

Call for evidence on the European Commission mandate regarding the PRIIPs Regulation

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

1. General Information

* Please indicate the desired disclosure level of the comments you are submitting:

- Confidential
 Public

* Stakeholder

Assuralia

* Sector

- Investment management
 Insurance
 Banking (structured products/ derivative products)
 Other

* Contact person (name and surname)

* Contact person email

Contact person phone number

2. Introduction

In the September 2020 new Capital Markets Union Action Plan, the European Commission (Commission) announced its intention to publish a strategy for retail investments in Europe in the first half of 2022.

In May 2021, as part of its evidence gathering, the Commission launched a three-month public consultation on a wide array of aspects related to retail investor protection. [1] The Commission is also undertaking an extensive study that was launched in 2020, which involves analysis of the PRIIPs Key Information Document (KID), as well as other disclosure regimes for retail investments. This study will involve extensive consumer testing and mystery shopping, with the aim to ensure that any future changes to the rules will be conceived from the perspective of what is useful and necessary for consumers.

On 27 July 2021, the Commission sent to the JC of the ESAs a request for advice asking the ESAs to assist the Commission in the preparation of legislative proposals implementing aspects of the retail investment strategy, and more specifically regarding a review of Regulation (EU) 1286/2014 on packaged retail and insurance-based investment products (PRIIPs) [2]. The deadline for the ESAs to provide their advice is 30 April 2022.

The Commission invited the ESAs to provide advice on the following main areas:

- A general survey on the use of the KID
- A general survey on the operation of the comprehension alert in the KID
- A survey of the practical application of the rules laid down in the PRIIPs Regulation
- An assessment of the effectiveness of the administrative sanctions, measures, and other enforcement actions for infringements of the PRIIPs Regulation
- An assessment of the extent to which the PRIIPs Regulation is adapted to digital media
- An examination of several questions concerning the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation

For most of the areas set out above, additional more specific elements to be addressed were identified in the mandate; for instance for the general survey on the use of the KID there are four sub-elements, including to provide evidence on the extent to which marketing information aligns with the information in the KID.

Notwithstanding the mandate provided by the Commission, the information collected and analysis conducted by the ESAs since 2018 would indicate that changes to the PRIIPs Regulation are needed in other areas, besides those addressed in the mandate, in order to achieve the optimal outcomes for retail investors. Indeed, the ESAs have previously provided their views on the need for changes to the PRIIPs Regulation in a number of areas. [3] Consequently, this call for evidence requests feedback on a range of other issues, where the ESAs are considering the relevance to additionally provide advice to the Commission.

In parallel with sending the call for advice on the PRIIPs Regulation to the ESAs, the Commission also sent separate calls for advice individually to EIOPA [4] and ESMA [5] regarding other aspects of retail investor protection, as part of the work to develop a retail investment strategy. The ESAs are seeking to coordinate the work undertaken for these different mandates.

The ESAs acknowledge that the importance and complexity of the topics set out in the Commission's request for advice call for a thorough involvement of stakeholders to ensure that they can adequately contribute to the formulation of the advice from the beginning of the process. At the same time, the short timeframe available to prepare this advice, places constraints on the type of consultation and time that can

be given for responses. Taking into account these constraints, as well as the nature of the request from the Commission, which seeks various different types of evidence regarding current market practices, the ESAs have decided to launch a call for evidence. The responses provided will be used to shape the technical advice to the Commission. The ESAs also plan to hold a stakeholder event in Q1 2022 before finalising the advice. Further details about this event and how to register will be available via the relevant sections of the ESAs' websites in due course.

Where questions in this call for evidence ask for respondents' "experiences" regarding a certain issue or topic, **please provide information regarding the basis for the views provided**. This might include whether the views are based on actual experiences, such as selling, advising on, or buying PRIIPs, a survey of market participants, academic research undertaken etc. Manufacturers of products, which currently benefit from an exemption to produce a KID, such as fund managers, are not precluded from sharing evidence or experience under this call, but should clarify the context in which they would provide comments.

[1] EU strategy for retail investors (europa.eu)

[2] Call for advice

[3] See for example the Joint ESA Supervisory Statement – application of scope of the PRIIPs Regulation to bonds (JC 2019 64), or the Final Report following consultation on draft regulatory technical standards to amend the PRIIPs KID (JC 2020 66).

[4] Call for advice to EIOPA regarding certain aspects relating to retail investor protection | Eiopa (europa.eu)

[5] Call for advice to the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) regarding certain aspects relating to retail investor protection (europa.eu)

1. Please provide any general observations or comments that you would like to make on this call for evidence, including any relevant information on you/your organisation and why the topics covered by this call for evidence are relevant for you/your organisation.

