



# **Evaluation of the European IPR Helpdesk**

## **Executive Summary**

**An evaluation prepared for the European  
Commission Directorate-General for Enterprise  
and Industry**

**This study was carried out for the European Commission by**



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## Objectives of the Study and Methodology

This evaluation has been commissioned by the Unit for Industrial Competitiveness for Growth in the Directorate for Enterprise Competitiveness, Industry and Growth Policies of DG Enterprise and Industry in the European Commission. Other Commission services involved with IPR and support for enterprises have participated in the study, including DGs ENTR D, CONNECT, MARKT, RTD and the JRC. Another significant party to the exercise has been the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and innovation (EACI).

The overarching objective of the study was to evaluate the relevance of the objectives and the mandate given to the European IPR Helpdesk and its effectiveness within its particular policy context. Specifically the study:

1. Has identified, tests and applied methodologies for evaluating the relevance coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and utility of the European IPR Helpdesk;
2. Reviewed the relevance of the purpose the European IPR Helpdesk and the mandate allocated to it;
3. Evaluated the impact and utility of the European IPR Helpdesk and based on these findings assessed whether the objectives of the Helpdesk have to be adjusted;
4. Considered alternative ways to provide IPR support to the different relevant target groups;
5. Provided recommendations for modifications of the design of the service and its target group;
6. Analysed whether the structure and the internal organisation of the Helpdesk is the most suitable for the services to be provided.

On the basis of an assessment of the impact of the project against its objectives, the evaluation examines to what extent the project has achieved these objectives, the relevance of the service to present and future economic and policy priorities and the links with other business support services and relevant organisations.

### ***Methodological approach***

The methodology made use of the standard evaluation framework for an assessment of legislation, focusing on key evaluation questions relating to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, EU added-value, utility and sustainability. It also addressed specific considerations, relating to the objectives and mandate of the European IPR Helpdesk. The main elements considered were:

- The objectives, functions and mandate initially attributed to the European IPR Helpdesk;
- The scope of the assistance offered by the European IPR Helpdesk;
- The definition of target users;
- Impacts that the Helpdesk has generated;
- The current implementation mode (a service contract of 3 years);
- Overlaps/ complementarities between the European IPR Helpdesk and other Community or Member State action in the relevant areas;
- Co-operation with multipliers and synergies between the Helpdesk and other related Helpdesks, NPOs and the Enterprise Europe Network.

### ***Research tools***

The main research tools used included:

- extensive desk research of documentation, including contracts, internal reports, studies and evaluation reports. In particular, there was examination of strategy documents, progress reports;

management plans; minutes from the meetings between the Helpdesk and the Commission and performance data provided by the contractor and the Commission;

- 46 interviews covering a broad range of stakeholders – Commission officials, Member State authorities, organisations providing IP services, European and national industry associations, users of the service and other SME participants in FP7.
- Three online surveys targeted at registered users, non-users (other SME participants in FP7) and Members of the Enterprise Europe Network. 399 responses were received from a survey of approximately 3,500 registered users of the Helpdesk and 639 responses to a survey of over 10,000 ‘non-users’– SMEs participating in FP7 that have not made use of the Helpdesk’s services. There was a poor response to the survey of the Enterprise Europe Network.

## Main Findings of the Study

The main findings of the evaluation are as follows:

### *The European IPR Helpdesk’s Aims and Objectives*

1. The aim of the European IPR Helpdesk, as defined in its current contract with the Commission, is to:  
*‘assist beneficiaries of EU funded projects and EU SMEs in general in issues related to intellectual property rights’.*
2. The **overall conclusion of the evaluation is that, for the most part, the European IPR Helpdesk has successfully implemented the tasks with which it was charged** and that its mandate and objectives continue to be appropriate and valid. Issues highlighted in the 2006 Evaluation have been addressed.

### Positioning the Helpdesk

3. The IPR Helpdesk exists in a landscape of IP service providers that is relatively rich. Other active organisations include:
  - The other IPR Helpdesks established by the Commission (China IPR Helpdesk etc.)
  - Other European support organisations, supporting research and innovation (Enterprise Europe Network, National Contact Points etc.)
  - Networks and projects offering support, especially those established to assist the exploitation of research
  - National and regional organisations offering support in the management and exploitation of IP, notably Intellectual Property Offices
  - National and regional business support organisations, innovation and incubation centres and technology promotion agencies
  - Organisations offering information and support on IP generally and IP registration – European Patent Office, OHIM, national IPOs, trade associations

- Professionals offering commercial services relating to IP – commercial business advisers, patent attorneys etc.

While the scale and nature of the services provided vary considerably between countries and organisations, all of them share a common objective of promoting better management and greater use of intellectual property. They frequently co-operate with each other in pursuing this common objective.

