

External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014 – mid 2017)

Final Report – Executive Summary

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Lead Implementing Partner in
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Consortium composed of
ICON-INSTITUTE GmbH & Co KG Consulting Group,
Adam-Smith International, Ceval, IOD-PARC, Linpico, Proman, Baastel, Integrity
Leader of the Consortium: Landell Mills
Contact Person: Sophie Mottram (Landell Mills), Amelie zu Eulenburg (ICON-INSTITUTE)
Team comprised:
David Nyheim (Team Leader), Karen Sherlock (Deputy Team Leader),
Ralf Trapp, Fernanda Faria, Marla Zapach, and Ana Carina Franco.

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Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace

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Executive Summary

This Midterm Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) is one of several parallel evaluations of External Financing Instruments under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, and feeds into the required Midterm Review report of the External Financing Instruments. The Midterm Review started in June 2016 and is to be finished by the end of December 2017, as per the Common Implementing Regulation Article 17. The Midterm Evaluation covers all three components of the IcSP: (a) responses in situations of crisis and emerging crisis (IcSP Regulation Article 3); (b) conflict prevention and capacity building in pre- and post-crisis situations and to build peace (Article 4); and (c) global and trans-regional as well as emerging threats to peace, international security and stability (Article 5). It assesses whether the IcSP is fit for purpose to deliver EU resources towards EU external policy objectives, both at the start of the evaluation period (2014) and at present (mid 2017), and considers the current place of the IcSP – its unique function as well as its complementarities and synergies - within the wider set of the EU's External Financing Instruments.

The IcSP Midterm Evaluation is evidence-based, guided by the intervention logic of the Instrument and applies a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative and, more importantly, qualitative data. The approach is focused on answering several evaluation questions that cover EU's evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, efficiency, added value, coherence, consistency, complementarity and synergies and leverage). The evaluation involved the review of over 400 documents (decisions, action documents, previous evaluations at project and Instrument level, annual reports, and other documents), about 140 key informant interviews, participation in and extraction of data from a consolidated survey administered to EU Delegations for all External Financing Instruments mid-term evaluations, and an Open Public Consultation process. The evaluation hypotheses and preliminary findings were validated during the field visits that covered eight selected partner countries. It is worth mentioning that for the Midterm Evaluation, the IcSP baseline had to be built ex-post, which required substantial research and the preparation of additional outputs.

The evaluation concluded that despite its limited size (budget for 2014-2020 is € 2.34 billion), the IcSP makes significant contributions to EU policy priorities and external action strategy. Overall, it has delivered on its commitments, yielded important outcomes, and is responsive to a fast-evolving peace and security context. It is a relatively efficient instrument, where flexible management procedures that accelerate contractual procedures and direct contracting of implementing partners are widely praised. It is extensively used by EU Delegations, particularly because of its speed and flexibility, and its value added also rests in the promotion of European values in a sector that is increasingly affected by securitisation. The Instrument reaches out to other External Financing Instruments, but its articulation with these is at times challenged by cumbersome Commission procedures. It is an important Instrument that contributes to deepen political dialogue and a greater profile for the European Union. The IcSP's relevance will further increase in the years to come. However, for the Instrument not only to continue to be fit for purpose, but at the same time to enlarge its potential for impact and positive external effects, there are several questions to be considered: (a) how to leverage the Instrument's position to engage in strategic dialogue with other global peace and security funds on systemic challenges, including funding cuts in the sector; (b) how to find the right balance between non-securitised and securitised actions/programmes in the Instrument's contributions to EU security priorities and global commitments; (c) how to bolster the strategic framework and synergies with the European External Action Service and other EU External Financing Instruments in work to strengthen international and regional peace and security architectures; and (d) how to ensure that the evidence-base that underpins the design of IcSP actions and programmes reflects the rise of emerged threats and hybrid conflicts.

Recommendations

REC1: Ensure IcSP continuity post-2020 The European Commission (EC), European External Action Service (EEAS), European Parliament, and European Council should ensure IcSP continuity post 2020.

REC2: Build an IcSP baseline The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the DG International Cooperation and Development Unit B5 (DEVCO B5) should build an IcSP baseline that enables better future performance measurement.

REC3: Improve the overall strategic framework for the IcSP This needs to include: (a) the development of a EEAS and EC peace and security strategic framework (b) systematically monitoring and assessing levels and types of peace and security programming and (c) defining, beyond existing guidance, a comprehensive approach to 'do no harm' and conflict-sensitivity in actions/programmes in securitised sectors.

REC4: Engage in strategic dialogue on systemic challenges with other peace and stability funds The EEAS, together with the FPI and DEVCO B5 should regularise strategic dialogue with other peace and stability funds on systemic challenges affecting the sector.

REC5: Address identified action/programme-level challenges in the IcSP FPI and DEVCO B5 should ensure continued IcSP performance by addressing action/programme level challenges identified in the Midterm Evaluation.