

PROVISIONAL¹ SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE NOTIFICATION OF AN EVALUATION PLAN

(version July 2014)

Member States are invited to use this sheet for the notification of an evaluation plan pursuant to Art. 1(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 651/2014².

Member States are also invited to use this sheet in the case of a notified aid scheme subject to an evaluation as foreseen in the relevant Commission guidelines.

Please make reference to the Commission Staff Working Document "Common methodology for State aid evaluation"³ for guidance on the drafting of an evaluation plan.

Identification of the aid scheme to be evaluated

(1) Title of the aid scheme:

The Austrian government promotes through the „digital offensive“ the competitive and technology neutral roll-out of nationwide high-speed broadband networks, based on targets of the Ministry of Transport, Technology and Innovation, set out in its “Broadband Strategy 2020”.

Austria’s Broadband strategy 2020 outlines the following targets:

- by 2018 the coverage of highspeed broadband connections for Austrian households in densely populated areas shall be close to 70%,
- by 2020 there shall be a near nation-wide coverage of the whole Austrian population with highspeed broadband connections.

The “Masterplan for broadband aid” is the centerpiece for the fulfilment of targets as outlined by the “Broadband strategy 2020”.

The “digital offensive” as well as the “masterplan for broadband aid” comprises specific aid instruments, consisting out of four different aid schemes in regards to “broadband coverage” and “-usage”. Three schemes are “infrastructure related” and complementary to each other, whereas the fourth one is supportive to the former ones:

- „Breitband Austria 2020_Access“ (BBA2020_A) aims for an improved coverage by focusing on the spatial extensiveness of access networks.
- „Breitband Austria 2020_Backhaul“ (BBA2020_B) supports the reinforcement of backhaul networks and the connection of isolated solutions to core networks. The

¹ This Supplementary Information Sheet is provisional and not mandatory. It is, however, recommended that – until its final version is approved as a part of the revision of the Implementing Regulation – Member States use it for the notification of an evaluation plan.

² Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the common market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, OJ L 187 of 26.6.2014, p. 1.

³ SWD(2014)179 final of 28.5.2014.

main strategic thrust is the provision of high symmetric transmission rates.

- „Breitband Austria 2020_Leerverrohrungsprogramm“ (BBA2020_LeRohr) is supposed to facilitate the installation of cable ducts for communication networks during on-going civil engineering works.
- Finally the fourth scheme “Austrian Electronic Network” is regarded to enhance the usage of highspeed broadband connections. The aid stimulates the development of broadband internet related services and applications in the transition phase from R&D-results towards an introduction into the market. It covers the development of services and applications within the aspects of eGovernment, eHealth, eLearning, eInclusion, improvement of traffic security, thrust and security and SME-support services.

The first three schemes will be notified according to the terms and definitions by the EC. Therefore the evaluation will apply and respective details are provided within this document.

The latter one – AT:net - is considered under the terms and conditions of the “de minimis regulation” and will not be notified. As such respective details and explanations have been excluded within the following paragraphs.

Bmvit will act as the “Haushaltsführende Stelle” (eng.: “housekeeping entity”) whereas the “Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (FFG)” has the role of a “Abwicklungsstelle” (eng.: “settlement center”).

(2) Does the evaluation plan concern:

a scheme subject to evaluation pursuant to Art. 1(2)(a) of Regulation (EU) 651/2014

a scheme notified to the Commission pursuant to Art. 108.3 TFEU

(3) Reference of the scheme (*to be completed by the Commission*):

[Empty dotted box for reference of the scheme]

- (4) Please mention, if relevant, ex ante evaluations or impact assessments for the aid scheme and ex post evaluations or studies conducted in the past on predecessors of the aid scheme or on similar schemes. Please provide a brief description of the results and conclusions, highlighting specific challenges that the evaluations and studies might have faced from a methodological point of view (e.g. data availability) that are relevant for the assessment of the present evaluation plan. If appropriate, please identify relevant areas/topics not covered by previous evaluation plans that should be object of the current evaluation. Please provide summaries of such evaluations and studies in annex or internet links to the documents concerned.

During the development of the Masterplan⁴ acting as the basis for the “Breitband Austria 2020” state aid programmes, bmvit conducted and considered several **ex-ante evaluations and / or impact assessments** based upon reports, studies and scientific papers. **Common to all of these are the beneficial conclusions within socio-economic aspects upon but not limited to GDP, employment and productivity for Austria by the increase of (highspeed-) broadband coverage, speed and usage.**

Please note that all further explanations and descriptions are concerned for the three to be notified “Breitband Austria 2020” schemes. Details about the scheme “AT:net” have been excluded as being considered under the “de minimis regulation”.

The impacts of the Internet and broadband for the Austrian socio-economic landscape have been evaluated within the study “Die ökonomische Bedeutung der Internet-Wirtschaft in Österreich” by Fjodor Gütermann und Agnes Streissler-Führer⁵.

A study by WIK-Consult GmbH⁶ “Ein Benchmark zur Effizienz verschiedener Breitbandförderungsmodelle“ evaluated and concluded that the given targets and principles of “Breitband Austria 2020” state aid programmes are best suited for Austria in contrast to other possible aid scenarios.

Furthermore a recent report by PwC “Breitband für Österreich – Evaluierung des Breitbandausbaus in Österreich für das BMVIT⁷” - evaluates the “Breitband Austria 2020” schemes and concludes that the defined schemes suit to the expected principles and targets in relation to the strategy, masterplan as well as other possible aid scenarios.

bmvit has to comment that ex-ante evaluations and / or impact assessments strictly according to the given principles and guidances as outlined within the EC document “Common methodology for State aid evaluation” has not been performed yet. Please see further explanation on how bmvit will address those outlined aspects for the intended evaluation within the following chapters.

The past aid-scheme under the title “Breitband Austria 2013” is ongoing and will be

⁴ <https://www.bmvit.gv.at/service/publikationen/telekommunikation/downloads/breitbandoffensive.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.agnesstreissler.at/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/Internet-Economy-AT.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.wik.org/index.php?id=studien>

⁷ PWC report is classified as strictly confidential and publicly not available

concluded by Q4/2015. Bmvit plans for this measure within the scope of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) an ex-post evaluation in a similar manner as for the new aid programmes but under the specifications of this regulation.

Bmvit gathered already evaluation experiences for ex-post evaluations by the creation of the annual published "broadband evaluation report"⁸ since its first release in 2013. The report covers aspects, evolutions, direct as well as indirect effects and trends of the broadband- as well as the ICT-sector on a yearly basis. The provided content is independent from ongoing aid programmes.

Beside the fact that bmvit maintains an internal database as the basis for certain broadband related direct effects, bmvit experienced during past preparations for the "broadband evaluation reports" certain inconsistencies within the available external data related to the measurement of direct effects. This is mainly due to the amount of various dependent and / or independent data sources, their different timely creation and collection and their statistical significance due to the limited amount of data of the past. Therefore efforts for bmvit will be to amalgamate and correlate respective data for the use within the evaluation.

In terms of the evaluation of indirect effects by broadband aid schemes bmvit found out that there is a considerable large gap within the area of necessary data sources. Although several scientific papers consider certain socio-economic impacts their underlying data is not or only in a very limited scale (quantity, duration) available. Scientific papers focus on very certain aspects for a short period in time as such data is not periodically available. Likewise as with data for the interpretation of direct effects efforts it will be necessary to aggregate and merge diverging data offered by different sources for indirect effects accordingly.

⁸ Available for download under:
<http://www.bmvit.gv.at/telekommunikation/breitbandstrategie/downloads/1evaluierung2013.pdf>

Objectives of the aid scheme to be evaluated⁹

- (5) Please provide a description of the aid scheme specifying the needs and problems the scheme intends to address and the intended categories of beneficiaries (e.g. size, sectors, location, indicative number).

The expansion of the high-performance broadband infrastructure for the supply of homes and enterprises has an enormous influence on the economic and social development in Austria.

Economic researchers investigated a significant contribution of ICT and broadband to the GDP. The Worldbank found a GDP increase by 1,2% in case of a 10% increase in broadband coverage¹⁰. The scientific paper « Broadband Infrastructure and Economic Growth » concludes that a 10% increase in broadband connections contributes to the GDP between 0,9% and 1,5%¹¹. Austria's share of ICT in value added dropped by 0.9% between 2000 and 2011 and was at 3.8% in 2011¹². Austria is compared to several other countries located at the last position by the OECD ranking. Ireland, Korea and Japan are at the leading position with values of 11.24%, 9.58% and 8.21%.