3. Call for evidence

3.1 General survey on the use of the KID

Extract from the call for advice

A general survey on the use of the PRIIPs KID across the Union, including, to the extent feasible, evidence on:

- *The number and type of products and their market share for which PRIIPs KIDs are produced and distributed.*
- *The recent developments and trends on the market for PRIIPs and other retail investment products.*
- *The extent to which PRIIPs KIDs are used by product distributors and financial advisors to choose the products they offer to their clients.*

- *To the extent feasible, the extent to which marketing information aligns with or differs from the information in the PRIIPs KIDs.*

In terms of this general survey, it can be relevant to clarify that regarding the third bullet point in the mandate above, the ESAs understand that evidence is sought on the extent to which the information in the KID is used by persons advising on, or selling, PRIIPs separate from the obligation to provide the KID to the retail investor. This might include, for example, identifying if a product is suitable for the retail investor. For this topic, the ESAs would like to ask for feedback to the following questions:

2. Do you have, or are you aware of the existence of, data on the number, type and market share of different types of PRIIPs? If you have such data, would you be in a position to share it with the ESAs?

We do not own such data as insurers offer a wide range of insurance- based investment products (IBIPs) that allow consumers to combine investment with insurance cover and satisfy diverse needs. For example, insurers offer:

- Unit-linked, which can be structured, non-structured, multi-option (MOPs) or non-MOPs, etc.
- Profit participation products, which can be discretionary, non-discretionary, etc.
- Hybrids, which can be static, dynamic, multi-option (MOPs) or non-MOPs, etc.
- Annuities, which can be immediate, deferred, with mortality guarantees, without mortality guarantees, etc.
- Guaranteed products.
- Index-linked.
- National-specific products classified as PRIIPs, like certain funeral products.

All IBIPs have unique features that only insurers are able to offer, such as insurance covers, guarantees or capital protection mechanisms, flexibility of payments, estate benefits, etc.

That's why it's complicated to provide quantify information over such a large range of products.

3. In your position as product distributor or financial advisor, to what extent do you make use of KIDs to choose or compare between the products you offer to your clients? In case of trading online, does your platform offer an automatised tool that can help the retail investor in making comparisons among products, for instance using KIDs?

The KID is used by the insurance intermediary, as requested by the law.

As product distributor, we do not really have a view on the selling process, which is conducted by the insurance intermediary.

But the KID isn't the first document that is used in order to provide information to customer, as other documents are more relevant (such as the one providing information on the funds). For insurance products, not all the essential information's linked to guarantees and insurance covers are provided in the KID, so there is a need for more information, and the role of the insurance intermediary remains key under these circumstances.

4. If this is the case, what is preventing distributors or financial advisors from using the KID when they choose a product for a client?

As product distributor, we do not really have a view on the selling process, which is conducted by the insurance intermediary.

One of the obstacles to the use of the KID could be linked to the fact that not all the necessary information's are provided in it (no space to properly explain insurance covers and guarantees).

If there are no insurance covers or guarantees, the information is simply omitted. The information on the fund itself or linked to the fiscal treatment of a product are as relevant as current information.

Insurance intermediaries must comply with the distribution legislation and have to assess the risk profile of the client before considering the KID.

5. In your experience, e.g. as a retail investor or association representing retail investors, to what extent are KIDs used by distributors or financial advisors to support the investment process? Is marketing material used instead or given greater emphasis?

6. What are your experiences regarding the extent of the differences between marketing information and the information in the KID? What types of differences do you consider to be the most material or relevant in terms of completeness, plain language, accuracy and clarity? What do you think might be the reason(s) for these differences?

As stated in the PRIIPs Regulation, the objective of the PRIIPs KID is to help retail investors understand and compare different products.

As such, the PRIIPs KID was not designed to be the main or only training or sales tool for distributors. The IDD already ensures that distributors:

- Receive appropriate information from product manufacturers on insurance products, including on the product approval process, the identified target market and the suggested distribution strategy, to fully understand the products they intend to distribute.
- Perform a suitability appropriateness and/or demands and needs assessment, depending on the applicable conditions, to make sure that products proposed to consumers meet their needs.
- Provide fair, clear and not misleading information to consumers.
- Undertake a minimum of 15 hours of professional development training per year to continuously update their knowledge and abilities.

Based on the IDD rules, distributors are equipped with the information and tools they need, and act under high standards of consumer protection.

With reference to marketing materials, the IDD article 17.2 requires all information addressed by the insurance distributor to customers or potential customers to be fair, clear and not misleading. The provision specifically includes marketing communications and also states that marketing communications shall always be clearly identifiable as such.

3.2 General survey on the operation of the comprehension alert

Extract from the call for advice:

A general survey on the operation of the comprehension alert, taking into account any guidance developed by competent authorities in this respect, the survey should gather data on the number and types of products that include a comprehension alert in the PRIIPs KIDs, and to the extent feasible, evidence on

whether retail investors and financial advisors consider the comprehension alert in their investment decisions and/or advice.

For this topic, the ESAs would like to ask for feedback to the following questions:

7. What are your experiences regarding the types of products that include a comprehension alert?

In Belgium, very few products have a comprehension alert because there aren't so many complex products on our market. When used, the comprehension alert is added to the KID because of the particularities of the payout of the product and not because of capital protection mechanism.

