

The top of the page features a blue banner with a white border. Inside the banner, on the left, are the twelve yellow stars of the European Union flag. On the right, there is a white outline map of Europe. The banner has a slight wavy texture.

The European Union's IPA programme

IPA - interim evaluation and meta-evaluation of IPA assistance

Meta Evaluation of IPA assistance



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IPA - interim evaluation and meta-evaluation of IPA assistance

Meta evaluation

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List of Abbreviations

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Abbreviation and full name	
DIS	Decentralised Implementation System
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
MEUR	Million Euro
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NIPAC	National IPA Co-ordinator
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework
ROM	Results Orientated Monitoring
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement

Executive Summary

This meta evaluation of IPA assistance has been prepared from seven Country Programme Interim Evaluations and two thematic evaluations in the Rule of Law and Civil Society. This analysis has been complemented by the study of a series of additional reports by the European Commission (EC) and other donor organisations to establish an appropriate policy context for the evaluation recommendations. The report summarises the conclusions of the contributory evaluations into 25 key findings and related recommendations designed to improve both the planning and implementation of the IPA II.

Key findings

The overall conclusions from the contributory evaluations are that the **delivery of outputs is generally good** especially in those countries operating under centralised management. However translating **project level outputs into results and impact has not been as good** as it could have been. Technical areas or those with a strong accession imperative have performed better in this respect than more horizontal actions not underpinned by the acquis.

Although the methodology for the contributory evaluations did not specifically consider the programming phase, some important conclusions can be drawn from project implementation. The move towards sectoral fiches in recent years has started a process of more holistically thinking. However, programming still requires a portfolio of mature project concepts that are too prescriptive so early in the planning and risk being out of date by the time of implementation. The **programming process is too long** and in a transition environment projects are likely to be out of date by the time they are implemented. The excessive administrative burden of programming means that it substantially remains a top down process led by the Commission Services. Projects are frequently scaled to the administrative requirements of contract management rather than to the absorption capacities of beneficiaries.

The IPA was **contracted and implemented mainly in line with planned expectations** and using appropriate mechanisms, although the use of delegated management to bilateral aid agencies has been at times questionable. **Project implementation lacked flexibility**, and assistance was not always sufficiently rapidly deployed by contracting authorities. Experience from those countries where decentralised management has been introduced suggests that EUDs will in the short term retain significant operational responsibilities after conferral of decentralised management. This needs to be formally recognised and resourced to avoid delays in programming until the moment that the beneficiary administrative capacity has reached adequate levels. Despite financial difficulties, co-financing is an important tool to engender ownership and should be maintained at appropriate levels

Assistance has been substantially effective and **performs best when it has been driven by a clear acquis** as this provides a politically accepted institutional structure and professional mandate. The IPA has been a **useful facilitator of change** but must be accompanied by a clear political process and steady progress in the accession process to generate results. **Timeliness is a key factor** in ensuring ownership and this is difficult to achieve with the current programming and implementation rules coupled with constrained beneficiary administrative capacity.

Analysis of sectoral performance to determine the impact of the IPA shows that **substantial progress has been made towards sectoral policy objectives** established at the beginning of programming although the contribution of earlier assistance and other actors should not be

discounted. Again, impact has been most positive in areas driven by the acquis harmonization process. In more horizontal areas of reform that lack these drivers, impact has been more difficult to achieve. Where ***national ownership of proposed reforms is low impact is reduced***. The recruitment and retention of qualified staff particularly remains a systemic issue affecting the performance of the IPA and is not helped by the lack of an effective merit based recruitment and career management policy in most countries. The ***integrated nature of project design - with a number of mutually dependent components to achieve an overall objective - has reduced impact*** where contributory elements were not successfully achieved on time. Generating planned impact from infrastructure investments under Component I of IPA has not been good, but new systems already coming into place are likely to address the shortcomings here.

Sustainability is likely to be lower in those areas that had difficulty generating planned results and impacts. As most of the projects in the evaluations were ongoing at the time of the assessment, analysis of sustainability focuses on the key factors of: political support to the enlargement process; sufficiency of finance; and institutional stability. Sustaining the results and impacts achieved by the IPA relies on ***the national level political priorities*** remaining in line with programme objectives and this is not always the case. Changes in political leadership lead to policy changes and institutional restructuring. Therefore, in cases where the long programming and implementation process covers more than one Parliamentary cycle and the likely change in political leadership, sustainability is vulnerable. Although ***financial commitments for institution building are usually assured*** through government budgets, capital investments for socio economic development frequently face financing issues that have the potential to affect sustainability.

Multi-Beneficiary Programmes have a clear added value to the national programmes, although they have suffered from ownership issues due to complex co-ordination both within countries and between beneficiaries that has necessitated a more top-down programming process than seen under National Programmes.

Key recommendations

Strategic and policy level recommendations

- Institutional reform - and therefore IPA programming - needs to be based on national strategic planning that defines clear medium term EU Accession related goals that can be turned into IPA programme result targets.
- Political dialogue between the (potential) candidate and the EC on sensitive areas of discontent is important, with the aim to reach agreement. The IPA has an important role in supporting the national authorities to implement change in sensitive areas, however IPA funding should not be allocated to areas that the national political process is unwilling to endorse.
- The programming process should be abbreviated and limited to the establishment of sectoral objectives in line with EU policies and performance conditionalities. The more detailed project design should take place after signature of Financing Agreements.
- Within the overall policy parameters established by the strategic and sectoral planning documents, and therefore not violating the accession driven character of IPA, the Commission Services should give more room for authorities of the beneficiary countries to choose the specific scope of the assistance.
- Sectoral planning by the national authorities should include data availability at the impact or policy objective level to enable effective measurement and attribution of change. It should be acknowledged in the planning stages of associated IPA assistance supporting sectoral change that where data is missing funds have to be provided for data gathering or alternative proxy indicators have to be sought. Funding could be allocated at a programme level or a horizontal level for strengthening of data sources.

Operational level recommendations

Although IPA II foresees generally larger interventions, programming should also remain tailored to low capacity beneficiaries by allowing flexible, smaller scale or less intensive assistance, if necessary counterbalanced by a sequence of projects over a multi annual perspective. This can be realized among others by increasing the use of framework contracts also for larger (up to 300KEURO) interventions. More robust capacity assessments during programming should assist in a more appropriate scaling of the IPA support.

- Maintain capacity in the EUD in the period up to and after decentralisation of management as the scale of assistance requires, whilst maintaining separation between the preparation and oversight roles of the Delegation staff in line with DIS structures. Delegations should at the same time retain a formal mentoring and advisory role assisting beneficiaries in the preparation and monitoring of assistance either directly or through national aid co-ordination structures.
- Staff recruitment and turnover needs to be analysed by the national authorities for potential beneficiaries of IPA assistance and national level mitigation strategies developed. If necessary minimum staffing conditionalities should be defined on a national level and a beneficiary level, along with verification and monitoring procedures to ensure required staff are in place and functioning for the purposes intended.
- Delegated management agreements should only be utilised when there are clear administrative, operational and financial reasons for doing so.
- IPA programme management should be an integral part of the management of an institution and therefore IPA management units should be absorbed into the operational structure of beneficiaries rather than being stand alone bodies.
- Infrastructure investments should be preceded by robust financial and economic feasibility studies that, in addition to the existing requirements for feasibility studies, clearly indicate mechanisms to ensure sustained funding for operations.
- The Commission Services are recommended to develop more rigorous selection criteria to focus the Multi-Beneficiary Programmes on sectors with clear need for a regional approach.

1 Objectives and scope of the meta evaluation

1.1 Introduction

The overall objective of the project *Interim Evaluation and Meta evaluation of the European Commission's (EC) Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) Component I* is to improve the performance of European Union (EU) financial assistance. This meta evaluation represents the final component of the contract and aims to consolidate the key findings of the individual contributory evaluations¹ to identify common or systemic issues that have influenced the performance of the IPA and, from this, to develop recommendations to stimulate discussion on the further design of the IPA instrument for the financial perspective 2014-2020.

1.2 Summary methodology

The analysis started with a *data collection* phase that consolidated the findings from each evaluation report included in the meta evaluation by evaluation question. This led to the definition of a series of thematic conclusions on the performance of the IPA and from this, overall conclusions of the key issues that could be taken into consideration in the design of the new IPA instrument. The second phase of *data analysis* verified and validated the conclusions by testing the extent of their homogeneity on the systemic IPA level. This is important because the source information comes from evaluation reports with different methodologies or focus (see also Annex 4) and is based on a small sample of projects. A more comprehensive elaboration of the methodology is contained in Annex 1.

1.3 Methodological challenges

The meta evaluation faced two main methodological challenges -it had to integrate information from evaluations with different methodologies or focus and the limitations of the constituent evaluations form the limitations of the meta evaluation.

Although there are differences in the approaches, the overall conclusion is that the evaluations are to a large extent comparable, which allows for a methodologically sound meta analysis. The limitations of the constituent evaluations are principally:

- Drawing sectoral conclusions in the meta evaluation is not possible because of the limited coverage of individual sectors within the country reports and the heterogeneous nature of the IPA region. At most, a sector has been reviewed in four reports (half of the total country reports) and, additionally, the scope of projects within sectors varies between countries
- None of the contributory evaluation reports included a full value for money analysis and therefore the meta conclusions on efficiency are qualitative and focus on detecting the common factors that influence efficiency of procurement and contract implementation.

¹ CPIE Croatia, February 2012, DFC Consortium; CPIE Turkey, March 2012, Particip; CPIE Albania, November 2012, Ecorys; CPIE Bosnia and Herzegovina, January 2013, Ecorys; CPIE Kosovo, January 2013, Ecorys; CPIE Serbia, February 2013, Ecorys; CPIE Montenegro, March 2013; Multi-Beneficiary Evaluation, May 2013, Ecorys; Thematic evaluation of civil society assistance, June 2011, IBF; and Thematic evaluation of Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and the Fight Against Corruption and Organised Crime in the Western Balkans, February 2013, Berenshot.

1.4 Contributory evaluations

The primary source of information for the meta evaluation are ten contributory evaluation reports: seven Country Programme Interim Evaluations (CPIE), an evaluation of the Multi-Beneficiary Programmes (MBP) and two thematic reports. These reports review a total of 400 projects covering about 1,195 MEUR in EU funds, although this figure is somewhat skewed by the very large coverage in both Turkey and Croatian evaluations and the thematic evaluation on Rule of Law.

Table 1.1 Scope of contributory reports

Report	Sectors covered	EC Budget (MEUR)
CPIE Albania	PAR / Public Finance & Financial Management & Transport	37.200
CPIE Bosnia and Herzegovina	Quality infrastructure and Statistics & Social sector (labour market, social policy and education)	32.070
CPIE Croatia	Public Administration Reform, Public Finance & Public Procurement Justice, Freedom and Security Internal Market & Economy Agriculture, Fisheries and FVP policies Regional Development and Cohesion Policy Energy, Transport & Environment	194.081
CPIE Kosovo *	Public Finance & financial management Socio- economic development Human Rights	101.576
CPIE Montenegro	Energy and Environment Agriculture	18.900
CPIE Serbia	Public Administration Reform and Public Finance management & Energy and Environment	131.900
CPIE Turkey	Copenhagen Criteria Priority, Adoption and Implementation of the Acquis, Promotion of EU-Turkey Civil Society Dialogue Supporting activities	150.620
Thematic Evaluation of Rule of Law	Judicial reform, Fight against organized crime, Fight against organized corruption	346.499
Thematic evaluation on Civil Society	Civil Society	45.000
Multi-Beneficiary Programmes	Institution Building, Infrastructure, International Organisations	68.800
Total EU contribution		1,196.085

1.5 Policy context

The findings on performance (efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact) of IPA in the Western Balkans and Turkey over the financing years 2007-2009 form the basis for the recommendations laid down in this report. These have been developed in the context of the EC's future policy for the IPA. This is a moving target as the mechanisms for the instrument are currently in development. There is therefore the need for reflection of the recommendations with the objectives of IPA II.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

The table below presents an overview of the specific provisions in the draft regulation for IPA II²

Table 1.2 Objectives of IPA II

Objectives IPA II	To be achieved by
The delivery of assistance will be made more coherent, strategic and result-oriented	• Comprehensive multi-annual country (and multi-beneficiary) strategy papers • Reinforcing (co-) financing of agreed sector strategies • More systematic multi-annual programming • Making financial assistance more directly conditional on improved governance and growing ownership
The delivery of assistance will be made more flexible and tailored to address needs.	• Allowing un-differentiated access to assistance • Envisaging a more progressive, phased approach to the management of financial assistance • Linking progress along different management phases to political priorities • Increasing flexibility between priorities
The deployment of assistance will be made more efficient and effective	• The identification and use of innovative financial instruments • Increasing cooperation with other donors and International and other financial institutions at strategic level • Continuing to support regional programmes/projects that bring added value • Streamlining the rules for the procurement of twinning assistance

The main planning elements of IPA II are currently underway in an exercise that has become necessarily concurrent due to the limited remaining time before the instrument must be initiated. These planning documents include:

- An overall common strategic framework for the seven year period;
- National level country strategy papers, heavily focused on sectoral assessment and sectoral based planning;
- Five policy areas that broadly reflect the five components of IPA I;
- Implementing rules and procedures.

Other concepts for the new instrument include the availability of annual and multi annual programming, greater flexibility in using budgets and simplification of procedures. Policy documents usefully highlight a greater emphasis will be placed on baseline data and the development of detailed intervention logic and indicators in programming.

IPA II is intended to be sectorally focused, meaning that assistance will be delivered in the context of Sector Strategy Papers that define objectives, priorities, measures and interventions with result oriented indicators. In particular, the proposals elaborating the concepts for sector based programming³ for IPA II are relevant in the framework of the findings from this meta evaluation of IPA I. An important element in the current thinking on implementation of a sector based approach for IPA II is that not all beneficiary countries will be ready to adopt it and different sectors are likely to become ready at different times within a country. Readiness depends on:

- Existence of well-defined national sector policies /strategies.
- Institutional setting, leadership and capacity for implementation of the sector strategy.
- Sector and donor coordination.
- Mid-term budgetary perspectives for sector policy implementation based on sector budget analysis and sector allocations in Mid-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs);

² Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II), Brussels, 7.12.2011, COM(2011) 838 final, 2011/0404 (COD).

³ Sector Approach in Pre-Accession assistance, Ref. Ares(2013)65573 - 18/01/2013.

- Capacity for monitoring of sector policy implementation and in particular the development of Performance Assessment Frameworks (PAFs).

Practical aspects of how to implement a sectoral approach remain to be defined and the CPIE found that the overall concept remained a source of confusion amongst most stakeholders. Key aspects such as the ability to implement sectoral budgetary support in a decentralised management environment remain to be resolved. The EC leaves open the possibility of stand-alone projects if a sector strategy is not yet appropriate.

1.6 Structure of this report

Chapter 2 consists of a summary of the principle findings derived from the contributory reports by evaluation criteria along with conclusions on the systemic reasons behind them together with specific operational level recommendations.

Chapter 3 contains more horizontal or over arching findings that affect the IPA on a broader level, also along with recommendations to improve performance.

The background research and analytical structure is presented in the annexes. Annex 1 covers the approach and methodology, Annex 2 a summary of the key elements of the documentary analysis of other donors, Annex 3 the tabulation framework of key conclusions from the contributory reports including assessment of impact, and annex 4 the verification and validation process for assessing the comparability of the contributory reports.

2 Findings by assessment criteria

2.1 Overall findings of the evaluations

The key findings of the individual reports that contributed to this evaluation have been tabulated to identify common themes in line with the evaluation methodology questions and judgement criteria. These are included in the meta evaluation where they are sufficiently representative – Annex 3 contains more extensive details of the findings in each evaluation report and also identifies the number of reports that the issue is mentioned in.

The overall conclusions from the contributory evaluations is that whilst the delivery of outputs is generally good, achievement of outcomes, impact and sustainability are not as good as they could be, especially in areas not driven by acquis harmonisation. The reasons for this include the programming and planning process, timeliness of the delivery of assistance, ownership of beneficiaries, absorption capacity and sequencing.

In analysing potential solutions, it is important to take into consideration the work already undertaken by the Commission Services in the development of the IPA II instrument. Their conclusions that the new instrument should be more flexible, strategic and result oriented to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the assistance is largely endorsed by this meta evaluation. The operational framework for the IPA II developed thus far also provides useful and practical solutions to some of the issues identified in the various country and thematic evaluations that make up the meta evaluation.

These findings also concur with the Commission Service's opinion that a move to a more sector orientated approach to the delivery of IPA II has the potential to address many of the factors that have impeded IPA I. However, a sectoral approach is a significant departure from the highly prescriptive processes and procedures developed by the Commission Services for the implementation of IPA I in the period 2007-13.

In creating programme level conclusions it should furthermore be borne in mind that the IPA region consists of an increasingly heterogeneous group of countries and therefore some conclusions may not be applicable for all countries.

2.2 EQ1: To which extent are interventions financed under IPA efficient in terms of value-for-money when delivering outputs and immediate results?

Finding 1: Time extensions to projects are reported in all of the contributory evaluations but in general are not significant. They are used to compensate for earlier delays in implementation, to use remaining resources or to provide a bridge of assistance until subsequent projects become active. In many cases, time extensions reflect changes in the project environment as well as improvement in the definition of project scope since the original design some years earlier.