Regarding employment the EC see a multiplication factor of about 1.4 up to 5 new jobs triggered by ICT¹³. Likewise investments in broadband infrastructure projects could contribute to an increase in employment as stated by a German¹⁴ (rem. : an invest of 36 Mio. EUR in FTTH-based broadband infrastructure could result in 541.000 job-years) and a UK¹⁵-based study (rem. : an invest of 5 Mrd. GBP could cause 280.000 job-years).

Furthermore productivity is increased by broadband connections for the population as well as businesses. LECG Ltd. predicted that every additional broadband connection per 100 people could improve the productivity by 0.1%¹⁶. SMEs could increase their productivity by 10% if they use web technologies¹⁷.

Another important factor lies within the advantages of location and real estate.

⁹ Beyond providing a general description of the objectives and eligibility rules of the scheme, the aim of this section is to assess how the eligibility and exclusion rules of the scheme may be used to identify the effect of aid. In some cases, the precise eligibility rules may not be known in advance. In these cases the best available expectations should be provided.

¹⁰ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTIC4D/Resources/IC4D_Broadband_35_50.pdf

¹¹ http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1516232

¹² http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-factbook-2014_factbook-2014-en;jsessionid=f83nldjnrmiqi.x-oecd-live-03

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=4243

¹⁴

<https://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/mygsb/faculty/research/pubfiles/6155/Impact%20of%20Broadband%20on%20Jobs%20and%20German%20Economy.pdf>

¹⁵ http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/23830/1/UK_Digital_recovery.pdf

¹⁶

http://www.itu.int/wsis/stocktaking/docs/activities/1286203195/Report_BroadbandStudy_LECG_Marc_h6%5B1%5D.pdf

¹⁷ Fjodor Gütermann, Agnes Streissler-Führer. Die ökonomische Bedeutung der Internet-Wirtschaft in Österreich, 2013.

Sweden reported advantages in terms of an increase in the amount of population within FTTH-covered areas¹⁸. Similar experiences of advantages in real estate in relation to the existence of a broadband coverage were published in the UK near Coventry¹⁹.

Finally the EC outlines within the study „Unlocking ICT growth potential in Europe enabling people and businesses“²⁰ that an existing broadband infrastructure is a prerequisite to enable the beneficial effects in the area of innovation. High quality and affordable infrastructures (fixed- and mobile-broadband) form the basis for the increasing demand of Cloud- and BigData-services.

On the contrary a nationwide expansion with ultrafast high performance broadband access (more than 100MBit/s) would require an overall investment of approx. 5.6 Billion EUR for Austria²¹, according to a study by the European Investment Bank (EIB) from 2011. This can not be applied by the Austrian infrastructure provider alone. Furthermore, as the Austrian telecommunication sector is a fully liberalised market the respective companies, invest exclusively in regions where a sufficient demand exists. This leads to a market failure in large parts of Austria - especially in rural areas.

The aids, under the three to be notified aid programs, are intended to stimulate investments as well as the competition within the market. As such they contribute to a near nationwide coverage of ultrafast high performance broadband access in accordance with the "Broadband Strategy 2020". The aids are intended to target network investors and / or telecommunication providers.

During preparation of the respective aid schemes EC's "Broadband Guidelines" served as a guidance concerning transparency, open access and technology neutrality. Therefore aids should lead in general to the creation of new infrastructure that otherwise would not have been created. They should result in an increased capacity and speed available within the broadband product market, and should contribute to lower prices, wider choices for customers, a better coverage and an increase in innovation activities.

Today in Austria, the coverage ratio for fast Internet access (with bandwidths of up to 30Mbit/s – ie. "NGA speed") is at 70.2 Percent compared to leading countries such as

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<http://www.ssnf.org/Documents/Konferenser/Bilder%20till%20konferenssidan/Effects%20of%20FTTH%20on%20employment%20and%20population.pdf>

19 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/10673641/How-does-broadband-speed-affect-your-property-value.html>

20 <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/new-study-unlocking-ict-growth-potential-europe-enabling-people-and-businesses>

21 http://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/eibpapers/eibpapers_2011_v16_n01_en.pdf

Belgium or the Netherlands, which report near nationwide coverage already.

The coverage of ultra-fast broadband access (with bandwidths of more than 100 Mbit/s) is at an international remarkable low level of about 44.5 Percent.

The below listed state aids are intended to target the following categories of beneficiaries:

- "BBA2020_LeRohr", prioritised for communities although also eligible in second priority for telecommunication providers, and
- "BBA2020_Access" as well as "BBA2020_Backhaul", eligible only for telecommunication providers.

As of today there exist in Austria a total of 2.100 communities²² of which the BBA2020_LeRohr program would be of potential interest. bmvit expects that few of those (estimated less than 25%) will issue applications for this particular aid.

The programmes BBA2020_Access and BBA2020_Backhaul are applicable for Austrian Telecommunication Providers as of the listing by RTR-GmbH²³ – the Austrian National Regulatory Authority (NRA). Their size varies from a single large leading OpCo with SMP at the Austria telecommunication market offering convergent QuadruplePlay-services and bundle-products, to several mid-sized ones partly offering convergent bundle solutions and finally to (very-)small-to-mid-sized providers offering geographical- and broadband-technology-wise (ie. Fixed-broadband) limited services.

A1 Telekom Austria is the incumbent operator in Austria and has the largest customer basis within their Fixed- (xDSL-based) and Mobile-Broadband-infrastructure. They are stated as being the operator with "SignificantMarketPower" within the Austrian Market by RTR-GmbH. They are followed by several other telecommunications providers providing their products at a national level in the area of fixed- (based upon ULL, Cable, WiFi or WiMAX technology) and/or mobile-broadband as well as several small-to-medium sized operators offering services on a geographically limited scale.

²² See also: http://www.statistik.at/web_de/klassifikationen/regionale_gliederungen/gemeinden/index.html

²³ See also: <https://www.rtr.at/de/tk/ListeAGGTK?anf=a>

- (6) Please indicate the objectives of the scheme and the expected impact(s), both at the level of the intended beneficiaries and as far as the objective of common interest is concerned.

The objective common to the three to be notified “infrastructure related” special aid directives (ie. “BBA2020_Access”, “BBA2020_Backhaul” und “BBA2020_LeRohr”) in regards to direct effects is a significant improvement of the broadband coverage in those areas of Austria, which would not adequately be supplied within three years from the publication date of the respective special aid directive.

Sustainable investments are intended to stimulate the deployment of NGA networks, which stimulate the wholesale market and thereby secure the competition on the retail market, whereby a significant increase of the coverage and usage of broadband high-performance additions is expected.

Common to three infrastructure related aid schemes (rem.: BBA2020_Access, BBS2020_Backhaul and BBA2020_LeRohr) is that they leverage the rollout of broadband infrastructure with direct non-repayable grants to lower the capitalisation gap.

In accordance with several studies it is of common knowledge that FTTH/FTTB-based nationwide coverage is the best suitable scenario to fulfil Austria’s broadband strategy although it is not commercially feasible – see also item no. 5). Market participants need to increase their investment by a factor of 3 per year to make this scenario happen, which is not feasible as of today’s market- and capital-conditions according to a study by WIK-consult. The capitalisation gap for a full nation wide fibre infrastructure is valued at approx. 2 Billion Euro. Beside aid schemes with the intention to widen FTTH-networks, the practice of „second-best-approaches“ shall be an effective aid policy as of WIK-consult. Such an approach has been foreseen by the proposed aid schemes by the efficient use and evolution of existing infrastructures and networks as intermediate steps heading for full blown FTTH-based networks and thereby increasing the bandwidth significantly.

WIK-consult evaluated in 2013 several aid scenarios and their pros and cons. They concluded that the „direct aid scenario“ is the most favorable one due to their positive contribution in the aspects of broadband strategy, resource- and cost efficiency, competition based capital allocation, aid sustainability as well as administrative and organisational efforts.

BBA2020_LeRohr in particular targets the reduction of high excavation costs for the NGA-rollout of up to 80% in optimised manner if they are predominantly combined with other construction activities.

