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on the ex post evaluation of the "Prevention and fight against crime" 2007-2013 programme (ISEC)

Accompanying the document

Report from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

ex post evaluation for the period 2007 to 2013 of the "Prevention and fight against crime" programme (ISEC) and the "Prevention, preparadness and consequence management of terrorism and other security related risks" programme (CIPS)

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1 INTRODUCTION

The "Prevention and Fight against Crime" 2007-2013 programme (ISEC) was established for the period 2007 to 2013 by Council Decision No 2007/125/JHA[1] as part of the Framework Programme on Security and Safeguarding Liberties 2007-2013 (SSL). Its total allocated budget amounted to EUR 522 million for the whole period. The other component of this Framework Programme is the "Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security-Related Risks (CIPS)", which is covered in a separate report.

In the context of the growing professionalisation and internationalisation of criminal networks and activity and the evolution of existing security threats, the ISEC programme aimed to prevent and combat *all* forms of crime at EU level, including in particular terrorism, trafficking in human beings and offences against children, illicit drug and arms trafficking, corruption and fraud and to contribute to the development of the policies of the Union.

The legal basis of the ISEC programme required the Commission to submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions the following evaluations reports:

- An annual presentation on the implementation of the Programme.[2]
- An interim evaluation report on the results obtained and the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the implementation of the Programme by 31 March 2010.[3]
- A communication on the continuation of the Programme by 31 December 2010.[4]
- An *ex post* evaluation for the period 2007 to 2013 on the implementation of actions co-financed by the Fund[5] by 31 December 2015. Due to the internal re-organisation of DG HOME, the reporting on this ex post evaluation was delayed to 2018. The present staff working document therefore reports on this *ex post* evaluation covering the evaluation of the 2007 to 2013 Annual Work Programmes (AWPs) implemented in the participating Member States, based on the findings of an ex

1 OJ L 58, 24.2.2007, p. 7–12.

2 The State of play of the AWPs was presented at ISEC Committee meetings twice a year.

3 See European Commission (2010) Evaluation of 'Prevention and Fight against Crime' and 'Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security Related Risks' Programs - JLS/2010/ISEC-CIPS/001-F4. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/evaluation/search/results.do?fileId=136471.

4 See European Commission (2011) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the Mid Term Evaluation of the Framework Programme "Security and Safeguarding Liberties" (2007-2013). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/financing/fundings/pdf/com2011-318_final_16062011_en.pdf .

5 Article 14(4) of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing, as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management and repealing the Council Decision No. 2007/125/JHA.

post evaluation study carried out by an external consulting firm and building up on the previous evaluations mentioned above.[6]

The *ex post* evaluation assessed the ISEC programme in light of its relevance (whether its objectives matched with societal needs), effectiveness (to what extent objectives have been achieved), efficiency (to what extent costs were proportionate to the achieved benefits), coherence between the actions financed by the instrument as well as the added value of intervening at EU level.

The interim evaluation of the Internal Security Fund (ISF)[7], its Police component being the successor of the ISEC and CIPS programmes for the period 2014-2020, takes into account the findings and conclusions formulated by this evaluation, assessing what has been implemented already under ISF-Police and what needs to be further addressed in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020. The interim evaluation of ISF is due in 2018[8]. The Commission will submit an interim evaluation report of ISF by 30 June 2018 to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The results of the interim evaluation together with the results of the present ex-post evaluation will contribute to the shaping of the future policies in migration and security area, especially to the preparation of the new funding instruments in the MFF post 2020.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIATIVE

2.1 POLICY CONTEXT

The rationale behind setting up the ISEC programme was to develop necessary measures to *"prevent, detect, investigate, and prosecute all forms of crime efficiently and effectively, most particularly in cases with a trans-border element"*.[9] The foundation for Council Decision 2007/125/JHA establishing ISEC was provided within the three pillar structure of the Treaty of Maastricht[10], which includes competences around preventing and combating crime, organised or otherwise.

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6 Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Croatia as of 2013.

7 Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 laying down the general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combatting crime, and crisis management, OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 112–142.

8 Regulation (EU) No 514/2014, Article 57. Part of the interim evaluation is the mid-term review of the ISF national programmes of the Member States (Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, Article 8) which takes place in 2017 and 2018. The purpose of the mid-term review exercise is for the Commission and the Member States to review their national programmes and assess the need for a possible revision of the programme, in light of developments in Union and national policies through a questionnaire and bilateral dialogues with the Member States. In addition, if the need arises, the results of the mid-term review of the national programmes may support requests for additional funding made by the Commission to the budgetary authorities for the remaining implementation period.

9 Council Decision 2007/125/JHA.

10 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:xy0026

Several legal, practical and policy developments introduced before 2007 had an influence on the adoption of ISEC. A predecessor of ISEC was the **Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (AGIS)** framework programme established by Council Decision 2002/630/JHA.[11] Its main aim was to strengthen Member State cooperation between the police, other law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. AGIS covered the period 2002-2006 and supported practitioners in contributing to the development of EU policy in this area.

In November 2004, the European Council, building on the conclusions of the Tampere European Council 1999, reaffirmed its promotion of freedom, security and justice through the prevention of and fight against crime. This led to the development of the Hague Programme (2004-2009), focusing on strengthening security in the EU. Of particular relevance to the ISEC programme are two of the specific aims of the Hague Programme:

- defining a balanced approach to migration and fighting trafficking in human beings and;
- developing a strategic concept on tackling organised crime and guaranteeing the right balance between privacy and security while sharing information.

The subsequent Stockholm Programme and Action Plan (2010-2015), called for the development of an EU Internal Security Strategy, underlying the need to fight cross-border crimes such as trafficking in human beings, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, cybercrime, corruption, counterfeiting and piracy and illicit drugs. The financial support provided under ISEC covered indeed these areas of intervention. This support, along with the abovementioned EU policy developments, underlines the increasing importance of the Union's policies in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice, with the Lisbon Treaty and with the guidance provided by the Stockholm Programme and its Action Plan.

On 22 November 2010, the Commission issued the Communication titled *The EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe*, which proposed over the next four years, five strategic objectives for internal security and concrete actions. This Communication oriented the priorities for financial support provided by the Union within the framework of ISEC and CIPS programmes.

2.2 BASELINE

At the beginning of the ISEC period, there was no common EU policy on the prevention and fight against crime and existing cooperation in this area took place in the form of inter-governmental cooperation between Member States. ISEC thus covered a wide scope of policy areas, leaving cooperation possibilities open for Member States as a way to foster closer cooperation the areas of trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking, cybercrime, economic and organised crime, corruption, law enforcement cooperation, child sexual abuse, radicalisation, arms trade and trafficking. The following sub-sections provide an outline of key policy developments in the different thematic areas covered by the ISEC Programme.

[11] 2002/630/JHA: Council Decision of 22 July 2002 establishing a framework programme on police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters (AGIS), http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32002D0630

Trafficking in human beings

According to Europol, human beings are trafficked by organised criminal groups (OCGs) mainly to serve illegal labour and sex markets[12].

There was an overall upward trend in the number of victims of human trafficking registered with police, NGOs and other agencies over the ISEC period in the EU. According to Eurostat data, the number of identified and presumed victims of human trafficking increased by 18 % between 2008 and 2010, with a total of 6 309 reported by EU Member States in 2008, 6 955 in 2009 and 7 410 in 2010[13]. However, trends across Member States have varied.

At European level, focus on human trafficking was high. Indeed, during the years of the implementation of ISEC, there were two main policy developments:

- Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims**,** and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA.[14]
- The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016.[15]

The Directive and the Strategy fit in the wider global action against trafficking in human beings to which the EU is committed. In 2009, the Council approved the Action-Oriented Paper on strengthening the EU external dimension on action against trafficking in human beings[16]. The EU is committed to strengthening coordinated action amongst Member States. The aim is also to act in countries of origin and transit of victims and to raise awareness, reduce vulnerability, support and assist victims, fight the root causes of trafficking and support those third countries in developing appropriate anti-trafficking legislation (Directive 2011/36/EU (2)).

Drug trafficking

Drug trafficking is considered by Europol as the most dynamic crime area, with trafficking routes continuously diversifying. Heroin, cannabis, cocaine and synthetic drugs are the types that are most commonly illegally trafficked and consumed in the European Union[17]. Cannabis is the most frequently consumed drug in the EU, with Cocaine being the second[18]. Due to unlikely decrease in consumption, high profits and low risks, many

12 Europol, SOCTA 2013. Available at https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta

13 Based on the available data from 24 EU Member States, excluding Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom for which data was missing. Source: https://emnbelgium.be/sites/default/files/publications/20130415_thb_stats_report_en.pdf.

14 https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/directive_thb_l_101_15_april_2011_1.pdf

15 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0286:EN:NOT

16 https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/eu-policy/action-oriented-paper-strengthening-eu-external-dimension-against-trafficking-human-beings_en

17 Op.cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta

18 Op.cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta

Organised Criminal Groups (OCGs) are shifting from heroin and cocaine trafficking to cannabis[19].

Some Member States registered a slight decrease in consumption between 2007 and 2013, but the market appears to have stabilised[20].

Synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS) have also increasingly become a challenge for European law enforcement authorities. In 2012, 70 psychoactive substances emerged with NPS being increasingly sold on the Internet[21]. The high profitability and continuous expansion of this market is likely to turn competition between OCGs more and more violent[22].

In terms of policy developments during or right after the period under evaluation, the EU published the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 and the Action Plan 2013-2016[23], of which a progress report was published in 2015[24]. The aim of both the Strategy and of the Action Plan is to offer a platform for coordination among Member States and to promote an EU approach. The Strategy focuses around three areas: drug markets, health and social issues and evidence-based decision making.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime can include several crimes conducted through the Internet. According to Europol's definition, cybercrime comprises of both 'specific' cybercrime offences such as hacking, phishing and malware, as well as internet-enabled fraud[25]. Phishing is a constantly growing threat in the EU, used to gather information directly from unaware victims as well as to install malwares in people's devices (e.g. asking them to follow a link). There has also been a growing trend towards the hacking of service providers as opposed to single users as a more efficient way to gather quickly large amounts of sensitive data used consequently to carry out frauds. Finally, payment card fraud generates an annual income of around EUR 1.5 billion for OCGs in the EU, having caused substantial losses to the EU economy[26].

The beginning of the ISEC programme coincided with the outburst of social media at global level (Facebook, YouTube and later Twitter and LinkedIn). As a consequence of this boom, new opportunities were created for organised crime causing additional challenges for law enforcement agencies. Indeed, nowadays a significant share of the funding invested in security goes to the ICT (Information and Communications Technology) field[27].

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19 Op.cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta
20 Op.cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta
21 Op.cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta
22 Op.cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta
23 http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_212356_EN_EMCDDA_POD_2013_New%20EU%20drugs%20strategy.pdf
24 https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/docs/drugs_strategy_report_en.pdf
25 Op. cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta
26 Ibidem.
27 Second expert workshop organised for this evaluation, ICF S.A. offices, Brussels, 6th of March 2017.

One third of European citizens do not trust the internet for banking or payment services[28]. In this context and given the increasing rate of cybercrime against both individuals and private sectors, the EU adopted a Cybersecurity Strategy in 2013[29]. In the same year, the EU adopted a Directive on attacks against information systems[30] which required Member States to strengthen national cyber-crime laws and introduce tougher criminal sanctions. The 2013 Cybersecurity Strategy consists of five strategic priorities: to achieve cyber resilience, reduce cybercrime, develop cyber defence policy and capabilities, develop industrial and technological resources for cybersecurity and establish a coherent international cyberspace policy.

Economic and financial crime

Economic and financial crimes include fraud and money laundering. Fraud is a broad category covering also poor business practices such as reckless investment, misrepresentation of financial statements and conspiring to manipulate inter-bank interest rates[31]. The most common economic fraud is value-added tax (VAT) fraud which causes a loss of VAT revenue. At EU level, the VAT fraud which takes advantage of movement of goods between different jurisdictions is known as the missing trader intra community (MTIC) fraud. MTIC is a widespread criminal offence affecting many EU Member States and perpetrated from both inside and outside the EU. It deprives Member States of tax revenue required to make investments, maintain public sector services and service sovereign debt. The loss of VAT revenue due to MTIC fraudulent transactions is estimated at between EUR 45 and 53 billion[32]. Advance Fee Fraud and Money laundering are the other most common economic crimes. It is estimated that the sum of money laundered globally amounts to between 2% and 5% of global GDP each year[33]. The difficulties linked to international cooperation in investigations, differences in legislation and lack of awareness against economic and financial frauds make detection of Advance Fee Fraud generally low[34].

At the EU level, there was no evident policy development in this area during of the implementation period of the ISEC Programme and thus the main legislative instrument remains Directive 2005/60/EC (October 2005) on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing[35]. The Directive was adopted in the context of the need to adjust previous legislation (Council Directive

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28 2012 Special Eurobarometer 390 on Cybersecurity.

29 JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union: An Open, Safe and Secure Cyberspace. 2013. Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013JC0001.

30 DIRECTIVE 2013/40/EU OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 12 August 2013 on attacks against information systems and replacing Council Framework Decision 2005/222/JHA. Available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2013:218:0008:0014:EN:PDF

31 Op. cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta

32 Final Report of 30 June 2015, TAXUD/2013/DE/319, page 17. Available at https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/sites/taxation/files/docs/body/ey_study_destination_principle.pdf

33 Op. cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta.

34 Ibidem.

35 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:309:0015:0036:EN:PDF

91/308/EEC (June 1991)) to the newly created international scenarios such as the use of the financial system and money laundering for terrorist financing.

Corruption

Although Member States have developed over time the necessary legal instruments in place to prevent and fight corruption, the EU anti-corruption Report of 2014 found that results delivered by these instruments are not satisfactory across the EU[36]. Some of the issues mentioned include anti-corruption rules not always being vigorously enforced, the persistence of systemic problems and a lack of sufficient capacity for the relevant institutions to enforce the rules in this area.

An "anti-corruption package" is in place since 2011 which aims to shape EU policies in the fight against corruption. It includes a Communication in Fighting Corruption in the EU[37] and a Commission Decision establishing an EU-anti corruption reporting mechanism[38]. The legislation now in place at EU level is the Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA of 22 July 2003 on combating corruption in the private sector[39], which aims to establish passive and active corruption as criminal offences in all Member States and to ensure that penalties are effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

Law enforcement cooperation

With the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon and the abolition of the 'pillar structure', the EU gained more resources to promote police cooperation[40]. Cooperation and policies are still developing, with attention focused on countering pan-EU threats and crime more effectively and doing so in compliance with fundamental rights and data protection rules.

Two important legislative instruments in place to facilitate law enforcement cooperation are: the Council Decision 2008/615/JHA on the stepping up of cross-border cooperation, particularly in combating terrorism and cross-border crime (the so called Prüm Decision) and the Council Framework Decision 2006/960/JHA on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities of the Member States of the EU. While the latter sets up the rules for Member States' law enforcement authorities to exchange existing information for the purposes of criminal investigations, Council Decision 2008/615/JHA aims to improve the exchanges of information between the authorities responsible for the prevention and investigation of criminal offences. The decision sets out provisions with regard to:

- the automated access to DNA profiles, dactyloscopic data and certain national vehicle registration data;

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36 European Commission, EU anti-corruption Report, 2014, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/corruption/docs/acr_2014_en.pdf .

37 https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/news/intro/docs/110606/308/1_en_act_part1_v121.pdf

38 https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-is-new/news/pdf/com_decision_c%282011%29_3673_final_en.pdf

39 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003F0568&from=EN.

40 European Parliament, Fact sheets on the European Union, Police Cooperation, September 2016, available at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.12.7.html.

- supply of data in relation to major events;
- supply of information in order to prevent terrorist offences;
- other measures for stepping up cross-border police cooperation.

At operational level, the main instrument for cooperation is Europol, which is central to the broader European internal security architecture. Since 1 January 2010, Europol has been an EU agency financed from the EU budget. Europol has been at the forefront of the EU law enforcement response to emerging threats: in January 2013 the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) was established, which is responsible, inter alia, for the Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (iOCTA). The Council expanded Europol's counterterrorism mandate further with the launch, on 1 January 2016, of the new European Counter-Terrorism Centre, to which Member State counterterrorism experts are seconded to boost cross-border investigation capacity. Lastly, founded in 2000, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) is responsible for training law enforcement officials.

Child sexual abuse

According to Europol, the amount of video material depicting child sexual abuse available online increases steadily, also, due to innovations in video sharing technology[41], making new material most likely to be exchanged in non-commercial environments. The threat of online child sexual exploitation is expected to increase in the coming years corresponding with higher levels of demand for new child abusive material and continued technological developments[42]. This crime has serious consequences on the young victims, leading to lasting mental issues and even suicide.

There is no available data on this topic covering the implementation period of ISEC (2007-2013), given that reporting of this issue through the 'Threat Assessment from the Global Alliance Against Child Sexual Abuse Online' only began in 2015. The Alliance is a joint EU-US initiative launched in December 2012. The 54 participating countries committed to four targets: better identification of and assistance to victims; more efforts to investigate cases of child sexual abuse and prosecute offenders; increased awareness among families and communities and reduction of availability of child pornography materials.

During the ISEC implementation period, one legislative instrument was adopted in 2011 at EU level covering this crime area, Directive 2011/92/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (replacing Council Framework Decision 2004/68/JHA)[43]. The aims of the Directive are to establish minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the area of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, child pornography and solicitation of children for sexual purposes; to introduce provisions to strengthen the prevention of those crimes and protect victims.

Radicalisation

41 Op. cit., https://www.europol.europa.eu/content/eu-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta
42 Ibidem.
43 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32011L0093

Terrorists and violent extremists have improved their use of the Internet and social media for communication, planning terrorist attacks, targeting, recruiting, training and propaganda[44]. Many experts have also described the process of self-radicalisation among EU nationals[45]. Countering radicalisation is high on the Member State and EU agendas, in particular given the most recent terrorist attacks that have taken place on European soil.

At EU level, there were policy developments, during and after the evaluation period, which targeted radicalisation. The first pillar of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy[46] (2005) explicitly focused on the prevention of radicalisation by tackling the factors that lead to radicalisation and violent extremism. Followed by the Internal Security Strategy, the Radicalisation Awareness Network was created in 2011 on that basis[47]. In 2014, the EU revised its Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism.[48] The revised Strategy was adopted in recognition of the fact that radicalisation and terrorism are constantly evolving phenomena and, as a consequence, the priorities and approach of the EU in this area need to be constantly updated.

