EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 12.6.2018
SWD(2018) 341 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Interim Evaluation of the Internal Security Fund - Police

Accompanying the document

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

on interim evaluation of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund

{COM(2018) 464 final} - {SWD(2018) 339 final} - {SWD(2018) 340 final}

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AMIF	Asylum Migration and Integration Fund
CBRN-E	Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives
CIPS	Specific programme Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and Other Security-related Risks
DG CONNECT	DG Communications Networks, Content & Technology
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG JUST	DG Justice and Consumers
DG TAXUD	DG Taxation and Customs Union
EBCGA	European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex)
EBF	External Borders Fund
EMAS	Emergency assistance
ERF	European Refugee Fund
EU	European Union
eu-LISA	European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice
Eurostat	Statistical office of the European Union
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ESF	European Social Fund
FTE	Full-time equivalent
ISEC	Specific programme Prevention of and Fight against Organised Crime
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ISF-BV	ISF Borders and Visa
ISF-P	ISF Police
MFF	Multiannual financial framework
NP	National programme
PNR	Passenger Name Record
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
RF	European Return Fund
SAC	Schengen associated countries
SOLID	General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows
SFC2014	Shared Fund Management Common System of DG HOME
SLTD	Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database
SSL	Security and safeguarding liberties programme
VIS	Visa Information System

List of countries

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
LI	Lichtenstein
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff working document presents the interim evaluation of the instrument for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management which is part of the Internal Security Fund for the programming period 2014-2020, specifically covering the period running from January 2014 until the end of June 2017 (it is referred to as 'ISF-P', or 'the Fund' throughout this document). ISF-P was designed to help ensure a high level of security in the EU.

The evaluation assesses ISF-P's progress towards meeting its objectives. The findings will:

- inform the legislators and all relevant stakeholders of its achievements so far;
- provide the evidence base for the Member States and the Commission to address any weaknesses and to take corrective measures to minimise their impact; and
- inform the design of the future funds.

The total resources needed to implement ISF-P were initially estimated at EUR 1 004 million divided into two parts: (i) EUR 662 million or 66 % to be managed by Member States under the framework of multiannual national programmes and (ii) EUR 342 million or 34 %, managed by the Commission under Union actions and emergency assistance.

An interim evaluation, taking place only a few years after the funding period started, has obvious limitations. In addition, the migration and security crisis has had a major impact on the home affairs policy area and thus also on all the funds, not only ISF-P.

Nevertheless, looking at the Fund's **effectiveness**, early evidence at this stage of implementation shows that progress is being made towards fulfilling the different levels of ISF-P's objectives. The Fund has helped strengthen Member States' capabilities to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism and to strengthen their mutual cooperation as well as improving Member States' capacity to effectively manage security-related risks and crises.

In terms of **efficiency**, the results of the Fund have been achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of both human and financial resources deployed, the effective management and control systems in place that ensured the Fund was correctly implemented, and effective measures that prevented irregularities from occurring. The perceived administrative burden appears to be the main factor undermining efficiency. However, assessing the part of Fund implemented by the Member States against the criterion of simplification and reduction of administrative burden has been complex as the previous funds (ISEC and CIPS) were fully implemented under a direct management mode.

This evaluation finds that the ISF-P's original rational for intervention and its objectives are still **relevant,** also in light of the changing political priorities that have made security issues a major concern. The broad scope and flexibility offered by the Fund helped to address the changing needs and thus helped to ensure its relevance.

Coherence and complementarity between ISF-P and other relevant EU and national instruments (ISF Borders and Visa and AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund), and also the justice programme, Hercule III, Horizon 2020) was ensured at the programming stage and followed-up during the Fund's implementation. The different funding modes of ISF-P were also found to be coherent and complementary to each other. Cooperation with relevant EU agencies, especially Europol and CEPOL (the EU agency for law enforcement training) is crucial.

The Fund has ensured **EU added value** in terms of improving cross-border cooperation, exchanging of knowledge and best practices, and mutual trust amongst Member States' law enforcement authorities. It also ensured EU added value when key EU policies were being applied and implemented. Furthermore, it has helped to broaden the scope in terms of investments in under-prioritised or highly specialised policy areas.

The **sustainability** of effects is considered a common feature of most ISF-P funded projects as the actions are usually aligned with and complementary to national priorities and EU requirements. Therefore, these projects are generally planned with a view to remaining operational beyond the Fund's support. In addition, a wide range of measures to ensure sustainability of project results have been put in place.

Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement and for lessons to be learned. For example, the monitoring and evaluation framework itself should be developed to further address (i) issues such as baseline values, definition of indicators, and synchronisation of calendars, (ii) matters linked to efficiency of the Fund and flexibility and (iii) perceived administrative burden.

1 INTRODUCTION

This Commission staff working document presents the interim evaluation of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (ISF-P) in line with Article 57(2) of Regulation (EU) No 514/2014[1], the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/207[2] and the Better Regulation guidelines[3].

Member States submitted to the Commission an interim evaluation report on the implementation of actions and progress towards achieving the objectives of their national programmes by 31 December 2017. On the basis of these reports, the Commission has to submit an interim evaluation report on the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 to the European Parliament, to the Council, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions by 30 June 2018.

The purpose of this evaluation is to:

1) ensure transparency and accountability in the ISF's implementation, the general objective of which is to ensure a high level of security within an area of freedom, security and justice; and

2) help make the future implementation of EU instruments in the fields covered by ISF more relevant, effective, efficient, and sustainable, and enable them to provide EU added value and simplification measures and reduce administrative burden.

This evaluation has looked at the progress made in implementing the programme, and assessed whether corrective actions are needed to make sure that the programme delivers as planned. It also contributes to the preparation of the next generation of funding instruments (the successors of ISF-P), under the post-2020 multi-annual financial framework (MFF).

This evaluation covers the whole ISF-P programme in all EU Member States, except Denmark and the United Kingdom, which do not participate in the ISF-P. The evaluation covers the period from 1 January 2014 until 30 June 2017 and it looks into the national programmes, Union actions and emergency assistance financed under ISF-P.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (OJ L 150 of 20 May 2014).

[2] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/207 of 3 October 2016 on the common monitoring and evaluation framework provided for in Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (OJ L 33 of 8 February 2017).

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines_en

2 BACKGROUND TO THE INTERVENTION

2.1 Baseline

Ensuring a high level of freedom and security within Europe has been at the top of the EU policy agenda since the Tampere Council Conclusions in 1999. Policies such as migration, security and management of the external borders became a strategic priority at EU level, through the priorities set by The Hague programme[4] and the Stockholm programme and its action plan[5]. Art. 67 TFEU defines one of the EU's overarching objectives: offering European citizens 'an area of freedom, security and justice with respect for fundamental rights and the different legal systems and traditions of the Member States' as well as 'ensure a high level of security through measures to prevent and combat crime, racism and xenophobia, and through measures for coordination and cooperation between police and judicial authorities and other competent authorities'.

In the field of internal security, the Commission's communication on the internal security strategy in action (ISS)[6], adopted in 2010, identified clear strategic goals and provided a basis for concerted action to address common security challenges in the years to come. Through cooperation and solidarity at EU level and with non-EU countries, substantial progress has been made towards creating a more open and secure Europe. Strategic objectives included: disrupt serious and organised crime networks; prevent terrorism and address radicalisation and recruitment; raise levels of security for citizens and businesses in cyberspace; increase Europe's resilience to crises and disasters

Within this context, the programme 'Security and Safeguarding Liberties' was put in place for the period 2007-2013 (almost EUR 800 million) and built up of two separate financial instruments following the different legal bases provided in the Treaties[7]: (i) Specific programme Prevention of and Fight against Organised Crime (ISEC) and (ii) Specific programme Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and Other Security-related Risks (CIPS)[8].

The security and safeguarding liberties (SSL) general programme and its specific programmes included the following general objectives:

- contribute to protecting citizens, their liberties and society against terrorist attacks and related incidents, and to safeguard the EU as an area of freedom, security and justice (SSL);

[4] Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: The Hague Programme: Ten priorities for the 2005-2010, The Partnership for European renewal in the field of Freedom, Security and Justice (COM(2005) 184 final – Official Journal C 236 of 24.9.2005).

[5] Adopted by the European Council on 2 December 2009 (document no. 17024/09), provides a framework for EU action on the issues of citizenship, justice, security, asylum, immigration and visa policy for the period 2010–2014. Action plan COM(2010) 171 final of 20/04/2010.

[6] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – The Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five Steps towards a more secure Europe (COM(2010) 673 final of 22 November 2010).

[7] Law enforcement, police cooperation and crime prevention are subject to Title VI of the Treaty on European Union (Articles 29-42). Preparedness and consequence management of terrorism refers to civil protection measures, set under the Treaty establishing the European Community (Article 3(1)(u)).

[8] COM/2005/0124 final (GPSSL); Decision No 2007/124/EC (CIPS), Decision 2007/125/JHA (ISEC) – OJ L 58, 24.2.2007.

- contribute to developing other EU policies such as police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, protection of the environment, public health, transport, research and technological development and economic and social cohesion (SSL);

- contribute to supporting Member States efforts to prevent, prepare for, and protect people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents (CIPS);

- contribute to ensuring protection in areas such as the crisis management, environment, public health, transport, research and technological development and economic and social cohesion, and in the field of terrorism and other security-related risks within the area of freedom, security and justice (CIPS);

- contribute to a high level of security for citizens by preventing and combating crime, organised or otherwise, in particular terrorism, human trafficking and offences against children, illicit drug trafficking and illicit arms trafficking, corruption and fraud (ISEC);

- contribute to developing EU policies, by focusing on four themes: crime prevention and criminology, law enforcement, protection and support to witnesses, and protection of victims (ISEC).

The two funding programmes were implemented under direct management only, by means of Community actions.

Moreover, to ensure fair responsibility-sharing towards common migration and asylum policies and borders management, the EU provided financial support to strengthen (i) legal migration and integration, (ii) asylum, (iii) irregular migration and return, and (iv) management of the external borders and visa policy, as well as the external dimension of these policies. In light of this, under the 2007-2013 programming period, the General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows (SOLID) was put in place, with a total contribution of almost EUR 4 billion.

The SOLID programme's legal base has been built up of four separated financial instruments: (i) the European Refugee Fund (ERF), (ii) the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF), (iii) the European Return Fund (RF) and (iv) the External Borders Fund (EBF)[9].

CIPS and ISEC, together with the SOLID programme, were replaced by AMIF and the Internal Security Funds (ISF Borders and Visa and ISF Police) in April 2014. The main reason for creating the two-pillar structure was to contribute to the simplification, rationalisation, consolidation and transparency of funding in the fields of internal security.

The table below[10] shows the development (in size and scope) of funds in the home affairs area, how they evolved over time, leading up to the development of the current generation of funds, namely AMIF and ISF.

[9] Decision No 574/2007/EC (EBF), Decision No 573/2007/EC (ERF), Decision No 575/2007/EC (RF) – OJ L 144 of 6.6.2007; Council Decision 2007/435/EC (EIF) – OJ L 168 of 28.6.2007.

[10] See Annex 5 for a complete comparative table of all previous and current home affairs funds.

Table 2: Summary overview of home affairs funds and programmes during 2007-2013 and 2014-2020[11]

General Programme	Policy area	Fund / Specific Programme Budget, Participation & Objectives	
		Previous Funds (2007-2013)	**Curent Funds (2014-2020)**
General Programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows *(93% to 96% shared management; remainder under centralised direct management)*	Asylum	European Refugee Fund (ERF III) EUR 614 million[12], All Member States except DK ▪ Support and encourage Member States in receiving refugees and displaced persons ▪ Emergency measures to address sudden mass influx if migrants and asylum seekers	Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) EUR 3 137 million (initial) All Member States except DK ▪ Strengthen and develop all aspects of the CEAS ▪ Support legal migration to the Member States and promote effective integration of third-country nationals ▪ Enhance fair and effective return strategies and contribute to combating illegal immigration ▪ Enhance solidarity and responsibility sharing between Member States, particularly those most affected by the migratory flows
	Integration of legally residing TCNs, legal migration	European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF) EUR 825 million, All Member States except DK ▪ Support the integration of non-EU immigrants into European societies	
	Return	European Return Fund (RF) EUR 676 million, All Member States except DK ▪ Improve return management ▪ Encourage development cooperation between Member States and countries of return	
	Integrated border management and visa	External Borders Fund (EBF) EUR 1 820 million, All Member States (including RO & BG and the Schengen associated states from 2010) except the UK and IE ▪ Financial solidarity amongst Schengen countries ▪ Manage efficient controls and the flows at the external borders ▪ Improve management of the consular authorities	Internal security Fund (ISF) EUR 3 764 million (initial) ISF Borders and Visa All Member States except IE and UK plus the Schengen associated states CH, IS, LI, NO ▪ Ensuring a high level of security in the EU and facilitate legitimate travel ▪ Visa and support integrated border management
General Programme Security and Safeguarding Liberties *(centralised direct management)*	Prevention of and fight against organised crime	Specific Programme Prevention of and Fight against Organised Crime (ISEC) EUR 600 million, All Member States ▪ Crime prevention, law enforcement, witness protection and support, victims protection	
	Combating terrorism and other security-related risks	Specific Programme Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and Other Security-related Risks (CIPS) EUR 140 million, All Member States ▪ Protection of citizens and critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks and other security incidents	ISF Police All Member States except DK and UK ▪ Ensure a high level of security in the EU, fight against crime, manage risks and crisis

The share of funding for home affairs in the EU budget steadily grew (in the period 2007-2013 it amounted to EUR 6.45 billion or 0.77 % of the total EU budget, covering not only the financing programmes, but also funding for large-scale IT systems (Visa Identification System (VIS), Schengen Information System (SIS), EURODAC and the agencies). The spending during this period has been characterised by heavy 'back-loading', increasing from EUR 500 million in 2007 to EUR 1.5 billion in 2013.

Results from previous evaluations and stakeholder feedback confirm that these instruments have been generally effective and that the EU funding added genuine value[11]. Nevertheless, the EU has been facing a number of policy challenges in the area of crime and terrorism, not all of which

[11] Impact assessment accompanying the proposal for the Home Affairs Funds in the period 2014-2020 (SEC(2011) 1358 of 15.11.2011).

[12] After adoption of EASO; takes account of Decision No 458/2010/EU amending the ERF basic act.

could be sufficiently covered by ISEC and CIPS. These are schematically collected in the table below.

Table 3: Overview of challenges faced by Member States and the EU in the area of crime and terrorism to be addressed during the period 2014-2020[11]

▪ Increased cross-border organised crime and reduced effectiveness of national law enforcement activities as well as criminals evading law enforcement bodies by crossing over European borders and jurisdictions. ▪ More sophisticated crimes such as cybercrime and payment card fraud growing in size. ▪ Quick development of the nature of crime. ▪ Terrorism as an increased concern for the EU citizens as it has presented unique threats compared to organised crime due to the sporadic and transnational nature of offences, as well as the low cost of carrying out terrorist attacks (including use of the internet) compared to the very high implications and costs of terrorist activities. ▪ Lack of an effective EU-level strategy and coordination between national authorities on terrorism, including increased risks for Member States' critical infrastructures. ▪ Growing connections between terrorism and organised criminal activities, separatist and ethno-nationalist terrorist groups. ▪ Increasing extremism.

CIPS and ISEC complemented each other and provided a holistic approach to the EU's prevention of and fight against organised crime and to combating terrorism and other security-related risks. However, there have been drawbacks, identified by the *ex post* evaluations[13], as well as during the Commission's impact assessment accompanying its proposals for the 2014-20 generation of home affairs funds[11].

Overall, such findings included a significant geographical imbalance in terms of programme coverage, administrative burden, lack of clarity in relation to the areas covered by the programme, a range of activities that was too wide leading to fragmentation and lack of focus. In addition, a need for a clearer scope and for boosting coordination among organisations was identified. Besides, the programmes have neither developed as needed nor as fast as the terrorist threats. Therefore, there was an urgent need for an efficient update which is being provided by the ISF-P.

This staff working document also analyses the extent to which the recommendations from the *ex post* evaluations of CIPS and ISEC have been taken into account in ISF-P (see below table).

Table 4: Overview of findings and recommendations that have shaped ISF-P

***Ex post* evaluations of ISEC and CIPS**	**What has ISF-P addressed and how**
▪ Suggested a more flexible and faster funding mechanism to address needs on the ground and identify the needs for reducing administrative burden.	▪ The structure **was simplified** as ISF-P includes only two specific objectives (crime prevention and crisis and risks) supported by seven operational objectives. Moreover, **emergency assistance** (**EMAS)** has been available to approach any unexpected emergency situation.
▪ Recommended a dedicated technical assistance budget which could fund an improved monitoring system, including IT systems, visits, technical expertise, etc.	▪ There is a **technical assistance budget** in order to cover specific personnel, IT systems, business trips, etc.
▪ Proposed more detailed reports from coordinating organisations to improve monitoring of results.	▪ Member States submit **annual implementation reports** under shared management and interim and final reports (technical/operational and financial) under direct management.

[13] Formal approval from the Commission still pending for ISEC/CIPS *ex post* evaluations.

▪ Highlighted the importance of **creating of networks** and fund more analytical activities.	▪ Europol Information System (**EIS**) and the Radicalisation Awareness Network (**RAN**) were created.
▪ Claimed that **underspending** was a major concern in ISEC and CIPS	▪ Different delivery mechanisms (**shared and direct management**)

2.2 Description of ISF-P and its objectives

In a nutshell

ISF-P aims to ensure a high level of security in the EU through supporting the fight against crime and managing risks and crises effectively.

2.2.1 The ISF-P

The legal basis for ISF-P is Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 (the Specific Regulation)[14] adopted by the European Parliament and the Council and it is based on Articles 82(1), 84 and 87(2) TFEU. In addition, general provisions for both AMIF and ISF are laid down in Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 (Horizontal Regulation)[1]. These two Regulations are complemented by Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/207 on the common monitoring and evaluation framework (CMEF Regulation)[2].

ISF-P's aim is to help ensure a high level of security in the EU through the fight against crime and managing risk and crises. All Member States, except for DK and the UK[15], contribute to implementing it.

However, the recent terrorist attacks in Europe have highlighted the need for a stronger EU response to terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters. The EU has tried to provide a comprehensive and quick reaction to these significant challenges, by formulating its European agenda on security[16] in 2015 that included five key principles on which all actors involved had to work together:

- ensure full compliance with fundamental rights;
- more transparency, accountability and democratic control;
- ensure existing EU legal instruments are better applied and implemented;
- a more joined-up inter-agency and a cross-sectoral approach; and
- bring together all internal and external dimensions of security.

This agenda has also provided a clear framework for the Member States to work together better on security and was the basis in June 2015 for the European Council's endorsement of a renewed

[14] Regulation No 513/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management (OJ L 150/93 of 20 May 2014).

[15] The Danish opt-out from measures under Title V TFEU is now governed by Protocol No 22 attached to the Treaty.

[16] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – The European Agenda on Security (COM(2015) 185 final of 28 April 2015).

internal security strategy for the period 2015-2020. The priorities of this strategy are: tackling and preventing terrorism, preventing and fighting serious and organised crime and, preventing and fighting cybercrime.

Finally, legislative acts have been adopted or proposed on setting up stronger and smarter information systems for security, making the data architecture of EU information systems more effective and efficient. These include the European Criminal Records Information Exchange System proposal for a Regulation (ECRIS)[17] and passenger name record (PNR) directive[18]. There is an increased need for the interoperability of these IT systems in order to improve data management in the area of security[19].

Considering the evolving needs and challenges related to the security concerns, the ISF-P's initial budget has been increased to support Member States in implementing the passenger name record directive and develop information exchange and interoperability tools. The following analysis of needs should be read in correlation with the answer to the evaluation question on relevance in sub-chapter 5.4 on page 41.

The needs of ISF-P

The overview of challenges faced by Member States and the EU in the area of home affairs in the previous period 2007-2013 and presented in Table 2 above, could be translated into the following needs that ISF-P tries to address.

- Crime prevention: the need to improve: interoperability of law enforcement systems in the Member States; intelligence sharing between Member States; cross-border joint operational coordination and cooperation between Member States; core capacities in some Member States (trained staff, infrastructure for training); poor quality of forensic data; uneven capacity to provide victim support; lack of capacity to carry out threat and risk assessments; poor communication and involvement of citizens/private sector; and weak cooperation with relevant third countries.

- Risks and crises: the need to improve: cross-border joint processes and procedures in case of man-made disasters; uneven coordination and operational cooperation between national crisis centres; lack of capacity to carry out threat and risk assessments; training infrastructure; poor public/private partnerships; insufficient cross-border simulation exercises; and weak partnerships with relevant third countries.

General and specific objectives of ISF-P

As set out in Article 3 of the Specific Regulation, the general objective of the Fund; *'…shall be to contribute to ensuring a high level of security in the Union'*. This objective further breaks down in two specific objectives on crime prevention and on risks and crises:

Specific Objective 1: Crime prevention

[17] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a centralised system for the identification of the Member States holding conviction information on third -country nationals and stateless persons (TCN) to supplement and support the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS-TCN system) and amending Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 (COM(2017) 344 final of 29 June 2017).

[18] Directive (EU) 2016/681 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the use of passenger name record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime (OJ L 119 of 4 May 2016).

[19] COM(2017) 793 final and COM(2017) 794 final of 12 December 2017.

'crime prevention, combating cross-border, serious and organised crime including terrorism, and reinforcing coordination and cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other national authorities of Member States, including with Europol or other relevant Union bodies, and with relevant third countries and international organisations '

Through this specific objective, the ISF-P is supporting the fight against all forms of crime, including terrorism and organised crime. In addition, it is helping to increase coordination and cooperation among several law enforcement authorities at national and EU level as well as Europol and other international organisations.

Specific Objective 2: Risks and crises

'enhancing the capacity of Member States and the Union for managing effectively security-related risks and crises, and preparing for and protecting people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents'

The ISF-P ensures through this objective that all Member States's capacity to manage security-related risks effectively is strengthened, improved and efficient. Moreover, this objective focuses on the need to prepare people and critical infrastructures against any attack, particularly terrorist ones.

In addition, to sufficiently cover and reach these specific objectives a number of operational objectives were defined in order to support a successful implementation.

Table 5: ISF-P operational objectives

- **Promote and develop measures strengthening Member States capability to prevent crime and combat cross-border**, serious and organised crime including terrorism, in particular through (i) public-private partnerships, (ii) exchange of information and best practice, (iii) access to data, (iv) interoperable technologies, (v) comparable statistics, (vi) applied criminology, (vii) public communication and (viii) awareness raising.
- **Promote and develop administrative and operational coordination, cooperation, mutual understanding and exchange of information among Member States law enforcement authorities**, other national authorities, Europol or other relevant EU bodies and, where appropriate, with third countries and international organisations.
- **Promote and develop training schemes**, including schemes for technical and professional skills and knowledge of obligations related to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and in implementing European training policies, including through specific EU law enforcement exchange programmes, in order to foster a genuine European judicial and law enforcement culture.
- **Promote and develop measures**, safeguards, mechanisms and best practice for early identification, protection and support of witnesses and victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, and particularly for child witnesses and victims, especially those who are unaccompanied or who need guardians.
- **Measures strengthening Member States administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all economic sectors**, including through public-private partnerships and improved coordination, cooperation, exchange and dissemination of know-how and experience within the EU and with relevant third countries.
- **Secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation bodies at EU and national level**, including situation centres, to (i) enable comprehensive and accurate overviews in crisis situations to be produced, (ii) coordinate response measures and (iii) share open, privileged and classified information.
- **Measures strengthening the EU's and Member States' administrative and operational capacities to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments**, which are evidence-based and consistent with priorities and initiatives identified at EU level. This is especially the case for those that have been endorsed by the European Parliament and the Council. This is so the EU can develop integrated approaches based on common and shared appreciations in crisis situations and strengthen mutual understanding of Member States' and partner countries' various definitions of threat levels.

Beneficiaries of ISF-P

The Fund's beneficiaries include federal and national authorities, local public bodies, non-governmental organisations, private and public companies, and education and research organisations, to the extent that they are relevant for the Fund.

Eligible actions

The eligible actions under ISF-P are listed in Article 4 of the Specific Regulation. These include: (i) police cooperation and coordination between law enforcement authorities, (ii) networking; (iii) public-private partnerships; (iv) mutual confidence; (v) learning, exchange and dissemination of know-how and best practice; (vi) information sharing; (vii) interoperability; (viii) monitoring and evaluation; (ix) threat and risk impact assessments; (x) awareness raising; (xi) dissemination and communication; (xii) IT systems that help achieve the objectives; and (xiii) training and education of staff and experts of relevant authorities.

In addition, the ISF-P is also an important instrument in relation to and in third countries by supporting:

- police cooperation and coordination between law enforcement authorities, including joint investigation teams and any other form of cross-border joint operation;

- networking, mutual confidence, understanding and learning, identification, exchange and dissemination of know-how, experience and best practice, information sharing, shared situation awareness and foresight, contingency planning and interoperability; and

- training and education of staff and experts of relevant authorities.

The eligible actions under technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission and of Member States are listed in Articles 9 and 20 of the Horizontal Regulation. These include: expenditure relating to the preparation, selection, appraisal, management and monitoring of the programme, actions or projects or to (i) audits and on-the-spot checks (ii) the strengthening of the administrative capacity; (iii) information and dissemination; and (iv) computerised systems for the management, monitoring and evaluation.

Financial allocations, top-ups and management modes

ISF-P is implemented through (i) shared management in shared responsibility with the Member States, (ii) direct management by the Commission or (iii) indirect management by an entrusted third party. A more detailed description can be found in sub-chapter 3.1 on page 17.