To outline the objectives for each aid program, the following paragraph has been taken out of the aid's special directives («Sonderrichtlinien BBA2020»):

Indikatoren für eine wesentliche Verbesserung der Breitbandverfügbarkeit sind (eng. „indicators for the significant increase of broadband coverage“):

BBA2020 A

1. *Die Ausweitung der geografischen NGA-Netzabdeckung (eng. Increase of geographical NGA-coverage)*

| | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 3 | |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| Jahr / year | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| % | 35 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 85 | 98 |

Tabelle 1: Verfügbarkeit von ultraschnellen Breitband-Hochleistungszugängen (Basis: Wohnsitze) – eng. Coverage of high-speed broadband connections for households with more than 100 Mbit/s)

2. *Die Steigerung der leitungsgebundenen bzw. der drahtlosen Access-Qualität (eng. Increase of fixedline and wireless access-quality)*

| | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 3 | |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| Jahr / year | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Mbit/s | 16 | 25 | 30 | 50 | 70 | 100 |

Tabelle 2: Durchschnittlich verfügbare Bandbreite pro versorgter Einheit. (eng.: average available bandwidth per supplied unit)

BBA2020 B

| | Phase 1 | | Phase 2 | | Phase 3 | |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| Jahr / year | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
| % | 45 | 50 | 55 | 60 | 65 | 70 |

Tabelle 1: Steigerung der Hochleistungs-PoP-Anbindungen (eng. Increase of high-speed Point-of-Presence connections)

BBA2020 LeRo

- *Indikator 1:
50%-ige Steigerung der Anzahl von Wohnsitzen und Gebäuden auf Gemeindeebene, wo die Möglichkeit zur Verlegung von Hochleistungs-Breitbandinfrastruktur geschaffen wird. (eng.: 50 Percent increase in the amount of households and buildings per community in which high-speed broadband infrastructure could be deployed)*
- *Indikator 2:*

*30%-ige Reduktion der Grabungskosten bei geförderten Vorhaben. (eng.:
reduction of excavation costs by 30 percent within aided projects)*

The contest for aids via „call for bids“ is best suited to achieve the lowest aid amount for the expected aid targets thereby reaching resource efficiency as of WIK-consult. The proposed aid schemes are based upon the following principles as stated by WIK-consult:

- (1) Action areas are properly tailored at community level (not too small to introduce additional costs though large enough to balance out high- versus low-cost areas). The „call for bids“ are defined upon NUTS3-regions. A coverage ration below 100 percent is intended as a lowered value could significantly lower the capitalisation gap and costs.
- (2) The mechanisms of aid contest by „call for bids“ shall be fully functional. As such the respective party will be selected who fulfils all conditions as of the special aid directives and requires the lowest capitalisation gap. This provider maintains the most efficient technology to fulfil the coverage, uses the existing infrastructure best and thereby minimizes costs.
- (3) The amount of aid to close the capitalisation gap will be an important criteria within the selection process.

- (7) Please indicate possible negative effects, on the aid beneficiaries or on the wider economy, that might be directly or indirectly associated with the aid scheme²⁴.

Negative aspects in regards to direct effects might arise regarding the incumbent – A1 Telekom Austria AG – as they could probably gain bidding advantages within certain geographical areas. Due to their spatial wide xDSL-based technology and coverage the reaching of the aid's fixed broadband access quality target – see chapter 12) for details – could be endangered. This advantage could possibly lead to a lock-in situation within respective regions.

The funding strategy of the BMVIT will create an incentive for investments and at the same time guarantee fair competition.

The funding rates, as part of the development programs (up to 50% of the capital expenditures for BBA2020_Access, BBA2020_Backhaul and BBA2020_LeRohr) are chosen in a way to stimulate and not to replace the needed investments.

A fair competition between the potential aid applicants will ensure that an extension of the market domination by large provider / telecommunication operators will not happen. Small providers shall be given a real chance. In cases of competing aid applications, not only the size of the proposed coverage area is decisive, and as such not only large providers (rem: which would propose a larger coverage area) may win the contract.

As part of the concrete underlying principles of the broadband strategy situations of "windfall gains" will be prevented as no funding application can be issued for the expansion of already existing infrastructures.

In the generic case if the aid schemes will not be issued the impacts the following benefits can not be realised:

- An aforementioned study promotes the contribution to GDP as a 10 Percent increase of broadband connections could increase the GDP by 0,9 to 1,5%.
- Broadband contributes to employment by a factor of 1,4 up to 5 for new workplaces according to a study by the EC.
- Advantages in location and real estate, increases in productivity, add value and revenues.
- Broadband networks also contribute to the reduction of emissions and greenhousegas due to reduced traffic intensity and optimised energy

²⁴ Examples of negative effects are regional and sectorial biases or crowding out of private investments induced by the aid scheme.

consumption.

- the ranking and gap of Austria within several ICT- and broadband-related international rankings (ie. OECD-NRI, EC-InnovationUnionScoreboard, EC-DESI, EC-Dashboard) compared to other / leading nations will worsen furthermore.

- (8) Please indicate the annual budget planned under the scheme, the duration of the scheme²⁵, the aid instrument(s) and the eligible costs.

The duration of the aid program is from 2015 to 2020. The aids are based upon non-repayable grants of up to 50% of the costs for the deployment of passive infrastructures from 2016 onwards (applicable for the aid programmes BBA2020_Access, _Backhaul and LehrRohr).

The funds have been financed by the capital gained through the recent frequency auction (rem.: total gain of about 2 Billion Euro) and be partly reinvested within the Austrian (telecommunication provider) market from a macroeconomic point of view.

The annual budget planned under the respective scheme is as follows:

| Subsidy scheme | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| BBA2020_Access | 100 Mio.€ | 80 Mio. € | 80 Mio. € | 80 Mio. € | 40 Mio. € |
| BBA2020_Backhaul | 100 Mio.€ | 80 Mio. € | 80 Mio. € | 80 Mio. € | 40 Mio. € |
| BBA2020_LehrRohr | 85 Mio. € | 30 Mio. € | 30 Mio. € | 30 Mio. € | 15 Mio. € |

The eligible costs are as follows:

The following paragraph has been taken out of the aid's special directives («Sonderrichtlinien BBA2020»):

BBA2020 A:

Investitionskosten für den Ausbau von Zugangsnetzen der nächsten Generation (NGA-Netzen), im Sinne dieser Sonderrichtlinie für den Ausbau der passiven Netzinfrastruktur, das sind in der Regel Baukosten beziehungsweise Kosten für Leerrohre, für Glasfaserleitungen und für Verteilerkästen, wenn sie buchhalterisch im Anlagevermögen oder als Anlage in Bau erfasst sind. (eng.: capital expenditures for the deployment of passive physical infrastructures in the context of NGA-access network deployments, like construction costs, costs for ductwork, fibre cables, distribution boxes if they are documented as capital assets or assets in construction.)

²⁵

Aid schemes defined in Art. 1(2)(a) of Regulation No 651/2014 shall be excluded from the scope of the Regulation six months after their entry into force. After having assessed the evaluation plan, the Commission may decide to extend for a longer period the application of the Regulation to such schemes. Member States are invited to precisely indicate the intended duration of the scheme.

BBA2020 B:

Investitionskosten für die Verstärkung der Zubringernetze und die Anbindung von Inselösungen an die Kernnetze für die passive Infrastruktur von Backhaul-Anbindungen. In der Regel sind das Baukosten und Anschaffungskosten für Bauteile der passiven Kommunikationsinfrastruktur, wenn sie buchhalterisch im Anlagevermögen oder als Anlage in Bau erfasst sind. (eng.: capital expenditures for the enhancement of backhaul networks as well as connection of islands towards core networks concerning passive infrastructures of backhaul connections; like construction costs and capital expenditures for passive communication infrastructures, if they are documented as capital assets or assets in construction.)

BBA2020 LeRo:

Investitionskosten für den Ausbau von Leerrohrsystemen mit und ohne Kabel, darunter fallen insbesondere Kosten für Tiefbauarbeiten (Grabungsarbeiten inkl. Wiederherstellung), Kosten für die Leerverrohrung (wie Sub-Ducts, Mikrorohre usw.) inklusive Verlegung, Kosten für LWL-/Glasfaserkabel inklusive Einblasen und Spleißen, Kosten für Faserverteiler inklusive deren Einbau, Kosten für passive Einrichtungen von Verteilern und Ortszentralen.

(eng.: capital expenditures for the enhancement of ductwork with or without cables; like construction costs, costs for deployment of ductwork, fibre cables, distribution boxes and central (distribution-) offices if they are documented as capital assets or assets in construction.)