Arms trade and trafficking

It is difficult to discern a pattern in relation to the trafficking of firearms due to insufficient availability of data. Available data for a handful a Member States suggest that firearms trafficking figures in recent years have remained stable.

It is also difficult to detect a trend in the number of deaths caused annually by firearms. Data is only available for all 28 Member States for the years 2007-2010, and a clear pattern cannot be discerned for this data. The total number of deaths recorded in the EU seems to decrease over time but this may likely be a reflection of the absence of data than a trend.

The main legislative instruments dealing with arms trade and trafficking at the EU level are Directive 91/477 (amended by Directive 2008/51) and Regulation 258/2012. Directive 91/477 introduced a number of provisions regarding both the possession and transfer of arms and their transportation. The objective was to facilitate the free movement of goods while ensuring a certain level of protection against cross-border crime and terrorism. Directive 2008/51 amending Directive 91/477[49] was adopted on 21 of May 2008 and introduced a number of changes in the EU main legislative instrument dealing with arms possession and transfer.

The main amendments introduced related to the innovative elements that the UN Protocol on the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts, components and ammunition, signed on behalf of the EU by the Commission in 2002, added to the EU regime. These innovative elements included the introduction of a marking system, an explicit penalisation of offences related to illicit arms trafficking, and the definition of reactivation of deactivated arms. Together with an implementation report, the Commission

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44 Europol, EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Report (Te-Sat), 2014, https://www.europol.europa.eu/activities-services/main-reports/te-sat-2014-eu-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report.

45 Ibidem.

46 http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204

47 The first year of the RAN was funded under ISEC procurement after which it was funded through a separate DG HOME funds outside the ISEC Programme.

48 http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9956-2014-INIT/en/pdf

49 OJ L 179, 8.7.2008, p. 5–11.

also presented a proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons in 2015.[50]

2.3 THE ISEC PROGRAMME AS FUNDING INSTRUMENT

The ISEC programme aimed to prevent and combat *all* forms of crime at EU level, including in particular terrorism, trafficking in human beings and offences against children, illicit drug and arms trafficking, corruption and fraud and to contribute to the development of the policies of the Union. To achieve this, it sought to contribute to the following **general objectives**[51]:

1. The Programme shall contribute to a high level of security for citizens by preventing and combating crime, organised or otherwise, in particular terrorism, trafficking in persons and offences against children, illicit drug trafficking and illicit arms trafficking, corruption and fraud.
2. Without prejudice to the objectives and powers of the European Community, the general objectives of the Programme contribute to the development of the policies of the Union and of the Community.

Further to these general objectives were the following **specific objectives**[52], all four of which were linked to each of the general objectives and provided operational guidance to the implementation of the ISEC programme:

(a) To stimulate, promote and develop horizontal methods and tools necessary for strategically preventing and fighting crime and guaranteeing security and public order such as the work carried out in the European Union Crime Prevention Network, public-private partnerships, best practices in crime prevention, comparable statistics, applied criminology and an enhanced approach towards young offenders;

(b) To promote and develop coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding among law enforcement agencies, other national authorities and related Union bodies in respect of the priorities identified by the Council in particular as set out by the Europol's Organised Crime Threat Assessment;

(c) To promote and develop best practices for the protection and support witnesses; and

(d) To promote and develop best practices for the protection of crime victims.

The programme aimed to contribute to the abovementioned objectives within **four themes**[53]:

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50 https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2015/EN/1-2015-750-EN-F1-1.PDF
51 These are defined under Article 2 of Decision No 2007/125/JHA.
52 These are defined under Article 3(2) of Decision No 2007/125/JHA.
53 These are defined under Article 3(1) of Decision No 2007/125/JHA.

(a) Crime prevention and criminology;
(b) Law enforcement;
(c) Protection and support to witnesses;
(d) Protection of victims.

These themes focus the intervention by grouping the policy areas covered by the programme into four main strands, each of which were in turn linked to one or several of the abovementioned specific objectives. In addition, several thematic areas covered by the projects implemented under the ISEC programme were identified; these are discussed in section 6.

Implementation through Direct Management

The ISEC programme has been implemented via actions under the 2007-2013 AWPs, under direct management mode via projects supported by grants (representing 85% of total funding committed), or via contracts for services concluded following calls for tenders or administrative arrangements with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) (representing 15% of total funding committed).

Under direct management, the European Commission retained full responsibility for implementation and carried out all programming and operational work. Political priorities and objectives for projects were defined in the AWPs adopted each year, and calls for proposals launched following the approval of each AWP. Member States were involved in the approval of AWPs, but they were not involved in the management of the Programme.

Whilst the ISEC's objectives were 'fixed' in the founding legislation[54], the AWPs set the Programme priorities and sub-priorities and could be revised on a yearly basis. This allowed the Programme a degree of flexibility when adapting to changing needs. The process of setting annual priorities in the AWPs was carried out in regular consultation with the Member States and through an inter-service Committee with the involvement of relevant policy units from the Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs. Through a comitology procedure, Member States received a draft of the AWP and were invited to provide their comments. Following incorporation of these comments, the final version of the AWPs was adopted via a Decision.

Funding was provided largely through action grants awarded on the basis of calls for proposals. Three types of grants were used, namely:

(i) action grants to co-finance specific initiatives awarded through general and targeted open calls for proposals (CFP), representing 73% of funding provided through grants;

(ii) action grants awarded through restricted CFP reserved to public sector entities with whom 'framework partnership agreements' (FPA) have been established, representing 23% of funding provided through grants; and

(iii) operating grants aimed at supporting the activities of NGOs with a European dimension, representing 4% of funding provided through grants.

[54] Council Decision 2007/125/JHA, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:058:0007:0012:EN:PDF

Other funding channels included public procurement contracts, involving open calls for tenders and administrative arrangements with the JRC. EU Agencies, funded by an EU subsidy, were not entitled to apply under ISEC for the activities they are responsible for, as that would constitute double funding. However, EUROPOL became an EU Agency only on 1 January 2010. Before that, being another type of legal entity (inter-governmental), it was indeed funded to carry out a number of projects. However, EU Agencies could participate in projects, provided that they paid for their own costs.

According to Article 5 of Decision No 2007/125/JHA, the **types of actors who could apply for ISEC funding** included law enforcement agencies, other public and/or private bodies, actors and institutions, including local, regional and national authorities, social partners, universities, statistical offices, NGOs, public-private partnerships and relevant international bodies.

According to Article 4(2) of Decision No 2007/125/JHA, **the types of actions eligible for financial support from ISEC were**:

a) Actions improving operational cooperation and coordination (strengthening networking, mutual confidence and understanding, exchange and dissemination of information, experience and best practices);

b) Analytical, monitoring and evaluation activities;

c) Development and transfer of technology and methodology;

d) Training, exchange of staff and experts;

e) Awareness and dissemination activities.

Overview of Main Characteristics of the Grants

From a sample of 151 projects selected for in-depth analysis, the vast majority (108, representing 72%) were transnational, if they included at least one partner organisation based in a different Member State to the coordinating organisation[55] while only a small share were national (43, representing 28%). Overall, the average number of organisations involved in a project was five[56].

A more in-depth analysis of the geographical dimension of transnational partnerships in the sample (for 108 projects, as mentioned above) highlighted that coordinating organisations located in one Member State which established multiple partnerships tended to do so in different countries.[57] This indicates that when there were opportunities to initiate a large number of partnerships, coordinating organisations did tend to make these partnerships as diverse as possible. Such opportunities are likely linked to a number of other factors such

[55] Additionally, one project – coordinated by Europol – was classed as transnational as it was coordinated by a trans-European organisation.

[56] It should be highlighted that the majority of national projects in the sample concerned single organisations whereas transnational projects included an average of seven organisations.

[57] For example, the Netherlands established 96 partnerships with organisations located in 22 different Member States for only 14 transnational projects.

as funding, or the number of projects coordinated altogether by organisations from a specific country. In this case, for organisations in countries such as Italy, where the highest number of coordinating organisations were located, more partnerships were established with a number of coordinating organisations in different Member States, compared to organisations located in countries which coordinated fewer projects.

A salient trend was that coordinating organisations appear to partner up with a coordinating organisation in a neighbouring or a Member State belonging to the same geographical category[58]. As a result, coordinating organisations located in newer Member States (i.e. EU-13) were more likely to partner up with a coordinating organisation in another EU-13 country than a Western European, Southern European or Nordic Member State. Similarly, the number of partner organisations located in Nordic Member States taking part in projects was higher when the project was coordinated by another Nordic country, compared to when coordinated by a Southern European or EU-13 Member State.

Regarding the geographical distribution of national projects, Italy coordinated the largest number of national projects (9)[59] followed by the UK (4). Overall, 20 Member States coordinated at least one national project.

No clear association could be established between the type of call for proposals or thematic focus and partnership size. However, it is interesting to note that for the following thematic areas, no single size partnerships occurred (for those thematic areas which had at least five projects in the sample): trafficking of human beings, child sexual abuse and forensics.

3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation was planned and tendered before the Better Regulation Guidelines were adopted on 19 May 2015, but still covered all the five key evaluation criteria required by the Guidelines i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value. To assess these criteria, the evaluation reviewed the 10 questions that are included in Annex 4.

4 METHOD

The evaluation relies on an external study carried out between August 2016 and August 2017 by a consulting firm specialised in evaluation. The study's methodology combined desk research, and both qualitative and quantitative analysis. It required a systemic

[58] For the purpose of this analysis, Member States were categorised into: the EU-13 (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia); Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, United Kingdom); Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain); and, Nordic Europe (Denmark, Finland and Sweden).

[59] This is consistent with an overrepresentation identified in the evaluation of coordinating organisations located in Italy within the whole Programme.

synthesis of the evidence regarding the implementation of the ISEC Programme. Information was drawn mainly from various primary and secondary sources, such as:

- **Primary sources:** three online surveys (coordinating organisations, partner organisations and project participants); stakeholder targeted consultations; thematic case studies (8); public consultation; expert workshops (2) and expert input.
- **Secondary sources:** quantitative data on all ISEC projects provided by the Commission; in-depth analysis of a sample of projects (151 projects, representing 27% of all 568 finalised projects); a literature review of EU policy baseline and context and a literature review of national baseline and context.

A more detailed overview of the methodology used for the evaluation study may be found in Annex 3.

Information was triangulated when possible to ensure validity and robustness. Findings from the study are presented in this report together with the financial data extracted from ABAC[60].

5 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation process encountered a number of difficulties that induced methodological limitations (for more details on the methodology see Annex 3).

The lack of a baseline

The first key obstacle encountered in the evaluation was the fact that establishing a baseline for measuring either organised crime or the volume of crime levels across the EU is difficult. In terms of organised crime, there are no established methodologies for measuring in a comprehensive manner most illegal markets or activities covered by actions funded via ISEC. Similarly, the statistical information gathered on the volume of crime at EU level covers solely a few types of crimes (e.g. homicides, car-theft and robberies), and does not cover unreported crime. It has also proven very difficult to make EU-wide comparisons due to differences in criminal justice systems, definitions and practices. These difficulties made it problematic and indeed not possible to establish a common EU baseline. As a mitigation measure, during the inception phase of the evaluation, external evaluators were asked to develop a set of indicators with a view to mapping as far as possible the national and EU context with regard to the different thematic areas covered by ISEC and to identify trends in these data before, during and after the programming period. However, the evaluators encountered significant data issues when trying to populate the indicators and it was agreed that due to the lack of comparable data, this information would only be used for illustrative purposes. For this reason, a detailed overview of the EU policy developments in the thematic areas covered by the ISEC Programme over the period 2007-2013 was developed instead, as presented in Section 2.1.

Furthermore, an inherent difficulty when measuring the extent to which ISEC helped to improve the management of crime – and thus to establishing causal relations between

[60] ABAC is the Commission's accrual-based online accounting system.

ISEC projects and reported impacts – was the fact that due to the wide range of factors that influence crime and their dynamic interconnection[61], it has not been possible to establish direct links between the funding provided to specific projects and the perceived outcomes or impacts in the relevant areas of crime. Therefore, measuring the overall impact of specific funding instruments, including ISEC, on general or organised crime levels remains methodologically challenging. It has not been possible to establish direct causal links between the ISEC Programme's intervention or identified needs on the one hand and observed impacts or results on the other hand; therefore, effectiveness has been mostly evaluated in terms of outputs or perceived impacts or results– which were more easily measured and compared across MSs – rather than actual impacts or results.

Time lag between Programme implementation and the Ex Post Evaluation

There was a time lag between the implementation of the Programme (2007-2013) and the ex-post evaluation (August 2016-August 2017). This meant that the relevant beneficiaries and national and EU authorities and experts were often no longer working in the same position and were thus difficult to reach, which is reflected in a low response rate to some of the consultations (see Annex 3). The external evaluator took some initial measures to mitigate these difficulties, such as sending several email reminders to the persons surveyed, searching for alternative contacts when possible, raising the individual partner organisation interviews to two rather than one, and extending the deadline for the online survey carried out as part of the case studied. Overall, all evaluation questions have been answered to some extent, thanks to the use of triangulation of data where possible. Where the evidence base has been deemed to be too low to be reliable, this has been indicated.

Monitoring, accessibility of data and consistency of project data

Issues have been noted with regard to the monitoring of project progress and final results which hindered the assessment of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value.

Firstly, the outputs/results of the projects were not centrally collected and the final assessments of projects could have been carried out more comprehensively, elaborating on particular elements or activities of the project and their potential future use. The effect of these limitations on effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value is further explained in sections 9.2 and 9.5.

While relevant information could be collected for all evaluation questions, a full overview of final financial data and project data, especially with regard to a final absorption rate[62] was not consistently available across all projects, given that data on final payments was not

[61] The range of factors known to influence crime levels is wide and includes: social and economic factors (such as (youth) unemployment rates), law-enforcement policies (e.g. number of police officers or CCTV coverage), and criminal justice policies (including changes in imprisonment rates), taxation policies (e.g. when related to smuggling of excisable goods), etc.

[62] The absorption rate is defined as a relation of funding spent to funding committed and it is expressed as a percentage.

available for projects which were not yet complete[63]. The data drawn from different sources was not always consistent. This has limited the overall findings of the evaluation to some extent. Where possible, estimates have been used to calculate absorption rates and implementation trends. However, the figures relating in particular to the last programming year should be used with caution. Given that no estimates were available for the JRC data, no absorption rate has been calculated for the JRC element of the procurement sector.

Another limitation which affects the assessment of relevance and effectiveness is that no peer review of the products/outputs was undertaken and results could not be measured due to the lack of ex ante targets. It was not feasible to compare the "cost of projects'" under ISEC to other similar projects due to the absence of comparable projects. This hindered the assessment of efficiency and effectiveness to a large extent, as it was difficult to compare project costs and to measure the extent to which the same objectives were met by the different types of projects in the various areas of organised crime addressed by ISEC.

To mitigate these limitations, the assessment of effectiveness and efficiency had to rely largely on the qualitative data collected through the stakeholder consultations. This, combined with the absence of a baseline, proved to be a limitation in terms of methodology.

6 STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Initially, ISEC had an allocated budget of EUR 532 million as specified in the AWPs for the period 2007 to 2013. However, the allocated budget decreased for the programming year 2011 due to financial resources needed to cope with the migration crisis, bringing the total allocated budget down to EUR 522 million.

The budget allocated per programming year varied, with EUR 45 million for 2007 being the lowest allocated in a given AWP and EUR 117.57 million for 2012 the highest. There was another peak in the budget in 2010 (i.e. EUR 99 million). Across the programming period, grants constituted 70% to 90% of an AWP's total budget available.

The **minimum EU co-financing** increased from 50 000 euro (period 2007 to 2009) to 80 000 euro in 2010 and remained at 100 000 euro from 2011 onwards. The maximum rate of the EU co-financing increased consistently with the increase in minimum EU grant, from 70% (period 2007-2009) to 80% in 2010 and stayed at 90% from 2011 onwards for the remainder of the Programme implementation period.

In total, 782 ISEC grants were implemented across the programming period. The number of grants implemented per year remained largely the same over the period 2007-2010 (between 95 and 101), before rising to 144 in 2011 and peaking to 153 in 2012, consistent with an increased allocated budget for that financial year.

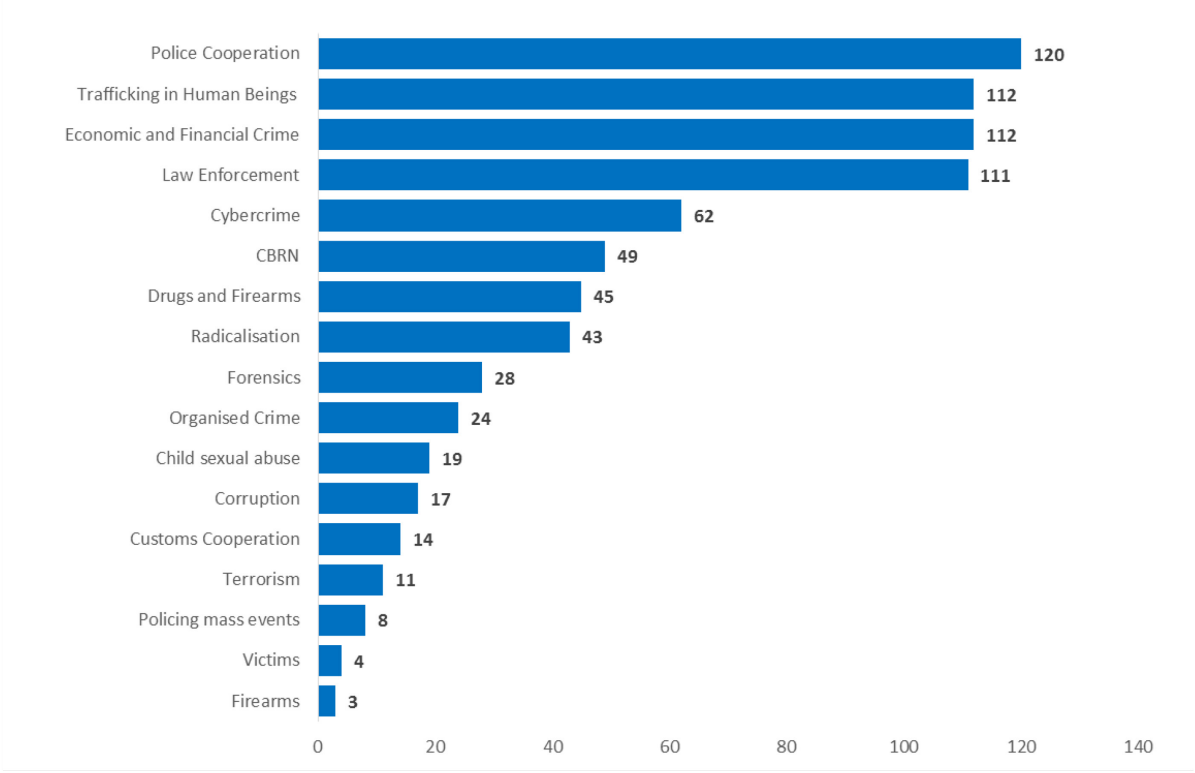
More action grants were funded via open calls (569 grants, representing 73% of implemented grants) than via restricted calls (213 grants, representing 27%). There were 32 monopoly grants (4%) and 180 framework partnership grants (23%) overall. Only one operating grant was implemented in the funding period.