The total resources for ISF-P's implementation period 2014-2020 have been initially estimated at EUR 1 004 million, are divided as follows:

- EUR 662 million or 66 % of the total amount, managed by Member States under the framework of multiannual national programmes (**shared management**);

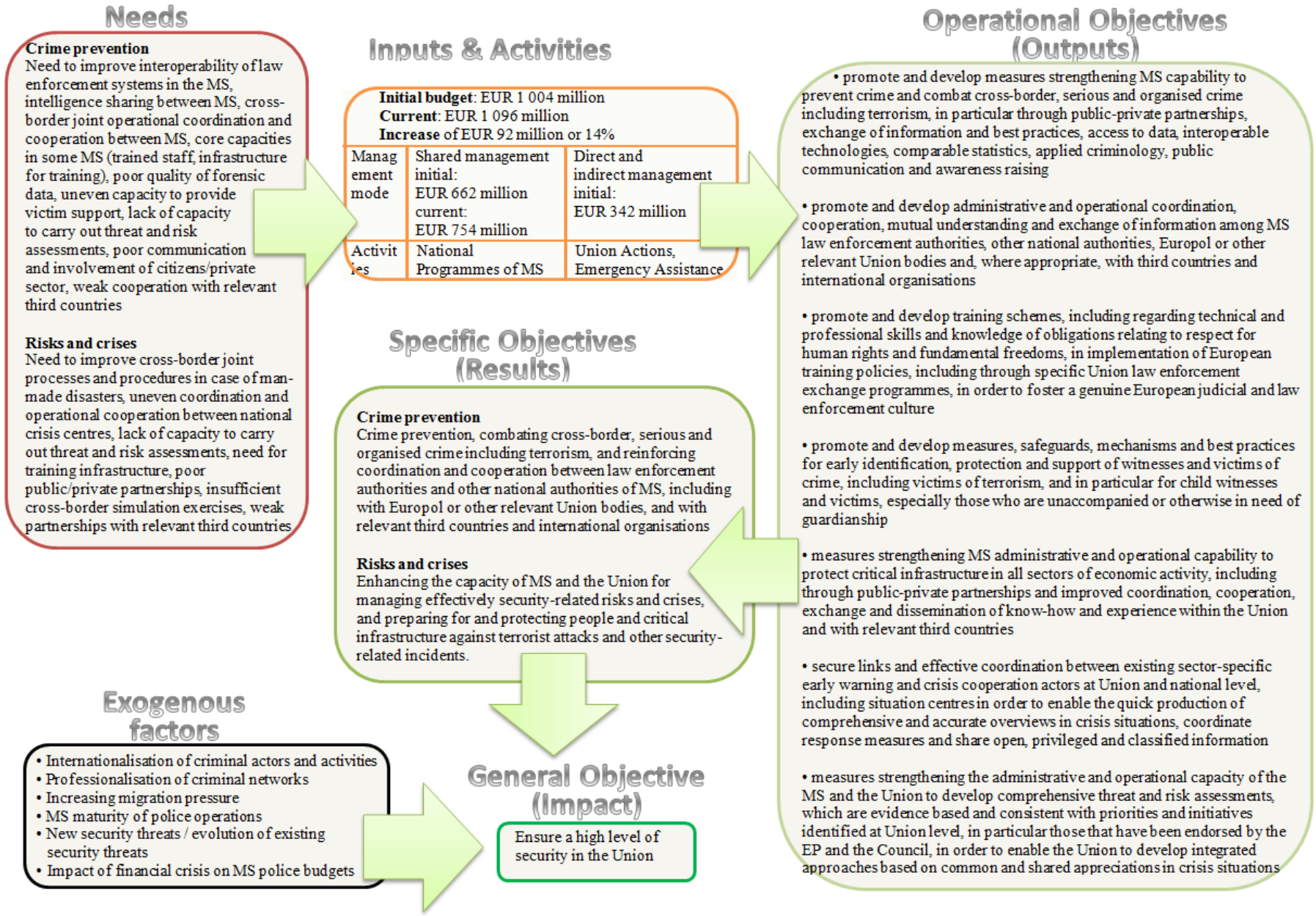
- EUR 342 million or 34 %, managed by the Commission through annual work programmes focusing on union actions, emergency assistance (EMAS) and technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission (**direct or indirect management**).

In response to the unforeseen security threats of recent years, most notably the terrorist attacks in many Member States, this budget was increased through a top-up of EUR 70 million to support Member States in implementing the passenger name record directive and another one of EUR 22

million for developing information exchange and interoperability tools. As a result of this, the present allocations of the national programmes currently amount to EUR 754 million.

2.2.2 The intervention logic

The diagram below, based on ISF-P's legal basis, presents the key aspects of the functioning of the Fund, including the policy areas that it covers and the specific needs and objectives that it seeks to address, all in correlation with the EU resources allocated. In setting out the causal links between ISF-P's activities, outputs, results and impacts, the intervention logic helps to clarify what the Fund is aiming to achieve, how it will achieve it and with what. The implementation process is further explained in Section 3.1.


Needs
Crime prevention
Need to improve interoperability of law enforcement systems in the MS, intelligence sharing between MS, cross-border joint operational coordination and cooperation between MS, core capacities in some MS (trained staff, infrastructure for training), poor quality of forensic data, uneven capacity to provide victim support, lack of capacity to carry out threat and risk assessments, poor communication and involvement of citizens/private sector, weak cooperation with relevant third countries
Risks and crises
Need to improve cross-border joint processes and procedures in case of man-made disasters, uneven coordination and operational cooperation between national crisis centres, lack of capacity to carry out threat and risk assessments, need for training infrastructure, poor public/private partnerships, insufficient cross-border simulation exercises, weak partnerships with relevant third countries
Inputs & Activities
Initial budget: EUR 1 004 million
Current: EUR 1 096 million
Increase of EUR 92 million or 14%
Management mode
Shared management initial: EUR 662 million current: EUR 754 million
Direct and indirect management initial: EUR 342 million
Activities
National Programmes of MS
Union Actions, Emergency Assistance
Operational Objectives (Outputs)
• promote and develop measures strengthening MS capability to prevent crime and combat cross-border, serious and organised crime including terrorism, in particular through public-private partnerships, exchange of information and best practices, access to data, interoperable technologies, comparable statistics, applied criminology, public communication and awareness raising
• promote and develop administrative and operational coordination, cooperation, mutual understanding and exchange of information among MS law enforcement authorities, other national authorities, Europol or other relevant Union bodies and, where appropriate, with third countries and international organisations
• promote and develop training schemes, including regarding technical and professional skills and knowledge of obligations relating to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in implementation of European training policies, including through specific Union law enforcement exchange programmes, in order to foster a genuine European judicial and law enforcement culture
• promote and develop measures, safeguards, mechanisms and best practices for early identification, protection and support of witnesses and victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, and in particular for child witnesses and victims, especially those who are unaccompanied or otherwise in need of guardianship
• measures strengthening MS administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity, including through public-private partnerships and improved coordination, cooperation, exchange and dissemination of know-how and experience within the Union and with relevant third countries
• secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors at Union and national level, including situation centres in order to enable the quick production of comprehensive and accurate overviews in crisis situations, coordinate response measures and share open, privileged and classified information
• measures strengthening the administrative and operational capacity of the MS and the Union to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments, which are evidence based and consistent with priorities and initiatives identified at Union level, in particular those that have been endorsed by the EP and the Council, in order to enable the Union to develop integrated approaches based on common and shared appreciations in crisis situations
Specific Objectives (Results)
Crime prevention
Crime prevention, combating cross-border, serious and organised crime including terrorism, and reinforcing coordination and cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other national authorities of MS, including with Europol or other relevant Union bodies, and with relevant third countries and international organisations
Risks and crises
Enhancing the capacity of MS and the Union for managing effectively security-related risks and crises, and preparing for and protecting people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents.
Exogenous factors
• Internationalisation of criminal actors and activities
• Professionalisation of criminal networks
• Increasing migration pressure
• MS maturity of police operations
• New security threats / evolution of existing security threats
• Impact of financial crisis on MS police budgets
General Objective (Impact)
Ensure a high level of security in the Union

3 IMPLEMENTATION / STATE OF PLAY

3.1 Description of the implementation process

ISF-P is being implemented either by the Member States (shared management), directly by the Commission (direct management), or indirectly by entrusting the budget implementation task to a third party[20] (indirect management).

For shared management, at the beginning of the programming period, all Member States had a policy dialogue with the Commission to help them prepare their national programmes. Based on the outcome of the dialogues, the Member States have proposed their multiannual national programmes. The Commission examined these programmes, consulted relevant agencies and eventually approved each national programme.

To implement their national programmes, Member States had to set up a management and control system[21]. The Commission follows the implementation under shared management by examining the annual implementation reports and accounts submitted yearly by the Member States.

Member States are expected to submit two national evaluation reports: an interim evaluation report by the end of 2017 and an *ex post* evaluation report by the end of 2023. The Commission takes these reports into account in its interim and *ex post* evaluations of the Fund which are sent to the European Parliament, to the Council of the EU, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions by 30 June 2018 and 20 June 2024 respectively.

In light of the interim evaluation reports submitted by the Member States, and developments in EU policies and in the Member States, a mid-term review of the situation is planned for the middle of the programming period, i.e. 2018 (Art. 15 of the Horizontal Regulation). Based on the outcome, the national programmes can be revised and additional available resources can be allocated to those.

A small amount of money equal to 5 % of the total national allocation plus EUR 200 000 is reserved in the national programmes for technical assistance.

Moreover, each Member State needs to establish a partnership with relevant stakeholders including, other public authorities, international organisations, NGOs and social partners in order to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate the national programmes. Stakeholders meet regularly in a monitoring committee set up to follow the national programme's implementation[22].

Some types of actions, due to their nature, such as transnational actions, innovative projects, support to civil society organisations, and actions requiring fast mobilisation of funds are implemented under direct management by the Commission. Indirect management is used by the Commission to delegate tasks to EU agencies, international organisations and civil society organisations because they are best placed to carry out those activities and also because of the limited human and administrative resources available in the Commission[11].

[20] These parties can be countries or the bodies they have designated, international organisations and their agencies.
[21] Horizontal Regulation (EU) 514/2014, Section 2.
[22] Article 20 of the Horizontal Regulation.

The share of the budget managed by the Commission is subject to annual work programmes[23] for union actions. This share comprises:

- grants (awarded on the basis of open or restricted calls for proposals or directly);
- procurement (awarded on the basis of calls for tender or framework contracts); and
- delegation agreements (actions that are entrusted to third parties).

The projects selected receive in co-financing a maximum of 90 % of the eligible costs. The emergency assistance is considered a specific type of union actions.

3.2 Description of the implementation status

3.2.1 Shared management

According to the legal base, the EU contribution initially allocated EUR 662 million for all national programmes. However, after the 2017 top-up the reprogrammed amount became EUR 754 million. Such top-up included EUR 70 million to support Member States in implementing the passenger name record directive and EUR 22 million to increase and improve the development of information exchange and interoperability tools.

By 31 December 2016[24], Member States had committed EUR 283.5 million of the total available EU resources for 2014-2020 for national programmes that were adopted, with an **implementation rate** of nearly 37.6 %. Total payments declared under accounts for 2014-2016 amounted to EUR 63.5 million, resulting in a very low **level of payments** of 8.42 %[25].

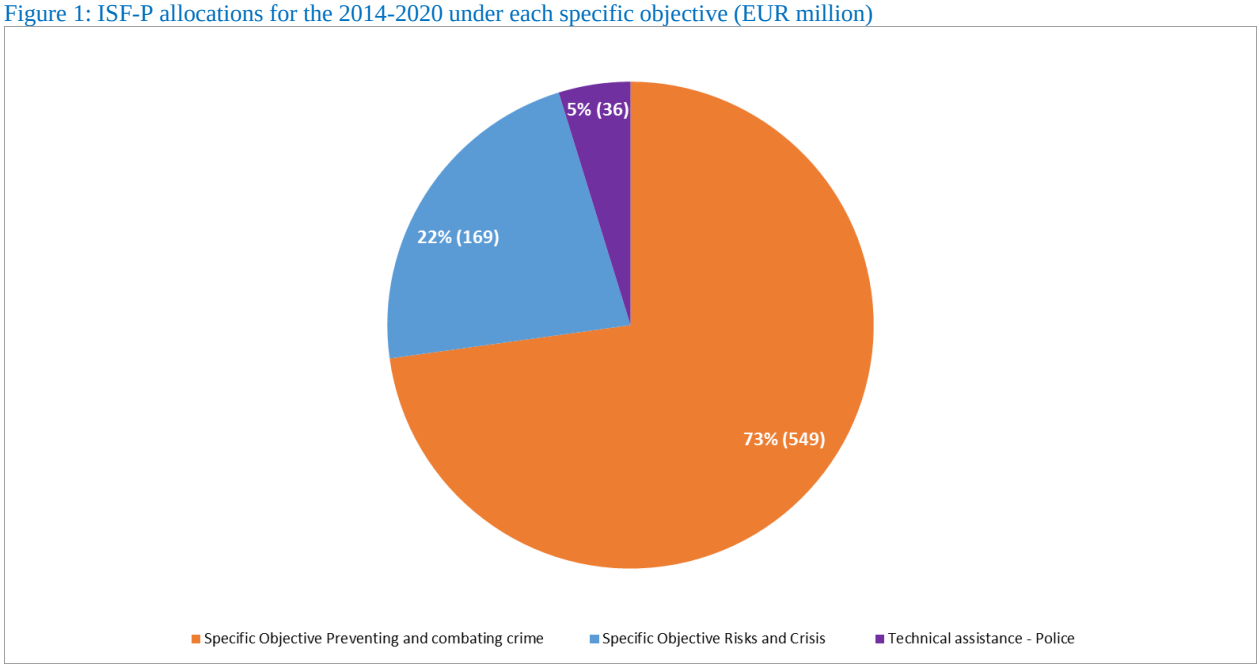
Disaggregating **data by the ISF-P specific objectives (SOs),** resources have been earmarked for the first specific objective — crime (with 72 % of the planned EU commitment/available EU resources for adopted national programmes), followed by the second specific objective — risks and crisis (with 23 %), and technical assistance (with 5 %).

[23] The annual work programme is a planning document explaining how the budget allocated for certain policies or funding programmes will be spent.

[24] The reference period for shared management ran from January 2014 until 31 December 2016, which corresponded to the period covered by the last set of accounts submitted by the Member States and cleared by the Commission.

[25] The level of payments varies widely between Member States. Possible reasons for such a low level of payments may include: late approval of most of the national programmes, complexity and length of national public procurement rules, administrative burden (i.e. heavy reporting requirements) and low pre-financing rates.

Figure 1: ISF-P allocations for the 2014-2020 under each specific objective (EUR million)

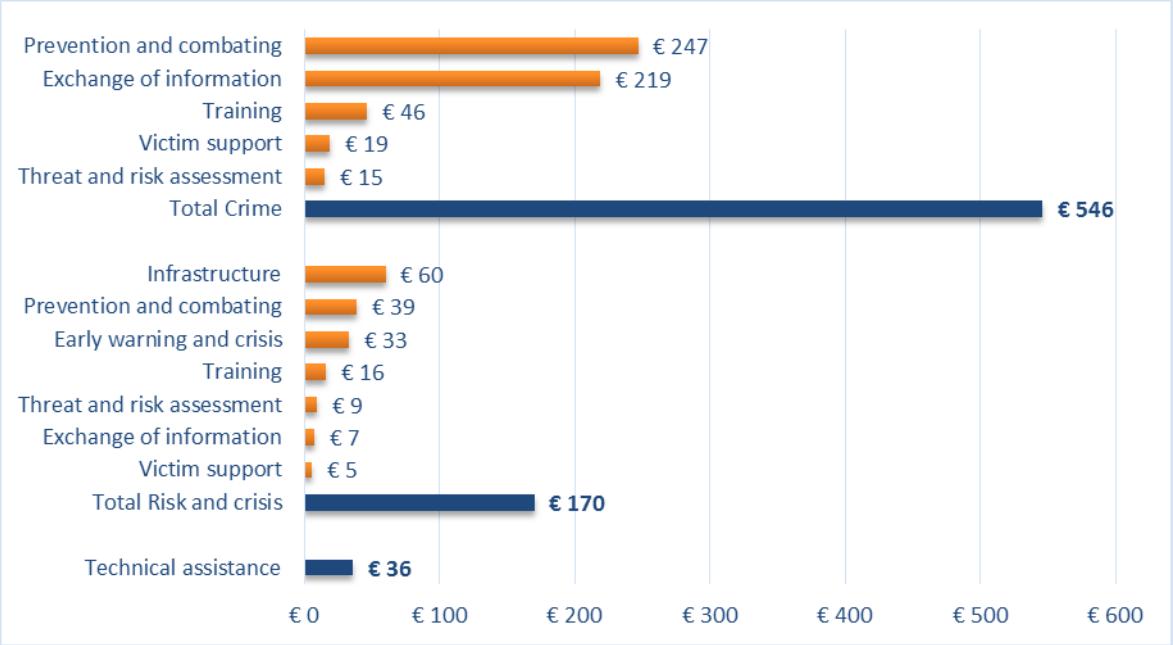


For **specific objective — crime**[26], the Member States that spent the highest amounts on projects related to this objective are Germany, Spain, France and Italy with EUR 30, 18, 10 and 9 million respectively. Member States that spent the lowest amounts are Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia, Luxembourg, Latvia or Slovakia, with projects funded for less than one million euro. Furthermore, Poland has not provided any data under this indicator.

For **specific objective — risks and crisis**[27], Germany, Estonia and Netherlands are the Member States to have spent the highest amounts on projects related to this objective, with EUR 3.4, 3.2 and 4.8 million respectively. The remaining 21 Member States financed projects for less than EUR 3 million. In addition, Croatia and Poland have not provided data under the referred indicator.

[26] SFC2014, latest submission from the Member States as of February 2018.
[27] Ibid.

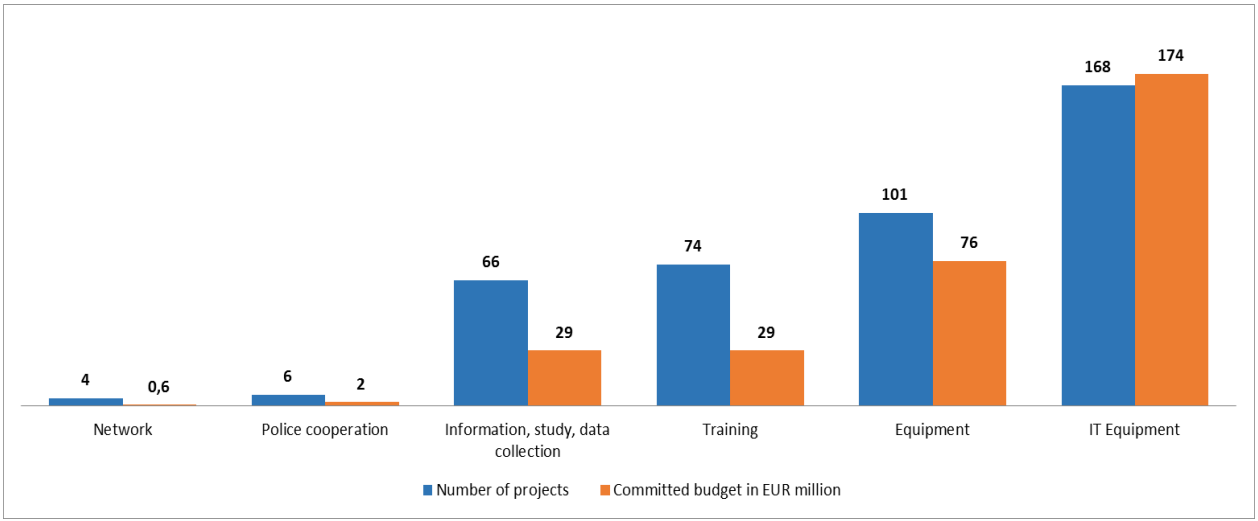
Figure 2: Budgetary allocation by specific and operational objectives (in EUR million)



Among the operational objectives, most funds — EUR 247 million, around 33 % — are allocated to strengthening Member States capability to prevent and combat crime. The second highest amount is allocated to actions under the operational objective 'exchange of information' under both specific objectives ('crime prevention' and 'risks and crisis'), with a total of EUR 226 million, around 29 % of all national programmes' funds. The objectives with the least allocations are the development of threat and risk assessment capacity and support for witnesses and victims of crime (about 3 % for each objective).

In terms of Member States commitments by action type, the available data reflects approved projects only. The table below summarises the distribution of funds by action type for approved projects in the national programmes. Over half of the approved funds (56 % for 168 projects) are allocated to the acquisition of IT equipment. Another quarter of the committed funds (25 % for 101 projects) are allocated for equipment, covering a wide variety of national objectives, such as general prevention and combating of crime, drug trafficking, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives (CBRN-E), and cybercrime. A very small share (10 projects with less than 1 % of the committed funds) is allocated to police cooperation and networks development.

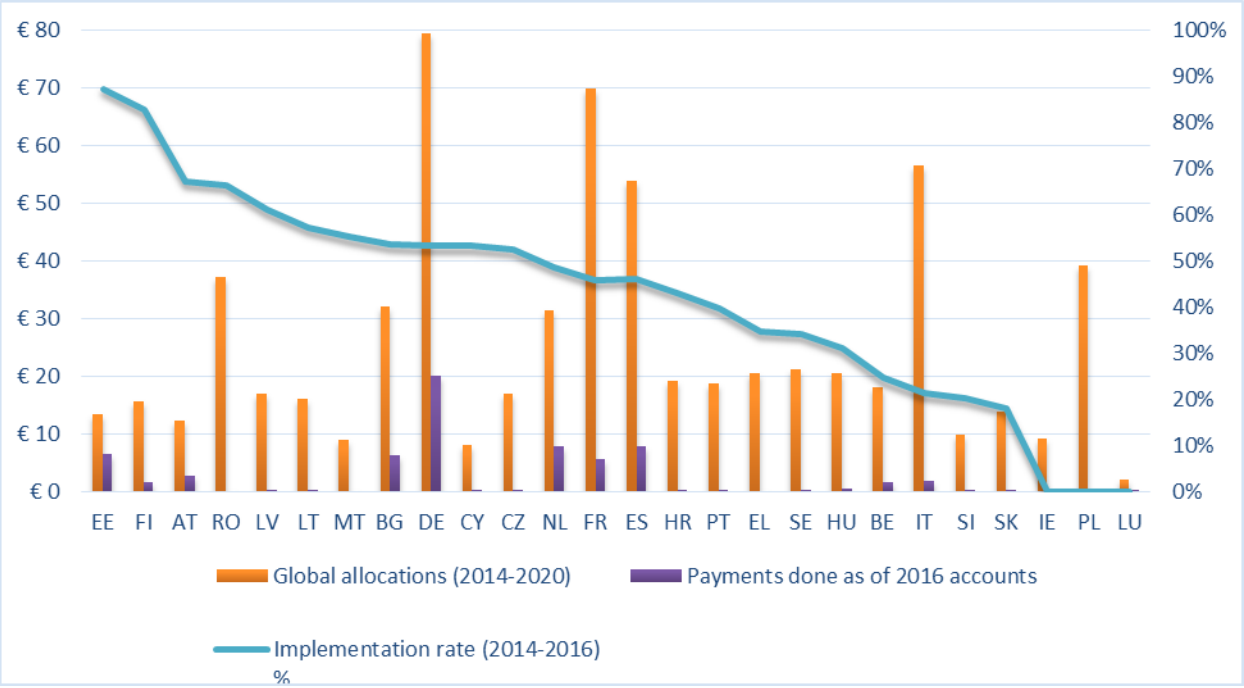
Figure 3: Committed funds by action type



The implementation rate describes the progress of Member States in launching specific actions to implement their national programmes. However**, the implementation rate does not indicate the level of completion of the launched actions**.

The level of payments represents the amount of payments made by the Commission to a responsible authority implementing a national programme against the allocation available for that same country for the 2014-2020 period. As Member States are free to choose whether to submit accounts after the projects end or during their implementation (e.g. when a certain phase of a project is completed), **the level of payments does not necessarily reflect project progress**.

Figure 4: Global allocations (2014-2020), paid amounts by the Commission (2014-2016) (EUR million) and implementation rate[28]

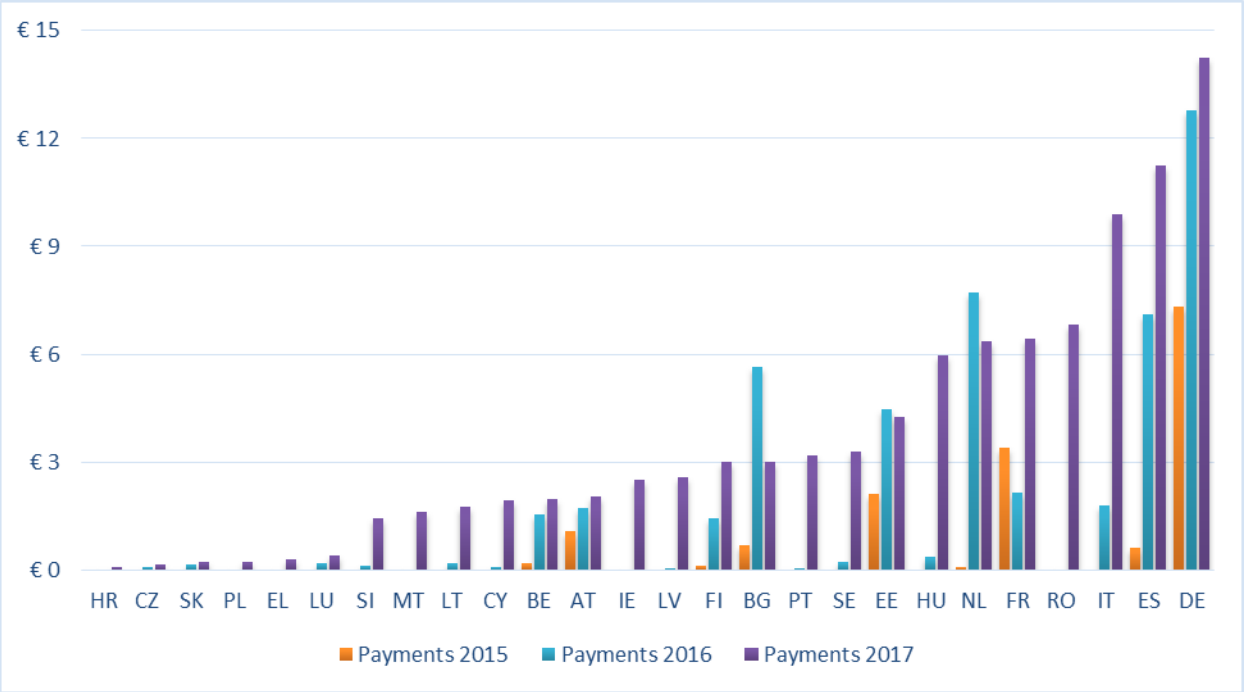


A review of the level of payments by Member States indicates that only four countries have payments higher than 20 % (EE, DE, NL and AT), while 10 Member States have payments lower than 1 %[29].