Moreover, the demands and needs test seems to be more relevant than the comprehension alert, because it allows the insurance intermediary to understand and cater to the specific needs and the financial knowledge of the customer. This highlights the key role of the intermediary in the process, who can give more concrete information than a paper-based standard comprehension alert, that might only scare the consumer without really helping him understand the product.

8. Do you have or are you aware of the existence of data on the number and type of products that include a comprehension alert? If you have such data, would you be in a position to share it with the ESAs?

Information is provided to consumers based on the current rules, but no figures are available.

9. What are your experiences regarding the extent to which retail investors take into account the inclusion of the comprehension alert?

In Belgium, very few products have a comprehension alert because there aren't so many complex products on our market. When used, the comprehension alert is added to the KID because of the particularities of the payout of the product and not because of capital protection mechanism.

Moreover, the demands and needs test seems to be more relevant than the comprehension alert, because it allows the insurance intermediary to understand and cater to the specific needs and the financial knowledge of the customer. This highlights the key role of the intermediary in the process, who can give more concrete information than a paper-based standard comprehension alert, that might only scare the consumer without really helping him understand the product.

10. As a retail investor or association representing retail investors, are you aware of the existence of a comprehension alert for some PRIIPs?

11. What are your experiences regarding the extent to which financial advisors consider the comprehension alert?

In Belgium, very few products have a comprehension alert because there aren't so many complex products on our market. When used, the comprehension alert is added to the KID because of the particularities of the payout of the product and not because of capital protection mechanism.

Moreover, the demands and needs test seems to be more relevant than the comprehension alert, because it allows the insurance intermediary to understand and cater to the specific needs and the financial knowledge of the customer. This highlights the key role of the intermediary in the process, who can give more concrete information than a paper-based standard comprehension alert, that might only scare the consumer without really helping him understand the product.

3.3 Survey on the practical application of the rules

Extract from the call for advice:

A survey of the practical application of the rules laid down in the PRIIPs Regulation, taking due account of developments in the market for retail investment products, which should include practical evidence on:

- *To the extent feasible, the amount and nature of costs per PRIIP to various market participants of complying with the requirements of the PRIIPs Regulation, including the costs of manufacturing, reviewing, revising, and publishing PRIIPs KIDs, including as a proportion of total PRIIP costs.*
- *To the extent feasible, the extent to which the PRIIPs Regulation is applied in a consistent manner across the EU for the most commonly sold types of PRIIPs.*
- *The supervision of the PRIIPs KID, including the percentage of cases where inaccurate PRIIPs KIDs were identified by NCAs.*
- *The number of relevant mis-selling events before and after the introduction of the PRIIPs KID, including through data on the number of complaints received, number of sanctions imposed, and other relevant data.*

Concerning this topic, the ESAs would like to ask for feedback to the following questions:

12. For PRIIP manufactures or sellers:

12. a) Please describe the different types of costs incurred to comply with the PRIIPs Regulation.

There are one-off and ongoing costs to be considered such as set up and monitoring costs, which can vary depending on the frequency of any significant changes that trigger the PRIIPs KID revision and are aggravated by continuous regulatory changes.

The costs of implementation include:

- o Downright outsourcing of the whole process in some cases.
- o Cross-functional work to interpret the requirements
- o Data to be gathered
- o Actuarial and financial calculations
- o IT software implementation
- o Design of the PRIIPs KID template
- o Test of calculations and design
- o Legal assessment of the texts and numbers
- o Potential translation into different languages
- o Distribution to agents and customers
- o Training for distributors

- o Update of the website, etc.

Any changes to the PRIIPs KID framework will result in significant costs for PRIIPs manufacturers. In a market, a single large company reported that the cost of implementation of a regulatory review could be up to €1,000,000, given the amount of internal and external resources needed and other material expenses (figures based on the proposals presented by the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) in the 2019 consultation paper).

12. b) Can you provide an estimate of the average costs per PRIIP of complying with the requirements of the PRIIPs Regulation? Where possible, please provide a breakdown between the main types of costs, e.g. manufacturing, reviewing, publishing, etc.

This is impossible to quantify per individual product.

These costs will vary according to the possible 'economies of scale' (if you have more products the cost per product might be less) but also whether a company does this in-house or outsources part or whole of the process.

12. c) Can you provide an estimate of what proportion of the total costs for the product are represented by the costs of complying with the PRIIPs Regulation?

This is impossible to quantify per individual product.

13. What are your experiences regarding the extent to which the PRIIPs Regulation is applied in a consistent manner across the EU for the most commonly sold types of PRIIPs? What are the main areas of inconsistencies?

In Belgium, our national competent authorities require ex ante notification. This is a national choice based on authorities' resources and consolidated practices. Such divergences are natural, as they stem from differences in national markets themselves, and do not represent a barrier.

According to Assuralia, inconsistencies or discrepancies are in the regulation itself, as it does not meet the technical features and specificities of insurance products.

Overall, there is no need for more consistent supervision as national supervisory authorities are better positioned to assess tools, frequency and, if necessary, remedial actions.

