain its objectives.

Commitment holders are requested to present a plan for the implementation of the commitment.

¹⁴ 1 SEC(2000)1051, Focus on Results: Strengthening Evaluation of Commission Activities http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society/evaluation/data/pdf/lib_master/sec2000_1051_strengthening_eval.pdf

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/key_feat_en.htm

¹⁶ European Commission (2004), Evaluating EU activities. A practical guide for the Commission services. DG BUDGET – Evaluation unit, p. 10

Only at a later stage – at the moment of the annual submission of the commitment monitoring report -, however, are they asked to report on the monitoring and, only on a voluntary basis, on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the commitment. Indicators related to outcome are, in fact, not included in the minimum requirements for reporting on the commitment implementation. Forum members are, however, encouraged to evaluate the outcomes and the impacts of their commitment. Especially now that the Forum process has come to his full implementation, more and more attention is given to measuring the effects of the commitment activities. The EU Alcohol Strategy Evaluation highlights that Forum members across different categories are willing to further enhance the evaluation and impact of commitments. Hence, a shift from a ‘monitoring approach’ to an ‘evaluation approach’ should be promoted. It is extremely important that commitment holders define a plan before the start of the activity which clearly maps out the main steps and requirements associated to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the commitment.

In this regard, the use of the intervention logic can help enhance the focus and robustness of evaluation activities. It consists of a systematic and visual way of presenting the key steps required in order to turn a set of resources or inputs into activities that are designed to lead to a specific set of changes or outcomes. If well-defined before an activity is implemented, the intervention logic can facilitate planning and execution, as well as the identification of key questions about the activity and the data and information to be collected for the monitoring and evaluation. When evaluating commitments, the intervention logic should be referred to in order to assess the effectiveness of a commitment; i.e. the extent to which its supported objectives have been met.

An illustration of the intervention logic process with specific reference to the EAHF monitoring commitment reports’ sections is presented in the diagram below (

Figure 1). It illustrates the differences in scope between the monitoring and evaluation approaches.

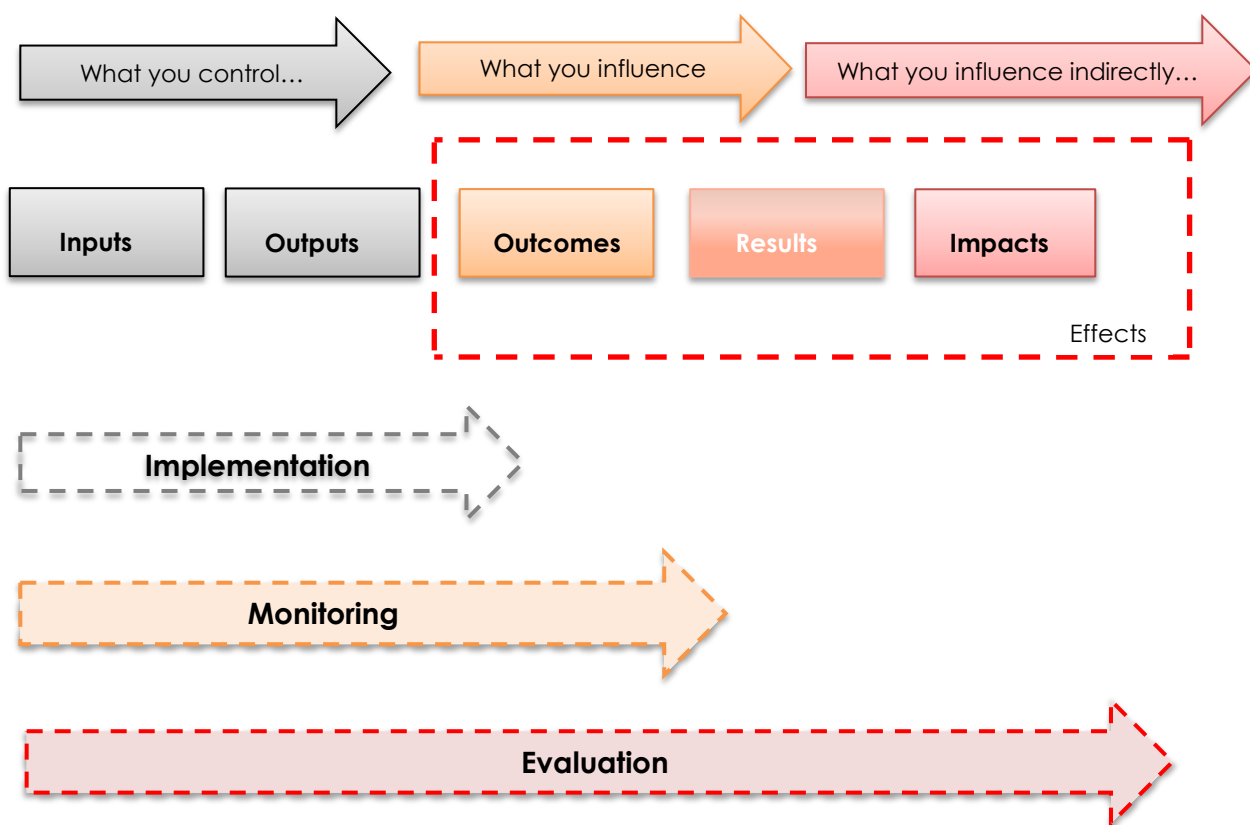
Monitoring serves to provide regular feedback during the course of an activity’s implementation on those factors that are under the control of the commitment holder; i.e. inputs and outputs. Evaluation attempts to assess the effects occurring as a consequence of the activity. In other words, about it focuses on those factors that the activity intends to influence directly (outcomes) or indirectly (results and impacts).

The intervention logic reflects the structure of the ‘monitoring report’ outlined in Annex two of the Forum Charter. It requires Forum members to identify and describe a number of commitment-related elements. These include the following:

1. The rationale underlying the existence of the problem and the objectives to be achieved (**objective, relevance**)
2. The context within which the intervention takes place, how various elements are expected to interact (**implementation**)
3. The resources and activities required in order to achieve intervention’s objectives (**input**)
4. Products and services developed (**outputs**)
5. How these generate the desired results in the short and medium term (**outcomes**)
6. How these generate the desired results in the long term (**impacts**).

This logic framework is particularly useful in those instances where assessment is not straightforward (e.g. as a result of time lags between implementation and effects). This tends to be the case of EAHF commitments. The logic framework helps the evaluator/commitment holders to understand how progress has been made along an anticipated path towards the final impacts.

Figure 1 Components of the intervention logic in line with EAHF monitoring commitment reports' sections



Source: Adapted by the authors from European Commission (2004)

2.1.3. DRAWING UP AN EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION LOGIC

The following section outlines a series of steps that will enable commitment holders to draw up the intervention logic for the commitment to be undertaken. As already highlighted, it is important that the intervention logic inform the process of commitment conception and planning. When planning the commitment, it is better to start with the issue being addressed, then consider the impact or change the intervention is intended to achieve before working backwards through the steps required in order to achieve these objectives.

A. Step 1: Identify the issue (objectives)

Setting objectives when an intervention is being designed is an essential aid to evaluation since they are an integral part of assessing an intervention directly with regard to the issues of relevance and effectiveness.

This step involves describing the problem that the intervention attempts to solve or the issues that it seeks to address. This step should help to articulate the rationale for the intervention and identify the outcomes and impacts.

Useful questions to ask to identify the context and issues:

- What are the stated objectives of this intervention/activity?
- What is the particular problem that has been identified – who has identified this, and why at this particular point of time?

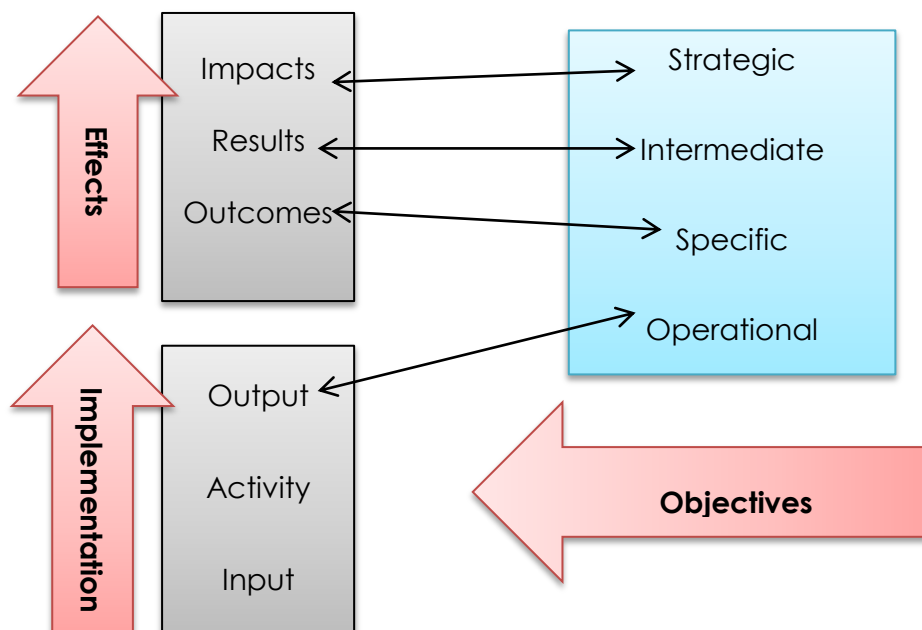
Furthermore, objectives provide a starting point for the development of performance indicators. Objectives can be set at several different levels:

- **Strategic objectives** provide a basis for assessing an intervention in relation to longer-term and more diffuse effects (*impacts*).
- **Intermediate objectives** provide a basis for assessing an intervention in relation to its direct or indirect short- to medium-term effects (*results*) on the target group.
- **Specific objectives** provide a basis for assessing an intervention in relation to its direct short-term effects (*outcome indicators*) on the target group.
- **Operational objectives** provide a basis for assessing an intervention in relation to its *outputs*. Such objectives are normally described in the ‘implementation section’ of the commitment monitoring report, when presenting the milestone for the implementation of the commitment (*who, when, what, etc.*).

Given that the main focus of an evaluation is on the effects (i.e. outcomes, results and impacts) of an intervention, the most relevant objectives through which performance is assessed are those at the specific, intermediate and strategic level.

The relationship between the implementation, objectives set and the effects of the commitment is visually presented in Figure 2 below. With reference to the Forum commitments, *Strategic objectives* are those identified by the ‘relevance section’ of the commitment monitoring report. In this section, the report should describe, how the commitment contributed to achieving the overall aims of the Forum. *Intermediate* and *Specific objectives* should be clearly identified in the ‘objective section’ of the commitment monitoring report, while *Operational objectives* with the ‘outputs section’ of the commitment monitoring report. The clearer the description of objectives is, the easier it will be to assess a commitment’s effects.