However, considering that the annual accounts for 2017 were submitted by the Member States in mid-February 2018, we can conclude that the overall level of payments has increased by up to 21 %, with Italy, Romania, Hungary, Sweden, Portugal, Latvia and Ireland and many other Member States making significant improvements as illustrated in the figure below. This shows, as expected, the positive and drastic **increasing trend of the level of Fund payments** for the remaining implementation period.

[28] Ibid.
[29] SE, CZ, LV, PT, HR, EL, IE, MT, PL and RO.

Figure 5: ISF-P payments 2015-2017 (EUR million)



3.2.2 Direct and indirect management

Under direct and indirect management, the Fund is centralised at the European Commission level. The Commission approves annual work programmes that define the priorities and objectives for each year, including the priorities for the calls for proposals. They concern union actions[30], and emergency assistance[31]. Applications for funding under union actions for instance are submitted online[32] and applicants may take part in multiple calls either as an applicant or a co-applicant[33].

Overview of initial allocation of union actions as per annual work programmes and of the amounts actually awarded and spent

A total amount of EUR 122.5 million was allocated for union actions and EUR 6.5 million for the emergency assistance as per the annual work programmes 2014-2016[34]. Furthermore, of that

[30] Union actions are managed directly by the Commission through grants and procurement or indirectly via delegation agreements (e.g. with Europol). The total amount initially budgeted for the 2014-2020 period is EUR 342 million.

[31] Emergency assistance is provided in response to crises. It can cover up to 100% of the eligible expenditure and is managed directly by the Commission. For the majority of emergency assistance actions covered, ISF-P granted 95% of the cost of the project. However, this may reach 100% for some type of beneficiaries.

[32] Applications for grants have always been submitted online: 2014 and 2015 annual work programmes via Priamos, and as of 2016 via the DG Research and Innovation's e-grants system. Applications must include the application form, a description of the action, and a budget estimate.

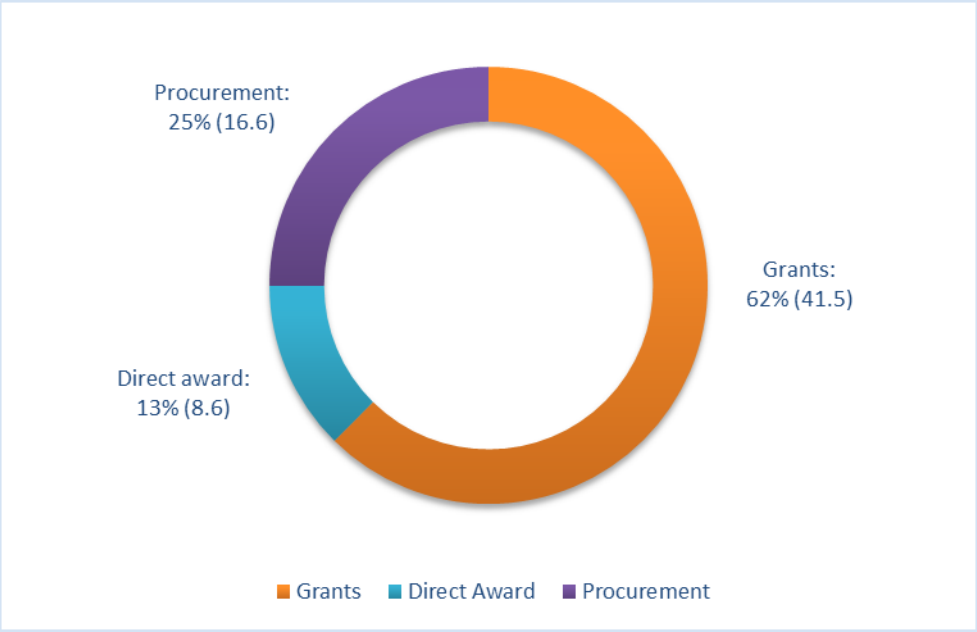
[33] Upon award and during the implementation of funding beneficiaries are required to report on the project's progress by submitting a mid-term progress report including, among other things, information on the results achieved to date, any obstacles, and any delays. When the project is completed, beneficiaries are required to submit a final technical implementation report which will include information on the results of the project, its impact and a description of the activities undertaken.

[34] The annual work programme 2017 was adopted in September 2017 and is thus outside the evaluation period.

amount, EUR 118.5 million was implemented under direct management and EUR 10.5 under indirect management.

Current data (2014-2016) on payments show that the main spending has been incurred for calls for proposals (62 %):

Figure 6: Payments made as of December 2016 (EUR million)

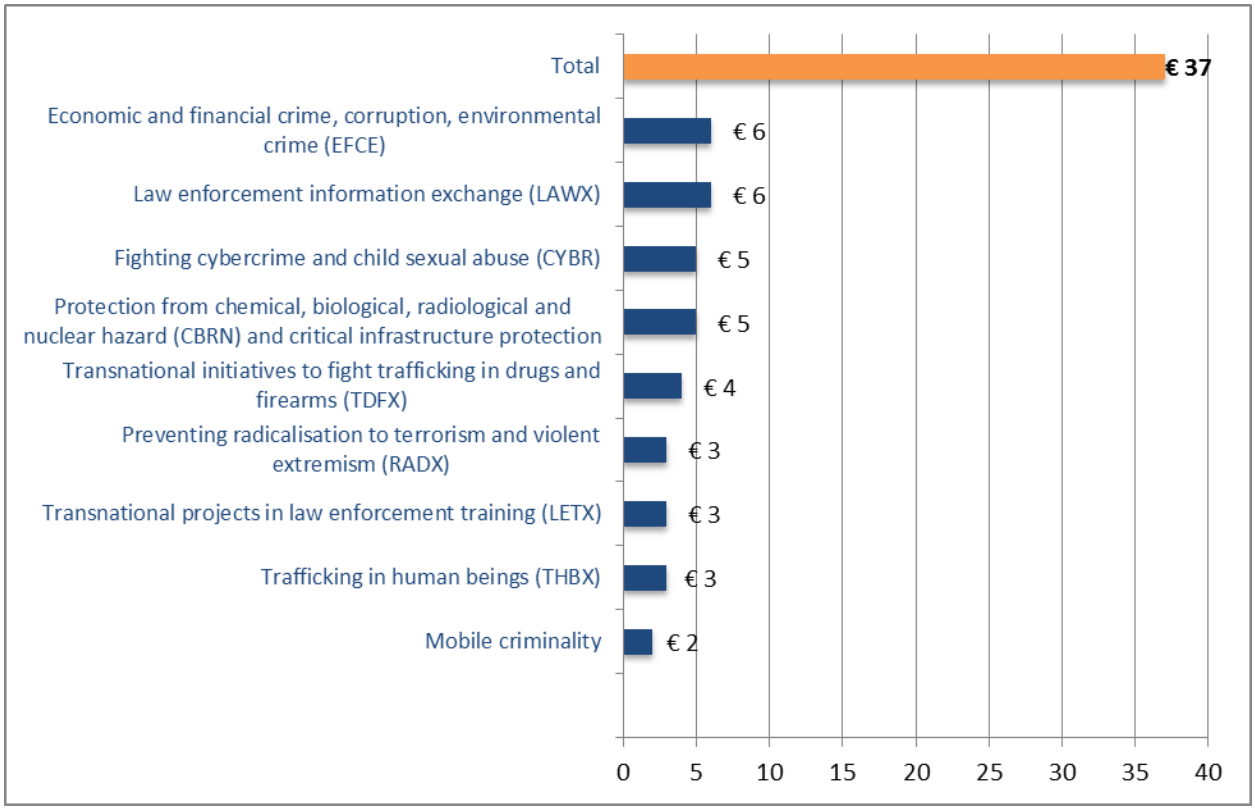


Calls for proposals

The overall budget for calls for proposals for the period 2014-2016 was EUR 41.1 million, including open calls (EUR 36.7 million) and restricted ones (EUR 4.4 million). There were four calls for proposal in each of the first two years (2014 and 2015) and one call in 2016. The policy areas[35] and the budgets for open calls are presented in the following figure:

[35] Based on Regulation (EU) 513/2014, Art. 8.

Figure 7: Budgets for open calls 2014-2016 per policy area (EUR million)



The distribution in the payments made so far among the several policy areas does not show any great discrepancies. The economic, financial, corruption and environment crimes received the highest amount paid (EUR 4.7 million) and the law enforcement training the lowest (EUR 2.6 million). Overall, nearly a total of EUR 29 million was paid out over the period 2014-2016.

Direct awards

The budget for direct awards in the annual work programmes for the period 2014-2016 is for EUR 22.8 million, accounting for 18 % of all union actions. In the reference period, nine direct grants were awarded, for a total of EUR 12.6 million. Payments for the direct awards amounted to EUR 9.1 million. Beneficiaries from six Member States (DE, PT, AT, BE, NL and SE) received direct awards.

Procurement

The budget for procurement in the 2014-2016 annual work programmes was EUR 49.3 million. By 30 June 2017, 207 procurement contracts and 9 administrative arrangements and service level agreements were signed for a total amount of EUR 38.8 million with corresponding payments made for EUR 23.4 million, thus leading to an implementation rate of 60.3 %.

Procurement essentially covers services that the Commission purchases directly and due to the nature of procurement, most of the contractors are based close to the Commission's headquarters. Therefore, contractors from only five Member States (NL, BE, FR, UK and DE) account for 99 % of the procurement contracts.

Emergency assistance

So far emergency assistance has been awarded in 2016 and 2017 for the following five projects:

- Belgian Federal Police (maximum grant EUR 0.9 million, 2016) — for tactical communication tool for special forces;
- French Ministry of Interior (maximum grant EUR 0.9 million, 2016) — for analytical system for video surveillance data;
- Europol (maximum grant EUR 1.5 million, 2016) — hot spots training and deployment;
- Belgian Federal Police (maximum grant EUR 0.7 million, 2017) — for increased explosives and firearms detection; and
- Europol (maximum grant EUR 2.2 million, 2017) — hot spots training and deployment.

4 METHOD

4.1 Short description of methodology

This interim evaluation assesses how the Fund has worked so far and intends to inform the national authorities, the EU institutions, the stakeholders and the general public about the key achievements and limitations of ISF-P[36]. The evaluation includes the analysis of the legal base in relation to the needs and actions implemented and the key changes implemented under the ISF-P relative to its predecessors, as well as the outlook for the remaining implementation period 2017-2020 — this is *the summative dimension*.

The evaluation identifies several lessons learnt to inform the Commission and the Member States on how they could address weaknesses and overcome obstacles, to ensure that during the second half of the implementation period corrective measures are taken and their impact is minimised — this is *the formative dimension* (see also the key findings in Chapter 6 on page 53). This forward-looking aspect of the evaluation will also contribute to the preparation of the next generation of funding instruments, post 2020.

This evaluation of ISF-P has been carried out by an external expert group and has been coordinated by the HOME Funds Evaluation Team in Unit E3 of the Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME) with the support of an Inter-Service Steering Group comprising other Commission general directorates and services, which has met four times — on 24 October and 15 December 2017 and on 1 February and 8 March 2018.

The external study of the interim evaluation started in September 2017 and has been guided by Terms of Reference adopted by the Commission. It has been based on the following data sources.

- Legal acts of the Funds including: the specific regulations; the horizontal Regulation; and implementing and delegated acts.
- Reports from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the application of various directives and regulations.
- National programmes of the participating Member States; management and control systems, annual implementation reports and annual accounts; and the national interim evaluation report.
- Union actions: Commission annual work programmes; grant agreements signed with awarded beneficiaries; and interim and final reports of the beneficiaries having implemented union actions.
- Emergency assistance: Commission annual work programmes for emergency assistance; grant agreements signed with awarded beneficiaries; and interim and final reports of the beneficiaries having implemented emergency assistance actions.
- Reports of the monitoring visits of the Commission (shared and direct management); audit reports drafted by the audit authorities of the Member States or by or on behalf of the Commission;

[36] For the implementation period 2014-2017.

- *Ex post* evaluation of the framework programme 'Security and Safeguarding Liberties (2007-2013) (SSL)', composed of two programmes: 'Prevention and Fight against Crime (ISEC)'; and 'Prevention, Preparedness and Consequence Management of Terrorism and other Security-Related Risks (CIPS)'.

- Relevant EU strategies, action plans, communications, recommendations; other relevant studies originating in the academic sector or produced by other institutions.

- Reports and statistics from EU agencies operating in the justice and home affairs/ migration and security area; DG Migration and Home Affairs statistics; Eurostat.

4.2 Evaluation questions[37]

In line with the 'Better Regulation' guidelines, this interim evaluation addresses evaluation questions under each of the sections, which are structured around the five evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence and EU added value.

Effectiveness	**To what extent has the ISF-P reached its objectives?**
▪ How did the Fund contribute to the prevention of cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism? - What progress was made towards the achievement of the expected results of strengthening Member States capability to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime? - What progress was made towards developing administrative and operational coordination and cooperation among Member Sates public authorities, Europol or other relevant Union bodies? - What progress was made towards developing training schemes in implementation of EU training policies, including through specific Union law enforcement exchange programmes? - What progress was made towards putting in place measures, safeguard mechanisms and best practices for the identification and support of witnesses and victims of crime? ▪ How did the Fund contribute to improve the capacity of Member States to manage effectively security-related risks and crises, and protecting people and critical infrastructure? - What progress was made towards reinforcing Member States administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity? - What progress was made towards establishing secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors? - What progress was made towards improving the administrative and operational capacity of the Member States and the Union?	
Efficiency	**Were the general objectives achieved at reasonable cost?**
▪ To what extent were the results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost in terms of deployed financial and human resources? ▪ What measures were put in place to prevent, detect, report and follow up on cases of fraud and other irregularities?	
Relevance	**Did the objectives of the interventions correspond to the actual needs?**
▪ Did the objectives set by the Member States in the national programmes respond to the identified needs? ▪ Did the objectives set in the annual work programmes for the union actions address the actual needs? ▪ Did the objectives set in the annual work programmes for emergency assistance address the actual needs? ▪ Which measures did the Member States put in place to address changing needs?	
Coherence	**Were the objectives set in the national programmes coherent with the ones set in other EU funded programmes (also during the implementation)?**
▪ Was an assessment of other interventions with similar objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? ▪ Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period? ▪ Were the actions implemented through the Fund coherent with and non-contradictory to other interventions with	

[37] The detailed evaluation questions are included in Annex 5.

similar objectives? ▪ Was the coherence ensured also of the Fund?	
Complementarity	**Were the objectives set in the national programme and the implemented actions complementary to those set in other policies?**
▪ Was an assessment of other interventions with complementary objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? ▪ Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established to ensure their complementarity for the implementing period? ▪ Were mechanisms aimed to prevent overlapping of financial instruments put in place?	
EU added value	**Was any value added brought about by the EU support?**
▪ What are the main types of added value resulting from the Fund support (volume, scope, role, process)? ▪ Would the Member States have carried out the actions required to implement the EU policies without the financial support of the Fund? ▪ What would be the most likely consequences of an interruption of the support? ▪ To which extent have actions supported resulted in a benefit at the Union level?	
Sustainability	**Are the positive effects of the projects likely to last when the Fund support will be over?**
▪ What were the main measures adopted by the Member States to ensure the sustainability of the results of the projects (both at programming and implementation stage)? ▪ Were mechanisms put in place to ensure a sustainability check at programming and implementation stage? ▪ To what extent are the outcomes/benefits of the actions sustained by the Fund expected to continue thereafter?	
Simplification and reduction of administrative burden	**Were the management procedures simplified and the administrative burden reduced for its beneficiaries?**
▪ Did the innovative procedures introduced (simplified cost option, multiannual programming, national eligibility rules, more comprehensive national programmes allowing for flexibility, operating support and STS for LT) bring about simplification for the beneficiaries of the Fund?	

4.3 Limitations and robustness of findings

Limitation 1

The first limitation of this evaluation concerns its timing: it is taking place only three years after the ISF-P was launched. Due to the late approval and slow implementation of the national programmes evaluating the cost-effectiveness of the actions has been challenging, since most of the projects are still ongoing or have only very recently begun to be implemented. Funding consumed under the national programmes[38] at the time of this evaluation represent only 8.42 % of the total funding allocated so far, while the average implementation rate was 37.7 %. The evidence on the Fund's results and impact is thus very limited. It is also not possible to definitively measure the sustainability of the effects of actions, as many of them are still being implemented. Thus, for these reasons this evaluation is not expected nor is it able to produce a full picture of the programme's results and impacts nor can it draw final conclusions.

Mitigation

Only data that were available were considered for this evaluation. Furthermore, tangible results through case studies, interviews and general and relevant project documentation were analysed. Moreover, to determine the sustainability of effects of actions, the likelihood of actions continuing has been assessed instead.

[38] In this context it is worth noting that Ireland has not submitted its national ISF evaluation report. Therefore it was not possible to include Ireland in this evaluation.

Limitation 2

There have been a lack of benchmarks to compare performance, mainly because AMIF and ISF are the first home affairs programmes to have a common monitoring and evaluation framework (CMEF) and a set of indicators (common, result and impact). At the same time, the stakeholders consider that the relevant indicators could be further improved. There has been a lack of quality in the data and in the Member States annual implementation reports, partly because the common monitoring and evaluation framework and all the guidance arrived later in the process (early 2017).

Mitigation

In this case, the national programmes and the national interim evaluation reports have provided the needed policy and performance baseline. Moreover, statistics on crime (mainly from Eurostat) have been a useful tool to assess the development of the different crime typologies before 2014 and during the implementation period being evaluated here.

Limitation 3

There have been issues related to data availability and measurability of impacts (for example, most of ISF-P indicators focus on outputs). Often, these indicators are not linked to the Fund's specific objectives; hence it is difficult to attribute the observed changes to the Fund. The information gathered through primary sources is limited, since stakeholders have no clear idea of the results brought about by the Fund. The information focuses more on procedural issues, and is providing a very general perspective on the Fund's implementation, with sporadic examples found on the ground.

Mitigation

In order to counter this issue, the evaluation has used other sources of evidence and triangulation techniques to assess the soundness of the value of the indicators reported. Also, indicators were not included in the evaluation whenever they were not considered to be strong enough and could alter the interim assessment.

Limitation 4

Concerning the open public consultation provided for in the Better Regulation guidelines, the Commission has worked on the future multi-annual financial framework in clusters setting up a streamlined consultation[39] that covered both forward and backward looking questions. Launching a specific consultation for the interim evaluations could have created confusion and not provided much added value compared to the broader exercise.

Mitigation

The open public consultation for the interim evaluation was therefore replaced by a targeted consultation (involving beneficiaries of union actions) which was eventually used to contextualise the findings. This consultation received input from 23 participants.

[39] Open Public Consultation: 155 responses submitted.
'Support to the preparation of the next generation of EU Funds in the Home Affairs, Synopsis Report on the stakeholder consultation' E&Y, February 2018. (Not made public yet).

Overall, DG HOME has thus tried to mitigate these limitations as much as possible, by transparently providing the data sources, all of which are made publicly available. Conclusions are then drawn, where possible, based on the triangulation of evidence from various data sources. Whenever possible, the *ex post* evaluation of the preceding programmes ISEC and CIPS has been used as a benchmark.

5 ANALYSIS AND ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

5.1 How effective has ISF-P been so far?

This question aims to provide an insight into whether ISF-P is on track to meeting its objectives. The Fund has two specific objectives: one linked to crime prevention — combating cross-border, serious and organised crime including terrorism and the other to managing security-related risks and crises.

In a nutshell

The Fund has contributed to a high level of security in the EU by means of preventing and combating cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism, and strengthening coordination and cooperation between law enforcement authorities. It has also contributed to improving Member States' capability to manage security-related risks and crises effectively and, to a lesser extent, by protecting people and critical infrastructures against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents.

Available evidence indicates that the Fund has helped to improve cooperation and coordination among Member States and European bodies, and towards improving Member States' capability to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments, although the number of ISF-P funded projects at national and EU level is relatively low.

With regard to union actions, several actions have been initiated in the area of early warning and cooperation on crisis prevention (e.g. the ATLAS network).

However, the Fund has made limited progress so far towards (i) boosting Member States administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure, (ii) protecting victims, and (iii) developing training schemes and exchange programmes. Furthermore, it has only made limited progress with third countries and international organisations, although most projects concerning these operational objectives are still ongoing.

The Fund has helped the EU to attain a higher level of security in the Union. This has been done via the achievements on its two specific objectives and in particular, the achievement of the seven operational objectives.

The Fund has helped reduce the prevalence of cross-border 'classic crime areas' in the EU as proved by the contextual crime indicators, while the incidence of new crime areas (e.g. financial and economic crime, cybercrime) has increased. The exact extent to which ISF-P is accountable for these changes cannot be shown. However, a qualitative assessment could show that the preceding ISEC and CIPS programmes as well as ISF-P contributed to the reduction of cross-border crime by means of: (i) better equipped and trained law enforcement officers, (ii) more and better exchange of information through various networks and structures and IT systems as well as (iii) the acquisition of technical equipment.

In addition, the Fund has made progress towards improving how current EU policies and instruments are applied and implemented (e.g. passenger name record directive, Prüm Council Decision on automated data exchange, biometric data capture and exchange, and interconnection with the systems of Justice and Home Affairs agencies).

Compared to ISEC and CIPS, an important change ISF-P introduced was the new objective of strengthening Member States capabilities. Furthermore, ISF-P is structurally different from its predecessor programmes, since around 40 % of all projects under the national programmes (169 of 419), in terms of the type of action, were focused on IT equipment or other equipment while only 10 projects were focused on police cooperation and networking[40]. Taking this into account, ISF-P has contributed to the operational exchange of information through IT systems and, to a lesser extent, to other forms of transnational exchange and cooperation, which was the key focus of its predecessor programmes. Due to this structural difference in the focus of the programmes, it is not possible to establish a 'like-to-like' comparison. Both *exchange of information and cooperation* and *improving operational capabilities* are complementary and are key components that contribute to greater security in the EU.

ISF-P helped strengthen the coordinated response against threats and crises and bolster the capability of Member States in the fields of threat and risk assessment, early warning systems and protection of critical infrastructure. In order to protect critical infrastructure, most measures focused on strengthening operational capability in case of terrorist attacks, including those involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosive substances, mostly through training law enforcement officials, acquiring highly specialised equipment and IT software and tools, and improving coordination between stakeholders. In addition, several Member States prioritised the development of training schemes and the establishment of national training capacities for future cross-sectoral training of all stakeholders involved in managing risks and crises.

Likewise, a significant number of Member States implemented actions which focused on establishing secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors, including (i) the development or upgrade of warning-alert systems and (ii) improving coordination between different authorities and with other countries, notably to strengthen cybersecurity.

However, the Fund has only made limited progress towards strengthening mutual trust among Member States law enforcement agencies (usually through relationship building during joint training, exchange programmes and participation in union actions, and operational cooperation). These types of actions were either not fully implemented by the national programmes or reduced in volume compared to the Fund's predecessor programmes. Also, ISF-P has only made limited progress in protecting victims of crime and in protecting people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents. Nevertheless, the vast majority of stakeholders interviewed stated that the project outputs and results are expected to be delivered in line with the resources and activities set out. Therefore, it is expected that ISF-P will achieve its objectives by the end of the programming period (i.e. 2020).

Strengthen Member States capability to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime

Under the national programmes, some progress has been made in strengthening Member States' capabilities to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism, as the vast

[40] This is not an exact categorisation as some projects may have had more than one focus area.

majority of Member States have implemented or are in the process of carrying out projects related to this objective. On average about four projects are carried out by each Member State, mainly in the fields of financial and economic crime, cybercrime, illicit drug trafficking and terrorist threats. These projects involve improving operational infrastructures, as well as mutual cooperation[41]. As nearly all of these projects are still ongoing, and even if some projects have already produced results and have led or contributed to positive effects, it is still too early to measure the overall impact of ISF-P[42].

Furthermore, Member States have also used ISF-P funds to respond quickly to needs on the ground by investing in IT systems and renewal of operational equipment which aimed to upgrade and increase the operational capability to prevent and combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, especially drug trafficking and terrorism. As to improving IT systems, acquisitions included technological and management systems, network devices, IT solutions, telecommunication interception systems, and computers. Other investments were made on technical equipment, such as mobile analysis laboratories, forensic tools and narcotics analysers. Finally, equipment such as special vehicles, drones and protective vests and equipment was purchased, some of which have already been put into practice (EE, FR and SI). To prevent cross-border and organised crime, automatic number plate recognition systems have been installed (EE, ES and FR).