3.4 Use of digital media

Extract from the call for advice

An assessment of the extent to which the PRIIPs Regulation is adapted to digital media. This survey shall include an evidence-based assessment of:

- *To the extent feasible, the actual use of various types of physical and digital media for delivering or displaying the PRIIPs KID to retail investors.*

- *To the extent feasible, the preferred digital or physical media for retail investors to access and read PRIIPs KIDs, and the appropriateness of the PRIIPs Regulation for allowing access to and readability of PRIIPs KID on such platforms.*
- *The appropriateness of the approach taken in the PEPP Regulation 2019/1238 for displaying the PEPP KID on digital media for the PRIIPs KID.*

Article 14 of the PRIIPs Regulation lays down rules regarding the types of media that can be used to provide the KID to the retail investor. It is specified that the use of paper format should be the default option where a PRIIP is offered on a face-to-face basis, but that it is also possible to provide the KID using a durable medium other than paper or by means of a website, if certain conditions are met. These conditions include, for example, that the retail investor has been given the choice between paper and the use of another durable medium or website.

The PEPP Regulation[1] provides rules regarding the distribution of the PEPP KID either electronically or via another durable medium in Article 24. For the PEPP KID, electronic distribution can be seen as the “default” approach, but customers need to be informed about their right to request a copy on another durable medium, including paper, free of charge.

For PEPP KIDs provided in electronic format, the PEPP Regulation also allows for the layering of information (Article 28(4)). This means that detailed parts of the information can be presented through pop-ups or through links to accompanying layers. In general terms, layering allows the structure of the information to be presented in different layers of relevance: for example from the information “at a glance” that is essential for all audiences, to more detailed information being readily available in a subsequent layer for those interested, and so forth.

Concerning this topic, the ESAs would like to ask for feedback to the following questions:

[1] REGULATION (EU) 2019/1238 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019 on a pan-European Personal Pension Product (PEPP) (OJ L 198, 25.7.2019, p. 1)

14. Do you have or are you aware of the existence of data on the use of different media? If you have such data, would you be in a position to share it with the ESAs?

We do not have data on the use of various type of physical and digital media for delivering or displaying the PRIIPs KID to retail investors.

15. What are your experiences as a product manufacturer or product distributor or financial advisor regarding the preferred media for retail investors to access or read the KID? Are there challenges for retail investors to receive the KID in their preferred media, such as due to a certain medium not being offered by the distributor?

We do not have data on the preferred media for retail investors when accessing the PRIIPs KID. Besides, Assuralia, in order to follow the digital evolution and sustainable ambition of the EC, fully supports the digital by default option, with the option, for clients who ask, to obtain the information on paper.

The paper by default option should be replaced by the digital by default option. Requirements to provide information to consumers should be updated to reflect digital developments while keeping in mind that

advice is needed in order to ensure the consumer's understanding of a product. Consumers should be given the choice to conclude transactions and receive documentation on a digital basis if they prefer so. IDD should be updated to remove the current default paper-based requirements.

Moreover, in order to avoid legal insecurity and additional administrative burden for the insurers, we are of the view that the consumer should choose between a digital process and a "traditional" process at the beginning of the sales process and stay in the chosen process from the beginning to the end of the contractual relationship. It's a digital by default option with an opt-out possibility.

16. How do you as a retail investor, or association representing retail investors, prefer to receive or view the KID?

17. What are your experiences regarding the preferred media for product distributors and financial advisors when using the KID?

We do not have data on the preferred media for product distributors when using the PRIIPs KID. Besides, Assuralia, in order to follow the digital evolution and sustainable ambition of the EC, fully supports the digital by default option, with the option, for clients who ask, to obtain the information on paper.

The paper by default option should be replaced by the digital by default option. Requirements to provide information to consumers should be updated to reflect digital developments while keeping in mind that advice is needed in order to ensure the consumer's understanding of a product. Consumers should be given the choice to conclude transactions and receive documentation on a digital basis if they prefer so. IDD should be updated to remove the current default paper-based requirements.

Moreover, in order to avoid legal insecurity and additional administrative burden for the insurers, we are of the view that the consumer should choose between a digital process and a "traditional" process at the beginning of the sales process and stay in the chosen process from the beginning to the end of the contractual relationship. It's a digital by default option with an opt-out possibility.

18. Should changes be made to the PRIIPs Regulation so that the KID is better adapted to use on different types of media?

Yes, changes should be made to the PRIIPs Regulation so that the KID is better adapted to use on different types of media:

-Article 14 of the PRIIPs Regulation needs to be revised to avoid the use of paper as a default requirement for the provision of information.

-Article 14.2(c) of the PRIIPs Regulation allow the use of websites that fulfil certain conditions. This provision could, however, be improved further, if the default setting of paper as the primary mode of provision was removed. The provision on a durable medium other than paper and on a website as stipulated by Article 14.2 (b) and 14.2(c) should be accepted as equivalent.

Also, an excessive number of figures does not help consumers' understanding on any media. The following simplifications can be envisaged:

-The current PRIIPs KID displays around 20 figures on costs, that will increase to around 30 different figures

under the revised Regulatory Technical Standards (RTS). This can be simplified including in the ‘What are the costs?’ section only the information that is essential for consumers, namely the total aggregate costs expressed in Reduction in Yield (RiY) and the annualized monetary costs, both expressed at the end of the Recommended Holding Period (RHP), with no need to show intermediate time periods.