Figure 2 Link between Objectives and the Outcomes and Impacts in the intervention logic



Source: Adapted by the authors from European Commission (2004)

b. Step 2: Identify the final impacts (results and impact indicators)

The box at the bottom left corner of the intervention logic diagrams presents the overarching objectives of the intervention; i.e. what is to be achieved. **Impact evaluation** looks beyond the imminent results of policies, instruction or services to identify longer-term as well as unintended programme effects.

Questions to ask in identifying impacts:

- What is the intervention looking to achieve in the long-term (e.g. reduced alcohol related harm)?.
- What objectives will this intervention aim at?

The Forum Charter states that, ideally, the effects on the reduction of alcohol-related harm – as the ultimate goal of all commitments – should be evaluated, preferably on the longer term. However, given the current nature and timeframe of the Forum process, in many cases it will not be possible for the Forum members to perform this type of impact evaluation. Reasons for this include the geographical dispersion of some commitments (for instance marketing activities) as well as resource constraint that prevent members from performing an effective evaluation in accordance with ‘scientific gold standards’ (which, for example, would require a control condition or a control region)¹⁷.

c. Step 3: Identify outcomes

The step involves identifying what short to medium-term outcomes (for example, in terms of changes in behaviour, attitude or knowledge) will be required if the ultimate impacts identified in step 2 are to be achieved through the implementation of a particular activity. Outcome evaluations study the immediate or direct effects of the programme on the target group(s).

¹⁷ Charter establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum, European Commission, 2007. Annex 2, p. 11
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Useful questions to ask in identifying outcomes:

- What is the intervention looking to achieve in the short to medium term (e.g. increased awareness, partnership working, better skills, change in attitude or behaviour...)?
- With regard to the above, what kind of changes should be expected as a result of intervention activities?

Steps relating to the identification of outputs and inputs are not discussed in this report.

2.2. EVALUATION VARIANTS

The following sections outline different evaluation variants relevant in the context the Forum. Evaluation details should be clearly identified already at the planning stage of the commitment. Such variants constitute the categorization against which the overview of evaluation approaches followed by the Forum members was carried out as presented in chapter 3.1.

2.2.1. SOURCE AND TIME OF EVALUATION

The European Commission categorises evaluation according to different criteria, such as temporal scope or how it is conducted (internal/external)¹⁸.

Ex ante evaluation is a process that supports the preparation of the project/activity. Its purpose is to gather information and carry out analyses which help to ensure that the delivery of the objectives will be successful, that the instruments used are cost-effective and that reliable evaluation will be subsequently possible.

In itinere evaluation examines an on-going activity. This evaluation can build on work of an earlier ex ante evaluation by assessing the continued relevance of objectives and also posing questions relating to the delivery of initial outputs and the early effects on an activity. An intermediate evaluation has an important role to play in producing direct feedback into the implementation process and thus help to improve the quality of on-going activities.

Ex post evaluation embraces the entire intervention period, with a special focus on the impacts, efficiency and effectiveness of the activity implemented. It should also assess how sustainable the realised impacts are and what are the main factors behind success or failure of an activity. Since it usually takes time for impacts to materialise, ex post evaluations be scheduled accordingly.

Evaluation may be conducted either by professionals belonging to the organisation responsible for the implementation of the activity (internal evaluation) or by external experts (external evaluation). The use of **external evaluators** is particularly suitable for evaluations with a strong summative dimension (i.e. determining the effectiveness of an activity for the purposes of accountability is central to the evaluation). Since external evaluators view an intervention with a certain degree of detachment, they may be more independent in their assessment of it. Furthermore, external evaluators tend to be in a better position to engage in dialogue with relevant stakeholders and access and process relevant data and information.

On the other hand, **internal evaluation** is particularly useful where the formative dimension (i.e. an evaluation concerned with examining ways of improving and enhancing the implementation and

¹⁸ European Commission (2004), Evaluating EU activities. A practical guide for the Commission services. DG BUDGET – Evaluation unit, p. 12

management of interventions) is dominant; this, in fact, allows for results to be taken into account in future implementation of similar activities. Sometimes it might be useful to combine both external and internal evaluation approaches in the evaluation process. Even if the coordination and the main parts of an evaluation are carried out in-house, some of its components can be entrusted to external experts. Examples of these are carrying out surveys or organising workshops, where the assumptions and opinions of different stakeholders are tested. It must be also highlighted that external evaluation entails higher costs compared to internal evaluation.¹⁹

2.2.2. EVALUATION METHODS

Surveys are best adapted to collecting facts and opinions from the target group during intermediate and ex post evaluations. They can be most effectively implemented when an up-to-date list of people in the target group and their contact address is available. Surveys are most effective when made up of closed-end questions whereby respondents must choose from within a pre-set list of answers. This question format can help generate valuable data and information about a commitment's effects.

Interviews with key informants are suitable for all evaluation situations, being adapted to collecting qualitative data of both a retrospective and prospective nature. They may be structured in character, taking a form similar to that of a questionnaire, semi-structured with the interview focusing on providing detailed information on a number of key themes whilst leaving the possibility to explore subthemes and to develop new topics, or unstructured so as to allow areas of interest to be developed and explored in the course of the interview. Interviews are especially useful for gathering in-depth information about process-related issues, i.e. how events occur and why.

Focus groups are a survey technique based on a small group discussion. The particularity of this tool is its ability to harness the dynamics of the people who are affected by an intervention in order to generate rich, in-depth information on a specific subject. Focus groups can be used as a means to collect both retrospective and prospective data of a qualitative nature, for example about existing or past processes and effects, or about possible future events and situations that may arise as a consequence of a yet-to-be-implemented intervention. Focus groups should be representative in the sense that participants bring the variety of different viewpoints to bear on a particular subject.

Desk research collects analyses both quantitative and qualitative data about the context in which an activity unfolds as well as the activity itself, using a diversity of information sources and tools with a view to identifying patterns across data and validating the associated findings. Desk research is involved in gathering data from existing resources. Desk research is very effective and can be conducted in starting phase of the evaluation as it is quite quick and cheap and most of the basic information could be easily fetched which can be used as benchmark in the research process.

Media monitoring in an evaluation technique that aggregates information gathered by traditional and social media content providers, using specific software to compile and analyse that information – sometimes further refined by human analysts. Media monitoring and analysis can help members track advertisement campaigns, explore emerging social trends, and obtain insights into how media and other opinion leaders are responding to their products and messages. It can also help assess prominence, or the attention a story on an organization, brand, issue, message, etc. receives in the media. It can be measured in terms of the quantity and quality of media coverage, including type of media, extent (of coverage), share of voice, story size or length, placement, media circulation or audience share, media relevance (to the organization's audience), story treatment, use of visuals,

¹⁹ European Commission (2004), Evaluating EU activities. A practical guide for the Commission services. DG BUDGET – Evaluation unit

type of coverage, etc..

Website statistics refers to the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of internet data. It is not just a tool for measuring website visits but can be used as a tool to assess and improve the effectiveness of delivering a specific message through a website. Web statistics applications can also help companies measure the results of traditional advertising or awareness raising campaigns. Web statistics provide information about the number of visitors to a website and the number of page views. It helps gauge traffic and popularity trends which is useful for evaluating effectiveness. On-site web analytics measure a visitor's behaviour once on a website. This data is typically compared against key performance indicators for performance, and used to improve a web site or awareness campaign's audience response. Google Analytics is the most widely-used on-site web analytics service; although new tools are emerging that provide additional layers of information, including heat maps and session replay.

Compliance check aims to enhance the timely and accurate implementation of a regulation or self-regulation. Compliance checks can be used for educational purposes: to identify, warn, and educate alcohol establishments that serve or sell alcohol to underage youth.

Peer review refers to the assessments, ratings, or evaluations of a product or performance that is carried out by other people in the same field (peers) in order to maintain or enhance the quality of the work or performance in that field. The precise form and nature of a peer review varies according to the context. Its strength is based on the concept that a larger, more diverse group of people will usually find more weaknesses and errors in a work or performance and be more impartial in its evaluation than will merely the person or group who created the work or performance.

2.2.3. TYPE OF DATA

All evaluations use data collected in a systematic manner and which are associated to indicators. As defined by Church and Rogers²⁰, an indicator can be defined as a quantitative or qualitative factor or variable against which we can measure change associated with particular policies. They allow us to perceive difference, improvements or developments relating to a desired change, and over a specific time period when set against a baseline. As such, they must be SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timed. Key components of indicators include the following:

- What needs to be measured
- Unit of measurement to describe the change
- Status at the baseline year
- Size, magnitude or dimension of the intended change
- Quality or standard of the change to be achieved
- Target populations
- Timeframe²¹

Data may be **quantitative** (e.g. counts of programme participants, number of website visits or level of alcohol consumption etc.). They also may be **qualitative** (e.g. descriptions of how the perception of a participant changed). Successful evaluations often blend quantitative and qualitative data collection. The choice of which to use should be made with an understanding that there is usually more than one way to answer any given question.

²⁰ Church C. and Rogers MM (2006), Indicators in Designing for Results, SFCG, Washington, USA

²¹ Church C. and Rogers MM (2006), Indicators in Designing for Results, SFCG, Washington, USA

3. OVERVIEW OF EVALUATION APPROACHES

This chapter provides an overview of evaluation approaches followed by the Forum members. The report reviewed 99 final commitment monitoring reports and 10 separate evaluation reports. Particular areas of focus were on evaluation details (use of internal/external evaluation; evaluation methods deployed); and on the use of outcome and impact indicators. During the inception phase it was agreed that the overview would consider all final reports since 2010.

3.1. OVERVIEW OF 'EVALUATION DETAILS'

Evaluation approaches have been mapped according to the evaluation methods deployed (i.e. data collection tools), the source of evaluation (internal, external or both), the type of data used (quantitative, qualitative or both) and the timing of the evaluation (*ex ante*, *in itinere*, *ex post*).

The evaluation methods have been categorised as follows:

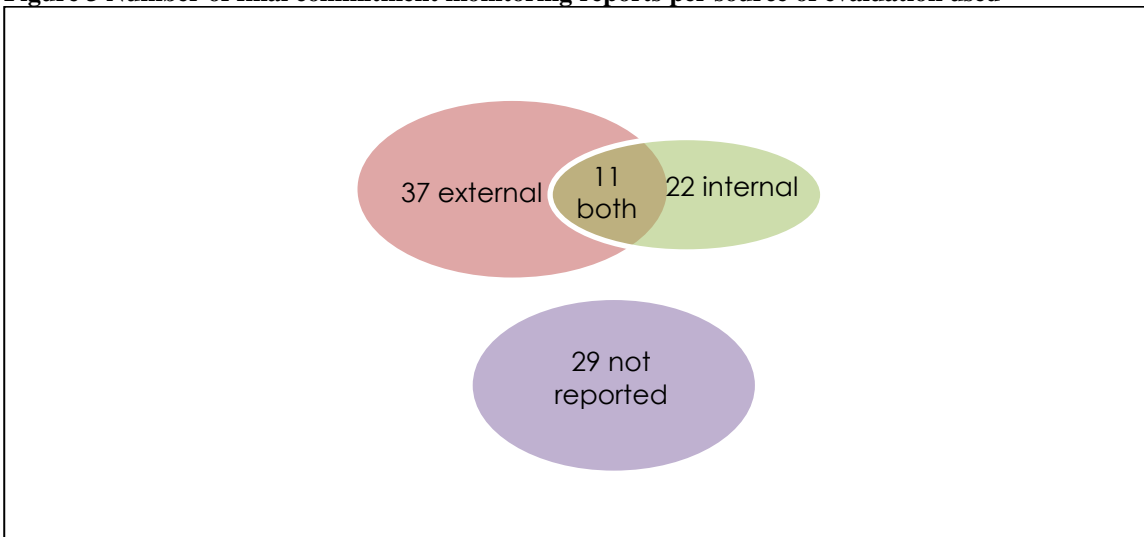
- Survey (online, in written form, over the phone)
- Focus group / external feedback
- Interview
- Website statistics
- Media monitoring
- Desk research
- Peer review / internal feedback
- Compliance check.

