

# RISKSUR Symposium: Roundtable discussions

## Question 4

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**Question: We claim that evaluation should be an intrinsic part of any surveillance system. Do you agree or disagree? What characteristics of a surveillance system, or the surveillance context, define the evaluation scope and frequency (e.g. objective, duration, history, international disease situation)?**

### Feedback

**We claim that evaluation should be an intrinsic part of any surveillance system. Do you agree or disagree?**

It was agreed that at a global level, YES, evaluation should be an intrinsic part of surveillance; however the picture was more complex at other levels. Some of the factors influencing the relevance of evaluation included:

- Feasibility – evaluation is not always possible and criteria will vary according to feasibility.
- The level of evaluation: basic evaluation of performance indicators (lab data; number of suspicions e.g. an internal evaluation) compared to the evaluation of a complete system, which maybe more complicated; economic evaluation is even more complicated. In some cases there may be no point in carrying out an extensive evaluation.
- While economic evaluation is not always needed, it could be used to advocate for a change in surveillance.
- It is not possible to evaluate everything as evaluation can be very qualitative and the level of details can vary. Could be a minor or very detailed evaluation depending on the requirements.
- Evaluation is important, but not just for the sake of evaluation: **need a clear purpose, evaluation objectives**; ensuring you are doing the right thing.
- To inform trade, trading partners: ensuring trust in surveillance outputs both ways.
- Evaluation should be part of the surveillance design from the beginning, not only after planning and implementation. Otherwise waste of money and time.
- Evaluation and design goes hand in hand.
- **Evaluation is part of the cycle.**
- Need to be able to act upon the results of the evaluation: room for improvements. We can still evaluate but should concentrate on using the results to make the EU change the rules it may still be worth it, have to concentrate the efforts on what give you the best results.
- Evaluation is an obvious source of fine tunings and success stories can be reviewed; to inform good practices.

**What characteristics of a surveillance system, or the surveillance context, define the evaluation scope and frequency (e.g. objective, duration, history, international disease situation)?**

- The objectives of the surveillance system.
- Diseases situation: locally, in neighbouring countries, internationally (link to trade and globalization). It was noted that 'international means' different things to different people - other countries, outside EU? Intra-EU community.
- Local disease situation: depends on the geographic scale of what the system is covering.
- History of surveillance (system well established, new program).
- Political issues.
- Specific context (which encompass the previous points).
- Flexibility of the system is also a key point: to adapt to the changes in disease situation.
- Legislation: if you have to monitor you have to review (e.g. *Salmonella*); voluntary or mandatory monitoring or incentive based system. (link to question 7)
- Evaluation trigger points: regular annual evaluation; or incursion of disease (unusual events), political, risk awareness perception issues. Should be open to these different triggers.
- Not possible to define scope and frequency: specific to surveillance systems and changing dynamics of the situation (disease status). History also influence (if never had it or had it before).
- Evaluation is used to show **trust and keep trust in the system**. Both internal and external (policy makers, human health professionals). The incentive to communicate the results of the evaluation will be different.
- Transparency, good signals to define good evaluation.
- Risk of introduction, depending on geography, status of neighboring countries.
- International situation including wildlife (e.g. avian flyways).
- Economic costs.
- Public health implications.
- Simplicity of the process (should be kept simple).