BBA2020 A, BBA2020 B und BBA2020 LeRo:

Als Investitionskosten können auch anteilige Kosten anerkannt werden, die außerhalb des Förderungsgebiets angefallen sind. Dazu muss bereits im Förderungsansuchen deren Auswirkung auf die Investition im Förderungsgebiet begründet und quantifiziert worden sein.

Investitionsbezogene Eigenleistungen in Form von Arbeitsleistungen und Material-entnahmen; sie müssen zu ihrer Anerkennung durch Vorlage von Aufzeichnungen glaubhaft gemacht werden.

Die Plausibilität der veranschlagten Kosten kann anhand von Pauschalkostensätzen überprüft werden, die im Zusammenwirken von haushaltsführender Stelle und Abwicklungsstelle festzulegen sind.

(eng.: further capital expenditures could be accepted if they are accrued outside of aid areas and their impact upon expenditures within aid areas are documented and quantified. goods and services on their own account shall be made plausible to be accepted. Projected costs could be verified via

plausibility checks based upon lump-sum rates. Lump-sum rates shall be defined bilaterally between bmvit and the settlement center (Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft - FFG.)

- (9) Please provide a summary of the eligibility criteria and the methods for selecting the aid beneficiaries. In particular, please describe the methods of selecting beneficiaries, the indicative budget available for each group of beneficiaries, the likelihood of the budget being exhausted for certain groups of beneficiaries, possible scoring rules, aid intensity thresholds, criteria the authority granting the aid will take into account when assessing applications.

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

The following paragraph has been taken out of the aid's special directives («Sonderrichtlinien BBA2020»):

BBA2020 A:

Die Qualitätskriterien sind: (quality criteria are as follows)

1. *Geografische Abdeckung mit NGA-Qualität (geographical coverage of NGA-quality)*
 - 1.1 *Steigerung der Verfügbarkeit (increase of coverage)*
 - 1.2 *Ausmaß der räumlichen Verbesserung (extent of spatial improvement)*
 - 1.3 *Zugangspunkte für Mitnutzungs- oder Überlassungsmöglichkeiten (access points for joint-use and hand-over possibilities)*
 - 1.4 *Summenbandbreite der Accesstechnologie pro Teilnehmer (summarised bandwidth of access technology per subscriber)*
 - 1.5 *Durchschnittliche Anbindungsbandbreite pro Einheit (average connection bandwidth per unit)*
 - 1.6 *Verteilung der Bandbreiten im Förderungsgebiet (bandwidth distribution within the aid area)*
2. *Regionale Relevanz*
 - 2.1 *Zusatznutzen durch Abdeckung in der Fläche (add value of coverage within the area)*
 - 2.2 *Berücksichtigung von Standortfaktoren (consideration of location factors)*
 - 2.3 *Regionalökonomische Aspekte (regional economic aspects)*
3. *Wirtschaftlich günstigstes Angebot (best commercial bid)*
 - 3.1 *Förderungsbedarf im Verhältnis zur Steigerung der Verfügbarkeit (aid demand in relation to coverage increase)*
 - 3.2 *Förderungsbedarf im Verhältnis zur Steigerung der Bandbreite (aid demand in relation to increase of bandwidth)*
 - 3.3 *Anteil der Förderung am Investitionsvolumen (Förderhebel)(ratio of aid to capital expenditure)*
 - 3.4 *Kooperationsumfang über die Sektorengrenze hinweg (insbesondere Kooperation mit Energie-, Straßen- und Wassersektor) (extent of cooperation beyond sectors –*

- energy-, transportation- and watersupply-sector)*
4. *Standardangebot und Endkundenprodukte (standard offer and end customer products)*
 - 4.1 *Standardangebot (standard offer for ULL product)*
 - 4.2 *Leistungsbeschreibungen und Entgeltbestimmungen zu den angebotenen Endkundenprodukten (specification of services and prices for end customer products)*

BBA2020 B:

Die Qualitätskriterien sind: (quality criteria are as follows)

1. *Planungsqualität (planning quality)*
 - 1.1 *Relevanz der PoP-Anbindung für bestehende Zugänge (relevance of PoP-connection to existing connections)*
 - 1.2 *Trassenführung und PoP für Mehrfachnutzung optimiert (quality of route and POP-optimisation for multiple use)*
2. *Regionale Relevanz*
 - 2.1 *Zusatznutzen durch Abdeckung in der Fläche (add value due to geographical coverage)*
 - 2.2 *Berücksichtigung von Standortfaktoren (consideration of location factors)*
 - 2.3 *Regionalökonomische Aspekte (regional economic aspects)*
3. *Wirtschaftlich günstigstes Angebot (commercial best bid)*
 - 3.1 *Verhältnis zwischen Förderungsbedarf und förderbaren Gesamtkosten (ration between aid demand and total costs)*
 - 3.2 *Kostenreduktion aufgrund der Nutzung von Mitverlegungsmöglichkeiten (cost reductions due to joint laying possibilities)*
4. *Standardangebot (standard offer)*
 - 4.1 *Zugangspunkte für Mitnutzung oder Überlassung (PoPs for joint-use and hand-over possibilities)*
 - 4.2 *Anzahl der frei verfügbaren Dark Fibres unter Berücksichtigung des über-regionalen Bedarfs (amount of free accessible dark fibres considering the extended regional demand)*

BBA2020 LeRo:

Die Qualitätskriterien sind: (quality criteria are as follows)

1. *Geografische Abdeckung (geographical coverage)*
 - 1.1 *Wohnsitze, wo aufgrund des geförderten Vorhabens zusätzliche Verfügbarkeit von NGA geschaffen werden kann. (amount of households for which additional coverage could be provided by the aided project)*
 - 1.2 *Gebäude, wo aufgrund des geförderten Vorhabens zusätzliche Verfügbarkeit von NGA geschaffen werden kann. (amount of buildings for which additional coverage could be provided by the aided project)*

2. Regionale Relevanz
 - 2.1 Zusatznutzen durch Abdeckung in der Fläche (add value by the geographical coverage)
 - 2.2 Berücksichtigung von Standortfaktoren (considerations of location factors)
 - 2.3 Regionalökonomische Aspekte (regional economic aspects)
3. Planungsqualität und Mitverlegungsgrad (quality of planning and amount of joint laying)
 - 3.1 Planungsqualität unter Berücksichtigung der besonderen Förderungsbedingungen (quality of planning regarding special aid conditions)
 - 3.2 Verhältnis zwischen der in Eigenregie ausgebauten Grabungsstrecke und der mitverlegten Grabungsstrecke (ratio of excavation lengths done by the beneficiary on their own versus joint-laying with others)
4. Wirtschaftlichkeit (economics)
 - 4.1 Verhältnis zwischen Förderungsbedarf und förderbaren Gesamtkosten (ratio between aid demand and total costs)
 - 4.2 Verhältnis zwischen Förderungsbedarf und der zusätzlichen Verfügbarkeit für Wohnsitze und Gebäude (ration between aid demand and additional coverage for households and buildings)
 - 4.3 Kostenreduktion aufgrund der Nutzung von Mitverlegungsmöglichkeiten (cost reduction due to joint laying possibilities)
 - 4.4 Standardangebot (standard offer)

The methods for selecting the aid beneficiaries consider the following aspects:

Im Zuge der Bewertung werden zu jedem Kriterium Punkte vergeben. Für jedes Kriterium muss eine Mindestpunktzahl erreicht bzw. überschritten werden. Es können nur Vorhaben gefördert werden, die in Summe mindestens 50 % der maximal möglichen Punkte erreichen. Diese Bewertung wird mit Hilfe eines Bewertungshandbuchs durchgeführt.

(eng.: During the evaluation each evaluation criteria will be considered and rated. For each criteria a certain minimum threshold need to be reached by the applicant. Applications will be excluded from the further consideration and assessment if they stay in summary for all criteria below 50 percent. Dedicated „assessment handbooks“ for each special aid directive have been created to outline the specific details for each criteria.)

Es ist eine Bewertungsjury bei der Abwicklungsstelle eingerichtet. Sie

setzt sich aus mindestens drei unabhängigen Experten/innen zusammen, die im Zuge eines Aufrufs aus einem Experten-Pool nominiert werden, der im Vorfeld von der haushaltsführenden Stelle auf Vorschlag der Abwicklungsstelle geschaffen wird.

(eng.: the settlement center establishes an assessment jury consisting of at least three independent experts nominated out of a dedicated pool of experts. The pool will be created by bmvit and experts will be gathered by call into this.