Finding 2: However, the time between the programming and the start of assistance is very long, taking at a minimum two years and in many cases longer. From concept to completion is in the order of five years. Only in Kosovo is the timeliness of contracting not considered a problem. By its very definition, a transition economy is going to evolve faster than these timelines. The scale of ongoing IPA assistance in Croatia, which is now a member state, is indicative of this issue. Most beneficiary institutions do not have the strategic planning capacity or multi annual financing

perspective to be able to plan for the smooth integration of substantial IPA assistance several years in advance. To be effective in a sectoral context, assistance needs to arrive when it is needed and this requires a simplification of procedures to reduce the time from concept to implementation.

Recommendation: The programming process should be abbreviated and limited to the establishment of sectoral objectives in line with the Accession agenda, conditionalities and performance criteria. Translation of these sectoral objectives into specific projects, entailing more detail, should take place after preparation of Financing Agreements. This will allow for a shorter period between design and implementation, a higher likelihood that project conditions as presumed at the design stage are still realistic at the stage of implementation and that overall the most appropriate design is chosen to achieve or contribute to the achievement of sectoral objectives.

Recommendation: There should be more systematic use in all countries of multiple Financing Agreements or sectoral Financing Agreements in any one year as clusters of projects or sectors become ready for financing, rather than all projects having to wait for a single annual event. The administrative processes required for preparing a Financing Agreement should be streamlined or reduced to enable shortening of the procedure.

Finding 3: All but one of the contributory reports noted that project budgets are in general realistic but identified a number of weaknesses in the budgeting process. Projects are frequently scaled to the administrative needs of the programme rather than to the absorption capacity of the beneficiary. There is an indicative minimum size of 2MEUR for project values and smaller projects have been concentrated into single larger multi component fiches that bear limited relevance to the individual components. There is also often limited information on the absorption capacities of beneficiaries at the time of programming and administrative capacity assessments are not systematically made to determine the scale and scope of assistance provided. Market price analysis rapidly becomes out of date. The planned increase in the size of framework contracts to 300KEUR under the new Financial Regulation will make implementation of smaller technical assistance projects possible, rather than their consolidation into larger contracts to meet the minimum 2 MEUR tendering value. This should improve the appropriateness of the scale of assistance as well as its time for mobilisation. The TAIEX instrument has proved effective and popular – particularly in the latter stages of the enlargement process when fine tuning of legislation is needed - as it can rapidly mobilise very specific assistance, but it has a limited budget scope. Twinning light, whilst being less demanding on beneficiaries, still requires a well-developed capacity and take a long time to put into place.

Recommendation: Assistance should be scaled to absorption capacity using more capacity assessments at programming and diverting smaller projects into more appropriate contracting mechanisms.

Recommendation: Very fast track 'TAIEX Plus' type assistance perhaps in the form of a national level framework or call-down contracts for rapid mobilisation of small scale ad hoc Technical Assistance (TA) up to 100KEUR for specific exercises and gap filling should be implemented.

Finding 4: All reports noted that the delivery of outputs of IPA assistance within the centralised management system has been largely successful – principally due to the resources and capacity deployed by the Commission Services. As was shown in Croatia, Turkey and recently in Montenegro, the effective decentralisation of IPA management needs both strengthening of national administrative systems and time for these actors to gain experience. Comparison between countries using the centralised and the decentralised system shows that contracting speed is likely to substantially slow down once decentralised management is conferred. Even after conferral of management, the European Union Delegations (EUD) are often called upon to provide substantial unofficial input into the preparation of project documentation whilst also having an ex ante control function. This is a pragmatic solution to management difficulties but it maintains a situation of low beneficiary ownership.

Recommendation: Maintain capacity in the EUD in the period up to and after decentralisation of management as the scale of assistance requires, whilst maintaining separation between the preparation and oversight roles of the Delegation staff in line with DIS structures. Delegations should at the same time retain a formal mentoring and advisory role assisting beneficiaries in the preparation and monitoring of assistance either directly or through national aid co-ordination structures

Finding 5: Co-financing of institution building is generally limited and funds have been supplied as expected, although national capacities to do so are becoming increasingly threatened by constrained government budgets. Only the five reports covering centralised management of the National IPA considered co-financing (not reports from CRO and TUR). Here the contracting is challenging as separate procurement mechanisms have to be used and where the activities are interdependent there is a high risk of overall failure. This means that in reality co-financing is not included, not provided or is used in a more peripheral manner to the overall objectives of the assistance. However, co-financing is an important tool to ensure ownership. Therefore despite the ongoing poor macroeconomic conditions affecting IPA countries, the inclusion of co-financing in future institution building assistance is appropriate and important. National authorities consulted during the preparation of the meta evaluation raised concerns over their financing capacities but all agreed in principle with the need to ensure co-financing to stimulate ownership. Therefore greater consideration could be given to including the operational costs that they already provide to reflect their real contributions.

Recommendation: Once decentralised management has been conferred, co-financing for institution building assistance (both twinning and technical assistance) should be increased to a level that will engender effective commitment from national stakeholders.

Recommendation: Develop clear rules to enable the costs of national institutions to be included in co-financing so that beneficiaries are able to reflect their true level of financial involvement.

Finding 6: Almost all assistance has used appropriate financing instruments and has followed the standard procurement processes that should ensure the best priced solution is provided. For example in the Humanitarian Aid sector in Kosovo the IPA has achieved good results at minimal costs through contribution agreements with national and international Non-Government Organisations. In Serbia, direct agreements with European peer organisations such as the European Central Bank (ECB) have proved both highly effective and efficient. A number of key issues can be highlighted:

- Twinning is strongly promoted over technical assistance but requires well developed beneficiaries with a clear understanding of their accession agenda to be most effective. It would appear logical and appropriate therefore that Twinning should be used more once a country becomes a Candidate.
- Contracting of European Peer organisations (such as the ECB, the European Patent Office and the European Organisation for Standardisation in Serbia) has been cost effective, as in addition to the strong delivery of outputs these contractors have often made financial contributions to the budget or charged less than market prices for their services.
- The contributory evaluations reviewed a limited number of delegated management agreements to Member State bilateral agencies. From the evidence collected of its use, the mechanism is quick and requires little management by the Commission, but does not clearly add value, compromises the market in consultancy services and makes oversight difficult due to minimal reporting requirements. This is likely to continue as both bilateral and multi-lateral agencies increasingly seek to be implementing partners rather than co-financers of sectoral development.

Recommendation: The Commission Services should explore a more systemic operational role for European peer organisations such as the ECB within the institution building components of IPA II. Whilst enlargement activities are likely to remain a peripheral part of their operations, there is scope

for using these specialized technical institutions in a more enhanced role either as direct service providers or providing sectoral oversight and advisory support to Delegations and national authorities.

Recommendation: Delegated management agreements to bilateral aid agencies should only be utilised when there are clear administrative, operational and financial reasons for doing so.

Partners should bring effective additional finance⁴ and the mechanism should not be used to compensate for administrative weaknesses in either the beneficiary or contracting authority. Clear and regular reporting rules to the EUD should be enacted that are at least equivalent to the reporting required under other instruments.

Overall conclusions of efficiency

Whilst comprehensive cost benefit analysis was not undertaken as part of the contributory evaluations, they find that overall implementation of the IPA has been efficient. The IPA was contracted and implemented largely in line with expectations although the contracting process remains too long for the sometimes rapidly evolving beneficiary needs in a transition country environment. Minor time extensions of contracts are reasonably common and used to improve the overall performance of the programme. Most projects have been appropriately contracted, although some concerns exist with the need for delegated management and administrative capacity to support twinning. Greater flexibility in project scaling is needed, especially in providing more rapidly deployed assistance. Beneficiary management capacity takes time to improve after decentralised management has been conferred on national contracting structures, meaning the EUDs should retain some operational responsibilities beyond those foreseen under DIS structures over the short term. Ownership therefore needs to be improved and one clear mechanism is to increase the level of co-financing. The difficulties in generating comparable data and the generally qualitative nature of impact indicators precluded the development of cost effectiveness assessments in the contributory evaluations.

Five country programme evaluations used the Results Orientated Monitoring (ROM) programme to assess project performance. In most – but not all – reports, the evaluators of the country programme agreed with the ratings given by the ROM assessors. Of the 95 projects included in these country programme evaluations, half (50) were subjected to the ROM. Whilst there are likely to be some variations in interpretations between assessors, a consolidation of performance data provides a basic overview of programme performance by evaluation criteria. For efficiency, 72% of projects were rated as either 'good' or 'very good' by the assessors.

2.3 EQ2: To which extent are interventions financed under IPA effective in delivering outputs and immediate results?

Finding 7: A key finding from all of the contributory evaluations is that the generally positive delivery of outputs by contractors has not always led to the achievement of planned results. A range of systemic reasons are included in table 0.3 of annex 3, but some examples include tax administration in Albania and public procurement in Serbia, Albania and Kosovo, support to the Small and Medium Enterprise sector in Kosovo and metrology in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are a wide range of causes, both operational and political, but the overriding issue is that the transition process requires beneficiary institutions to make often substantial operational and cultural changes but they – or their management - may be slow or unwilling to change. They therefore need sufficient external stimulus to do so but whilst assistance from the IPA facilitates institutional reform, it is usually not sufficient to drive it. In the later stages of the enlargement process beneficiaries of Component I assistance are driven by the acquis harmonization process and

⁴ Not just supplement their own fees, as occurred in the support to the Ministry of European Integration in Albania.

specifically by the chapter negotiation screening and benchmarking. Countries in earlier stages of the accession process or in areas not explicitly driven by the *acquis* have to promote institutional change through national planning. There has been significant effort in the establishment of sectoral strategies but the extent to which these are national strategies rather than sectoral donor co-ordination strategies and the extent to which they therefore actively drive national development varies.

Recommendation: Institutional reform - and therefore IPA programming - needs to be based on genuine national strategic planning that defines clear medium term goals in line with the accession agenda that can be turned into IPA programme result targets. This is particularly important for those parts of the IPA not driven by the *acquis*, such as socio-economic development or public administration reform.

Finding 8: Another key factor affecting the usefulness and thus adoption of the outputs of the assistance is the relevance to the beneficiary needs at the time those outputs are achieved. The length of the programming and procurement process is such that whilst it takes several years for assistance to arrive it is also difficult to be precise over the timing of its arrival. A failed tender or unfulfilled conditionality could delay a project by a year by which time the political and operational landscape could substantially change. To be effective assistance needs to arrive when the beneficiary is prepared to utilize it.

Recommendation: Keeping programming results-based and less focused on the outputs – the specific tasks needed to achieve those results - until later in the procurement phase would provide greater relevance to beneficiary needs at the time assistance actually arrives.

Finding 9: The IPA has moved towards a multi-annual programming perspective through implicit multi annual support for certain sectors and multi-annual fiches in 2012-13, even if commitments are still made annually. This has helped to achieve results; it acknowledges the longer term nature of institutional reform; enables beneficiaries to commit to the process and supports the achievement of results and impacts by sustaining supervision and monitoring into the medium term. Beneficiaries can plan longer term development strategies with confidence that they will be financed and therefore commit their own resources (financial, managerial and political) to achieving the envisaged results. There will be a greater flexibility for the use of multi annual financing under IPA II but the exact implementation modality remains to be finalized. Multi-annual programming also has its pitfalls: early delays become rapidly compounded into substantial implementation problems in later phases. Experience furthermore suggests that it needs to retain an annual performance benchmarking even if programming covers a longer duration.

Recommendation: As substantial programming and planning capacities are required to ensure that annual activities are completed in a timely fashion, future use of multi annual programming should ideally be limited to experienced beneficiaries implementing a sectoral strategy with clear results based performance indicators.

Recommendation: Multi annual programming should in the near term retain an annualized component of result measurement.

Finding 10: Although only included in the methodology of the evaluations in TUR and CRO, the appreciation of the results of assistance by beneficiaries highlights an important issue. Beneficiaries also often see the success of a project as the delivery of outputs rather than the achievement of results, especially when the assistance is not specifically targeting the current needs. The project is perceived as a separate action and not an integral part of the institutional development of the beneficiary, causing the emphasis to be on the delivery of outputs and not the achievement of results.

Recommendation: Programming should become more results based. Introduce the system of Implementation Completion Reports that are the responsibility of both the beneficiary country and the EC services and not the obligation of the contractor.

Overall conclusions for effectiveness

IPA assistance has been positive but not as effective as planned. The generally positive delivery of project level outputs has in many cases not been turned into the achievement of expected results due to a range of operational and political reasons that are principally orientated around difficulties in engendering a change culture in institutions and their management. Performance has been best in those areas that are driven by an *acquis* harmonisation imperative, especially as accession approaches. Countries at an earlier stage in the process require rigorous national strategic planning in line with EU policy agenda as a basis for effect implementation of the IPA. The IPA has been a useful facilitator of change but must be accompanied by a clear political process to generate results. Timeliness is a key factor in ensuring ownership and multi annual programming can do much to engender this - but must be used with care.

2.4 EQ3: Are the outputs and immediate results delivered by IPA translated into the desired/expected impacts, namely in terms of achieving the strategic objectives/priorities linked to accession preparation? Are/can impacts be sufficiently identified/quantified?

2.5 EQ4: Are there any additional impacts (both positive and negative)?

The evaluation methodology used in the five CPIE undertaken by Ecorys within the scope of the current contract focused on the assessment of impact at the sectoral level. It reviewed both how impact had been achieved in the sample sectors reviewed against programme objectives and also how the programme had contributed to the development of institutional structures, human resource development or systems and tools. Whilst the limited coverage of the various sectors across the evaluation reports made consolidation of sectoral findings difficult to achieve with confidence, the meta evaluation was able to develop more systemic findings at the impact level. A more detailed summary of impacts achieved and not achieved is included in tables 0.4 and 0.5 in Annex 3. The findings below highlight key factors that impede or promote the achievement of impact.

Impact on *Institutional structures* has been more positive in those areas of intervention that are directly related to the transposition of the *acquis*, as well as in technical areas or in areas related to the management of EU funds. However there have been a number of issues with the successful development of institutional structures. Legislation transposition with the assistance of the IPA has in some cases either not been adopted or has not been effectively enforced because of a lack of political will, a lack of necessary inter institutional collaboration or insufficient administrative capacity. The causes of these operational deficiencies are varied but principally driven by the level of ownership of the national administration to the intended reforms.

An associated aspect of the weaknesses in implementing legislation is the establishment of new structures or the restructuring of existing institutions in the light of legislative changes. New institutions have struggled to be able to operate effectively and to be sustained because of insufficient sustained political will or inadequate human and/or financial resources. Although ownership is a key issue in achieving impact, changes in the external environment can affect the relevance of project results or the availability of resources to maintain operations or the political agenda of beneficiaries.

Finding 11: A common impediment noted in all reports to achieving impact in *human resource development* in transition countries has been the retention of qualified staff. Issues of staff recruitment and turnover which have traditionally challenged relatively low paying civil servant salaries, especially in European Integration structures that require language skills and are frequently demanding, have appeared less of a problem in the contributory evaluations although this varies from country to country. This is principally attributed to the broader economic crisis and the associated reduction in pull from the private sector but may also be affected by the technical nature of some of the sectors under review, where there are more limited alternative sources of employment. That said, sustaining administrative capacity, both through the retention of trained individuals and the effective systematization and replication of training, are and will remain core threats to the sustainability of the IPA. Mitigation measures implemented by some countries such as Turkey have struggled to be effective. This is additionally compromised by the effective lack of a merit based recruitment and career management system in many of the IPA beneficiary countries.

Recommendation: Staff recruitment and turnover needs to be analysed by the national aid co-ordination structures on a national level and even on a beneficiary level before the development of mitigation strategies, again, either on a national or beneficiary level. Conditionalities, or beneficiary commitments, in terms of minimum staffing levels could be developed.

Finding 12: An associated issue most particularly raised in those reports considering Public Administration Reform in detail (SRB, KOS, ALB) has been the lack of a merit based system of recruitment and career management within the civil service across the region which undermines the impact of all aspects of human resource development included within IPA assistance. Even where formal legislation is in place there is frequently concern over the extent to which it is applied in practice. Despite significant pressure from the Commission Services in the promotion of and support to this element of public administration reform, the lack of an *acquis* limits their ability to influence government into changing the system in practice.

Recommendation: The Commission Services should consider re-orientating its approach to civil service reform. Clear benchmarks should be established by the national authorities within a vision of how they perceive civil service reform should be undertaken in their country.

Systems and tools

Component I assistance contains funding for investments that support institution building and also stand alone capital investments in socio economic development for those applicant countries without access to components III, IV and V. Investment funds in support of institution building have had an important impact in leveraging advisory support in the establishment of functioning systems, but there are a number of systemic issues that have compromised this. Investment in supporting infrastructure (such as computer systems) continues even if associated institution building elements have not been successfully absorbed. Sufficiency of funding and staffing in beneficiary institutions are usually limited and this has constrained the uptake and use of new systems. Funds may also be lacking for operation, maintenance and necessary upgrades. Systems requiring or promoting inter institutional collaboration may be dependent on sector reform or policy changes that have to be achieved in parallel.

Finding 13: Five reports that included assessments of capital investments for socio economic development (ALB, CRO, KOS, TUR & MBP) have generally found achieving the planned level of impact challenging. Furthermore, maintaining regional networks in areas supported by MBP without an *acquis* imperative relies on national resources, for which commitments are not always clear. Key factors have been the availability of funds for maintenance and operation, efficient inter institutional collaboration particularly on a local level, transparent selection of investment projects to ensure that they meet local needs and the need for supporting infrastructure from additional financing. It is clear that with other tools becoming available (such as the Western Balkan

Investment Framework) and new aid modalities for IPA II (all countries to access all policy areas of funding), grant funding from the EU will become more focused on leveraging loan finance for substantial investment projects. This will serve to increase ownership locally and enhance the rigour of project selection and supervision.

