

## **Evaluation of the EU CIP ICT-PSP**

Evaluation of the European Union Competitiveness and Innovation Programme  
Information and Communication Technologies Policy Support Programme

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The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission

## 1. Setting the context

### 1.1 The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)<sup>2</sup>

The Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, CIP, was adopted on 24 October 2006 by Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council<sup>3</sup>. The CIP brings together specific Community measures in the field of entrepreneurship, SMEs, industrial competitiveness, innovation, information and communication technology (ICT), environmental technologies and intelligent energy. These measures had before been regulated by separate Council Decisions. The single framework decision establishes: a set of common objectives; the total budgetary envelope for pursuing those objectives; different types of implementing measures; and the arrangements for monitoring and evaluation in order to protect the Communities' financial interests.

### 1.2 The specific programme: the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT-PSP)<sup>4</sup>

The common objectives of the CIP are pursued by three specific programmes entitled: "Entrepreneurship and Innovation;" "ICT Policy Support" and "Intelligent Energy – Europe".

The ICT Policy Support Programme has a budget of 728 M€ for the period 2007-2013. It supports the wider uptake of ICT in Europe including particularly the priorities expressed within the i2010 initiative (see box). It drives and stimulates innovation through ICT use and ensure that ICT progress is transformed into benefits for all European citizens, business, industry and governments. The deployment and best use of innovative ICT based solutions is stimulated in particular for services in areas of public interest. In doing so, the programme also feeds in stimulating the development of lead markets for innovative ICT services<sup>5</sup>.

The i2010 strategy<sup>6</sup> "A European Information Society for Growth and Employment" is the policy framework of the European Union (EU) for the information society and media. It promotes the positive contribution that information and communication technologies (ICT) can make to the economy, society and personal quality of life. i2010 proposes three priorities for Europe's information society and media policies:

- 1) The completion of a Single European Information Space which promotes an open and competitive internal market for information society and media;
- 2) Strengthening Innovation and Investment in ICT research to promote growth and more and better jobs;
- 3) Achieving an Inclusive European Information Society that is consistent with sustainable development and that prioritises better public services and quality of life.

To achieve these priorities, a set of actions have been launched. They include: regulatory actions, policy coordination actions, and financial instruments at Community level. The ICT-PSP, together with the ICT in FP7 (research & development) are the main financial instruments of i2010

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> CIP Programme Decision No. 1639/2006/EC, OJ L 310, 9.11.2006, p.15 [http://ec.europa.eu/cip/ciplegalbase\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/cip/ciplegalbase_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/ict\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp)

<sup>5</sup> The need for which was highlighted in the Aho report, "Creating an innovative Europe" January 2006

[http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/action/2006\\_ahogroup\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/invest-in-research/action/2006_ahogroup_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/eeurope/i2010/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm)

### 1.3 The CIP ICT-PSP instruments

There are three complementary instruments based on combined approaches: the Pilots Type A building on initiatives in member states and associated countries; Pilots Type B, stimulating innovative use of ICT in public and private sector; and Thematic Networks (TN) to mobilise and support exchanges between practitioners and policy makers. Additionally, for the period 2009-2011 there will be an additional transitory instrument, the Best Practice Network (BPN).

	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Founding</b>
<b>Pilot A</b>	Minimum 6 national administrations or competence centres acting on their behalf	Interoperability between member states solutions	36 months	5-10 M€
<b>Pilot B</b>	4 Legal entities	Implementation of an ICT service	24-36 months	2-2'5 M€
<b>TN</b>	7 Legal entities	Bring together relevant stakeholders	18-36 months	300-500 k€
<b>BPN</b>	<i>7 Legal entities</i>	<i>Adoption of standards</i>	<i>18-36 months</i>	<i>3-5 M€</i>

## **2. The Evaluation Strategy**

The legal base for the CIP stipulates that the Commission shall regularly monitor the implementation of the Framework Programme and its specific programmes. This legal base explicitly mandates:

- "The interim evaluation of the Framework Programme shall be completed by 31 December 2009 and the final evaluation by 31 December 2011"
- "The interim and final evaluations of the specific programmes shall be arranged in such a way that their results can be taken into account in the interim and final evaluation of the Framework Programme".