Die Bewertungsjury hält die ermittelten Ergebnisse in einer schriftlichen Förderungsempfehlung an die haushaltsführende Stelle fest. Die Förderungsempfehlung kann auch Auflagen und/oder Bedingungen zur Erhöhung der Förderungswirkung beinhalten.

(eng.: the assessment jury documents all necessary results within a written aid suggestion and issues this to bmvit. The aid suggestion may also contain certain terms and conditions to increase the aid effect.)

Auf Basis der Förderungsempfehlung der Bewertungsjury entscheidet der Bundesminister für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie über die Förderungswürdigkeit der Vorhaben und verständigt darüber die Abwicklungsstelle. (eng.: bmvit decides based upon the aid suggestion issued by the assessment jury about the dignity of the aid and informs the settlement center.)

For the details of the indicative budget available for each group of beneficiaries we'd like to reference to question number 8.

The likelihood of the budget being exhausted for certain groups of beneficiaries is considered as follows:

One "call for bid" has been defined at the NUTS-3-level and as such 35 call for bids will be done. For each of these areas a certain amount of fund has been allocated out of the total available budget (rem.: the amount for each of the 35 bids has been allocated by a certain nationwide agreed distribution ration). In cases of "oversubscription" - in other words, if there are not enough subsidies available to provide funds for all the received applications - the funding is reduced proportionately and then allocated accordingly.

The aid intensity thresholds are defined as follows:

The thresholds for aids and subsidies are determined partially differently in the special aid directives:

- for BBA2020_Access , BBA2020_Backhaul and BBA2020_LeRohr the funding rate is up to 50 Percent of the capital expenditures.

Concerning the scoring rules and criteria the authority granting the aid will take into account when assessing applications we'd like to reference to the dedicated aid "assessment handbook" ("Bewertungshandbuch") for each special aid directive.

For the calculation, assessment and evaluation of quality criteria as outlined in chapter 1, 3 and 4 specific data has been made available bmvit-internally in a Geographical Information System called "Breitbandatlas" since the beginning of 2014 – for detailed explanations about the "Breitbandatlas" please see answers to question 12).

- (10) Please mention specific constraints or risks that might affect the implementation of the scheme, its expected impacts and the achievement of its objectives.

Today no ***specific constraints or risks*** are indicated.

The aid budget is available and has been allocated for the aid programmes.

The proposed bidding process timelines for the program "BBA2020_LeRohr" will be kept by Q2/2015.

Evaluation questions

- (11) Please indicate the specific questions that the evaluation should address by providing quantitative evidence of the impact of aid. Please distinguish questions related to the direct impact of the aid on the beneficiaries from questions related to the indirect impacts. Please explain how the evaluation questions relate to the objectives of the scheme.

The final evaluation , which is to be regarded as a holistic evaluation of the broadband strategy 2020 for the 3 to be notified programs and which includes the assessment of the macroeconomic impact takes place, after the end of the period covered by these special aid directives.

On the basis of project reports, bmvit collects and compares the expansion of the geographic NGA network coverage and the increasing access quality in the BBA2020_A.

In the BBA2020_B, ultrafast end customer connections are collected on the basis of project reports by bmvit.

The number of residences and buildings at the community level where the possibility of deployment for high broadband infrastructure could be provided, is increased by the BBA2020_LeRohr. High broadband infrastructures are expanded cost-effectively through the coordinated and cooperative approach concurrent to municipal civil engineering work.

Austria's "cause-effect-toolset" called "Wirkungsorientierte Folgenabschätzung (WFA)" captures and documents the aids objects, impacts and their respective measures. The details provided within the WFA are used for aid evaluation purposes at national level. Below mentioned explanations have been partly taken out of the toolset for each aid program to provide further information.

The evaluation will cover the following questions concerning "direct effects" :

The following items are applicable for the aid programmes BBA2020_Access, BBA2020_Backhaul and BBA2020_LeRohr:

- To which extent does the aid increase the supply by beneficiaries and demand by customers of broadband infrastructure (in terms of supplied coverage, actual amount of connections and respective usage by customers and fulfilled high speed bandwidths by aid beneficiaries)?

The Objectives are:

- the geographical NGA-coverage is approximately at 98 Percent by

2020 (BBA2020_Access)

- the fixed- as well as Mobile-Broadband Access-quality is on average at 100Mbit/s by 2020 (BBA2020_Access)
- 70% out of the total of 16.600 PoPs shall be connected by fibre-cables (BBA2020_Backhaul)
- within 400 out of 500 communities adequate duct-works were deployed, which will provide the ability for broadband coverage of more than 50% of related buildings within the respective community (BBA2020_LeRohr).

Coverage related data (ie. the increase in coverage for households and buildings within the specific 100x100Meter landscape-cell on a per beneficiary basis) will be provided by the « Breitbandatlas ». Data regarded to GIS-information concerning the rollout of broadband infrastructure by beneficiaries will be taken from the « WebGIS-Application ».

Usage related data will be taken from external sources but are not limited to the NRA, Statistik Austria, EuroStat – please see the following paragraph for details about data sources and availability as well as sources mentioned within the « broadband evaluation report ».

The following items are specifically applicable in addition to the aforementioned ones for BBA2020_LeRohr:

- How does BBA2020_LeRohr gain savings in terms of excavation costs and roll-out due to the major criteria of joint-use and / or joint-laying by physical infrastructures?

The objectives are :

- savings of up to 30 Percent of the total captial expenditures for excavation works by 2020

Bmvit understands the following questions as focussing upon those concerning “indirect effects”. The availability, correctness, completeness and consistency of proper statistical data is questionable today, therefore changes of the mentioned items may apply.

- To which extent does the aids influence the broadband market in terms of supply (rem. : coverage) and demand (rem. : usage) of products, services, applications, prices?
- What are the measureable supply and demand side influences

concerning spill-over effects by the aids (e.g. towards the ICT-, travel&tourism-, innovation-sector; concerning employment, environment, population, research and development intensity, accomodation, site selection)?

- To which extent does the aids influence the market position of telecommunication providers in terms of competition, opportunities for market entries?
- How does the aids impact infrastructure and telecommunication providers in terms of costs and revenues, employees, customer-base?
- How does the aids impact construction companies due to the increase of construction works in terms of revenues, employees, amount of contracts ?
- What is the measurable impact of the aids concerning broadband and ICT in regards to socio-economic aspects, like increase of GDP by 1,2% according to a study of the Worldbank, productivity, add value, increased demand for employees within rural areas which received aids?

The questions that are asked during the evaluation(s) are naturally aligned with the objectives of the programs – therefore see also answers to the previous questions.

Result indicators

- (12) Please indicate how the results of the scheme will be measured, which indicators will be built including the sources of data, and how the result indicators correspond to the evaluation questions. Please explain why the chosen indicators are the most relevant for measuring the expected impact of the scheme.

The main Austrian “cause-effect-toolset” to capture and document the aids impacts and their chosen indicators is called “Wirkungsorientierte Folgenabschätzung (WFA)”. The below mentioned snapshot have been taken out of this toolset.

The objectives and their respective indicators for the aid program BBA2020_Access are as follows:

Objective: near nation wide coverage of NGA-networks with bandwidths of more than 100Mbit/s

| Ausgangszustand Zeitpunkt der WFA | Status as of today | Zielzustand Evaluierungszeitpunkt | Target status |
|--|--|---|---|
| rd. 44,5 % der zu versorgenden Haushalte können derzeit mit Breitband-Hochleistungszugängen >100 Mbit/s ausgestattet werden. | Approx. 44,5% of households could be covered with high speed broadband infrastructure | Geografischen NGA-Netzabdeckung: Endevaluierung 2020 = rund 98% | The geographical NGA-coverage by 2020 is approx. 98% |
| Die leitungsgebundene beziehungsweise drahtlose Access-Qualität (Bandbreite pro versorgter Einheit) beträgt derzeit durchschnittlich 16 Mbit/s | The Fixed- as well as Mobile-Access-quality (bandwidth per supplied unit) is on average 16Mbit/s | Leitungsgebundene beziehungsweise drahtlose Access-Qualität (Bandbreite pro versorgter Einheit): Endevaluierung 2020 = 100 Mbit/s | The Fixed- as well as Mobile-Access-quality (bandwidth per supplied unit) is on average 100Mbit/s |

The objective and their respective indicators for the aid programm BBA2020_Backhaul are as follows :