[63] The final calculations on absorption rates include all projects up to 30/03/2017.

Given that targeted calls were only introduced from 2010 onwards, a much higher number of grants were funded under the general open calls (216 action grants under targeted calls and 353 action grants under general calls). Half of the grants funded under targeted calls were in response to calls relating to the areas of financial and economic crime and cybercrime.

The Commission's monitoring table provided an overview of the specific thematic areas covered by ISEC projects (17 in total), which in turn fall under the four more general themes of the programme (see section 2.3). An analysis of the projects implemented shows that each of four thematic areas (police cooperation[64], economic and financial crime, law enforcement, and human trafficking) accounts for over 100 grants and that together they represent 58% of the total number of grants. The lowest number of grants was implemented in the areas of victims and policing mass events.

Figure 1: Number of grants implemented by thematic area



64 ISEC projects categorised as police cooperation include training, exchange of information and data among police forces in different Member States.

The demand-driven design of the AWP (see section 7) resulted in a significant geographical imbalance in terms of the number of projects funded per coordinating organisation in each Member State and thematic areas covered per Member State. While organisations from Italy and Germany coordinated 115 projects and 82 projects respectively, organisations from 15 Member States (AT, CY, CZ, DK, EE, EL, FI, IE, LU, LV, MT, PT, SE, SI, SK) coordinated 20 projects or fewer, with Malta and Luxembourg at the bottom of the scale (these countries only coordinated two projects each).

When taking into account also the Member State location of partner organisations which participated in the projects, the outlook is similar with organisations from Italy (303), United Kingdom (244), Romania (172), Germany (152) and Spain (144) being particularly active, while organisations from Luxembourg and Malta were relatively inactive in the Programme (with participation in 20 or less projects).

Low levels of participation were found to be linked to unfamiliarity with the Programme, a lack of institutional capacity to develop project proposals and to understand administrative requirements (including requirements for co-financing) as well as a lack of contacts and partners in other EU Member States. One issue highlighted by Member States was the difficulty encountered in finding partners due to the different organisational structures across Member States. Another issue experienced by an Eastern European Member State, which prevented them from applying, was the requirement for an application to respect a minimum value threshold[65] which was considered by the Member State to be very high.

In order to achieve a better geographical spread by raising awareness of the Programme, regional information days were introduced; these took place in seven Member States (AT, HU, IT, RO, SE, SI, and the UK) in 2010, 2011 and 2012, encouraging participation in the Programme. Member State representatives were also asked to promote the Programme nationally.

From a sample of 151 projects selected for in-depth analysis[66], 51% of all projects were coordinated by either a law enforcement agency or a national ministry. Non-governmental organisations/ civil society organisations and university or research organisations were also common coordinating organisations, representing 17% and 13% respectively. Other types of coordinating organisations were local authorities (6%), judicial authorities (5%), commercial entities from the private sector (3%), regional authorities (2%), European Networks, platforms or forums (1%) and other types (3%).

6. 1 Absorption Rates of the ISEC Programme

A total budget of EUR 522 million was allocated[67] to the ISEC Programme of which just over EUR 413 million was committed and EUR 304 million spent (including funding provided via

65 EUR 100,000 in 2011, EUR 50,000 in 2007-2008, and EUR 80,000 in 2010.

66 This sample represents 27% of the 568 projects which were finalised by 30 June 2016.

67 While the total amount for the ISEC Programme according to the planned funding for 2007-2013 was just over EUR 532 million, this figure takes into account the final allocation to all funding mechanisms and includes the changes brought to the initially allocated budget through the modifying decisions mentioned at the beginning of the section.

action grants and funding provided via public procurement). Not all available funding from the various calls was awarded, mostly due to project applications not meeting the eligibility criteria or the quality criterion for being awarded funding. Over the programming period, ISEC had an overall absorption rate of 74%.

Absorption rates of action grants (under open and restricted calls)

Under the 782 action grants implemented in the ISEC Programme, a total of EUR 352.9 million was committed and EUR 261.2 million was spent, with a total **absorption rate of 74%**[68]. This percentage is slightly lower than commonly observed in other EU funding programmes[69].

Grants under open calls: The majority of funds were committed and spent (73%) on action grants under open calls (general and thematic calls) which generated the highest number of projects (569). 180 of the 782 grants selected for in-depth analysis were implemented under framework partnership calls, representing 21% of budget expenditure. Overall, over the period 2007-2013 absorption increased from 68% in 2007 to 79% in 2013. The 2011 ISEC interim evaluation report had found a poor absorption of the allocated budget and it was considered likely that this would continue in the following years, however, a clear upward trend in terms of absorption across the period can be discerned (see Figure 2), following the use of mitigating measures such as the modification of funding mechanisms following the mid-term evaluation of the programme.

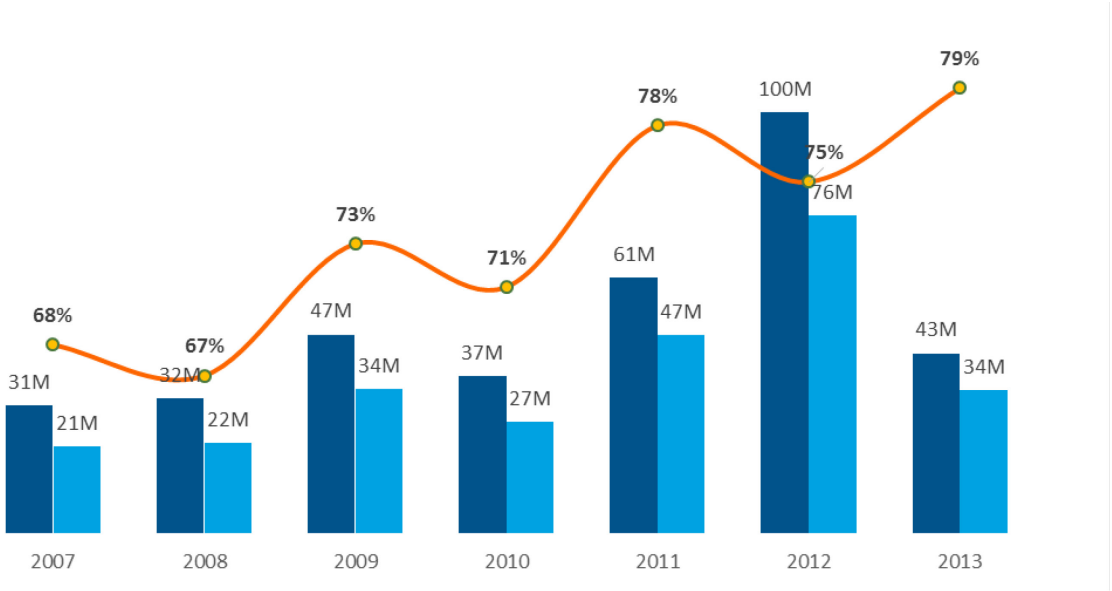
Initially, as part of the 2007-2009 AWPs, only general calls were included under the open calls for proposals. In the 2010 AWP, targeted calls were added, to improve focus on the priorities outlined in the AWPs. The targeted calls were introduced to ensure a better distribution across key themes and ensure a critical mass of projects within each thematic area, in agreement with the Member States in a comitology procedure. Furthermore, the targeted calls were expected to speed up the selection procedure. Before this change, difficulties were encountered in evaluating and comparing a very diverse pool of applications, given the broad thematic scope of ISEC, whereas with the adoption of the targeted calls it was possible to compare between and within themes. The targeted calls were introduced first in the beginning of each year, with the general calls following in the spring/summer of the same year. This also made it possible to transfer any underspend on targeted calls into the general calls, thus ensuring that funds could be allocated to more projects which allowed for better absorption of the available funds.

68 The absorption rates are calculated using the financial data included in the AWPs, the modifying decisions applied on these amounts and the DG Budget ABAC system. It should be noted that a total of 195 projects (1 in 2009, 6 in 2010, 35 in 2011, 68 in 2012 and 85 in 2013) were not yet closed. For these projects, the final invoice amount, as recorded in ABAC, has been used for the calculation of the absorption rate). The figures are still subject to potential change but it is not expected to be very significant as most projects used in the calculation of the absorption rate, i.e. 75%, are finalised.

69 Several programme evaluations, including Youth in Action, the EGF, the ESF and the EU Structural Funds suggest that an absorption rate >80% is acceptable especially when the programme is introducing innovation and/or requiring new stakeholders to work together. A 'typical' absorption evolution starts between 60-70% to then, towards the end of the programme period, arrive at 80-95% (and in some cases even 100%).

The increased effective uptake of resources over time could also be explained by the changes made to the Programme's application procedures after the budgetary revision in 2010, which meant that project budgets were scrutinised before they were selected and awarded rather than at the stage of award and grant agreement. Between 2010 and 2011 the largest year-on-year improvement can be observed in the absorption rate (an increase of 7 percentage points).

Figure 2: Committed and spent budget and absorption rate by AWP year



Source: Data extracted from ABAC as of 31/03/2017.

Grants under targeted calls: The average value of funds committed to projects under the targeted calls (EUR 550 000) is almost twice as high as the average value of projects committed under the general calls (EUR 350 000), although this is due to the very high value of one specific project implemented under the PNR targeted call, representing over EUR 17 million[70]. When excluding this project, the average value of funds committed to projects in the other ISEC targeted areas (EUR 378 000) is similar to an average value of projects under the general calls scheme.

Grants under restricted calls: There was an overall lower absorption rate over the 2007-2013 period of action grants within framework partnerships (70%) compared to other types of projects (other types of action grants – 77%, Grants to bodies in monopoly situations – 76%). This might be explained by the high number of projects that were not fully implemented or poorly budgeted in the early years of the Programme implementation as the absorption rate increased over time to 86% in 2013.

[70] Project implemented by French General Directorate of Customs and Excise in 2012.

Framework partnerships were established following a call for applications and aimed to provide for cooperation with 'trusted partners', such as public bodies or organisations with country-wide responsibility with legal personality established in the Member States (other types of bodies were not eligible to apply). Framework partnerships were concluded for a period of four years and framework partners could undertake individual projects that may last up to three years. The AWPs outlined the priorities for framework partnerships which were very similar to those in the open calls. However, the use of framework partnerships did not have the intended effect: consulted stakeholders found that framework partnerships as a funding mechanism did not provide the expected level of flexibility due to a lengthy and reportedly bureaucratically heavy application process. In addition, both open and restricted calls had very similar priorities[71]. Under the successor fund, ISF-Police, framework partnerships are no longer used.

The procurement sector

A total of EUR 60.6 million was committed during the Programme through procurement, of which EUR 51.6 million was committed to various procurement items and nearly EUR 9 million to the JRC. Of the 51.6 million committed during the Programme to procurement items, EUR 42.9 million was spent by 31 March 2017, representing an absorption rate of 83% (in total 349 public procurement projects were implemented).

In addition, 14 administrative arrangements or actions with JRC were carried out. Originally, a budget of EUR 8.87 million was committed to actions and administrative arrangements with the JRC. The largest project had a commitment of EUR 2.3 million, and the smallest project was EUR 70 000.[72] Final data on project expenditure was not available at the time of writing the evaluation report, so it has not been possible to provide an estimate of the final spent amount under the JRC actions.

[71] For example, although projects to support joint investigation teams (JITs) were specifically included in the calls for proposals of the framework partnerships, they were also funded as part of action grants through open calls for proposals. The long time needed to finalise the grant agreement (as well as amendments) is intrinsically incompatible with the nature of investigative work. In ISF-Police, the joint investigation teams have been allocated under the eligible actions of the national programmes (under the shared management modality) and the 'framework partnership' does not exist in the new Programming period as a type of action.

[72] These figures are based on data extracted from ABAC. Final data on project expenditure was not available at the time of writing the report.

7. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

7.1 Relevance

EQ1. *To what extent did the objectives and the actual results of the ISEC programme correspond to the needs related to the prevention of and fight against crime?*

The assessment of the relevance of ISEC focused on the extent to which the objectives and the results of the programme corresponded to the needs related to the prevention of and fight against crime.

With regard to the objectives, the ISEC Programme was created to support the implementation of the EU acquis and policy initiatives in the areas of prevention and fight against crime. The nature of the policy areas covered by ISEC requires a transnational response. For example, in the area of trafficking in human beings, Eurostat statistics showed that the majority of registered victims (65%) come from other EU Member States.[73] Policy-wise, in the backdrop of a single market and a Schengen area, facilitating 'mutual trust' and cooperation among law enforcement and other practitioners in the Member States has been generally seen as vital.

Furthermore, based on the subsidiarity principle, ISEC funding was not meant to substitute national funding in the internal security area but rather to complement it, providing increased support to cross-border cooperation. In this sense, specific objective (a) relating to "coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding among law enforcement agencies, other national authorities and related EU bodies"[74] is highly relevant to the needs in the sector, as confirmed in the replies to the stakeholder consultation. Different categories of stakeholders saw such cross-border cooperation as highly necessary, especially in the context of internationalisation of crime and professionalization of criminal groups. Consulted stakeholders agreed that given the financial crisis which took place during the Programme period, transnational cooperation would not have been financed through alternative sources of funding, such as national budgets.

Similarly, specific objective (b) relating to the "promotion and development of horizontal methods and tools"[75] was also seen by consulted stakeholders as relevant to the needs. ISEC has supported the development of tools, including large IT systems for the development of EU flagship initiatives in crime prevention – i.e. Passenger Name Record (PNR), Prüm and FIU.net[76]. In addition to IT systems, cross-border responses to crime require common tools and methodologies and the facilitation of their practical operationalisation. In this sense, this specific objective is also relevant to the needs in the area of prevention and fight against crime.

Overall, the relevance of these objectives has been further confirmed by the fact that 88% of participants in ISEC projects surveyed responded that the objectives of the projects corresponded to their needs and/or the needs of their organisations.

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73 Eurostat (2015), Statistical Working Papers, Special edition on trafficking in human beings.

74 Defined under Article 3(2) of Decision No 2007/125/JHA.

75 Defined under Article 3(2) of Decision No 2007/125/JHA.

76 FIU.net is a decentralised and sophisticated computer network supporting the Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) in the European Union in their fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Specific objectives (c) and (d) concerned the development of best practices for protection and support to witnesses and victims. Whereas the 2007 and 2008 AWPs included these objectives as a separate priority area under the open calls for proposals, in the 2009 to 2013 AWPs, the protection of victims was included as a transversal element within specific crime areas included under the different priority areas, general and targeted calls focusing on victims of human trafficking, victims of terrorism, victims of radicalisation and organised crime and child victims of sexual exploitation. However, the 'support to witnesses' was not explicitly mentioned after the 2008 AWP, except as part of the objectives, while the 'support to victims' was mentioned in 2009-2013 as priority areas for the open and targeted calls relating to various types of victims. This is because the issues relating to witnesses and victims would be mainly covered under the Daphne III programme while under ISEC support, to victims was kept as a priority when it related to the prevention and fight against crime. This also meant that overlaps with the Daphne III were avoided (see section 9.4).

These last two specific objectives attracted slightly less attention than the two first ones in terms of the number of projects implemented, especially with regard to 'support for witnesses' (please see section 6, figure 1 for an overview of number of projects implemented in these thematic areas).

Demand-driven design of the Programme

Whilst the ISEC's objectives were 'fixed' in the founding legislation[77] i.e. Council Decision 2007/125/JHA, the continuous relevance of the Programme was ensured by the process of setting the ISEC priorities and sub-priorities which were identified by Member States and competent Directorate-Generals of the Commission[78] on a yearly basis and included in the AWPs. This allowed the Programme a degree of flexibility when adapting to changing needs. Member State representatives as well as Commission representatives considered that the process had run smoothly and their comments had been taken on board in the final approved versions.

The process of priority formulation and AWP adoption lasted about six months, and was followed by the publication of the calls for proposals. The AWPs reflected the priorities in the year before – following the 'n+1 year' model, 'n' being the year of the adoption of the AWP and the implementation taking place one year later. This resulted in a time lag between the formulation of priorities and their actual implementation.

Some stakeholders commented that given the broad scope of the Programme, there were no major issues with the 'n+1 year' model, but a few suggested that the Programme could have better reflected the changing nature of law enforcement priorities. In their view, the design of ISEC made it difficult to be highly responsive or flexible to emerging needs, due to the time lapse of a full year between the drafting of the AWPs and the launch of the calls for proposals. This meant that specific areas might no longer be as relevant or as high on the political agenda as they were one year earlier. This was addressed in the successor funding instrument, ISF-

[77] Council Decision 2007/125/JHA, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:058:0007:0012:EN:PDF

[78] The process mentioned for the identification of priorities and sub-priorities was carried out in regular consultation with the Member States, through a comitology procedure and an inter service group with relevant DGs competent in the area of protection of critical infrastructure in the Commission, including DG CNECT, DG ECHO, DG SANCO, DG MOVE, DG ENER and the JRC.

Police, through the inclusion of emergency assistance "to address urgent and specific needs".[79]

Regarding the priorities set in the calls for proposals, most ISEC coordinating organisations and partner organisations considered these to be relevant. In their response to a survey, the coordinating organisations considered ISEC priorities to be relevant to specific strategic/operational needs at national (62 responses or 66%) and EU level (72 responses or 77%), and to the specific needs of target groups/ related stakeholders in the different thematic areas (55 responses or 60%). Similar percentages of co-beneficiaries reported the same, although their response rate to the survey is much lower (35 responses in total).

Project participants responded very similarly to project coordinating and partner organisations. An overwhelming majority (97% or 91 responses) of participants considered that the priorities in the calls for proposals corresponded to the needs at EU level, while slightly less so to priorities at national level (94% or 88 responses) and the needs of the target group and related stakeholders in the respective thematic area (94% or 88 responses).