Recommendation: Key systemic issues compromise the impact of infrastructure investment at this stage in national development. The scale of infrastructure needs cannot possibly be met through grant aid, which should instead be increasingly focused on planning and leveraging loan finance for infrastructure investments. This would both improve economic efficiency by promoting the most economically advantageous projects and also prepare projects for future more substantial grant funding after accession. A key lesson from previous enlargements has been the lack of a project pipeline for structural fund investments and this can be effectively addressed in the pre-accession phase.

Finding 14: Most of the CPIEs (specifically noted in ALB, CRO, TUR & MBP) conclude that progress was good at the sectoral level against the policy objectives of the European Partnerships developed at the time of programming the IPA. However, these objectives are broad and did not often contain sufficiently measurable targets, which is understandable in a policy document but not useful as a basis for performance evaluation. Even where measurable impact information is available, the analysis of sectoral impact shows that because of the number of actors and their common broader objectives it is very difficult to disaggregate the contribution of the IPA from that made by the other donors and the beneficiary administration in sectoral development.

Recommendation: Strategic planning for IPA II needs to base impact level indicators on the IPA Regulation to clearly link national policy with the IPA.

Recommendation: Sectoral planning should include the analysis of data availability at the policy objective and project impact level. It should be acknowledged in the planning stages that where data is missing funds have to be provided for data gathering or alternative proxy indicators have to be sought. Funding could be allocated either at a programme level or more horizontally or be made the responsibility of the national authorities – for example, directing national statistical services to develop new surveys in their future work.

Recommendation: Project and programme monitoring should orientate from the EUDs onto the National IPA Coordinators (NIPACs) via sectoral co-ordination committees at the earliest opportunity in those countries where it has not already been established. External evaluation contractors should be established at national level in beneficiary countries to provide a range of inputs to the programme management process.

Finding 15: The IPA was consistently targeted (noted in all reports) on the political objectives of enlargement, both in terms of legislation harmonization and capacity building of institutions as well as the broader social and economic development in the pre-accession phase. Whilst there has been close involvement of line DGs in components III, IV and V of the IPA, within component I the EU does not have a budget instrument or management process for regional sectoral oversight. Regional sectoral planning and the use of line DGs or competent European peer organisations would strengthen the link between the sectoral policy and the financial framework of the IPA. Unfortunately, under IPA II there will be a reduced involvement of line DGs due to a range of reasons, including budgetary management within the programme, budget and thus resource restrictions in the line DGs themselves and a greater demand for their work within the European Union (EU). Operationally, the use of European peer organisations has successfully linked the broader policy environment to national programmes.

Finding 16: Programme impact is logically influenced by the selection of projects to be financed. The allocation of funding between components and between sectors is essentially political and reallocation of funding has to remain within the thematic areas of the programme. This is expected

to change to some extent in IPA II as funding will be additionally allocated to those areas that are performing well, probably from a floating pool of funds. It is still unclear how poorly performing sectors will be assessed or if funds will be removed from those areas that are not meeting performance benchmarks. Within Component I there is no procedure or specific parameters to guide the prioritization process, despite the lengthy programming process. Project selection remained a largely Commission led political negotiation, despite more efforts since earlier pre accession financing instruments to include recipient administrations. The Commission still finances projects which it feels are important at a national level but which have little or no local political support and which consequently struggle to provide impact.

Recommendation: Within the overall policy parameters established by the strategic and sectoral planning documents, the Commission Services should empower national authorities to choose the specific scope of the assistance within the available budgetary envelope. This would improve ownership and remove a significant obstacle to impact and sustainability. Observation of the established parameters by the Commission Services during this process should ensure that this remains in line with the accession-driven character of IPA.

Conclusions on impact

Impact has been positive overall, performing best in areas driven by the *acquis* harmonization process, although the contribution of earlier assistance and other actors should not be discounted. Where national ownership of reforms is low, impact is reduced. The recruitment and retention of qualified staff particularly in EU integration structures remains a systemic issue affecting impact but less so than in previous enlargements due to the broader economic crisis that limits alternative employment opportunities. The lack of an effective merit based recruitment and career management policy in most countries further compromises human resource development and this shows no sign of being overcome. The integrated nature of project design, combining interventions targeting different elements of institutional reform, places significant reliance on the successful completion of all elements. This has had negative influence on impacts for investments where the institutional framework has not been reformed first. Achieving impact from capital investments under Component I of IPA has not been good, but other tools becoming available (e.g. Western Balkan Investment Framework), new aid modalities for IPA II (all countries can access all policy areas of funding) and a re-orientated focus of grant funding under IPA (becoming more focused on leveraging loan finance for investment projects) should address this.

2.6 EQ5: Are the identified impacts sustainable (or likely to be sustainable)?

2.7 EQ6: Are there any elements which (could) hamper the impact and/or sustainability of assistance?

Much of the assistance under review was either ongoing at the time of the evaluations or had recently finished, which limited the assessment of sustainability to an analysis of appropriate pre-conditions, such as sufficient administrative capacity, political support for the programme objectives and the presence of mechanisms to ensure ongoing finance. Whilst outputs were substantially delivered by the assistance, the use of those outputs to generate results and impacts was not always as good as it could have been. The sustainability of the achievements is directly connected to the extent to which outputs have been effectively used by beneficiaries and therefore it could be considered that sustainability was not as good as it could have been. There are, in addition, other specific factors that have affected the sustainability of the IPA.

Finding 17: Changes in political priorities are an integral part of the democratic process despite EU accession being a consistent political priority in recent years in the IPA countries. All reports note some instances of difficulties due to the lack of political support for IPA supported policy objectives.

Clearly, the attractiveness of membership varies between the IPA beneficiaries and the instrument is itself ultimately a tool of the political process of enlargement. However on an operational level this has led to changes in the extent of support for a specific project or sector of intervention, especially in those areas not driven by the *acquis* such as social and economic development or public administration reform. For its part, the Commission Services still uses the IPA as a tool to promote concepts and policies important to the accession process that do not yet have sufficient traction – and therefore ownership - in the beneficiary country. Public procurement and PIFC are examples. This seems inappropriate for the stage of development of the countries of the region - as they are mostly not candidate countries there is little need for the Commission to drive the accession process. Under sectoral planning, only part of the sectoral agenda will be driven by accession issues.

Recommendation: Political risk assessments should become a part of sectoral planning by the Commission Services, especially in those areas not driven by the *acquis*, to determine if there is sufficient political will to support planned results.

Recommendation: Political dialogue between the (potential) candidate and the EC on sensitive areas of discontent is important, with the aim to reach agreement. The IPA has an important role in supporting the national authorities to implement change in sensitive areas, however IPA funding should not be allocated to areas that the national political process is unwilling to endorse.

Finding 18: The provision of ongoing finance for institution building activities is usually assured through government budgets. All reports cover this aspect. Whilst there are often problems with ensuring the sufficiency of funds, especially with the increasingly constrained budgets, as long as the assistance has been sufficiently integrated into the beneficiary structures, this is normally satisfactory. Socio economic infrastructure investments present a different picture with concern raised in a number of reports on the availability of both funds and also the system to collect funds for ongoing use of the investment. This is especially apparent for investments to be financed at a local level or by users.

Recommendation: Infrastructure investments should be preceded by robust financial and economic feasibility studies that, in addition to the existing requirements for financial and economic analysis, clearly indicate mechanisms to ensure sustained funding for operations.

Finding 19: Institutional reform is an intrinsic part of public administration reform and the democratic system and this is especially so in the politically orientated administrations of the region where the composition of government is reflected in the structure of the administration. These factors have led to the closure, merger or change in mandate of a number of institutions supported by the IPA and this undermines sustainability. All of the National IPA reports include examples where results of the assistance have not been sustained because of institutional instability.

Recommendation: Where institutions supported by the IPA are to be closed, justification should be provided to the Commission Services on how the capacity developed will be retained.

Conclusions on sustainability

Sustainability is likely to be lower in those areas that had difficulty generating planned results and impacts. As most of the projects in the evaluations were ongoing at the time of the assessment, analysis of sustainability focuses on the key factors of: political support to the enlargement process; sufficiency of finance; and institutional stability. Changes in political priorities have had negative consequences for the sustainability of assistance, both in the support to drive policy changes and institutional restructuring which changes the status of IPA beneficiaries. The Commission Services also uses the IPA as a tool to promote reform in sensitive areas, which has an inherent risk for both impact and sustainability in cases where no agreement has been reached between EC and the (potential) candidate authorities. Although financial commitments for institution building are usually assured through government budgets, capital investments for socio economic development frequently face financing issues that have the potential to affect sustainability.

3 Horizontal findings

There are a number of findings that have an effect on the performance of the IPA in a broader manner:

Ownership

Finding 20: The centralized management of the programming and procurement system limits ownership of beneficiaries in both project design and implementation. All reports included in the evaluation raised concerns over the level of ownership for various elements of the programme. The amount of time committed to a project by beneficiary staff is frequently significant but usually this presents the involvement of more junior staff if language or technical competence limits the involvement of those more senior. The assistance may, at the time of implementation, be perceived less relevant by the beneficiary institution, even though it was perceived relevant at the programming stage. Other factors reducing ownership include the extent of involvement and understanding of senior figures in the institution, the limited financial commitment needed and sometimes the conservative management culture of the institution itself. Programming of MBP remains top down, reducing regional ownership but there is little that can be further achieved with capacity constraints in all stakeholders and a short contracting period. In most instances the most senior figure in project implementation is the Senior Project Officer - this individual may not be experienced, may lack political support or may not even be from the same institution.

Recommendation: IPA programme management should be an integral part of the management of an institution and therefore IPA management units should be absorbed into the operational structure of beneficiaries. This would strengthen the link between project implementation and institutional policy and thus enhance ownership.

Administrative capacity

Finding 21: Administrative capacity is both a precondition and an objective of IPA assistance, with the need to have a sufficient administrative base on which to build capacity. All of the contributory evaluations consistently noted that assistance was scaled more to the administrative rules of project and contract management than the needs of beneficiaries. They also noted the lack of formal administrative capacity assessments of potential beneficiaries to be able to scale the assistance to their capacity or to require reinforcement prior to assistance starting. Without sufficient capacity assistance focused on the delivery of outputs by contractors and as beneficiaries are unable to effectively utilize outputs as planned, overall impact is reduced.

Recommendation: Although IPA II foresees larger interventions, there is still a need for programming to be more tailored to low capacity beneficiaries by allowing smaller scale or less intensive assistance, if necessary counterbalanced by longer duration projects or a sequence of projects over a multi annual perspective.

Recommendation: There is a need for more robust capacity assessments prior to embarking on more sizeable support to new beneficiaries, to be able to scale the support appropriately to the beneficiaries' absorption capacity.

Donor co-ordination

Finding 22: Achieving sectoral impact requires making the most of the resources available from all donors and therefore a strong donor co-ordination structure is important. It is also one of the concepts underpinning the sector wide approach to aid interventions. Significant efforts have been put into establishment of nationally led co-ordination structures – not least by the beneficiary countries themselves – but the effectiveness of these systems is variable. Sectoral co-ordination groups are often reliant on the enthusiasm of an individual or an individual institution and often

remain driven by the co-chairing donor body. This reflects the perception that donor co-ordination in an environment of limited funds is more in the interests of the donor community than the beneficiaries. Despite this, examples of proactive collaboration between donors exist.

Recommendation: Donor co-ordination should be increasingly managed primarily by the national authorities. The EUD should continuously stress the importance of donor coordination for the beneficiary authorities.

Sectoral approach

The sector wide approach is based upon a national or sectoral development strategy supported by a nationally led monitoring structure to verify the achievement of result targets. IPA I has in part supported the establishment of these systems by promoting sectoral planning as part of the programming process and by creating sectoral monitoring committees to monitor project performance. All of the contributory reports apart from MNE considered the strategic approach to programming and how the ongoing process of introducing a sectoral approach could or was improving performance.

Sectoral policies and national sectoral strategic planning are developed from national development agendas into which all financing elements (national funds, donor support, IFI support etc) contribute. This forms the basis of the sector budget support, which is one of the financing modalities of the sector wide approach. However a national development agenda will be only partially influenced by the accession process. It is not yet clear how the external funding mechanism of the IPA can fit into a sectoral approach which consists of a result based framework that covers a range of national policy priorities and not just the accession process. This issue will probably be approached sector by sector and country by country, but this appears more due to the lack of a clear policy than as a strategic vision. In Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia sectoral planning structures have been well established for some years, although they have not yet led to an improved implementation performance. In Bosnia and Herzegovina concrete efforts are being undertaken in the justice sector to introduce a sector budget support type approach, although fitting this into the administrative requirements of the current IPA is challenging and complex.

Finding 23: The Commission Services have clearly announced the move towards a sectoral approach but until mid-2012 most stakeholders (including the Commission Services) had little idea about its implementation. The development of the concept is occurring at the same time as the development of the instrument to implement it and this vagueness will make practical implementation at a national level challenging. In January 2013, the Commission has published draft Guidelines for the Sector Approach in Pre-Accession Assistance, as well as presented them to all stakeholders at the IPA conference held that same month. Additionally, workshops have been held in all beneficiary countries (except Iceland) to allow developing a more thorough understanding of the sector approach. Once specific sectors have been identified through the Country Strategy Papers, and subject to remaining needs, further practical guidance on devising quality sector approaches is foreseen to be provided.

Recommendation: Where needed, further guidance on the practical aspects of the implementation of the sector approach under IPA II should be provided to national authorities, *inter alia* to assist capacity building efforts.

Performance measurement

Finding 24: The results of the meta evaluation (again, all reports but MNE) indicate that within this sectoral programming framework the focus should be on a sequential programming in which subsequent assistance is logically based on the results achieved and which is therefore tailored to the development needs of the beneficiaries. This requires better data, in the form of clear baseline

information along with measureable performance indicators at both result and impact levels. National monitoring systems are in most cases nascent and even after the conferral of decentralized management take time to strengthen and become embedded into national political systems. The intention to include a performance bonus mechanism within IPA II will need to be based upon objective measurement systems that will require a strong monitoring mechanism. In the process of trying to develop a new aid implementation modality, the key message of improving the quality of project and programme design risks being lost. With the current ongoing preparation of the Strategic Reference Framework, Country Strategy Papers, Sector Strategies and the implementing rules it is difficult not to be concerned that the start of the IPA II will lack the ownership and measurable performance data that compromised its predecessor.

Recommendation: Sectoral Monitoring Committees could be reinforced to both monitor sectoral performance as they currently do in the decentralized environment but also to generate objective monitoring data. National level external evaluations covering projects, sectors and thematic issues could be used to support programme and performance management. Indicators should be verified as available before being included in programme documents.

Multi- Beneficiary Programmes

Finding 25: Respondents to the survey made for the MBP evaluation suggest regional infrastructure, law enforcement and organised crime fighting, customs, migration and environment as most relevant sectors for MBP. Stakeholders also highlighted a number of areas (including minority issues, cultural heritage, history teaching and acquis related issues) covered by the MBP that they consider as not effective, suggesting that regional priorities are different to those of the Commission Services. This is not to suggest that these more challenging areas should be excluded from future assistance, but the resistance of national level beneficiaries should be taken into consideration during the planning stages to strengthen ownership.

Recommendation: The Commission Services are recommended to develop more rigorous selection criteria to focus the MBP on sectors with clear need for a regional approach. However, issues such as minority rights and cultural heritage remain important and therefore the Commission Services need to improve communication with national stakeholders on the importance to fund these more contentious areas (for example, the need to address Copenhagen Criteria).

Annexes

Annex 1. Approach and methodology

A detailed organisation and methodology for the meta evaluation was developed as part of the inception report for this final phase of the Interim and Meta Evaluation of IPA Assistance and presented at the formal kick off meeting on 10th April 2013. After further clarifications, the research phase of the evaluation started on the 15th April and was completed on 28th May. The draft version of the report was submitted to the Commission Services on 7th June and the report presented at the Heads of Operations and Finance Officers biannual planning meeting in Budva on 19th June.

Objectives of the evaluation

Definitions

A **meta evaluation** is commonly described as ‘an evaluation of evaluations’ and is used to refer to a systematic review of evaluations to determine the quality and use of their findings. A **meta analysis** aggregates and summarises the findings of several evaluation studies qualitatively or quantitatively. The original terms of reference for this Interim and meta evaluation of the IPA require:

*‘The primary objective of the **meta-evaluation** will be to analyse and consolidate relevant findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from different evaluations on IPA assistance, namely the CPIEs described above and contracted by the Commission (for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo and multi-beneficiary programmes). It will also include interim evaluations contracted by IPA beneficiaries (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey).’*

Objectives

The meta evaluation takes the form of a consolidation of the results of the individual evaluations with the objective of:

- Firstly, arriving at a common assessment, i.e. findings, conclusions and recommendations on the performance of the IPA in the overall regional context.
- Secondly, drawing common or systemic findings that can be applied to the IPA in a broader context; and.
- Thirdly, in recognition of the differences in the region, determine country specific factors that influence how key findings vary from country to country.

Methodology

Evaluation questions and judgement criteria

The interim and meta evaluation consists of eight evaluation questions, of which six are functionally related to performance evaluation and two concern recommendations to improve performance. The meta evaluation was developed around these six core performance questions:

- EQ1: To which extent are interventions financed under IPA efficient in terms of value-for-money when delivering outputs and immediate results?
- EQ2: To which extent are interventions financed under IPA effective in delivering outputs and immediate results?
- EQ3: Are the outputs and immediate results delivered by IPA translated into the desired/expected impacts, namely in terms of achieving the strategic objectives/priorities linked to accession preparation? Are/can impacts be sufficiently identified/quantified?
- EQ4: Are there any additional impacts (both positive and negative)?

