



# **External Evaluation of the Partnership Instrument (PI) (2014 – mid 2017)**

## **Short Summary**

**June 2017**

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*Evaluation carried out on behalf of the European Commission*

Service of  
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Lot 1: EVALUATION*

**External Evaluation of the  
Partnership Instrument  
*Short Summary***

**The report consists of:**

**Short Summary**

**Volume I: Final Report**

**Volume II: Final Report - Annexes**

## **SHORT SUMMARY**

### **VOLUME I: FINAL REPORT**

Executive summary

0. Outline

1. Introduction

2. Methodology

3. Answers to the evaluation questions

4. Overall conclusions and recommendations

### **VOLUME II: FINAL REPORT - ANNEXES**

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Annex 2: Evaluation approach

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Annex 12: The contribution to PI specific objectives by actions evaluated individually

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The creation of the Partnership Instrument (PI) in 2014 was in **direct response to an evolving international context, with the emergence of new actors and an evolution of the EU's partnerships with strategic partners and third countries**. The design of the PI reflected the need to enhance the ability of the EU to engage internationally across a broad spectrum of countries and international fora, and policy areas. The PI provides a mechanism for the EU to **promote its interests through policy and political cooperation with third countries globally**.

The **PI was (and remains) a directly relevant tool** to support the EU's bilateral, regional and multilateral agenda as set out in particular in the EU's Global Strategy and in line with a number of EU international commitments (notably Agenda 2030). The programming of the Instrument is focused on EU strategic objectives and interests, and its implementation is flexible to make it responsive to challenges, policy priorities and opportunities that have newly emerged or evolved since the Instrument was first created.

This evaluation found evidence of the **political leverage of the PI**. In spite of its relatively limited envelope and novelty, the PI is already proving to be **effective in delivering results**, addressing specific EU priorities across all four specific objectives of the Instrument. The PI has acted as an **enabler, opening up areas for dialogue and cooperation in practical terms**. The monitoring of the PI is currently being consolidated, which will ensure a more adequate evaluation of the results of the Instrument in the future, capturing all the dimensions of the support deployed. However, the evaluation finds that the PI is not systematically mainstreaming key themes defined in the Common Implementing Regulation, which yet correspond to core values of EU external action. The design of PI-supported actions must systematically consider these themes, with greater emphasis placed on ensuring they are reflected in the delivery of actions and in monitoring of the results achieved.

The EU added value of the PI lies in its design, the support it channels for the **proactive promotion of EU interests and objectives and its flexible implementation**. The creation of the PI marked a **change of approach** with the EU in a position to decide what it wants to pursue and to build up a long-term, strategic vision of its role as a global actor. In the case of industrialised partner countries, most strategic partners and graduated countries, the PI is often the only instrument to support bilateral cooperation in "areas and subjects beyond development cooperation" and "create a positive environment for a deepened relationship" (Regulation (EU) 234/2014). Where other financing instruments are available, the PI is used where there exists an EU strategic interest and where the actions considered cannot be funded by other instruments. Without the PI, the EU would not have the means to pursue its goals with respect to a wide range of partner countries and international fora, failing to live up to its international commitments as well as to the partners' expectations.

**Priority setting and decision-making on the PI has gradually evolved from an initial demand-driven approach to a more strategic one**, with high levels of engagement from the EEAS (European External Action Service), line Directorates General (DGs), DG DEVCO and EU Delegations within partner countries. But there is still scope for improvement in terms of an enhanced **role for EU Delegations in identifying and designing actions**, and **greater support from client DGs in the implementation of the actions**, to ensure all actions reflect the country context and receive the necessary technical expertise. Such enhancements would likely require additional resources.

The PI programming and delivery mechanisms are ensuring **proportionate administrative costs and a reasonable administrative burden**, and the budget is efficiently delivered. But the choices made to ensure the flexible implementation of the PI have a cost, a trade-off accepted to ensure that the PI is **fit for purpose**.

The PI is a **niche instrument** which fills a funding gap in the EU's toolbox. There is good alignment between the PI and the framework for EU external action in the pursuit of EU interests and objectives. Complementarities are in particular noticeable with EU development policy; trade, market access and investment; climate change, environment; research; and public and cultural diplomacy. There are also complementarities with other External Financing Instruments (in particular with the Development Cooperation Instrument, DCI) and other EU instruments (such as Horizon 2020 and COSME, EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Medium-sized Enterprises). More **internal and external communication about the PI** is still needed to raise the visibility of the Instrument to ensure an optimal use of the funding available.



A TETRA TECH COMPANY

40 Bernard St  
London WC1N 1LE  
United Kingdom

t: +44 (0) 20 7837 2881