In addition, with the support of ISF-P, Member States have improved their mutual cooperation to investigate and counter cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism. Cooperation took place by way of (i) exchanging information on cross-border crime, (ii) establishing transnational networks and projects, and (iii) Member States participating in joint investigation teams (JITs) and the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats (EMPACT) policy cycle. For instance, thematic networks allowed for operational practices to be exchanged on money laundering (AMON network in ES), anti-corruption (AT), police information and analysis (DE), cooperation centres and centres of excellence on cybercrime, and asset recovery. Five Member States (AT, BE, DE, FI and SI) invested in projects involving the exchange of information and practices to counter extremism and radicalisation.

National actions financed by ISF-P have also contributed to improving human capabilities and human resources, especially by financing the training and hiring of additional staff.

In terms of results, the above actions funded under shared management led to the disruption of organised crime groups, especially through: (i) seizures of cash (EE and FR), (ii) the taking down of websites (FR), (iii) arrests (DE, FR and MT), (iv) seizures of stolen goods (DE and EE) and (v) seizures of drugs, heroin and cocaine (BG, EE, ES, FI and MT).

The union actions' projects have helped strengthen Member States capabilities to prevent and fight against serious, transnational crime as well as improve cooperation. ISF-P funds supported

[41] Financial and economic crime, such as: (i) corruption, money laundering, financing of terrorism (AT, CZ, EE, FI, HU, LT, PT, SE and SI), (ii) proceeds of crime (NL and SE); (iii) cybercrime (AT, CY, CZ, ES, FI, FR, HU, LT, LV and SI); (iv) illicit drug trafficking (BG, CZ, EE, ES, FR and HU); (v) trafficking in human beings (BG, HU and SI); (vi) terrorist threats and radicalisation (BG, DE, EE, ES, FR, MT and SE); (vii) organised property crime (AT and DE); (viii) illegal importation and exportation (MT); and (ix) environmental crime (FR and SI).

[42] It is also too early to assess the results of such action as the programme's implementation got off to a slow start and the impacts may take up to three years to materialise. In addition, in the case of some Member States (IE, SE and SI), due to the confidential nature of sensitive operations carried out, details of the activities could not be disclosed to the evaluators, who therefore could not report on how such actions were implemented, nor their effectiveness.

projects in a number of different areas, in particular on radicalisation, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings. This was mainly achieved through gathering and sharing knowledge on a specific crime topic by conducting research and creating networks and databases. Other projects intended to strengthen operation capability through police cooperation, awareness-raising activities and training law enforcement officials.

The Fund's predecessor programmes ISEC and CIPS helped to stimulate, promote and develop cross-cutting methods for preventing and fighting crime. Improved networking and cooperation between authorities across Member States was identified as one of ISEC's main results (building trust, increasing Member States motivation to work together and 'improved Community feeling').

It is expected that the union actions of ISF-P will contribute to improving cooperation to a lower extent when compared to ISEC and CIPS as the amount of funding allocated to union actions under ISF-P is a third of that allocated under its predecessor programmes. However, if accounting for the entire ISF-P (including shared management), provided that projects are implemented as expected, the Fund's contribution is expected to be much greater as developing and using IT systems for exchanging information and other operational state-of-the-art equipment is likely to achieve a more transformational change across all Member States (rather than support single projects with participants from only a few Member States as in ISEC and CIPS).

Improve Member States and EU capability to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments

Ten Member States[43] have already implemented or are about to implement actions improving the administrative and operational capability in order to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments. Therefore, ISF-P is on the right track towards achieving this operational objective. Projects have focused on: (i) protecting critical infrastructure (AT, BG, EE and FI); (ii) developing information systems and knowledge relating to explosives (EE, ES and NL); (iii) training on the identification of possible 'foreign fighters' (EL); and (iv) developing analyses on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosive threats (EE, IT and LU).

The union actions have helped develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments, particularly relating to radicalisation and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives threats. At least two-thirds of stakeholders consulted thought that actions under both shared and direct management modes are achieving their objectives.

More than 60 % of all CIPS-funded projects focused on developing frameworks, methodologies, tools and approaches for risk assessment at a sectoral level. To ensure the effectiveness of risk assessment, the 'cascading effect' of common infrastructures needs to be taken into account in order to prevent and reduce the consequences of security incidents. The critical infrastructures are interdependent within different sectors, and if these interdependencies are not well assessed and considered this may lead to catastrophic cascading failures and domino effects. Compared with CIPS, ISF-P has managed to develop more comprehensive threat and risk assessments by focusing further on such interdependencies and cascading effects in case of disruption and destruction of critical infrastructures during terrorist attacks, and by ensuring the adaptability of outputs to other sectors and to a large-scale implementation.

Coordination and cooperation among Member States, Europol or other relevant EU bodies

[43] AT, BG, EL, EE, ES, FI, IT, NL, LU and RO.

In order to develop administrative and operational coordination and cooperation among Member States public authorities, Europol or other relevant EU bodies, the funded actions focused on establishing improved cooperation and coordination structures. This was mainly achieved through developing information systems, interconnections between databases and law enforcement applications, as well as developing platforms to exchange information. In particular, Member States used the Fund to comply with their obligations related to implementing EU legal instruments such as the passenger name record (PNR) directive[44].

Most of the Member States have used ISF-P funds to carry out projects that aim to achieve this operational objective, with an average of three projects per Member State. Two-thirds of stakeholders consulted believe that this objective is on track to being attained.

Positive contributions towards effective coordination and cooperation are noted mostly through the following measures: (i) setting up structures and centralised information systems to enable information exchange to take place (DE, EL FI, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT and PT); (ii) enabling access to operational databases and ensuring IT systems are interconnected (BG, IE and MT); (iii) improving data exchange, especially in order to implement the Prüm treaty[45] and the passenger name record directive; and (iv) strengthening coordination and cooperation mechanisms between law enforcement authorities and Europol (HU and LT).

Furthermore, ISF-P funds have been used to improve firearms control (BG, DE, FR and PL) and to help Member States meet their obligations under the passenger name record directive (BE, CZ, EE, ES, FR, LU, PL and SE) through the implementation of feasibility studies, developing the passenger information unit (PIU) application, and modernising the IT infrastructure and security environments[46]. The exchange of relevant passenger name record data among Member States and with Europol will ensure better cooperation between national authorities and will reduce security gaps.

ISF-P has also supported several national projects that are helping to implement the EU policy cycle. Some of these projects involve: (i) providing IT equipment for forensics experts who are helping to prepare SOCTA[47] (BG); (ii) carrying out a feasibility study on implementing a national criminal intelligence model (LV); (iii) police experts participating in operational meetings (CZ); (iv) enabling the better use of SIENA[48] and the Europol Information System (EIS) to support the exchange of information between Europol and national units (DE, IT, PL, SI and SK); and (v) supporting joint investigation teams (JITs) (AT, DE, FI, LT, PT and SI) that focus on different crime areas (FI).

A small number of projects have focused on cooperation with third countries. However, the limited scale of those is unlikely to generate significant results.

---

[44] It refers to the the Member States obligation to implement the Directive (EU) 2016/681 with regard to the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of terrorist offences or serious crimes. For instance, the Member States should establish the passenger information units (PIUs) which are responsible for exchanging both passenger name record data and the results of processing this data between them and with Europol, as well as, under specific conditions, with third countries.

[45] The Prüm treaty aims to develop international cooperation between the Member States regarding the exchange of data.

[46] The passenger name record data can be used for preventing as well as investigating and prosecuting terrorist offences. By processing these data against predetermined criteria and relevant databases, national authorities can obtain valuable information concerning people who might be involved in criminal activities such as terrorism, drugs trafficking, trafficking in human beings, child sexual exploitation and other serious crimes.

[47] Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment.

[48] Secure Information Exchange Network Application.

The union actions focused mainly or partly on developing or improving administrative and operational coordination and cooperation in different thematic areas among Member States public bodies and with Europol, and other relevant EU agencies, such as Frontex, and international bodies, such as Interpol. These projects aim, among other things, to facilitate and standardise the exchange of information and data.

The Fund's predecessor programmes ISEC and CIPS helped develop more stable transnational cooperation between Member States and their agencies, as well as better exchange of information, particularly in the field of forensics, drugs, passenger name record, cybercrime and trafficking in human beings. ISF-P is building upon the projects started in ISEC and CIPS and continuing with some of the actions started through these programmes, such as passenger name record and exchange of information under the the Prüm treaty.

Secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors

The majority of Member States have implemented actions focused on establishing secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors. Some delays in implementing ongoing projects were reported due to the following reasons: complexity of some projects leading to revisions (NL, LU and SK), or manufacture-related (FR), operational (AT) or coordination (EE) issues.

ISF-P has funded the following main types of actions under this operational objective:

- improvement of coordination between different departments, units, authorities, including with other countries (AT, ES and FI);
- development or upgrade of warning-alert systems (DE and NL);
- technical upgrade and acquisition of further equipment (AT, EE, FR, LU and LV); and
- development of structures and systems related to cybersecurity in order to establish secure links (AT, CZ and EE).

Furthermore, ISF-P has also implemented actions aimed at establishing an international centre for intelligence or other major events (AT), carrying out a feasibility study on establishing a coast guard centre for managing security incidents (BE) and developing a preventive model for security at universities (FI).

A key union action has been implemented under this operational objective to support the ATLAS network[49], which aims to strengthen the preparedness and effectiveness of special intervention units through exercises and other cross-border exchanges, including in crisis situations and the acquisition and sharing of tactical equipment to support special operations.

Through procurement, ISF-P funds were used to ensure the operations of Commission's secure zone (through maintenance, gradual upgrade, accreditation of IT systems and project management support) as secure environment for supporting (i) information exchange with EEAS, Europol, and Frontex, (ii) crisis management and risk assessment and (iii) strategic analysis.

[49] ATLAS network is a cooperation structure between special intervention units in the EU.

With regard to the contribution of CIPS Programme, similarly as in the ISF-P, the role of the Joint Research Centre was prominent in implementing these types of actions. CIPS had strong geographical imbalance and limited participation of Member States. As such, the role of ISF-P is expected to be a bit more prominent, although only 23 % of national programmes' total funding has been allocated to the second specific objective (risks and crises).

Strengthening Member States administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity

Despite the expected number of tools put in place to enable the protection of critical infrastructure, Member States did not reach the target in this area. Although actions have been implemented slowly at national level[50] and most of the projects are still ongoing, five Member States (AT, EE, ES, FR and SI) implemented projects on protecting critical infrastructure, which have already been completed and provided shown some results.

Projects financed by ISF-P were mainly focused on:

- improving cooperation between relevant stakeholders and operators of critical infrastructure in the case of terrorist or chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives attacks, including the training of law enforcement officials (AT, CY, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, NL, MT, RO and SE); and

- acquiring protective and preventive equipment for police forces or special rescue units (BE, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, HU and LV).

The achievement of these projects' objectives was sought through: (i) improving the information systems (EE and SI); (ii) developing emergency response communication strategies (DE and MT); (iii) developing new security concepts (BE, SE and NL) and increasing security at airports (CZ and FR); (iv) establishing an event management centre (HU); and (v) increasing cybersecurity (NL and PT).

Similarly, also in response to the recent context of increased security challenges and threats, the union actions presented the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure from chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosive materials as a high priority. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) has played an active role in implementing the European programme for critical infrastructure protection (EPCIP), in supporting the European Reference Network for Critical Infrastructure Protection (ERNCIP) and in assessing and validating the modelling tools and decision support systems addressing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives releases. Nevertheless, with the exception of the ERNCIP, the number of actions, their scope and the number of participants has remained limited. If actions related to 'infrastructure' continue to be implemented at a slow pace, the ISF-P is unlikely to achieve its operational objective related to critical infrastructure protection.

Also in 2015, the Commission launched a call for proposals to support the implementation of the EU chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives action plan on strengthening the security of explosives and the EPCIP. Actions focused on protecting critical infrastructure and training law enforcement practitioners.

[50] Delays in the submission of reports; delays due to limited staff and resources available to public authorities; delays in the RA's audits and verifications of projects; delays in the conduct of the required tender procedures.

Measures, safeguard mechanisms and best practices for identifying and supporting witnesses and victims of crime and terrorism

The actions implemented have focused on victims of human trafficking, followed by victims of terrorism and of child abuse, domestic violence, drug trafficking and financial crimes. For the type of actions, Member States put in place measures that aimed to raise awareness and provide information to crime victims, and combat human and sex worker trafficking (AT, EE, ES, MT, RO and SE[51]), support crime victims and witnesses in courts (CZ and FI[52]) and protect them through different programmes (AT, CZ, FI and MT), and boost law enforcement training on crime victim support (NL[53], MT[54] and RO).

Furthermore, a lot of ISF-P funded actions are directly or indirectly related to implementing the Directive establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection for victims of crime[55] (FI, MT, NL and SE).

Under union actions, limited progress has been made to reach this objective during the evaluation period, notably mid-term outputs so far, since most projects are still in the implementation phase. The relevant projects concern mainly victims of trafficking in human beings (THB), victims of financial and economic crime, and whistle-blowers. These actions aim to provide victim assistance and carry out awareness-raising activities.

Project coordinators considered that ISF-P has contributed to achieving this objective, but to a moderate extent (25%[56]). Four interviewees of projects at national and Union level stated that progress has been achieved with regard to supporting victims of crime.

Training

ISF-P has supported Member States in making progress towards developing training schemes, helping to boost professional skills and knowledge in several relevant policy areas. The majority of Member States have programmed and are implementing measures focusing on training, in particular in the fields of cybercrime, trafficking in human beings, drug trafficking and corruption. In contrast, training schemes to help Member States fulfil their obligations on human rights and fundamental freedoms have been least prominent. Furthermore, some Member States have focused on developing technical and operational skills, including on operating equipment such as drones and IT software.

---

51 The Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority in Sweden is developing an interactive website to make relevant information to victims easily accessible and comprehensible.

52 The IT systems of the justice administration that deal with crime victim compensation in Finland were renewed. The system is in place and the effect is that payment are able to be coordinated towards supporting crime victims.

53 The Netherlands carried out training for law enforcement officials in order for them to provide effective victim support.

54 Malta's law enforcement launched a victim support unit in April 2017. The aim of this unit is to provide victims of crime with access to support services and increase their participation in protection programmes. Also, an awareness-raising campaign targeted law enforcement officials to make better known the adopted standard procedures when working with victims of crime.

55 Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA (OJ L 315 of 14 November 2012).

56 Surveyed Project coordinators of Union actions and under the National Programmes: 9 out of 38 respondents agreed with the statement that their project made a significant or very significant impact in this area. Surveyed project co-beneficiaries of Union actions: 3 out of 12 different partners agreed with the statement that their project made a significant or very significant impact in this area.

As of June 2017, more than 11 000 law officials have been trained since 2014 compared to a target of about 128 000. If Member States continue implementing actions at the current pace, they are unlikely to achieve the training targets by the end of the period.

While a significant number of national actions tended to focus on boosting law enforcement officers' professional skills to tackle new or emerging threats as well as serious cross-border crimes, some training schemes aimed to improve their technical skills, such as operational, technological, software, and forensic skills. Other training schemes were carried out as an integral part of a larger project within the realm of ISF-P, and they helped boost the participants' professional skills and knowledge (DE, NL and FR).

In summary, the training is expected to result in the expertise of police officers and investigators being strengthened, hence helping law enforcement authorities to carry out their work more effectively. While it is too early at this stage to measure the results of the projects, the collected evidence shows that progress is being made — despite a slower than anticipated start — in many Member States.

Under union actions, limited progress has been made towards developing training schemes since most projects are still in the implementation phase. However, there was a call concerning law enforcement training (LETX) in the annual work programme 2015. About half of the stakeholders consulted claimed that training activities were not part of their projects.

The union actions that were relevant to training focused on a wide range of topics, especially in conjunction with the aim of strengthening the capability to prevent and combat crime, including terrorism, most notably on: (i) counter-terrorism, (ii) smuggling, (iii) trafficking in human beings; (iv) radicalisation; (v) cybercrime; (vi) drugs; (vii) chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives; (viii) forensics; and (ix) economic and financial crime. While the union actions' scope as well as the number of participants involved is relatively limited compared to actions under the national programmes, the projects incorporating a train-the-trainer approach[57] have the potential for a multiplier effect in training a large number of law enforcement staff in the second half of the Fund's implementation.

Compared to the ISEC and CIPS programmes, ISF-P's progress in this area has been limited so far. As presented under the section on coherence, CEPOL should have a more prominent role when it comes to law enforcement training funded through ISF-P.

5.2 How efficient has ISF-P been so far?

This question aims to consider the relation between the inputs of the Fund (i.e. resources, budget, etc.) and the outputs it achieved. It tries to answer two questions: (i) to what extent the effects of the actions were achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed and (ii) what measures were put into place to prevent, detect, report and follow-up cases of fraud, and other irregularities.

In a nutshell

[57] By design, the union actions focus on the train-the-trainer approach and hence are limited in the number of people they directly train. Indirectly, the union actions could lead to a number of people being trained across the EU.

Overall, in the limits of available data, it could be considered that the results of the Fund have been achieved at reasonable cost in terms of both human and financial resources. Some Member States have put in place national efficiency measures. However, most Member States face problems with the EU guidance, common indicators and the reporting/monitoring calendar. Despite simplification improvements, the perceived administrative burden can be considered as a factor that undermines efficiency.

Overall, the available data suggests that the Fund's results have been achieved so far at reasonable costs in terms of both financial and human resources[58] as far as it is possible to assess at this stage. The perceived administrative burden can be considered as being the main factor undermining efficiency.

Low levels of human resources costs were associated with implementing the national programmes (at responsible authority or delegated authority level). In terms of number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the responsible authority, delegated authority and audit authority compared to the number of projects implemented, the large variation found suggests that the number of required full-time equivalents depends on the scope and volume of the projects that Member States need to implement at a particular moment.

A total of 217 annual full time equivalent staff in Member States have been deployed to work on implementing the ISF, which corresponds to an average of 5.4 completed or ongoing projects per full time equivalent. The available data is for the combined ISF-BV and ISF-P, therefore the number of full-time equivalents linked to ISF-P is less than half of the total. The ratio of projects to full-time equivalents ranges from very high to very low. This may be due to the mere volume of ISF allocations, with some Member States receiving relatively smaller allocations (e.g. CZ, MT, LT and SK. It could also reflect the choices made by Member States when designing their programmes. Some Member States have decided to concentrate a significant amount on a few bigger projects, which only cover some operational objectives, while others have numerous smaller projects spread across all operational objectives. On average, 7.08 full-time equivalents per Member State have been involved in managing the Fund and are paid through technical assistance[59] or national budgets, with remarkable differences between the different Member States. Overall, taking into account the average number of projects implemented by 2017 (12.84), an average of 0.55 full-time equivalents were engaged per project. Member States show a growing or stable number of full-time equivalents over the years from 2014 to 2017[60].

Some of the success factors that brought efficiency have been the following:

- public agencies that benefit from the Fund were able to use their own networks to involve additional resources on an ad hoc basis and at no extra cost for the project;

- considerable knowledge and expertise had been gained through experience from previous projects (especially from the CIPS/ISEC programmes and from other programmes with multiannual projects);

[58] As also confirmed by 17 Member States (AT, BG, CZ, DE, ES, FR, HU, LU, MT, NL, PL, EL, HR, IS, SE, SI and SK); 10 participants to the eighth Evaluation Network Meeting (BE, BG, FI, HR, HU, NL, PL, PT and RO).

[59] Technical assistance should enable the Member States to carry out the implementation of their national programmes and assist beneficiaries in complying with their obligations and EU law.

[60] Except Germany (where full-time equivalents decreased from 25 to 21) and Malta (where full-time equivalents decreased from 13 to 10).

- staff were already employed in the organisation; and

- the flexibility of the national programmes.

Furthermore, national measures concerning the application, implementation, monitoring and reporting process have been put in place in some Member States[61] to ensure efficiency which include some of the following actions: (i) administrative and technical project approval procedures, (ii) procedures to assess whether expenditure is appropriate, (iii) project monitoring mechanisms, and (iv) national coordination mechanisms. There are also a number of issues at Member State level that are deemed to negatively affect efficiency. These are: (i) the requirement to allocate minimum percentages to national objectives[62], which are complex and recurrent in reports[63], (ii) common indicators[64] and (iii) the alignment of monitoring calendars[65].

Measures put in place to prevent, detect, report and follow-up cases of suspected fraud and other irregularities have also been contributing to a cost-effective implementation, through:

- prevention: careful examination of project applications; ex ante public procurement control systems; risk analysis by the responsible authority/delegated authority; training on fraud prevention or fraud risk management; provision of guidance tools; and regular communication between projects and responsible authority staff;

- detection: administrative control checks; operational on-the-spot checks; financial on-the-spot checks; and ex post audits;

- reporting and follow-up: implementation of communication instruments; establishment of procedures for reporting suspected fraud; and establishment of procedures for corrective and deterrent measures.

The majority of Member States claim that the management and control measures are appropriate and effective, saying that stringent mechanisms ensure that fraud and irregularities are prevented. However, experience suggests that there is always a potential trade-off between the procedures in place to prevent fraud and irregularities and the Fund's overall efficiency, in the sense that measures can be seen as very effective for preventing fraud, but they are not necessarily very efficient from a management perspective.

DG HOME's human resources have only slightly increased, despite the large increase in the value of the emergency assistance and the emergency situation on the ground following the migration crisis, and the need to follow-up closely and assist those Member States under pressure while implementing their respective national programmes, which have put an enormous strain on the Commission's general directorates and services. Overall, the emergency assistance and union actions as well as the objectives concerning indirect management actions have been achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources used in DG HOME.

---

[61] Seven national interim evaluation reports (AT, BE, FR, HU, MT, PL and SE). Interviews with several responsible authorities (BG, EL, FI, LT, PL and PT).

[62] Two national interim evaluation reports (BE and SI). Several responsible authorities participating in the eight evaluation network meeting (BE, EE, ES, HU, LT, NL and PL).

[63] Eight national interim evaluation reports (AT, BE, CY, CZ, ES, FR, IT and LV); four participants in the eighth evaluation network meeting (BE, BG, DE and IT).

[64] Several participants in the eight evaluation network meeting (BE, DE, CZ, FI, FR, HU, LU, MT, PL and PT); one national interim evaluation report (DE).

[65] Two participants in the eighth evaluation network meeting (BE and FR). Three national interim evaluation reports (BE, CY and FI). Interviews with two responsible authorities (FR and BE).

5.3 How much simplification and reduction of administrative burden has ISF-P brought so far?

This question aims to analyse the innovative procedures that the Fund introduced and looks at the extent to which they have simplified management procedures and reduced the administrative burden for the Fund's beneficiaries. Nonetheless, it is difficult to quantify how much simplification was brought by the ISF-P overall, therefore a qualitative assessment has been made instead.

In a nutshell

The single set of procedures for all areas covered by the Fund and for both AMIF and ISF in general was found to have led to simplification. The simplified cost option was used in only a few Member States who acknowledged its efficiency in reducing the administrative burden. However, the measures that the Fund implemented for simplifying and reducing the administrative burden have only partially achieved their intended goals. In spite of simplification improvements, there is little evidence at this stage that the administrative burden has been significantly reduced. Monitoring, reporting and verification measures are still burdensome and Member States have asked for further guidance in order to comply with EU requirements. The reporting requirements and the irrelevance of some common indicators were also reported as adding to the administrative burden.

Overall, the measures that ISF-P implemented to simplify and reduce administrative burden **have only partially achieved their intended goals**. The ISF-P introduced several new administrative and managerial procedures such as: simplified cost option, multiannual programming, national eligibility rules, more comprehensive national programmes, new IT-tools, and requirements for collecting cost data according to the *Better Regulation guidelines and toolbox*.

Under **shared management**, varied opinions are given by the responsible authorities. Up to 11 (half of the consulted responsible authorities) stated that the administrative burden has been reduced. However, eight claimed the opposite and only three stated that there had been a limited reduction compared to previous EU programmes. The responsible authorities claimed that the shift from programming national actions on an annual basis to a multiannual basis was particularly beneficial, in the sense that it provides Member States with the necessary flexibility to plan and adjust their national programmes' implementation according to changing needs and capacities. The wide variety of benefits entailed by multiannual programming includes: the possibility of having projects with longer life-cycles; the potential for higher levels of payments[66]; and the elimination of the need to prepare annual programmes. However, there are still some challenges such as setting targets for 7 years, reporting multiple times per project or coupling with the co-financiers' annual commitment capacity since most work with annual budgets. Also, the single set of procedures for all areas covered by the Fund and for both AMIF and ISF was found to lead to simplification.

Furthermore, national eligibility rules were deemed to provide more flexibility in managing the national programmes[67]. However, some responsible authorities highlighted that these rules actually added to the administrative burden[68] and led to problems for participants from more than

[66] Funds not used in a given year can be deployed in later years.
[67] About two-thirds of the responsible authorities interviewed perceived the introduction of national eligibility rules (13 responses) as positive.
[68] Mainly because of the investment to implement them at national level (BE, CY and LU).

one country[69]. Also, the simplified cost option was not used by most responsible authorities consulted[70]. A minority of responsible authorities acknowledge either its efficiency in reducing administrative burden or its potential to do so[71].

Concerning the undue administrative burden, the presence of some irrelevant indicators as well as the requirement to report on all indicators regardless of the actions implemented under the national programmes was highlighted[72]. Also, there are too many bodies in charge of financial controls over the use of EU funding compared to national funding and this creates a burden when implementing projects and reporting at national level (CZ and NL), the timing of which also differs from the one required under ISF-P.

The available data is hard to interpret and does not provide sufficient detail for analysing the simplification and reduction of administrative burden under **direct management**. Overall, beneficiaries of union actions did not express any concern about the administrative burden and were content with the support they received at EU level. The study did not cover recipients of direct awards and procurement contracts.