Although a very limited number of responses (3) were received for the public consultation on ISEC conducted, two of the respondents stated that the projects and activities funded in their respective Member States (DE and IT) addressed needs related to the prevention of and fight against crime.

Overall, the ISEC programme was considered relevant in terms of results, as these addressed the needs identified through the initial formulation of the ISEC programme specific objectives. However, as mentioned in section 5, the assessment of relevance in terms of results remains limited by the lack of a central repository of ISEC project deliverables and results.

The main results identified from ISEC projects were: enhanced networking, forms of sharing information and best practices, increased levels of knowledge and skills of practitioners, improved understanding of methods, tools and practices and increased take up of new/transferred methods, tools and practices.

In-depth analysis of 151 projects[80] showed that the most significant results of ISEC projects were enhanced networking and forms of sharing information and best practices (reported for 75% of projects) and increased levels of knowledge and skills of practitioners (in 74% of projects). This is followed by improved understanding of methods, tools and practices (in 50% of projects) and increase take up of new/transferred methods, tools and practices (in 23% of the projects). Results relating to behavioural changes amongst target groups were less salient (reported only for 13% of projects). Please note that each project could have had more than one result.

These findings are supported by information gathered through stakeholder interviews, in particular with authorities in the Member States, whereby the programme was seen as contributing positively to the results obtained in the different EU policy areas. Enhanced networking and cooperation between authorities across Member States were identified by several stakeholders as one of the main results of the ISEC Programme. Building trust,

[79] Article 10, Regulation No 513/2014.

[80] Please note that each project could have had more than one result.

increasing Member States' motivation to work together and "improved Community feeling" were described as important outcomes of the Programme's actions.

Bearing in mind that law enforcement authorities have been the main target group of ISEC projects, stakeholders highlighted that ISEC activities "gave real and concrete added value to law enforcement authorities".

7.2 Effectiveness

The assessment of effectiveness sought to measure the extent to which the ISEC programme contributed to its general and specific objectives[81]. Therefore, each of the evaluation questions answered in this section focuses on one of the programme's general or specific objectives (see section 3):

EQ2. *Did the ISEC programme contribute to better security for citizens and if so, to what extent? To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute in the areas of preventing and combating crime, organised or otherwise, in particular terrorism, trafficking in persons and offences against children, illicit drug trafficking and illicit arms trafficking, corruption and fraud?*

As mentioned in section 5, the exact extent to which ISEC contributed to this first general objective is not possible to quantify and it is difficult to establish a causal relationship between ISEC actions and the impact of better security for EU citizens. The evaluation also highlighted issues with regard to the monitoring of project progress and final results, which hindered the assessment of effectiveness

Bearing these limitations in mind, overall, the evaluation findings suggest that ISEC achieved all of its objectives to some extent and achieved the expected outputs, which, it can be argued, contributed to crime prevention and, ultimately, to better security for EU citizens. The main results identified from ISEC projects were enhanced networking, forms of sharing information and best practices and increased levels of knowledge and skills of practitioners. This is followed by improved understanding of methods, tools and practices and increase take up of new/transferred methods, tools and practices. The majority of projects accomplished their planned activities and achieved their objectives. In addition, ISEC played a key role in the development of stable transnational cooperation between Member States and their agencies in the areas of crime prevention and combatting, as well as better exchange of information, particularly in the field of forensics, drugs, PNR, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings. National authorities interviewed also reported that ISEC projects fostered cooperation between agencies in the same Member State, increasing synergies between national Law Enforcement Agencies.

Supporting these findings, most project coordinating organisations, partner organisations and participants surveyed perceived ISEC projects to have contributed to a great extent to better

[81] In order to do so, each of the evaluation questions answered in this section focus on one of the programme's general or specific objectives: EQ2 deals with general objective 1; EQ3 deals with general objective 2; EQ4 deals with specific objective a); EQ5 deals with specific objective b); EQ6 deals with specific objective c); and EQ7 deals with specific objective d).

security for EU citizens. Only 13% of participants, 4% of coordinating organisations and none of the partner organisations respectively thought that ISEC project(s) had made no contribution at all. This is further supported by the in-depth analysis of a sample of projects (151 in total), which shows that the majority of projects analysed achieved all their objectives (84%), while 15 % of projects partially achieved their objectives and only 1% (2 projects) did not. Similarly, the final assessments made of the project sample found 75% of projects to be excellent or very good with beneficial results and impacts achieved; 20% were assessed as acceptable/average, while 5% were marked as poor or very poor.

In terms of achieving the project objectives, project coordinating organisations (91) responded that the objectives were fully achieved (82 responses), while only nine responses found the objectives to be only partially achieved. With regard to the quality of the outputs, the final evaluations on projects completed at the end of the projects show that, in certain cases, some outputs could have been more comprehensive, better elaborated, and/or designed in a better way to have a greater impact. Comments of this nature are made in about 15% of the sample of projects (5% of the projects were rated as 'poor' or 'very poor/not acceptable' and 10% were rated as 'acceptable /average'). In a few instances, the transnational projects in question had a strong national focus and did not seemed to benefit the partner organisations from other Member States (whose involvement in the project was judged to have been rather limited) to a limited extent.

EQ3. *To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to the development of the policies of the Union?*

Regarding the extent to which the Programme contributed to the second general objective, ISEC projects contributed to a wide range of EU policies in the field of prevention and the combatting of crime, such as the Prüm Decision, Passenger Name Record (PNR), the EU Action Plan on the security of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) materials, the EU Policy Cycle to tackle organised and serious crime (EMPACT), as well as contributing to the implementation of several EU Directives[82].

The **PNR** is one of the key flagship EU initiatives in the area of crime prevention supported by ISEC funding. Directive 2016/681 aims to regulate the transfer from the airlines to the Member States of PNR data of passengers of international flights, as well as the processing of this data by the competent authorities. ISEC-funded projects amounting to over EUR 50 million have been implemented in the area of PNR, with 15 Member States benefitting from these projects.[83] These projects supported the development of Passenger Information Units (PIUs) in the Member States for the collection and processing of PNRs and included a range of related activities, including the purchase of hardware and software; training and capacity-

[82] ISEC contributed to EU Directives such as: Directive 2011/93/EU on combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, and child pornography; Directive 2003/98/EC on the re-use of public sector information; Directive 2011/62/EU amending Directive 2001/83/EC on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use, as regards the prevention of the entry into the legal supply chain of falsified medicinal products; Directive 2011/36/EU on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims.

[83] AT, BG, EE, FR, FI, HU, IT, ES, LT, LV, NL, PT, RO, SI, SE.

building for data transfers and data analysis as well as profiling and matching of PNR data. As the PNR systems became operational in some Member States only at the beginning of 2017, and in some cases later due to technical difficulties, it is not possible to comprehensively examine the effectiveness of projects in this area. However, several interviewed Member State authorities[84] saw the PNR projects as examples of successful ISEC contributions which are expected to have a tangible result. Indeed, considerable financial support for the implementation of PNR continues to be provided to Member States through the successor fund, ISF-Police.[85]

The **Prüm Decisions**[86] are a key EU policy initiative and aim at closer police and judicial cross-border cooperation in combating terrorism and cross-border crime, in particular in terms of exchange of information. Over 30 projects were implemented to support the implementation of the Prüm Decisions amounting to over EUR 17 million and covering most EU Member States. Projects focused, among other things, on building operational and technical capacity; the provision of equipment and automated solutions and training to users. The Projects aimed at the faster processing of crime-scene evidence, leading to more accurate DNA profile and fingerprint identification.

Evidence of the impact of these projects on the implementation of the Prüm Decisions was drawn from the analysis of project final reports. In Latvia, a 2009 ISEC-funded project[87] supported the understanding of technical capacities of the Prüm DNA data exchange and developed software for the Prüm interface, contributing to the implementation of the Decision. Similarly, a 2009 ISEC-funded project implemented in Estonia[88] established international online functionalities of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), making it compliant with the requirements of the Prüm Decisions. A project in Germany established Mobile Competence Teams (MCT) which contributed to an exchange of methods and tools between Member States and supported ten Member States successfully in implementing the Decisions.

Interviewed Member State authorities saw such projects as key examples of ISEC's contribution to the exchange and management of information and intelligence for law enforcement. According to interviewees, projects contributed to develop functionalities for exchanging data with other Member States which will be used on a daily basis for the Prüm data exchange.

EQ4. *To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promotion and development of horizontal methods and tools necessary for strategically preventing and fighting crime and guaranteeing security and public order, such as the work carried out in the European Union Crime Prevention Network, public-private partnerships, best practices in crime prevention,*

84 Authorities from EE, LT, LV, RO and SI.

85 The recent "top-up" in financial support provided to Member States for PNR through ISF-Police highlights the importance given to developments in this area.

86 Council Decisions 2008/615/JHA and 2008/616/JHA.

87 Project "Building up the technical capacity of the State Police of the Republic of Latvia to implement the DNA data sharing according the Council decisions 2008/615/JHA and 2008/616/JHA. (Prüm Decisions)".

88 2009 AG project "Establishing the international online functionality of the existing Estonian AFIS according to Council Decision 2008/615/JHA".

comparable statistics, applied criminology and an enhanced approach towards young offenders?

From a sample of 151 projects analysed, 60% included as an activity relating to specific objective a), the development of horizontal methods and tools; these were spread evenly across the different thematic areas of the ISEC Programme. The vast majority of surveyed project participants (87%), co-beneficiaries (80%) and coordinators (86%)[89] considered that ISEC projects had made a contribution to the achievement of the promotion and development of horizontal methods and tools in this area. Horizontal methods and tools for preventing and fighting crime include:

- investigation tools and techniques;
- software tools, databases and technical solutions;
- development of methodological frameworks, methodologies and the sharing of best practices.

Investigation tools and techniques

Among the sample of 151 ISEC projects analysed as part of this evaluation, a total of 24 projects reported to have had outcomes related to investigations. Such outcomes were achieved either through carrying out field investigations involving transnational law enforcement agencies (and the creation of Joint Investigation Teams – JITs), or through the development of tools, trainings, guidelines and/ or best practices with the aim to increase investigators' efficiency and effectiveness. Projects final reports show several examples of positive results achieved by ISEC projects, some of which brought to the arrest and detention of criminals as well as the seizure of large quantities of drugs. For example, the project "European Joint Investigation Teams in cross-border cold case review situations" supported a joint investigation between the UK, the Netherlands and Eurojust on several known criminal cases and involving the prosecution of a suspect in the UK (the suspect was convicted to a life sentence).[90] Furthermore, the project created a JIT manual which will support knowledge and experience sharing with other Member States.

Similarly, the project "Pre-Trial Investigation M3" developed best practices in fighting international corruption and investigated several serious crimes with the aim to deter international corruption on a general level and confiscate criminal profits. It also fostered coordination and operational cooperation among law enforcement agencies (and other actors) of Finland, Croatia and Austria as well as Eurojust, and established an international JIT, which was reported to be an effective method for fighting international corruption. Member State authorities' representatives interviewed also confirmed the positive results of ISEC projects supporting investigation activities. One Member State mentioned that ISEC funding made a significant contribution to investigations, as it gave national law enforcement agencies

89 In total 95 project coordinators, 102 participants and 32 co-beneficiaries were provided responses to the survey.

90 Final Report of project "European Joint Investigation Teams in cross-border cold case review situations".

the financial and technical ability to cooperate with and include third countries (e.g. non-EU countries) in investigation activities.

Overall, the development of horizontal methods and tools has been found to have a potentially strong multiplier effect. Innovative investigative methodologies and tools on specific crime areas (e.g. counterfeit medicines, VAT fraud, methods in forensic science, etc.) can be tested in a few Member States and then replicated across others. Nevertheless, the evaluation showed that collecting all different results of ISEC with a view to ensuring their potential future use (instead of only relying on dissemination efforts of project promoters whose abilities may be limited), should have been taken up centrally at Commission level (or by one of its agencies).

Software tools, databases and technical solutions

The adoption of the PNR system has been mentioned by representatives from several Member States as an important tool for data exchange. Also in one Member State, ISEC contributed to the implementation and update of three software programmes which helped police officers with their daily work. According to the interviewee, this was a large-scale and large-impact software, which also facilitated the exchange of information with other Member States.

Data collected through the analysis of projects' final reports show that only a limited number of ISEC funded projects covered the collection and/or sharing of comparable statistics throughout the years of implementation of the Programme. A total of 15 projects (out of the 151 projects) mentioned the collection/sharing of statistics as a project activity or objective, thus showing a low level of implementation of such activities. Furthermore, none of the Member State representatives interviewed as part of the evaluation reported evidence of results in terms of development of statistical data. However, as reported in final reports analysed as part of the sample database, some projects contributed to the development of comparable statistics or tools for the sharing of statistical data on crime. For example, the 2007 project "European Statistical Database of Lethal Violence (ESDoLV)" aimed to lay the foundations for a joint European statistical database on lethal violence. Member States involved in the project provided national statistics which were successfully compiled into one dataset named the European Homicide Monitor (EHM), which can be used for detailed analyses of trends, factors that foster lethal violence, preventive measures, sentencing policy and treatment of perpetrators. Another similar project produced a tool for the validation and utilisation of EU statistics on human trafficking (TrafStat), contributing to an increased knowledge at EU level of THB data and statistics.

Indeed, databases, IT systems and e-Platforms also have a potentially high multiplier effect as multiple users can be connected electronically. However, projects in this area encountered several obstacles which hindered their effectiveness.

For example, interviews with the Europol Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) on its decentralised computer network supporting the FIUs in the EU in their fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism - the FIU.net[91] - revealed a number of issues. The set-up of FIU.net has been financed through ISEC two-year grants amounting to

[91] Council Decision 2000/642/JHA.

approximately EUR10 million in the period 2007-2015. FIU.net was led by the Dutch Ministry of Security and Justice until 2016 and since 2016, the management was assumed by Europol. Europol is now responsible for operational developments, training initiatives and the operational running of the system. Before the beginning of the process of embedding it into the Europol system, Europol carried out a number of assessments at infrastructure level, programme level, DPO assessment, and cryptographic assessment of the FIU.net. Based on these assessments, weaknesses were revealed in the security of the system.

Another example was provided by a French authority, who mentioned issues encountered in the implementation of PNR. These revolved around the complexity of data collection when working with the airlines. The administration did not envisage at the outset of the project the degree of complexity and disparities in the norms and technical applications. Due to the complexity of projects such as those funded for the implementation of the PNR, more emphasis could have been placed on the monitoring of project implementation and results by technical experts and possibly, through the Programme, on creating opportunities for relevant organisations in the Member States which received such funding to exchange experiences and share lessons learnt on similar activities. This is partly addressed under the successor fund ISF-Police, as regular meetings take place between the participating Member States in the form of the "AMIF-ISF Committee meetings", where Member States exchange best practices, share experiences and can provide feedback or direct questions about such issues.

Development of methodological frameworks, methodologies and sharing of best practices

One of the most tangible contributions in this area is the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN), funded through ISEC.[92] EUCPN aims to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and accumulate best practices and information in the area of crime prevention. In 2012, an external evaluation was commissioned[93] which found that EUCPN performed relatively well and has made good progress in relation to the objectives. However, a number of shortcomings were identified in relation to the added value of some of the contact points in relation to EUCPN's functioning and visibility; its action at local level as well as tailoring its products to the target groups. One of the key findings of this evaluation was that a substantial amount of ISEC crime prevention projects supported by the ISEC Programme were implemented without associating or even informing EUCPN. Indeed, when reviewing the project documentation of the sample of projects, only a limited number of ISEC projects mention dissemination activities in relation to the EUCPN. This has been confirmed in an interview with the EUCPN whereby EUCPN reported not having received results of ISEC-funded projects. As already presented above, it is recommended that good practices and results of ISEC projects are shared with EUCPN which can potentially act as a 'repository' of good practices provided there are workable dissemination channels in place.

[92] Set up by the Council Decision 2001/427/JHA, repealed by the Council Decision 2009/902/JHA. See http://eucpn.org/

[93] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/crime-prevention/docs/20121130_eucpn_report_en.pdf .

21 projects analysed as part of the evaluation described the development or sharing of crime prevention best practices, of which more than half tackled the areas of police cooperation, law enforcement and economic/ financial crime. Both the projects' final reports and Commission's final evaluation reports showed evidence of positive outcomes related to the sharing of best practices in crime prevention at EU level, particularly between law enforcement agencies and other practitioners. For example, one project implemented in Finland in 2010 contributed to developing best practices in fighting international corruption and fostered cooperation among participating countries (AT and HR) and Agencies (Eurojust) as well as between law enforcement and judicial authorities. The project developed best practices through an investigation of several serious economic and financial crimes. Similarly, the 2011 project "Enhancing the administrative capacity of police officers for prevention of sexual crimes against children" contributed to the transfer of best practices to Bulgarian police officers, providing them with relevant tools for the prevention and detection of sexual crimes against children.

In addition, a total of 6 ISEC projects out of the sample of 151 projects analysed referred to the enhancement of forensic capabilities at national level. Three Member State representatives commented positively on the results of ISEC projects in the field of forensics, generally obtained through the development of new tools or methodologies and sharing of best practices. For example, Greece reported that the Forensic Science Division of the Hellenic Police (which was directly funded by ISEC) was able to obtain equipment that significantly upgraded its technical capacities both in scope and in accuracy, and that most of the equipment of the DNA Database Section was funded with the support of the ISEC Programme.

Furthermore, the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes (ENFSI) network (monopoly body funded by ISEC) has contributed through the sharing of data and good practices in this field. The network brought together more than 40 organisations competent in forensics across the EU. Best practices manuals across many forensic disciplines were prepared (e.g. fingerprinting, DNA, handwriting, etc.). According to the ENFSI management interviewed, the ISEC funding has been instrumental in achieving ENFSI's strategic objectives.

Interviewed Member State representatives also commented positively on the development of best practices in their respective countries as part of cooperation initiatives between transnational law enforcement agencies.

However, a significant area for improvement identified by the evaluation and by most stakeholders is that the results and deliverables of ISEC individual projects have not been compiled in a central repository (e.g. by the Commission or a relevant EU agency/network) to enhance knowledge sharing and transfers of practices (as mentioned under section 5). For example, methodologies developed to investigate certain types of crimes, reports, analysis, best practices, training materials, etc. could have been compiled centrally and, consequently, the effectiveness of the programme could have been boosted if their potential multiplier effect and continuous usage for interested stakeholders in other Member States had been maximised.