Additionally, the EU Financial Regulation and Implementing Rules<sup>7</sup> impose the formal requirement to collect and assess evidence by an ex-post evaluation of the CIP interventions (2015).

Therefore, and in conformity with the Commission's Communication "Responding to Strategic Needs: Reinforcing the use of evaluation"<sup>8</sup>, and in particular with regard to its recommendation to improve the planning of evaluation activities, these evaluations are carried out in advance of the corresponding evaluations of the CIP as a whole, and the necessary budgetary allocations for the interim and final evaluations of the specific programmes are included in the respective annual work programmes. In particular there

<sup>7</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/financial\\_regulation\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/documents/financial_regulation_en.htm)

<sup>8</sup> "Responding to Strategic Needs: Reinforcing the use of Evaluations" (SEC(2007)213.  
[http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/COM\\_2008\\_0526\\_F\\_EN\\_COMMUNICATION.pdf](http://erc.europa.eu/pdf/COM_2008_0526_F_EN_COMMUNICATION.pdf)

shall be a CIP-PSP interim evaluation by 31-05-2009, a "final" evaluation by 31-05-2011, and a "ex-post" evaluation in 2015.

The planned evaluation and monitoring activities for the ICT-PSP are set in the "Multi-Annual Plan for Evaluation and Monitoring of the ICT-PSP"<sup>9</sup>. This plan draws on the recommendations in a supportive study<sup>10</sup>. The budget consequences of this evaluation plan are about 0.2% of the programme expenditure.

The three levels at which monitoring and evaluation activities are carried out are: the individual project level; the intermediate, sub-theme level within the Work Programme and the overall ICT-PSP level.

### 2.1. Proposal/Project-Level

The purpose of the first level evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the Commission's evaluation of proposals and its management of projects, and to monitor the achievements of projects.

Annual work-programme and annual call for proposals are established every year for CIP-PSP. So far an independent monitoring of the selection of proposals has been set for the first and third call for proposals. The monitoring is carried out by a group of 2 independent experienced experts, one of them, the 'rapporteur', prepares a report for the INFSO management. This report is presented to the Management Committee and published.

Additionally, each project is subject to an annual review. An external panel of experts assesses the progress of each project against its objectives. The report is the basis for re-orientation, re-scheduling or termination of the project. This review is responsibility of the operational units.

### 2.2 Sub-theme Level Evaluation

The sub-theme-level is the level at which objectives are set. It is the most appropriate level at which to evaluate the performance of the funded projects against the objectives and in particular to evaluate their capacity of mobilising stakeholders beyond the projects themselves.

It will be assessed whether the sub-theme is fully covered by the initiatives that are being financed; whether the objectives are achieved; whether there is a significant mobilisation and/or whether market failure still persists. This information will be used to inform revisions on the work-programme and to support the evaluation of the programme.

### 2.3 Programme Level Evaluation

The aim of the programme level evaluation is to identify the overall effectiveness of the interventions and their synergies with other activities in the i2010 initiative. The programme level evaluation will cover the contribution of the ICT-PSP to the CIP (at framework level)

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<sup>9</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/ict\\_psp/documents/CIPICTPSPMulti-annualPlanEvaluationandMonitoringtheICT-PSP.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/documents/CIPICTPSPMulti-annualPlanEvaluationandMonitoringtheICT-PSP.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information\\_society/evaluation/studies/s2006\\_cip\\_psp](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society/evaluation/studies/s2006_cip_psp)

### 2.3.1 The Interim Evaluation

The CIP interim evaluation is due to be completed by 31-12-2009, therefore requiring that an external expert panel presents the results of the interim CIP-PSP evaluation by May 2009. As this evaluation takes place at a time when only a limited number of results and outputs are available, the interim evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the new intervention instruments considering whether they:

- have been relevant to the needs and problems identified by the programme
- have been efficient in their operation and in their use of resources
- have been effective in engaging organisations which can meet the objectives of the programme, or show reasonable likelihood of being so at the time of evaluation
- show good likelihood of generating the broader impacts on society looked for by the programme.