The ISEC/CIPS *ex post* evaluations concluded that there is the need for simplification under direct management as the shared management mode was introduced for the first time under ISF-P. Various improvements have been recommended such as: (i) better timing regarding calls for proposals, (ii) making the budget review exercise more efficient, (iii) discontinuing the use of operating grants, (iv) implementing a project monitoring system, (v) strengthening the framework partnership concept and (vi) increasing efforts to use flat-rates, lump sums etc.

5.4 How relevant has ISF-P been so far?

This question aims to determine whether the Fund's original objectives are still relevant and how well they still match the current needs and problems. It also addresses the programme's flexibility against changing circumstances in the wider context.

In a nutshell

The Fund's original rationale and objectives are still relevant in the aftermath of the migratory and security crisis. Appropriate mechanisms to address the changing needs have been put in place both at the programming and implementation stages. The flexibility offered by the Fund, consisting of transfers of money between different objectives, helped to address the changing needs. However Member States would appreciate even more flexibility that would result from the minimum allocations of funds to objectives no longer being imposed and the number of national objectives being reduced.

Alignment of national and ISF-P objectives

[69] Several Member States have chosen not to apply national eligibility rules: BE, BG, EE, ES, HU and SE.

[70] About two-thirds of the responsible authorities who responded (13 responses) stated that they are not using this option in the management of ISF-P. The other third (6 responses out of 20 responses) believed that the simplified cost option does reduce administrative burden.

[71] Some responsible authorities that are not using the option, see its potential or believe it needs to be further elaborated (CZ), and others plan to introduce it in 2018 (ES).

[72] Some indicators are not relevant for the impact they are supposed to measure (e.g. number of seizures of drugs is not considered a relevant indicator, as it ignores the amounts seized): DE, PT and NL.

The alignment of national and ISF-P's objectives already started during the policy dialogues between the Commission and Member States. At that level, both parties identified the links between ISF-P objectives and those of national strategic documents (such as national internal security strategies, or cybersecurity, organised crime, or counter-terrorism and radicalisation strategies). In addition, the policy dialogues mapped the 'key issues', which in effect represented the key internal security threats and risks and related needs. The capacity and capability needs that were identified reflected both crime-area specific needs as well as cross-cutting needs.

In their national programmes, the Member States identified the relevant policy areas as included in the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats policy cycle[73]. However, some also choose to focus on an area that presents challenges for them, such as drugs, trafficking in human beings, cybercrime, financial crime or corruption. The scope and objectives of the national programmes were sufficiently broad and flexible to accommodate changing needs and there was no need for significant changes. Overall, the identified threats fall within the scope of the existing objectives and actions as defined in the national programmes. However, the recent context of the unprecedented migration crisis and rise of terrorism and the substantial differences in the security situation between some member states highlighted the need for higher flexibility in designing the national programmes so they can respond to changing needs. A number of Member States[74] agreed that flexibility in designing national programmes is important as the security situation is prone to rapid change and may also differ quite substantially from one Member State to another.

According to the Article 5 of ISF-P's legal base, Member States have to reserve a minimum of 20 % of their budget for the first specific objective 'crime prevention' and a minimum of 10 % for the second specific objective 'risks and crisis'. This provision is in place to ensure that Member States tackle both objectives. In practice, 73 % of ISF-P funds were allocated for 'crime prevention' and 27 % were allocated for 'risks and crisis' in the national programmes.

Although flexibility is allowed when using the Fund, Member States reported that when designing the national programmes they have felt the need to focus on most of the priorities and thus, they did not focus their programmes on a few operational objectives but rather tended to spread the funding across most priorities. Thus, more flexibility should be given to Member States so they can focus on specific individual objectives and use resources in a limited number of objectives/thematic areas (thematic concentration) instead of pursuing various priorities across different areas[75]. Member States would appreciate more guidance or discussion around concentration vs the spreading of funding across priorities. They believe that spreading funding across too many priorities results in fragmentation of the funds which may limit the overall effect.

The majority of projects are in the area of crime policy. The objective of strengthening cooperation and coordination was identified in the national programmes of many Member States and thus most of the projects concerned either purchasing IT equipment or purchasing equipment for law enforcement authorities.

[73] Facilitation of illegal immigration; trafficking in human beings; counterfeit goods; excise and missing trader intra-community (MTIC) fraud; cocaine and heroin; synthetic drugs; illicit firearms trafficking; organised property crime; and cybercrime. More information may be found on Europol's website here: https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/eu-policy-cycle-empact

[74] BE, BG, DE, ES, HU, MT, PL, RO and SK.

[75] Opinions expressed by AT, CZ, FI and HU.

Some Member States did not receive project proposals in relation to some of the objectives (FR, FI and HU[76]). This fact does not necessarily indicate that the objectives were not relevant. Possible explanations include the potential beneficiaries' lack of experience with writing project proposals and timing issues. In some other cases relevant projects were selected, but contextual changes affected the relevance later on[77].

Alignment of union actions and emergency assistance and actual needs

The union actions aimed to focus on areas of particular interest for the EU that were complementary to shared management. Most of the union actions were based on a needs assessment[78]. Stakeholders also believed that the Fund's objectives and expected results corresponded well to the EU's needs and strategic priorities, needs of EU organisations and needs of the Member States where the organisation is based. The annual work programmes were aligned with the EU internal security strategy. The objectives of the 2014-2016 annual work programmes in providing support to union actions and emergency assistance under ISF-P correspond to the EU internal security strategy's objectives and threat assessments. For example, open calls on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives, radicalisation, trafficking in human beings, economic and financial crime correspond to the strategy's priority areas.

Therefore, the objectives set in the annual work programme addressed the actual needs well, in particular the needs for actions with a **transnational dimension**. The calls for proposals sought to fund projects addressing different parts of the above-mentioned themes. However, given the small amount of funding and the number of projects awarded through open calls, only a few organisations will receive funding for projects in the end. In addition, open calls seem to target areas of high priority and are specific or targeted to a particular topic within a sub-area[79]. Thus these targeted calls contribute to the Fund's relevance. Such focus when linked and aligned with current wider priorities and also the activities of other EU bodies, such as Europol, is welcome in order to maximise the results of the actions.

The calls for proposals are considered relevant and appropriate by the Member States as they have a strong transnational dimension and were informed by the current needs. The rationale for selecting the particular calls was clearly outlined in the annual work programmes. However, some Member States would welcome a clearer definition and presentation of the rationale for selecting priorities and calls for proposals. Also, implementation challenges and the need for assistance in project coordination were mentioned as obstacles to participating in union actions (BE and HU). Key players, such as Europol, should be closely consulted when defining such open calls.

Similarly to the preceding ISEC and CIPS programmes, there is continuing geographical imbalance when it comes to awarded actions under open calls for proposals. This is due to the specific nature of the open calls, whereby applicants choose to apply to calls depending on their

[76] For example, the Hungarian responsible authority published a call for proposals on research activities related to industrial infrastructure but no project proposals were received.

[77] For example, in Belgium an ongoing project had difficulties in fulfilling its objectives as it was dependent on an external partner whose internal priorities were affected by the terrorist attacks. On another project carried out in Belgium, changing circumstances (shift to outsourcing) reduced the need for a particular project (investment in own infrastructure), and as such, decreased that project's relevance (BE-national interim evaluation report).

[78] Survey with project coordinators – 75% 'yes' or 26 respondents.

[79] For example, the call ISFP-2017-AG-THBX on trafficking in human beings is focused on two priorities: Priority 1 - Profile/modus operandi of traffickers/criminal organized groups/links with other forms of serious and organized crimes, prosecutions and convictions; and Priority 2 - Actions focusing on the wider trafficking chain, including the profits involved in human trafficking.

need or interest. However, due to the small number of union actions, even geographical spread would not be the main priority and is difficult to achieve in practice. Thus, the main focus of the open calls is to fund projects of EU significance that could boost a specific priority or identified need.

With regard to the awarded projects, Belgium and Italy[80] were the most active Member States in terms of the number of grants coordinated and also by the total amount of funding awarded. Seven Member States which participate in ISF-P did not coordinate any grants under the calls for proposals (BG, EE, FI, HR, LV, MT and SK). Similar to the situation with ISEC and CIPS, this resulted in a geographical imbalance across the EU in terms of participation in ISF-P.

The thematic calls were overall balanced in terms of the number of projects awarded, with economic and financial crime and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives having the highest number of awarded projects.

Projects considered to be particularly relevant by consulted national stakeholders were those targeting: (i) radicalisation and propaganda; (ii) prisoners' rehabilitation; (iii) the return of foreign fighters; (iv) the updating of police infrastructure; and (v) training to police staff. However, more funding should be given for actions targeting anti-corruption initiatives as well as research (BE and CS). Likewise, in the area of cybersecurity, the Fund offered limited options for acquiring technical equipment.

Also considered as very useful were actions promoting (i) networking, (ii) partnerships and exchanges, (iii) police cooperation and coordination, (iv) networking and training with third countries and (v) development and transfer of technology and methodology[81]. Collaboration with partners from other countries was considered particularly valuable as an experience but also with regard to the projects' outputs. It is notable that compared to ISEC and CIPS, such collaboration has been reduced due to the much more limited number of open calls for proposals. However, the networks of practitioners supported through the Fund ensure a level of transnational collaboration.

In order to respond to crises, a flexible emergency response mechanism managed by the Commission responds to relevant and immediate needs of Member States and is meant to quickly address threats with a significant impact on EU citizens' security (see Section 3.2.2 on the implementation status of emergency assistance). However, the practical implementation of the emergency assistance actions highlighted certain limitations, mostly relating to the speed at which this funding was released (usually more than 6 months). Also, as the term 'emergency situation' is quite broad and offers room for interpretation[82], it offers the possibility to still continue the actions even if the situation no longer represents an emergency but still requires constant post-emergency assistance.

Measures put in place to address changing needs

Various mechanisms are in place to ensure that the national programmes respond to the changing needs while they are being implemented. Some Member States have continuous consultations

[80] Belgium with 11 projects amounting for EUR 7 652 260 and Italy with 12 projects amounting for EUR 6 818 698).

[81] Information from case studies: DE, CS and CY.

[82] Art. 2, Regulation 513/2014 'emergency situation' means any security-related incident or newly emerging threat, which has or may have a significant adverse impact on the security of people in one or more Member States. It does not specify the types of situation that Member States could treat as emergencies.

with potential beneficiaries, others use interim consultative processes. Certain Member States had to adapt their national programmes to respond to the changing security environment and be able to focus on newly emerging needs[83]. At the same time, the objectives of the national programmes in a number of Member States (AT, BE, BG, DE, EE, ES, HU, PT, SE and SK) were sufficiently broad and flexible to accommodate changing needs and there was no need for significant changes. Overall, the identified threats fall within the scope of the existing objectives and actions as defined in the national programmes. In some Member States the changes relating to the security situation and in particular to terrorism required amendments to the national programmes[84]. Two such changes which led to revisions in the national programmes resulted from (i) the elevated terrorism threat and (ii) the migration crisis and security-related challenges[85]. Also, changes to the national programmes may have resulted from the need to implement various EU legislative instruments[86].

In conclusion, the ISF-P objectives are still relevant to the needs of the Member States as also shown by the requests for extra funding. Some Member States expressed that they needed to extend measures already planned in their national programmes or provide additional funding[87]. In some cases the required changes involved a decrease in funding[88] or its redistribution. In some other cases the focus of law enforcement priorities has shifted, while in others this focus has expanded.

5.5 How coherent and complementary has ISF-P been so far?

These questions look at the extent to which different ISF-P actions work together internally and with other EU interventions and to identify whether there are complementarities, gaps and overlaps between different initiatives.

In a nutshell

The Fund is considered to be coherent and its objectives are complementary to other national policies. The Fund's coherence and its complementarity with other EU financing instruments have been ensured during the design, programming and implementation stages. Coordinating mechanisms have been put in place to ensure coherence and complementarity at the implementation stage. The monitoring committee and the responsible authority play key roles in

[83] For instance, France refocused its strategy on the fight against terrorism in light of the terrorist attacks that targeted Paris in 2015. In Greece the specific objective 'Preventing and Combating Crime' had to be modified to add a new objective 'Operating Support for First Practitioners'.

[84] For example in Greece, the specific objective 'Preventing and Combating Crime' had to be modified to add a new objective 'Operating Support for First Practitioners'.

[85] Due to the elevated terrorism threat in Europe, more funding was required to prevent terrorism. However, some law enforcement organisations were less interested in ISF-P funding via EU funds. This was because the objectives and eligible actions were not in line with their country's needs. In addition, the rapid and widespread increase in the number of asylum seekers and migrants in 2015 led Member States to strengthen their focus on human trafficking victims or on establishing anti-radicalisation and mental health actions directed towards this group.

[86] For example, in Slovenia as a result of new regulations requiring Member States to set up national systems for the processing and recovery of information on airline passengers (due to the passenger name record directive), two new measures were added to the national programme. Similarly, the national programmes of a number of countries (BG, CY, EE, LV, LU, ES, SE and FI) were revised in relation to the passenger name record directive.

[87] For instance, Belgium requested an additional EUR 26 336 900 to continue funding its programme on de-radicalisation. However, no changes to its national programme were envisaged.

[88] This is the case for Germany and Slovakia. Also in Belgium, the objectives of one project were reviewed due to higher than expected costs for equipment purchases.

ensuring coherence. Different implementation modes have been complementary to each other. However, there appears to be some room for improvement in relation to EU agencies and to internal coherence as there is little awareness among beneficiaries about the actions and projects carried out within the ISF framework.

The coherence and complementarity of actions funded under the national programmes was ensured by their design which was done according to the Member States needs assessment and the Fund's rules. This ensured that the national programmes were consistent with other existing mechanisms that target the same needs as ISF-P[89]. Member States that did not carry out such an assessment provided reasons as to why this was not considered necessary. In particular, some Member States (EE, RO and SI) claimed that the actions co-financed by ISF-P are very specific and they are not covered by other national programmes[90]. For example, one Member State highlighted that although some areas covered by ISF-P (i.e. terrorism prevention, weapons and drug smuggling, corruption and de-radicalisation) were also addressed by nationally funded programmes, the type of projects implemented through ISF-P were different (e.g. international networks), which thus made them complementary to nationally funded actions.

In addition, at national level, the vast majority of Member States ensured that ISF-P actions were coherent and complementary with similar interventions carried out under other EU funds through the establishment of coordination mechanisms[91], mainly by setting up Monitoring Committees[92] involving different responsible authorities. The potential for their duplication with other actions funded under other EU programmes was limited and actively managed, especially during the programming stage (e.g. through inter-service consultations, working groups incorporating representatives of relevant Commission general directorates and other EU institutions[93] and through using informal communication channels between the relevant ministries[94]).

The actions eligible under the national programmes were complementary in the sense that their actions and results were mutually reinforcing[95]. The complementarity of actions carried out under the following policy areas was often mentioned: radicalisation, interoperability of systems, critical infrastructures, forensics and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives preparedness. Certain types of actions were complementary by nature, i.e. the acquisition of

[89] Source national interim evaluation reports of BE, BG, CY, CZ, EL, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL and SK. The assessments involved, among other things, analysing similar interventions under previous EU-funded programmes or the national programmes and policies (BE, CZ, HU, IE, LT and PL) or the participation of other relevant national and local authorities or beneficiaries of the projects (BG, CY, DE, MT and PL).

[90] National interim evaluation reports.

[91] At EU level, coordination mechanisms were used to prevent work from being duplicated and ensure synergies resulted from coordination of management efforts. In particular, during the Fund's programming and implementation stages, specific actions were taken to ensure complementarity/synergies with: (i) ISF - Borders and Visa; (ii) AMIF, (iii) Horizon 2020 – applied research for ISF-P; (iv) ESIF programmes that involve security; (v) EU Solidarity Fund; (vi) Instrument for pre-accession assistance; (vii) external aid; (viii) OLAF (Hercule programme); (ix) Norwegian/Swiss Cooperation funds; and (x) national funding and programmes.

[92] Monitoring Committees were established to ensure the operational coordination of the different funding sources. These groups allow project managers to provide an overview of the status of their projects, discuss bottlenecks and detect possibilities for cooperation with other ISF-P projects (e.g., in Estonia this mechanism has occasionally led to adjustments to projects in order to eliminate overlapping and increase the potential impact of the programme). In some cases, specific coordination mechanisms were implemented for large-scale projects (e.g. the German Police Information and Analysis Network).

[93] This was evidenced by BE, BG, CY, DE, HU, LU, LV, NL, PL, SE, SI and SK.

[94] This was evidenced by CZ, EE, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT and SE.

[95] Nearly all national interim evaluation reports established the complementarity of different projects carried out under the national programmes. Some actions were intertwined and thus are mutually contributing to the attainment of ISF-P objectives.

equipment and software and training on their use. The level of complementarity also depends on the way in which actions are programmed under the national programmes.

With regard to radicalisation, the RAN Centre of Excellence provides coordination and support for the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)[96]. It uses its expertise to guide the working groups, offer tailor-made support to individual countries and disseminate knowledge and practices. The EU Internet Forum established in 2015 brings together governments, Europol, internet companies, the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, the European Strategic Communications Network and the Radicalisation Awareness Network with the objective to reduce accessibility to terrorist content online and to empower the civil society partners to increase the volume of effective alternative narratives online.

In addition, the coherence and complementarity at project level can be ensured through procurement by asking the applicants to explain how their projects were going to create synergies, as well as to declare any other sources of funding[97]. Their applications were then examined by evaluation committees whose members are usually familiar with other relevant programmes and can thus identify potential risks for overlapping.

In the Member States where no assessment was carried out, the complementarity resulted from the way the Fund's implementation was governed. More precisely, the wide stakeholder consultation during the programming stage allowed for the high consistency of priorities and projects, thus ensuring the absence of conflicts.

The complementarity among the Fund's different implementation modes (shared, direct and indirect) has been ensured. Moreover, no overlapping or duplication was found between them, since they actually covered different types of actions[98]. Specifically, direct and indirect management were generally intended to be designed and implemented to improve and complement interventions planned under the national programmes, or to fund interventions that cannot be implemented under shared management for several reasons (e.g. allocation limits, difficulties in reviewing the national programmes, etc.). In particular, the emergency assistance enabled actions that are difficult to be implemented under the national programmes (due to allocation limits) to be supported, since they address emerging and unpredictable needs arising from emergency situations. The emergency assistance has also improved private-public synergies[99]. The union actions allowed the Member States to plan and implement cross-country projects, which were otherwise not affordable under the national programmes[100]. Moreover, indirect management projects allowed the EU to entrust budget implementation tasks to partner countries, bodies designated by partner countries, or international organisations with the necessary expertise and knowledge to properly manage and implement the measures required.

However, as regards internal coherence there appears to be some room for improvement, since it seems that ISF-P beneficiaries are not very aware of the actions and projects carried out within the ISF framework (beneficiaries appear to perceive most coordination as informal, to be done

---

96 The RAN Collection of Approaches and Practices, which has been regularly updated since 2014, contains details of radicalisation projects based in the EU which are transferable to other contexts. The projects have been presented in a RAN Working Group meeting for peer review and approved by the RAN Steering Committee.

97 For example, Estonia's national interim evaluation report states that applicants are obliged to provide an overview of the projects that they have previously implemented as well as to state whether they plan to apply for other funds.

98 Interviews with DG Home officials, BG Chief Directorate Police, IT Navy and CIES Onlus (beneficiary of Italian emergency assistance), EL delegated authority.

99 Ibidem.

100 Interview with DG HOME officials.

on own initiative and not incentivised, while there is a clear need for more formalised information at project and national level[101]). In some Member States, the responsible authorities were not aware about the projects that had been carried out in their country under union actions or the proposals that were submitted under union actions calls (ES, HU and SE). Respondents suggested that the Commission could consider providing such information to the responsible authorities[102]. Furthermore, responses to the targeted consultation suggested that cooperation between project coordinators of different union actions does not seem to be a common practice[103]. Hence, no cooperation mechanism to ensure coherence between the actions implemented under the national programmes and the union actions has been formally set up. Despite all this, project coordinators and co-beneficiaries of the union actions consider that their projects are coherent and are consistent with other interventions[104] at national and EU level.

It is possible to pursue the potential complementarity of ISF-P with other EU-funded programmes in the field of crime prevention as well as management of risks and crises. In the field of crime prevention, the complementarity between ISF-P and the following EU programmes has been assessed: the justice programme; Hercule III; Horizon 2020 (H2020); and the rights, equality and citizenship programme. Two instruments focused on third countries are also included in the assessment of coherence: (i) the Instrument for pre-accession (IPA II) and the European Neighbourhood Instrument. The legal bases of these programmes point to the complementarity between these and ISF-P in terms of the objectives they pursue, their territorial and material scope, the actions that are eligible for funding and the groups they target. However, the risk of these programmes and ISF-P duplicating efforts is minimal due to the different nature of the actions or eligible activities that they cover.

In the field of risk and crisis management, complementarity between ISF-P and the following EU programmes has been assessed: Horizon 2020: the EU Civil Protection Mechanism; the health for growth programme and, from an external dimension, the Instrument contributing to stability and peace (IcSP). As in the field of crime prevention, an analysis of the legal bases of these instruments points to a certain overlap between ISF-P and some of these programmes, namely Horizon 2020 and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. However, the actual duplication of efforts is prevented due to the different activities funded and the different coverage of the actions funded.

Furthermore, the activities of the relevant EU agencies should be more aligned with similar activities in ISF-P to avoid duplication and ensure synergies. Agencies should be consulted in the Fund's programming and implementation stages in inter-service consultations and at project level, including in the formulation of the annual work programmes. Europol plays a key role in the area of law enforcement and is active in the same areas as ISF-P, in particular as a support centre for law enforcement operations. One example that highlighted where overlap was observed was in the area of firearms trafficking. The high degree of potential duplication should be well managed and it should be ensured that different funding streams and budgets are aligned. Europol is also a key player when it comes to the interoperability of IT systems and it should be

[101] Except for two interviewees who proactively monitor the activities carried out at national level (ES-I-UA, NL-I-UA), all project coordinators stated that they are not aware of the projects implemented in their field of expertise.

[102] Other Member States had a Monitoring Committee (BG) and were informed about union actions projects.

[103] Most respondents participating in the targeted consultation for project beneficiaries (67% or eight respondents) declared they have not established cooperation or synergies with other projects/actions funded by the EU or at national level.

[104] Almost all respondents of the targeted consultation for project coordinators (97% or 30 respondents) and all the respondents for co-beneficiaries (100% or 12 respondents) agreed with the question 'Do you consider that the project was coherent and non-contradictory with other actions / projects?'.

involved in such projects. Also, CEPOL is the EU agency for law enforcement training and its activities pose the risk of duplication with some actions funded under ISF-P in the area of training. CEPOL should be more involved in implementing and monitoring projects in the area of training and, given its central overview of training needs and its technical knowledge, it should be consulted regarding the training funded through ISF-P.

5.6 What is the EU added value of ISF-P so far?

This question aims to assess the value that results from ISF-P that is additional to the value that could result from interventions which would have been achieved by the Member States at national level.

In a nutshell

Overall, the Fund has ensured EU added value in terms of improving cross-border cooperation, exchanging knowledge and best practice, trust amongst Member States law enforcement authorities and applying and implementing key EU policies (process effects). It has also helped to broaden the scope and improve the quality of the actions in terms of investments in under-prioritised or highly specialised areas. The purchase of state-of-the-art equipment has boosted the capabilities of the national authorities to carry out specialised interventions with a wider scope. The Fund has also enabled the broadening of the types of knowledge exchange and law enforcement training (scope effects). The Fund has proved that it contributed to harmonising EU-level research on crime prevention, as well as enabled increased investments and focused on long-term measures in this area. It has also enabled high-volume investments, especially in IT systems, training and specialised equipment (volume effects). The absence of ISF-P funding would have been detrimental to both the quality of the EU response to cross-border cooperation and the Member States ability to implement innovative solutions (role effects).

The main EU added value of ISF-P can be found in its process, scope and volume effects, as well as in its role effects. As most security threats identified at EU level are cross-border and call for better cooperation between Member States, the main EU level benefit of ISF-P arises from the transnational dimension of certain actions, especially the Union actions which are seen as having a stronger emphasis on the EU dimensions that directly relate to these threats. As regards the national programmes, the Fund is seen as contributing to a safer Europe through boosting cooperation and working together with the Member States on their national priorities.

Therefore, the Fund has ensured EU added value by enabling cross-border projects to be implemented through encouraging operational cooperation and mutual learning. It has also helped to implement EU IT systems at national level. Moreover, ISF-P is seen as broadening the scope and volume of existing national interventions, which, under national funding programmes, would not have been implemented at the same scale or within the same timeframe, while some actions would not have been implemented at all without ISF-P.

The ISEC and CIPS programmes had a strong transnational dimension as transnational cooperation was a prerequisite for funding except in very special cases which had an EU priority. However, the geographical distribution of coordinating and partner organisations that received funding was highly uneven and concentrated in a few Members States. EU added value for ISEC and CIPS could have been higher if organisations had been better spread over the Member States. By establishing the shared management mode in ISF-P (initially 60 % of total programme and over 70 % after the top-ups), ISF-P had a better geographical reach across all Member

States. However, Union actions, especially those implemented through open calls for proposals, are characterised again with the same geographical imbalance that was in ISEC and CIPS.

One of the main components strengthening EU added value in ISEC and CIPS was the transnational partnerships established as part of the projects. In the vast majority of cases, coordinating and partner organisations thought that cooperation and exchange of information with organisations from other countries helped them to gain more knowledge and expertise on the subjects they were working on. In comparison, ISF-P introduced a new operational tool to strengthen Member States' capabilities, which enabled improvements in technical and operational capabilities at national level, including through the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment and, to a lesser extent, cooperation and exchange of information. However, the union actions, especially those funded under open calls for proposal, continue to show very similar geographical patterns to ISEC and CIPS.