-The “What is this product?” section of the KID alone includes 7 different types of disclosures on costs, but it only allows a too short mention of the insurance covers, while it is a crucial information for consumers choice. The information on the existence, or lack, of insurance covers, guarantees or other capital protection mechanisms should be prominently displayed instead.

-The “What are the risks and what could I get in return?” section could also be simplified, with no need to show intermediate time periods and provide additional information on the product performance based on a different methodology in the “Other relevant information” section for certain categories of products.

19. Do you think it would be appropriate to apply the approach taken in the PEPP Regulation 2019 /1238 (highlighted above) to the PRIIPs KID?

3.5 Scope of the PRIIPs Regulation

Extract from the call for advice:

An examination of the following questions concerning the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation:

- *whether the exemption of the products referred to in Article 2(2) points (d), (e), and (g) of the PRIIPs Regulation from the scope of PRIIPs should be maintained, in view of sound standards for consumer protection, including comparisons between financial products.*
- *whether the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation should be extended to additional financial products.*

The points referred to Article (2) of the PRIIPs Regulation concern:

(d) securities as referred to in points (b) to (g), (i) and (j) of Article 1(2) of Directive 2003/71/EC;
(e) pension products which, under national law, are recognised as having the primary purpose of providing the investor with an income in retirement and which entitle the investor to certain benefits;
(g) individual pension products for which a financial contribution from the employer is required by national law and where the employer or the employee has no choice as to the pension product or provider.

In 2019 the ESAs published a Supervisory Statement on the application of the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation to bonds (JC 2019 64). In this statement it was stated that:

Ultimately, in order to fully address the risk of divergent applications by NCAs, the ESAs recommend that during the upcoming review of the PRIIPs Regulation, the co-legislators introduce amendments to the Regulation in order to specify more precisely which financial instruments fall within the scope of the Regulation. We would also recommend to reflect more expressly the stated intention of the PRIIPs Regulation[1] to address packaged or wrapped products rather than assets which are held directly, to avoid any legal uncertainty on this point.

Taking this Statement into account, the ESAs are interested in feedback on a number of additional issues

besides those specified in the mandate from the Commission. Thus, concerning the topic of scope, the ESAs would like to ask the following questions:

[1] This is stated in recitals 6 and 7.

20. Do you think that the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation should be extended to any of the products referred to in Article 2(2), points (d), (e) and (g)? Please explain your reasoning.

The current exemptions for pension products should be retained. Pension products have very specific objectives as well as a special fiscal and regulatory treatment at national level. Therefore, there are national tailored information requirements on pensions. Thus, the current exemptions for pension products should be retained. The PRIIPs Regulation and related RTS were designed for retail investment products, some of which are speculative products with a short-term horizon. These products are significantly different in nature to pension products which were, as a result, explicitly left out of the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation. For example:

- The PRIIPs KID does not include the level of detailed information required by savers to make decisions about their retirement savings.
- The PRIIPs KID does not allow for detailed information on the specific rules falling under the remit of member states, including tax treatment, retirement age and applicable contract law.
- Key information for pension savers is not given enough prominence in the PRIIPs (e.g. annuities, insurance cover, guarantees).
- The information focuses on short term investment: e.g. intermediate values, total costs in monetary terms.

21. Do you think that the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation should be changed with respect to other specific types of products and if so, how?

22. Do you think changes should be made to specify more precisely which types of financial instruments fall within the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation? Please specify the amendments that you think are necessary to the Regulation.

23. Do you have specific suggestions regarding how to ensure that the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation captures packaged or wrapped products that provide an indirect exposure to assets or reference values, rather than assets which are held directly?

24. Do you agree with the ESA Supervisory Statement relating to bonds and what are your experiences regarding the application of the Statement?

25. Do you think that the definitions in the PRIIPs Regulation relating to the scope should take into account other elements or criteria, e.g. relating to the maturity of the product, or relating to a product only having a decumulation[1] objective, or where there is not active enrolment[2]?

[1] For example an annuity.

[2] This might include, for example, employment based incentive schemes

Assuralia thinks that any modification to the definitions in the PRIIPs Regulation relating to the scope should not be intended to include pension products, which have very specific objectives as well as a special fiscal and regulatory treatment at national level. (See answer Q20).

26. Do you think that the concept of products being “made available to retail investors” (Article 5(1) of the PRIIPs Regulation) should be clarified, and if so, how?

27. Do you think it would be beneficial to develop a taxonomy of PRIIPs, that is, a standardised classification of types of PRIIPs to facilitate understanding of the scope and that could also be used as a basis for the information on the “type of the PRIIP” in the ‘What is this product?’ section of the KID (Article 8(3)(c)(i) of the PRIIPs Regulation)? If yes, do you have suggestions for how this could be done?

No. The proposal to develop a taxonomy would create additional administrative requirements to comply with _____ and insurers do not believe that a standardized classification would be useful. This would complicate the whole process without any guarantee that it will fit all specific products and situations on the different markets.