It is worth noting that many of the monitoring reports limit to vaguely mention that some sort of feedback was received during or at the end of the implementation of the commitment. Very often information on outcomes and impacts is in fact not supported by clear evidence as Forum members refer to the feedback received from participants/beneficiaries of the activity without clarifying if such information has been gathered by means of a survey or other methods (e.g. 'the training is considered to be useful', 'participants were satisfied with the service', 'participants said that they have learn something'). Such information is ambiguous and can hardly be categorized under one of the evaluation methods identified in the analysis. However, given the high number of monitoring reports that use this approach, the feedback provided by participants or beneficiaries to the activity has been interpreted as external feedback and clustered with the focus group method, while feedback provided by people from the organisation which is owner of the commitment (e.g. member associations) has been interpreted as internal and categorised under the peer review method.

3.1.1. SOURCE OF EVALUATION

Figure 3 shows that the majority of the 99 final commitment monitoring reports use external evaluators. This amounts to 37 of the 99 reports, while only 22 evaluated the commitment internally. 29 of the reports do not provide information on the type of evaluation deployed and 11 use both internal and external methods to evaluate different components of the activity (e.g. external evaluators carried out media monitoring, and surveys are carried out internally).

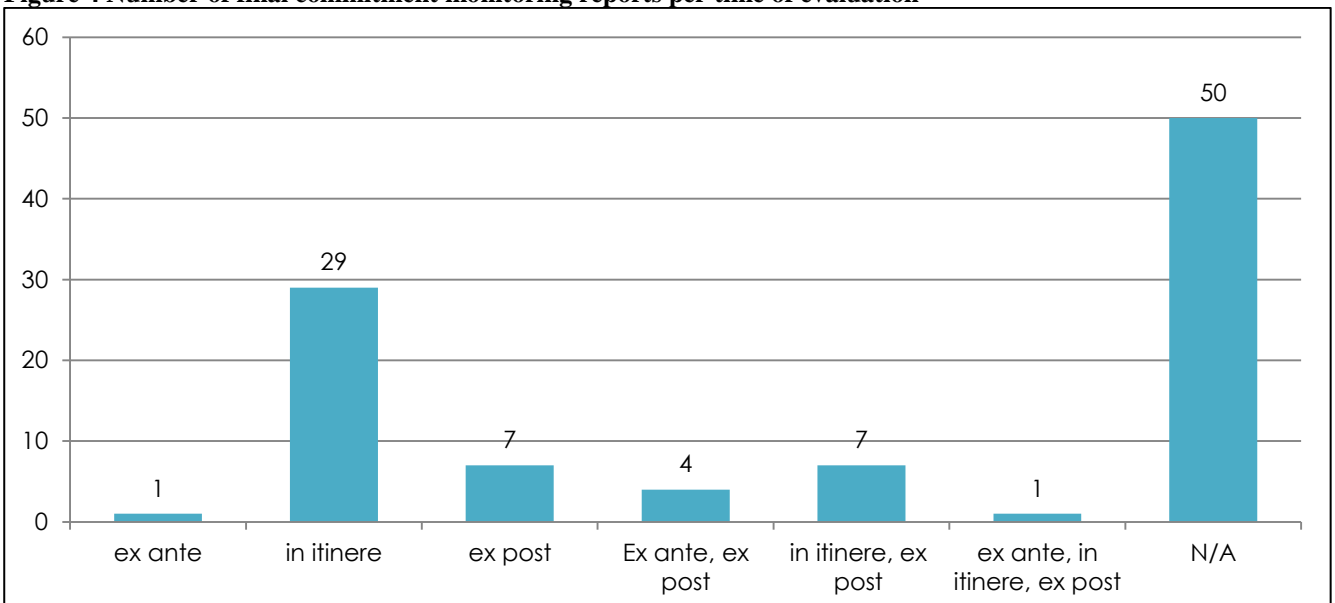
Figure 3 Number of final commitment monitoring reports per source of evaluation used



3.1.2. TIME OF EVALUATION

Figure 4 **Error! Reference source not found.** shows that half of the reports do not specify if the evaluation has been performed in previous periods or when it has been performed. It is therefore difficult to establish baseline data for comparison once a commitment is implemented. Only one report indicates that an evaluation has taken place before, during and after (*ex ante*, *in itinere*, *ex post*) implementation. Almost 30 of the reports indicate that the evaluation was carried out during (*in itinere*) the implementation of the commitment (e.g. survey or interview carried out after a conference or training was completed).

Figure 4 Number of final commitment monitoring reports per time of evaluation

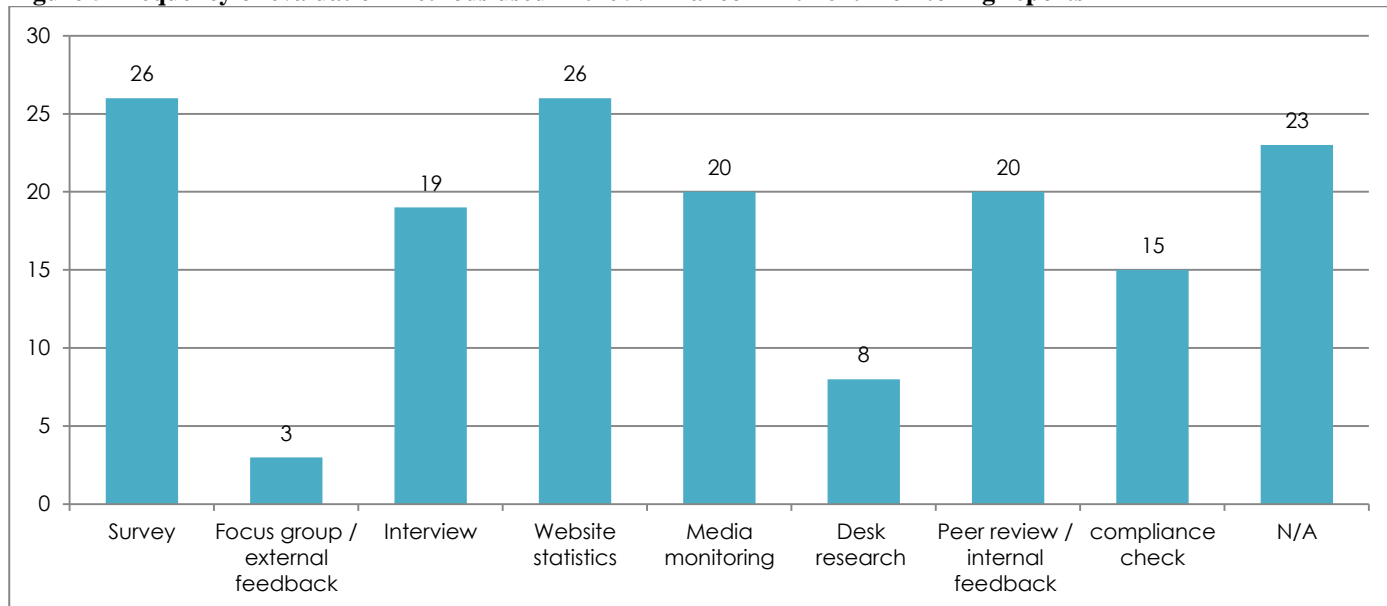


3.1.3. EVALUATION METHODS

Figure 5 shows the frequency of evaluation methods used by the commitment holders as presented in the 'evaluation details' section of the 99 commitment monitoring reports. Note that a

commitment may have been evaluated using more than one method. In addition, Table 2 below the figure maps the frequency of evaluation methods against each type of activity.

Figure 5 Frequency of evaluation methods used in the 99 final commitment monitoring reports



As shown in the above figure, the most frequently used evaluation methods are surveys and website statistics followed by interviews (respectively used 26, 26 and 23 times). As indicated in the table, this is probably due to the fact that the majority of commitments undertaken in the context of the Forum consist of education and awareness-raising activities²². When education activities are implemented through the organisation of conferences, seminars or training, their effectiveness could be easily assessed by directly engaging with the participants with a survey or an interview after the implementation took place. When the awareness raising activities (i.e. consumer information, media activities and youth involvement) are implemented through the launch or the upgrading of a website - which is a strong component of the majority of the commitments - data necessary to measure the effectiveness are easily accessible and measurable through the use of internet analytic tools. Not surprisingly, media monitoring is the most frequently used method for the evaluation of media activity.

The table also shows that the evaluation methods most used for assessing commercial communication activities are compliance check and peer review/internal feedback. Such activities often refer to rule enforcement and promotion of self-regulation compliance in relation to marketing and sales activity (e.g. Responsible Drinking Messages on beverages). Compliance check is therefore the most suitable method to be applied for evaluation of marketing activity.

Peer review in the context of the Forum refers to the feedback received by people within the organisation and/or company that have not been directly involved in the implementation of the commitment but have experienced and report on its positive results. Given that such evaluation is based on a personal opinion, it could be often biased and therefore it is not comparable. Nevertheless, many Forum members use this type of feedback to measure the effectiveness of activities such as consumer information, media and commercial communication.

Methods such as focus group and desk research are not frequently and uniformly used for the evaluation of all types of activities.

²² Summary Report 2013, p. 17

It must be noted, however, that 19% of the 99 final monitoring reports do not specify the evaluation methods used.

Finally, the table also shows that only two of the 99 commitment monitoring reports provide evaluation details for counselling activities and none for treatment activities.