This interim evaluation is further described in the next section.

### 2.3.2 The Final Evaluation

A final evaluation will be completed by 31-12-2011 for which an independent panel will produce a report by middle 2011 using the inputs of a programme-level study and building on the intermediate-level analysis. The final evaluation will place emphasis on later stage elements of activities and outputs and outcomes and broader impacts.

### 2.3.3 Follow-up programme and Ex-Post Evaluation in 2015

The evaluation of the later years of the current programme must inform the preparation of an ex-ante impact assessment of options for a follow-up to the CIP measures in the next financial perspectives (2014-2020). There will also be a need to collect and assess evidence for the ex-post evaluation of the CIP interventions.

## **3. A concrete example: the work of the CIP ICT-PSP interim evaluation panel**

The Interim Evaluation Report of the CIP ICT-PSP is the result of the work of a panel of 4 independent experts. One of the panel members acts as chairperson, coordinates the meeting and mediates the discussions of the panel. The panel works by consensus and its work is supported by four means:

- a support study that provides evidence and analysis of the kick-off of CIP-PSP<sup>11</sup>
- a self-assessment of the effectiveness of the CIP ICP-PSP conducted by the Commission itself
- the support of a rapporteur, who synthesizes and presents information, conducts interviews with key stakeholders and drafts the reports.
- the European Commission provides the panel with relevant studies and reports, relevant policy documents, implementation reports, work programmes and information about the proposals and their evaluation.

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<sup>11</sup> Study to support the Interim Evaluation (and Panel) of the ICT Policy Support Programme under CIP  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information\\_society/evaluation/non\\_rtd/programmes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/information_society/evaluation/non_rtd/programmes/index_en.htm)

Someone who has previous experience in evaluation of European RTD and in broader frameworks for innovation and competitiveness was proposed as panel-chair. Three other Panel members were proposed bringing in complementary expertise in the public and private sectors, while providing balance between 'new' and 'old' Member States and between men and women. The timetable for the panel is shown in the following table.

Date	Phase	Work of the panel
September 2008	Information	Presentation of the CIP PSP and the evaluation activities. Decision on work plane and time Discussion of the Evaluation Questions
November 2008	Information	Analysis of the evidence base and self-assessment
January 2009	Information/Writing Discussion	Analysis, discussion and first recommendations
March 2009	Writing Discussion and recommendations	Draft final report Discussion on the feasibility of the recommendations
May 2009	Recommendations Conclusions	Final Report

### 3.1 Main findings

From the analysis it is possible to extract the following positive conclusions:

- The ICT-PSP has successfully attracted organisations from beyond the usual constituency of the EU ICT programmes, especially the public organisations which are crucial to the success of such a programme .
- The presence of relevant stakeholders in most projects (experienced in European projects and in the themes addressed) should contribute to their good results.
- ICT-PSP is having a positive effect on participants' cooperation in the retained projects: they are already working more on the topics addressed, and as a consequence, are learning more on their partners and their ways of doing.
- The Pilot A projects are already successful regarding better coordination and communication between high-level national authorities, and making them work together.

The initial appraisal by DG INFSO, the self-assessment, covers relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, utility and the sustainability of impacts. Given the fact that the programme is in its infancy, the assessment exercise has focused on the various aspects of programme implementation.

#### **Relevance**

The response to the first two Calls for Proposals has been encouraging with requests for Community support exceeding the available budget by a factor of three. Those projects and thematic networks which were selected for funding and/or contract grant negotiation under both first and second Call for Proposals fully support the themes and objectives as defined in the Work Programmes.