3.6 Differentiation between different types of PRIIPs

Following a targeted consultation on PRIIPs towards the end of 2018, the ESAs’ Final Report published in February 2019 (JC 2019 6.2), which proceeded further work on a review of the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation, stated (page 14):

- *Differentiation between different types of PRIIPs: taking into account information regarding challenges to apply the KID to specific product types, for example very short-term products or specific types of insurance or pension products, it is intended to analyse if it is appropriate to introduce some additional differentiation in how the rules apply to different types of products, while still adhering to the overarching aim of comparability between substitutable products.*

This aspect was considered during the review of the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation initiated in 2019, but this work was conducted within the constraints of the existing PRIIPs Regulation. In the context of reviewing the PRIIPs Regulation, consideration could be given to the following types of approaches:

- The development of broad product groupings or buckets of similar products. A more tailored approach could be taken for each of these groupings, with the aim to ensure the meaningfulness of the information and prioritising comparability within these groupings. This might also ease the

comparability between the PRIIPs Regulation and sectoral legislation (such as MiFID, IDD) on certain disclosure requirements;

- A reduced degree of standardisation in the KID template;
- Provisions that would allow for supervisory authorities to grant exemptions or waivers from the requirements in duly justified cases.

28. Do you think that the current degree of standardisation of the KID is detrimental to the proper understanding and comparison of certain types of PRIIPs? If so, which products are concerned?

Yes, the degree of standardisation is too high, we plead for less standardisation.

Assuralia calls for a disclosure framework that aims at improving consumer understanding and makes products comparable where they serve similar consumer needs while ensuring disclosure accuracy, rather than artificially forcing product comparability when it is not aiding consumer decision making.

Disclosures must be meaningful and effective help consumers better understand the product features. The information should therefore be limited to essentials and any disclosure format should be user- and digital friendly.

Disclosures must be suitable to the product(s) concerned in the various markets. They should reflect insurance products' distinctive features.

Comparability should not be achieved at the expense of understandability and accuracy of information. Imposing overly prescriptive one-size-fits-all requirements for a wide variety of different products has proven to fail. Therefore, the EU framework needs to be less prescriptive and better tailored to insurance specificities.

29. Do you think that greater differentiation based on the approaches highlighted above, is needed within the PRIIPs Regulation? If so what type of approach would you favour or do you have alternative suggestions?

No, Assuralia calls for a disclosure framework that aims at improving consumer understanding and makes products comparable where they serve similar consumer needs while ensuring disclosure accuracy, rather than artificially forcing product comparability when it is not aiding consumer decision making.

Pre-contractual information should strike a right balance between comprehensibility and comparability. Comparability should not be achieved at the expense of understandability and fairness of the information.

30. Do you have suggestions for how a product grouping or product buckets could be defined?

We are not in favor of product grouping, as it will fail, knowing that imposing overly prescriptive one-size-fits-all requirements to a wide variety of products is detrimental to understandability and accuracy of information.

As answered in Q.28, Assuralia calls for a disclosure framework that aims at improving consumer understanding and makes products comparable where they serve similar consumer needs while ensuring disclosure accuracy, rather than artificially forcing product comparability when it is not aiding consumer decision making.

Disclosures must be meaningful and effective help consumers better understand the product features. The information should therefore be limited to essentials and any disclosure format should be user- and digital

friendly.

Disclosures must be suitable to the product(s) concerned in the various markets. They should reflect insurance products' distinctive features.

3.7 Complexity and readability of the KID

Taking into account the views previously expressed by some stakeholders that the information in the KID is overly complex and contributes towards an information overload for the retail investor, the ESAs would like to ask for suggestions on how the KID could be improved in this respect.

There can also be a link between this issue and the use of techniques such as layering as referred to above in the context of the digital KID (see Section 3.4), as well as other design techniques, such as the inclusion of visual icons or dashboards at the top of documents[1].

[1] Dashboards can include the most essential information at the top of the document. This is the approach taken, for example, for the PEPP KID - "PEPP at a glance" in Annex I of PEPP Delegated Regulation 2021/473 point 4 and the template in part II.

31. Would you suggest specific changes to Article 8 of the PRIIPs Regulation in order to improve the comprehensibility or readability of the KID?

Assuralia calls for more flexibility, as the information provided through tables are not really clear, we know that it's difficult for customer to understand it properly (specifically without any advice from insurance intermediaries), the great amount of figures overburden the document. Moreover, it is set up with a very negative (instead of neutral) connotation. Providing all this information (costs, performances,...) without any perspectives is not consumer friendly. There is no room to explain the very technical texts. We need to be allowed to provide information on the context, on how we obtain such results, and lower the negative information provided between other information.

Furthermore, we need more than 3 pages in order to provide all the relevant information to customers.

32. How could the structure, format or presentation of the KID be improved e.g. through the use of visual icons or dashboards?

This could be improved by adding another page to the KID, 4 in place of 3, as it is limited in the actual regulation. In any case, if a PRIIPs KID is given on paper, it will represent 2 pages, so it might as well be filled recto-verso.

