

Short Summary

The mid-term evaluation of the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (2014-2017) is part of the external assessment of the nine External Financing Instruments of the EU. The evaluation aims to assess whether the Instrument is fit for purpose while contributing to lesson learning and accountability. Data collection included review of documents, interviews with a broad range of stakeholders, a case Study for Ukraine, surveys and a consultation process following the draft report. Main evaluation challenges were the early stage of implementation of INSC-II, with few results yet on the ground and the lack of measurability of expected outcomes.

The evaluation finds the instrument relevant to its objectives and well aligned to EURATOM priorities and directives on nuclear safety. INSC interventions respond well to partners' priority needs and the instrument has adequate flexibility to adjust to new challenges. The analysis of effectiveness shows a steady flow of pertinent projects and delivery of outputs.

Centralized management, a limited number of dedicated staff and specialized support management services constitute efficient arrangements. The evaluation finds evidence of a unique value added due to the institutional framework that allows the Commission to act at a global level; the instrument is supporting complementarities, coordination and synergies and is effective in leveraging financial resources for nuclear safety and contributing to sector policy and political dialogue. The instrument contributes positively to EU crosscutting priorities related to the environment, improved governance, flexibility, ownership and gender.

In order to enhance its effectiveness and improve visibility, the Instrument needs to strengthen its result orientation and measurability, improving quality of strategies, programming and action documents, with increased attention to outcomes, impacts and sustainability. Capacities in management-by-results should be strengthened at all levels. The evaluation evidences how human resources are short to strengthen the quality of processes, improve the design of actions and manage by results. Monitoring and evaluation processes need as well strengthening.

The evaluation concludes that the instrument is fit for purpose. Its distinctive features allow for interventions in the nuclear safety sector well beyond capabilities of individual Member States, and other donors or the capacity of engagement of the private sector and of national institutions. A set of 4 main recommendations is supported by the evaluation: 1) EU Cooperation on nuclear safety should be continued and reinforced to meet priority needs, 2) Strategy, programming and action documents should be more specific, result oriented and clearly linking financial resources to expected outcomes. A comprehensive monitoring system focused on outcomes should be developed. Evaluations should be used as a standard lesson-learning and accountability tool. An impact evaluation should be carried out; 3) Crosscutting contributions supporting improved governance and national ownership should be continued and strengthened; 4) Political and policy dialogue should be reinforced including with strategies, plans, results frameworks, close monitoring and external assessments. Complementarities with other instruments should be reinforced, with special attention to reinforcing safety and security linkages. In general, INSC should "open up", working less in isolation and increasing relevant interactions with Delegations and other EU players. Finally, resources should be adjusted to meet the challenges of these recommendations.