Objective : Modernisation of existing backhaul-networks

| Ausgangszustand Zeitpunkt der WFA | Status as of today | Zielzustand Evaluierungszeitpunkt | Target status |
|---|--|--|--|
| Die Internetversorgung in entlegenen Gebieten ist häufig von kleinteiligen Lösungen gekennzeichnet. Damit Haushalte und Unternehmen die angestrebten Übertragungsraten tatsächlich flächendeckend nutzen können, sind auch im Bereich der Datenzubringung und Datenabführung (Backhaul) beziehungsweise der Anbindung lokaler Netze an die Kernnetze weitere Investitionen notwendig, die unter marktwirtschaftlichen | The supply with Internet connections in rural areas is often done via small-sized and very limited solutions. To reach the bandwidth and coverage targets it is necessary to enhance backhaul networks as well as their connections from | 2020 sollen etwa 70% von ca. 16.600 der Points of Presence - PoP mit Glas angebunden sein. | By 2020 approx. 70 percent out of the 16.600 PoPs shall be connected with fibre. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Bedingungen von den österreichischen Infrastrukturbetreibern nicht aufgebracht werden können. Etwa 45% der Points of Presence - PoP sind erst mit Glas angebunden. | local networks towards core networks, which could not be provided by infrastructure providers under market conditions. Approx 45 Percent of PoPs are connected with fibre. |
|--|--|

The objectives and their respective indicators for the aid programm BBA2020_LeRohr are as follows :

Objective 1 : sustainable improvement of the coverage

| Ausgangszustand Zeitpunkt der WFA | Status as of today | Zielzustand Evaluierungszeitpunkt | Target status |
|--|---|---|--|
| In etwa 500 Gemeinden wird man mit der Flächen- und Backhaulförderung allein keine qualitativ ausreichende Versorgung erreichen. In diesen Gemeinden existiert auch keine Leerverrohrung, die eine kostengünstige Versorgung ermöglichen könnte. | Approx. 500 communities will not be provisioned with adequate coverage by the aid programmes BBA2020_Access or BBA2020_Backhaul. Within those there will also not be ductworks available for a cost-efficient coverage. | In 400 von den 500 Gemeinden sollen adäquate Leerrohrsysteme errichtet sein, die den möglichen Zugang zu zumindest 50 % der Gebäude der jeweiligen Gemeinde umfassen. | For 400 out of 500 communities adequate ductworks were deployed, which provide the ability of broadband coverage for more than 50% of related buildings within the respective community. |

Objective 2 : reduction of excavation costs for the broadband rollout

| Ausgangszustand Zeitpunkt der WFA | Status as of today | Zielzustand Evaluierungszeitpunkt | Target status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hoher Anteil an Grabungskosten (70 bis 80 % der gesamten Errichtungskosten) bei Ausbauvorhaben für Breitband-Hochleistungszugänge | 70 to 80 Percent of the total capital expenditures are related to excavation costs for projects of high-speed broadband connections | Reduktion der Grabungskosten bei geförderten Projekten um etwa 30 % | Reduction of approx. 30% for the excavation costs of projects being granted with aids |

The measurement of broadband coverage related data – as outlined above for the aid programmes BBA2020_Access, BBA2020_Backhaul and BBA2020_LeRohr - will be done by an already available bmvit-internal GIS-system called "Breitbandatlas²⁶".

Data within this tool is based upon voluntary provisions by the respective

²⁶ <http://breitbandatlas.info/map.php>

telecommunication providers including past and future aid beneficiaries. The “Breitbandatlas” has been made available to the public since 2013.

Furthermore an existing obligation for applicants and beneficiaries within the special aid directives guarantees the documentation and provision of GIS-specific data concerning the rollout for each aid receiver within the “WebGIS-application”.

Broadband usage and socio-economic related data will be taken from several publicly available sources, including but not limited to

- NRA’s “Telecom Monitor²⁷”,
- NRA’s “Die österreichischen Telekommunikationsmärkte aus der Sicht der Nachfrager²⁸”
- Statistik Austria
 - o “Information Society²⁹”,
 - o “National Accounts³⁰”,
 - o “Structural Business Statistics³¹”
- Eurostat “Information Society³²”,
- EC
 - o DESI³³,
 - o Digital Agenda Scoreboard³⁴
- Akamai State-of-the-Internet reports³⁵,
- OECD “Factbook”³⁶.

In addition to those sources, data made available during the aid tender processes will also be considered and used further on.

Since 2013 an annual published “broadband evaluation report³⁷” provides an insight about the data sources being used for today’s evaluation purposes (in terms of broadband-coverage, -usage, -technologies, -supply by OpCo’s). bmvit will continue to use the within the document referenced data repositories and add respective new ones if needed for the purpose of aid evaluation. There are also plans to enhance upcoming reports by aspects as

²⁷ <https://www.rtr.at/en/inf/alleBerichte>

²⁸ https://www.rtr.at/en/inf/BerichtNASE2015/RTR_Studie_NASE_2015.pdf

²⁹

http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/EnergyEnvironmentInnovationMobility/information_society/index.html

³⁰ http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/Economy/national_accounts/index.html

³¹ http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/Economy/enterprises/structural_business_statistics/index.html

³² <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/information-society/statistics-illustrated>

³³ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/desi>

³⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/digital-agenda-scoreboard>

³⁵ <http://www.stateoftheinternet.com/connectivity-akamai-state-of-the-internet-reports.html>

³⁶ http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-factbook_18147364

³⁷ <http://www.bmvit.gv.at/telekommunikation/breitbandstrategie/downloads/1evaluierung2013.pdf>

outlined within the EC document “Common methodology for State aid evaluation” and based upon the bilateral agreements, experiences and results with the selected aid evaluation body / consortium.

Envisaged methods to conduct the evaluation

- (13) Please provide information on the envisaged methods to be used in the evaluation to identify the causal impact of the aid.

bmvit appreciates and values the described methods within the EC document “Common methodology for State aid evaluation” to a high degree, although has left the decision open which of those is (are) the most suitable one(s). bmvit would keep the opportunity to let the evaluation body / consortium propose during the tender process and bilaterally agree with the selected contractor upon the best fitting one(s) after an initial evaluation round in a small / limited scope in the context of the aid during the evaluation phases. From a today’s perspective there is certain risk within the measurement of direct and indirect effects regarding availability, correctness, completeness, consistency of required underlying indicator data.

Nevertheless today’s available annual “broadband evaluation report” covers certain aspects as mentioned within the EC document (e.g. presentation of indicators as well as actual measurement results of direct and indirect impacts). Although it lacks the aspect of counterfactual considerations, the existence of and comparison against a well-defined control group as well as the usage of specific statistical calculation and interpretation tools as mentioned in Annex I of the EC document.

However the recent report for 2014 will form the basis and starting point for further more enhanced and detailed aid evaluations in future beside the externally executed evaluations.

- (14) Please provide information on the identification strategy of the counterfactual (control group)³⁸. Please describe in detail the composition and the significance of the control group.

bmvit would keep the opportunity to let the evaluation body / consortium propose during the tender process and consequently bilaterally agree with the selected contractor upon the best fitting one(s) after an initial evaluation round in a small / limited scope in the context of the aid well before the end-evaluation.

From today's understanding there is potential in the definition of appropriate control group(s) within the borders of respective NUTS-3-areas and the areas (100x100Meter landscape-cells) of fixed network broadband coverage. NUTS-3-areas are the borders for aid applications during the bidding processes.

As one of Austria's large cable operators (rem.: UPC Austria) has not issued aid applications up to now, it seems feasible to include them within the control group if the necessary data is available and can be gathered for evaluation purposes.

The aspects outlined within the EC document "Common methodology for State aid evaluation" will be an integral part during the tender process to select and decide upon the contractor for an evaluation body / consortium.

³⁸ Depending on the specific scheme, it might be appropriate to assess the effects of the aid scheme on different groups of undertakings (for instance on beneficiaries and their competitors). In such cases different counterfactuals (hence control groups) should be defined.

- (15) Please explain how the envisaged methods address potential selection bias. Can it be claimed with sufficient certainty that observed differences in the outcomes of the control group are due to the aid?

Bmvit will take care that this aspect will be addressed specifically and intensively during the tender process and specified bilaterally with the contractor of the evaluation body / consortium.

The plan is to evaluate and select the best fitting method(s) based upon aspects as outlined within the EC document "Common methodology for State aid evaluation" after signing of the contract initially. As such the best fitting method(s) will be selected, their applicability re-evaluated over the aid runtime period and settled for the final evaluation.