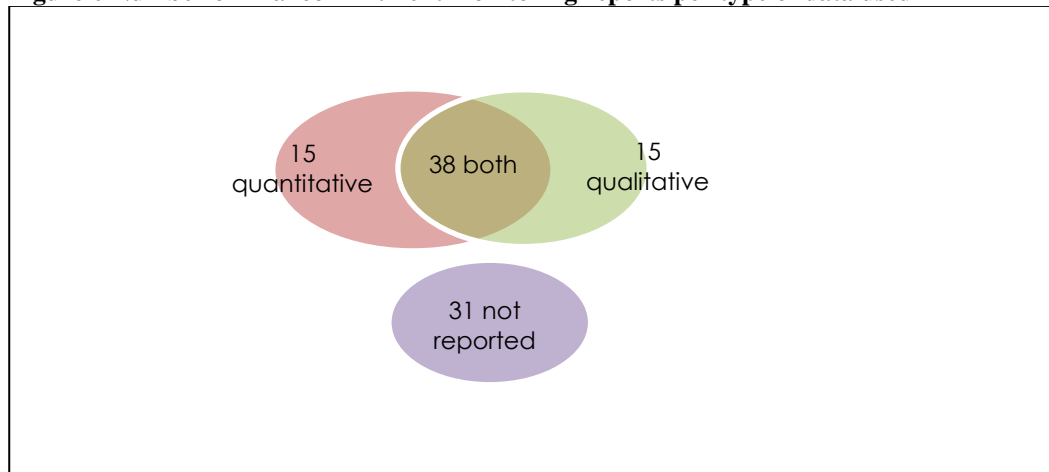
Table 2 Frequency of evaluation methods used in the final commitment monitoring reports per each type of activity

Evaluation methods / Types of activities	Survey	Focus group / external feedback	Interview	Website statistics	Media monitoring	Desk research	Peer review / internal feedback	Compliance check	N/A
Education	7	1	2	7	6	1	4	1	7
Counselling	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Consumer Information	4	1	9	11	4	2	4	3	2
Media	4	0	3	9	8	1	5	3	1
Other activities	4	1	2	2	3	1	4	0	1
Research	4	1	2	2	1	1	0	0	1
Youth involvement	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	0	1
Commercial communication	2	0	3	1	0	0	3	3	2
Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
N/A	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	1	1

3.1.4. TYPE OF DATA

Figure 6 shows that the majority of reports (38) use both qualitative and quantitative measures. The use of quantitative data (15 of the 99 reports) is normally used in the evaluation of consumer information and media activity, where the use of website statistics and media monitoring methods is more common. The use of qualitative data (also accounting for 15), on the contrary, is not attributable to any specific type of activity. A high proportion of reports (31) do not provide any information on the type of evaluation data used be noted.

Figure 6 Number of final commitment monitoring reports per type of data used



3.2. OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES UNDER PRIORITIES AREAS AND RELATED OUTCOME AND IMPACT INDICATORS

The desk review showed that commitments had been submitted in all action areas of the Forum, with a concentration in three areas: *‘cooperation on commercial communication and sales’*; *‘information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking’* and *‘information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption’*.

The action area that has received the lowest number of commitments is *‘Develop a strategy aimed at curbing under-age drinking’* (under-age drinking is also directly addressed under the action area *‘Enforce age limits for selling and serving of alcoholic beverages’*).

These two priority areas overlap and both address Aim 1 of the Alcohol Strategy *‘to curb under-age drinking, reduce hazardous and harmful drinking among young people’*. It is worth noting that the links between the priority areas of the Forum and the EU Alcohol Strategy are not straightforward. Some of the aims addressed by very few commitments do not have a priority area directly connected to them. There is therefore need to clarify linkages and synergies across the priority themes and across the multitude of actions and initiatives²³.

In general, the economic operators’ commitments regarding responsible business practices include activities such as self-regulation of commercial communication (marketing), training of staff and encouragement of ID-checking (sales). The commitments of the non-industry organisations address controls on the enforcement of legal age limits and on alcohol policy laws, monitoring of the alcohol industry’s alcohol advertisements, and provision of information on alcohol marketing regulation and on the impacts of marketing and of minimum pricing.

Action dedicated to education and awareness-raising has also been a leading area for member commitments. Among these activities, several alcohol producers have made voluntary commitments under the Forum to provide information on the risks of alcohol on packaging labels.

The remainder of this section provides an overview of the types of activities and the main outputs that have been implemented under each Forum priority areas in relation specific objectives. For each priority areas, outcome and impact indicators identified under different activities will also be presented.

It must be noted, however, that commitment holders followed a process-based approach in the monitoring exercise, focusing on the presentation of outputs rather than on the results. Only little information is, therefore, found in the ‘outcome and impact indicators’ section.

In the cases where more comprehensive information is provided, this turns out to be very uneven and confusing as well as not consistently divided between short-, medium-, and long-term. Such an approach did not allow for a categorization of the types of outcomes and impacts identified matched to the types of activities and outputs. An attempt at the creation of a typology will be presented in the recommendation section.

²³ Milieu Ltd, COWI (2012), *Assessment of the added value of the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm*, Final Report for the European Commission, DG SANCO

3.2.1. BETTER COOPERATION / ACTIONS ON RESPONSIBLE COMMERCIAL COMMUNICATION AND SALES

Table 3 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area ‘Better cooperation / actions on responsible commercial communication and sales’

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Statutory restrictions on alcohol advertising	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research for evidence based policies - Provision of information on alcohol marketing regulation/European alcohol policy development - Provision of information on impacts of marketing and of minimum pricing
Strengthen self-regulation and responsible practices in alcohol advertising and sales	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring of the industry's alcohol advertisement - Monitoring self-regulatory systems for alcohol marketing Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of sales staff - Internal training on corporate code of practice - Training on responsible marketing Commercial communication/consumer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of responsible business practices - Enforce responsibility practices for sales and for marketing - Marketing codes and practices - Communication standards for responsible advertising to new area such as digital marketing <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Self-regulation on commercial communication, including advertising and social media - Implementation of common marketing standards Consumer information/media activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication on the case of minimum pricing - Leaflet on alcohol and men
Enforcement of age limits	Consumer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhance compliance with age limits - ID checking - Controls on enforcement of legal age limits - Placement of responsible drinking messages / age verification procedure in social media

The review shows that commitment-holders normally found it much easier to identify outcomes and impacts related to consumer information and media activities. Short term outcomes listed refer for example to the number of website visits or media hits.

Regarding training activities, workshops or events organized with the purpose of raising awareness on the importance of responsible commercial communication and sales, short term outcomes identified cover the number of participants and the positive feedback of participants gathered through a post-event survey. Commitment-holders in these cases specified whether the participants were satisfied with the content of the activity and whether their opinion on the topic has changed. When the participants at the training activities were marketing professionals, impacts identified also refer to an increased efficiency in producing responsible communication material, reduced risk of creating material which targets underage consumers and the reduction of non-compliant ads reaching the market. When the commitment referred to the issuing of guidance documents on responsible marketing practices (e.g. BoE 7 Operational Standards, guidelines on digital media etc.), the outcomes have been measured by the number of recommendations put into practice or the number of companies that have implemented/integrated such guidance document into their business practice. This type of activities led to the creation of a continuous dialogue and partnership between stakeholders, identified in the commitment monitoring report as long-term impacts.

Commitments aimed at the enforcement of legislation on alcohol advertising normally consist of monitoring activities. These list as long term impact an increased compliance with the law. Indicators that measured this change were for example the number of companies that started to modify the contents of the advertisements; the number of ads in compliance with the codes and laws; the number of specific legal points clarified in law; the increased use of the emergency procedure to stop non-compliant advertising campaigns.

The same types of indicators were also listed with reference to outcomes and impacts of compliance monitoring activities aimed at the enforcement of self-regulation. Given the voluntary nature of self-regulation activities, an additional impact identified was the creation of partnerships between organizations' associated members and consequently strengthened engagement.

3.2.2. DEVELOP INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES ON RESPONSIBLE PATTERNS OF CONSUMPTION

Table 4 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area 'Develop information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption'

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Awareness raising and information activities	Consumer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer information campaigns: disseminate information on responsible alcohol consumption Youth involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School education programmes Commercial communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and advertising campaigns Media activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of web platforms - Conferences and seminars Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and guidelines targeting health professionals Treatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treatment services
Developed knowledge base on patterns of consumptions, build knowledge on attitude, behavior, key issues of consumption, analyze drinking patterns	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and data gathering on characteristics of responsible and or responsible alcohol consumption behavior

The short term outcomes identified under this priority area are generally relevant to the evidence of a change in behavior from the participants at a training activity or the beneficiary of treatment, education and youth engagement programmes. Nevertheless, only very rarely are qualitative or quantitative used to measure such change of behavior. Examples of quantitative indicators mentioned are: lower alcohol consumption after the treatment, lower number of drivers under the influence of alcohol. These, however, are only mentioned and no quantitative evidence is provided. For qualitative indicators, Forum members often use a survey to gather participants' opinions. Findings on medium term outcomes denote a change in attitudes towards alcohol, and therefore that the awareness of the impact of harmful alcohol consumption of participants was raised. This is, however, not supported by clear evidence (e.g. 'beneficiaries declared they have learnt something').

For information activities, short term outcomes refer to positive feedback from beneficiaries, medium term outcomes refer to increased awareness of the usefulness of the information material distributed.

For activities that encourage the use of BAC services, outcomes and impacts have been identified in the increased interest in the initiative, meaning increased responsibility of drinkers in the short term, increased used of the service in the medium term, and ultimately, a lower BAC level average in the long term.

For scientific research activities aimed at developing the knowledge base of patterns of consumption, short term outcomes were measured by the number of website visits or reports downloaded; the medium term outcomes were measured by the scope of media coverage achieved (e.g. number of scientific journals in which the report/publication appeared and number of press releases). The fact that the message delivered by the report/publication has become part of a common understanding is identified as a long term impact. This is however, difficult to measure.

3.2.3. DEVELOP INFORMATION AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES ON THE EFFECT OF HARMFUL DRINKING

Table 5 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area ‘Develop information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking’

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Awareness raising and information activities on the effect of harmful drinking	Consumer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information on specific risks with responsibility messages on the packaging labels of alcoholic beverage - Voluntary warning label schemes - Consumer information campaigns - Dissemination of responsible drinking message and best practices Commercial communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication and advertising campaigns Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training for health professionals that advice harmful drinkers - Awareness raising for adult health, including alcohol related chronic physical and mental disorders - Information and guidelines targeting health professionals Media activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conference and seminars - Creation of web platforms Counseling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Counseling for alcohol use disorders in workplaces Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research and dissemination of data on alcohol consumption Treatment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Treatment services
Enhanced Drink driving enforcement on maximum blood alcohol content for driving	Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drink driving activity - BAC services

As far as media activities, conferences and seminars are concerned, several quantitative indicators were identified that measure short term outcomes such as increased awareness and spread of information on the issue; some examples are number of participants; geographical coverage of participants etc.

When the awareness raising activity consisted of an information website, outcomes appear to have been relatively easy to measure (e.g. number of website visits, geographical coverage of website visits). When the interest in the website continued to be renewed sometime after the initial launch, number of registration, number of website visitors, average of monthly visits were mentioned as medium term outcome indicators of the increased availability of information and raised awareness of the impact of harmful drinking on the target group (young people).

