

Recommendations for the assessment and design of European integration schemes

Checklist

General

- use the InDivEU evaluation framework to inform the design and assessment of the integration scheme
- estimate the objective features and expected outcomes of the scheme and of relevant alternatives reliably and accurately
- estimate the subjective preferences of relevant publics reliably and accurately
- justify the choice of normative criteria and standpoints transparently
- weigh the trade-offs between evaluation criteria transparently: e.g. feasibility vs effectiveness, functional benefits vs subjective preferences, European vs national interests, stability of commitments vs democratic congruence
- prefer schemes requiring a broad and substantive participation of relevant publics in their enactment and eventual revision: e.g. transparent and informed debate, democratic deliberation and decision-making, high democratic accountability, revisable commitments
- consider differentiated integration to accommodate a high heterogeneity in national preferences, dependencies, and capacities

Feasibility

- maximize or satisfice the feasibility of the scheme on the basis of a concrete analysis
- consider the use of design features minimizing the number of reluctant veto players: e.g. inter se agreements and secondary EU legislation; full or selective opt-outs for countries with idiosyncratic preferences and ratification procedures
- always consider differentiated integration to address potential obstacles, as it is generally more feasible than uniform integration

Effectiveness

- maximize or satisfice the overall net benefits of the scheme for the EU on the basis of a concrete analysis
- consider the use of design features increasing its expected benefits: e.g. reliance on complementary goods, excludable goods, and economies of scale
- avoid negative externalities of the scheme for EU non-participants and, possibly, for the rest of the world
- consider the possible extension of the scheme to third countries: e.g. EU enlargement, external differentiation, or global agreements
- consider differentiated integration only when the overall net benefits of the scheme are positive but are reduced by the inclusion of specific countries, due to their objective characteristics or subjective preferences

Substantive fairness

- maximize or satisfy the fair distribution of the overall benefits of the scheme among its participants and beneficiaries (countries, regions, social groups) on the basis of a concrete analysis
- justify normative choices pertaining to substantive fairness transparently: e.g. non-maleficent, egalitarian, merit-based, or needs-based distribution
- consider the use of design features increasing the satisfaction of the chosen normative criteria: e.g. compensatory transfers, selective exceptions, and flexibility
- avoid negative externalities of the scheme for EU non-participant and, possibly, for the rest of the world
- consider differentiated integration to improve the individual benefits of participants (compared to no integration) and non-participants (compared to uniform integration); avoid it when it enables unwanted exclusions and free-riding and to pursue redistributive outcomes

Procedural fairness

- maximize or satisfy the fairness of the procedures for the enactment and eventual revision of the scheme on the basis of a concrete analysis
- justify normative choices pertaining to procedural fairness transparently: e.g. level legitimacy, democratic legitimacy, or democratic congruence
- consider the use of design features increasing the satisfaction of the chosen normative criteria: e.g. substantial involvement of the European and the national parliaments, concessions to reluctant countries, and revisable commitments
- select unanimous decision-making procedures whenever the scheme threatens to undermine vital national or European interests; if the two interests clash, seek mutually acceptable compromises
- consider differentiated integration only when it is used as last resort option, includes consultation rights for excluded member states (e.g. observation in the European Council and full participation in the European Parliament), and remains open for non-members to join on unanimously agreed criteria

Acceptance

- maximize or satisfy the acceptance of the scheme among relevant publics on the basis of a concrete analysis: national governments, national parliaments, national electorates, supranational institutions, experts, and stakeholders
- consider the use of design features increasing acceptance both in the EU as a whole and in individual countries: e.g. strong preferences for supranational solutions, homogenous cross-national preferences, low negative externalities, framing, and multi-speed differentiation
- consider differentiated integration and alternative solutions (e.g. package deals) whenever individual countries are strongly opposed to further integration in a specific area