

External Evaluation of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II)

Short summary

Objective of the evaluation

The main aim of the evaluation is to provide a comprehensive answer to the question whether the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) is delivering against its main objective of preparing candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership and thus if it is fit for purpose.

Key conclusions

- IPA II is becoming fit to deliver the instrument's objectives – to prepare candidate countries and potential candidates for EU accession. The sector approach is facilitating the IPA II instrument to attain its objective of preparing candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership. It has improved the strategic focus of IPA II over its predecessor. The sector approach is still in a transitional phase.
- The current arrangements allow for the use of multiannual programmes with split commitments (MAP) however, the use of MAP is limited.
- Indirect effects are noted in the approach now being taken towards programming IPA II assistance. Budget support has been a catalyst for institutional changes in those countries where it is being delivered. It has also enhanced policy dialogue. Direct effects are not yet observable at programme level.
- Uncertainty prevails over the sector approach planning. Beneficiaries have struggled to produce documents of good quality; their value is not clearly understood and the approach taken for ensuring ownership as varied from recipient to recipient. Indicators of the Performance Framework can be considered adequate. Weaknesses in the quality of indicators in country programmes and action documents remain.
- Overall, the intended efficiency gains have still to materialise. Evidence from IPA I shows that the introduction of the indirect management mode with the beneficiary country (IMBC) offers improved ownership of the programme among beneficiaries but overall efficiency invariably suffers in most cases compared to direct management.
- The novelties of IPA II (sector approach, sector budget support programmes, performance framework, etc.) contribute to the coherence and complementarity of the IPA II actions. Complementarity of IPA II with the actions of other External Financing Instruments (EFIs) active in the candidate countries and potential candidates is good but not secured.
- Regarding Turkey, inefficiencies in many parts of the IMBC have generated chronic delays that have accumulated in the system.

Key recommendations

- Under sectoral requirements, there is an increasing need for a longer-term perspective in implementations. Explore the potential for wider deployment of such approach. If this assessment proves positive, commence preparations for its increased use after 2020, in line with the next programming period.
- Explore the potential for wider deployment of MAP. If this assessment proves positive, commence preparations for its increased use after 2020.
- Clarify the sector approach planning with all relevant parties. Improve the overall quality of (working) documents used for sector approach planning.
- A strategic vision for those countries under IMBC needs to be created as a basis for strengthening the capacities of the institutions involved in its delivery. Cost effectiveness of IMBC needs to be fully assessed.
- Weaknesses in monitoring systems and indicators at sector level need to be addressed on a systematic basis.
- Coordination of IPA with other EFIs planning/ programming activities should be improved. Where the National Authority assigned to donor coordination is weak, actions should be implemented for improving the Authority's capacity and performance.
- As concerns Turkey, IPA II funds should be channelled into those sectors with a proven track record of delivering results under IPA I.