3.8 Performance scenarios and past performance

In the ESAs' draft regulatory technical standards (RTS) to amend the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation submitted to the Commission in February 2021[1] (and adopted by the Commission on 7 September 2021 [2]), the ESAs included a proposed new requirement for certain types of investment funds and insurance-based investment products to publish information on the past performance of the product and refer to this within the KID. This approach was taken so that the availability of this information would be known, and the information would be published in a standardised and comparable format.

However, the ESAs also stated in the Final Report[3] accompanying the RTS that (on page 4):

the ESAs would still recommend, as a preferred approach, to include past performance information within the main contents of the KID on the basis that it is key information to inform retail investors about the risk-reward profile of certain types of PRIIPs. Since it has been argued that the intention of the co-legislators was for performance scenarios to be shown instead of past performance, it is understood that a targeted amendment to Article 8 of the PRIIPs Regulation would be needed to allow for this. A consequential amendment is also considered necessary in this case to allow the 3 page limit (in Article 6(4)) to be exceeded to 4 pages where past performance information would be included in the KID;

Besides the issue of past performance, the ESAs' work under the empowerment in Article 8(5) regarding the methodology underpinning the performance scenarios has raised significant challenges. Since the ESAs first started to develop these methodologies from 2014 onwards, it has proved very difficult to design appropriate performance scenarios for the different types of products included within the scope of the PRIIPs Regulation that would allow for appropriate comparisons between products, avoid the risk of generating unrealistic expectations amongst retail investors and be understandable to the average retail investor. In particular, no academic consensus has been reached on how to develop common performance scenarios that would be equally appropriate for all types of PRIIPs, proving the inherent difficulty of such an approach.

In this context, the ESAs would like to ask for feedback on:

[1] EIOPA's Board of Supervisors agrees on changes to the PRIIPs key information document | Eiopa (europa.eu).

[2] Implementing and delegated acts | European Commission (europa.eu)

[3] JC 2020 66 (30 June 2020)

33. Do you agree with the ESAs' assessment in the Final Report (JC 2020 66) regarding the treatment of past performance?

Yes, but not only for past performance. We need more place in order to provide relevant and useful information to the customer in the mandatory sections. There is no space to properly explain insurance covers and guarantees. If there are no insurance covers or guarantees, the information is simply omitted. Moreover, intermediate time periods are not appropriate for IBIPs.

For now, there is an overload of figures, obtained through different methodologies (past performance is anchored in actual historical data, while future scenarios show the range of possible outcomes). This would only confuse consumers, and not simplify their choice.

34. Would you suggest changes to the requirement in Article 8(3)(d)(iii) of the PRIIPs Regulation concerning the information on potential future performance, and if so what would you specifically change in the Regulation?

Assuralia is in favour of changes in this requirement, because providing information on return after 1 year does not make sense for long term product, it's misleading for consumer and it provides no added value. The treatment of future performance should be adapted to the insurance products specificities.

3.9 PRIIPs offering a range of options for investment (Multi-Option Products (“MOPs”))

In the ESA Consultation Paper of October 2019 on proposed amendments to the PRIIPs KID (JC 2019 63), the ESAs stated that their analysis of the implementation of the rules for MOPs indicated some significant challenges regarding the clarity and usefulness of the information provided to retail investors. In particular, it was stated that (page 51):

Where a generic KID is used (in accordance with Article 10(b) of the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation), it is difficult for the investor to identify the total costs related to a particular investment option. This arises because the generic KID shows a range of costs, but does not always identify which costs are specific to an investment option and which costs relate to the insurance contract. At the same time, it is understood that the information on the underlying investment option (in accordance with Article 14 of the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation), does not usually include the total costs of investing in that option. Therefore, it is often not possible for the investor to identify from the generic KID the costs that may apply in addition to those shown in the option-specific information.

One of the proposals in the Consultation Paper was to introduce a differentiated treatment for the ‘most commonly selected investment options’ (page 52). In the final draft RTS following the consultation, the proposals relating to the most commonly selected investment options were not included taking into account various implementation challenges raised by respondents to the public consultation.

However, the ESAs introduced some specific changes to the approach for MOPs, for example to require the separate disclosure in certain cases of the costs of the insurance contract or wrapper. It was considered that these changes would result in material improvements to the current KID. At the same time, despite these proposed changes, there are still considered to be material issues that were not possible to address within the constraints of the review of the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation.

In the Final Report (JC 2020 66), the ESAs also stated at that stage that they consider the optimal way to address the challenges for MOPs is to use digital solutions, but that this would require changes to the PRIIPs Regulation.

As part of the May 2021 consultation from the Commission on the Retail Investment Strategy, feedback was also requested on the approach for MOPs to require a single, tailor-made KID, reflecting the preferred underlying investment options of each investor, to be provided.

In this context, the ESAs would like to ask for feedback on the following questions regarding potential alternative approaches for MOPs that might require a change of the PRIIPs Regulation:

35. Would you be in favour of requiring a KID to be prepared for each investment option (in accordance with 10(a) of the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation) in all cases, i.e. for all products and for all investment options[1]? What issues or challenges might result from this approach?