- EQ5: Are the identified impacts sustainable (or likely to be sustainable)?
- EQ6: Are there any elements which (could) hamper the impact and/or sustainability of assistance?

Phases of the evaluation

The evaluation was divided into two phases:

- Phase 1- *Data consolidation phase* which aimed to develop an appreciation of the enlargement policy base, identify key themes, review the quality of the information available, gather the conclusions from each evaluation and develop preliminary meta level conclusions.
- Phase 2 - *Data analysis and reporting phase* which aimed to verify and validate conclusions by subjecting them to testing to determine the extent of their homogeneity. This is important because, firstly, the source information comes from a small sample and secondly the Western Balkans and Turkey is a heterogeneous region. The different countries differ widely in size and culture. Six of the eight countries in this study are newly independent, two very recently. One country is at the very start of the accession process without even a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) and another is on the cusp of EU entry. It is therefore logical that there will be different reactions to the same issue in different countries.

Phase 1 - Data consolidation (see below tasks 1,2,3)

The first phase of the meta evaluation involved the analysis of the policy environment to ensure that the conclusions and recommendations are relevant and appropriate. It also included a meta evaluation of the CPIEs themselves to ensure that there was sufficient evidence within the reports upon which to base the meta findings. This phase developed a tabulation framework within which to systematise the data.

The contributory elements for meta evaluation were the seven CPIEs available (see table 0.1 below), the two thematic evaluations undertaken during 2012 in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs and Civil Society and the evaluation of the Multi Beneficiary Programme undertaken as part of the current assignment.

Table 0.1 contains details of the status of country evaluation reports at the start of the meta evaluation:

Table 0.1 Status of the CPIE as at end March 2013

Report (Country)	Status
Turkey	Completed in 2012
Croatia	Completed in 2011
Albania	Completed
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Completed
Serbia	Draft Final – submitted to EC
Kosovo	Draft Final – submitted to EC
Montenegro	Draft Final – submitted to EC
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	ToR prepared

The evaluation for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was not available for inclusion in the meta evaluation. To address this, the evaluation included a field visit to the country to discuss the key conclusions and recommendations of the meta evaluation with the national stakeholders.

The two thematic evaluations undertaken during 2012, in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs and Civil Society were used to corroborate the horizontal conclusions from the main reports.

The evaluation of the Multi Beneficiary Programme was in its concluding stages. It had a slightly different approach to the CPIE, including an analysis on the added value of the MBP over the National Programmes rather than a sectoral study. However, the programme assessment component followed the same structure as the CPIE and therefore was a useful source of comparative information.

In an elaboration of the initial scope of work, the information provided by the country interim evaluations, the two thematic evaluations and the evaluation of IPA MBP was broadened with the inclusion of other evaluation reports of EU or other donors' assistance in the region to ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of the meta evaluation address recent experiences of both the Commission Services and key partner interlocutors in the region. Whilst the European Commission is the principle donor in the IPA region, within specific sectors bilateral and multi lateral donors play a significant role. By reviewing the work of these organisations, the meta evaluation aimed to ensure that its conclusions and recommendations are in line with more sectoral policy where these are affected by more than one donor. The reports that were reviewed included:

- EU support to the preparation of pre-accession instruments beyond 2013, ELARG.
- Evaluation of twinning versus TA, ELARG.
- Review of twinning in Croatia, ELARG.
- IPA meta evaluation 2012, ELARG.
- Serbia Country Partnership Strategy Completion Report (CPSCR), World Bank.
- Bosnia Herzegovina CPSCR, World Bank.
- FYROM CPSCR, World Bank.
- Montenegro CPSCR, World Bank.
- Evaluation of SIDA's support to environment infrastructure and reform in Central and Eastern Europe and Western Balkans 1995-2010.
- Evaluation of DFID's Regional Programmes Western Balkans 2003-07.
- Reform of the Western Balkans: Regional Co-operation SIDA.
- Evaluation of Support to civil society in the Balkans, SIDA.
- Mid Term evaluation of the civic advocacy partnership (CAPP II) project in Bosnia, USAID.
- Performance evaluation of USAID Serbia and Montenegro Preparedness, Planning and Economic Security Programme.
- Serbia Consortium for Election and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS II) Evaluation, USAID.

The collection of data for the meta evaluation was essentially complete as the principle documents (the seven country evaluations plus the two thematic evaluations and the MBP evaluation) were available. Tabulation of data and initial screening of information from the reports was undertaken in the first week of the study. This formed the basis for the development of thematic and overall conclusions and the development of the questions to be asked of the stakeholders.

Phase 2 - Data analysis and reporting (see below tasks 4,5,6)

As described above, the meta conclusions were derived from a small sample and in some cases from only one sector assessment. It was therefore important that preliminary findings were validated. This process aimed to increase the likelihood that conclusions generated in one country or in one sector are also valid for other countries or sectors. Validation was implemented in three steps:

1. Within the scope of the tabulation exercise (see below task 3), additional information was derived from the published evidence base of the reports (i.e. the annexes) to either strengthen analysis or to identify the relevance of conclusions where this is not included in the main text;
2. An internal workshop was carried out at the end of the first phase (8 May) where the team discussed and elaborated the key conclusions; The purpose was to ensure that the draft

conclusions identified in the initial stage have a basis on the information currently available and to verify the additional information that needs to be obtained. It was important to develop perspectives, gather information and discuss issues that may have been identified during the country evaluations but not made it into the evaluation reports;

3. External consultations were held in a number of the IPA beneficiary countries to gather collaborative information and to popularise the broader conclusions of the exercise. The external consultation covered the EUDs and NIPAC offices in Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Tasks implemented

The intensive implementation schedule required the tasks within the evaluation to be implemented in parallel, with different elements allocated to different experts.

Development of inception report for the evaluation

The inception report for the meta evaluation component of the evaluation was drafted by the team leader and aimed to clarify the approach and methodology that will be used, provide details on the expected outputs and confirm the timing of the evaluation and the resource requirements.

Kick-off meeting of the evaluation

The broad scope of the meta evaluation was presented to the Commission Services at the formal kick off of the evaluation in Brussels on 10th April 2013. The methodology has been subsequently refined and detailed within the updated inception report.

Task 1 – Policy Analysis

The policy environment was reviewed in order to create an appreciation of the future direction of Commission enlargement policy for the forthcoming perspective as well as the lessons that have been learned from other evaluations of assistance to the Western Balkan region. The objective was to ensure that the conclusions and recommendations of the meta evaluation are relevant to the current and future policy environments and do not duplicate or contradict other key findings from recent sectoral or geographic assessments.

The key source documents for this study were the existing Commission strategy papers on the future of enlargement policy in the next financial perspective as well as shorter term papers on annual policy⁵. The IPA II Regulation and associated internal planning documents were an important element in this. Previous evaluations consolidated in the meta evaluation of 2011 were reviewed to provide an indication of the key recent issues in the implementation of the IPA. Studies by other donors where relevant were reviewed to ensure a broad scope of perspectives on the development of the region is gained.

Task 2 – Evaluation of the data sources

The starting point for any meta analysis is a set of robust component evaluations and consistent data. Therefore this task comprised evaluation of the ToR, methodology and individual evaluation reports over the three methodologies utilised to assess whether what was asked and what was delivered gives the conclusions sufficient rigour to withstand objective external analysis. It aimed to determine where the strengths and weaknesses of the analysis lie and therefore the confidence that the meta analysis can have in specific conclusions.

Analyses of this kind are essentially a meta evaluation in the more formal sense of reviewing a series of evaluations for consistency of content. The assessment of the evaluations also analysed

⁵ The annual Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges COM (2012) 600.

the complementarity of the three evaluation methodologies to determine the extent to which they can be used to answer common evaluation criteria. One of the criticisms of the previous meta evaluation prepared during 2011 was the inability to draw common conclusions where they had been undertaken by different consultants and thus they had been tackled in different ways even though the individual reports had answered the same questions. In part to address this, the 2012 evaluation exercise included five of the CPIE under a single contract and followed a common methodology. However, the meta evaluation also includes the CPIE for Croatia and Turkey which had different evaluation questions, although in all reports these were based around the OCED DAC criteria. The assumption that the reliability of information and homogeneity of the country reports for Croatia and Turkey were sufficient to be used as sources for the meta evaluation, but this needed to be tested. This was important because the CPIE for Turkey and Croatia were directed at programme level indicators using a wide range of projects as an evidence base. The five CPIE under this contract by contrast used a sectoral sample to draw conclusions at the sectoral level and from there to the programme level.

In the Turkey and Croatia reports the criterion of relevance was included but this was omitted from the remaining reports as it had been covered in the previous round of evaluations.

Task 3 Tabulation framework

A framework is required to tabulate the information from the CPIE reports into a structure that will allow ready comparison and analysis. The framework itself was created from information developed under tasks 1 and 2, with task 1 identifying themes and systemic issues from the broader policy environment and previous evaluations and task 2 bringing the common findings from the individual evaluation reports.

The common findings identified had been allocated to the evaluation questions to ensure that they cover all of them and then subdivided under the evaluation criteria – efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability and another group of horizontal criteria, which cannot be allocated to more than one of the evaluation criteria. The evaluation findings used for the tabulation are presented below:

Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Horizontal findings
• Time extensions • Realistic budget • Timely contracting • Co-financing	• Delivery of outputs • Quality and usefulness of the outputs • Achievement of results • Appreciation of results • Know how transfer	• Lack of data to measure impact • Impossible to disaggregate • Political (acquis) relevance • Project prioritisation • Support to EU Accession • Impact on socio economic development • Impact on institutional structures • Impact on human resources • Impact on systems and tools • Enhanced collaboration between institutions	• Financial limitations • Institutional sustainability • Political sustainability	• Ownership • Leadership • Capacity • Quality of programming and SWAP • Consecutive projects • Ambitious objectives • Selection of service providers • Monitoring process • Indicators • Institutional arrangements • Donor coordination and complementarity • Inter sectoral cooperation and involvement of Civil Society sector

By tabulating themes and findings, the framework provided a provisional indication of the extent to which findings can be considered to be common between reports and thus appropriate to consider within the context of the meta evaluation.

The first task in the consolidation of key findings was to tabulate the evaluation questions from the TUR and CRO methodologies into the six evaluation questions of the interim and meta evaluation so that a common basis for the analysis is achieved. The key conclusions from each evaluation then were used to develop answers for each of the six evaluation questions using information in the reports to measure performance against judgement criteria.

Task 4 Internal consultations

The preliminary phase of the validation process after the gathering of the existing data was done at an internal workshop with the key experts of the evaluation team to discuss the key conclusions identified and to both further elaborate them and develop recommendations that will form the basis for the external validation.

Task 5 External consultations

The initial scope of work for the meta evaluation considered that it would be an entirely desk based exercise with a kick off and end of fieldwork meeting held in Brussels. Two factors have emerged during implementation that have led to the inclusion of more proactive missions to each of the recipient countries to discuss the conclusions and recommendations: the first is that it has become apparent that the derivation of conclusions from a small sample of sectors means some strengthening through specific discussion with key stakeholders in each country would be useful to ensure relevance; and secondly the request to present the meta evaluation at the Heads of Operations and Finance Officers (HOFO) meeting makes it important to ensure senior Commission management have been consulted and that they have a broad understanding of the evaluation and its contents.

The external consultation took the form of meetings in Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with sector and country stakeholders where the individual conclusions and the analysis behind them were discussed to determine complementarity. These stakeholders included management staff of the EUDs and the key staff of the NIPAC due to their good technical knowledge of the sectors, the national situation as well as the aid modalities.

The consultations were important both in highlighting where the conclusions are substantially irrelevant in individual countries and also in beginning the process of popularising the key thoughts of the meta evaluation. They also brought useful insight into the current planning for the IPA II instrument. As there was only a limited time between the submission of the meta report and its presentation it was important to ensure a broad consensus on the content as early as possible.

Task 6 Reporting

The meta evaluation is a summary document targeted at senior management and therefore the report is structured with the focus on the conclusions and recommendations with all supporting evidence and analysis consigned to the annexes.

The report was presented to the HOFO management meeting in Montenegro in mid June.

Annex 2. Findings from other evaluations

The analysis from this part of the research has been integrated into the main conclusions and recommendations during their preparation. This annex is offered as an overview of the key issues determined by the review.

Relevance

Concerning the relevance of the interventions of the different donors, some remarks are made. Generally, the interventions that relate to the direct mandate of the institutions involved work the best. This seems to be obvious, but there are still interventions that do not directly relate to the mandate, or the mandate is not yet clearly established and the interventions are implemented based on possible mandates.

In relation to this, it is concluded that there is a need for sequencing interventions based on the stage the organisations supported are in. First there should be structures and support to define the mandates, followed by support to organisations to implement the new, revised, or reconfirmed mandates. Support to infrastructure should not be the goal in itself; it should be only supplementing the other interventions. Projects are currently too much stand alone and not sufficiently linked to the wider process. In projects selection these aspects are not taken into account enough, leading to projects that do not always yield the best.

Some donors set their goals at a highly ambitious level, not taking into account the immature level of governmental cooperation. It is concluded that the capacity of the beneficiary and counterpart administration generally needs to be better taken into account when setting the ambitions. This can be extended to the consideration of the maturity of the beneficiary organisations which needs to be taken into account when choosing the type of interventions. For example, for twinning it is concluded that this is only useful for organisations that are more mature and able to absorb the twinning input.

As developments are not always as fast as expected, it is important to build in some flexibility in the strategies in order to be able to adapt to changes in the real situation.

For projects that involve more than one country, often there is a lack of willingness to cooperate. Multi beneficiary projects are found to be relevant in case in an individual country not enough experts are available, and hence not enough critical mass to absorb the project on their own.

Effectiveness

In terms of outputs, most projects deliver what they should do, with some exceptions – the evaluators of the World Bank projects are rather critical on the achievements these have made.

In general, the evaluations show that the impacts are often not measurable or are rather modest. Quite often, the expected impact is not defined, nor is there any monitoring mechanism in order to identify results and impacts after project implementation.

In relation to what is mentioned under relevance, it is indicated that there are some important prerequisites for success. One of the conclusions is that creating tools is not a guarantee for success. Effective interventions work first on issues such as a corporate culture, which is important to sustain the changes and the use of the tools. This and the level of commitment of the

beneficiaries determine the level of success. Furthermore, it is concluded that institutional changes are mostly more suitable than organisational changes.

An important driver for change is the Acquis or meeting the requirements of a Directive - Interventions prove to be the most effective if they are Acquis/Directive related

Efficiency

Most evaluations show that delays in project implementation are rather common. In the end these delays do not negatively influence the outcomes of the projects; these are just delivered a little later than planned.

Delays are caused by:

- Procurement processes that are slower than foreseen. Especially in the EC's decentralised process delays in procurement occur.
- Weak management skills of the beneficiary.
- Weak interagency and inter-ministerial cooperation in the benefiting country.
- Deficiencies in project preparation, such as weak design of the project in general, weak or no feasibility studies (this was especially the case with World Bank projects).
- Delays in starting the project due to lack of fulfilment of the conditionalities.

For Sida projects it was concluded that in some cases overinvestments in environmental projects took place.

The evaluation on the Rule of Law (Berenschot) concludes: *'Annual project identification and preparation is hectic, the incentive is to quickly conclude. Although the MIPD is formulated for three years, it is every year revised. On the positive side, it is concluded that over time more coordination, and more long term capacity development programmes are set up'*.

For regional projects, the SIDA report concludes: *'Support through IPA has long planning horizons and long decision-making processes. It has been described by several interviewees (also in Brussels and at the EU delegations) as a large super tanker that is difficult to stop and change course after its direction has been set. This is also well understood among officials in Brussels; and in order to compensate for heavy administration, the EU sees a need for complementary bilateral (speed boats in this analogy) projects that can change direction, solve upcoming problems and take on opportunities that arise'* (report SIDA on regional cooperation).

Twinning is in terms of budget spending comparably more efficient than TA. At the same time, some evaluations conclude that twinning is time consuming and that it only works if the capacity of the beneficiary is sufficient.

Sustainability

There are several structural issues that threaten sustainability. The main threats are:

- Lack of ability to attract and maintain staff. Often there is no sound HR strategy in place that provides a certain guarantee that a high level staff is attracted and maintained.
- For investment projects, in most cases the maintenance and exploitation costs are not guaranteed. Budgetary reservations are needed.
- There is a lack of institutionalisation of the outputs and results of the projects; changes in corporate culture needed.
- Often there is a lack of ownership at a higher level, preventing to take the results of the project further.
- Organisational changes suffer reverse trends.

- Low number of staff targeted.
- Lack of critical assessment of the assumptions.
- Outputs written by experts and thus no learning.
- Lack of capacity of beneficiary organisation to produce follow-up of project outputs.

Furthermore, lack of political support or political will for change and lack of a strategy behind the interventions are mentioned as important bottlenecks for achieving the results and for sustaining them. Connected problems mentioned are the fact that sequencing is not properly done and interventions that are donor driven. Quite often, changes can only be sustained if proper follow up projects are identified. It is therefore concluded that often long term institutional support is needed to sustain the results and to take them further.

Examples of recommendations included in other evaluation reports

Recommendations provided in the contributory reports included:

- Have an integrated policy framework, in which projects and interventions are prioritised.
- Define combined/integrated approaches.
- Alignment of assistance with the EU integration agenda.
- Design projects on a sound understanding of the reform process.
- Understand the constraints.
- Introduce conditionalities, such as strategic direction, political support, deeper involvement stakeholders, ensure the capacity of beneficiary).
- Define better indicators to measure results and impacts.
- Better involve the beneficiary in preparation and implementation.
- Ensure that the political context is favourable.
- Formulate focussed objectives .

