FACTSHEET: LESSONS LEARNT AND BEST PRACTICES

IPA CBC MID TERM EVALUATION

SELECTED FINDINGS

1. The intervention logic of the CBC Programmes between IPA II Beneficiaries remains relevant to the needs of the border areas. There has been comprehensive and inclusive programming by the national authorities within the broad framework defined by the European Commission.

2. CBC Programmes between IPA II Beneficiaries are most effective in meeting the overall programme objectives in socio-economic development and cross border co-operation, with administrative capacity limiting the achievement of objectives in EU Integration.

3. Whilst the programme structures are established in line with the implementing Regulation, further work is still needed to strengthen administrative capacity. However, monitoring systems are well embedded and provide robust management support and reporting at operation and increasingly at programme level.

4. Delays in mobilising funding are starting to be overcome, with commitment rates improving across the programmes.

5. Once contracted, operations are generally implemented on time with good support from the structures managing implementation. Outputs are largely delivered as expected although funding remains low and somewhat fragmented.

6. Sustaining both partnerships and operation results is often reliant on subsequent IPA CBC Programme financing but there has been better inclusion of sustainability in the design of both calls for proposals and application evaluation processes.

7. Systems are in place to ensure coherence with other IPA CBC Programmes. More could be done to better engage particularly with other EU funded CBC programmes being implemented in the region.

8. The IPA CBC Programme has generated good visibility amongst institutional partners and direct beneficiaries in the border regions.

KEY LESSONS LEARNT

1. The IPA CBC Is designed and implemented under a largely common approach in very differing local contexts, which needs a broader range of tools if it is to be effective in addressing challenges in the border regions.

2. There are too many indicators and a recognised need to simplify indicators and develop common indicators.

3. Changing the role of the JTS to remove them from the procurement process has enabled them to more readily engage with local stakeholders, although it does risk removing all local knowledge from grantee selection.

4. The use of NGOs and consultants to support implementation is a practical first step but is expensive and limits the amount of funding that flows through to end beneficiaries. Further.

5. Small scale infrastructure can be an effective tool in complementing administrative capacity building but larger infrastructure needs to be connected to addressing a clear cross border challenge and to be connected to broader regional development strategies.

6. The development of truly joint operations that address cross border challenges rather than just addressing development issues in the border regions is a lengthy and complicated process that is best addressed by strategic projects.

7. Placing a greater focus on sustainability in the grant evaluation process is needed to address the reliance on ongoing donors support for most interventions.

8. Collaboration and coordination at a IPA CBC level between individual IPA CBC Programmes enables the exchange of best practice and builds collaboration.
Programme design has become increasingly focused on specific priorities over time.

The simplification of indicators has helped to focus monitoring effort and improve the quality of reporting.

The comprehensive monitoring of grantees from all stakeholders leads to the successful delivery of outputs.

Moving the JTS outside of the border to more central regions where there are capacity issues makes sense in some of these very small beneficiaries where distances to the border regions remain small.

Centralised advisory support through CBIB+ has been critical to the programming, implementation and monitoring.

The provision of a nationally financed fund and interest free loans for matching funds enables grantees to concentrate on implementation rather than fund raising and helps to ensure operations are implemented on time.

Providing training in the JTS head office for the satellite office staff helps to build capacity and partnerships.

Allocating operation management between the JTS head office and antenna at a contract level rather than at a country level ensures full oversight of implementation, including the extent to which the operation engages across the border.

Development of guidance in visibility supports the implementation of a common standard.

The use of the IPA National Programme to provide training to local authorities augments the soft capacity building provided by the IPA CBC Programme.

**GOOD PRACTICES IDENTIFIED**

**KEY FIGURES**

- **70% of CBC operations** had full cross border collaboration throughout the design and implementation stages
- **91% of CBC partnerships** established are expected to continue
- **86% of CBC partners** are happy with the partnerships established

**Local authorities**

- **93%** thought the IPA CBC Programme was building their capacity to manage structural funds
- **81%** considered IPA funding important for their region
- **46%** thought that the IPA CBC had improved employment, economic and social development locally
- **81%** said the programme made people feel more connected to the European Union

The number one outcome from CBC operations has been better relations between local authorities on both sides of the border.

The number one challenge in the application process was finding a suitable partner.