- (16) If relevant, please explain how the envisaged methods intend to address specific challenges related to complex schemes (e.g. schemes that are implemented in a differentiated manner at regional level, schemes that use several aid instruments).

The „Broadband-Strategy 2020“ and accordingly also the related “Masterplan” of bmvit provide four different subsidies programmes, which are intended to develop complementary effects. The interactions and interdependencies between those four programs will be reflected in the evaluation report(s).

One specific challenge in this context is represented by the different objectives and potential beneficiaries of the aid programs. BBA2020_A, BBA2020_B and BBA2020_LeRo are intended as infrastructure funding programs for communities partly as well as for Austrian telecommunication providers, whereas AT:net acts as technology promotion program (in terms of service and application development) especially targeted for Austrian SMEs and other enterprises.

Within BBA2020_A, BBA2020_B and BBA2020_LeRo there are differences in terms of:

- targets: like endcustomer coverage, bandwidth quality, backhaul improvement, duct-works reuse and additional deployment
- beneficiaries: communities and telecommunication providers

Data collection

- (17) Please provide information on the mechanisms and sources for collecting and processing data on the aid beneficiaries and on the envisaged counterfactual.³⁹ Please provide a description of all the relevant information that relates to the selection phase: data collected on aid applicants, data submitted by applicants, selection outcomes. Please also explain any potential issue as regards data availability.

The existing « Breitbandatlas » provides broadband coverage related data – see also aforementioned explanations. Data will be updated on a yearly basis by the first quarter of the consecutive year.

The « WebGIS-application » will provide GIS-related information about the deployment of broadband-infrastructures by beneficiaries. Aid applicants are obliged to document and provide GIS-data about their own existing infrastructure, new and planned deployments as well as their targeted quality. The GIS-data of aid beneficiaries will be taken for evaluation and will be taken over by the new « infrastructure-register ». Respective data will be issued by the applicant during the aid tender and at the invoice milestone.

Usage and socio-economic data will be collected from external sources as mentioned within paragraphs above.

The « aid application » must contain a business plan concerning the to be aided project, which is available for evaluation purposes. Respective data will be issued by the applicant during the aid tender.

All data used during the assessment of aid applications will be made available by the settlement center to bmvit for evaluation purposes. For business-critical and / or –confidential data the respective security and confidentiality conditions will apply.

Within the special aid directives there is a generic obligation to provide bmvit with all necessary data concerning an evaluation on a per request basis during lifetime of the related aid schemes.

Data and reports for members of the controlgroup will be derived from publicly available sources (e.g. business reports via the Internet).

³⁹ Please note that the evaluation might require sourcing both historical data and data that will become progressively available during the deployment of the aid scheme. Please identify the sources for both types of information. Possibly, and desirably, both types of data should be collected from the same source as to guarantee consistency across time.

- (18) Please provide information on the frequency of the data collection relevant for the evaluation. Are observations available on a sufficiently disaggregated level?

The “broadband evaluation report⁴⁰” will be published annually by the first quarter of the consecutive reporting year.

The measurement / collection of broadband coverage related data will be done by an already available bmvit-internal GIS-system “Breitbandatlas⁴¹” independent from any aid. Data within this tool is based upon voluntary provisions by the respective telecommunication providers including past and future aid beneficiaries as well as non-beneficiaries. “Breitbandatlas” related data is updated once a year within the first quarter of the consecutive year. Data granularity and accuracy is on 100x100Meter landscape-cell level.

GIS-Data within the “WebGIS-application” will be issued by the applicant during the aid tender, and finally provided at the invoice milestone.

Broadband usage and socio-economic related data will be taken from several publicly available sources, including but not limited to

- NRA’s “Telecom Monitor⁴²”,
- NRA’s “Die österreichischen Telekommunikationsmärkte aus der Sicht der Nachfrager⁴³”
- Statistik Austria
 - o “Information Society⁴⁴”,
 - o “National Accounts⁴⁵”,
 - o “Structural Business Statistics⁴⁶”
- Eurostat “Information Society⁴⁷”,
- EC
 - o DESI⁴⁸,
 - o Digital Agenda Scoreboard⁴⁹
- Akamai State-of-the-Internet reports⁵⁰,
- OECD “Factbook”⁵¹.

⁴⁰ <http://www.bmvit.gv.at/telekommunikation/breitbandstrategie/downloads/evaluierung2014.pdf>

⁴¹ <http://breitbandatlas.info/map.php>

⁴² <https://www.rtr.at/en/inf/alleBerichte>

⁴³ https://www.rtr.at/en/inf/BerichtNASE2015/RTR_Studie_NASE_2015.pdf

⁴⁴

http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/EnergyEnvironmentInnovationMobility/information_society/index.html

⁴⁵ http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/Economy/national_accounts/index.html

⁴⁶ http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/Economy/enterprises/structural_business_statistics/index.html

⁴⁷ <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/information-society/statistics-illustrated>

⁴⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/desi>

⁴⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/digital-agenda-scoreboard>

⁵⁰ <http://www.stateoftheinternet.com/connectivity-akamai-state-of-the-internet-reports.html>

⁵¹ http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-factbook_18147364

The availability and use of most recent data of these sources is dependent to their publication milestones (rem.: for their publication milestones please see the references within the footers). During preparation of reports always the most recent data will be considered by default.

In addition to those sources, data made available during the aid tender, contract establishment and also at the end of the promotion will also be collected, considered and used for the evaluation if not protected due to (business-)security and -confidentiality reasons. Such data will be only made available on a per case / aid application basis.

Data and reports for members of the controlgroup will be taken from publicly available sources (e.g. via business report in the Internet) on a per case basis.

(19) Please indicate whether the access to the necessary data for conducting the evaluation might be hindered by laws and regulations governing confidentiality of data and how these issues would be addressed. Please mention possible other challenges related to data collection and how they would be overcome.

The data are publicly available in an aggregated form, detailed data are provided by the BMVIT.

The data protection is also, concerning the extension of broadband networks, an essential point and, therefore, the following relevant arrangements find its way into the special aid directives.

The following paragraph has been taken out of the aid's special directives and settles the terms and conditions for security and confidentiality of aid application at a national level («Sonderrichtlinien BBA2020»):

Der Förderungswerber nimmt sowohl im Förderungsansuchen als auch im Förderungsvertrag zur Kenntnis, dass die haushaltsführende Stelle und die Abwicklungsstelle berechtigt sind,

- 1. die im Zusammenhang mit der Anbahnung und Abwicklung des Vertrages anfallenden personenbezogenen Daten zu verwenden, wenn dies für den Abschluss und die Abwicklung des Förderungsvertrages, für Kontrollzwecke und die Wahrnehmung der der haushaltsführenden Stelle gesetzlich übertragenen Aufgaben erforderlich ist;*
- 2. die für die Beurteilung des Vorliegens der Förderungsvoraussetzungen und zur Prüfung des Verwendungsnachweises erforderlichen personenbezogenen Daten über die von ihm selbst erteilten Auskünfte hinaus auch durch Rückfragen bei den in Betracht kommenden anderen Organen des Bundes oder bei einem anderen Rechtsträger, der einschlägige Förderungen zuerkennt oder abwickelt, oder bei sonstigen Dritten zu erheben und an diese zu übermitteln, sowie Transparenzportalabfragen gemäß § 32 Abs. 5 TDBG 2012 durchzuführen.*

Zur Geltendmachung der Rechte als Betroffener gem. 5. Abschnitt Datenschutzgesetz 2000 ist ein schriftlicher Antrag bei der Abwicklungsstelle einzubringen.

Der Förderungswerber nimmt weiter zur Kenntnis, dass es dazu kommen kann, dass Daten insbesondere an Organe und Beauftragte des Rechnungshofes (insbesondere gemäß § 3 Abs. 2, § 4 Abs. 1 und § 13 Abs.

3 des Rechnungshofgesetzes 1948, BGBl. Nr. 144), des Bundesministeriums für Finanzen (insbesondere gemäß §§ 57 bis 61 und 47 BHG 2013 sowie § 14 ARR 2014) und der Europäischen Union nach den EU-rechtlichen Bestimmungen übermittelt oder offengelegt werden müssen.

Der Förderungswerber nimmt weiter zur Kenntnis, dass die haushaltsführende Stelle auf einer zentralen Website ausführliche Informationen zum geförderten Vorhaben analog zu den Bestimmungen des Artikel 9 Abs. 1 der Verordnung (EU) Nr. 651/2014 der Kommission (Gruppenfreistellungsverordnung) veröffentlicht.