EQ5. *To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promoting and development of coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding among law enforcement agencies, other*

national authorities and related Union bodies in respect of the priorities identified by the Council, in particular as set out by the Europol's Organised Crime Threat Assessment?

Concerning the extent to which the ISEC Programme contributed to the achievement of specific objective b), the evidence collected during the evaluation shows that activities such as transnational cooperation, coordination and networking (including mutual learning and exchanges of good practices) between law enforcement agencies, national authorities and other relevant bodies (e.g. civil society organisations, NGOs, universities and research institutes) were implemented by a large number of ISEC projects. Stakeholders reported strong evidence of outcomes and results related to transnational cooperation, coordination and mutual understanding.

More than 50% (93 in total) of the 151 ISEC funded projects included in the sample analysed had the "promotion and development of coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding" as a project objective[94], with 16 focussing solely on this objective (the large majority was also focusing on stimulating, promoting and developing horizontal methods for preventing and fighting crime). These 93 projects were implemented in 25 Member States, with the majority of the coordinating organisations located in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and the UK and the coordinators consisting mostly of law enforcement authorities, national Ministries as well as universities and research institutes. Projects' final reports show that more than half of the sampled projects (69 in total) of projects targeting the development of coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding were finalised according to plan.

Overall, the analysis of final reports of the projects, the online survey as well as feedback gathered through interviews with relevant national authorities suggest that projects made a significant contribution to the promotion and development of coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding among law enforcement agencies, other national authorities and related Union bodies. The most commonly reported outcomes from the sample of ISEC projects, were: improved understanding of methods, tools and practices (reported by 50% of the projects); increased levels of knowledge and skills of practitioners (reported by 74% of the projects); enhanced networking and forms of sharing information and best practices (reported by 75% of the projects). Furthermore, stakeholders also reported on the positive outcomes related to the operational cooperation between transnational law enforcement agencies (e.g. police, border guards), providing examples of successful joint operations leading, for example, to the seizure of large quantities of drugs and to the arrest of wanted persons.

Activities implemented through ISEC funding contributed to the development of more stable transnational cooperation between Member States and their agencies, as well as better exchange of information, particularly in the field of forensics, drugs, PNR, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings. National authorities interviewed also reported that ISEC projects also fostered cooperation between agencies in the same Member State, increasing synergies between the Law Enforcement Agencies.[95]

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[94] 59% of them funded through action grants, 32% through Framework Partnerships and 9% through monopoly organisations.

[95] For example Greece reported that ISEC supported greater cooperation between national actors such as the Criminal Investigation Agencies, Forensic Labs, Judicial Services, Coroners and Health Sector Agencies; in Romania there was increased cooperation between the Department for Intelligence and Internal Affairs within the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor's Office with the High Court for Cassation and Justice within the Public Ministry.

These outcomes are in line with the priorities identified in the 2013 Europol Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA).[96] However, other ISEC projects focussing on cooperation and coordination activities covered some of the OCTA's priorities to a lesser extent (e.g. fraud, money laundering and counterfeit goods).

The 2011 Europol OCTA identifies "strong and effective partnerships with the private sector"[97] as a priority area, particularly for the purpose of crime prevention and awareness raising. Evidence collected through the evaluation shows that cooperation between the public and private sector in Member States was supported by ISEC projects to a limited extent.

However, in several instances, stakeholders interviewed did report evidence of public-private partnership or cooperation facilitated by ISEC activities:

- in Romania, air carriers established cooperation protocols for the exchange of information with law enforcement agencies in the context of a project on PNR in order to prevent possible threats related to terrorism and organised crime;
- in Greece, the procurement process for the equipment of forensic material provided an opportunity for members of the Forensic Science Division to meet with suppliers, who supported them with expertise and information on the operational needs of the Division and explored the opportunity for the potential development of tailor-made products which will support the Police's efforts in the forensic field and;
- the Italian Medicines Agency and carried out by an international consortium of partners including both private (e.g. Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies – ASOP) and public partners (e.g. Italian police forces)[98].

EQ6. *To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promoting and development of best practices for the protection of and support to witnesses?*; and

EQ7. *To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promoting and development of best practices for the protection of crime victims?*

From the sample of 151 projects analysed, a relatively low number of ISEC projects focused on providing protection and support to witnesses or victims of crime. Seven of the projects analysed reported impacts associated with increased support and protection to victims and witnesses of crime. All seven projects entailed awareness-raising activities as well as analytical research activities to a lesser extent. Among these projects, two were carried out in the field of police cooperation. The other areas covered include: law enforcement, child sexual abuse, human trafficking, economic and financial crime, and radicalisation.

Reduction in the number of crime victims was only cited as an impact under three projects. It should be noted that this is influenced by many exogenous factors which are outside the control of the projects funded. The areas covered by the projects include child sexual abuse, cybercrime and radicalisation. A caveat should be highlighted regarding the 2007 de-

[96] The priority areas identified in the report were: facilitation of illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings, counterfeit goods with an impact on public health and safety, Missing Trader Intra Community (MTIC) fraud, synthetic drugs production and polydrug trafficking in the EU, cybercrime and money laundering.

[97] Europol - EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment 2011

[98] This project was called FAKESHARE II and is included in the Italian case study on financial crime.

radicalisation project, given the reported shortcomings in dissemination and awareness-raising and the strong focus of the project on crime prevention at the local level.

The low number of projects dedicated to these areas is further confirmed by a perceived low impact. When asked about the perceived contribution of ISEC projects to best practices for the protection of witnesses and crime witnesses, less than 40% across the three stakeholder groups of respondents (project participants, co-beneficiaries and coordinators) replied that their project made some contribution to these areas, while almost 50% responded that this was "not applicable".

7.3 Efficiency

EQ8a. *To what extent were the results of the ISEC programme achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed?*

As mentioned in section 6, due to the lack of an initial baseline and to the difficulties encountered in comparing project costs, the assessment made of efficiency below relies largely on the qualitative data collected through the stakeholder consultations.

Concerning the **cost-efficiency of the financial resources deployed**, as mentioned previously, a budget of EUR 522 million was allocated to the ISEC Programme of which EUR 413 million was committed and EUR 304 million spent (including funding provided via action grants and funding provided via public procurement). There was an upward trend in the absorption of funds spent on action grants with an overall absorption rate of 74% across the period 2007-2013, and a peak of 79% in the last year. The EU funding provided was perceived by the vast majority of consulted stakeholders as having been sufficient and as having been highly cost-efficient for all activities implemented under ISEC. Particularly, the creation of networks was viewed as having a high value for money.

At project level, a more in-depth analysis was carried out for a total of 146 projects using data taken from financial cost statements[99]. Overall, 92% of the estimated budget of all sampled grant agreements together appears to have been spent. The underspend was primarily a result of:

- Costs for travel being far lower than estimated, which was partially due to standard day rates for subsistence and travel being higher than actual costs incurred;
- Actual output (the difference between planned and actual events and participants) was lower than expected, although this could not be ascertained due to limited details on the exact targets set at the beginning and those achieved;
- There were variations between the estimated and spent budget due to difficulties in forecasting such costs. Some organisations underestimated these costs and needed more complex IT tools than initially envisaged or such costs were simply higher than

[99] The financial cost statement provides budgetary information about two stages of the project cycle, one at the start at the stage of the grant agreement on the basis of forecasted expenses, and one at the end consisting of the final budget of actual expenses.

foreseen. On the other hand, some organisations were able to make savings on IT costs, for example, by opting for available open source software.

The data suggests that the absorption of funding improved towards the end of the Programming period, with total final expenditures slightly closer to 100% in 2010-2013 than for 2007-2009 (although 2008 is an exception).

Reported issues that may have hampered cost-efficiency of these projects were: "Drop-outs and change in staff of the project" (mentioned for 29 out of 146 projects); "Problems related to Commission management" (mentioned for 22 out of 146 projects); "low level of participation from participants" (mentioned for 16 out of 146 projects); and "lack of cooperation from partners" (mentioned for 8 out of 146 projects). For ten projects, issues highlighted include the budget reallocation, lack of financial resources to carry out some elements of the project, and difficulties in having to pre-finance the project, only claiming reimbursement later.

These findings are supported by the responses of coordinating organisations to a survey, where the majority (58 respondents representing 64.4%) indicated that project budget was spent more or less as planned, while a third (32 respondents, representing 35.6%) highlighted that less was spent than planned. Reasons provided for this were the lower participation than expected in certain projects (9 respondents); differences between planned and actual spending including lower than expected travel costs (14 respondents); having carried out a technical solution in-house rather than through an external contractor and thus making cost savings (2 respondents); shortening of the length of training events as their foreseen length was considered impractical; fluctuations in prices leading to costs differing from the forecast (3 respondents) but also lacking technical capacity (in IT staff) to contribute to a project activity; purchase orders exceeding those in planned budget; inability to carry out a part of the project due to legal constraints and internal procedures deemed complex; choices made during the project to carry out different activities from those planned; staff leaving before the end of the project; and internal difficulties of the organisation leading to lower absorption.

Overall, the majority of coordinating organisations surveyed found EU funding to be sufficient for the activities undertaken (87.6%). Among the coordinating organisations for whom funding was not sufficient, issues highlighted were the difficulty in securing co-financing from other sources and in ensuring the continuity of certain outputs (i.e. websites, IT tools); higher costs for specific activities than expected; difficulties in keeping overhead costs under the ceiling; and having some of the funding reclaimed after an audit due to the implementation of activities not foreseen or declared costs found to be ineligible for EU funding.

The external evaluation of the networks Railpol[100], Tispol[101] and Aquapol[102] developed under projects for which grants were awarded to bodies in a monopoly situation and which consisted

[100] Railpol is an international network of the organisations responsible for policing the railways in EU Member States. The aim is to enhance and intensify international railway police cooperation in Europe, to prevent threats and guarantee the effectiveness of measures against cross-border crime.

[101] Tispol aims at cooperation of traffic police forces of Europe in order to improve road safety and law enforcement on the roads of Europe. It acts as a platform for learning and exchange of good practices between the traffic police forces of Europe.

[102] Aquapol acts as a platform for learning and exchange of good practice for law enforcement in the domain of waterborne transport in Europe. Its main activities are exchange of intelligence, exchange of operational information and experience and cross border cooperation in day-to-day law-enforcement work.

of rather large projects (about EUR 500 000 per year), found no indications of significant inefficiencies. Although the evaluation found that these projects/networks might benefit from a better demonstration of efficiency and value for money, it ultimately concluded that "the networks are providing sufficient outputs to warrant their ongoing investment".[103]

Overall resources have generally been considered by respondents to have been used in an efficient way, and although discrepancies in outputs of projects were found, there are no indications of significant differences in outcomes pointing directly to inefficient use of funding. As mentioned in section 6, the vastly different nature of each project makes their direct comparison challenging and potentially misleading. Another factor is that a lack of detailed and harmonised reporting on outputs and results in final reports does not allow for a fully-fledged comparison.

Concerning the **cost-efficiency of the human resources deployed**, one of the key issues highlighted by various stakeholders was the high staff turnover both in the Commission and in the other organisations coordinating or participating in or projects. In the Commission, across the period 2007-2013, there were around 24 different desk officers in total (OIA) responsible for following-up on ISEC projects and public procurement items at various times, as well as four programme managers. Some OIAs were responsible for dozens of projects at the same time, which would make it difficult to have a detailed understanding of the situation in each project. This was further exacerbated by the fact that until 2011, projects were not required to submit an interim report. Some stakeholders alluded to this issue in interviews and the survey, pointing out that frequent staff changes made communications more time-consuming, with valuable knowledge getting lost in the process.

Furthermore, given the relative newness of the Programme and the lack of resources of the Commission at the time to closely follow all ISEC projects from start to end, the evaluation showed that a dedicated technical assistance budget could have been useful. Such a budget could have better supported the development of a state of the art monitoring system to collect and analyse data on financial progress, outputs and results of projects, as well as provided technical expertise throughout the lifecycle of projects and increased the dissemination of results.

Another issue raised in scoping interviews was the fact that the introduction of targeted calls in 2010 reportedly increased the workload for preparation, but also helped maximise the use of available budget and enhanced the quality of proposals.

In addition, a mixed picture emerges regarding perceptions of the administrative burden accompanying project implementation. Based on the evidence gathered, it can be concluded that the ISEC Programme had a similar level of administrative burden to other EU programmes. The majority of coordinating organisations reported a positive experience with regard to the application and award procedure and 20% of respondents reported that no administrative burden was perceived. However, the vast majority did perceive some administrative burden[104]. The survey with partner organisations confirms similar perceived

[103] Evaluation of Aquapol, Railpol and Tispol Final Report, 15 January, 2013.

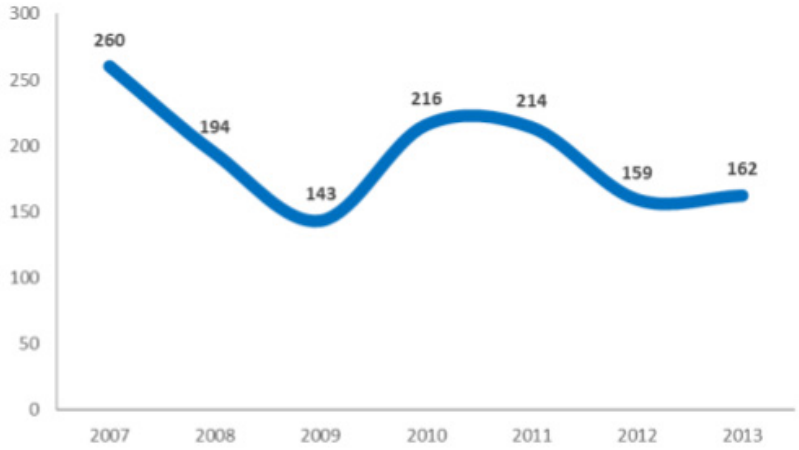
[104] 33% reported experiencing some administrative burden and 45% reported experiencing a significant or very significant level of administrative burden.

levels of administrative burden in the implementation of ISEC projects compared to other non-EU funded projects.[105]

Several key performance indicators related to the Commission's management of the implementation of the programme were stipulated in the Financial Regulation and are reported below[106]:

1. Concerning the time to award, (the time taken from the call for proposals until the award decision –), although the vast majority of project coordinators surveyed and interviewed did not perceive major problems in the application procedure, a number of coordinating organisations considered the time taken to announce the award decisions a challenge, with 14 respondents (representing 17%) as well as a few interviewees finding the time taken too lengthy. In 2009, 2012 and 2013 the average time taken remained under the maximum limit of six months, however in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011 there were a few cases in which the time taken went over this limit. Despite these exceptions, the average time taken for an award decision decreased over the period with an average of 260 days in 2007 down to 162 in 2012 and 2013 (see figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Time taken from the call for proposals until the award decision



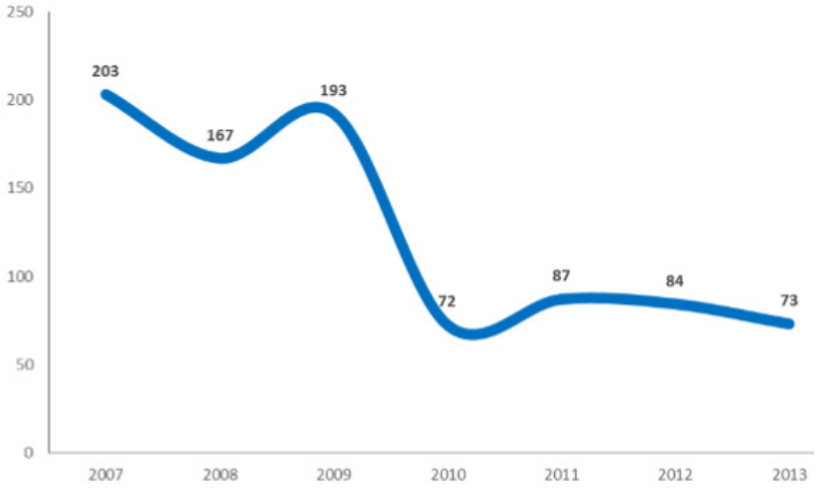
2. A similar and more marked trend can be observed regarding the time to contract (the time taken from the award decision until the grant agreement), with the average time per year going down over the period, from an average of 203 days in 2007 to 73 in 2013 (see figure 4 below). The average time across the whole programming period was 119 days. In addition,

[105] 37% of partner organisations reported experiencing significant administrative burden and 33% reported experiencing some administrative burden, whilst 3% reported experiencing very significant administrative burden. Only one respondent reported experiencing no administrative burden, whilst five respondents did not know.

[106] The deadlines are provided as stipulated in the Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU, EURATOM) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002).

from 89 surveyed coordinating organisations only 9 reported issues in signing the grant agreement, while the remaining 80 viewed the grant agreement process as running smoothly.

Figure 4: Time taken for the signature of the grant agreement



3. Lastly, the evaluation found diverging trends for the time to make payments (the time taken to make the pre-financing payments) and the time taken to make the final payment. Most pre-financing payments were paid on time throughout the programming period, with 95% of payments on time in 2007, and 100% on time for the remaining years except 2012, when 78% of payments were made on time. In contrast to this highly positive trend, although on average the time taken to make final payments also improved to some extent across the programming period, during the final payment stage the sample of projects analysed shows an on-time payment ratio between 45% and 60% for all years except 2007 (23%) and 2011 (65%). A slower performance for the final payment is probably due to the emphasis on verifying and checking all project deliverables and budget headings prior to authorising payment.

EQ8b. *What kinds of initiatives or approaches were adopted to simplify access to and implementation of the actions funded by the programmes?*

Several changes were introduced during the ISEC programming period as a response to weaknesses identified in the first years of implementation. The most salient changes were those made to the application award process and the introduction of targeted calls from 2010 onwards. Another significant change is a shift in favour of shared management under the successor fund, ISF-Police. These changes reflect the ability and flexibility of the Commission to respond to weaknesses with adjustments to the design, access to and/or implementation of the Programme.

Concerning the **changes introduced in the application award process**, throughout the programming period, in addition to the required completion of budget estimation forms, staff-cost analysis and a partnership declaration, applicants were asked to provide the following information in the application form for project grants:

- general project information (including types of activities, partners involved and deliverables);
- content of the project (including problem description, objectives, relevance, innovation and EU added value);
- implementation of the project (approach and methodology, description of activities, risks and opportunities);
- financial management; results (including sustainability) and evaluation and dissemination of information.