For research, youth involvement and training activities several outcomes and impact indicators have been used. For example, one indicator in the medium term is the increased number of association members reporting that a certain level of awareness has been reached. Such an outcome also translates into the long term, as partnerships and networks built up this way support the future development of information and education programmes.

When the training activity was targeted at bar tender or sales people, short term outcomes referred to the increased awareness of the risks and impacts of harmful drinking. They were measured by the number of participants reached, number of staff that put the recommendation into place, number of positive feedback comments received (i.e. a measure of the usefulness of training).

For activities such as drink driving, outcomes and impacts have been identified in the increased interest in the initiative, meaning increased responsibility of drinkers in the short term, continuous increased used of the service in the medium term, meaning a change in behavior, and ultimately, a lower BAC level average in the long term. Some of the reports also indicate a reduced number of alcohol related accidents as an expected long term impact.

In some of the monitoring commitment forms, Members considered the fact that concerns on the effect of harmful drinking are fed into the political debate as a long-term impact.

3.2.4. DEVELOP EFFICIENT COMMON APPROACHES TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE CONSUMER INFORMATION

Table 6 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area ‘Develop efficient common approaches to provide adequate consumer information’

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Encourage responsible behaviour related to alcoholic beverage consumption	Media activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of online dialogue platform - Conferences and seminars
Help consumers to informed decisions	Consumer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer information campaigns: disseminate information on responsible alcohol consumption - Labeling, especially towards pregnant women or young people

The majority of activities implemented under this priority area consist of the creation of responsible drinking messages. These have been normally delivered through the launch of an educational website. Short term outcomes have been measured by the quantification of website visits. The increased number of website visitors, the trend in the most viewed pages and the time spent on the website indicate that consumers are engaged and more aware of responsible patterns of consumption. The change of drinking culture is mentioned as a long term impact to be achieved. However, no evidence is provided on how this has or will happen in the future.

3.2.5. ENFORCE AGE LIMITS FOR SELLING AND SERVING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Table 7 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area ‘Enforce age limits for selling and serving of alcoholic beverages’

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Supporting law enforcement on legal purchase age	Consumer information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities with focus on compliance with age limits Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessing/monitoring compliance with age limits - Shops and bars testing

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Inform and educate sales people	Education: - Training of sales and bar staff of responsible service
Strengthen responsible business practices	Education: - Guidelines from retailer's umbrella organizations to member companies Consumer information: - Self-regulatory code of conduct for the sale of alcohol products

The majority of activities implemented under this priority area deal with the enforcement of the legal purchasing age. The outcomes observed by the Forum members are: increased use of responsible messages (number of companies that use RDM); enhanced compliance with the law (decreased number of cases when alcohol was served to underage drinkers per inspections to licensed premises); and, ultimately, decreased exposure of underage people to alcohol.

3.2.6. PROMOTE EFFECTIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGE AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Table 8 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area ‘Promote effective behavioral change among children and adolescents’

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Statutory restrictions on alcohol advertising	Commercial communication: - Self-regulation in alcohol advertising - responsible practices in alcohol advertising
Awareness raising	Education: - Awareness raising campaigns Research: - Production of report, expert guidance and tools on alcohol and young people - Research on attitudes and behavior towards alcohol (survey) Media activity: - Conferences and seminars

Very few commitments relate to this priority area, the majority of which were submitted in 2010. Given that the reporting mechanism was not completely clear at that time, commitment holders did not provide comprehensive information on outcomes and impacts achieved. The main activities undertaken consist of conferences, reports and media activity aimed at raising awareness of harmful alcohol consumption, with outcome and impact indicators following those for similar activities carried out under priority presented in section “e” above.

3.2.7. DEVELOP A STRATEGY AIMED AT CURBING UNDER-AGE DRINKING

Table 9 Overview of specific objectives, types of activities and main outputs under priority area ‘Develop a strategy aimed at curbing under-age drinking’

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Increase awareness of restriction for serving and selling alcohol to minors	Media activities: - Campaigns addressing underage drinking to raise awareness on restrictions for serving and selling alcohol to minors - Campaigns regarding the role of adults in reducing underage drinking
Enforcing legislation / Compliance with age limits	Research: - Research on alcohol regulation
Self-regulation and responsible practices / statutory restriction in alcohol advertising	Consumer information: - Voluntary warning label schemes

Specific Objectives	Operational objectives: types of activity / outputs
Promote moderate and sensible use of alcohol among under age	Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community based prevention projects - Awareness raising targeted to medical professionals - Education programmes, advocacy schools, training for trainers Media activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conferences and seminars Youth involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School programmes Counseling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programmes for children and families with alcohol problems and for pregnant women at risks

Activities under this priority area and normally implemented along with activities aimed at enforcing age limits (priority presented in section “e” above).

A vast majority of activities consist in the enforcement of self-regulation codes for advertising that is measured with increased implementation of self-regulation codes (increased number of companies that have adopted the code and, ultimately, decreased exposure of underage people to alcohol advertising.)

3.3. OVERVIEW OF SEPARATE EVALUATION REPORTS ATTACHED TO THE COMMITMENT

Two types of documents were submitted by Forum members to complement the commitment monitoring reports: external evaluation reports and internal evaluation reports. Although these are not taken into account in the assessment process, they could be very useful for the purposes of this report as they could represent examples of good evaluation practices.

A total of ten documents have been revised. These are listed in the table below, indicating also to what commitment they refer.

Member	Title of Commitment	Title of document	Type of document
Alcohol Policy Youth Network – APYN	Alcohol and Youth: Engaging European young people in the debate! (1454)	EAPYC evaluation	Internal evaluation
Alcohol Policy Youth Network – APYN	Alcohol and Young People(1018)	Alcohol Policy Youth Network. Youth Empowerment for a better life. External evaluation 2011.	External evaluation
SABMiller	Responsible message on consumer communication materials in SABMiller's European operations (1496)	Presence of Responsible Drinking Messages in Packaging and Advertising. Compliance Monitoring Report. April 2012	External monitoring and evaluation
SABMiller (subsidiary: Dreher Breweries)	Campaign on responsible alcohol consumption (616)	Alcohol Responsibility Program of Dreher Breweries Hungary – June 2008 - March 2009. External Evaluation Report	External evaluation
SABMiller	Social dialogue on responsible consumption empowered by self-awareness toolkit (1094)	Evaluation of the Self-awareness toolkit – Alcohol Responsibility Program	External evaluation

Member	Title of Commitment	Title of document	Type of document
CEEV - Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins	"Wine in Moderation - Art de vivre" Programme (878)	DWA Seminar Interim Evaluation. August 2010	Internal evaluation
DHS	Support capacity and competence building (834)	DHS Factsheets on Alkohol, evaluation of the feedback questionnaires	Internal evaluation
Diageo	A Safer Nightlife Partnership - Server Training (1186)	Tryg Den Af, A partnership for safer nightlife in Copenhagen. Period 2009-2010	External evaluation
EASL - European Association for the Study of the Liver	Promote the education and training of healthcare professionals in the field of alcoholic liver disease (954)	Feedback questionnaire	Internal evaluation
Pernod-Ricard S.A.	"Responsible Student Parties" implementation in Europe - updated February 2012 (1494)	Responsible Party Programme, Evaluation Report, October 2012	External evaluation

With regard to the evaluation of the outcomes and impacts of the commitment, the information provided in these separate documents is very similar to the information that Forum members provide in the commitment monitoring form. For example, for activities that consist in communication campaigns, or commitments aiming at putting responsible drinking messages on beverages, Forum members have normally assessed short term outcomes through surveys analysing the visibility of the message, the level of the memorization of the advertisement, or the immediate identification of the nature of the advertisement. These surveys enable members to assess the number of people reached under a commitment's set of activities.

In addition to the evaluation of outcomes and impacts, Forum members that provided separate evaluation reports have usually also evaluated the activities implemented commitment themselves. It is in fact worth noting that no definition of 'evaluation details' in the feedback form enables members to differentiate between the two approaches (i.e. evaluation of effectiveness and/or evaluation of the implementation cycle of the commitment itself). Most members have chosen to provide in these separate documents details on how they evaluated the commitments overall. It is also interesting to see how some members have evaluated the relevance and effectiveness of the activities implemented as it provides evidence supporting the linkage between objectives and outputs, e.g. how relevant and effective are the outputs in reaching the objectives.

The table below shows the evaluation methods used by Forum members for some of the activities implemented and the criteria used to assess both the relevance and the effectiveness of the activities implemented.

Type of activity	Evaluation tool	Relevance	Effectiveness
Conference / seminars	Feedback questionnaires Interviews with secretariat members	Relevance of the target audience Compatibility of participants with the activities Relevance of the information provided (e.g. is the level of information adapted to the target)	Satisfaction of the audience with the activities Quality of the information provided Effectiveness of the internal organisation

Type of activity	Evaluation tool	Relevance	Effectiveness
		audience?)	Possibilities to establish future partnerships
Communication activities	Surveys, questionnaires, personal interviews	<p>Relevance of the targeted audience</p> <p>Relevance of the communication means selected for the target audience</p> <p>Relevance of the information provided to the target audience</p>	<p>Visibility of the campaign materials / easy identification of programme visual identity</p> <p>Simplicity and clarity of the message</p>
Education material: toolkits / factsheets / training	Feedback questionnaires	<p>Relevance of the targeted audience</p> <p>Relevance of the information provided to the target audience</p>	<p>Attractiveness of the programme/ the materials</p> <p>Appropriate length</p> <p>Simplicity and clarity of the message</p> <p>Quality of the information provided</p>

4. SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES

Disseminating and building on good practices is at the heart of the EU alcohol strategy. Examples of good practice approaches are listed in the Alcohol Strategy and have been developed and compiled in EU-funded projects. The Forum’s Charter also refers to both ‘good’ and ‘best’ practices, including in terms of monitoring commitments. Other documents also refer to both, and the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

The Forum plays a prominent role in collecting, disseminating, developing and setting standards for good/best practices (e.g. the large number of commitments flowing from the benchmark model of self-regulation outlined in the Advertising Round Table)²⁴.

Strengthening the use of good and best practices in the development of commitments is a key area for the Forum to address. Bridging the gap between the *availability* of good practices proven to contribute to the reduction of alcohol-related harm and the actual design of commitments would strengthen the ‘intervention logic’ linking commitments to reductions in harm. Highlighting good practices used by Forum members for the evaluation of a commitment is also part of this process; the following section presents reports that offer examples of good evaluation practices.

In light of the literature review on evaluation and findings from the review of evaluation approaches followed by Forum members, a set of criteria has been identified for the selection of good practices. As a first step, of the 99 final reports, those that received a high score (3.5-5 range) in the annual assessment exercises (2010-2013) in the sections *outcome and impact indicators, objectives* and *evaluation details* have been selected.