For twinning the following conditions should be fulfilled:

- Acquis related.
- Beneficiary sufficiently equipped and capable to absorb and carry the administrative burden.
- Only if role/mandate of the beneficiary is clear and legally established.
- Only if the decision on how to realise the acquis is made.
- Political and public support guaranteed and.
- Management stable.

Source reports

- Ecorys, 2011, Assessment of administrative and institutional capacity building interventions and future needs in the context of European Social Fund.
- HTSPE, 2011, Mid term evaluation of IPA Assistance evaluation report.
- Berenschot, 2013, Thematic evaluation of Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime in the Western Balkans.
- MWH, 2007, Phare environment thematic evaluation.
- IPB, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands, 2011, Regionaal en geïntegreerd beleid?
- SIDA, 2010, Evaluation Sida's support to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency's cooperation with environmental authorities in the Western Balkan, 2005-2009.
- SIDA, Eric Buhl-Nielsen et al, February 2013, Evaluation of Sida's Support to Environment Infrastructure and Reforms in Central and Eastern Europe and Western Balkans 1995-2010 - A Desk Study.
- GHK i.a. for DG-Elarg, 13 June 2011, Ev to support the preparation of pre-accession financial instruments beyond 2013.
- Ecorys for DG-ELARG, 26 January 2011, Evaluation Twinning versus TA.
- MWH for DG – ELARG, 28 December 2008, Review of Twinning in Croatia.

- Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) for World Bank Group, 7 December 2011, Serbia Country Partnership Strategy Completion Report (CPSCR) Review.
- Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) for World Bank Group, 20 September 2011, Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Partnership Strategy Completion Report (CPSCR) Review.
- World Bank, Croatia Country Partnership Strategy Completion Report.
- ITAD Ltd for DFID, Evaluation of DFID's Regional Programmes Western Balkans DFID 2003-2007.
- Indevalop for SIDA Decentralised Evaluation, December 2012, Reform Cooperation in the Western Balkans: Regional Cooperation SIDA.
- Indevalop for SIDA Decentralised Evaluation, September 2010, Evaluation of Support to the Civil Society in the Balkans.
- Evenson & Marchenko for USAID, August 2011, Mid-Term Evaluation of the Civic Advocacy Partnership (CAPP II) Project in Bosnia – Herzegovina.
- IBTCI for USAID, September 2012, Performance Evaluation of USAID Serbia and Montenegro Preparedness, Planning and Economic Security (PPES) Programme.
- Democracy Intl for USAID, December 2011, Serbia Consortium for Election and Political Processes Strengthening (CEPPS II) Evaluation.

Annex 3 Tabulation framework

In accordance to the evaluation methodology developed in the meta evaluation inception report, a framework has been developed to tabulate the information from the CPIE and thematic reports into a structure that will allow ready comparison and analysis.

Information from the following evaluation reports has been tabulated:

- CPIE Albania, Ecorys, August 2012(in the tables below marked as AL)
- CPIE Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecorys, April 2013(in the tables below marked as B&H)
- CPIE Croatia, DFC Consortium, February 2012(in the tables below marked as CRO)
- CPIE Kosovo, Ecorys, March 2013(in the tables below marked as KO)
- CPIE Montenegro, Ecorys, March 2013(in the tables below marked as MN)
- CPIE Serbia, Ecorys, March 2013(in the tables below marked as SR)
- CPIE Turkey, Particip, February 2012(in the tables below marked as TUR)
- IPA MBP Evaluation, Ecorys, April 2013(in the tables below marked as MBP)
- Thematic Evaluation of Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime in the Western Balkans, Berenschot and Imago, February 2013(in the tables below marked as T1)
- Thematic evaluation of EU's support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey, IBF International Consulting in collaboration with BAA, June 2011. (in the tables below marked as T2)

The meta evaluation was developed around the six core performance questions of the Ecorys evaluation methodology developed for this assignment, in addition to the broader themes or systemic issues identified during the policy analysis. These evaluation questions are as follows:

- EQ1: To which extent are interventions financed under IPA efficient in terms of value-for-money when delivering outputs and immediate results?
- EQ2: To which extent are interventions financed under IPA effective in delivering outputs and immediate results?
- EQ3: Are the outputs and immediate results delivered by IPA translated into the desired/expected impacts, namely in terms of achieving the strategic objectives/priorities linked to accession preparation? Are/can impacts be sufficiently identified/quantified?
- EQ4: Are there any additional impacts (both positive and negative)?
- EQ5: Are the identified impacts sustainable (or likely to be sustainable)?
- EQ6: Are there any elements which (could) hamper the impact and/or sustainability of assistance?

Within the scope of the Ecorys evaluation methodology, each of the evaluation questions is assessed using a number of judgement criteria and indicators. These judgement criteria form the basis of a series of evaluation findings that were selected to tabulate the information from the contributory evaluation reports to determine the extent to which they were present in each of the reports. Analysis of the reports has also identified some findings in addition to the scope of the judgement criteria and these have also been included where they represent a common feature in the reports. Finally, the findings have been systematised and divided into five groups: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and horizontal findings (the latter covering findings that can be attributed to more than one evaluation criterion). The tabulation is found in table 0.3 below.

The tabulation continues with the presentation of the relevant issues from the evaluation reports distributed to the selected findings and countries (evaluation reports) where they have been identified. As a second step the key issues per evaluation finding have been summarized.

This Annex presents:

- Table 0.2 Summarising the most important horizontal or systemic (ie, not sectorally specific) recommendations from each of the contributory reports.
- Table 0.3 Describing the findings of the evaluation and commenting on how they have featured in the various reports.
- Table 0.4 A more detailed review of the impact and achieved and not achieved by the assistance, with an analysis of the reasons behind this.
- Table 0.5 A summary of the impact by theme of institutional structures, human resources or systems and tools.

Table 0.2 Systemic issues from recommendations

Country	Systemic issues within systemic recommendations
EQ 7 Are there potential actions which would improve the <u>efficiency and effectiveness</u> of the on-going assistance?	
Albania	• Absorption capacity of the beneficiary organisation should be carefully assessed • Restrict the use of ICM to those cases where it is able to leverage non-EU funding • Introduction of conditionalities.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	• Commitment/involvement beneficiaries • Conditionalities • Internal communication • Assessment absorption capacity beneficiaries
Montenegro	• Conditionalities: admin capacity; financial resources; etc • Internal communication • Absorption capacity beneficiaries. • Role of the EUD limited to facilitation and guidance.
Kosovo	• Focus on clearly defined tasks • it should be verified that the Twinning partners are real 'practitioners' in the EU reality
Serbia	• Assessment of relevance/ ambition of projects • Formal assessment of absorption capacity • Assessment of twinning relevance • Internal communication is conditional • Needs and capacity assessments of all beneficiaries
MBP	• Mechanisms to improve the frequency and transparency of programme implementation reporting for all stakeholders. • Technical assistance for institution building should be used only in those areas where there is a clear operational need for a regional perspective
EQ8 Are there actions which would improve the prospects for <u>impact and sustainability</u> of the on-going assistance?	
Albania	• Assess the absorption capacity of potential beneficiaries • Assess Twinning relevance • Apply stronger conditionalities
Montenegro	• Ensure more commitment and willingness to sustain the achievements in the legislative segment. • Staff turnover and capacity constraints are conditional
Kosovo	• Improve working conditions for young people trained under EU assistance • Prior to new capacity building efforts management and organisation analysis

Serbia	• A clear lead institution, preferably with a clear national champion • Institutional structures, including laws, should clearly be in place before investment in either human resources development or systems and tools. • Future planned assistance to the sector should be made conditional • Clearer financial conditionalities • Political and institutional leadership as conditionality of future assistance to the sector.
MBP	• Involvement of technical DGs in a more formal role in project oversight, • Greater use could be made of technical capacity in EUDs. • Technical partners under implementation agreements (for example Eurostat) have the competence and oversight to be able to make assessments of the results and actual (or likely) impact of the assistance • More rigorous selection criteria to focus the MBP on sectors with clear need for a regional approach.
Country	Systemic issues within recommendations
Turkey	• Increase prioritisation of sector-based assistance. • Consider developing a concept of sectoral lead beneficiary institutions. • Put more emphasis on results and performance in reporting • Ensure that feedback from evaluation and monitoring is systematically integrated into programming and implementation.
Croatia	• Enforce a constructive and partnership-oriented dialogue in order to make the sector-based programming a success. • Strengthen leadership and coordination in respect to PAR at the highest political decision-making level a, for instance by temporarily appointing a deputy prime minister in charge of the Ministry of Public Administration. • Promote quality control systems in beneficiary institutions. • Further strengthen critical reflection by beneficiaries in the SMSC.

Table 0.3 Findings in the evaluation reports

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
Efficiency		
Time extensions	7 + T1+ MBP	Time extensions to contracts are a common feature in IPA implementation both in national programmes and in the MBP. They occurred in all programmes and countries with different intensity and were usually needed to compensate for delays during implementation and to enable better achievement of results. In general they do not have significant negative effects on the achievement of results and are viewed as a management tool. The contracting authorities and the EU Commission usually use this management flexibility and grant no cost extensions where it is possible and where there is benefit for project performance.
Realistic budget	6 + MBP +T1 +T2	Budget allocations were realistic for the majority of the projects but there are exceptions where budgets have been over or under estimated. In general budgeting for supply and infrastructure projects is less precise due to time differences since preparation of technical specifications and limited scope of market analyses. The thematic evaluation on Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime notes that the share of IPA funding was fairly low given the importance of the sector, but the trend here is towards increased allocations,. The allocation and absorption of funds under Civil Society sector was hampered by the insufficient national absorption capacities and general staff constraints across all sectors in EUDs. In general, information on the budgets although present in most of the reports (except Turkey) is very scarce. The CPIEs do not analyse this issue in depth because of the practical difficulties in both measuring impact of institution building assistance and obtaining sufficient comparative data to enable a credible cost effectiveness assessment to be made.
Timely contracting	6 + MBP + T1 +T2	Timely contracting appears a challenge for most of the countries with exception of Kosovo, where the contracting is implemented within the planned time limits due to its highly centralized programming and implementation procedures. In the case of B&H contracting is substantially hampered by the complex institutional and political environment in the country. Croatia and Turkey operate under DIS and timely contracting is an issue, especially in the case of Croatia where programme extensions were needed to avoid loss of funds. The timely contracting has had particularly negative consequences in the Civil Society sector as the recipient organisations have limited financial resources to pre finance activities and cannot accommodate significant delays in their working programmes. Timely contracting appears not a problem in the case of MBP, despite the shorter contracting period, due to intensive use of direct agreements to contract assistance and the centralised management.
Co-financing	5	This finding was not covered in the Croatian and Turkish reports. Co-financing is not a systematic problem although in some cases there were difficulties to ensure it in a timely manner, especially when the project was delayed beyond the planned financial year in which the co-financing was budgeted. The provision of co-financing by local authorities is in general problematic. In some cases

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
		of excessive unplanned or additional costs national co-financing was provided to cover those. Provision of co-financing under centralised management is administratively difficult to achieve because of the need to use both national and EU procurement systems.
Effectiveness		
Delivery of outputs	7 + MBP	The outputs in majority of the cases have been delivered in all PA countries studied as well as under the MBP. There were single exceptions. In general it could be concluded that there are no problems with the delivery of outputs although in some instances the implementation experienced difficulties and time extensions were needed.
Quality and usefulness of the outputs	7+T1+M BP	The prevailing opinion is that majority of the outputs were delivered at an appropriate quality level and have been useful to the beneficiaries, although exceptions were noted. The usefulness of the outputs to the beneficiaries is affected by their quality, the need for them and the capacity of the beneficiaries in both human and/or financial resources to take them up. The thematic report on Rule of Law notes the selection of the experts and their suitability for the work planned as a factor in the delivery of quality results.
Achievement of results	7 + MBP	Whilst planned outputs are in most instances delivered, the extent to which these are effectively turned into results is not as good as it should have been The achievement of results has been hampered by: • Outputs not taken up by the beneficiaries; • Low capacity of the beneficiaries; • Lack on political agreement and lack or change of clear policy direction; • Resource constraints -additional investment, running costs and additional staffing • Difficulties and risks in projects dealing with entrepreneurship - contracting rates were rather low (less than 77 % of the total project value contracted), quality of projects applications was rather poor, the Contracts were cancelled, local beneficiaries (SMEs) demonstrated insufficient readiness, application procedures were reported by many applicants as complicated (language, templates...). • Condensed assistance due to insufficient beneficiary staff; • Complex project design; • Ambitious objectives; • Little expectations for sustainability of outputs; • Changes in experts; • Poor quality of the outputs; • Outputs not considered useful; • Complicated institutional environment;

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
		Lack of effective longer term management mechanisms for infrastructure operation.
Appreciation of results	2 +T1	Due to the methodologies employed, this is highlighted only in 2 CPIEs – Croatia and Turkey and in the Thematic report on Rule of Law. Beneficiaries usually measure project achievements in terms of outputs not in terms of the change occurred – the results. Project fishes usually have clear output indicators and less good result indicators which makes measurement of the achievement of results sometime challenging or impossible. The contractors also usually report in terms of outputs and rarely in terms of results in part because these are usually achieved only towards the end of the assistance. This is a systematic issue not only for IPA. The achievement of results is usually commented upon in evaluation reports but monitoring reports focus on achievement of outputs. Monitoring of structural fund programmes also suffers from insufficient clear data on achievement of results. Therefore the monitoring and evaluation guidelines of the EC for 2014-2020 programming period recommend definition of result indicators and monitoring of results as well as monitoring of outputs (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/wd_2014_en.pdf) In the thematic report it has been noted that the outputs are being produced, and are important, but resultant outcomes are still to be systematically recorded.
Transfer of know how measured by location of the assistance and beneficiary participation in implementation	2 +T1	Close cooperation of the provider/contractor with the beneficiary organisation is crucial for ensuring transfer of know-how and achieving the planned effects of institution building assistance. Twinning assistance is more likely than TA to be located within the premises of the beneficiary and more likely to support the beneficiaries in achieving project deliverables. Although this issue has been included in only two CPIEs and in one of the thematic reports, it suggests that that there is a systematic lack of consideration of the knowledge transfer process, particularly under TA contracts. The location of advisors outside of the beneficiary premises reduces their involvement in the delivery of outputs. Whilst some tools such as working groups can alleviate this, they cannot compensate for the lack of real day-to-day collaboration.
Impact		
Lack of data to measure impact	3 +MBP	Although specifically raised as an issue in only three CPIEs and in the MBP evaluation it is nevertheless a systematic problem. Although the five CPIEs written by Ecorys focused on programme and sectoral impact this was to some extent compromised by the limited amount of specific programme and project level quantitative data, both in the form of targets or performance. Monitoring data to measure impact is usually not collected because it is too early in the performance of the project and monitoring reports rely on qualitative information to draw vague or general conclusions.
Impossible to disaggregate	2 + MBP	Changes happen not only because of the IPA interventions that are evaluated but also because of other factors and therefore the contribution of the IPA should be disaggregated. Contribution analysis are however time and resource consuming, and especially under sectoral impact of IPA analysis lacking data. In the case of the CPIEs this was largely done on the basis of expert opinion taking into account the known contribution of other programmes/donors and limited to broad parameters. The issue has been noted in two CPIEs and in the MBP evaluation.