However, from 2010, applicants were also requested to provide the information according to work streams, indicators to measure results, evidence of previous programme experience and to provide more details on project partners. While adding a level of complexity, these requirements increased the potential for higher quality projects, motivating the applicants to develop a more rigorous plan and cost estimation of each of their activities as well as to introduce a progress monitoring dimension. However, a few grant beneficiaries found it demanding to report project expenses in detail, using templates that sometimes changed during the project cycle. Some monopoly organisations found the budget rules to be very rigid and would have welcomed a greater degree of flexibility to better manage changes between budget lines.

A small number of interviews with coordinating organisations highlighted some problems with the management of the application process. Some of the issues encountered included finding the application process time consuming and the online application website not being user-friendly. Suggestions for improvement made for the Commission were to put in place a dedicated application support team able to respond quickly and effectively to queries. Introducing a section to deal with the general queries on the application procedure would have advantages and would make it possible to cover queries not covered by the existing guidance. Other suggestions made by coordinating and partner organisations to improve the flexibility of and access to the application procedure included: allowing the application to be submitted in a different language other than English; allowing projects to make changes to the application/information supplied during application after the point of submission; and reducing the amount of information required as part of the application process.

With a view to increasing access to the Programme, information days were organised in Brussels in 2010 and 2011 to explain the application procedures to potential applicants, with the aim of attracting a higher number of applications. Regional information days were held in seven Member States[107] in 2010, 2011 and 2012. It is not possible to establish the impact of these information days based on the data available as the trends found are inconclusive. The trend in number of applications shows a decrease in the total number of applications per AWP year from 2010 to 2011 (respectively 247 and 147), however, a marked increase can be observed from 2011 to 2012 in the total number of applications (respectively 147 and 315)[108].

The Commission also sought to improve the guidance documents for the calls for proposals. Although the application forms became more extensive during the programming period, the guides also provided more detailed support. The increased length partly reflected the increase

[107] AT, IT, RO, HU, SE, SI, and the UK.

[108] It should be noted that in 2011 there was no call for framework partnership proposals.

in the level of detail required in the application form and the introduction (and thus explanation) on the PRIAMOS system[109]. The majority of coordinating organisations reported a positive experience with regard to the application and selection procedure: 74% of online survey respondents indicated that they had encountered no specific problems with the application procedure and only 6% of respondents reported issues with understanding the application documents.

The evaluation found that the share of ineligible project applications amongst all rejected applications went down over time, as a possible consequence of the changes introduced. However, other exogenous factors including improved know-how of the application system and rules as time progressed, and the application experience of repeat applicants, may also have been a reason for the decrease in ineligible projects.

Between 2007 and 2013 there were 54 call for proposals[110], with 4 in 2007, 6 in 2008, 5 in 2009, 12 in 2010, 10 in 2011, 9 in 2012 and 8 in 2013. The possible outcomes of project applications were: successful applications; unsuccessful applications; ineligible applications and withdrawn projects. The overall success rate over 2007-2013 was 42% (from 1 700 applications made over 2007-2013, 818 were awarded, including via reserve lists)[111]. The share of ineligible projects was much lower over the period 2011-2013 (ranging from 7% in 2013 to 15% in 2012) than 2007-2010 (ranging from 24% in 2007 to 31% in 2009). This might have been due to two reasons: 1) an indication that eligibility criteria were better followed and/or understood in later years of ISEC than in early years and 2) thanks to the revision of the Financial Regulation, applicants could be contacted to request further information and avoid ineligibility on purely formal grounds.

Given the 'newness' of the Programme in the early years and the low capability or know-how of relevant stakeholders to write high-quality applications (in response to the Commission's focus on quality rather than volume), a lower level of funding could have been considered at the start of the Programme, or the use of a technical assistance budget as recommended above (see section 9.2). To compensate for the lower fund absorption of some calls, ISEC provided for the possibility of transferring remaining funding between calls (see below). It is recommended that, for future programmes in the field of crime prevention implemented through direct management, this flexibility is maintained.

A difficulty encountered with general calls was that project applications covering a very diverse range of thematic policy areas needed to be compared in terms of quality as part of the selection process, a significant challenge considering the very different target groups and aims. Another issue was the concern that the original design of general calls did not sufficiently meet the aim of supporting EU policy developments in specific areas. To address these issues, **from 2010 onwards targeted calls were introduced** which reflected the EU policy priorities more closely and which drove the budget allocations available in each thematic area. During one of the scoping interviews carried out for the evaluation, it was highlighted that several positive effects of this introduction could be observed, such as an

[109] Which was introduced for applications for restricted calls in 2009 and for open calls in 2011.

[110] This figure includes all types except monopolies.

[111] Between 2007 and 2013 there were at least 520 non-successful projects, while another 339 applications were ineligible. At least 43 applications were rejected because the applicant did not have sufficient financial or operational resources for carrying out the project.

increase in the level of efficiency and transparency[112], an increase in the use of the available budget thanks to the fact that the non-awarded budget from the targeted calls was now used for the general call, maximising available budget; and a diversification of the types of organisations receiving grants, with an analysis of the sample of 151 projects showing that the proportion of NGOs and civil society organisations amongst coordinating organisations increased with the introduction of targeted calls.[113]

In addition, **a shift towards shared management as management mode** was introduced for the successor fund, ISF-Police. Unlike ISEC, which was implemented 100% under direct management, ISF-Police is being implemented on the basis of a combination, with around 60% of the available funding being allocated to national programmes under shared management and 40% allocated to Union actions under direct management. This change is expected to have an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the ISF Programme. However, it has not been possible, within the scope of this ex-post evaluation, to identify and determine whether the shift to shared management has provided efficiency and effectiveness gains in the current ISF Programme.

7.4 Coherence

EQ9a. *To what extent was the ISEC programme coherent with actions related to the prevention of and fight against crime supported by other EU financial instruments?*

In order to ensure coherence and avoid duplication between ISEC and other EU programmes/interventions, there was an ongoing consultation process from the planning phase to implementation phase of projects, which included the following actions: an inter-service consultation (ISC) carried out during the drafting of the AWPs where the different DGs had the possibility to provide comments, in the case of ISEC it included DGs such as DG TAXUD, DG JUST and DG ECHO; several working groups at Commission level covering ISEC, such as the Asset Recovery Office Platform (AROPLATFORM), where the needs and priorities of ISEC were discussed; the assessment of projects proposals on an ad-hoc basis to avoid double-financing of a project;114 the involvement of other DGs in DG HOME's evaluation committee, to ensure synergies between policy fields.

In order to analyse the coherence of ISEC with other EU programmes, the following programmes were selected for examination: Criminal Justice Support Programme (JPEN), Daphne III (Fight against violence), 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7) and Anti-fraud programme (Hercule II). An analysis of their coherence with ISEC is provided below.

Coherence with JPEN

[112] In spite of the human resources needed to prepare targeted calls efficiency gains included better handling of financial verifications and the perceived level of quality of the content of the proposals selected.

[113] Under the general calls in the period before 2010, smaller organisations represented only 18% of all coordinating organisations implementing grants, while in the period 2010-2013 they represented 45% of all coordinating organisations implementing grants under targeted calls.

[114] The project proposals had to list other EU funding in the application.

JPEN is designed to contribute to mutual recognition in criminal matters and supports initiatives for the exchange of best practices between legal, judicial and administrative authorities and the legal professions. It is coherent in scope to ISEC in so far as JPEN provides exchange of information and best practices in the area of criminal justice and protection of victims. There is thus ample scope for JPEN and ISEC to mutually reinforce respective actions and results. A large number of actions selected for grants or tenders from 2007 to 2013 under JPEN fell into training activities mainly of the judiciary or of legal practitioners, and mutual learning and exchanges between Member State authorities through for example seminars/symposia, showing scope for coherence with ISEC activities relating to 'training, exchange of staff and experts' and 'actions on operational cooperation and coordination'. Other JPEN activities included development of e-Justice at EU/national level and support and advice services, through for example websites, which had scope for coherence with ISEC activities regarding the 'development and transfer of technology and methodology'. In addition, JPEN activities concerning good practice dissemination with the purpose of supporting mutual learning had scope for coherence or overlaps with ISEC's 'awareness and dissemination activities'. Regarding potential overlaps at project-level, no particular overlap was identified as JPEN projects focused predominantly on judicial cooperation and tools to further such cooperation, which is outside the scope of ISEC.

Coherence with Daphne III

Another programme identified with potential for synergies and/or overlaps with ISEC was Daphne III. Created as part of the European Framework Programme "Fundamental Rights and Justice", Daphne III was designed to provide preventive measures against all forms of violence and support to victims and groups at risk (children, young people and women). Daphne III-funded actions were mainly led by national NGOs (including national platforms and networks), universities and European networks, platforms and forums. In line with the focus of the Programme on prevention, the projects mostly implemented were those related to 'awareness-raising, information and dissemination' activities, 'analytical activities' and 'mutual learning, exchanges of good practices and cooperation', with scope for coherence/overlap with similar ISEC activities.

Analysis of ISEC's last two specific objectives on 'exchange of best practices for protection of victims and witnesses' shows potential for complementarity with Daphne III's objectives on 'contribution to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence' and 'providing support measures and protection of victims and groups at risk'. The 2007 and 2008 ISEC AWPs included the protection of witnesses and victims as a separate priority area under the open calls for proposals for grants. As commented by Commission officials, the focus on victims and witnesses was later reduced in ISEC's AWP and subsequent calls for proposals encouraged the increase in synergies with Daphne III managed by the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUSTICE).[115]. In the 2009 to 2013 Annual Work Programmes the protection of victims in specific crime areas was included

[115] Although the focus on protection of victims was narrowed to specific conditions (to terrorism and crimes), ISEC's AWPs maintained the possibility for supporting projects on the protection of victims, as the basic act was not amended.

under the priority areas of the open targeted and general calls for proposal that dealt with victims of human trafficking, victims of terrorism, victims of radicalisation and organised crime and child victims of sexual exploitation. Complementarity between the two programmes was achieved by the two Directorate-Generals (DG HOME and DG JUSTICE) working together on stimulating synergies. These were achieved between ISEC and Daphne III in particular in the area of trafficking in human beings, which showed the largest potential for complementarity/overlaps.

Coherence with FP7

In addition, potential for coherence was identified between the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7), which aimed to strengthen the scientific and technological base of European industry and to encourage its international competitiveness, while promoting research that supports EU policies. One of the themes of FP7 relates to security and includes activities such as ensuring security of citizens, infrastructure and utilities and borders through technological solutions for civil protection, systems and services. These activities are complementary to the ISEC activities on 'development and transfer of technology and methodology' and 'analytical, monitoring, evaluation and audit activities'. Furthermore, cross-cutting themes of FP7, including 'security systems integration, interconnectivity and interoperability', focus on technologies seeking to enhance cooperation among law enforcement and thus have similarities with the law enforcement theme of ISEC.

Coherence with Hercule II

Another EU programme with possible overlaps or coherence with ISEC is Hercule II, which focuses on the objective of countering fraud and other illegal activities affecting the EU's financial interests. Both Programmes aim to enhance cooperation between law enforcement authorities across the EU. However, Hercule II addresses the national authorities dealing with the EU's financial interests, which do not necessarily need to be law enforcement authorities. Furthermore, the scope of crime prevention in ISEC is much broader.

Actions funded under Hercule II included technical assistance for national authorities, in particular providing specific knowledge, equipment and IT tools facilitating transnational cooperation, and training activities for law enforcement agencies which contribute in a preventive and/or operational way to combating fraud detrimental to the financial interests of the European Union. A third 'legal part' included co-financing of trainings, seminars, comparative studies, and conferences seeking to address the legal and judicial protection of the EU financial interests against fraud, corruption and any other illegal activities. Results from the stakeholder interviews suggest that the scope for coherence with Hercule II is the largest in activities regarding the development of technology and training of law enforcement staff. Although in practice Hercule II activities are focusing on protecting EU's financial interests, the nature of these activities had a potential for overlaps with topics which were covered by ISEC.

EQ9b. *To what extent was the ISEC programme coherent with actions related to the prevention of and fights against crime supported by national resources of the Member States?*

The assessment of this evaluation question was limited by a lack of available data due to the fact that, according to a number of Commission officials interviewed, national actions were not systematically reviewed on their potential coherence/similarities during the design and implementation of ISEC. However, Member States received a draft of the Work Programme and were invited to provide their comments. Following incorporation of their comments, the final version of the AWP was then adopted via a Decision. This allowed Member States to highlight any potential overlaps or duplication between ISEC activities and their national actions. It can be argued that the Commission and Member States could have worked together further to ensure a higher degree of coherence, but this would have been challenging given the number of Member States involved and the high number of thematic areas covered by ISEC. Overall, the majority of the Member State representatives stated that ISEC was an excellent tool that enabled the Member States to better implement actions to prevent crime in the different areas and that the ISEC priorities responded to the practical cooperation needs of the Member States.

EQ9c. *To what extent is it possible to identify synergies between the results of actions funded under the ISEC Programme and the results of similar actions supported under other EU Programmes (such as the Hercule Programmes), that were carried out by different organisational entities in the Member States and/or third countries?*

Regarding the possibility to identify synergies between results of ISEC actions and similar actions supported under other EU Programmes, evidence collected from project coordinators via an online survey shows that 33% of respondents were aware of other activities implemented outside the project and covering similar objectives.[116] Similarly, 31% of partner organisations responded that they were aware of other activities implemented at national, international and EU levels. These activities included, for example, a Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) study on extreme form of labour exploitation, and analysis conducted by Transparency International and ALTER-EU regarding lobbying regulation issues. However, these results are not representative of partner organisations as this survey question received a low number of responses from them.[117]

Examples of synergies provided by coordinating organisation survey respondents were:

- **Project reference JLS/2009/ISEC/CFP/AG**: the project coordinators scheduled training activities with CEPOL, to develop a common platform with an existing platform created by another project. According to the survey respondent, the project avoided overlapping and unnecessary expenditure of money on redundant activities;

[116] The online survey to coordinating organisations had a total of 102 responses. The question 'While implementing the project(s) your organisation coordinated, were you aware of any other activities outside your project being implemented that covered similar objectives' received 90 responses.

[117] The online survey to co-beneficiaries had a total of 110 responses. The question 'While implementing the project(s) your organisation contributed to, were you aware of any other activities outside your project being implemented that covered similar objectives' received 31 responses.

- **CRYME JLS/2007/ISEC/55:** the project CRYME created a strong relationship with the Italian Ministry of Justice, helping to foster cooperation between several mosques and institutions and to raise the awareness in European organisations on the importance of working in prison;
- **HOME/2012/ISEC/AG/4000004378**: The survey results indicate that the project revealed emerging risks in the interconnection between radicalization, counter-radicalization and social movements of different kinds (left, right, pro / anti-immigrant) by raising awareness within intelligence services of various countries, as well as the police;
- **HOME/2011/ISEC/AG/400002575**: the EURAD project created strong synergies between the partners and many former foreign fighters, as well as organisations representing ethnic and religious minorities in many countries, including Syria, Iraq and Libya and contributed to national analysis on the possibility got terrorists to become informers as an alternative to criminalization. The project contributed to reporting to various authorities on the presence of non-Muslims foreign fighters in several international and European countries.

Concerning co-beneficiaries, only ten respondents answered the question on the creation of synergies and types of synergies. The answers included similar examples, relating to the exchange of experiences or enhanced cooperation between project partners.

7.5 EU added value

EQ10. *To what extent would the beneficiaries under the ISEC programme (Member States, Universities, Institutes, Associations, etc.) be able to carry out the activities necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of the prevention of and fight against crime without the support of the ISEC programme?*

The added value of the Programme is closely linked to the 'importance' of EU funding for the organisations involved and to its ability to foster transnational cooperation which would often not have taken place if projects were supported through national funding alone. Findings suggest that the Programme financing was, overall, proportionate to the funding needs of coordinating organisations in order for them to implement their project, with 88% of surveyed coordinating organisations finding that the level of funding was sufficient to implement the activities for the projects they coordinated. Results from the same survey further suggest that a significant proportion of the activities developed under ISEC would have not been developed in the absence of ISEC funding. This was particularly noted for activities in specific ISEC thematic areas. For example, an interviewee reported that ISEC was the only source of funding for CBRN-related activities in Spain and that without EU funding none of these activities would have been carried out, notably given the start of the economic crisis in 2008. Another example, bearing in mind that over 30 projects were implemented to support the implementation of the Prüm Decisions (over EUR 17 million) and covering most EU Member States, is the fact that several interviewees suggested that, without ISEC funding, Prüm data exchange would not have been developed due to a lack of national funding.

Furthermore, 87% of coordinating organisations[118] reported that they would have struggled to find national or other funding opportunities to fully fund and implement their envisaged activities. However, 13% of respondents stated that they would have been fully financed through other funding sources to deliver projects. For those coordinating organisations for which funding was not available, the overall majority indicated that this was due to the fact that alternative sources of funding did not exist, while more than one fifth explained that their envisaged activities were not eligible for funding from other sources at several levels. In the difficult financial context of the time, many organisations reported seeing their national funding cut and some being forced to make organisational changes (i.e. cancelling their membership to European networks or reducing the staff involved in these networks) following financial constraints. These findings confirm that ISEC filled a gap in this regard.

Those organisations which indicated that they would have been able to find funding from another source were also asked about their reasons for applying to ISEC funding. The table below presents the responses provided per reason. The fact that the vast majority of reasons provided for choosing ISEC over other funding sources (30 out of 36 responses) relates to an aspect of ISEC's EU added value suggests that the programme's EU added value was the main reason for applying for funding.

Table 1: Reasons for choosing ISEC over other funding sources

Reason for choosing ISEC	Count
Opportunity to exchange information and good practices with other Member States	9
Opportunity to work with partner organisations in other Member States	8
Opportunity to have an impact at EU level	7
Opportunity to increase understanding of EU policy framework and available operational tools	4
Opportunity to work with partner organisations in my own country	2
It meant that our organisation could use the other funds available for other priorities	2
Other	2
Greater likelihood of impact than with other funds	1
Procedure for applying for funding was easier than for other funds	1

Interviews with coordinating organisations further suggest that ISEC funding made a substantial difference to the scale of results achieved. Although some activities could have been implemented without ISEC funding, most projects funded through monopoly bodies would not have been able to operate at the same level and in all Member States. For instance, RAILPOL started as a regional cooperation initiative between Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, but thanks to ISEC funding, it grew to cover twelve additional Member States. AQUAPOL continued its activities after the ISEC funding ended but would not have started without this initial financial boost.