The following criteria have been applied to the selected reports:

- Clear definition and differentiation between strategic, specific and operational objectives
- Clear definition of the target groups/population
- Clear link between objectives, outputs and outcomes/impacts
- Clear distinction between short-, medium- and long-term outcomes and impacts
- Capacity to be reproduced or adapted by other actors
- Specification on the type of data
- Specification on the timing of evaluation (ex-ante, in itinere, ex-post).

The information on good practices is presented in the following boxes. The description explains why such selected practices are good, with a focus on the aspects highlighted by the set of criteria. The description draws conclusion on what can be learned from such practices in terms of improving monitoring and evaluation in the future.

1422	SABMiller	Bartenders Training on Responsible Consumption Program
Type of organisation: Production and sales organisations Priority area(s): Develop information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption ; Develop information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking ; Enforce age limits for selling and serving of alcoholic beverages Type of activity(ies): Trainings for bartenders, online communication campaign. Year: 2013		
Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The target group is well defined for each type of activities: trainings are aimed at bartenders and the 		

²⁴ Milieu Ltd, COWI (2012), *Assessment of the added value of the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm*, Final Report for the European Commission, DG SANCO

campaign to a wider audience. The distinction is made in all sections.

- **Key indicators of performance** (KPI) – number of people trained, number of consumers reached – are indicated in the objective section, and referred to in the outcome section as main short term outcome. The link between objectives, outputs and outcomes is then well established.
- There is a **clear distinction between short-, medium- and long-term** objectives corresponding to the timing of the project: short-term objectives refer to the achievement of the quantitative targets set prior to the project; medium term objectives corresponds to changes in behaviour of bartenders; and long-term objectives refer to concrete follow-ups of the project to establish long-term behaviour changes, forming “ambassadors” of responsible behaviours among bar tenders. Short-term outcomes correspond to operational objectives, medium-term outcomes to specific and strategic objectives and long-term only to strategic objectives.
- The monitoring report explains **how the outcomes of each activity were evaluated** (method, timing, partnership with external agency) and clearly states in ‘other comments’ what were the difficulties in evaluating the implementation of some objectives.
- To evaluate the medium-term outcomes, feedbacks from the bar tenders after the training were collected. The **‘Mystery shopper’ research** lead afterwards (an actor playing the role of an intoxicated person in bars) is interesting as it assesses the impacts of the training on bartenders’ behaviour.

954	EASL - European Association for the Study of the Liver	Promote the education and training of healthcare professionals in the field of alcoholic liver disease
Type of organisation: NGOs and professional health organisations		
Priority area(s): Develop information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking		
Type of activity(ies): Education and training of healthcare professionals		
Year: 2011		
Description		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The target group of the conference is well defined: the audience is described in the commitment summary (‘practicing hepatologists (liver specialists) as well as clinical and laboratory scientists, fellows and residents’). • Although the section on outcome only describes the long term impacts, it is interesting to note that the monitoring report puts the conference in the wider strategy of the association on alcoholic liver disease (ALD), and consequently relates it the wider strategic objective of the organisation to improve the diagnosis, management, treatment and care of patients with ALD. The distinction between the specific objectives of the conference (improving the level of knowledge of participants) and the strategic objectives is then clarified. • The monitoring report explains how the outcomes of each activity were evaluated (method, timing, partnership with external agency). The feedback questionnaire filled in after the conference by participants is particularly described, providing information on the type of questions asked and a short assessment of results. It is interesting to note that the association created two evaluation documents: a feedback questionnaire that evaluates the quality of the conference (so the activity itself: quality of the agenda, quality of the presentations, variety of the topic addressed) and a quiz/questionnaire that evaluates the impact of the conference (increase in knowledge on the topics addressed during the conference). 		

1546	Diageo	Diverții Responsabilmente
Type of organisation: Production and sales organisations		
Priority area(s): Develop information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption		
Type of activity(ies): Drink driving campaign		
Year: 2013		
Description		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation of short term outcomes is well described: the methodology is explained including precise information of the sample of population on which the evaluation was conducted. • The timing of evaluation is specified: an ex ante evaluation was conducted to create a baseline and an ex-post evaluation followed six weeks later. The evaluation methodology is efficient as it enables to compare data collected against a baseline and consequently to assess the impacts of the campaign on drivers’ behaviours. 		

1534	SABMiller (subsidiary: Breweries)	Dreher	Csendkírály: Be the ‘silent king’ – responsible behaviour and respecting others
Type of organisation: Production and sales organisations			
Priority area(s): Develop information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption			
Type of activity(ies): Communication campaign			
Year: 2013			
Description			

- The **target group is well defined** in the objective section and well taken into account in the implementation of the project. The monitoring report states that activities and messages were tailored to the different stakeholders' needs and perspectives.
- The section on outcomes describes the short- and medium-term outcomes. There is a good balance between the two: the short-term outcomes focus on the achievement of the specific objectives of the campaign (awareness raising, reduction of noise linked to nightlife, enhancing dialogue between stakeholders) and the medium-term outcomes focus on the strategic objective of the commitment, promoting responsible behaviour from all stakeholders and dialogue on nightlife and its consequences on inhabitants.
- The section on **evaluation** describes all the tools used for each activity of the campaign and for each target group. The section is **exhaustive** and strong because it clearly **links the methods used to the objectives, outputs and expected outcomes**. It explains how **both qualitative and quantitative data** were collected.

944	Royal College of Physicians (RCP London)	Promoting the understanding of alcohol related harm and effective health strategies
Type of organisation: Research institute Priority area(s): Develop information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking Type of activity(ies): research, publication of studies on alcohol and ill-health in the UK, lobbying activities Year: 2010		
Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The target group is well defined in the objective section: 'the public, industry, medical community and decision makers'. This provides a link between the objectives and the outputs and outcomes, and also with the evaluation methodology. • There is a good balance between short- and medium-term outcomes as short-term outcomes refer to the impacts of the publications, that is raising awareness of politicians on the impact of alcohol misuse on the NHS, while medium-term outcomes focus on the consequences of raising awareness and lobbying activities, that is changes in legislations. • The evaluation section details precisely the method used for the media analyses: 'attributing values (beneficial, factual, or adverse) to each RCP mention in the mass media and tracking quantity levels to determine how many members of the public we have reached'. Details are also provided on the timing of the evaluation. 		

920	The Brewers of Europe	AssoBirra (Italian Brewers and Malsters Trade Association) - "O bevi o guidi" (Either You Drink or You Drive)
Type of organisation: Production and sales organisations Priority area(s): Develop information and education programmes on responsible patterns of consumption ; Develop information and education programmes on the effect of harmful drinking Type of activity(ies): communication campaign and education. Year: 2010		
Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a good balance between short-, medium- and long-term outcomes and impacts : short-term and medium-term outcomes are focused on specific objectives of the commitments (raise the awareness of future drivers on alcohol misuse)while long-term impacts focus on the strategic objective of the commitment (reduce road accidents related to alcohol misuse). • The evaluation section provides information on the type of evaluation conducted, the timing of evaluation (ex ante/ex post) and the method used (survey, media evaluation). 		

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK OF THE MONITORING COMMITMENT WITHIN THE FORUM

According to the evaluation of the EU Strategy to Support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm, the Forum appears to have succeeded in mobilising a broad range of stakeholders and in stepping up actions to address alcohol related harm. Actions under the Forum have also likely contributed to engaging cooperation among stakeholders at national and local levels²⁵. This notwithstanding, actions carried out by stakeholders could be further strengthened and widened in order to more effectively contribute to the overall aims of the Alcohol Strategy.

It would therefore be valuable for the European Commission to explore effective ways for providing guidance and raising standards for reporting and evaluation of the Forum member's initiatives. Assessing and demonstrating impacts of the commitments in alcohol related harm reduction by using a shared evaluation framework and specific indicators is essential for the credibility of the Forum as an implementation structure of the EU Alcohol Strategy.

This section firstly presents specific recommendations to refine the 'evaluation details' and the 'outcome and impact indicators' sections in the database and in the commitment monitoring form template. It then puts forward general recommendations for improving the evaluation framework of Forum members' commitments.

5.1. RECOMMENDATIONS TO REFINE THE DATABASE AND THE MONITORING FORM

5.1.1. EVALUATION DETAILS

The main findings of the present report reveal that, when reporting on 'evaluation details' regarding commitments, members tend to only include information on the evaluation method used. Quite often, this information lacks sufficient contextual elements and it is not clearly linked to the different aspects of the commitment. Moreover, few final reports specify when the evaluation was carried out, whether it was internal or external or which data and information served to inform it.

Depending on the type of activities carried out, some evaluation methods tend to be more suitable than others. For example, website statistics and media monitoring are instrumental in evaluating consumer information and media activities. Focus group/external feedback is an appropriate method to evaluate any education and youth involvement activity, while peer review/internal feedback and compliance check seem to be fit for the evaluation of activities that regard the enforcement of marketing or sales regulation, such as commercial communication activities. On the contrary, the use of surveys and interviews can be used for most activities.

The review of evaluation approaches carried out as part of this study showed that treatment and counselling activities are seldom evaluated. Even if an evaluation has been carried out, information is not submitted with the monitoring report. Although few commitments involve this type of activities, Forum members that decide to implement them should be actively encouraged to perform an evaluation. These types of activities could be evaluated, for example, through interviews, panel reviews or other external feedback from beneficiaries in order to ascertain the extent to which alcohol-related perceptions and behaviours may have changed as a result of the commitment.

²⁵ Milieu Ltd, COWI (2012), *Assessment of the added value of the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm*, Final Report for the European Commission, DG SANCO

To shed light on these aspects and, ultimately, ensure a systematic approach to assessing the impact of commitments, evaluation needs to be considered from the very outset of the commitment's conception and planning. Forum members would be encouraged to do so if additional fields, such as type of evaluation, evaluation method, type of data and time of evaluation, were included in the evaluation section on the database. An overview of evaluation-related items details to be included, ideally in the form of a drop-down menu, is presented in Table 10 below.

Table 10 Overview of evaluation details for a drop-down menu

Type of evaluation	Evaluation method	Type of data	Time of evaluation
Internal	Survey (online, in written form, by phone)	Quantitative	Ex ante
External	Focus group / external feedback	Qualitative	In itinere
Both	Interview	Both	Ex post
	Website statistics		Mix
	Media monitoring		
	Desk research		
	Peer review / internal feedback		
	Compliance check		

5.1.2. OUTCOME AND IMPACT INDICATORS

The main findings of the present report indicate that commitment holders tends to adopt a process-oriented approach to monitoring of commitments, thus primarily focusing on outputs rather results. Little information is typically included in the 'outcome and impact indicators' section. In addition, there seem to be serious difficulties to consistently structure this information into short-, medium-, and long-term time horizons. In the same vein, linking outcomes and impacts with the original strategic, intermediate and specific objectives identified at time of the submission of the commitment appears to be challenging. Related information often lacks accuracy; and the extent to which it is provided varies greatly across Forum members.