[1] This approach assumes complete investment in a single investment option and requires the KID to include all costs.

Assuralia is not in favor of such a proposition. By doing so, we are not in a pre-contractual phase, but in a mix between the pre-contractual and the contractual phase. It makes abstraction of the distribution

legislation and the role of the intermediary, who will give personalized advice to the retail customer and can better explain the product and the combination of options that would fit his individual situation than a piece of paper.

Trying to achieve this through the KID would be very complex as the KID is supposed to provide information at the product level, whereas this proposal is an attempt to provide information at the level of the consumer (with a portfolio simulation).

This could lead to a total misunderstanding in the consumer side, as it will be difficult to understand and it could create a false impression that by simulating, the product manufacturer provides a promise (for ex. on expected returns). Moreover, realizing such an idea could only be done through burdensome IT processes. This would also require information at 2 levels: product and underlying investment option and insurers have to rely on asset managers in order to obtain such information.

It is way too complex and costly to implement and to maintain from a compliance point of view, especially for smaller companies. Moreover, it's not clear for us what could be the added value of such an initiative, knowing that intermediaries could provide consumer with right combination of KIDs and explain them.

36. Would you be in favour of requiring an approach involving a general product information document (along the lines of a generic KID) and a separate specific information document for each investment option, but which avoids the use of cost ranges, such as either:

- **A specific information document is provided on each investment option, which would include inter alia all the costs of the product, and a generic KID focusing more on the functioning of the product and which does not include inter alia specific information on costs?; or**
- **The costs of the insurance contract or wrapper would be provided in a generic KID (as a single figure) and the costs of the underlying investment option (as a single figure) would be provided in the specific information document?**

What issues or challenges might result from these approaches?

Assuralia is not in favor of such a proposition. By doing so, we are not in a pre-contractual phase, but in a mix between the pre-contractual and the contractual phase. It makes abstraction of the distribution legislation and the role of the intermediary, who will give personalized advice to the retail customer and can better explain the product and the combination of options that would fit his individual situation than a piece of paper.

Trying to achieve this through the KID would be very complex as the KID is supposed to provide information at the product level, whereas this proposal is an attempt to provide information at the level of the consumer (with a portfolio simulation).

This could lead to a total misunderstanding in the consumer side, as it will be difficult to understand and it could create a false impression that by simulating, the product manufacturer provides a promise (for ex. on expected returns). Moreover, realizing such an idea could only be done through burdensome IT processes.

It is way too complex and costly to implement and to maintain from a compliance point of view, especially for smaller companies. Moreover, it's not clear for us what could be the added value of such an initiative, knowing that intermediaries could provide consumer with right combination of KIDs and explain them.

37. Do you see benefits in an approach where KIDs are prepared for certain investment profiles or standard allocations between different investment options, or for the most commonly selected options? In this case, what type of information could be provided regarding other investment options?

No. It is way too complex and costly to implement and to maintain from a compliance point of view, especially for smaller companies. Moreover, it's not clear for us what could be the added value of such an initiative, knowing that intermediaries could provide consumer with right combination of KIDs and explain them.

Besides, in the real-life, consumers choose different combination of options and invest different amounts in each option, again this approach would not improve the level of accuracy of the information received.

38. Do you have any other comments on the preferred approach for MOPs and or suggestions for changes to the requirements for MOPs in the PRIIPs Regulation?

3.10 Alignment between the information on costs in the PRIIPs KID and other disclosures

In the final draft RTS amending the PRIIPs Delegated Regulation submitted to the Commission in February 2021 (and adopted by the Commission on 7 September 2021), the ESAs sought to introduce changes to the way that cost information is presented in the KID, in particular for non-insurance packaged retail investment products (PRIIPs)[1]. One of the aims of these changes is to achieve a better alignment with disclosure requirements in MiFID and IDD.

At the same time, the ESAs have received representations from stakeholders that there might still be inconsistencies or misalignment between the PRIIPs KID and disclosure requirements in other legislative frameworks. This issue is also related to the issue of appropriate differentiation between different types of PRIIPs (see Section 3.7).

Since the issue of consistency between different disclosure requirements for retail investment products is also addressed in the calls for advice to ESMA and EIOPA, the ESAs will, in particular, coordinate the work on this aspect, and consider the appropriate mandate within which to address any issues that arise.

[1] As defined in point (1) of Article 4 of the PRIIPs Regulation

39. Taking into account the proposals in the ESAs' final draft RTS, do you consider that there are still other inconsistencies that need to be addressed regarding the information on costs in the KID and information disclosed according to other retail investor protection frameworks?

3.11 Other issues

40. Do you think that other changes should be made to the PRIIPs Regulation? Please justify your response.

Assuralia is in favour of a 4 pages KID, in place of the current 3 pages, in order to provide clear and meaningful information to customers.

We also plead for a digital by default approach, with should be made through the IDD review process, in order to allow the use of paper and digital, with the possibility for the customer to choose its favorite medium.

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