Under shared management, in terms of scope effects, the scope of ISF-P was very broad to allow Member States the flexibility to define priorities and also to respond to a changing security environment (as established in Section 5.4). ISF-P has facilitated increased investments in crime prevention activities[105] which often receive fewer funds from national authorities due to higher priority being given to investigation and prosecution of crimes[106]. This also includes a stronger focus on long-term measures in the field of crime prevention, which would not have been possible otherwise due to the short-term nature of national political priorities. In addition, the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment has strengthened the capabilities of national specialised authorities to carry out interventions with a wider scope, e.g. the analysis of portable devices for cybercrime investigations[107]. It has also enabled the broadening of the types of knowledge exchange and law enforcement training.

Regarding volume effects, ISF-P has added volume to existing national actions in a number of ways. The Fund had brought significant EU added value by increasing the volume of investments in under-prioritised policy areas, such as the fight against organised crime which has been at a disadvantage compared to terrorism over recent years[108]. It has also enabled system upgrades and updates to allow for more comprehensive coverage of data exchange among national authorities, increased the total number of trained staff, and strengthened the Member States' capabilities through purchasing specialised equipment (RO, PT, PL and MT).

Furthermore, the Fund has facilitated and enabled synergies, cooperation and the exchange of information and knowledge among Member States Joint Investigation Teams (CY, LV, BG and HU). ISF-P has strengthened measures arising from EU requirements, including through a common steering methodology (e.g. support for standardising information exchange through SIENA).

ISF-P's process effects are seen as increasing the quality and effectiveness of activities, processes and procedures required to ensure security at national level (HR, LV and MT), including through upgrading IT systems and providing guidance on the design and management of projects relating to law enforcement. Also, ISF-P has contributed to the better use of common

[105] Projects on prevention of radicalisation, particularly of young people were carried out in: BE, DE, EE, FI, CY, PT and SE. For example, in Germany, the project 'Online and offline intervention for de-radicalisation via social media' aimed to prevent or reverse radicalisation processes by social media and online communication. In Romania, training was organised aimed at preventing corruption in public administration.

[106] As per evaluation workshop with the responsible authorities, national interim evaluation reports.

[107] Ibidem.

[108] Through a research network on organised crime as per national interim evaluation reports.

systems amongst Member States and a greater budgetary flexibility, wherein a leverage effect is achieved, which enables Member States to increase the number and broaden the scope of projects (CY, LU and HU).

In terms of role effects, the implementation of ISF-P funded actions plays a major role in innovation, new ways of working, and new cooperation. The Fund acts as a catalyst for developing police approaches to fight crime (e.g. new or extended joint trainings, transfer of methodologies, and networks among law enforcement agencies). ISF-P has generated significant EU added value through increased investments in innovation intended for law enforcement authorities, as well as the implementation of new technologies and their mainstreaming to police forces (BE, EE, FR and IT). Also, the Fund has increased the number of activities with cross-border dimensions and strengthened the cooperation among Member States while facilitating their leadership in particular areas (LU).

Regarding direct management, in terms of scope effects, similarly to actions funded through ISEC and CIPS, Union actions also contribute to enabling EU regulatory transposition in a range of fields, such as anti-money laundering (CZ). Activities implemented through Union actions also covered broader initiatives such as cross-border cooperation by involving countries from wider geographical areas, as well as inter-regional cooperation by bringing together regions from across the whole EU (DE). Furthermore, some projects are said to have helped increase the quality of information exchange among Member States and with third countries (e.g. countries of the Western Balkans), which would fall outside of national funding priorities (DE).

In terms of volume effects, a total of 60 projects were awarded through open calls for proposals for the Fund's first implementation period. At this rate, it could be expected that around 150 projects will be awarded through ISF-P open calls. In comparison to this, 569 projects were implemented through open calls for proposals in ISEC and CIPS for the entire period. This is an obvious decrease of the volume of actions implemented and thus, no increase in volume effects can be observed compared to ISF-P's predecessor programmes. Regarding direct awards, ISF-P has continued to provide funding to EU networks of practitioners as had happened through ISEC and CIPS and thus, there is continuation rather than an increase in the volume.

In terms of process effects, Union actions are helping to increase the quality and effectiveness of activities, processes and procedures required to ensure security. This has been done for example through developing common techniques, tools and methodologies.

In terms of role effects, some of the greatest achievements of the Fund were boosting cross-border cooperation, encouraging trust-building amongst Member States law enforcement authorities and better application and implementation of key EU policies (such as implementing the passenger name record directive or the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats) or EU IT systems[109]. This included bringing people together through training and exchange programmes[110], which enabled research and law enforcement organisations to work with partners from other Member States[111]. The Fund has also contributed to the harmonisation of EU-level research on forensics and crime prevention, as well as to the involvement of civil society in crime prevention research and actions. In addition, ISF-P has contributed to the better exchange of knowledge and best practices, especially through its support of directly funded professional networks, such as ATLAS or CARIN.

[109] The EU dimension is the most visible in actions implementing EU legislation such as interoperability of IT systems.

[110] As per scoping interviews and as per discussions at an evaluation workshop with Responsible Authorities.

[111] As per interviews with coordinators of Union actions.

The absence of ISF-P funding would have been detrimental to the quality of the EU response to cross-border cooperation and to the ability of the Member States to implement innovative solutions. Nevertheless, some actions would have been implemented only as a minimum to comply with EU legislation and they would have been limited in scope and quality, therefore diminishing Member States' capacities for cross-border crime prevention, detection and investigation, information exchange and innovation[112]. Similarly, certain actions would have been implemented mainly in specific areas of national interest (e.g. the passenger name record, EU IT systems), while others would have risked not being funded at all or suffered delays[113]. With respect to Union actions, ISF-P largely supported projects, especially the ones linked to civil society organisations that would not have taken place without its support.

The interruption of ISF-P financing, and especially the funding to the national programmes, is likely to have significantly negative implications on the efforts already put in place as well as: (i) cause a reduction of the scope and quality (e.g. the number of target beneficiaries reached, the type of services provided), (ii) delays in the Fund's implementation or its possible discontinuation, (iii) loss of networking capacity, (iv) less innovative measures, (v) a revision of priorities and (vi) the risk of the Member States not reaching EU/national goals. Also, most union actions funded by ISF-P would not have taken place without its support. Discontinuing support for union actions would likely result in the loss of exchange of expertise between the partners and Member States participating in joint activities.

5.7 How sustainable are the actions implemented under ISF-P so far?

This evaluation question aims to look at (a) how long the effects of the actions are likely to last after the intervention ends (sustainability of effects), and (b) the extent to which the actions can be continued after the ISF-P financing ends (sustainability of actions).

In a nutshell

The Fund's sustainability has been ensured through the alignment and complementarity of its actions with actions developed in response to national priorities or EU requirements. Comprehensive measures and mechanisms ensuring sustainability have been put in place at programming and implementation stages both under shared and direct management. However, the ongoing implementation of most projects makes it difficult to establish whether the effects on the target groups and on specific areas will really last.

A wide range of measures to ensure sustainability of project results are in place for projects implemented both under shared and direct management. Regarding the national programmes, at the selection stage the following measures ensuring sustainability are envisaged: (i) the evaluation of project sustainability[114], ensuring maintenance and follow-up costs are accounted for (especially for IT equipment)[115] and (ii) minimum requirements for warranty and duration of targeted or declared utilisation[116].

[112] BE, BG, CY, CZ, ES, SK, RO, PT, MT, LV. LU, IT, HR and FI.

[113] ISF-P has funded some low priority, niche, highly specialised and innovative projects, which, without EU support, would have been temporarily or indefinitely halted (AT, BE, BG, CZ, EE, SK, RO, PT. IT and FI).

[114] For example, projects are evaluated for sustainability by the Policy Committee and the Programming Committee in France (FR). Sustainability checks are also performed by some responsible authorities at the programming stage (LV).

[115] In some Member States the beneficiaries are required to specify in the application process the size of the operating, follow-up and maintenance costs and to describe how they will be covered after the projects are

At the implementation stage, quantitative and qualitative indicators are defined and monitored in order to ensure sustainability (BE, HU and SK). Beneficiaries are required to provide proof of financial support according to sustainability principles (CZ and PL). The sustainability of actions is also ensured through the specialised training of staff[117], information sharing through networks meant to improve the exchange of best practice and cooperation mechanisms that helped improve the expertise, knowledge and qualifications of staff involved in managing and implementing projects. In other cases, Member States have undertaken proactive measures to attempt to extend the lifespan of equipment delivered with ISF-P support, such as special police vehicles[118]. Concerning IT systems and services funded under ISF-P, the sustainability levels of their positive effects depends largely on future development needs.

In addition, the reporting requirements on long-term sustainability of results were also envisaged at the completion stage. In some Member States the responsible authorities organise onsite visits and checks to validate the requests coming from beneficiaries for sustainable project results[119].

For Union actions, the diverse range of measures implemented to ensure the sustainability of the projects' results relate to internal codes and mutually agreed commitments, multiplication effects of training, awareness raising at political level and wide dissemination of results.

ISF-P funded projects tend to be aligned with national priorities or are developed in response to requirements that result from implementing EU regulations. Priorities that have already been allocated funding from the national budgets are often complemented or further developed using ISF-P funding[120]. Thus, this approach is seen to guarantee sustainability because the costs for sustaining the respective investments (e.g. IT systems, devices, vehicles) are usually covered by the national budgets.

Some responsible authorities have developed relationships with all relevant stakeholders for programming and implementing the national programmes, while others use steering groups for each of the projects which consist of different stakeholders relevant to the project scope. This intensive consultation process has also included discussions on the actions' sustainability and their long-term benefits. However, in some Member States no specific mechanisms for checking sustainability were put in place at the programming phase, apart from the common monitoring

finished (EE, LV, PL and DE). In other cases beneficiaries were also expected to plan their budgets for the maintenance costs of the equipment procured with ISF-P support, while sustainability duties and periods are binding and included in the grant agreements (HU, MT and PL).

116 ES, HU, NL, MT, PL, RO, PT, EE, FI and BG.

117 In addition to the delivery of IT systems, specialised equipment and infrastructure components, some responsible authorities mention that projects involving training and qualification of staff also exhibit high sustainability levels CY, HR, HU, EL, EE, CZ, ES and FI. Acquiring new skills through training is seen as sustainable as it builds on both personal and institutional capacities. Training appears to be highly valued both in delivering sustainable results, such as skills and qualifications, and as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable effects in delivering IT solutions, systems, specialised equipment and infrastructure.

118 In Finland, for example, there is a programme whereby vehicles are rotated among police stations or units that have different levels of workload, in order to ensure that workload is equally distributed over vehicles, and therefore optimally extending the lifetime and maintenance costs of vehicle. In Bulgaria the approach towards the same purpose is exactly the opposite –the number of people driving one patrol vehicle is reduced in order to instil a better sense of ownership and care in the individual officers for the vehicle.

119 FR, CZ, MT, PL, BG and RO.

120 Therefore, post-implementation costs for operation and maintenance of IT systems, equipment, or infrastructure are covered by national budgets (national interim evaluation reports CY, BG, DE, NL, SK, RO, HR, FR and EE).

and evaluation framework, either because the responsible authorities considered it unnecessary or because such a requirement was absent in their national programmes[121].

The results of the projects funded tend to be sustainable for two main reasons. Firstly, many responsible authorities consider projects involving the development of IT systems, supply of specialised equipment, and infrastructure as sustainable by nature[122]. Secondly, IT-related systems and infrastructures are continuously updated and maintained in order to operate effectively, while equipment is protected by the manufacturer's warranty which is cross-checked with requirements for the minimum length of targeted use[123].

Finally, when considering the limitations in assessing actions' sustainability, one important aspect relates to the difficulties in measuring it due to a lack of consistent monitoring and specific sustainability-related indicators, including over a period of time that extends beyond the end of life of projects. Another one relates to actions that are still being implemented, whereby it is difficult to establish whether the effects on the target groups and on specific areas will really last.

[121] EE, ES, IT, LU, NL, SI and PT.
[122] AT, BE, DE, HR, FR and HU.
[123] LU, AT, HU, HR, IT, MT, DE, MT and LV.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

In this section, several limitations were identified, based mainly on the short time that has elapsed since the beginning of the programme's implementation and therefore, the absence of conclusive results. This has already been claimed in this staff working document and highlighted in ISF-P's interim evaluation. Therefore, the following conclusions and recommendations should be considered merely as a means of temporary guidance which show the current state of play as of June 2017. Therefore, these should be considered as a tool in order to better approach the necessary corrective actions and ensure the ISF-P is duly delivered as originally intended. In addition, the interim evaluation and its main findings should contribute to the formulating of ISF-P's successor in the context of the post-2020 multi-annual financial framework.

6.1 Effectiveness

ISF-P's effectiveness has been impacted by the newly emerging security threats which, among others, raised security challenges caused in particular by the terrorist attacks. Also, ISF-P's late start and the slow implementation of actions funded under the shared management mode have affected the extent to which ISF-P could achieve its objectives.

The Fund contributed to a high level of security in the EU through strengthening the Member States' capability to prevent and combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism. This was done through numerous actions targeting areas such as financial and economic crime, cybercrime and drug trafficking. To achieve this objective, investment in IT systems and operational equipment were the most common action types that Member States selected under their national programmes. Cooperation amongst Member States also helped to boost capability (although to a lesser degree) through exchanging information on cross-border crime and disseminating best practices, establishing transnational networks and projects, and Member States participating in joint investigation teams and the European multidisciplinary platform against criminal threats policy cycle.

The progress ISF-P made towards developing training schemes and exchange programmes is limited as the number of trained law enforcement staff is below the target established in the national programmes and the Fund's contribution in third countries is lower than expected. However, the Member States have programmed and are in the process of implementing measures focusing on actions targeting different topics and types of training, in particular in the fields of cybercrime and corruption.

Furthermore, the Fund supported the strengthening of the Member States capacity to manage the security-related risks and crises effectively through developing comprehensive threat and risk assessments. The progress made by ISF-P in protecting victims of crime as well as protecting people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents is limited. The cooperation and coordination between national authorities was improved through (i) the establishment of sector-specific early warning systems, (ii) cooperation mechanisms and (iii) the upgrading and procurement of equipment allowing a better response to crisis or emergency situations.

ISF-P also made good progress towards implementing the systems enabling the Prüm Council Decision on automated data exchange, the passenger name record directive, the biometric data capture and exchange as well as the interconnection with the systems of JHA agencies such as Europol.

Issues for further consideration

- To increase effectiveness the national programmes should be more focused. This will enable Member States to prioritise some objectives that could lead to better results.

- The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework should be improved by introducing 'baseline values' so it can check which specific indicators are relevant at national level and thus enable the progress of projects to be appropriately monitored.

- To improve the cooperation with third countries and EU agencies.

6.2 Efficiency

Overall, in the limits of available data, it could be considered that the results of ISF-P so far have been achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of both human and financial resources. The perceived administrative burden is considered to be the main factor undermining efficiency. Even if the national programmes have been very slow to begin, the Fund's overall implementation appears to be on track as emergency assistance bridged the funding gap and catered to immediate needs, helped by the flexibility in triggering such emergency actions.

The management and control measures have been considered appropriate and efficient, with stringent mechanisms to ensure that fraud and irregularities are prevented effectively

The implementation of the national programmes started very slowly, creating challenges for evaluating the cost-effectiveness because the majority of the projects are still ongoing. The low levels of human resources costs were associated with the pace at which the national programmes are implemented in the Member States. Overall, the Member States show a growing or stable number of full-time equivalents over the period 2014 to 2017. DG HOME's human resources have just slightly increased, despite the large increase in value of the emergency assistance and the emergency situation on the ground following the migration crisis.

Efficiency was also ensured thanks to considerable knowledge and expertise gained through experience from previous projects and the flexibility of the national programmes. Furthermore, national measures concerning the application, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes have been put in place in some Member States to ensure efficiency. As for the management and control measures, they are generally considered as appropriate and effective.

There are also a number of issues at Member States level that are deemed to negatively affect efficiency: the requirement to allocate minimum percentages to national objectives; complex and recurrent reports; common indicators; and the alignment of monitoring calendars.

Overall, the emergency assistance and the union actions as well as indirect management actions have achieved their objectives at a reasonable cost in terms of DG HOME's financial and human resources.

Issues for further consideration

- The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with relevant indicators should be established at the beginning of the programming period addressing, for example, reporting requirements.

- A sufficient level of pre-financing payments should be planned to facilitate the successful implementation of the national programmes.

6.3 Simplification and reduction of administrative burden

Overall, the measures implemented by ISF-P for simplification and to reduce administrative burden have only partially achieved their intended goals. Despite simplification improvements, there is little evidence, at this stage, that the administrative burden has been significantly reduced. The multiannual programming enabled emerging needs to be addressed throughout the seven-year timeframe and large investments to be managed in the long term. This helped to reduce the administrative burden resulting from the annual implementation cycle. Also, the simplified cost option was used in a number of Member States who acknowledged its efficiency in reducing the administrative burden. However, further guidance is needed to ensure the simplified cost option has a common definition, as this is still not clear to beneficiaries who are therefore reluctant to use it. Moreover, the single set of procedures for all areas covered by the Fund and for both AMIF and ISF was deemed to have led to simplification.

However, the administrative burden is still perceived to be substantial by both the authorities responsible for managing the funds and the beneficiaries. Even though the national eligibility rules were considered to provide more flexibility in managing the national programmes, they actually added to the administrative burden. The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework was established too late, well after the projects had started. Monitoring, reporting and verification measures are still burdensome and Member States have asked for clearer and more detailed guidance on how to simplify compliance with Commission requirements. The reporting requirements and the irrelevance of some common indicators were also identified as potential factors for increasing the administrative burden.

Issues for further consideration

- The multiannual programming should be maintained for future financing periods.
- The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with more relevant indicators should be established at the beginning of the programming period for simplifying the processes and calendars.

6.4 Relevance

ISF-P is relevant and its original rationale and objectives remain largely valid in the recent context of heightened security challenges and newly emerging threats.

The priorities and objectives set by Regulation (EU) 513/2014 have proven to be relevant and are still aligned to current needs and to the policy priorities and areas identified in the European agenda on security and by national strategies in related fields. The needs identified during the programming stage did not change significantly during the Fund's implementation and no new need or priority emerged which has not been covered by the Fund. Main mechanisms identified to ensure the Fund's relevance included: (i) the policy dialogue and the consultative method adopted during the programming stage, (ii) the monitoring role played both by the responsible authority and by the Monitoring Committee, (iii) the possibility of making budgetary adjustments and transfers, and (iv) the mid-term review of the national programmes.

The interim evaluation also indicates that the Fund's scope is broad enough to enable necessary actions to be implemented in the areas of cross-border police cooperation, preventing and combating crime and crisis management. It has also identified general law enforcement cooperation and specialised training as actions of particular relevance to the beneficiaries and to the Member States needs. In addition, ISF-P support in the areas of radicalisation and protection

from terrorist attacks is considered useful in a changing security environment in Europe and most actions implemented in these areas were relevant. Also, the Fund responds to the need to tackle organised crime and new forms of crime, such as cybercrime, in view of the internationalisation and professionalisation of organised criminal networks.

Despite the evidence gathered on the Fund's relevance, more flexibility is needed regarding the national programmes' implementation. The main issue was found around the fragmentation of actions under multiple national objectives that prevented the pooling of resources around key priorities and made it difficult to implement cross-objective projects.

Issues for further consideration

- The future funds need to be designed in a way that enables them to address a comprehensive set of needs, as well as ensure flexibility in the case of unexpected changes.

- More guidance on how Member States could focus on a few operational objectives instead of spreading funds across too many priorities which could result in their fragmentation.

- Promote further the external dimension in order to better address global security threats.

6.5 Coherence and complementarity

The Fund has been coherent and complementary to other national and EU interventions. No overlap has been found between the ISF-P and national interventions in the fields of fighting crime and crisis management. The coherence and complementarity of actions has been ensured as they are properly designed according to Member States' needs assessments, the Fund's rules, and formal and informal coordination mechanisms. The design of the national programmes was based on a thorough policy dialogue between the Commission and the Member States, taking account of key needs and priorities as reported at national level. It has also been claimed that the monitoring committee and the responsible authority played an important role in ensuring synergies and avoiding overlaps between the ISF-P and other EU instruments. They did this through regular cooperation (i.e. mainly through inter-service consultation) with other national institutions implementing other funds (incl. EU funds) and with counterparts in other Member States to avoid any overlaps and double-funding.

The majority of Member States carried out assessments of other EU interventions which took place at the programming stage in order to ensure coherence and complementarity with them. Most Member States have also adopted different coordinating mechanisms at the implementation stage to ensure coherence and complementarity with similar interventions carried out under other EU funds. These mechanisms include inter-institutional exchange of information and cooperation among authorities responsible for different EU funds. However, there is potential for greater synergies between actions implemented under ISF-P and other EU-funded programmes, particularly in relation to Horizon 2020, Hercule III and the rights, equality and citizenship programme in the areas of (i) research and development of technologies, (ii) the fight against economic crime and (iii) the support and protection of victims.

The complementarity among the Fund's different implementation modes (shared, direct, indirect) has also been ensured. Direct and indirect management are generally designed and implemented to improve and complement the interventions under the national programmes or to fund those which cannot be implemented under shared management. In particular, the emergency assistance actions address emerging and unpredictable needs arising from emergency

situations which are difficult to be funded under the national programmes due to allocation limits. However, there is some room for improvement since it seems that project beneficiaries are not very aware of other actions carried out under ISF-P. Also, the activities of the relevant EU agencies should be more aligned to similar activities carried out under ISF-P to avoid duplication and ensure synergies. These agencies should be more actively included in the implementation and monitoring of the national programmes.

Issues for further consideration

- The future Funds should have a similar format (i.e. the national programmes that aim to build long-term capacities, emergency assistance that aims to alleviating immediate pressure, and the union actions being clearly and logically designed to support each other).

- Strengthen internal coherence between the national programmes and the union actions and boost the dissemination of information on Union actions at national level.

- Further strengthen the synergies between ISF-P and other EU interventions.

6.6 EU Added Value

Overall ISF-P has generated EU added value by enabling cross-border projects to be implemented by encouraging operational cooperation and mutual learning. It has also improved: (i) the information exchange, (ii) dissemination of best practices, (iii) the trust amongst Member States law enforcement authorities and (iv) the implementation of EU IT systems at national level (and has contributed to their harmonisation at EU level). The Fund's EU added value was also ensured through staff training and the purchase of specialised equipment, both of which were considered to be very relevant. Moreover, the Fund is considered to have broadened the scope of existing national interventions, which would have been delayed or have not been implemented at the same scale or within the same timeframe with national funding. Also, some actions would not have been implemented at all without ISF-P support as they were not considered as national priorities. The absence of ISF-P funding would also have been detrimental to the quality of the EU response to cross-border cooperation and to the ability of Member States to implement innovative solutions.

As regards direct management, without the resources provided for the emergency assistance and union actions, national funding would have led to a much more difficult and smaller-scale implementation, with a lower general impact. The Fund's main advantages come from the transnational dimension of union actions as well as the harmonisation of research on forensics and crime prevention at EU level. The benefits entailed by these measures also included higher cooperation both across and within Member States attained through the financing of EU professional networks (e.g. ATLAS, CARIN) which boosted the sharing of information, know-how and good practices as well as the private-public collaboration. This allowed for the timely and efficient handling of new security challenges and related emergencies. The discontinuation of union actions' support would have resulted in the loss of expertise sharing between the partners and Member States participating in joint activities.

- Further encourage the transnational component of eligible actions under the national programmes.

- Further increase the efforts to systematically disseminate the project results and best practices across the EU to allow for mutual learning and for the EU added value of the actions to be strengthened.

6.7 Sustainability

The sustainability of effects is ensured by most ISF-P funded projects as the actions are usually aligned with and complementary to national priorities and EU requirements, so they are generally planned with a view to remain operational beyond the Fund's support. A wide range of measures to ensure the sustainability of projects' results are in place for shared and direct management. For this purpose, measures such as evaluating project sustainability, ensuring maintenance and follow-up costs (e.g. for IT systems) and establishing minimum requirements for warranty and duration of targeted use are envisaged.

The sustainability of actions is also ensured through: the specialised training of staff; information sharing through networks to improve the exchange of best practices; and other cooperation mechanisms that contributed to improving expertise, knowledge and qualification of staff involved in managing and implementing projects.

In other cases, proactive measures were carried out by some Member States to extend the lifespan of equipment provided with the Fund's support (e.g. special police vehicles).

Some Member States have developed an intensive consultation process between the responsible authorities and all relevant stakeholders at the programming and implementation stages of the national programmes. This process also included discussions on the sustainability of actions and their long-term benefits, while other Member States did not develop any specific mechanism for assessing sustainability either because the responsible authorities considered it unnecessary or because the national programmes did not required it.

Issues for further consideration

- Consider the possibility of introducing specific monitoring indicators relating to sustainability to better assess it across all Member States.
- Invest effort in disseminating results and best practices to ensuring sustainable results.

ANNEX 1: PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Leading Directorate-General	DG HOME
Participating units of DG HOME	A2 — Legal Affairs D1 — Police cooperation and information exchange D2 — Terrorism and radicalisation D3 — Organised crime and drugs policy D4 — Cybercrime E1 — Union Actions E2 — National programmes for south and east Europe, evaluation, AMF/ISF Committee E3 — National programmes for north and west Europe, MFF, Evaluations
Participating DGs in ISSG	Secretariat-General DG BUDG DG JUST DG TAXUD
Legal base	According to Art. 57 of Regulation (EU) No 514/2014, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, to the Council, to the European Economic and Social Committee and to the Committee of the Regions an interim evaluation report of ISF-P at the level of the Union by 30 June 2018.
Roadmap approval	11 April 2017
Decide planning	PLAN/2017/891
Exceptions to the Better Regulation guidelines	None noted
External consulting firm specialised in evaluation	Contract signed in September 2017 with ICF Consulting Services Limited, UK.
Number of Inter-Service Steering Group meetings	3 meetings (last on: 1 February 2018)
Last deliverable handed in	9 March 2018 (Final report for acceptance)
Approval of the final report by Steering Group	
Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB) meeting	18 April 2018
Resubmission of the SWD to the RSB	

ANNEX 2: METHODS AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

This annex presents the methodology employed for the ISF-P's interim evaluation, including discussion on the challenges experienced, and the mitigation strategies employed to deal with them.

