

# RISKSUR Symposium: Roundtable discussions

## Question 5

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**Question:** We claim that effectiveness attributes (e.g. timeliness, sensitivity, false alarm rate) and economic efficiency criteria (e.g. cost-benefit ratio, cost-effectiveness ratio) should be integral to evaluations of surveillance. Are there other attributes in your experience that you think are more or equally important?

### Feedback

- All groups agreed that **effectiveness attributes are central** in the evaluation of surveillance systems. However, it was also highlighted that current approaches for evaluating effectiveness attributes commonly used (e.g. timeliness or sensitivity) may not be able to capture the co-benefit of **multi-objective surveillance systems**. Therefore, there would be the need for the development of a multi-objective effectiveness attribute.
- Most participants agreed that **economic efficiency criteria are also essential**, particularly for diseases with a strong economic impact. However, some participants observed that they may not be meaningful to evaluate **scanning surveillance systems** for new diseases, because the potential impact of an emergence event is difficult (or in some instances impossible) to quantify.
- When asked whether other attributes (not necessarily effectiveness attributes) may be more or equally important, most groups mentioned “**acceptability**” together with “compliance”, “acceptance” and “participation” (terms were used interchangeably), especially for surveillance systems based on passive components. On that matter, participants discussed whether it would be possible to artificially increase acceptability by making the legislation more stringent in terms of reporting suspicions. Whilst some suggested that this would be a possibility, others claimed that experience showed that such strategies are not very effective.
- “**Trust**” was also mentioned as an attribute worth looking at (again, especially for passive surveillance components). The issues related to trust are complex and might involve working on the following questions (this list is not exhaustive):
  - How to create trust in the system?
  - Does trust come first or is it generated by having a good and effective surveillance system?
  - How to link trust to the other evaluation attributes?
  - Should it be considered as an attribute?
- Other attributes mentioned included:
  - **Contribution:** by assessing how well integrated in the design of the surveillance all types of stakeholders involved in the surveillance are.
  - **Ease of execution** of the surveillance procedures.

- **Sustainability:** by assessing the balance between who is paying and who is getting the benefits.
- **Implementability:** by assessing the discrepancy between what is planned to be done and what is actually implemented in the field.
- **Awareness:** by assessing whether the different stakeholders are aware of the objective/procedures/etc. of the surveillance system).
- The **extent to which the data generated by the surveillance system are used.**
- Participants clearly agreed that the choice of attributes to evaluate depends on the **surveillance objective** and on the **evaluation level** (system VS component). Some also mentioned that it might depend on whether the surveillance system is at its beginning or not. In the former case, structural attributes might be more useful to evaluate than effectiveness attributes, while in the latter, evaluating effectiveness attributes might be more relevant (then, if effectiveness attributes are shown to not perform well, structural attributes might need to be evaluated as well).