European public administrations ISA: interoperability solutions

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In accordance with Decision No 922/2009/EC on interoperability solutions for European public administrations (ISA), the Commission presents a report on the findings and recommendations of the interim evaluation of the ISA programme which was launched on 1 January 2010 as a follow-up programme to the IDABC programme.

Main Findings: the evaluation was largely positive, describing the ISA programme as aligned with the policy priorities of the European Commission and the needs of Member States and implemented efficiently and coherently, delivering results that are reused by both Commission services and Member States.

Relevance: the Commission has demonstrated that 88% of the ISA actions facilitate efficient cross-sectoral interaction between European public administrations and 94% facilitate electronic cross-border interaction between public administrations across Europe.

The ISA programme is closely aligned with both the Digital Agenda for Europe and the eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015. The improvement of coordination between the ISA programme and both Member States and Commission services and the increased reusability of ISA solutions were additional needs identified by Member States.

Efficiency: overall, the ISA programme is considered to be efficient. In addition, the budget allocated is almost equal to the budget committed, and the total budget for the period 2010-12 is very close to the estimated financial cost for that period. Therefore, the budgetary resources are allocated and consumed efficiently. As to programme performance, this is generally on track, despite some delays in meeting some milestones. Some aspects of the ISA programme are not perceived as efficient: (i) the engagement of stakeholders is not considered efficient, particularly that of national interoperability experts. This can partly be explained by a lack of resources at national level; (ii) the allocation of human resources is only partially adequate.

Effectiveness: whilst a specific assessment of the results achieved by the programme is not yet feasible as the ISA programme is still in its early stages, common frameworks were perceived as the most effective solutions provided by the programme as compared to common services or reusable generic tools.

Utility: the results of the ISA programme are partially reused at both Member State and Commission level. Although concrete solutions could not always be named, some 24% of the ISA solutions are reused, representing roughly 65% of the total budget of the programme.

Recommendations

The evaluation report also highlights additional shortcomings and makes recommendations with regard to certain issues.

Communication and raising awareness: the ISA programme must ensure that all stakeholders involved in the ISA programme are well aware of the objectives of each action. It should reinforce promotion and communication activities regarding the ISA solutions that have produced concrete results by continuously participating in events at national level, organising ISA events, and issuing publications on these

solutions, as well as by playing an active role in other EU activities or programmes supporting opportunities for the reuse of ISA solutions.

The Commission is revising the communication strategy and will complement the overall strategy by pursuing dedicated communication activities in specific areas.

Engagement of stakeholders and project management continuity: the Commission will support Member States in implementing this recommendation by, for example:

- making use of the established networks with EU regions;
- exploring means of remote participation in meetings (videoconferences)
- other means to be identified together with the Member States.

In addition, the ISA programme will give priority to activities to assess the ICT implications of EU legislation, which Member States consider to be an important issue that has not yet been addressed.

The Commission is exploring synergies among its services by promoting inter-service contacts and stronger cooperation between services.

Avoiding overlaps and duplications, of work, increasing reusability and ensuring sustainability: the Commission takes a holistic approach to addressing the reusability and sustainability of interoperability solutions by acting at different levels:

- at governance level, by improving the links between the Commission's IT governance, the ISA programme and through the ISA committee with the Member States;
- at the strategic level, by putting more emphasis on reusability and sustainability in future ISA work plans and, if necessary, by a possible review of the European Interoperability Strategy (EIS);
- at operational level, by taking action to ensure better reusability of interoperability solutions and to develop sustainability enablers (e.g. European Interoperability Architecture (EIA), European Federated Interoperability Repository (EFIR), Assessment of trans-European networks supporting EU policies, Sharing and reuse strategy) and by considering possible means of financial sustainability including the proposed CEF.

Lastly, in line with the evaluator's recommendation, the ISA unit will identify actions producing concrete results by reviewing ISA solutions every two years as specified in the ISA Decision.