### **Efficiency**

As with the launch of any major initiative, participants faced a challenge in understanding the programme's aims and objectives and their relation to existing or previous initiatives. The proposal submission process could be simplified for proposers by shortening the programme documentation. Furthermore, overlap between general principles and specific requirements for a particular theme and objective tends to produce unnecessarily lengthy and repetitive proposals. The selection process was carried out efficiently. However, the negotiation process coincided with the introduction of new IT tools (e.g. NEF, PEGASE), which experienced some technical bugs and it took time for Project Officers POs to learn to use these new tools.

### **Effectiveness**

The first two Calls for Proposals resulted in over 150 submissions, attracting the interest of 1847 of participating organisations. The Implementation Plans for 2007 and 2008 show that while many of proposals failed to meet evaluation thresholds, the quality of those proposals retained for negotiation was high.

### **Utility and Sustainability**

As might be expected in the early stages of implementation of a new programme, concrete results from the ICT PSP are still limited and it is too soon for substantive evidence of utility and sustainability. However, the activities funded correspond well to the programme's stated themes and objectives, and, in some cases, ICT PSP projects build on initiatives and consortia developed within RTD projects. It is, however, premature to say whether the ICT PSP will lead to sustainable impacts over the longer term. Nevertheless, the high level of interest shown, particularly in some themes and objectives, make sustainability beyond the projects' lifetime likely.

## **3.2 Panel Recommendations**

### **Recommendation 1 - Clarify and embed project-level indicators**

The panel explains that project applicants themselves should have the responsibility for framing specific indicators through which their delivery of impact in relation to ICT PSP's objectives can be tracked. These should be quantitative as well as qualitative, and time-based. Participants should be required to propose these in their applications, and their contracts with ICT PSP should record specific agreements on

### **Recommendation 2 – Seek a better balance between objectives and budget**

The Panel has been conscious of the broad scope of ICT PSP's objectives and policy targets in relation to its budget. This has resulted in projects and networks being spread quite thinly across its thematic priorities. The Panel recommends that themes and objectives are limited to ensure that each one can be represented by a more significant body of work than is currently the case. This would improve the visibility of ICT PSP's work on its selected themes and priorities, and would as a result offer a better prospect of significant policy impact.

### **Recommendation 3 – Concentrate Pilots B on chosen themes**

The Panel also recommends that the numbers of themes with Pilots B are limited, as to ensure that there is a better critical mass of projects on the themes which are considered to be of the highest priority. As guideline the Panel suggest that each theme is populated by a minimum of five projects and that coverage of Member States is complemented with better links to relevant Thematic Networks.

### **Recommendation 4 – Closely link Thematic Networks to Pilot Projects**

The Panel thinks that Thematic Networks can be reinforced by closer links with relevant ICT PSP Pilot projects. The Panel recommends that in future calls for applications for Thematic Networks promoters should be required to:

- show how their actions could lead to future A or B pilots, or build in some cross membership and interlinked work with relevant existing Pilots
- reference at least one link with either a previous or existing ICT PSP project or network, or with a relevant project from another programme or initiative (e.g. Structural Funds).

Additionally, Thematic Networks could be encouraged to form further links with any other Pilot B projects funded in the call under which they have been approved.

### **Recommendation 5 – Apply a concerted effort to leverage the results of the programme into other policies and programmes**

The Panel believes that there should be more collaboration between DG INFSO and DG Regio in respect of the European Regional Fund and the European Social Fund with a view at very least to establishing relationships and joint dissemination between projects with related objectives.

The panel also advices to review the present very limited capacity of the NCPs with a view to enabling them to establish working and dissemination contacts between ICT PSP networks and relevant national projects and initiatives.

### **Recommendation 6 – Ensure a larger budget after 2013**

The Panel thinks that for significant work on deployment and interoperability, a successor programme will require a significantly larger budget: Pilots A or their equivalent will need to be larger, more Member States will need to be involved, Pilot B projects will need to be more numerous, with Thematic Networks reinforcing the deployment effort.