(20) Please indicate whether surveys of aid beneficiaries or of other undertakings are foreseen and whether complementary sources of information are intended to be used.

Data from the aid applicants, market participants and stakeholders will be collected and used in compliance with the data protection provisions by all involved parties - see previous answers.

Bmvit would keep the opportunity to decide bilaterally with the evaluation body / consortium whether surveys or other undertakings could improve the evaluation results. The settlement center will provide bmvit with relevant data and statistics based upon the aid applications.

It is planned to use complementary sources of information, although those have not been determined yet.

Proposed timeline of the evaluation

- (21) Please indicate the intended timeline of the evaluation, including milestones for data collection, interim reports and involvement of stakeholders. If relevant, please provide an annex detailing the proposed timeline.

Data of the various above mentioned sources - "Breitbandatlas", "WebGIS-application" - are available continuously – for details see aforementioned explanations.

During report preparation necessary data will be collected on a case per case basis from the various external sources.

By default the most recent data available close before and during report creation will be used for evaluation purposes.

In terms of evaluation an internal evaluation is envisaged every year as part of the "broadband evaluation report" of bmvit publicly available by the first quarter of the consecutive year.

Additionally every two years (rem.: so after each phase of the so-called "Masterplan" created by bmvit) there will be an interim evaluation conducted by an external evaluation body / consortium.

Furthermore the final evaluation will be carried out by the end of the aid programmes of „Breitband 2020“ by an external evaluation body / consortium.

Stakeholders will be involved on a case per case basis if there inputs improve the quality and consistency of the evaluation results.

(22) Please indicate the date by which the final evaluation report will be submitted to the Commission.

As the last acceptance of tenders will take place in late 2020, the final settlement of accounts is expected to last until 2024. Accordingly the preparation and publication of the final evaluation report could be expected close thereafter.

As long as no extensions of the aid programs will happen, no specific additional timely delay must be considered for the preparation and publication of the final evaluation report.

Since the schedule of the evaluation(s) may vary depending on the subsidy programme, the durations and milestones should be discussed with the European Commission and mutually agreed.

(23) Please mention factors that might affect the envisaged timeline.

The following aspects might adversely affect the time schedule:

- delays in the implementation / deployment of the expansion projects
- delays in making available the financial resources
- Delays during acceptance of applicants as well as contract settlement of aids

The body conducting the evaluation

(24) Please provide specific information on the body conducting the evaluation or, if not yet selected, on the timeline, procedure and criteria for its selection.

bmvit will conduct a tender to select the contractor for the evaluation body / consortium in accordance with the Austrian governmental contracting rules.

(25) Please provide information on the independence of the body conducting the evaluation and on how possible conflicts of interest will be excluded (or how this will be ensured in the selection process).

bmvit complies to the guidance and principles as outlined within chapter 3.7 of the EC document "Common methodology for State aid evaluation".

It will make sure that they and the Austrian governmental contracting rules are kept during the tender process and guaranteed by the contractor.

Bmvit will exclude participants from its own ministry as being the aid's housekeeping party and invite respective other external parties for tender.

(26) Please indicate the relevant experience and skills of the body conducting the evaluation (or how these will be ensured in the selection process).

bmvit complies to the guidance and principles as outlined within chapter 3.7 of the EC document "Common methodology for State aid evaluation".

It will make sure that they and the Austrian governmental contracting rules are kept during the tender process and guaranteed by the contractor.

The RfP documentation set will contain requirements and conditions in the context of aid evaluation, but not limited to:

- necessary requirements in terms of theoretical skills for the evaluation,
- practical experiences within evaluations (in particular in the area of broadband as well as ICT evaluations),
- profound knowledge about Austrian- and EU-wide specifics within the subject matter and
- experiences and provisions of appropriate tools for evaluation.

For each requirement the proposer is required to state compliancy and provide further explanatory documentation.

Finally the contractor will be selected based upon and aligned with the Austrian governmental contracting rules.

(27) Please indicate which arrangements will be put in place by the granting authority to manage and monitor the conduct of the evaluation.

Contractor is required to comply within the tender and contract to the below listed requirements:

- Involvement of distinct departments within bmvit for certain topics (e.g. for the aspect of innovation, corporate design related topics, etc.)
- Involvement of RTR-GmbH (Austria's NRA) within the subject matter
- delivery of periodic and frequent interim reports to surveil the evaluation progress and results
- presentations given during as well as at the final milestone about the evaluation progress and results
- definition of a Single-Point-of-Contact (SPOC) by the Contractor for all aspects
- fulfilment to handle the whole evaluation activity in accordance with Projectmanagement principles
- ability to do surveys upon the subject matter
- comply and support the acceptance of evaluation results

The aforelisted requirements will be defined as contractual obligations in accordance with the Austrian governmental contracting rules.

(28) Please provide information, even if only of an indicative nature, on the necessary human and financial resources that will be made available for carrying out the evaluation.

Each of the three aid programs outlines

- the overall establishment of the „broadband competence centre“, and
- the reservation of two Percent of each respective aid budget for accompanying measures.

As such human and financial resources are granted for evaluation purposes.

Publicity of the evaluation

(29) Please provide information on the way the evaluation will be made public, i.e. through the publication of the evaluation plan and other relevant information on a website.

bmvit complies to the principles and guidances as outlined within chapter 3.8 of the EC document “Common methodology for State aid evaluation”.

The externally conducted evaluation reports as such and the internally prepared annual „broadband evaluation report“ will be made publicly available at bmvit’s homepage within the publications area⁵².

Furthermore it is planned to involve stakeholders via consultations to discuss and provide feedback on a per case basis.

⁵² <http://www.bmvit.gv.at/telekommunikation/breitbandstrategie/publikationen/index.html>

(30) Please indicate how the involvement of stakeholders will be ensured. Please indicate whether the organisation of public consultations or events related to the evaluation is envisaged.

It is envisaged to continue the involvement of stakeholders concerning the evaluation via consultations as already done during the preparation of the special aid directives to discuss and provide feedback on a per case basis.

This involvement could be done in a formalistic way by written means or informal based upon face to face meetings. Bmvit would keep the opportunity to decide together with the evaluation body / consortium which method fits best at which point in time.

Nevertheless bmvit will organize frequent meetings with the national "broadband coordinators" nominated by each federal state to gain more knowledge about the aids results, experiences and issues.

- (31) Please specify how the evaluation results are intended to be used by the granting authority and other bodies, e.g. for the design of successors of the scheme or for similar schemes.

Results out of the continuous internal as well as external evaluations will contribute to changes and adaptations of the proposed aid schemes.

Any follow-up aid scheme programs in the context of broadband would be based on the results and experiences of all kind of evaluations (internal and external).

The gained experiences, improvements in terms of usage and knowhow regarding methodologies and tools used during the evaluation will be proposed and made available for other evaluation purposes (rem.: in particular concerning new and more enhanced aspects beyond today's status-quo as outlined within the EC document "Common methodology for State aid evaluation").

(32) Please indicate whether and under which conditions data collected for the purpose and/or used for the evaluation will be made accessible for replication and further studies and analysis.

Coverage related data in the aggregated manner as of today will be made publicly available by the "Breitbandatlas".

"WebGIS-application" data will be taken over by the upcoming new "infrastructure register".

Data used for the preparation of interim- and final-evaluation(s) will be kept internal and confidential if required, else they will be made publicly available on a per request basis and / or at the bmvit-homepage.

Data collected during the aid tender and respective aid applications will be kept internal and confidential. All data of applications by applicants not selected for a grant will be destroyed after the decision by the settlement center.

(33) Please indicate whether the evaluation plan contains confidential information that should not be disclosed by the Commission.

As the evaluation reports are primarily intended to be made publicly available they will not contain any confidential information. Every interested party shall be able to follow and reproduce the results of the published evaluation.

Although for certain specific considerations and evaluations – ie. upon counterfactual aspects or economic and financial implications – those specific reports and their underlying data may require confidential and secure treatment. As far as trade and business secrets are concerned, it has to be identified separately and on a per case basis, which material shall be disclosed and which not. Such confidential material will be marked as (strictly) confidential and shall not be disclosed in any case.

OTHER INFORMATION

(34) Please indicate here any other information you consider relevant for the assessment of the evaluation plan.

(35) Please list all documents attached to the notification and provide paper copies or direct internet links to the documents concerned.

All links whenever they apply has been inserted as footers within the respective part / answer.