The importance of ISEC funding is also demonstrated by the withdrawal of national members from ISEC-funded projects once the EU funding ended. For example, an interviewee reported

[118] 90 organisations provided responses to this question.

that some countries had to stop being members of RAILPOL as they were not able to finance their participation through national resources (e.g. to cover travel costs of staff to participate in exchanges or training). ISEC funding provided financial support to those countries (e.g. BG, RO, SI, LT) with limited national resources allocated in their national programmes to specific areas, such as cross-border cooperation, exchanges of experience and technologies. On the other hand, some themes covered by ISEC were cross-cutting and also interesting for other DGs and EU Agencies, which meant that they could also be funded through other sources (notably in the fields of drugs trafficking, financial or economic crime). For example, cooperation amongst almost all partner organisations of the European Competition Network, a network of national competition authorities of EEA countries initially called the European Antitrust Training in Forensic IT (EAT_FIT) and funded under ISEC, was subsequently funded and coordinated by DG Competition.

As mentioned above, a key aspect of ISEC's EU added value lies in its ability to foster transnational cooperation. Although concerns were raised during the first two programming years with regard to the actual contribution of partners to ISEC projects and the difficulties for some coordinating organisations to find the 'right' partner, overall and especially later on in the Programme, partnership cooperation was considered very positive by the stakeholders consulted. Changes introduced to the eligibility criteria of projects largely contributed to this.

The important contribution of ISEC funding to transnational cooperation and implementation of EU law in the various areas covered by the prevention and fight against crime was highlighted during a high number of interviews with all types of stakeholders. More specifically, some stakeholders commented positively on the advantages brought by the ISEC Programme, which allowed for the funding and development of research projects. Other security related programmes (e.g. Horizon 2020) were considered by some stakeholders to be too technical and restrictive and they concluded therefore that research projects, such as for example the Organised Crime Portfolio, may have not been granted the necessary funding in the absence of ISEC. Even though the amounts involved can be considered to be relatively low, or sometimes even insignificant, when compared to the national funding dedicated to some of thematic areas covered, stakeholders overall agreed that ISEC made a significant contribution to national law enforcement agencies cooperating closer transnationally, to building mutual trust, and to the formation of new relationships between organisations working with counterparts in other Member States. Furthermore, based on the online survey to project participants, when asked whether their participation in the ISEC project made a positive impact on their daily work, more than 81% (out of 107 respondents) confirmed that it did. Many mentioned that the Programme allowed them to cover those aspects which would usually be the first to be reduced if resources were scarce; this helped to increase the possibility of action in all relevant areas (e.g. training and dissemination activities) and especially international cooperation.

Transnational partnerships boosted cooperation and mutual trust amongst the ISEC beneficiaries also after the end of the projects with 35% of the respondents to the online survey to coordinating organisations noting that cooperation amongst partners fully continued after the project funding ended. However, in many cases the actual impact at EU level and thus the EU added value of national projects depends to a certain extent on the actual promotion and dissemination of the transferable outcomes at EU level. The evaluation found room for improvement in this area (see section 8).

8. CONCLUSIONS

The ISEC programme played a key role in fostering action at an EU level in the areas of preventing and tackling crime at a time where EU policies in these areas were non-existent or at early stages of development. ISEC contributed to a large extent to the achievement of its first two specific objectives, the promotion and development of horizontal methods and tools necessary for strategically preventing and fighting crime and guaranteeing security and public order, as well as the promotion and development of cooperation among law enforcement agencies and other national authorities and Union bodies. The programme contributed to the promotion and development of best practices for the protection and support of witnesses and crime victims to a lesser extent.

Relevance

In terms of relevance, the evaluation found that the ISEC objectives and results were overall highly relevant to the needs of Member States in the areas covered by the programme. This was largely thanks to the fact that the Programme covered a wide range of thematic areas and allowed for the provision of funding to a wide range of stakeholders. However, the specific objectives concerning the development of best practices for protection and support to witnesses and victims attracted fewer projects. Furthermore, the demand-driven design of the programme sought to allow ISEC to target funding to Member State and EU needs. However, this was only partly achieved given that this demand-driven design resulted in a significant geographical imbalance, with Member States like Italy and Germany coordinating very large numbers of projects, while the other Member States coordinated very few projects. In order to allow Member States more equal access to funding and to improve their participation, a shift towards shared management mode was introduced for the successor fund, ISF-Police. Unlike ISEC, which was implemented only under direct management, ISF-Police is being implemented on the basis of a combination, with around 60% of the available funding being allocated to national programmes under shared management and 40% allocated to Union actions under direct management. It is expected that this shift could increase the ISF-Police's effectiveness and efficiency.

The evaluation also identified a time lag between the formulation of priorities under AWPs and their actual implementation; this was due to the fact that the AWPs reflected the priorities set in the previous year, which meant that there was a one year difference between the setting of priorities and their implementation, which at times hindered the programme's relevance. This was partly addressed in the successor fund, ISF-Police, through the inclusion of emergency assistance "to address urgent and specific needs".[119]

[119] Article 10, Regulation No 513/2014.

Effectiveness

The main results identified from ISEC projects were enhanced networking, forms of sharing information and best practices and increased levels of knowledge and skills of practitioners. This is followed by improved understanding of methods, tools and practices and the increased take up of new or transferred methods, tools and practices. The programme's effectiveness was evidenced by the fact that the majority of projects accomplished their planned activities and achieved their objectives. ISEC projects were particularly effective in contributing to the development of stable transnational cooperation between Member States and their agencies, as well as better exchange of information, particularly in the field of forensics, drugs, PNR, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings. National authorities interviewed also reported that ISEC projects fostered cooperation between agencies in the same Member State, increasing synergies between the law enforcement Agencies. The cooperation between the public and private sector in Member States was limited.

Room for improvement was identified the monitoring of projects and the compilation of project results and deliverables. The evaluation found that the creation of a central repository containing detailed data on individual ISEC project results and outputs would have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the programme. For example, methodologies developed to investigate certain types of crimes, reports, analysis, best practices, training materials, etc. could have been compiled centrally and thus, their potential multiplier effect and continuous usage for other interested stakeholders in other Member States could have been maximized. On the basis of the above finding, for projects conducted under Direct Management under the successor funding instrument, ISF, a repository of the results and outputs of such projects could be created and shared via, for example, the European Crime Prevention Network, the Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network (CIWIN), the website of the EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator[120] or via other Commission services. This has not yet been put into practice under ISF but could be taken into consideration for the next MFF.

Furthermore, given the relative newness of the Programme and the lack of resources of the Commission at the time to closely follow all ISEC projects from start to end, the evaluation showed that a dedicated technical assistance budget could have been useful. Such a budget could have better supported the development of a state of the art monitoring system to collect and analyse data on financial progress, outputs and results of projects, as well as provided technical expertise throughout the lifecycle of projects and increased the dissemination of results.

This has been addressed to a limited extent under the successor fund, ISF-Police, through the possibility for the financial instrument to contribute annually to technical assistance activities, which could be used for the development of a monitoring system.[121] However, under ISF-

[120] See http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/.
[121] Article 9, Regulation (EU) No 513/2014.

Police the technical assistance available cannot be used for staff contracting and the development and implementation of a monitoring system requires also additional human resources on both the Member State and the Commission side. This could be addressed in the future MFF.

Efficiency

ISEC was found to be efficient to a large extent. In general, the vast majority of consulted stakeholders perceived EU funding to have been sufficient and to have had an overall high or very high value for money across all thematic areas. Flexibility of the Fund was appreciated by the stakeholders. No significant differences in the cost-effectiveness of individual projects were found following a comparison of similar financial inputs to their outputs and results.

An upward trend in the absorption of funds spent on action grants with an overall absorption rate of 74% across the period 2007-2013, and a peak of 79% in the last year, suggests improved implementation of the programme. This is likely to be a result of changes introduced during the ISEC programming period and of increased Member State and Commission experience with the programme. Furthermore, the funding provided through ISEC was perceived by the vast majority of consulted stakeholders as having been sufficient and as having been highly cost-efficient for all implemented projects. In particular, the creation of networks was found to be highly cost-efficient.

Although the evaluation found mixed responses regarding the perception of administrative burden related to the implementation of the programme when stakeholders where consulted, overall it was concluded that the ISEC Programme had a similar amount of administrative burden to other EU programmes.

However, the following areas for improvement in terms of efficiency were identified: additional support could be provided to potential applicants during the application phase, the monitoring of project outputs and results could be enhanced by requesting more detailed final reporting from project beneficiaries. With regard to improving the monitoring of project results on the basis of the required reporting, it was concluded also that a qualitative assessment of the results of the Programme was missing due to the absence of a peer review on project results conducted by external experts. Although under ISF-P this has slightly improved as Member States have to submit an Annual Implementation Report under Shared Management and Interim and Final Reports under Direct Management, the absence of a peer review of results still represents a shortcoming that could be addressed under the next generation of Funds.

As already stated under relevance, with regards to dissemination of project outputs and results, consulted experts and coordinating organisations recognised that the absence of a central repository bringing together the findings of ISEC projects informing stakeholders on

available results has decreased the effectiveness and efficiency of the Programme to a certain extent.

Coherence

ISEC supported the implementation of EU obligations and cross-border cooperation among Member States in a large number of crime areas. In the context of financial crisis, national funding was very scarce or not available for such cooperation and thus, no significant risk of duplication with national funding streams was found. ISEC was therefore deemed as highly coherent with initiatives at national level.

A substantial scope for coherence and complementarity was identified between ISEC and other EU Programmes, namely JPEN, DAPHNE III, FP7 and Hercule II. Thanks to cooperation between DG Home and DG Justice, synergies were achieved between DAPHNE III and the two ISEC specific objectives relating to the promotion and development of best practices for protection and support of witnesses and crime victims, especially in the area of trafficking in human beings. Although potentially a theoretical overlap between ISEC and the remaining EU programmes is possible, no evidence of overlaps was found.

Overall, an effective coordination at both design, implementation and delivery stage was crucial to maximise the potential for coherence and complementarity and to avoid the risk of duplication. It can be concluded, on the basis of the evidence collected, that this was achieved to a large extent.

EU Added Value

In line with the strong transnational dimension reflected in its objectives, the ISEC programme was found to have had a high EU added value. Due to a lack of national funding for transnational cooperation in many Member States, a significant part of activities developed under ISEC would not have been developed in the absence of funding from this programme. In other cases, ISEC funding made a substantial difference to the scale of results achieved. Even though other funding was available in similar policy areas, ISEC was unique in the high level of funding provided, the number of different crime areas covered, and the solely transnational focus of the programme.

In the vast majority of cases, coordinating and partner organisations considered that cooperation and exchange of information with organisations from other countries helped them to gain more knowledge and expertise on the subjects they were working on. However, the EU added value of projects depended to a certain extent on the actual promotion and dissemination of the transferable outcomes at EU level, which was limited.

As mentioned above, the geographical distribution of coordinating and partner organisations that received funding was highly uneven and concentrated in a few Members States. EU added value could have been higher if organisations had been better spread over the Member States. Various reasons seemed to have caused this uneven spread. Despite the Commission's attempt to stimulate applications through regional information days, applications were still very dependent on factors such as the Member States' Committee representative's pro-activeness, knowledge and capacity of organisations to submit high quality proposals and their compliance with the eligibility criteria. As mentioned above, this geographical imbalance has been addressed through the shift towards shared management. Although under the current fund MS are entitled to implement transnational projects and/ or national projects with potential for transferability, the shift towards shared management could, however, mean that in practice many projects implemented by Member States under ISF-P tend to have less of a transnational dimension than projects previously conducted under CIPS, which due to the Direct management mode naturally had a higher transnational dimension. In consequence, it can be stated that the EU added value of the ISF-P fund has somehow decreased compared to ISEC.

ANNEX 1 - PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Leading Directorate-General	DG HOME
Participating Units of DG HOME	A2 – Legal Affairs B2 – Visa Policy and document security B3 – Information Systems for Borders and Security C2 – Border Management and Schengen E1 – Union Actions E2 – National programmes for South and East Europe, evaluation, AMF/ISF Committee E3 - National programmes for North and West Europe, budget, MFF, agencies
Participating DGs	Secretariat-General DG BUDG DG ENV DG ENERGY DG GROW DG JUST
Roadmap approval	November 2015
Agenda Planning	2016/HOME/073
External consulting firm specialised in evaluation	Contract signed in August 2016 with ICF Consulting Services Limited
Number of steering group meetings	5
Last deliverable handed in	January 2018
Approval of the final report by Steering Group	January 2018

1. Overview

A large part of the ex post evaluation of the Prevention and fight against crime 2007-2013 (ISEC) Programme is the stakeholder consultations. The consultations were conducted by the European Commission and by an external consulting company specialised in evaluation ('the external evaluators') in the framework of their contract with the Commission to provide a study on the ex post evaluation of the implementation of ISEC. An overview of the consultation processes, the type of stakeholders consulted as well as the results of these consultations is provided below.

1.1 The public consultation conducted by the European Commission

From 14 July 2016 to 15 November 2016, the European Commission held an Internet-based public consultation on the ISEC Programme 2007-2013 in the form of an online questionnaire. Contributions were sought from individuals (experts, beneficiaries), public authorities, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, social partners and civil society, academic institutions, international organisations, EU Institutions and Agencies, based in EU Member States or third countries. The aim of the consultation was to collect views and opinions on the results and impacts of projects and actions co-financed by the ISEC programme during 2007-2013 and to assess their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value. The final number of respondents was very low: three participants from three Member States (Germany, Italy and Austria), all of them EU citizens. Given this low response rate, contributions cannot be considered to be representative of the targeted stakeholders. However, the results may provide additional insights and will be presented below together with the findings of the other consultations. In addition, the fact that the information available on the identities of the participants is based on self-reported values which cannot be verified should be considered as a further limitation.

1.2 The consultations conducted by the external evaluators

In addition to the consultation conducted by the European Commission, the external evaluators conducted targeted consultations with a range of stakeholders through online surveys, stakeholder consultations, thematic case studies, expert workshops and expert input. This section provides an overview of the type of consultation process that took place in each case. The unit responsible for the evaluation (DG HOME, Unit E2) supported the access to relevant EU-level stakeholders. Stakeholders were approached via e-mail introducing the study and the importance of their contribution, including a letter of introduction from DG HOME.

1.2.1 Online surveys

The external evaluators launched three online surveys at the end of December 2016 addressed at coordinating organisations, partner organisations and project participants.

Online survey for coordinating organisations

This online survey was available in five languages: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. The survey ran for four weeks – from 4 November 2016 to 5 December 2016. The goal of this survey was to invite all coordinating organisations of ISEC projects to participate by answering questions on the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value). From a total of 658 contacts invited to complete the survey, 156 responses were received (97 complete responses and 59 partial responses).

Online survey for partner organisations

The coordinating organisations were asked to send this survey to the relevant partner organisations of ISEC projects. Similarly to the online survey for coordinating organisations, this survey was open from 4 November 2016 until 5 December 2016 and it was available in the same five languages. A total of 110 responses to the survey were received of which 37 were complete and 73 partial responses.

Online survey for project participants

This online survey ran for 12 weeks – from 1 December 2016 until 28 February 2017. It was also available in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. The participants were identified with the assistance of the coordinating organisations which forwarded the survey to the participants of their ISEC projects. The total number of replies of this online survey was 285 from which 118 are complete responses and 167 are partial.

1.2.2 Stakeholder consultation

The external evaluators carried out 41 interviews with six types of stakeholders. The interviews were either held face-to-face or via telephone conversation. The six types of interview conducted for the purpose of the evaluation were: scoping interviews with Commission officials, EU agencies and offices, Commission officials responsible for other EU programmes, European and international organisations, representatives of monopoly bodies, and Member State representatives. The external evaluators carried out these interviews in a semi-structured way based on questionnaires developed for each stakeholder type.

1.2.3 Case studies

Following the request of DG HOME, the external evaluators carried out thematic case studies. The aim of these case studies was to examine more closely the results and impacts in one specific thematic area, and where possible to link them to the wider context at EU level. In total 8 thematic case studies were carried with the participation of six Member States– Police

cooperation (Germany), Economic and financial crime (Italy), Cybercrime (Italy, Ireland, UK), Chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials and explosives (CBRNE) (Spain), Drugs and firearms trafficking (UK), Radicalisation (The Netherlands), Forensics (Germany), and Organised crime (Italy).

1.2.4 Expert workshop and expert input

The external evaluators organised two expert workshops which were held in Brussels – one on 23 September 2016 and one on 6 March 2017. Both workshops were carried out with experts involved in the evaluation. The second workshop was followed by written inputs from the experts on the findings presented in the draft final evaluation report.

2. Results

The most significant results of the consultations carried out by the European Commission and the external evaluators are grouped in this section and presented according to the following evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value.

2.1 Relevance

The assessment of the relevance of ISEC was focused on the extent to which the objectives and the design of the Programme corresponded to the needs related to the prevention of and fight against crime. Regarding the relevance of the objectives, the stakeholder consultations confirmed that the first two specific objectives "coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding of law enforcement agencies, other national authorities and related EU bodies" and "promotion and development of horizontal method and tools" were highly relevant and necessary. An overview of the opinions of the respondents to the surveys on the ISEC programme shows that 69% strongly agreed with the statement that the objectives and the expected results of the ISEC project corresponded to their needs/the needs of their organisations. Concerning the relevance of the design of the programme, the results from the consultations, the interviews and the expert workshops, show that in broad terms the programme allowed for flexibility in the funding of different types of actions that could evolve and change over time.

In addition, the consulted stakeholders agreed on the importance of ISEC during the financial crisis, as no alternative for financing transnational cooperation in the area of prevention and fight against crime existed. Furthermore, the extensive scope of the programme was, overall, appreciated by the applicants and covered their needs on the ground. The European Commission public consultation supports these positive findings. For instance, Question 7 asked the participants to what extent, in their opinion, the projects and the activities funded in their country of residence addressed the needs related to prevention of and fight against crime. The majority (2/3) replied that they related to the needs to a significant extent and the rest (1/3) only "to a limited extent".

2.2 Effectiveness

ISEC-funded projects contributed to achieving the general objectives of the Programme and its specific objectives related to developing horizontal tools and methods, and cooperation, coordination and mutual understanding in the area of prevention and fight against crime. The evaluation of the effectiveness of ISEC aimed to assess the extent to which the Programme was effective in achieving those general and specific objectives. Question 4 of the Commission's public consultation asked participants whether, based on their experience, the actions financed by ISEC in their country were consistent with the objectives of the Fund. Two of the respondents replied that they "do not know" (DE and IT) and the third one replied that they were consistent "to a limited extent" (AT).

