Pan-European eGovernment services and networks: interoperable delivery, programme IDABC 2005-2009, follow-up IDA II

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The purpose of this communication is to present the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the implementation of the IDABC programme, in accordance with Article 13(2)-(4) of the IDABC Decision. The evaluation was performed by the Commission with the assistance of a team of independent experts from a consultancy company. The evaluation was largely positive describing the IDABC programme as having a global very high quality. However, it highlights a few shortcomings that it recommends for consideration in the further implementation of the programme.

To recall, the IDABC programme provides funding to actions under two headings, namely Projects of Common Interest and Horizontal Measures, which are listed in the rolling IDABC work programme. Projects of Common Interest are actions in the policy areas of the EU concerning the establishment or enhancement of pan-European eGovernment services in support of public administrations, businesses and citizens. Horizontal Measures are actions designed to support Projects of Common Interest and eGovernment in general.

Findings:

Relevance: all the data gathered for the evaluation point to a very satisfactory level of relevance for the IDABC programme. The evaluation found that the IDABC programme's objectives and planned actions are fully in line with the needs and priorities established at EU level by the Lisbon objectives. The IDABC programme generally contributes directly to broader objectives such as the facilitation of innovation and the uptake of ICT as well as to more specific objectives such as the creation of a more mobile workforce, e.g. by providing information services facilitating movements across borders. 5.2. **Efficiency:** the evaluation notes that an in-depth analysis of efficiency at this stage is premature, given the general and understandably low level of progress of the programme at this early stage. Nonetheless, based on the data gathered from the survey, the evaluation tentatively judges the way the resources are used to implement the activities satisfactory from an economic point of view.

Effectiveness: the IDABC programme is still in its early stages, and a detailed appraisal of the benefits yielded is not yet feasible. Nonetheless, it is possible to make hypotheses regarding the future evolution of the actions. The majority of Projects of Common Interest are considered likely to deliver according to schedule, whereas the Horizontal Measures are generally expected to require either extra help or extended durations, primarily due to a late start, lengthy procedures and staff shortage. However promising levels of effectiveness are likely to be achieved by both Projects of Common Interest and Horizontal Measures.

Utility: the sort of eGovernment services provided by the IDABC programme are considered unique, as the need for common pan-European telematic interfaces across public administrations is not satisfied by any other programme or initiative in the same manner. Member States that have joined the EU in the last enlargement are in particular extremely satisfied with the services provided, not least since IDABC offers them a way to improve their own telematic infrastructures and services. Stakeholders do not seem to have a consensual view on whether administrations are a sufficient and satisfactory target group or whether efforts to satisfy needs of businesses and citizens should be increased.

Coherence: there appears to be a good level of internal coherence between the measures supported by the IDABC programme. IDABC actions contribute to the programme's objectives following a holistic approach. The coherence of the programme vis-à-vis the other Community activities in the area of Pan-European eGovernment and infrastructure services, i.e. the external coherence, deserves more attention.

The current state of progress of the actions funded by the IDABC programme - about 50% of the actions included in the work programme had actually started in the first quarter of year 2006. The proportion was slightly higher for the Projects of Common Interest than for the Horizontal Measures. **Co-ordination and involvement of Member States:** the establishment, within the Member States, of a national co-ordinated and consolidated approach to Projects of Common Interest appeared to be quite controversial for certain categories of stakeholders. This controversy leads actually to a global level of dissatisfaction as regards the ability to co-ordinate opinions between Member States' representatives in the PEGSCO and in the sectoral committees. However, some Member States have implemented specific means by which the PEGSCO member and the sectoral committee members co-ordinate their views.

The evaluation of the implementation of the IDABC programme has lead to a number of **conclusions and recommendations**, which are detailed in the Communication. In brief, they are as follows:

- a greater attention must be paid to the timing of evaluations. Since compliance to the calendar in the IDABC Decision is obligatory, for future programmes a higher degree of flexibility with regard to the timing of the evaluations should be envisaged in the Decision, and consequently enable the programme to benefit from evaluation results more fully;

- the Commission must ensure that all players know their part in the implementation process. Organisational diagrams should be designed and operational descriptions of the roles of the contributors adequately disseminated, first and foremost in the case of Projects of Common Interest;

- efforts should be made at the strategic level of the programme to gather and disseminate specific and up-to-date information about users' needs. The evaluation suggests that PEGSCO members are solicited as they are an important source of knowledge and, at the same time, that knowledge sharing sessions are organised. Data from the project feasibility studies could also be synthesised and disseminated;

- the extent to which IDABC actions are able to comply with agreed milestones should be closely monitored during the implementation of the programme, in particular for Horizontal Measures . The evaluation underlines the need for establishing a more balanced action/staff ratio in the management of the Horizontal Measures, both in relation to the IDABC programme and to any subsequent programme;

- a strategic appraisal of the links between the various EU programmes within which the EC develops interoperable eGovernment initiatives should be carried out in order that inter-programme learning processes and synergies can be enhanced. The results of this strategic appraisal should lead to a specification of the strategic positions and inter-relationships of the EC eGovernment related programmes.