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
Political (acquis) relevance	7 + MBP + T1 + T2	IPA supports countries that applied for EU membership in their preparation of becoming part of the EU. In order to measure the wider impact of the assistance it is important to know whether the assistance is relevant to this objective and compliant with the goals of the accession strategic documents. The finding has been commented on in all evaluation reports. The general assessment is that the supported assistance is relevant and compliant to the EU acquis. However, considering the broad scope of the acquis and policy documents this does not necessarily mean it was the most needed. The thematic evaluation on Rule of Law notes that there is no real link between the EU's overarching policy documents and its regional Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework (MIFF). The MIFF shows allocations across countries and funding categories but not sectors. The EU therefore does not have a specific budget instrument for operationalizing overarching regional policy concerns.
Project prioritisation	1 + T1 + T2+MBP	An interesting and important finding covered in only one CPIE (Turkey) due to the scale of their IPA Programme is the concept of prioritising projects. This is important to ensure the best use of limited financial resources and maximize impact. By its nature it requires also good donor coordination and targeted national strategic documents. The TUR report states that prioritisation of project proposals remained largely implicit. There are some factors that obviously are driving the prioritization process such as the linkage to important accession benchmarks and coherence with EU pre-accession strategic documents, together with project quality and readiness (although the Turkey report argues that the last two are taken into account in practice). However there are largely no procedures or specific parameters to guide programmers in the prioritisation process. The thematic reports provide different views. The report on the Rule of Law states that while all NP projects fit MIPD objectives, actual prioritisations in the NPs are not obvious as there is no justification for the choice of projects and their particular focus as against possible alternatives. The report on Civil Society notes that in general terms, programming of assistance to CS in the WBT involves a good degree of prioritisation, which is subject to agreement with the national and CS stakeholders. The MBP should focus on issues that really require a regional perspective. Respondents to the survey done for the MBP report suggest regional infrastructure, law enforcement and organised crime fighting, customs, migration and environment. Stakeholders have also highlighted a number of areas (including minority issues, cultural heritage, history teaching and acquis related issues) covered by the MBP that they consider as not effective, suggesting that regional priorities are different to those of the Commission Services.
Support to EU Accession	7 +MBP	Having in mind the wider objective of the IPA, all CPIE report that the assistance contributed to preparation of the countries for future EU membership. In the two specific cases of Croatia and Turkey. Croatia joined the EU on 1st July 2013 therefore the impacts with this respect are tangible and benefiting from the dynamics of the accession process – although much of the preparation of institutions for accession will have been achieved by earlier programmes. Turkey's accession to EU is largely a political issue and therefore despite the technical and institutional progress by IPA the achievement of the wider objective is uncertain.
Impact on socio economic	3 + MBP	The impact on socio-economic development is a wider impact that in many cases is not specifically planned under component I but appears as a result of the achievement of project objectives supporting by other measures or factors, such as strengthening rule of law or legislation harmonisation. Therefore it can only be

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
development		stated that component I has made a contribution primarily indirectly to this type of impact. This has been commented in three CPIEs and under the MBP evaluation. Reported Component I interventions that led to socio-economic impact were in infrastructure development, facilitation of trade, support to creation of jobs, support to Roma communities and environment protection.
Impact on institutional structures	7 + T1 +MBP	The impact on institutional structures has been commented upon in all CPIE reports. It was one of the key objectives of IPA support including transposition and enforcement of the acquis. The MBP impact on institutional structures is less compared to IPA NP and is clearly evident only in the case of regional organisations. IPA has made a visible contribution to institution building in those areas of the SAA underpinned by technical elements of the acquis, such as tax, customs, intellectual property rights, environment, statistics, quality infrastructure etc. and less to non acquis related areas such as public administration reform due to political and cultural resistance to change. The IPA contributed to the development of structures to manage current and future (under the SF) EU assistance. Contribution to approximation of legislation in various sectors was reported. The thematic report on Rule of Law notes that institutional development has been the most important and yielded the most sustainable results: new laws, restructured judicial and court system (high judicial councils etc.), new judicial philosophy represent the foundations for all subsequent rule of law work and capacity building. IPA impact was valuable in inducing institutional changes in the cases where the IPA assistance was targeted to problematic sectors and allowed the national administrations to resolve some institutional inefficiency.
Impact on human resources	7 + MBP + T1	The impact on human resources has been covered in all CPIE, in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic report on the Rule of Law. Strengthening of human resources in various areas has been reported. Nevertheless in some instances it was noted that the impact was reduced by the limited administrative and operational resources as well as staff turnover and lack of merit based recruitment in public administration. Therefore it was stressed that the assistance in this area should be longer-term and predictable, The strengthened human resources improved the ability of the administrations to better manage the assistance, draft legislations and improve operations. Croatia CPIE acknowledges the IPA contribution to development of human capacity for effective management of structural funds. In general the capacity of the beneficiaries - both the national administration as well as municipalities and NGOs - to implement projects was strengthened. This applied for. Knowledge and experience gained from IPA also assisted many beneficiaries in securing additional funding for their own activities.
Impact on systems and tools	7 + MBP + T1	Together with support in the area of institutional strengthening and human capacity development, IPA provided substantial support in systems and tools in the form of development of IT systems, elaboration of manuals and infrastructure investment which enhanced management and operation and supported socio-economic development and environment protection. This is acknowledged in all CPIE reports as well as in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic report on Rule of Law. The full achievement of the planned impact from the investments in systems and tools is threatened due to limitations related to human capacity, inter-institutional cooperation and lack of financial resources for maintenance and operation.
Enhanced collaboration between	7 + MBP	Enhanced collaboration between institutions is one of the indirect IPA impacts noted in all CPIE and in the MBP evaluation. This includes inter country collaboration between institutions as well as collaboration with EU and regional institutions. It is evident in continuing cooperation between twinning partners (although this frequently depends on additional financing), cooperation between institutions operating

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
institutions		in one sector, including donors, Civil Society Organisations (CSO) and EU institutions and in some cases this cooperation led to establishment of networks between several institutions. The contribution of IPA to enhancement the involvement of CSO in the programming and implementation of the assistance particularly in environment sector was noted. Enhanced cooperation between local level institutions (municipalities) was also visible in several cases induced by IPA projects. MBP has a special contribution to enhancement of collaboration and cooperation as it is targeted to provide assistance to several beneficiaries. The enhanced cooperation between institutions led to improvement of programming and implementation, transfer of knowledge and experience and harmonization of practices.
Sustainability		
Financial limitations	7 +MBP +T1	Financial limitations to sustainability of IPA assistance have been noted in all CPIE, in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic report on the Rule of Law. The limitations in beneficiary budgets reduce sustainability and long term institutional capacity building. Financial limitations in many cases threaten proper maintenance and operation of infrastructure or equipment. A special case is Croatia where it is expected that rationalization/priorization might influence some IPA TAIB investment sustainability. However although particularly reported in the case of Croatia, it is likely that changes in investment priorities might occur in the other countries as well driven by various reasons as change in the political leadership and economic crisis. The preparation and construction of infrastructure in the region is sustained with the introduction of WBIF where grants and loans are leveraged and provided by EC various financial imitations.

Institutional sustainability	7	Institutional sustainability relates to the sustainability of institutions as structures and the human capacity that they have. The issue has been highlighted in all seven CPIE reports. In terms of structures, sustainability is threatened by reorganization and closure of institutions (for example in the case of Chemical management Agency in Serbia and the division the former Ministry of Environment into two new entities, and the reorganisation of authorities under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Ministry of Health in Turkey). Institutional capacity building connected to specific implementation of the acquis has a better chance of being sustained than more horizontal support that lacks the acquis imperative. In terms of sustainability of human capacity, the major problem is related to the lack of merit based recruitment and career management for civil servants combined with attraction and retention of appropriate staff. There are some differences between the countries. In AL the new employment conditions which are being proposed for civil servants engaged with EU funds is a significant shift in approach. Some beneficiary staff are benefiting from a recent increase of salaries but this staff retention policy remains uneven and inadequate. In B&H, Montenegro , Kosovo and Serbia administrative capacity represents a significant threat to sustainability either through the sufficiency of staff or the retention of trained staff. In addition the sustainability of Regional Development Agencies in Kosovo was doubtful because the institutions created were not embedded in local administrative structures . The expected accession of Croatia to the EU is supporting institutional capacity created. In Turkey the institutional environment is relatively stable. A structural adjustment process is still ongoing to meet EU requirements. Mainly young and well educated but often inexperienced staff have been hired within the managing and administration bodies dealing with EU issues. Staff turnover partially hampers the speed of institutional capacity building.
Finding	Nr of reports	Issues in the evaluation reports
Political sustainability	7 + MBP + T1	The presence of political support is an important sustainability issue highlighted in all evaluation reports. The lack of political support delayed reforms as adoption of legislation or strategic documents was delayed. The progress in areas which are not considered important and politically supported is very difficult and in some cases impossible (fisheries in Montenegro, Public Administration Reform in Croatia). The opposition to change in some political circles (as resistance to change of Public Procurement System in some political circles in Kosovo) also hampered reforms and undermined sustainability of the assistance. The thematic report on the Rule of Law notes that in most of the Western Balkans there is insufficient political support for putting in place effective rule of law, anti-corruption and organised crime systems. Yet political commitment is a key factor for the success of Rule of Law assistance in general and for measures against organised crime in particular. B&H is a particular example of complex institutional and political situation which continues to make sustaining progress difficult. Political support for Turkey accession to the EU is an important driver for sustainability of the reforms made.

Horizontal findings		
Ownership	7+MBP +T1+T2	Ownership was highlighted in all evaluation reports as a horizontal factor that influences many elements of the assistance, including quality of programming and addressing beneficiary or country needs, efficiency of implementation, achievement of results and sustainability. Although most IPA countries operate under centralized management, ensuring better ownership was recognized as important to improve effectiveness and sustainability. Evaluation reports provide examples of both good and weak ownership of the assistance. The more generic issues relate to greater involvement of the beneficiaries in the planning process and during implementation (particularly in the case of B&H,KO and MN). Good ownership is of particular importance for twinning projects. The ownership of the Serbian administration and beneficiaries is better both in planning and in implementation. In the case of Croatia, which operates under DIS, visible improvement of the ownership was observed in the course of a single year inspired by the pending accession. Turkey also operates under DIS and ownership in terms of greater involvement of local institutions at the expense of EU institutions is good. However cases of unclear ownership on projects with multiple beneficiaries have been reported. In the case of the MBP, despite increasing attempts to involve national stakeholders the programming process remains top-down driven by the Commission Services, which negatively affects ownership within beneficiary countries. The implementation, monitoring and reporting is, even more than the programming, driven by Commission Services in Brussels with little active involvement of NIPACs and EU Delegations. The thematic report on Civil Society notes that the goals set may not always correspond to citizens' socio-economic priorities and that partnerships with local authorities are needed.
Leadership	3 + T1	This is a specific issue noted in three CPIE reports (AL, CRO, SR) and in the thematic report on Rule of Law. It relates to internal organization of project implementation and subsequent uptake of the assistance. The presence of leadership in specific fields makes a clear difference in achievement of results. The cases discussed in the reports are in the areas of transport (AL), public administration (CRO and SR) and public utilities (SR). The lack of commitment by political leaderships in taking on the fight against organized crime is a key challenge for improving performance.
Capacity	7 + MBP + T1	Capacity is a systematic horizontal issue that affects all evaluation criteria. It was covered in all evaluation reports. The aspects studied include: (1) scaling of the assistance to the absorption capacity of the beneficiaries, (2) capacity to manage and implement, (3) adequate number of human resources to sustain results. The CPIE report variable capacity across the samples. Cases where the assistance has not been properly scaled to the absorption capacity of the beneficiaries have been reported, especially in twinning projects. These mainly relate to insufficient capacity in both counterpart staff numbers and skills.
Programming and SWAP	6 + MBP +T1 + T2	This finding examines: (1) beneficiaries involvement in programming (2) sector based approach in programming. These issues have been commented in six CPIE (not in Montenegro), in the MBP evaluation as well as in the two thematic reports studied. The involvement of the beneficiaries in programming varies. For the countries that operate under centralized management the programming is implemented by EUD with strong (Serbia) or weaker (Kosovo) involvement of the beneficiaries.

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
		In general, planning and programming of Civil Society support allows for the integration of Civil Society needs. However, this could be significantly improved by ensuring an optimal participation of all relevant Civil Society organizations and other stakeholders. Under DIS the sector based approach has been introduced in Turkey and for two sectors in Croatia (justice and home affairs, public administration reform). The reports note difficulties in the application of the approach. In Croatia wider sectoral and horizontal issues remain largely unexplored by the various SMSCs. In Turkey there is still not enough understanding what it actually means in practice and how beneficiaries can adopt to the new approach. Under the MBP the programming process provides reasonably good grounds for ensuring as much as possible the involvement of all interested parties. Other stakeholders (regional organisations, other donors, Civil Society Organisations, etc.) were largely consulted. The introduction of a more sector based approach in the next financial perspective offers the potential for better involvement of regional organisations as it will build on the sector working groups to take a more strategic approach to programming. The MIPDs as well as the project fiches have generally been consulted with the NIPACs and beneficiaries as appropriate and significant funds expended in bringing NIPAC representatives to Brussels in this process. Nevertheless the programming process remains top-down driven by the Commission Services which negatively affects ownership within beneficiary countries. The thematic report on the Rule of Law notes that the existing sectoral strategies are largely inappropriate as foundations for a sector approach. In a number of the states several steps have been taken to move towards sectoral programming, in line with the idea that IPA II (2014-2020) will largely be based on this. In most countries it is clear that neither institutional set-up nor budgeting processes are sufficient for a genuine sectoral approach to work. EU should only apply sector programming when conditions are in place: macro-economic framework, planning and budget system allow for predictable financing; sector policies and priorities are visible in the public budget; donor co-ordination and sector capacity is acceptable; performance assessment frameworks are reasonably clear; political will and commitment by national authorities to implement is credible. Where these conditions are not met, the EU should support interested national authorities to get them in place as soon as feasible.
Consecutive projects	4 + MBP +T1+T2	Commented in four CPIE reports (B&H, CRO, SR, TUR), in the MBP evaluation and in the two thematic reports. The message is that in many cases IPA assistance consists of consecutive projects that target the same theme, reflecting the limited duration of assistance contracts and the longer time needed to instigate the extent of changes required. This supports not only achievement of results but also sustainability and impact especially in the case of capacity development. In the Civil Society sector it was noted that the sequencing is ensured less regularly and its practice depends on national sector priorities and project context.
Ambitious objectives	5 + MBP +T1	This finding has been commented upon in five CPIEs (not commented in AL and KO), in the MBP report and in the thematic report on the Rule of Law as a constraint for achievement of results. There are several nuances of this finding (1) ambitious objectives compared to the capacity of the beneficiary; (2) ambitious objectives compared to the possibility to realize them having in mind other external factors; (3) ambitious objectives that target a goal that is only achievable after series of assistance and after some time (not possible within the scope of the project); (4) or a combination of these. While the (1) and partly (2) are not desirable as in most of the cases this would mean low effectiveness and sustainability (3) does not necessarily mean a weakness in the programming. Nevertheless this should be acknowledged as it requires additional measures (assistance) and multi-annual planning.

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
Selection of service providers	5 + MBP	Covered in four CPIEs (AL, B&H, KO and SR) and extensively commented in the CPIE for TUR and in the MBP evaluation. The reports for AL, B&H, KO and SR note that generally, appropriate service providers or twinning partners have been selected and the type of the assistance was appropriate, with only few exceptions. In Serbia the use of European peer organisations as service providers has been cost efficient. In AL however, the use of a delegated agreement under one contract did not allow for effective supervision by the EUD. The Turkey report notes that the use of direct grant agreements (DGA) is common and showed mixed but generally positive picture in terms of their efficiency. The reports argues that there is little basis for the use of a DGA as there is no natural monopoly to overcome and some of the agencies delivering DGAs operate in a very similar way to a conventional private consultancy firms. Furthermore, the DGAs are perceived as being expensive vis-a-vis other implementation mechanisms, especially TA. There was general agreement among interviewees that a better understanding of the real value for money of the DGAs remains absent. Much of contracting under MBP is implemented through administration agreements (Eurostat for Statistics, the World Bank for Public Finance Management) and grants. There is a good rationale for the choice of the contracting method. Due to the specificity of services in some cases there was limited choice on the companies/institutions/experts that were interested to provide assistance. EIPA, as an EU institution for training of public administration was chosen to support ReSPA. In other cases the choice was made based on the need to link the assistance to similar interventions by other donors. Direct agreements have speeded up contracting and centralised contracting is also seen as generating important efficiency gains in terms of project management, with the consolidation of assistance to a number of countries under a single contract. The report argued that these savings need to be offset by performance inefficiencies created by difficulties of targeting specific country needs within the scope of a single project. Under MBP there are higher administrative costs due to the need to coordinate activities with more than one country and beneficiary. Much of these costs are borne by contractors. Support to regional organisations is in the form of direct grants and whilst there is negotiation there are few practical ways to ensure costs are minimised. Even when there are tender processes, these do not always lead to cost effective solutions.
Monitoring process	6 + MBP + T1	A finding commented on in six CPIEs (not commented in MN report), in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic report on Rule of Law. Croatia and Turkey operate under decentralised management therefore it is normal that this finding has been studied as part of the beneficiaries' management capacity. In Croatia it is noted that some activities of the ROM contractor duplicate the work of the SMSCs, in particular in cases where the attendance at SMSCs is largely attributed to PIU staff. For Turkey monitoring remains largely unappreciated as a concept and there are indications that the approach has still to be absorbed by the entities responsible for the implementation of projects. In the other countries supervision on the projects is implemented by EUD (ECLO in Kosovo) with varying participation of the beneficiaries and the national authorities depending on the progress towards DIS. The ROM process provides some additional oversight. The ROM missions to B&H however have been reduced in recent years in both scale and scope although it was unclear whether this affected the quality of implementation. Under MBP, monitoring and reporting is in general implemented by the Steering Committees and the Commission Services where progress is summarised in biannual activity reports. NIPACs are consulted during the programming of MBP assistance but largely not involved in implementation reflecting the centralised management system. This does, however, limit the amount of information that they have on the MBP assistance in their countries. The EU Delegations are also not

Finding	Nr of reports	Elaborated in the evaluation reports
		involved in monitoring and reporting of MBP and in some cases are insufficiently consulted during the programming. This makes practical implementation more difficult than it needs to be as there is no local supervision and support to the contractors. The ROM process is the main tool that can provide additional external information on project implementation. The thematic report on Rule of Law notes that the Countries progress reports are not considered as a management and monitoring tool and need to become operationally useful. ROM reports are considered useful as it concerns the status of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness but should be made public since they contain useful information for a broad range of stakeholders. Strategic follow-up monitoring is useful: Key programs that have ended should have a quick follow-up review 6-12 months later, to assess sustainability and impact.
Indicators	4 + MBP + T1+T2	Commented in 4 CPIE reports (B%H, CRO, MN, TUR), in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic reports. The message of all reports is one – there is a lack of (measurable) indicators. It would be helpful to aim at consistency between general indicators defined at programming level and specific indicators at the project fiche and proposal level, to ensure greater programming coherence and precision.
Donor coordination and Complementarity	6 + MBP + T1 + T2	Commented in six CPIE (not commented in the CRO report), in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic reports reviewed. In general the reports provide a positive message on complementarity and donor coordination and state that the assistance is more complementary than overlapping. Nevertheless some examples of poor coordination have been highlighted. The thematic report on the Rule of Law reports that much of the early donor support to justice sector reform was uncoordinated. There has over time been better coordination of the assistance especially where the national authorities have developed their own (national) operational strategies. In a number of the states, however, there is still clearly some ways to go before coordination functions as it should. In the Civil Society Sector, the procedures need improvement in order to take sufficient account of how other donor interventions help meeting accession requirements. The MBP is a logical complement to the National Programmes as it has a clear added value in creating the conditions for interregional co-operation. Regional type projects have better added value as they are clearly focused on tackling cross border issues. Horizontal type projects have more difficulties in providing common solutions to diverse beneficiaries.