The overall methodology has been based on a mixed-method approach addressing the various components of the Fund including desk research of programme documentation, consultations with programme stakeholders via surveys and interviews as well as consultations with beneficiaries using a case study approach. Analytical exercises include analyses of the targeted stakeholder surveys, of programme data as well as descriptive quantitative and qualitative analyses.

The external study was divided into three phases: inception, interim and final:

- The purpose of the **inception stage** was to prepare the evaluation work to be carried out, and to ensure that the Steering Group and the contractor shared a common understanding of the study's scope and objectives. The activities planned in the inception stage included initial desk research, explorative interviews with DG HOME officials, refining the methodology and developing data collection tools. This stage culminated in the production of the inception report, which was discussed during a meeting with the Steering Group on the 24 October 2017, revised and then approved on 27 November.

- The purpose of the **interim phase** was mostly to collect data. The activities planned in the interim stage included desk research, in-depth interviews, case studies, meta-analysis of the national interim reports, forward-looking workshop with the Evaluation Network and the analysis of the legal base. This stage culminated in the production of the interim report, which was discussed during a meeting with the Steering Group on 15 December 2017, revised and then approved on 22 February 2018.

- The purpose of the **final phase** was to synthesise the data gathered, triangulate findings and provide conclusions on the evaluation questions and recommendations. The activities planned in the final stage included filling gaps in the data and refining the report, analysing the targeted consultation, and workshops. This stage culminated in the production of the draft final report, which was discussed during a meeting with the Steering Group on 1 February 2018, and is still being revised.

Therefore, the Inter-Service Steering Group has met for a fourth time to discuss the draft staff working documents.

Desk research was carried out during the inception phase in order to identify and assess relevant data sources that can feed into the analysis. The main point of reference was all data accessible through SFC2014 (for the national programmes), as well as additional data available on budget, the emergency assistance, union actions etc.

The **in-depth interviews** focused on the union actions and the emergency assistance, as well as aspects related to internal and external coherence and complementarity with other EU funding instruments. In total, the contractor conducted 48 in-depth telephone or face-to-face interviews (excluding interviews for the case studies). The interviews were carried out using semi-structured interview guides, including a number of pre-defined themes and questions.

Building on the desk-based work assessing the degree of complementarity and coherence between the ISF-P and other EU financial instruments' legal acts, interviews were conducted with representatives of other EU financial instruments (at EU level) that could have a possible impact on asylum seekers and refugees, on integration and on return. The coded data was then analysed and included in the main deliverables through a process of data triangulation.

The purpose of the **case studies** was to provide in-depth analyses of the interventions, allowing for good and bad practices to be identified and any weaknesses to be mitigated. The focus of the case studies was on the emergency assistance, though the responsible authorities in the countries concerned were also asked more general questions on the Fund's implementation and the complementarity of the emergency assistance with the national programmes.

The objective of the **meta-evaluation of national interim evaluation reports** was to make an aggregate assessment of how national interventions contributed overall. The national interim reports were submitted through SFC2014 by the responsible authorities by the end of December 2017.

A **forward-looking workshop** was organised on the fringes of the evaluation network meeting on 30 November with representatives of the responsible authorities and the Member States evaluators.

The purpose of **analysing the legal base** was to consider whether the ISF-P's legal basis is an obstacle to the Fund's effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.

The final phase of the study included a process of filling gaps in the **data and a refinement** of the answers to the evaluation questions. Conclusions were drawn per evaluation criterion, drawing on the triangulated results of the evaluation. Recommendations for the Fund's future and the next funding period were then developed.

A compilation and analysis of the answers received through the **targeted consultation** (which replaced the open public consultation that was originally planned) has been conducted.

In preparing for the finalisation tasks, the contractor held an **internal workshop** involving a brainstorming session with members of the core team and the evaluative and thematic quality assurance experts on the findings, which resulted in preliminary conclusions and recommendations. The main purpose of this validation workshop was to: (i) validate the conclusions; (ii) revise the recommendations to best fit the roles of stakeholders; (iii) address technical and legislative constraints and feasibility concerns; and (iv) establish an order of priority among the key recommendations and validate this list.

Basis on the work described above, the **final report** for review and acceptance was prepared and compiled.

ANNEX 3: STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

ISF-P had a consultation strategy whose objective was to gather input from stakeholders (evidence, data, as well as views and opinions) and ensure that all of them have the opportunity to present their views to the Commission on how well the existing programmes have performed and the extent to which they met the EU's objectives in these areas. Stakeholders' input was sought to provide the Commission with valuable insights on how well the current funds are performing, including on the challenges related to their implementation.

This open consultation, as provided for in the Better Regulation guidelines and the interim evaluation's consultation strategy, was meant for the general public and to be published for 12 weeks on the Commission's portal[124]. In parallel, the Commission general directorates and services have worked on the future multi-annual financial framework in clusters, setting up a streamlined consultation that covered questions on both the past and the future of the programmes. Launching a specific consultation for the mid-term evaluations could have created confusion and not provided much added value compared to the broader exercise. 153 answers and 52 position papers have been received in this context.

Therefore, the open public consultation for the interim evaluation was replaced by a targeted consultation which eventually was used to contextualise the findings. The questionnaires were aimed at the beneficiaries of union actions and emergency assistance and were made available in English, French and German. This targeted consultation run for 8 weeks and ended on 9 January 2018 and received input from only 23 participants.

The **results of the targeted consultation are presented** below:

- Of the 23 answers received, a little bit more than the half of the respondents (12) answered the survey as individuals in their professional capacity whereas only one respondent provided answers as an individual in his personal capacity. The rest of respondents (10) answered to the survey representing an organisation. Of these, 17 represented a public authority (13 national, 2 regional, 1 local and 1 responsible), 2 were from academic/research institutions, 2 from non-profit organisations and 2 from other type of organisations. All the respondents, apart from one, have benefited from ISF-P funding during the period 2014-2017. 14 respondents rated their knowledge of the Fund as "good", 4 as "very good", 4 respondents as "limited" and 1 as "very limited".
- The first part of the consultation concerned the importance of the specific objectives of ISF-P for the policy priorities in the Member States (preventing and combating crime, exchange of information, training schemes, protecting and supporting victims of crime, protecting critical infrastructure, developing comprehensive threat and risk assessments and effective coordination between sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors). The most important specific objective is "preventing and combating crime" (17 answers as "very important") followed by "exchange of information" (16 answers). Generally, all the objectives are considered of a great importance (significant percentage of "important" as an answer), while no specific objective was rated as "not important". Only a small number (5 answers) of respondents answered "don't know" regarding all the specific objectives.
- The second part of the consultation concerned the extent at which the actions financed by ISF-P in the Member States contribute to the Fund's objectives (preventing and combating crime, exchange of information, training schemes, protecting and supporting victims of crime, protecting critical infrastructure, developing comprehensive threat and risk assessments and effective coordination between sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors). 21 respondents considered that ISF-P does contribute to "preventing and combating crime" (1 to some extent, 12 to a great extent and 8 fully). 18 respondents considered that ISF-P contributes to "exchange of information" (2 to some extent, 9 to a great extent and 7 fully). 17 respondents considered the ISF-P contributes to "training" (7 to some extent, 5 to a great extent and 5 fully). 12 respondents considered that ISF-P does contribute to "protecting and supporting victims of crime" (5 to some extent, 5 to a great extent and 2 fully), while the others don't know, except for one who answered "not at all". 11 respondents considered that ISF-P contributes to "protecting critical infrastructure" (4 to some extent, 4 to a

[124] http://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations_en

great extent and 3 fully), while the others don't know, except for 2 who answered "not at all". 12 respondents considered that ISF-P does contribute to the "effective coordination between sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors" (3 to some extent, 7 to a great extent and 2 fully), while the others don't know, except for one who answered "not at all". 19 respondents considered that ISF-P contributes to "developing comprehensive threat and risk assessments" (5 to some extent, 12 to a great extent and 2 fully).

- When evaluating the responsiveness of the ISF-P support in addressing new/emerging needs, a little bit than the half of the respondents (12) argued that the ISF-P's responsiveness is to some extent flexible whereas 8 respondents replied that ISF-P support is fully flexible. On the contrary, the remaining 3 respondents have not a specific opinion on this topic ("don't know").
- Regarding preventing and combating crime, 17 respondents considered that ISF-P's contribution was very positive on how their country works in this area. With regard to crisis management, 10 respondents did not rate ISF-P influence on how their country works in this area and opted for the "don't know" answer. Generally, it can be said that the ISF-P has a positive influence on the crisis management processes in participants' countries (5 to some extent, 5 to a great extent and 1 fully). However, 2 respondents said that ISF-P has not at all a positive influence on the way that their country deals with crisis management.
- Concerning the cooperation between Member States in the field of preventing and combating crime, most of the respondents considered that the Fund contributes to improve the cooperation between their country and other Member States (21 positive answers). For crisis management, even though 9 respondents considered that the cooperation was improved through ISF-P, more that the half of the respondents (12) answered that they don't know.
- Regarding whether the EU policies in the fields of preventing and combating crime and crisis management would have been implemented without the support of ISF-P, the general prevalent opinion is that these EU policies could have been implemented outside the ISF-P scope but mostly to some extent (12 answers for the first field and 7 for the second one). Regarding the field of crisis management, 12 respondents don't know if these EU policies would have been implemented without ISF-P support. In both fields, one respondent considered that they would have been implemented anyway.
- Looking at ISF-P so far, respondents considered that the Fund promotes new actions that were not delivered in their country before in the fields of preventing and combating crime (10) and crisis management (only 2). More than the half of respondents (10 and 21 respectively) did not know how to answer these questions. Only 3 considered that ISF-P does not promote any new actions in the field of preventing and combating crime.
- Based on the answers, the ISF-P funded projects have a greater impact in helping beneficiaries to better prevent and combat crime in comparison to better protect people and infrastructures against security risks (22 positive answers for the first field and 13 for the second one).
- Compared to the previous programming period, 9 respondents did not know to rate the easiness of the implementation of ISF-P actions and projects. However, 8 respondents considered that it is generally easier to implement ISF-P actions and projects but there are some negative aspects, while 5 respondents found it much easier. No respondent answered that ISF-P hardens the implementation, but one respondent said that the implementation is generally harder, although there are some positive aspects.
- In what concerns the degree at which actions financed by ISF-P are coherent with actions and projects funded by national resources in the field of preventing and combating crime, the majority of respondents were positive (17), with the rest not being able to answer. With regard to crisis management, only 9 respondents gave a positive answer, while 14 were not able to answer.
- Regarding sustainability, 11 respondents considered that only a few actions funded under ISF-P would continue without the EU financial support. 7 respondents said that some of ISF-P actions could continue without EU financial support, while 3 considered that almost all the actions would be sustained anyway.
- With regard to the achievement of the objectives in the absence of ISF-P, 14 respondents considered that only a few objectives would have been achieved. 3 respondents said that the objectives would have been almost impossible to achieve without ISF-P support and, on the contrary, other 4 considered that some of the objectives would have been reached anyway. Only 2 respondents were not able to answer.

In addition to this, the evaluation reflected the results of a **forward-looking workshop** with representatives of responsible authorities and the Member States evaluators. Its results are presented below:

Issues to be considered

- Experience so far (prompt: relevance regarding national strategies on fight against crime; planning and programming process, eligibility of actions; monitoring and evaluation systems and mechanism; efficiency)
- Innovations put in place by ISF-P did deliver their intended effects (multiannual programming, simplified cost option)?
- Success stories (relevance, effectiveness, EU added value)

- Indicators you have used to measure progress and success. Common indicators have been useful?
- Obstacles encountered and what strategies to address them
- What to recommend the Commission regarding the future of ISF-P?

Relevance

Correspondence of the objectives to the actual needs

- During the morning session, many participants commented that the Programme remains highly relevant to the needs.
- Scope is very broad and covers over 22 crime areas. One Member State commented that the very broad scope of ISF-P allows to cover national needs.
- Other Member State noted that in terms of the areas under crisis and risk prevention, the scope has been vague and ambiguous instructions have been received from the Commission on the scope, so clearer guidance should be given in this respect.

Does the Programme focus on too many specific areas/priorities? Does this result in fragmentation or is the flexibility needed?

- Two Member States commented that they did not want their national programmes to be focused on so many areas. However, as a result of the policy dialogues, more areas had to be added. In addition, it is very difficult to decide what is more important in the security area.
- Other Member State opined that the flexibility is very important as each country has its own needs and specific crime issues and the Programme should cover all types of priorities.
- Certain Member State commented that flexibility is needed considering the volatility and the ever changing need of the security field. Also, within a period of 7 years it is important to have flexibility as security is a dynamic area and future challenges and priorities are very difficult to predict.
- Other Member State mentioned that the fragmentation and diversity of projects depends on the number of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project. Several stakeholders were involved in the delivery of the same projects which predisposes this fragmentation of national programme and actions related to ISF-P.
- Several Member States agreed that the scope of the Programme should remain flexible and broad but Member States should not be encouraged to spread too much across all priorities.

What is in place at national level to assess the needs in the field quite frequently to change the way in which you are going to use ISF-P?

- One Member State emphasized the need to continually assess and to amend the national programme and to take into account decisions or additional allocations on the basis of needs of the EU.
- Other Member State intends to propose that some of the actions fall out – invest in financial investigation and international and cross-border cooperation – priorities which are shifting from the programming period.

Relevance of eligible actions

- Most Member States considered that everything listed in Art. 4 of the legal base is relevant.

Relevance of funding instruments (i.e. national programmes, Union actions, technical assistance and emergency assistance)

- One Member State commented that around 70% of the union actions are pre-allocated to direct awards (e.g. to agencies) and this leaves less funds for calls for proposals.
- Other Member States commented that all networks are very much used and highly valued and national authorities take them into account.

Coherence

Scope for complementarity and overlap

- One Member State reported that distinguishing the scope of the area of risk and protection has been challenging. (man-made vs natural disasters). There were some potential overlapping areas with the union civil protection mechanism (UCPM) and the instructions from the Commission were seen as vague. This created difficulties in planning.
- Other Member State agreed on this point regarding the scope within risk crisis. There should be no overlap, but it has not been an easy task and the confusion comes in the annex of ISF-P as there are certain types of priorities, e.g. one of them says that it is an action that links together civil protection and law enforcement officers – law enforcement and civil protection. It was considered that ISF-P should really focus on mad-made disaster.
- Examples of EU programmes with potential for scope overlapping: Horizon 2020, social funds related to victim services, UCPM, anti-corruption programme as part of the structural funds.
- One Member State gave the example of ISF-BV where border control information is very often used for police purposes (e.g. in criminal cases and travelers to Syria).

Mechanisms to ensure coherence at national level

- It was mentioned that Member States have regular committees with representatives of other funds to ensure that there is no overlapping. In addition, beneficiaries are obliged to provide declarations twice that there are no overlaps of fund – in the application and during implementation.

Efficiency

Flexibility of Multiannual programming

- All participants agreed that the multi-annual programming brought flexibility which has been appreciated by the Member States.

Monitoring of indicators

- Participants reported issues with regard to the relevance of indicators; difficulty to collect data and meaningfulness. Furthermore, participants commented that it was difficult to see the link of indicators with project activities. Sometimes aggregate figures were available only.
- One Member State explained that indicators are sometimes not so relevant and, even the data is collected, it is difficult to assess the effect of the Fund and difficult to establish attribution effects. – e.g. kg of drugs vs number of seizures (seizures can be big or small so that is meaningless). It is also very difficult to do estimations. Furthermore, research-based evidence needs to give justification while the number is shrinking in terms of drugs collected – less seizures and kg of drugs detected may mean that the policies are working.
- Taking into account the broad scope of ISF-P and broad national programmes and the fact that each country sets its own priorities, the activities take place sometimes only in some areas but it is still needed to collect indicators in all other areas which does not make sense.
- It is a little early for impact indicators as the current programmes are at too early stage to produce any such results.

Reporting difficulties of calendar year vs reporting year

- All participants agreed on this point that the discrepancy between reporting and calendar year results in difficulties and confusion.
- One Member State noted that calendar from October to October does not make things easier as it provides a different calendar and makes it more complex for beneficiaries.

Late start with the Programme implementation and absorption capacity

- Shift from centralised to decentralised – had to build administrative capacity (regional agencies). Member States commented that the national programmes usually started slowly and managing and responsible authorities have limited amount of resources at the very end of the programme while the beneficiaries are in full swing of implementation after its end. This mid-term evaluation is premature due to the slow start of the national programmes and it would have made sense to do it next year. The issue of what will be the timeframe for the interim evaluation should encompassed at the end of the process and maybe should have started at the beginning with the development of different indicators.
- For ISF-P, the shift from central administration to decentralised one meant that Member States had to set up the responsible authority from scratch and develop the forms.

Advantages and disadvantages of calls for proposals vs direct awards in the national programmes

- One Member State mentioned that in the area of ISF-P there are a lot of 'monopoly' bodies and they are the only ones able to implement the actions – e.g. there is only one border police.
- Some Member States work with direct awards to support big and large investment projects which would not have been able to be financed without ISF-P support. At the same time, Member States use open calls to get a broader range of actions to reach other actors involved in security related issues. In Member Sates' experience, this is very good to generate innovation particularly in areas where there is no activity yet – e.g. in the area of prevention of radicalisation.
- One Member State used actions to encourage participation of regional law enforcement agencies. In the past the central forces aimed to benefit from such funds but with ISF-P they are able to reach the regional level.

Administrative burden/simplification measures

- One Member State mentioned that most of the requirements have to be streamlined. The Commission is sending out different questionnaires but there are the same people completing similar requests. This creates an important burden and the responsible authorities are also busy with commitments and payments, evaluations, etc.
- When it comes to the reporting, it is too cumbersome in comparison to what is at national level and even in respect to the amount of outputs.
- One Member State noted the regulatory framework was negotiated years before the actual implementation starts.

- Some Member States considered that more guidance from the Commission on the designation process is needed. Some guidelines came later and this created some insecurity for the responsible and audit authorities.
- The possibility of multi-disciplinary projects in combining funds from AMIF and ISF was suggested.
- Certain Member State suggested to extend the operating support to AMIF and ISF-P.
- There is a clear improvement in comparison to previous funds – e.g. positive SFC2014.
- De-commitment is de facto 9.5 months. One Member State suggested that this period should be expanded.
- One Member State mentioned the possibility to increase the financial allocation to the police cooperation field.

EU added value

- Strong EU-added value is seen in the Programme.
- Cross-border element is not easy to implement under national programmes. Two Member States commented that the cross-border aspect was somewhat lost – ISF-P implementation modes discourage cross-border and multi-country initiatives (shared management vs direct management).
- Other Member State said that a lot of the added value is seen in cross-border exchange programmes. Scope should be broader than the national territory; however, if an action has to be managed together with another Member State, it is difficult to implement it. There are no facilitating specific mechanisms for this laid down in the Programme. There is a need of more cross-border cooperation between Member States and with third countries and it is not an easy topic to address with the national programmes.
- Certain Member State noted that without the ISF-P support not so much regional police will be represented. Changes were made in order to make better representation at the end – e.g. participation of regional police in special trainings, forensic seminars, etc. Without ISF-P support, the participation in these trainings would be much lower.
- Other Member State noted that in terms of specific equipment, e.g. for specific surveillance needs, it is difficult to select one or two specific products from the market. However, with the help of the Fund this opportunity was given and the best equipment has been selected.
- One Member State commented that innovative projects would have not been implemented to this extent without ISF-P support. Other projects would have been reduced in scope due to the difficulty to secure national funding.
- Another Member State noted that long-term investments are difficult to make, but ISF-P allows to invest in prevention which is often underfinanced as it doesn't have the same priority as prosecution.
- Other Member State mentioned that often terrorism receives more national funding than organised crime which is also relevant, but thanks to ISF-P support this area has received proper funding as well.
- One Member State noted that perhaps cross border, organised and serious crimes could be financed separately under different streams. Other Member State disagreed as this implies segregation and not flexibility.

Effectiveness

Are Member States on course to achieve objectives?

- One Member State noted that they are on course to achieve the objectives, but there might be some delays for some projects and beneficiaries may ask their projects to be prolonged.
- Several Member States reported a slow start and issues in implementation and that the interim evaluation comes a bit too early as most Member States are at the beginning of the implementation of their national programmes and only few projects have been completed so far.
- Certain Member State mentioned that based on the projects in place so far the objectives of the national programme will be achieved. Sometimes it is more a question of waiting for the equipment to be delivered.
- Other Member State reported that projects are completely on track. For projects in the area of crime prevention, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness and measure prevention.
- In another Member State the beneficiaries chose the common indicators to report on their projects and sometimes they chose the easiest indicators to apply.

Success factors: Which type of projects/actions (or particular projects) have worked effectively so far and why this has been the case and which have not?

- One Member State mentioned that there are 2 projects that are considered as successful. These are the project relating to passenger name record and the one on training of project officers to detect early signs of radicalisation. Prisons could be centres where radicalisation spreads very easily and thus the project aims to detect early signs of radicalisation in prisons.
- In another Member State, a project related to training on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear explosives is considered as a success story.
- Other Member State reported two success stories. One project in cooperation in Eastern Europe to fight against crime (more than 30 networks) and a project on training in the field of financial criminality.

Obstacles which hamper effectiveness

Some Member States mentioned that the national rules for public procurement are sometimes cumbersome.

This targeted consultation has complemented the interviews and online surveys run in parallel by the consultant, and the table below provides an overview of the response rate. The results of all those consultations have been used to answer and contextualise the answers to the evaluation questions.

Overview of stakeholder consultation plan

Stakeholder type	Consultation method	Planned no. of stakeholders	Consultations undertaken
NATIONAL PROGRAMMES			
Responsible authorities	Interviews (telephone and face-to-face) with all participating Member States in the Programme (all MS except DK and UK)	26 interviews	26 interviews
Project coordinators (beneficiaries under national programmes)	Survey *RAs were asked to disseminate the survey at national level	**Survey** open to project coordinators	38 responses
Project participants	Survey *RAs were asked to disseminate the survey at national level **Not considered due to statistically insignificant no. of responses	**Survey** open to project participants	1 complete response and 3 incomplete responses
UNION ACTIONS			
Project coordinators (beneficiaries of Union actions)	Survey and interviews in some Member States in conjunction with case studies	**Survey** open to all project participants Interviews	26 completed interviews
Project partners (co-beneficiaries)	Survey	Survey open to all (snowballing approach)	16 responses
Project participants	Survey	Survey open to all (snowballing approach)	1 complete response and 3 incomplete responses
EMERGENCY ACTIONS			
2.1. Project coordinators	Interviews with project coordinators of all awarded actions	3 interviews	3 interviews
EU LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS			
EU agencies and services	Interviews with Europol, CEPOL, eu-LISA, ENISA, EMCDDA and JRC	6 interviews	3 interviews
Programme management of other EU Programmes	Interviews	11 Programmes (up to 10 interviews)	5 interviews

ANNEX 4: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Effectiveness

How did the Fund contribute to the achievement of the general objective defined in Regulation (EU) No 513/2014?

(a) How did the Fund contribute to the following specific objectives:

- Prevention of cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism?

- Reinforcement of the coordination and cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other national authorities of Member States, including with Europol or other relevant Union bodies, and with relevant third countries and international organisations?

(i) What progress was made towards the achievement of the expected results of strengthening Member States' capability to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism and to reinforce their mutual cooperation in this field, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

(ii) What progress was made towards developing administrative and operational coordination and cooperation among Member States' public authorities, Europol or other relevant Union bodies and, where appropriate, with third Countries and international organisations, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

(iii) What progress was made towards developing training schemes, such as those regarding technical and professional skills and knowledge of obligations on human rights and fundamental freedoms, in implementation of EU training policies, including through specific Union law enforcement exchange programmes, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

(iv) What progress was made towards putting in place measures, safeguard mechanisms and best practices for the identification and support of witnesses and victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

(b) How did the Fund contribute to improve the capacity of Member States to manage effectively security-related risks and crises, and protecting people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents?

(i) What progress was made towards reinforcing Member States' administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity, including through public-private partnerships and improved coordination, cooperation, exchange and dissemination of know-how and experience within the Union and with relevant third Countries, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

(ii) What progress was made towards establishing secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors at Union and national level, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

(iii) What progress was made towards improving the administrative and operational capacity of the Member States and the Union to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

Efficiency ***(Were the results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost?)***

To what extent were the expected results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost in terms of deployed financial and human resources? What measures were put in place to prevent, detect, report and follow up on cases of fraud and other irregularities, and how did they perform?

Relevance (*Did the objectives of the interventions funded by the Fund correspond to the actual needs?)*

Did the objectives set by the Member State in their National Programmes respond to the identified needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Union actions) address the actual needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Emergency assistance) address the actual needs? Which measures did the Member State put in place to address changing needs?

Coherence (*Were the objectives set in the national programme coherent with the ones set in other programmes funded by EU resources and applying to similar areas of work? Was the coherence ensured also during the implementation of the Fund?)*

Was an assessment of other interventions with similar objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period? Were the actions implemented through the Fund coherent with and non-contradictory to other interventions with similar objectives?