Based on the evidence collected, the external evaluation findings suggest that ISEC broadly achieved most of its specific objectives which, it can be argued, contributed to crime prevention and, ultimately, better security for EU citizens. Furthermore, the project coordinating organisations, partner organisations and participants surveyed perceived ISEC to have contributed to a great extent to better security of EU citizens. Only 13% of participants and 4% of coordinating organisations respectively responded that the ISEC projects made no contribution at all; none of the partner organisations reported this. Surveyed stakeholders also believed that ISEC made a contribution to the promotion and development of horizontal methods and tools, with 37% of coordinating organisations, 25% of partner organisations, and 33% of participants respectively perceiving ISEC to have made a very significant contribution. Only 1% of coordinating organisations believed that ISEC made no difference at all.

Regarding the extent to which projects under ISEC achieved their objectives, implemented activities and delivered expected outputs, the overall evidence collected suggests that ISEC projects have largely achieved their objectives and delivered the expected outputs. The external evaluators' in-depth analysis of a sample of projects showed that the majority of projects achieved all their objectives (84%), while 15 % of projects partially achieved their objectives and only 2 projects did not achieve their objectives. Similarly, the final assessments by the Commission of the sample of analysed projects shows that 75% of projects have been assessed as excellent or very good with beneficial results and impacts achieved; 20% of projects have been assessed as acceptable/average, while 5% of the projects were marked as poor or very poor. The vast majority of coordinating organisations surveyed (89) also reported that project activities were delivered fully (85%) or that most activities were delivered (14%). In addition, project coordinating organisations (91) responded that the objectives were fully achieved (82 responses), while according to nine responses objectives were only partially achieved.

2.3 Efficiency

The efficiency of ISEC aimed to measure the extent to which the costs of the actions funded under the programme were justified compared to the outputs. The evaluation focused on examining the financial efficiency of the Prorgamme across the funding years and funding

mechanisms, the extent to which the resources were used efficiently, and the efficiency of the Commission's management of human resources.

As confirmed by the stakeholders consulted and desk research performed, it was concluded that the ISEC Programme had a similar amount of administrative burden as other EU programmes. Question 8 of the Commission's public consultation asked whether the participants considered that the effect of the actions carried out under the Fund were achieved to a reasonable extent in terms of the financial and human resources deployed. Responses show a mixed picture, with the respondent from DE finding that benefits were greater than costs, the respondent from IT replying with "I don't know" while the third respondent (AT) replied that the costs are greater than benefits and added that the costs in administration are high and with little use in return. Findings from the survey of coordinating organisations are also mixed regarding the overall perception of administrative burden related to the implementation of ISEC. One in five respondents reported that no administrative burden was perceived whereas just over one third of respondents reported experiencing some administrative burden. In contrast, a quarter of respondents reported experiencing a significant level of administrative burden and just one in five a very significant level of administrative burden. The survey with partner organisations confirms similar levels of administrative burden in implementing their projects compared to other non-Commission funded projects: the large majority of partner organisations reported experiencing administrative burden. In this regard, 37% reported experiencing significant administrative burden and 33% reported experiencing some administrative burden, whilst 3% reported experiencing very significant administrative burden. Only one respondent reported experiencing no administrative burden and five respondents reported that they did not know. As regards to the financial efficiency of the Programme, EU funding was overall perceived to have been sufficient for the vast majority of consulted stakeholders and an overall high or very high value for money was pointed out across all activities. The majority of coordinating organisations (87,6%) considered the EU funding provided to be sufficient. However, 11 coordinating organisations did not find the funding available sufficient and they highlighted issues such as difficulty in securing co-financing from other sources and ensuring continuity of certain outputs.

Concerning the efficiency of human resources employed, the management by the Commission was overall considered positively, although the results of the consultations noted the existence of some issues in the technical follow-up of projects, the guidance provided to stakeholders and the interpretation of rules.

2.4 Coherence

The evaluation criterion of coherence refers to the extent to which the intervention did not contradict or create duplications with other interventions with similar objectives. The assessment targeted coherence with other EU programmes in the same field and coherence with national programme and initiatives.

The external evaluators' assessment identified substantial scope for coherence and complementarity between ISEC and **other** selected **EU Programmes** such as JPEN, DAPHNE III, FP7 and Hercule II.
For instance, based on information received from stakeholder interviews, the scope for coherence with Hercule II is the largest in activities regarding development of technology and training of law enforcement staff. For example, training financed under Hercule II addressed similar topics as ISEC.

The results from the European Commission's public consultation were not sufficiently conclusive to substantiate such findings. Question 10 of the consultation asked participants about the extent to which they consider that the EU funding for the ISEC programme was coherent with other actions in the same field funded by other EU financial instruments. Only one respondent replied that the EU funding for ISEC is coherent with other actions. The other two did not know.

The examination of the external evaluators concluded that ISEC was largely coherent with initiatives at **national level**. ISEC supported the implementation of EU obligations and cross-border cooperation among Member States in the different crime areas. In the context of financial crisis, national funding was not available for such cooperation and thus, no significant risk of duplication with national funding streams existed. Question 11 of the Commission's public consultation asked participants whether they considered the EU funding provided for the ISEC Programme coherent with the national actions of the Member States. The replies varied from coherent (DE), to coherent to a limited extent (AT), while one respondent did not know (IT). Despite the mixed results from the public consultation, the assessment of the external evaluators found that overall, the majority of Member State representatives stated that ISEC was an excellent tool that enabled Member States to better implement actions to prevent crime in the different areas, and that the ISEC priorities responded to the practical cooperation needs of the Member States.

2.5 EU added value

The external evaluators assessed the EU added value of ISEC in three directions – the transnational dimension, partnership aspects, and the importance of the EU funding provided.

While examining the **transnational dimension** of the EU added value of ISEC, the external evaluator concluded that due to the demand-driven design of the Programme (based on applications), the geographical distribution of coordinating and partner organisations that received funding was uneven and concentrated in few Member States. Italy, Germany, UK, the Netherlands led around 50 percent of the projects during the evaluation period (2007-2013). During the same evaluation period the involvement of organisations as coordinators of funded projects located in Cyprus, Denmark, Luxembourg and Malta was very limited – five or less projects were coordinated by organisations located in these Member States. Thus, the evaluator concluded that the EU added value could have been higher if organisations in all Member States had participated to a higher degree.

The added value of **partnerships** was considered to be high. The interviews with coordinating organisations suggested that, overall, the partnerships worked well in the vast majority of cases, and that they were viewed as a positive experience leading to valuable outcomes. According to these interviewees, a critical factor for a successful partnership was a pre-existing good relationship with organisations on which the partnership under ISEC was built. Following the date collected from the coordinating organisations, it was concluded that they were overall satisfied with the partnerships. They indicated that ISEC projects increased the knowledge and the expertise of the organisations involved in these transnational exchanges - 67% of the coordinating organisations (87) indicated that generally the partnership brought as added value more knowledge and expertise on the topic of the project whereas 49% noted that the partnership led to increased knowledge of policies and practices in other countries. An additional 33% indicated that ISEC supported them in establishing a network that helped them in raising awareness of the activities implemented by the national organisations or in disseminating the results achieved.

Concerning the **importance of EU funding** to carry out the activities, the online survey results showed that 88% of the coordinating organisations reported that the level of funding from the Commission was sufficient to implement the activities for the projects they coordinated. Thus, a significant part of the activities developed under ISEC would not have been developed in the absence of the Programme's funding. The public consultation asked participants in Question 1 whether they considered that in their county the implementation of the ISEC programme during 2007-2013 affected positively the work of the public administration in the field of prevention of and fight against crime. Two of the respondents replied with "significantly" (DE and IT) and one replied with "partially" (AT). Organisations indicating that they would have been able to find funding from another source (13% or 12 out of 90) were also asked why they chose to apply for ISEC funding. Multiple answers were possible but it is clear from the answers that the EU added value of the Programme constitutes one of the main reasons for applying for ISEC funding instead of funding from another source, as this is the third most common reason for choosing ISEC.

Study conducted by external evaluators

The preparatory ex post evaluation study conducted by the external evaluators was regarded as providing the most robust and impartial overview possible of the Fund because it was highly structured:

- A regular and transparent dialogue took place between the Commission services and the contractors;
- The parameters of the contract were clearly set out and respected;
- All data sources were assessed and presented data are clearly labelled.

Communication between the European Commission and the external evaluator

The study's progress was followed by an Inter-service Steering Group (ISG) comprised of officials from the following European Commission services: DG for Migration and Home Affairs, the DG for Environment, the DG for Development and Cooperation, the DG for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, the DG for Energy, the DG for Justice and Consumers, the DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and Small and Medium Enterprises, the DG for Budget, the Secretariat-General, the Joint Research Centre, the European Anti-Fraud Office, as well as the external evaluators with their partners and experts. Regular meetings took place between the contractors and the ISG and structured feedback (in both directions) was provided throughout the contract. This two-way dialogue was enriched by the active participation in the ISG of policy and implementation units and shadowed by horizontal units and the Secretariat-General.

Evaluation stages

A structuring feature of the external evaluation was the segmentation of the tasks into clearly defined stages which were closely observed by all parties. These stages had been determined in the Terms of Reference. Adherence to the Terms of Reference made the study itself more efficient and transparent.

1. **Inception and refinement of the methodological approach**: The overall purpose of the Inception Phase was to lay the groundwork and further elaborate and validate the method of approach to this evaluation.

2. **Data collection and analysis**

3. **Formulation of conclusions and recommendations**: This phase aimed to bring together the data collected and to formulate findings, conclusions and recommendations.

4. **Revision and finalisation**: The aim of the final phase was to assure the quality of the deliverables through revision and finalisation based on the comments of the Steering Group.

Data sources

1. Primary data

- Three online surveys:
  - Coordinating organisations (95 respondents)
  - Partner organisations (110 respondents) and
  - Project participants (285 respondents).
- Stakeholder consultations:
  - Scoping interviews with Commission officials (10);
  - EU agencies and offices (8);
  - Commission officials responsible for other EU programmes (3);
  - European and international organisations (1);
  - Representatives of monopoly bodies (3), and;
  - Member State representatives (16).
- Thematic case studies (8):
  - Police cooperation – Germany;
  - Economic and financial crime – Italy;
  - Cybercrime - Italy, Ireland and the UK;
  - Chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials and explosives (CBRNE) – Spain;
  - Drugs and firearms trafficking – UK;
  - Radicalisation – the Netherlands;
  - Forensics – Germany, and;
  - Organised Crime - Italy
- Analysis of public consultation responses (3 responses) and
- Expert workshops (2) and expert input.

2. Secondary Data

- An extensive quantitative analysis of the characteristics of all ISEC projects;
- In-depth analysis of a sample of ISEC projects (151 projects representing 27% of all 568 finalised projects);
- Literature review of EU policy baseline and context,
- Literature review of national baseline and context.

Methodological limitations

A number of methodological obstacles were encountered throughout the evaluation which affected, for a number of evaluation questions, the extent to which findings and conclusions could be formulated.

The lack of a baseline

The first key obstacle encountered in the evaluation was the fact that establishing a baseline for measuring either organised crime or the volume of crime levels across the EU is difficult. In terms of organised crime, there are no established methodologies for measuring in a comprehensive manner most illegal markets or activities covered by actions funded via ISEC. Similarly, the statistical information gathered on the volume of crime at EU level covers solely a few types of crimes (e.g. homicides, car-theft and robberies), and does not cover unreported crime. It has also proven very difficult to make EU-wide comparisons due to differences in criminal justice systems. These difficulties made it problematic and indeed not possible to establish a common EU baseline.

Furthermore, an inherent difficulty when measuring the extent to which ISEC helped to improve the management of crime – and thus to establishing causal relations between ISEC projects and reported impacts – was the lack of scientific consensus as to the range of factors that influence crime. The range of factors known to influence crime levels is wide and includes: social and economic factors (such as (youth) unemployment rates), law-enforcement policies (e.g. number of police officers or CCTV coverage), and criminal justice policies (including changes in imprisonment rates), taxation policies (e.g. when related to smuggling of excisable goods), etc. Attributing specific level of impact even of these established factors to changes in crime levels has not been done so far by academics. Therefore, measuring the overall impact of specific funding instruments, including ISEC, on general or organised crime levels remains methodologically challenging. It has not been possible to establish direct causal links between the ISEC Programme's intervention or identified needs on the one hand and observed impacts or results on the other hand; therefore, effectiveness has been mostly evaluated in terms of outputs or perceived impacts or results– which were more easily measured and compared across MSs – rather than actual impacts or results.

Time lag between Programme implementation and the Ex Post Evaluation

There was a time lag between the implementation of the Programme (2007-2013) and the ex post evaluation (August 2016-August 2017). This meant that the relevant beneficiaries and national and EU authorities and experts were often no longer working in the same position and were thus difficult to reach, which is reflected in a low response rate to some of the consultations (see Annex 3). The external evaluator took some initial measures to mitigate these difficulties, such as sending several email reminders to the persons surveyed, searching for alternative contacts when possible, raising the individual partner organisation interviews to two rather than one, and extending the deadline for the online survey carried out as part of the case studied. Overall, all evaluation questions have been answered to some extent, thanks to the use of triangulation of data where possible. Where the evidence base has been deemed to be too low to be reliable, this has been indicated.

Monitoring, accessibility of data and consistency of project data

Issues have been noted with regard to the monitoring of project progress and final results which hindered the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value. Especially given the relative newness of the Programme and the lack of capacity at the time within the

Commission to closely follow projects from start to end, a dedicated technical assistance budget could have supported a monitoring system to collect and analyse data on (financial) progress, outputs and results. The effect of these limitations on effectiveness, efficiency and EU added value is further explained in sections 9.2 and 9.5.

While relevant information could be collected for all evaluation questions, a full overview of final financial data and project data, especially with regard to a final absorption rate[122] was not consistently available across all projects, given that data on final payments was not available for projects which were not yet complete[123]. In addition, data provided by the Commission and the data drawn from other sources were not always consistent. This has limited the overall findings of the evaluation to some extent. Where possible, estimates have been used to calculate absorption rates and implementation trends. However, the figures relating in particular to the last programming year should be used with caution. Given that no estimates were available for the JRC data, no absorption rate has been calculated for the JRC element of the procurement sector.

Another limitation which affects the assessment of effectiveness is that the outputs/results of the projects were not centrally collected and the final assessments of projects by the Commission were not carried out comprehensively, often consisting only of a brief paragraph on the overall project, without elaborating on particular elements or activities of the project and their potential future use. In addition, no peer review of the products/outputs was undertaken. In addition, results could not be measured due to the lack of ex ante targets. It was not feasible to compare the "cost of projects'" under ISEC to other similar projects due to the absence of comparable projects. This hindered the assessment of efficiency and effectiveness to a large extent, as it was difficult to compare project costs and to measure the extent to which the same objectives were met by the different types of projects in the various areas of organised crime addressed by ISEC.

To mitigate these limitations, the assessment of effectiveness and efficiency had to rely largely on the qualitative data collected through the stakeholder consultations. This, combined with the absence of a baseline, proved to be a limitation in terms of methodology.

[122] The absorption rate is defined as a relation of funding spent to funding committed and it is expressed as a percentage.

[123] The final calculations on absorption rates include all projects up to 30/03/2017.

ANNEX 4 - LIST OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Relevance

EQ1. To what extent did the objectives and the actual results of the ISEC programme correspond to the needs related to the prevention of and fight against crime?

Effectiveness

EQ2. Did the ISEC programme contribute to better security for citizens and if so, to what extent? To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute in the areas of preventing and combating crime, organised or otherwise, in particular terrorism, trafficking in persons and offences against children, illicit drug trafficking and illicit arms trafficking, corruption and fraud?

EQ3. To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to the development of the policies of the Union and of the Community?

EQ4. To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promotion and development of horizontal methods and tools necessary for strategically preventing and fighting crime and guaranteeing security and public order, such as the work carried out in the European Union Crime Prevention Network, public-private partnerships, best practices in crime prevention, comparable statistics, applied criminology and an enhanced approach towards young offenders?

EQ5. To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promoting and development of coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding among law enforcement agencies, other national authorities and related Union bodies in respect of the priorities identified by the Council, in particular as set out by the Europol's Organised Crime Threat Assessment?

EQ6. To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promoting and development of best practices for the protection of and support to witnesses?

EQ7. To what extent did the ISEC programme contribute to promoting and development of best practices for the protection of crime victims?

Efficiency

EQ8. To what extent were the results of the ISEC programme achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed? What kinds of initiatives or approaches were adopted to simplify access to and implementation of the actions funded by the programmes?

Coherence

EQ9. To what extent was the ISEC programme coherent with actions related to the prevention of and fights against crime supported by other EU financial instruments and/or by national resources of the Member States, and to what extent is it possible to identify synergies between the results of actions funded under the ISEC Programme and the results of similar actions

supported under other EU Programmes (such as the Hercule Programmes), that were carried out by different organisational entities in the Member States and/or third countries?

EU Added Value

EQ10. To what extent would the beneficiaries under the ISEC programme (Member States, Universities, Institutes, Associations, etc.) be able to carry out the activities necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of the prevention of and fight against crime without the support of the ISEC programme?

ANNEX 5 - LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND COUNTRY CODES

AFIS	Automated Fingerprint Identification System
AGIS	Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters
AOP	Action-Oriented Paper
AP	Annual Programme
AWP	Annual Work Programme
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear materials
CIPS	"Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security-Related Risks
CEPOL	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training
Daphne II	Fight Against Violence
DG HOME	Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs
DG TAXUD	Directorate-General Taxation and Customs Union
DG JUSTICE	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EUCPN	European Crime Prevention Network
EC3	European Cybercrime Centre
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreements
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency
Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency as of 16/10/2016, previously European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
Hercule II	Anti-fraud programme
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISEC	"Prevention and Fight against Crime" 2007-2013 programme
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ITech	Information Technology
JPEN	Criminal Justice Support Programme
JRC	Joint Research Council
MAP	Multiannual Programme
MCT	Mobile Competence Teams
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MTIC	Missing Trader Intra Community
NCC	National Coordination Centre
NER	National Evaluation Report
NPS	New Psychoactive Substances
OCG	Organised Criminal Groups
PNR	Passenger Name Record
SSL	Framework Programme on Security and Safeguarding Liberties 2007-2013
VAT	Value Added Tax

List of country codes

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom

ANNEX 6- INTERVENTION LOGIC OF THE ISEC PROGRAMME