Finding	Nr of reports	Issues in the evaluation reports
Inter sectoral cooperation, coordination and involvement of Civil Society Sector	4 + MBP+ T1 + T2	Commented in four CPIO (CRO, MN, SR and TUR), in the MBP evaluation and in the thematic reports reviewed. Where commented the reports note improvements in the inter-sectoral cooperation and with the involvement of Civil Society Sector. Only in the case of Montenegro it was noted that although local authorities were very responsive in the energy sector, not all actors – specifically the private sector - were actively involved and this would reduce sustainability. In Croatia there are some visible improvements as concerns inter-sectoral cooperation; particularly in the framework of individual IPA TAIB sub- sectors. In Serbia better involvement of CSO in the planning and implementation is noted. The implementation of some of the IPA projects, especially Environmental Approximation Strategy required strong involvement of CSO and therefore IPA had a positive contribution to establishment of a culture of consulting environmental measures with NGOs active in this area. In Turkey Inter-institutional cooperation required by IPA TAIB is still deemed to be difficult during implementation. There are, however, some good examples For MBP coordination is a challenge as it involves beneficiaries in a range of countries with different capacities and specific issues. Co-ordination in some of the regional organisations is complex and not always as efficient as it could be. In the area of Rule of Law Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime support to CSOs has been ad hoc and seemingly without a longer-term and broad-based strategic perspective.. Across the region, Progress Reports stress the need to establish efficient institutional mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation. A sector approach would help facilitate such cooperation where activities do not just target individual agencies but include activities that aim at strengthening information sharing, co-ordination and joint action among relevant agencies. In the area of Civil Society sector the extent to which a range of Civil Society Organisations and other key stakeholders have been involved in needs assessment, strategy selection and other relevant aspects of the intervention logic is moderately satisfactory. Compared to CARDS, IPA much better promotes participation of Civil Society and other stakeholders throughout the programming cycle. Nevertheless, the IPA programming process could still benefit from adoption, implementation and enforcement of a set of Minimum Standards on Civil Society participation in IPA programming by all stakeholders.

Detailed impact analysis

After the tabulation exercise was completed it was considered that due to tabulation methodology the reasons for achievement or failure to achieve impact have not been thoroughly covered. The realised as well as not realised impacts from each evaluation report have been tabulated across the evaluation reports and sectors included in them. Then for some sectors, which were covered in more than one report (as Public Finance Management), sector conclusions on the realized and not realized impacts have been drawn. These are presented in the tables below.

Table 0.4 Detailed elaboration of impact by report

AL	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Public Finance and Financial Management	• Introduction of DIS under way • Integrated border management with Montenegro • Cooperation with the customs in Turkey and Montenegro established • Improved institutional set up in Public Procurement • Improved financial management • Real time connection of all treasury district offices • Improved transparency and accountability in the Albanian Treasury systems • Better regulation from the Bank of Albania	• No impact from the developed draft legal amendments to the Public Procurement Law as these have not been adopted. Therefore the legal structure is still not fully consistent with European standards. • The State Aid Commission has limited capacity and state aid schemes could potentially go unnoticed.
Transport	• Legislative approximation and improved policy in transport. • Enhanced tourist potential and cross border cooperation as a result of construction of rural roads.	• The doubling of Milot – Rreshen Road appears to be slightly premature for the current traffic flows. • The potential for expansion of port operations of Port of Shengjin and transformation of the port into a regional hub for Northern Albania and Kosovo remain doubtful.
B&H	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Quality Infrastructure	• Individual components are to various degrees operational and producing some impacts – EN standards are available, Conformity Assessment Bodies operate in limited areas, pre-market product control is undertaken, there is international recognition of some elements and there is some process of metrological verification. • EURAMET granted international recognition of the Laboratory for Mass	• Revision of the legislative framework and the strategic direction for the development of institutions in the field of metrology did not happen because the project outputs were not accepted by the national stakeholders • Implementation of products safety legislation remains sporadic. • Whilst the IPA has led to a large number of outputs, impact in terms of the establishment of a functioning QI system is still some way off..
Statistics	• Basis for carrying out of population census established	• Planned impact on strengthening of the capacity of the three statistical institutes is compromised by their limited administrative and operational resources.
Social sector	• Social inclusion of children enhanced in about 30% of the municipalities • The staff of the labour offices is continuously improved and also a better link is created between unemployed and employers at the labour offices • Agency for Higher Education Development and Quality Assurance and the Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualification in Higher Education are better prepared to implement their obligations. • Operation of Vocational and Education schools enhanced by supply of equipment & development of modular curricula and guidelines. • Better matching between provision of education and market demand for skilled labour force.	• Framework legislation for education is in place at state level but transposition into entity legislation varies. • Unemployment rates remain high • The employer associations are still not cooperating

CRO	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
All sectors	- Croatia prepared to become EU Member State - Administrative capacity strengthened - Inter-institutional cooperation improved	Tendering and contracting of EU assistance remains extremely slow.
KO	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Public Finance and Financial Management	- Strengthened national capacity to plan and manage EU assistance - The capacity of the Ministry of European Integration improved and the Ministry started to be involved in IPA programming and chairing donor-coordination meetings. - Border management has improved as a result of the IT system delivered under IPA 2008, as witnessed by faster border-crossing procedures (although obviously problems at the Serbian border pertain).	- Some of the concepts transferred under IPA face resistance within the Kosovar Public Administration. Corruption is still a common phenomenon - Human resource capacity in all ministries or agencies is still insufficient for a full implementation of the legislation, in both quantitative and in qualitative terms. - Although a Public Investment programme system has been installed in the Ministry of Finance, it is still, , insufficiently used as a tool for prioritising and identifying the best public investments
Socio-economic development	Speed of handling patent applications and product registrations has increased drastically; cases of illegal copying have diminished (although this still remains a problem)	- Regional development structures remain outside government institutions - Fragmentation of policy implementation poses a risk of losing impact for all capacity building efforts in the Public Administration in this sector
Human Rights	- Skills improved of the Ministry of Community and Return. - The management capacity for return of the municipalities has improved, although the problems with land allocation demonstrate that this process is not yet completed. - Drastic improvement of the livelihood of some 140 families - The school drop-out rate is already falling in the municipalities with IPA support	- The standards for maintenance and management of historical and religious sites have not yet been adopted and there is no structure in place for maintenance of the restored monuments. - A permanent Forum for Dialogue was not established. - Impact on the position of ethnic groups and individuals: returned Serbs, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian, to a limited extent vulnerable Albanians, is still modest due to the limited size of the funds versus the scale of the problem
MN	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Environment	- There is now a tariff which is cost reflective for the energy market. Law enforcement and transparency in the energy market is assured. - Improved institutional capacity to manage the area of environment towards EU accession - Beneficiary leading the negotiations on the energy chapter and developing unaided bylaws, rulebooks and market rules - Improved capacities of PRO-CON are expected to increase investments in the environment sector.	No tangible impact from the constructed sewerage system and supplied waste containers. In the first case as the sewerage system covers only part of the settlement with no waste water treatment plant and in the second as the impact is not yet realized and will depend on other conditions.

Agriculture	• The entire structure for IPARD is now being finalised and the IPARD Programme is in the process of adoption. • IPA contributed to effective inter-institutional coordination and cooperation, particularly in the veterinary and phytosanitary area. • The Law on agriculture and rural development, , was adopted in 2009, as well as some progress in legislation related to quality policy. • Immediate impacts from systematic training have already contributed to more effective legislation, produced rules and written procedures and manuals as well as programme documents. • Systems and tools have been established in the area of food safety as well as animal identification and registration and fisheries, primarily in IT and laboratory equipment. • Several laboratories in veterinary and phytosanitary sector have undergone accreditation for various analytical methods.	• Impact on the Law on Cooperatives is questionable. • Immense gaps remain stemming from a lack of knowledge of what remains to be done, by whom and in which time frame - particularly in the area of IPARD but also in fisheries. This also applies to the segment of monitoring, related to the issue of preparation of absorption capacity. • So far the expected impact of developing a fish catching sector with new investment in the restructuring and modernisation of the fleet has not been realised. The fleet has been modernized with equipment during the project but a catalytic effect from the project has not occurred.
SR	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Public Finance Management	• Internal audit capacity has been strengthened • Budget oversight generally has improved. • Support to the institutional structures of the National Bank of Serbia has made a substantial contribution to its ability to discharge its role as supervisor of the banking, insurance and pension sectors – although this could be undermined by the recent loss of independence. • The Ombudsman has strengthened its institutional structures and establishing links with other Ombudsman institutions in the EU. • The PEFA assessment improved scores in the area of revenue administration and financial supervision. • The foundations have been laid for the introduction of new customs controls that will reduce trade costs and times. • The Light Peer Review undertaken by Eurostat in 2011 noted good institutional progress of Statistical Office of Republica Srpska. • Systems and tools supported substantially the development of new types of statistics, including the Household and Agricultural census. .	• Difficulties in establishing institutional structures, both in functional inter-institutional collaboration and in the transposition of legislation reduced the impact of human resource development as training was substantially based on the legislation that was not adopted. • Comprehensive human resource development, both centrally to the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and in municipalities throughout the country structured around the National Training Strategy, will be limited by generally low capacity within municipality administrations and budgetary constraints. With 168 municipalities, IPA assistance has had to target those with most capacity. Whilst this should maximize the chances of achieving impact, it means the weakest are missed out. • Although an extensive body of draft legislation has been developed and some adopted, decentralisation is politically sensitive and momentum for further reform has slowed. The Decentralisation Strategy has not been prepared as planned. Local government are only obliged to produce waste management strategies and the extent to which other strategies and action plans will be actually used by municipalities remains unclear at this stage.

Environment	• Transposition of legislation in air pollution ensured compliance with the acquis. • Approximation of environmental legislation was enhanced. • The impact on human resources in energy sector is evident • Good institutional capacity at central level with the led to positive impact on enforcement of measures and improvement of inter-institutional cooperation, including with EU institutions and with the business. • Specific investment in air quality monitoring equipment to address local pollution problems and pollution from big combustion plants improved monitoring of air pollution. • Monitoring and reporting obligations of SEPA were enhanced through the establishment of environmental information system EIONET-RS	• In the case of the healthcare waste the impact could not be fully achieved due to inappropriate planning and the lack of a solution to financing the operation of the healthcare treatment facilities supplied. • There is so far no impact from the efforts to construct hazardous waste treatment facility due to the opposition of the location of the facility by the local population concerned. • The impact in water sector has been limited by incomplete transposition of legislation in the area and some inefficient provisions of the current Water Law. The planned impact from the reduction of point source pollution is threatened by the inability to ensure required financing for the operation of the WWTP through the water tariffs. • The support in systems and tools in the area of nature protection (NATURA 2000 network) will have limited impact until the weak institutional capacity at national level and unclear ownership of nature protection policy development and implementation are not addressed.
TUR	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
All sectors	• IPA TAIB helps to introduce modern institutional practices, compatible with European standards. • Inter-institutional co-operation between ministries has been fostered, (albeit with mixed results). Mechanisms for applying for and implementing EU funds have been introduced. • Many final beneficiaries secure additional funding for their own activities and investments • Comprehensive control systems and transparent processes, set up with IPA TAIB know-how, in the longer run will contribute to better governance at all levels. • More positive socio-economic impact will occur in the mid-term. Shorter-term socio-economic impact has resulted mostly from smaller investment into environmental protection or NGO support.	• In the main, the intended political impacts have so far not been achieved. EU-Turkey accession negotiations are progressing slowly and the risk of a so-called accession fatigue is adversely affecting wider IPA TAIB impacts.
MBP	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Institution building, Infrastructure development and regional organisations	• Publication of improved statistical data • Facilitated intra-regional trade and free movements of goods • Improved regional cooperation and cooperation with EU structures • The scale of the funding in infrastructure development available and its targeting on key needs using transparent selection processes suggests that the impact is likely to be positive	• MBP support in establishment of common tools for training in public procurement is under implementation but likely impact is uncertain due to the national focus of public procurement needs and the difficulties to replicate training or maintain networks unaided; • Studies implemented by Public Finance Management are likely improve public finance processes, however the limited scope of the assistance means that any impact will only be achieved if the results are placed at the centre of sectoral development on the national level.

T1	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Thematic Evaluation of Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime in the Western Balkans	- There have been major improvements to the fundamental institutional and organisational frameworks in the legal sector. The EU has clearly played a critical role for the individual EU accession processes to move forward. - Independence and professionalism has been enhanced with the modernisation of institutional setup.. - The legal philosophy of the judiciary has undergone a fundamental change, moving from being an instrument of state power during the Yugoslav era to becoming a key aspect of a modern state - Impartiality and efficiency of courts has been enhanced.. - Professionalism has been enhanced through the establishment of training centres that provide judges, prosecutors and others with relevant skills for a more modern and efficient judiciary. - The - at times heavy - investments in buildings and equipment have been questioned, but the European Court of Auditors (2009) notes that "although not all investment projects achieved fully satisfactory results and the sustainability is at risk, the investment ... made a relevant and useful contribution to the national infrastructure".	- The establishment of anti-corruption agencies was sometimes questioned as they may be so under-resourced they cannot work - Within the larger justice sector picture the problems of corruption and organised crime remain serious concerns. This is not least of all due to the fact that there are inter-linkages between corruption in the public sphere, driven by members of political elites, and organized crime. - Several states do not yet have operational agreements with pan-European bodies like Europol due to shortcomings in own systems, laws and controls. - In several countries, when the police are able to arrest suspects of organised crime, the justice system has often not been able (or willing) to prosecute, so more attention needs to be paid to what exactly is holding back progress in this field. The success rate in cases involving local political-criminal partnerships appears to be particularly poor.
T2	Realised or expected impact	Not realised or not possible impact
Thematic Evaluation on EU's support to Civil Society	Significant positive impact on improvement of Government-Civil Society organisations relations.	Impact and sustainability appear in a first instance to be hampered by the lack of targeted support to specific CSOs with capacity and vision to make a difference in the political transformation process of their country

These tables indicate the following **Systemic obstacles for achieving impact from EU assistance**:

- Limited scope of the EU assistance in relation to the problems to be solved
- Process of improvement is still under way: more (EU) actions are needed to achieve impact.
- Accession fatigue (Turkey, special case). More generally: as long as accession date is not clear, political commitment to accession related reforms will be low.
- Conditions for (full) impact are not in place:
 - Adoption of necessary legislation is in many countries an obstacle.
 - Limited institutional, administrative and operational capacity to follow up the EU assistance.
 - Lack of political commitment.
 - Lack of budget for follow up actions and maintenance.
 - A comprehensive human resource policy is lacking in most countries.
 - The ownership of the policy the assistance was addressed to is not clear.
 - Lack of internal cooperation between actors involved in the field addressed by the EU assistance.

Further the causes and underlying reasons for not achieving the impact have been studied in order to find the core problems and identify solutions.