Members who do perform in-depth evaluations of their commitments' effectiveness, tend to concentrate on assessing the visibility/attractiveness and clarity of the message delivered through commitment's activities to the target audience or, alternatively, the satisfaction of the beneficiary, thus not adding much new information compared to the monitoring report.

To ease the process of evaluating commitment's effectiveness, this section proposes a clearer categorisation of outcomes and impacts and as well as ideas to refine the sections of the commitments database dealing with outcome and impact indicators.

As shown in the overview tables (see section 3.2), it is important to note that many of the specific objectives are the same across the different priority areas. These could be grouped into four objectives, regardless of their relevance to a specific priority area. Table 11 below summarizes the four specific objectives identified during the review.

Table 11 Selected specific objectives

Selected Specific objectives
Enforcement of alcohol regulation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Age limits • Advertisement • Drink driving
Compliance with self-regulation on alcohol on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Sales
Awareness raising and information activities on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible patterns of consumption • Effects of harmful drinking • Alcohol regulation
Build knowledge base on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of consumption • Effects of harmful drinking

In the same vein, the outcomes and impacts to be assessed could be simplified and grouped according to the same four objectives, as shown in Table 12 below.

Table 12 Overview of outcomes, results and impacts per each selected specific objective

Selected Specific objectives	Outcomes (short term)	Results (medium term)	Impacts (long term)
Enforcement of alcohol regulation on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sales • Age limits • Advertisement • Drink driving 	Enforced rules	Established good practice / common standards	Reduced alcohol harm: Changes in behavior and attitude last over time
Compliance with self-regulation on alcohol on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Sales 	Enhanced compliance	Established good practice / common standards	Changes in biological parameters
Awareness raising and information activities on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible patterns of consumption • Effects of harmful drinking • Alcohol regulation 	Changes in awareness and knowledge	Changes in behavior and in attitude Established partnership for future action	Decreased incidence of disease/accidence/violence
Build knowledge base on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of consumption • Effects of harmful drinking 	Changes in awareness and knowledge		Increased low risk consumption/decreased high risk consumption

In addition to medium-term results indicating a specific change in behavior and attitude towards specific issues (e.g. alcohol consumption), other medium-term results have been identified. Innovative and successful activities aimed at rule enforcement and compliance with self-regulation standards could in fact attract the interest of and trigger action amongst other companies, establishing, in the medium term, examples of good practices and common industry standards. At the same time, innovative and successful awareness-raising activities can stimulate partnerships and networks amongst associations that can then take future action together.

The effects on the reduction of alcohol-related harm – as the ultimate objective of all commitments – could be evaluated in the long term. Nevertheless, measuring such impacts may prove challenging for a number of reasons.

First, given the current nature of the Forum process and the short duration of the commitments (i.e. from 3 months up to 3 years duration), it is unlikely that Forum members are able to monitor the long term impacts such as changes in biological parameters and decreased incidence of disease/accidence/violence. While this could be done for some types of activities (e.g. for drink driving interventions, the reduced alcohol-related road accidents could be evaluated with impact indicators) it is more challenging for other types (e.g. raising awareness) which account for the majority of commitments submitted. In addition to the timeframe, resource constraints are also a key barrier for members willing to evaluate their commitments.

Secondly, it is difficult to assess the impacts of commitments because it is a complex issue which requires a multi-component approach. Forum members could explain how a commitment is making or will make a contribution to tackling alcohol-related harm, but the impact remains difficult to measure. A single activity in itself may only be effective – or may be significantly more effective – when it is a component of a broad-based approach or strategy. In this context, the contribution of an action may be positive, but attribution of specific reduction in harm presents complex challenges. For example, a drink-driving campaign can be a contributing factor to a decrease in road accidents, but it would be very difficult to identify how many of the reduced number of accidents are attributable to the campaign when it acts together with greater activity of the police, stronger penalties and other factors. Directly relating Forum commitments impacts on alcohol-related harm is difficult at this stage, as information is limited and a number of commitments concern activities in areas where effects could be expected in the long term, and in conjunction with other actions, such as policy developments.

Finally, the absence of a common and compatible evidence-base and the slow progress towards harmonisation of reliable indicators across the EU are obstacles. Common indicators are needed for pregnancy, workplace and adults etc. in general in order to measure impacts. With this regard, the Commission could provide Forum members with examples of indicators that measures different types of outcomes and impacts. The Diet Platform’s Monitoring Framework document provides the members with a ‘Users guide on how to monitor the commitments’ and offers an explanation on what type of information commitment-holders should submit under each section of the commitment monitoring report as well as examples of indicators to be used. Such an approach could be adopted by the Forum.

Examples of indicators that could be proposed by the Commission and included in Annex two of the Forum Charter are presented in the Box 3 Examples of indicatorsBox 3 below.

Box 3 Examples of indicators

Examples
For leaflets: how many people have changed their mind about alcohol consumption (attitude change). This can be done by short questionnaires before and after the action.
For self-regulation or standard codes: it would be useful to know: what is the effect of codes of conduct for commercial communications? What has the qualitative and quantitative impact of self-regulatory principles been on marketing communications? What is the average compliance level with the self-regulatory rules? What are the effects on the target group? What is the effect of less commercial communication? Decreased sales figures of harmful products? Increased sales figures? Do those who have accepted them subscribe the principle fully?
For mass media campaign: it would be useful to know whether people are more aware or have changed their mind about the topic. This can be assessed by questionnaires before and after the action.
For education programmes: it would be useful to know whether knowledge about effects of harmful alcohol consumption and how many persons have adopted a new behaviour towards it. Both quantities can be measured by questionnaires before and after the action.

Source: adapted from *Monitoring Framework of the EU Platform on diet, Physical Activity and Health*²⁶

To ensure the use of “SMART” indicators, a set of questions could be applied. These are presented in the Box 4 below.

Box 4 Example of questions to ensure indicators are SMART

Specific:	Is it clear exactly what is being measured? Where is the change happening? At what level (Local, National, EU)
Measurable:	Are changes objectively verifiable? What unit of measurement will be used? Is it qualitative or quantitative? Is it a reliable and clear measure of results?
Achievable:	Are data sources known? Are data actually available at reasonable cost and effort? How reliable, complete and coherent (i.e. same units) is the data?
Relevant:	Will the indicator effectively demonstrate whether the desired change has taken place? Is it relevant to the intended outputs, outcome and impacts? Is the association of the indicator and measured change with the policy sphere credible?
Timed:	Is data available for this indicator for today? Is data available for the baseline year?

A precise definition of the target groups for an intervention is an essential prerequisite for successfully reaching the group and ultimately reaching the objective of the commitment and measuring its outcomes and impacts. When the activity is evaluated, the extent to which the target group has been reached is an important indicator of the effectiveness. It is therefore suggested that the target group indicated on the database when submitting the commitment is taken into account when measuring outcomes and impacts.

Relevant target groups in this regard include the following:

- People with special needs: pregnant women, children, older people, people with physical or mental diseases etc.
- Company staff (both sales and advertising)
- Organisation members carrying out the commitments
- Students/adolescents/parents
- Bartenders/cashiers
- Health professionals
- Wide audience
- Others

Box 5 below summaries, in the form of a checklist, the essential elements that should be taken into account for a successful definition of evaluation details and commitment’s outcome and impact indicators from the very outset of the conception and planning of the commitment. It would be valuable for the European Commission to consider these suggestions when providing guidance to Forum Members. They can also be of use to Forum members themselves when planning the commitment.

Box 5 Tips for a successful evaluation of commitment’s effectiveness

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify the issue (i.e. strategic objectives or priority areas) ✓ Identify specific objectives
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²⁶Monitoring Framework of the EU Platform on diet, Physical Activity and Health http://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/eu_platform_mon-framework_en.pdf

- ✓ Define the target group
- ✓ Identify the expected effects (distinguish short-, medium- and long term effects)
- ✓ Change terminology: "outcomes" (or short-term effects), "results" (or medium-term effects) and "impacts" (or long-term effects)
- ✓ Identify outputs (i.e. operational objectives or types of activities)
- ✓ Distinguish between outputs and outcomes
- ✓ Establish evaluation details already from the planning stage
- ✓ Match expected effects to specific objectives selected
- ✓ Establish SMART indicators

5.2. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be valuable to offer more guidance to Forum members on how to plan and evaluate their commitments.

The Commission could consider revising the 'Monitoring Commitment' framework (Annex 2 of the Charter) by:

- Adding a **specific definition and explanation** of what is meant by '**evaluation of the commitment**'. It is important that Forum members understand the evaluation approach and actively consider evaluation at the planning phase of the commitment.
- Distinguishing '**Information on monitoring**' and '**Information on evaluation**' in the commitment monitoring form and in the database. It is important that members understand the difference between both approaches, as explained in section **Error! Reference source not found.** The section on 'outcome and impact indicators' could be made compulsory for final reports as it is already for the 'evaluation details' and 'dissemination' sections. This would encourage members to assess the effects of their commitments.
- Adding more **specific guidelines and examples** for each section of the commitment monitoring form and for each type of activity. Examples could be drawn from the Diet Platform, in the context of which a 'Users guide on how to monitor the commitments' as well as 'Practical examples on how to monitor the commitments' have been developed and included as Annexes to the Charter. The ICAP toolkit²⁷ could also be useful in this respect, as it provides step-by-step examples of evaluation of specific types of prevention activities likely to be implemented by Forum members. Such guidelines could be further formalised if integrated into the Guidance Document Accompanying the Electronic Submission Form²⁸.
- Adding specific reference to the usefulness of the **intervention logic framework**. An intervention logic diagram could be used as a supporting tool for the member when planning the commitment and, subsequently, when filling in the electronic submission form. Essential elements that should be taken into account in the diagram include: strategic objectives (i.e. the seven priorities areas), specific objectives (as re-categorised in section 5.1.2), operational objectives (i.e. outputs) and the effects that the commitment intends to influence (outcomes, results, impacts).