Complementarity (*Were the objectives set in the national programme and the corresponding implemented actions complementary to those set in the framework of other policies — in particular those pursued by the Member State?*)

Was an assessment of other interventions with complementary objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period to ensure their complementarity for the implementing period? Were mechanisms aimed to prevent overlapping of financial instruments put in place?

EU added value (*Was any added value brought about by the EU support?)*

What are the main types of added value resulting from the support of the Fund (volume, scope, role, process)? Would the Member State have carried out the actions required to implement the EU policies in the areas supported by the Fund without its financial support? What would be the most likely consequences of an interruption of the support provided by the Fund? To which extent have actions supported by the Fund resulted in a benefit at the Union level? What was the added value of the operating support?

Sustainability (*Are the positive effects of the projects supported by the Fund likely to last when its support will be over?)*

What were the main measures adopted by the Member State to ensure the sustainability of the results of the projects implemented with support of the Fund (both at programming and implementation stage)? Were mechanisms put in place to ensure a sustainability check at programming and implementation stage? To what extent are the outcomes/benefits of the actions sustained by the Fund expected to continue thereafter? What measures were adopted to ensure the continuity of the activities carried out thanks to the operating support?

Simplification and reduction of administrative burden ***(Were the management procedures of the Fund simplified and the administrative burden reduced for its beneficiaries?)***

Did the innovative procedures introduced by the Fund (simplified cost option, multiannual programming, national eligibility rules, more comprehensive national programmes allowing for flexibility, operating support and Special Transit Scheme for Lithuania) lead to simplification for the beneficiaries of the Fund?

ANNEX 5: COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The following table analyses the costs incurred by the various actors involved in implementing ISF-P, the target group, the beneficiaries, the national administrations and the EU. These costs vary from the administrative/indirect or compliance costs for the beneficiaries, to the administrative costs or technical assistance for the responsible authorities, to the actual financial costs for the EU and to the human resources costs for all of the above. The analyses made were both qualitative and quantitative (including monetary analyses).

Table 6: Overview of costs associated with the ISF-P

Target Group	
	▪ FTE by participants dedicated to implementation of project activities, such as: time spent in training, piloting, testing equipment or capacity building. ▪ As regards the quantitative aspects, there is no information provided in national evaluation reports on FTE by target group participants.
Beneficiaries	
Admin	▪ national programmes: in the majority of projects, beneficiaries are state institutions. They usually assign one to two FTEs to manage the ISF-P projects and as a rule these employees do not get compensated for the time they dedicate to project management. Additional administrative and financial requirements on ISF-P projects are carried out by the respective units at the beneficiaries' institutions, thus the Fund is not charged with any administrative costs at the beneficiary level. Therefore, personnel administrative costs at the beneficiary level are minimal. ▪ Union actions: the indirect cost of beneficiaries is set at 7 % of the approved budget for the action, but these do not include project management costs (e.g. compensation for project coordinators, costs of project management activities, such as kick-off meetings or audits). Interviewed project coordinators believe the costs for implementing the actions are reasonable (76 %, or 26 respondents out of 34).
National administrations	
Technical assistance	▪ Technical assistance covers national authorities' administrative costs and is set at 5 % of national allocations. Based on national evaluation reports and interviews with responsible authorities, in many Member States additional administrative resources are deployed for managing the national programmes. The cost of these additional resources is covered by the national budget, but no data is available to estimate them. ▪ Responsible authorities expressed mixed opinions on the efforts made to simplify and reduce administrative burden in the Fund's management. Based on interviews with responsible authorities, the measure with the highest approval is the replacement of annual programming with multiannual programming. Two-thirds of respondents viewed national eligibility rules and specific top-ups as positive steps, whereas less than a third of responsible authorities have used the simplified cost option. Overall, only about half of the interviewed responsible authorities stated that the administrative burden of managing the Fund has been reduced. ▪ The committed amount for technical assistance for the entire period of the Fund is EUR 36 million, or 5 % of all allocations for national programmes. For the 2014-2016 period, EUR 2.7 million has been absorbed, which is only 7.6 % of the total allocations. 15 Member States had not claimed any technical assistance payments by the end of 2016.
HR	▪ A total of 217 FTEs have been deployed at responsible authorities, delegated authorities and audit authorities, (according to national interim evaluation reports; these numbers reflect the amount of staff dedicated to both ISF Borders and Visa and ISF-P). For the evaluation period, it has been calculated that one FTE has managed 3.6 projects, with an average value of EUR 1.3 million.
European Union	
Budget Commit	▪ The total amount provided in allocations to national programmes is EUR 754 million. Most of the allocations to the national programmes are dedicated to preventing and combating crime (72.6 %). Risks and crisis management projects are allocated 22.5 %, while technical assistance is allocated 4.9 %. Multiannual national programmes for the Fund were developed

	and approved in the 2014-2015 period. A top-up for PNR and IT systems interoperability was added in 2017.
Paym	▪ Under direct management, allocations have been made to Union actions, including open calls for proposals, direct awards, procurement and EMAS. ▪ Open calls were allocated EUR 28.8 million; direct awards were allocated EUR 9.1 million; procurement was allocated EUR 16.6 million; and EMAS was allocated EUR 6.2 million.
HR	▪ The cost for managing ISF (Borders and Police) is estimated based on the number of FTEs (internal and external personnel) involved. According to data provided by DG HOME, the calculated average amount of the Fund's budget managed by an FTE is EUR 3.3 million per year for the period 2014 — June 2017. The cost for internal and external personnel deployed at EU level represents on average 3.8 % of the Fund's budget and can be assessed as reasonable. ▪ The estimated number of FTEs involved in ISF (Borders and Police) is 555 as of 2017. The total cost for the 2014 — June 2017 period is EUR 68 million.

The following table analyses the benefits gained by the various actors involved in implementing ISF-P, the target group, the beneficiaries, the national administrations and the EU. These benefits vary from intangible such as knowledge developed or capacity built to tangible such as financial support. The analyses made are both qualitative and quantitative (including monetary).

Table 7: Overview of benefits associated with ISF-P

Capability to combat crime — Strengthening Member States capability to (i) combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism, and (ii) boost their mutual cooperation in this field. Benefits: tangible (financial support) and intangible (knowledge).
Target Group
▪ Disruptions of criminal groups (data on indicators provided by a small number of Member States): ▪ seizures of cash were reported by EE (EUR 2.5 million) and FR (EUR 1.6 billion); ▪ the taking down of websites has been reported only by FR with 1 500 in 2016 and 1 351 in 2017; ▪ the number of victims identified was reported by FR — 120 in 2017 and DE — 1 559 for the period 2014-2017; ▪ the number of people arrested was reported by DE (43), FR (253) and MT (9 144) for the period 2014-2017[125]; ▪ seizures of stolen goods were reported by DE (amounting to over EUR 1 million) and EE (EUR 90 million); ▪ over four million seizures of drugs were reported by five Member States (BG, EE, ES, FI and MT).
Beneficiaries
▪ Mutual cooperation to investigate and counter cross-border, serious and organised crime through transnational networks. ▪ Investment in IT systems and the acquisition and renewal of equipment (BG, CY, CZ, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IT, LT, LV, MT, PT, RO, SE and SI) which often aimed to upgrade and increase operational equipment in order to underpin Member States capability to prevent and combat serious, cross-border organised crime, in particular drug trafficking and terrorism. Acquisitions for strengthening IT systems include technological and management systems, network devices, IT solutions, telecommunication interception systems, and computers. Other investments were made on technical equipment, such as mobile analysis laboratories, forensic tools and narcotics analysers. Also, equipment such as special vehicles, drones and protective vests and equipment was purchased. ▪ 104 joint investigation teams and EMPACT operations carried out (of which 88 were carried out by DE).
National administrations
▪ Investment in IT systems and the acquisition and renewal of equipment, which aimed to upgrade and increase operational equipment in order to underpin Member States capabilities. This investment included acquisitions of technological and management systems, network devices, IT solutions, telecommunication interception systems, and computers. Other investments were made on technical

[125] These figures are based on the information provided by the Member States in their national interim reports and may not reflect the reality as it was not checked back with the responsible authorities by the evaluator.

equipment, such as mobile analysis laboratories, forensic tools and narcotics analysers, special vehicles, drones and protective vests.
European Union
▪ Establishing mutual trust ▪ Enhancing security of EU citizens ▪ Enhancing capabilities in specific crime areas, predominantly in financial and economic crime, cybercrime, illicit drug trafficking and terrorist threats, through improving operational infrastructures ▪ Cooperation amongst Member State also contributed to enhance capability through the exchange of information on cross-border crime, the establishment of transnational networks and projects, and the participation of Member States in joint investigation teams and the EMPACT Policy Cycle.
Exchange of information. Benefits: tangible and intangible (increased knowledge and awareness).
Target Group
▪ Enhancing cooperation and coordination among Member States' public authorities and European bodies and institutions. ▪ To a lesser extent, enhancing cooperation and coordination among with third countries and international organisations. ▪ Over 25,000 number of hits and exchange of information in the Prüm framework. ▪ No other quantitative information available.
Beneficiaries
▪ Setting up structures and centralised information systems to enable information exchange to take place (DE, EL, FI, FR HR, IT, LV, LT, PT). ▪ Facilitating the access to operational databases and ensuring interconnectedness of IT systems (BG, IE, MT)[126]. ▪ Enhancing the exchange of data, especially in order to implement the Prüm Treaty and the PNR Directive. ▪ Strengthening coordination and cooperation mechanisms between law enforcement authorities with Europol (HU, LT). ▪ Improve firearms control in four Member States (BG, DE, FR, and PL). ▪ Over 25,000 number of hits and exchange of information in the Prüm framework. ▪ No other quantitative information available.
National administrations
▪ Improved effective coordination through: ▪ Facilitating access to operational databases; ▪ Strengthening coordination and cooperation of law enforcement authorities with Europol; ▪ Interconnectedness of IT systems. ▪ Sharing biometric data through cooperation with Europol (SIENA) and Interpol or among Member States public authorities. ▪ Cooperation and exchange of information with third countries. ▪ Exchange of information led to improved control over firearms in some Member States. ▪ Over 25 000 hits and exchange of information in the Prüm framework.
European Union
▪ ISF-Police funding has been used by Member States to meet their obligations under the PNR Directive. Eight Member States (BE, CZ, EE, ES, FR, LU, PL, SE) have used the Fund to implement feasibility studies, develop the PIU[127] PNR application, modernise their IT infrastructure and security environments. The PNR will enable to process considerably larger volumes of data and will offer a larger community of end users a more rapid access to the results provided by PNR processing. ▪ Over 25,000 number of hits and exchange of information in the Prüm framework.
Training. Benefits

[126] The interconnection with Interpol and Europol with national police systems in Malta and Ireland allowed the national law enforcement authority to make comparisons against the content of the database with more efficient and simplified searches. More specifically, **Ireland** upgraded the information system of the Garda National Immigration Bureau in 2016 to integrate it with the Interpol network database (FIND) to allow for automatic real-time checking of shared data, such as information coming from scanned passports. The exchange of data had an added benefit of the system also containing the information shared by the UK Warnings Index Control Unit. Similarly, **Bulgaria** aimed to ensure access to the ICAO Public Key Directory system which allows border control systems of receiving countries to authenticate ePassports of issuing countries

[127] Passenger Information Unit.

Target Group
▪ Enhancing capabilities of their law enforcement institutions, notably by developing and/or carrying out training activities. ▪ Over 11,000 law enforcement officers trained from around 120,000 target. ▪ Approx. 30,000 persons days of training carried out. ▪ The highest number was achieved in Germany – 4,003 followed by Slovenia (1,911), Romania (1,474) and France (1,261) ▪ Under Union Action, approx. 300 enforcement officials were trained and 720 training units (person-days) were organised.
Beneficiaries
▪ Train-the-trainer actions expected to have a multiplier effect. ▪ Over 11,000 law enforcement officers trained from around 120,000 target. ▪ Approx. 30,000 persons days of training carried out. ▪ The highest number was achieved in Germany – 4,003 followed by Slovenia (1,911), Romania (1,474) and France (1,261).
National administrations
▪ Improved law enforcement capabilities and strengthened human resources, especially through financing training and hiring additional staff. ▪ Over 11 000 law enforcement officers trained. ▪ Approx. 30 000 people days of training carried out.
European Union
▪ Enhancing capabilities of law enforcement agencies through training and acquisition of new skills and knowledge. ▪ Over 11,000 law enforcement officers trained from around 120,000 target. ▪ Approx. 30,000 persons days of training carried out ▪ The highest number was achieved in Germany – 4,003 followed by Slovenia (1,911), Romania (1,474) and France (1,261)
Protection of victims. Benefits
Target Group
▪ Awareness raised on and providing information to crime victims, human trafficking and sex worker trafficking (AT, EE, ES, MT, RO and SE). ▪ Victims and witness protection programmes (AT, CZ, FI and MT). ▪ Support for victims of crime and witnesses in courts (e.g. court ruling via video conferencing facilities to avoid secondary victimisation, as well as interview rooms) (CZ and FI). ▪ Close to one million crime victims have been protected or assisted under ISF-P actions in only five Member States.
Beneficiaries
▪ Awareness-raising on and providing information to crime victims. ▪ Close to 1 million crime victims have been protected or assisted under ISF-Police actions in only 5 Member States.
National administrations
▪ Law enforcement training on crime victim support (NL, MT and RO). ▪ Close to 1 million crime victims have been protected or assisted under ISF-Police actions in only 5 Member States.
Capability to protect critical infrastructure
Target Group
▪ Reinforcing Member States' administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in the sectors of economic activity. ▪ 192 tools used by Member States (data provided by BE, CY, EE, EL, LV, MT and SI) to put in place and/or further upgraded with the help of the Fund to facilitate the protection of critical infrastructure. ▪ 134 expert meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences, publications, websites and online consultations organised with the help of the Fund related to critical infrastructure.
Beneficiaries
▪ Improving cooperation between relevant public and private, national and international stakeholders, operators of critical infrastructure in the case of terrorist or CRBNE attacks, including training of law enforcement officials (AT, CY, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, NL, MT, RO, SE). For example: (1) In Romania, the Centre for Coordinating the Protection of Critical Infrastructure has trained 100

liaison officers as part of its aim to establish a national training platform concerning the security of the 10 sectors of critical infrastructure;

(2) In Austria, structures, processes and measures were further developed to improve the protection of critical infrastructure, including the improvement and implementation of the Austrian Programme for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure (APCIP). This project resulted in a series of awareness raising meetings with operators of critical infrastructure, including discussions on specific thematic areas (e.g. extremism, terrorism, protection of property, ICT, etc.) and engagement with private sector operators. Operators of critical infrastructure companies will be incorporated in the risk and crisis management and into early warning systems. Before the support of ISF Police, only the safety authorities and the police were informed of current threats.

- Acquiring protective and preventive equipment for police forces or special rescue units, mainly specialised equipment to strengthen CBRNE defence, including protective clothing, bomb robots, special vehicles (BE, CY, EE, FR, HU, LV); purchase of substance analysers (CZ, EE, FI).
- 192 tools used by Member States (data provided by BE, CY, EE, EL, LV, MT and SI) to put in place and/or further upgraded with the help of the Fund to facilitate the protection of critical infrastructure
- 134 expert meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences, publications, websites and online consultations organised with the help of the Fund related to critical infrastructure

National administrations

- Information systems (purchased ICT devices) for the crisis management centre (SI)[128] or the rescue board (EE).
- Emergency response communication strategies involving the public in case of an attack (DE and MT);
- New security concepts in case of one-off (international high-level meeting in BE) or larger-scale incidents affecting critical infrastructure (e.g. breakdown of electricity network in SE plus another large-scale incident in NL); increasing security at airports through improving the security system by purchasing new equipment and technologies (CZ) or through training (FR).
- Event management centre for cooperation and exchange of knowledge in order to protect critical infrastructure (HU).
- Increased cybersecurity, such as raising public awareness (NL), a command and control centre to increase knowledge, and improve international cooperation (PT).
- The protection of critical infrastructure has been facilitated by the Fund as 192 tools have been used by Member States (data provided by BE, CY, EE, EL, LV, MT and SI) to put in place and further upgrade critical infrastructure.
- 134 expert meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences, publications, websites and online consultations organised in relation to critical infrastructure with the Fund's help.

[128] Slovenia upgraded the ICT equipment of the National Centre for Crisis Management and established a uniform IP Protected Communication Network. The new equipment is being used for crisis management exercises.

ANNEX 6: EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS USED TO ANSWER THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Member States strengthening international and cross-border cooperation

FI: ISF-P has financed IT-developments to be commonly used by law enforcement authorities to improve the analytical capability to investigate economic crime, which is also relevant for tackling transnational criminal phenomena. This has contributed to the increased detection of crimes and to shortening the investigation time. Large-scale crime analysis with large amounts of data can now be carried out, which previously had not been possible.

DE: The Federal Criminal Police Office is carrying out projects that: (i) combat organised property crime in DE, BG and RO; (ii) gather information on the exploitation of minors by criminal organisations in DE, BG, RO; and (iii) exchange research results as part of the Research Network on Organised Crime.

PT, ES, UK, IE, FR, NL and IT jointly-cooperate in fighting illicit drug trafficking by air and sea in the project 'Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre — Narcotics (MAOC-N)'. Over recent years, the Centre's data gathering and intelligence sharing activities have proven key to the seizure of large quantities of drugs (in particular cocaine) en route to the EU.

Europol: The project 'Secondary Security Checks at Hotspots including training and deployment of guest officers and own staff for monitoring and guiding purposes', aimed to strengthen the security of the EU's external border, against, among other things, counter-terrorism, migrant smuggling, and THB, in particular through providing secondary security checks.

Threat and risk assessments projects

AT has set up an operational unit within the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism dealing with threat and risk assessments, therefore creating the structural precondition for institutionalised threat and risk assessments at national level. The Office has already provided training for risk managers to develop their expertise in assessments.

EE participated in CBRN cooperation projects and training, and carries out two different projects under the national objective related to the Estonian Rescue Board: (i) one aiming to develop a new IT system that saves and analyses data for specific threat and risk assessments, and (ii) another aiming to improve the capacity of data analysis and the capability to collect, store and handle information related to explosives.

Union actions: The programmes 'Shielding South-east Europe from CBRN-E threats' and 'Coordinated transnational training programme for prevention and mitigation of CBR release induced by non-state actors' both aim to improve the capability of law enforcement in understanding, detecting and mitigating CBRN-E risks through training.

The objective of the Union actions 'Minimising insider threats within the supply chain of the precursors for explosives' is to develop 'smart measures' to reduce insider threat when precursors are being produced, distributed, sold and used.

The action 'Enhancing Beneficial Ownership Transparency' conducted comparative studies of different national experiences to develop risk assessment methodologies on high-risk areas of terrorism financing.

Projects aiming to improve operational coordination and cooperation by sharing biometric data

AT and SK have undertaken actions to link their national Automated Finger Identification Systems to the VIS and EURODAC.

12 Member States (BE, BG, DE, ES, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, SI and SK) have taken measures to create an effective system for exchanging data on DNA and fingerprints, including steps towards accrediting forensic laboratories, and vehicle registration data of concerned persons, in line with the Prüm decisions. Training has been carried out, the equipment has already been used in more than 68 000 operations, and eight forensic laboratories

have been accredited.

Union actions: 'DNA-STR Massive Sequencing & International Information Exchange' is developing a new, more efficient and effective DNA profiling methodology for forensic laboratories worldwide involved in generating DNA profiles for upload and searching in National DNA databases.

The 'European Strategic Communications Network' is building on the work of the Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team project to intensify the exchange of expertise in the field of strategic communications to counter violent extremism and terrorism.

Projects on crisis cooperation

Union actions: The project 'Detection and response to the radicalisation appearances' is being coordinated by the Estonian Police and Border Guard with public authority counterparts from LV, FI and LT. Its objective is to train police officers in dealing with cases of radicalisation and hence improve preparedness in crisis situations.

The project 'Illicit Trafficking Radiation Assessment Program phase II -Round Robin Tests (ITRAP+10, phase II – RRT)' coordinated by French Agency of International Technical Expertise helped Member States' national laboratories to build up testing capabilities of nuclear security instruments. These instruments are able to detect and identify the presence and movement of radioactive materials, for instance, at border crossings whether they are imports, exports, or shipments in transit.

Projects on capability to protect critical infrastructure

EE has been especially active in the field of protecting critical infrastructure, in particular concerning issues surrounding CBRN-E and IT systems.

FR acquired new decontamination mobile units to strengthen the capacities of decontamination and critical infrastructure across the territory should there be a CBRN-E attack. More than 2 600 people were trained to use these units. 12 units and 600 individual outfits were purchased.

AT further developed structures, processes and measures to improve the protection of critical infrastructure, including improving and implementing the Austrian programme for the protection of critical infrastructure (APCIP).

Union actions: The project 'FTE-project: Studying the Acquisition of illicit Firearms by Terrorists in Europe' implemented by the Vlaas Vredesinstituut in BE with IT and SE partners, aims to develop 'cybercrime expert' training to prevent an increase in the number of cyberattacks on IT systems, including critical systems.

The project 'Shielding South-east Europe from CBRN-E threats', coordinated by the Greek Centre for Security Studies with partners from EL and CY, aims to raise awareness of critical infrastructure threats in the area of CBRN-E among first line practitioners (police officers, coast guards, customs officers etc.). This mainly deals with the preventive level of CBRN-E risks which have cross-border and cross-sector components.

The project 'CBRN-E Law Enforcement Training Initiative — CELECTIVE' — coordinated by European CBRNE Centre of Umeå University, with partners from CZ, NL and SE — aims to protect critical infrastructure from CBRN-E threats by establishing a consolidated training programme that highlights cross-border cooperation.

Projects on identifying and supporting witnesses and victims of crime and terrorism

MT launched a victim support unit in April 2017. Its aim is to provide victims of crime with access to support services and increase their participation in protection programmes. Also, an awareness-raising campaign targeted law enforcement officials to make them better aware of the adopted standard procedures when working with victims of crime.

SE: the Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority is developing an interactive website to make relevant information to victims easily accessible and comprehensible.

FI: the justice administration's IT systems that deal with compensating crime victims were renewed. The systems are in place and payments can be coordinated towards supporting crime victims.

Union actions: The project 'Psychological health impact of THB for sexual exploitation on female victims. Consequences for stakeholders' aims to improve and optimise the treatment of female trafficking victims who suffered sexual exploitation by taking into account the impact THB had on their psychological health.

One of the main objectives of the project 'Countering THB, Protecting Victims and Enhancing Financial Investigations' is protecting and assisting victims through strengthening mutual trust and networking between experts and contributing to the discussion and analysis on measuring the costs of victims assistance.

Projects on training and train-the-trainer

Training on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially victim support (CY, CZ, HU and NL). In addition, two Member States (AT and ES) used ISF-P to carry out training for cooperation partners in third countries on human trafficking and other crime-related topics.

Training on THB (AT, ES, HU and SI).

Training on cybercrime (AT, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR and SI) and online child abuse (SI). FI is currently developing a study programme on preventing cybercrime and on cyber competence for the Police University College.

Training on corruption (CY, CZ, LT, PT, RO and SI), asset recovery (ES and HU), economic crime and money laundering (EL, FR, HU, PT and SI).

Training on new methods and techniques for countering drug trafficking (CY, CZ, EE and ES).

Union actions: The project 'Bounce resilience training, network and evaluation — STRESAVIORAII' is developing a resilience train-the-trainer programme for trainers working with young people, parents and frontline workers to prevent radicalisation and create a network of trainers to enable the exchange of best practice and knowledge. So far 10 cities in 5 Member States have been identified (BE, DE, FR, NL and SE) for pilot trainings.

The project 'Turning — Detection of drugs trafficking & drugs production: Train the trainers course, course curriculum, toolkit & exchange of best practices' aims to develop, among other things, an effective coordination of training on law enforcement information exchange for single point of contact (SPOC) staff and relevant SPOC 'stakeholders'. This is to be pursued through improved cooperation with CEPOL which will benefit from project results through a clearer, updated, training needs analysis.

Potential complementarity or overlapping with ISF-P

Both the **justice programme** and **Fiscalis 2020** fund activities that could potentially fall under the broader scope of ISF-P. However, in both cases there is no risk of duplication due to the different nature of the projects' beneficiaries. In this sense, actions undertaken under the justice programme target judiciary and judicial staff, a group of practitioners that can only ultimately benefit from measures under ISF-P insofar as these aim to encourage cooperation between judicial and law enforcement authorities. Similarly, Fiscalis 2020 targets national tax authorities as opposed to police services.

Potential for **complementarity** is also identified with regard to the **structural reform support programme (SRSP),** whose thematic scope partially overlaps with ISF-P concerning the fight against corruption, fraud and money laundering. Nonetheless, the nature of the support provided to Member States under each programme differs. In this sense, while ISF-P provides financial support for implementing specific projects, the SRSP aims to provide hand-on technical support for the design, planning and implementation of anti-corruption, anti-fraud and anti-money laundering strategies. Thus, **ISF-P and the SRSP are complementary**.

Potential for overlap has been found with **Horizon 2020** as regards analysis and evaluation activities. However, the research activities carried out under ISF-P are primarily related to implementing measures, while the focus of H2020 research focus on developing innovative technologies and solutions. This is also reflected in the nature of potential beneficiaries of H2020 calls, constituted by researchers, universities, companies and institutes from within and outside of the EU. In any case, as they are aware of the potential overlap, most countries have indicated that they pay particular attention to potential inconsistencies between actions funded by ISF-P and those by H2020 (e.g. AT, CZ and EE).

The **Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II)** and the **European Neighbourhood Instrument** provide support in the fight against corruption and the strengthening of institutional capacity by means of coordination,

cooperation, networking and training activities, which points to potential overlap between these instruments and ISF-P. However, their geographical scope is different to that of ISF-P, and the share of the budget destined to these actions under the national programmes and Union actions is relatively limited. Therefore, **the complementarity between these programmes can be assessed as high.**