The underlying reasons that prevent achievement of impact appear to be:

- Lack of appropriate legislation, administrative arrangements, inherited mentality
- No human or financial resources
- Poor economy/low salaries/no budget
- Low political significance of the institution
- No institutional framework existing
- Political recruitment/lack of merit based recruitment
- Poor ownership
- No political will/pressure to change
- Strong lobbying from powerful economic or political groups
- Lack of strategic vision
- Weak government with no enforcement powers, strong resistance from powerful economic or political groups

Table 0.5 Summary assessment of impact and causal factors

Realised impact	Limitations	Causes	Underlying reasons	Issue to address	Possible measures
Institutional Structures					
Transposition of legislation	Not always enforced	• Lack of political will	• Weak government with no enforcement powers, strong resistance from powerful economic or political groups	Ownership	Result oriented implementation
		• Lack of inter-institutional cooperation	• Lack of appropriate legislation, administrative arrangements, inherited mentality	Ownership	
		• Lack of capacity	• No human or financial resources	Ownership	
Establishment of new structures or restructuring	• Not always operate effectively • Not always sustainable	• Lack of political will	• Weak government with no enforcement powers, strong resistance from powerful economic or political groups	Ownership	
		• Lack of capacity	• No human or financial resources	Ownership	
		• Lack of financial resources	• Poor economy	Poor economy	Measures to support economic development
Human resources					
Strengthened capacity to implement operations	• Staff turnover	• Low salaries	• Poor economy	Poor economy	Measures to support economic development
	• Assistance to inappropriate staff	• Not all staff speak good EN	• No training, collaboration in the local language	• Assistance delivery approach	Assistance delivered in local languages
		• Inappropriate selection of collaborators	• No merit based recruitment/selection	• Political recruitment	?
Improved management/operational practices	• Internal resistance to change	• Lack of decision making power	• Assistance to one department of the institution (narrow problem targeting)	• Programming, Assistance delivery approach	• Target decision makers
	• No capacity to absorb the assistance and make the change	• No human, financial resources or institutional resources	• Poor economy	• Poor economy	• Measures to support economic development
			• Low political significance of the institution	• Ownership	• Result oriented implementation
			• No institutional framework existing	• No capacity building before instructional arrangements are at place	• Programming, conditionalities
Systems and tools					

Improved operations	• No proper use of systems made	• No need of systems, or no capacity or funds to use	• Poor ownership • No budget	• Programming and implementation approach	• Gradual transition toward DIS
				• Political significance	• Result oriented implementation
				• Poor economy	• Measures to support economic development
	• Lack of capacity	• No funds, high staff turnover	• Poor economy, low salaries	• Poor economy, low salaries	• Measures to support economic development
	• Lack of funds for maintenance and operation	• Inappropriate or no legislative/administrative provisions, no budget	• Economically and socially sensitive issues; no strong political will/mechanisms to be addressed; poor population/economy	• Ownership	• Result oriented implementation
				• Poor economy and population	• Measures to support economic development
	• Inefficient inter-institutional cooperation	• Inefficient legislation or enforcement of the legislation, inherited mentality	• No political will/pressure to change	• Ownership	• Result oriented implementation
Some general impact from infrastructure development– as increased tourist potential, improved conditions for socio-economic development, environment protection, energy savings, etc.	• Lack of funds for maintenance and operation	• Inappropriate or no legislative/administrative provisions, no budget	• Economically and socially sensitive issues, no strong political will/mechanisms to be addressed; poor population/economy	• Full commitment of the countries to realisation of objectives • Poor economy and population	• Result oriented implementation • Measures to support economic development
	• Inefficient inter-institutional inter-municipal cooperation	• Inefficient legislation or enforcement of the legislation, inherited mentality	• No political pressure to change	• Ownership	• Result oriented implementation
	• No need of the facility or unjustified size (large roads, harbours, waste water treatment plants)	• Overambitious objectives, political goals, economic interests and corruption	• Strong lobbying from powerful economic or political groups	• Programming approach	• Involvement of all stakeholders in programming
				• Ownership	• Result oriented implementation
				• Strong and independent judiciary system	• Support to reforms in the Judiciary • Creation of Strong Civil Society
	• No supportive measures – sewerage covering only part of the settlement, no waste water treatment plant, only part of the road rehabilitated etc.	• Narrow thinking at project not at programme/strategic level.	• Lack of strategic vision	• Programming approach	• SWAP approach

Annex 4 Methodological comparison of evaluations

This annex reviews the scope and content of the individual evaluations across the different methodologies used in the evaluation reports to determine the extent of commonalities and thus the confidence with which common conclusions can be drawn from the differing methodologies. It also assesses the quality of the individual reports and identifies those areas where conclusions may need further analysis to ensure validity.

The following evaluation reports have been taken into consideration:

- C PIE Albania, Ecorys, August 2012.
- C PIE Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ecorys, April 2013.
- C PIE Croatia, DFC Consortium, February 2012.
- C PIE Kosovo, Ecorys, March 2013.
- C PIE Montenegro, Ecorys, March 2013.
- C PIE Serbia, Ecorys, March 2013.
- CiIE Turkey, Particip, February 2012.
- IPA MBP Evaluation, Ecorys, April 2013.
- Thematic Evaluation of Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime in the Western Balkans, Berenschot and Imagos, February 2013.
- Thematic evaluation of EU's support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey, IBF International Consulting in collaboration with BAA, June 2011.

General

The evaluation reports all use the same general methodology: an assessment of the IPA assistance from the financing years 2007-2009 per country for a number of selected sectors based on a review of (a sample of) the IPA projects per sector in that country and an analysis of additional information sources: interviews with stakeholders, ROMs, expert judgment. The CPIEs for Croatia and Turkey review the total/sample of the total IPA assistance in the period 2007-2009.

The CPIEs prepared by Ecorys create a series of sector evaluations and use these as a basis where possible for the development of broader programme or country level conclusions. The Turkey and Croatia CPIEs contain a project level assessment and a programme or country level assessment which was prepared separately albeit with some links between the levels of analysis.

The two thematic evaluations included in the meta evaluation have a different approach. The Thematic Evaluation of Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime in the Western Balkans creates country reports which form the basis for a sector evaluation. The Thematic Evaluation of EU's support to Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey is mainly a sector analysis based on a document review and interviews in all countries. Unlike the CPIEs both thematic evaluations do not have an extensive evaluation of the performance of individual projects.

Evaluation questions

Although the methods used have strong similarities there are also differences. A first difference is in the formulation and level of the evaluation questions. The table below gives a summary of the evaluation questions:

Evaluation criteria	CPIE Turkey	CPIE Croatia	Other CPIEs/MBP	Thematic Evaluation Rule of Law.....	Thematic Evaluation of Civil Society
Relevance	Relevance to MIPD objectives	Relevance to Accession	<i>Not assessed explicitly</i>	Relevance to Accession	Relevance to Accession

		Priorities		Priorities	Priorities
Efficiency	Focus on absorption of funds	Focus on absorption of funds	Value for money in delivering project's outputs	Selection of interventions	Programming and selection of interventions
Effectiveness	Achieving MIPD objectives. Progress of interventions	Management of programmes	Deliverance of project's output and immediate results	<i>Not assessed explicitly</i>	Programming and selection of interventions
Impact	MIPD objectives	Immediate/ intermediate impacts across programmes	Strategic objectives linked to accession preparation	Key factors having an influence on impact	How can programming be enhanced to improve impact?
Sustainability	Monitoring structures. Immediate/ long-term sustainability	Which projects are sustainable? Prospects for IPA sustainability	Sustainability of identified project's impacts	Key factors having an influence on sustainability	How can programming be enhanced to improve sustainability?

Relevance is not explicitly assessed in the CPIE reports except for Croatia and Turkey. The evaluation questions in Turkey and Croatia are mix between the evaluation questions and what is called "judgement criteria" in the Ecorys methodology.

The CPIE reports for Turkey and Croatia have a twofold structure. The main text focuses on a rather high level: MIPDs or Accession Priorities. In the annex a detailed assessment of a set of projects per Acquis Chapter is presented as the basis for the conclusions on a higher level, although the link is not explicit.

The other CPIE reports focus the evaluation on sectors: sector analysis, IPA performance per sector, impacts per sector. However, conclusions are formulated per evaluation criterion (efficiency, effectiveness, etc) with some references to the sectors.

In the CPIEs for Turkey and Croatia there is a strong focus on the accession priorities. In the other CPIEs the link with the accession process is made through the impact analysis per sector. In the conclusions there are just a few references of the contribution to the accession process. This is because only with MNE negotiations for accession has started and the remainders do not have a strong accession agenda.

A striking difference is the focus in Turkey and Croatia on the absorption of IPA funds as part of the evaluation methodology. In the other CPIEs and the MBP there is hardly any financial assessment; not on the level of individual projects and not on the level of sectors.

Contribution to Acquis process is in principle part of the evaluation in all reports. In the Turkey and Croatia CPIEs and in the thematic evaluations there is a direct link through the chapters of the accession agreement. In the conclusions of the other CPIE reports there are only references to contributions to the acquis process.

Samples

Seven of the eight evaluations base their analysis of the performance of IPA assistance from the period 2007-2009 on a review of sets of projects:

- CPIE Albania included 14 projects which covered 25% of the eligible portfolio⁶ and 41% of the projects;
- CPIE Kosovo included 14 projects which covered 43% of the budget and 40% of the projects;

⁶ Excluding JHA and civil society.

- CPIE Bosnia Herzegovina included 20 projects which covered 18% of the budget and 27% of the projects
- CPIE Serbia included 26 projects which covered 25% of the budget and 30% of the projects;
- CPIE Montenegro included 12 projects which covered 22% of the budget and 36% of the projects;
- The MBP evaluation is based on 10 projects (24 contracts).
- In the CPIE Turkey report for each Acquis chapter a limited number of projects were selected (sampled) for a detailed assessment, leading to a total of 20 projects.
- CPIE Croatia has a full coverage of all projects (143).

Methodologically the conclusions of the CPIEs are valid for the IPA assistance in the assessed sector in a specific country. The sample base for conclusions on the total IPA assistance is small in some countries and – more importantly - most probably not properly stratified for this purpose. In hardly any of the CPIEs the issue of representativeness of the sample in scaling up the conclusions to the level of IPA assistance in a country is discussed in proper statistical terms. Only Turkey and Kosovo have a more formal description of the representativeness of the sample.

Sectors

The eight evaluations together cover a broad range of “sectors”. The six reports prepared under the Interim and Meta Evaluation contract are largely consistent in the definition of the sectors according to IPA 2011; although CPIE Bosnia Herzegovina evaluates also the IPA assistance in two *fields* (Labour Market and Social Policies) and the MBP introduces “regional organisations” as a field.

The CPIEs for Turkey and Croatia structure their impact analysis on all Acquis chapters, which of course have a link with the IPA 2011 sectors.

The table below gives an overview of the sectors covered in the reports.

Sector	Included in TUR/CRO	Included in SRB, BiH, MNE, KOS, ALB	Included in thematic evaluations
Agriculture	✓✓	✓	
Public Finance	✓✓	✓✓	
Energy	✓✓	✓	
Environment	✓✓	✓✓	
Public Administration Reform	✓	✓✓	
Quality Infrastructure	✓✓	✓	
Statistics	✓	✓✓	
Socio Economic Development	✓	✓✓	
Transport	✓	✓	
Regional Development	✓	✓✓	
Human Rights	x	✓	
Rule of Law, Judicial Reform and Fight against Corruption and Organised Crime		✓	✓
Civil Society			✓

Source: Inception report meta evaluation.

Drawing overall conclusions on the level of individual sectors in the meta evaluation will be difficult. The small overlap in the evaluated sectors between the reports - at the maximum, a sector has been reviewed in four reports (half of the total CPIEs)- and the small sets of reviewed projects in the sector analyses per country do not permit for a sector analysis over all countries.

Judgement criteria and indicators/descriptors

In the CPIEs (except for Croatia and Turkey) and the thematic evaluation concerning Civil Society there is a very detailed methodological judgment scheme: for each Evaluation Question a set of judgement criteria and related indicators/descriptors are defined. This scheme has structured and guided the assessment, but the list of

indicators/descriptors is for some of the evaluation criteria rather long and the indicators/descriptors are not explicitly linked to the judgment criteria. No indication is given of a weighting scheme in deriving overall conclusions.

The schemes and in particular the Judgment Criteria have not been used to the full extent to systematize the conclusions per Evaluation Question in all reports. In the table below an overview is given to what extent the Judgment Criteria are explicitly dealt with in the concluding sections of the reports. Please note that the CPIE Turkey and the thematic evaluation on Rule of Law etc use a different and less detailed methodology (judgement criteria are part of the Evaluation Questions). The MBP report doesn't specify judgment criteria in the sections on methodology.

The Judgment Criteria with respect to **Efficiency** (EQ 1) are explicitly dealt with in the concluding sections in all 5 reports prepared by Ecorys.. However under Efficiency in some reports judgement criteria have dealt with that in other reports have included under Effectiveness.

With respect to **Effectiveness** there are more gaps in dealing explicitly with the Judgment Criteria. In particular, not in all 5 reports was the criterion on uptake by beneficiaries explicitly dealt with.

Under **Impact** (EQ 3) all 5 reports prepared by Ecorys deal with the criterion about visibility of the IPA assistance. With respect to the other criteria there are gaps.

All reports prepared by Ecorys deal with **Additional Impacts**, but not systematically with the criteria about positive or negative impact. It seems that the difference between additional impacts and indirect impacts was not clear.

Almost all 5 reports prepared by Ecorys follow the judgement criteria on **Sustainability** systematically. Only the conclusions on Sustainability in the Montenegro CPIE are differently structured.

Elements hampering impact and sustainability have been listed a concluding way in only 2 reports. The other reports mention these factors in the recommendations.

Conclusions

The sector analyses in the annexes of the Turkey and Croatia CPIE reports match largely with the sector analysis of our CPIEs although there are differences in the judgement criteria used. The overall conclusions for Turkey and Croatia are on a much higher level than in the other CPIEs and will not provide comparable conclusions.

The conclusions of the thematic evaluations match with the more systemic CPIE conclusions as they have strong focus on the programming and project selection process.

Contribution to Acquis is in principle part of the evaluation in all reports. In the Turkey and Croatia CPIEs and in the thematic evaluation there is a direct link through the chapters of the accession agreement. In the conclusions of the other CPIE reports there are only a few references to contributions to the Acquis process.

The CPIEs for Turkey and Croatia pay attention to the absorption of IPA funds. In the other reports there is hardly any financial assessment.

In the meta analysis the general systemic conclusions for total IPA are based on the performance of a combined sample of 248 projects. This sample is rather small and not stratified for this purpose. There will be a need for additional evidence to underpin the systemic conclusions.

Drawing overall conclusions on the level of individual sectors in the meta evaluation will be difficult. The small overlap in the evaluated sectors between the reports - at the maximum, a sector has been reviewed in four reports (half of the total reports)- and the small sets of reviewed projects in the sector analyses per country do not permit for a sector analysis over all countries.

However, it would be interesting to check if the judgements about impact and sustainability are correlated with the type/characteristics of the sectors. The reports give the impression that in more "technical" sectors like statistics

or quality standards it is more likely that there is a (sustainable) impact than in the more “political sensitive” sectors like Public Administration Reform or Public Finance. This perhaps has also to do with differences in absorption capacity. In the technical sector the beneficiaries are mostly agencies, sometimes recently established.

The judgment criteria have in most cases a direct link to systemic aspects of IPA assistance, but the fact that the judgement criteria have not been used in the same way in all CPIEs makes the Meta evaluation more complicated.

The overall conclusion is that the methodologies used in the evaluations are too a large extent comparable and form a sound basis for a Meta-analysis.

Judgement criteria	AL	B&H	HR	MN	KO	SR	TR	MBP
EQ I To what extent are interventions financed under IPA <u>efficient</u> in terms of value for money when delivering outputs and immediate results?								
The assistance has delivered the planned outputs and achieved project objectives in the most cost effective manner.	x	x	NA	x	-	x	NA	NA
Planned outputs were normally delivered within the foreseen timespan	x ⁷	x ⁸	NA	x	x	x	NA	NA
Procedures for programming and supervision are transparent and promote efficiency	x	x	NA	-	x	x	NA	NA
IPA interventions normally do not result in excessive administrative burden for the beneficiary organisations	x ⁹	x ¹⁰	NA	x	x	x	NA	NA
Budget and timelines for the majority of interventions were realistic	x	x	NA	-	x	x	NA	NA
Generally a good mix of financial sources (incl. non-EU sources like IFIs etc.) was applied	x	x	NA	x	x	x	NA	NA
EQ II To what extent are interventions financed under IPA <u>effective</u> in delivering outputs and immediate results?								
The assistance was effective with the planned outputs delivered, at the appropriate quality level	x	x	NA	+/-	x	x	NA	NA
Normally, appropriate service providers or twinning partners have been selected	x ¹¹	x	NA	x	x ¹²	-	NA	NA
Procedures for programming and supervision are pro-active and promote quality and effectiveness	x	x	NA	-	x	x	NA	NA
Generally, outputs were relevant for the beneficiary organisations	x	x	NA	x	-	x	NA	NA
Generally, outputs have been taken up/used by the beneficiary organisations	-	x	NA	-	-	x	NA	NA
EQ III Are the outputs and immediate results delivered by IPA translated into the desired/expected <u>impacts</u>, namely in terms of achieving the strategic objectives/priorities linked to accession preparation? Are/can impacts be sufficiently identified/quantified								
The assistance provided under the IPA is making, or can be expected to make, a visible contribution to the	x	x	NA	x	x	x	NA	NA

⁷ Under Effectiveness.

⁸ Under Effectiveness.

⁹ Under Effectiveness.

¹⁰ Under Effectiveness.

¹¹ Under Efficiency.

¹² Under Efficiency.

Judgement criteria	AL	B&H	HR	MN	KO	SR	TR	MBP
institution building objectives of the NPAA								
All interventions fit logically into the wider objectives of IPA.	x	x	NA	-	-	x	NA	NA
Generally, outputs have been taken up by the beneficiary organisations	x	x	NA	-	x	x	NA	NA
Generally, the objectives of the programme have been met	-	x	NA	-	-	-	NA	NA
EQ IV Are there any <u>additional impacts</u> (both positive and negative)?								
Unplanned impacts are identified in the interventions	x	x	NA	x	x	x	NA	NA
There have been unplanned indirect positive effects of the interventions, which significantly augment the impact of IPA.	x	x	NA	-	-	-	NA	NA
There have been unplanned indirect negative effects of the interventions, which significantly take away from the impact of IPA.	x	x	NA	-	-	-	NA	NA
In hindsight, could these effects have been anticipated?	-	x	NA	-	-	-	NA	NA
EQ V Are the identified impacts <u>sustainable</u>?								
Long term institutional capacity building impacts will be sustained as they are a pre-requisite for membership of the European Union.	x	x	NA	?	x	x	NA	NA
Beneficiary budget is sufficient to sustain the effects.	x	x	NA	?	x	x	NA	NA
Beneficiary organisations are able to retain human resources necessary to implement the results of the IPA interventions	x	x	NA	?	-	x	NA	NA
IPA enabled effects are logically embedded in beneficiary (new) structures.	x	x	NA	?	x	x	NA	NA
EQ VI Are there any elements which could hamper the impact and/or sustainability of the assistance?								
There are (no) systemic issues which reduce the impact or sustainability of assistance.	x	-	NA	-	x	-	NA	NA

Judgement criteria	AL	B&H	HR	MN	KO	SR	TR	MBP
There are (no) embedded defects in the system in the partner country and/or beneficiary organisations which prevent adoption of the outputs of IPA interventions, e.g. excessive lack of staff, brain drain or lack of political will (either government or parliament) to adopt the changes)	x	-	NA	-	x	-	NA	NA



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