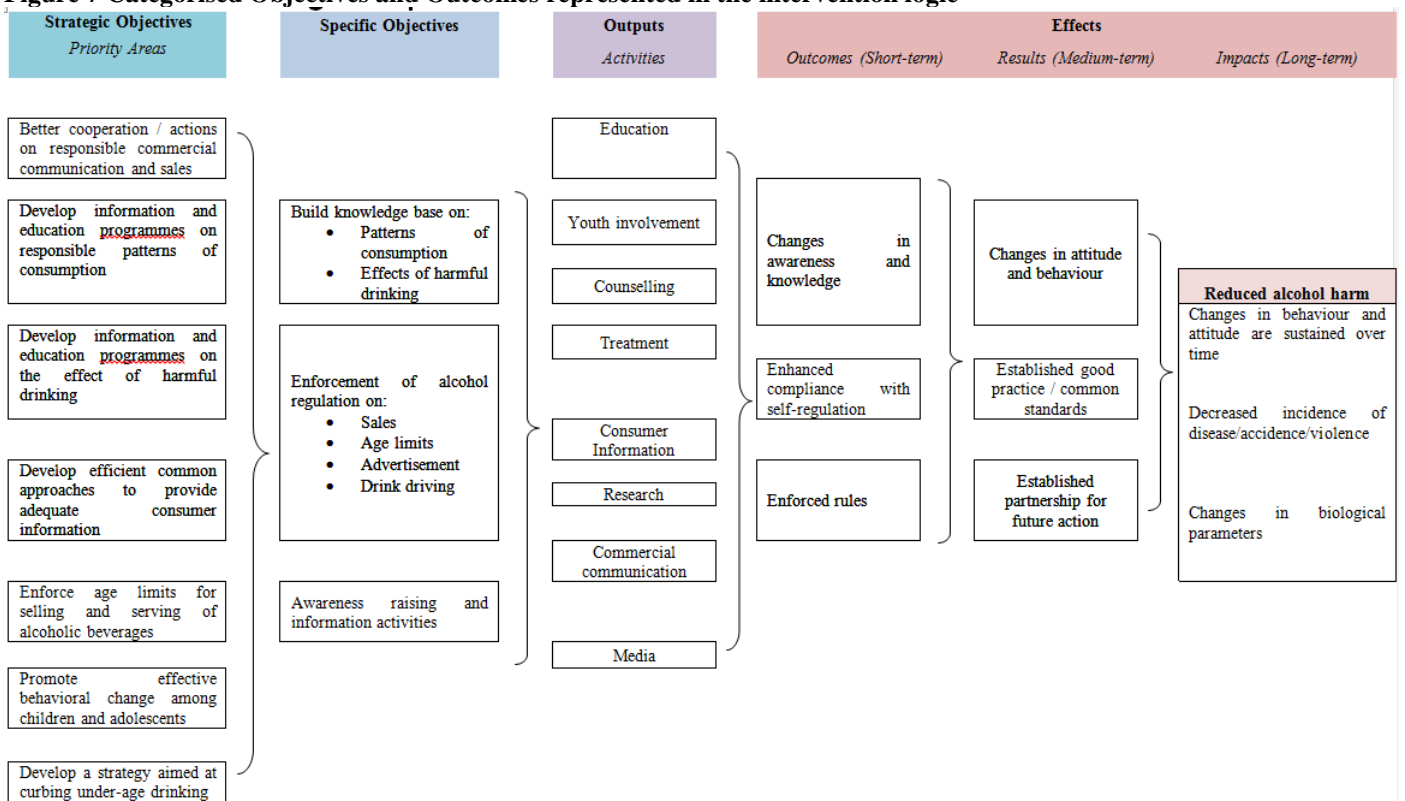
The diagram below represents the intervention logic applied to all re-categorised objectives

²⁷ ICAP (2010), A Guide to Evaluating Prevention Programmes
<http://www.icap.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=qcahxxxolgO%3D&tabid=437>

²⁸ Guidance Document Accompanying the Electronic Submission Form
http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/alcohol/forum/docs/alcohol_forum_guidelines_en.pdf

and outcomes.

Figure 7 Categorised Objectives and Outcomes represented in the intervention logic



Source: Authors' own compilation

As highlighted in the evaluation of the EU Alcohol Strategy, it is worth noting that the links between the priority areas of the Forum and the EU Alcohol Strategy are not straightforward. Some of the aims are addressed by very few commitments do not have a priority area directly connected to them. On the contrary, some of the priority areas of the Forum overlap with each other. There is therefore a need to clarify linkages and synergies across the priority themes and across the multitude of actions and initiatives. Defining concrete targets at EU and Member State level for the priority areas of the Forum under the aims of the Alcohol Strategy could help position individual initiatives within the wider framework of action and contribute towards a sharper focus on outcomes and impacts. The intervention logic for the implementation of the commitment would be stronger if the action areas in the Forum Charter and the aims of the Alcohol Strategy were more explicitly and directly related²⁹.

Once the process of revision of the Charter is completed, the specific guidelines could be presented at the plenary meeting. The presentation should focus on very practical examples of activities and indicators to measure outcomes and impact.

Those members that performed well in past monitoring assessment exercises, including those whose good practices have been highlighted in this report, could contribute to the improvement of their fellow members' evaluation activities by sharing their experience as well as their approach to evaluating the effectiveness of commitments. Furthermore, pilot testing for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the commitment could be carried out. Selected Forum members could, for example, test the new Guidelines and the use of the intervention logic framework as a supporting tool for the

²⁹ Milieu Ltd, COWI (2012), *Assessment of the added value of the EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol-related harm*, Final Report for the European Commission, DG SANCO

planning, monitoring and evaluation of a new commitment and present the results at a subsequent plenary meeting. If challenges and barriers are identified, these could then be further analysed and ways to improve the Guidelines and the use of the intervention logic framework be proposed.

The organisation of a workshop on evaluating commitments, as follow up to the workshop held on June 2008³⁰, could also be considered. Such workshop should focus on developing good approaches towards the evaluation of commitments, and should involve as much Forum members as possible. The use of the intervention logic as a tool that facilitate the planning, implementation and evaluation of commitment could also be investigated during the workshop. The Commission could, for instance, developed examples of the intervention logic per each strategic objective set (i.e. priority area).

³⁰ Workshop on monitoring and evaluation, 3 June 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/health/alcohol/forum/forum_details/ev_20080603_en.htm

Annex 1 Annex 2 of the Charter Establishing the European Alcohol and Health Forum

ANNEX 2

European Alcohol and Health Forum **Monitoring Commitment**

(Version 13/04/2007)

1. Introduction

The Monitoring Commitment provides guidance to Forum members on how to take forward the monitoring of their commitments in the context of this specific process.

Forum members agree to monitor their own performance in a transparent, participative and accountable way, so that there is a degree of multi-stakeholder involvement in reviewing progress and outcomes that creates trust in the data. There is also a commitment by participants to develop not only participative self-monitoring, but also some more ambitious good practice on monitoring, including aspects such as evaluation.

For the first time we are sitting round a table discussing what are the best voluntary actions towards reducing alcohol-related harm. Despite differing opinions, size and levels all agree to put together a framework to allow for as consistent monitoring as possible where individual actions can be assessed against their own objectives. Nevertheless different commitments by different partners must show themselves to be relevant to the general aims of the exercise.

Monitoring of commitment plays a vital role in developing engagement, accountability and trust, in mapping progress and confirming the commitments undertaken.

Monitoring should be appropriate and proportionate to your type of commitment. It should help you to:

- gain a better understanding of your commitments and the relevance to the general aims of the Forum
- fine tune your commitment
- understand what needs to be done and how
- better integrate your commitment with other commitments undertaken in the Forum
- engender wider stakeholder trust in your commitment
- eventually duplicate good practices.

2. The Commitment

Members of the Forum agree on the necessity to monitor their commitments in a systematic, open and understandable way as a step in building trust. They should assess the progress and outcome of ongoing activities and identify the constraints for early corrective action. They should check if milestones have been achieved by key dates and, if possible, measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the commitments.

The following steps indicate the minimum agreed requirements to monitor a commitment:

1. The relevance of the commitment to the general aims of the Forum is clearly described (relevance)
2. For each commitment there is a clear set of "monitoring-friendly" objectives (objectives)
3. Where feasible, the resources put into each commitment are identified (inputs)
4. The commitment is assessed and what has been achieved is identified and made public (outputs)

Given the nature of this process, the timescale and range of commitments it is unlikely that we will be able to monitor if the outputs may actually lead to desired long term changes in the form of outcomes. It has been agreed that indicators related to outcome are not part of the minimum requirements and may be provided by those who are in a position to do so. Such data would significantly increase the confidence and information on the effectiveness of the commitment.

The following step goes above the minimum agreed requirements to monitor a commitment:

5. If possible, identify the ultimate impact of your commitment (outcome)

The monitoring of commitments should be carried out in an open and transparent way so it creates trust in data and should seek to capture information about any unexpected or unintended consequences of actions in furtherance of the commitments.

It is also to be noted that some data are commercially sensitive and can not be communicated.

3. Assessing the relevance of the commitment

The Forum members should be able to describe, in a relatively simple way, how their commitment is relevant (or pertinent, connected, or applicable) to the realisation of the general aim of the Forum.

Relevance can be judged from a number of perspectives. The Forum member is responsible for defining the relevance of their voluntary commitment. The primary purpose of describing the relevance is to ensure that there is clarity as to: *How it achieves the aim of the Forum*. This is an essential step in building trust in data and in supporting a transparent, participative and accountable process.

4. Setting the objectives

The objectives help to focus in more detail on what the commitment is aiming to achieve. They need to connect to specific actions and to a specific timeframe, and they need to be concrete and precise as this will make it easier to monitor the commitments. In some situations it may be beneficial to divide the objectives into short, medium or long term objectives.

For all aspects of monitoring, Forum members may wish to utilize external bodies or organisations as these can bring specific expertise to help with the process.

For the reader to clearly understand what the objectives mean, it can be useful to apply the 'S.M.A.R.T.' procedure when writing or describing an objective. This means that objectives should be:

- **Specific** (connected to the action(s)) – clear about what, where, why and when the situation will be changed;

- **Measurable** – able to quantify or qualify the achievements, changes or benefits;
- **Attainable/achievable** – able to attain the objectives (knowing the resources and capacities at the disposal of all those concerned);
- **Realistic** – able to obtain the level of change reflected in the objective;
- **Time bound** – stating the time period in which the objectives will be accomplished.

Progress in fulfilling the commitment needs to be accompanied by specific indicators.

5. Measuring the objectives

Indicators are required to be able to monitor the commitments and build credibility and confidence in the work of the Forum.

a) Input indicators

Input indicators: measure the resources allocated to each action/activity depending of the objective of the commitment (funding, allocated resources, training etc) used for each activity

Input indicators measure the resources allocated to each action/activity, essentially what *did I do to put my objective into practice?* Resources here means materials, people and time – like how many people are working on the project, what training is needed to carry out the action and what are the total costs of the action.

However confidentiality, marketing competition and commercially sensitive data are issues that need to be taken into consideration regarding which data can be made available. When input data is commercially sensitive Forum members should try to find imaginative means in order to define the input. Good data is necessary to identify good practices and where relevant, to produce a cost-benefit analysis. It is also an indication about what efforts are needed for further implementation of an action.

b) Output indicators

Output indicator: used to measure the outputs or products that come about as a result or a product of the process. It measures from a quantitative point of view the results created through the use of inputs (sellers & servers trained, audience targeted, events organised etc)

Output indicators measure the products or the achievements of the commitment through the use of inputs or, simplified, *what did you quantitatively achieve with the money and resources?*

It is also important to have a good insight into the process of implementing or executing the action in a clear timeframe. Therefore it is necessary to have process indicators available, which can be monitored throughout the action. In this monitoring, it is essential to consider the timeframe and to define this in advance.

It is essential that the process or output indicators are linked to the objectives and are made as explicit as possible. Very often one objective can trigger several output parameters.

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