- 4. In its relationships with other IP organisations, the Helpdesk has to observe the principles of subsidiarity, avoid disrupting services offered on a commercial basis by private sector professionals and focus on areas where it can be most efficient.**
- 5. By offering assistance with the management and exploitation of IP to participants in EU research programmes, the European IPR Helpdesk has a distinctive niche, with a clear European dimension.** This role is valued by users of Helpdesk services, who wish to see it reinforced, notably through the provision of higher level services in the sense defined below.

#### **The Targets of the Helpdesk's Services**

6. The target groups of the Helpdesk are defined as follows:
  - *beneficiaries of EU funded programmes, ( participants in EU funded RTD & CIP projects)*
  - *EU SMEs in general in the process of negotiating or concluding transnational partnership agreements, especially through the Enterprise Europe Network.*
7. The current users of the Helpdesk's services broadly reflect the organisational composition of participants in FP7, with a slightly higher proportion of SMEs among users, especially of the helpline services.
- 8. Although under Horizon 2020, the encouragement of a greater exploitation of research results suggests that more attention to assisting enterprises will develop, exploiting research results can involve all the participants in the research and consequently the current definition of targets will continue to be appropriate.**
9. The IP element in assisting EU SMEs in the process of negotiating or concluding transnational partnership agreements is only one of the issues to be addressed in often complex situations. The role of the Helpdesk is best seen as continuing to provide specialist support to the Enterprise Europe Network, whose members are very active in this area.

#### **The Nature of the Helpdesk's Services**

10. The terms of the Helpdesk's contract specify that it should provide a *Website a Helpline*, Training, and *Awareness Raising Activities* and should co-operate with other actors involved in IPR and in the promotion of innovation.
11. The remit of the Helpdesk also requires it to provide assistance relating not only to formal IP, such as patents, trademarks, etc. but to cover all intellectual assets and their management. The evidence from the users' survey is that this requirement has been fulfilled.

### **The Users of the Helpdesk's Services**

12. Tracking of users of the core online and Helpdesk services shows that they are from 65 countries, including nearly all countries participating in FP7. There is a low level of usage by clients from central European countries. Registered users tend to reflect participation in FP7, except that the highest number of users continued to come from Spain – a legacy from the previous arrangements for the Helpdesk.
13. **A basic aim of the Helpdesk is to help its clients to improve their capacity to manage and exploit IP.** In the terms of a helpful definition developed by the IPeuropAware project (explained in more detail in section 3.2.1 of the main Report), clients approaching the Helpdesk can be said to be at one of four levels of IP capacity:
  - *Level 1 – Knowledge and Awareness:* a low understanding of intellectual property or where to access information (15.8% of current registered users)
  - *Level 2 – Protection:* a basic understanding of IP and mechanisms for protection, including its registration (33.5% of current registered users)
  - *Level 3 – Management:* an active programme of IP development and management of intellectual assets. (26.8% of current registered users)
  - *Level 4 – Strategy - Exploitation and Active Defence:* where IP is continuously developed and is a major source of value for a business, often involving licensing arrangements and extensive co-operation with other innovators (23.9% of current registered users).

Currently, then, the Helpdesk supports clients at all four levels of capacity. Generally, it helps them move towards a higher level.

14. **With the increasing emphasis for participants in EU-funded research on the effective exploitation of research results, there is a strong message from stakeholders that there is a need for the Helpdesk to concentrate more of its efforts on assisting clients at capacity levels 3 and 4.**
15. **However, there will continue to be clients at levels 1 and 2, who can be assisted in developing their IP capacity. This can be assured by a significant reinforcement of the relationship of the Helpdesk with multipliers,** most importantly in the Enterprise Europe Network, but also on an ad hoc basis with other organisations.

### **Meeting the Needs of Clients**

16. The results of the survey of registered users can be seen in Annex 2 of the main report. They are analysed in Chapter 3. They show that the service delivered by the Helpdesk meets users' current expectations. Overall, the users' outlook on the Helpdesk services is very positive. In particular:
17. Users consider the Helpdesk website to provide a wide spectrum of IP related information that is highly useful, both for users directly and for other services providing support in this area, such as Enterprise Europe Network ambassadors

18. Answers to individual questions provided by the helpline and its user friendly service are appreciated by registered users and other users interviewed
19. The Helpdesk is providing an effective range of training and awareness-raising activities - many more than was envisaged in the contract. Nine training modules have been developed at different levels and these are customised to the needs of the different organisations attending the events.
20. However, as outlined below, there is scope for a more systematic approach to training and awareness-raising activities.
21. **The survey of SMEs participating in FP7 that had not made use of the Helpdesk's services ('non-users') revealed that more than half of these potential users are not aware of the Helpdesk's existence. Furthermore, those that do know of the Helpdesk are not sure how it can assist them. This suggests a major problem in communication and not only for the Helpdesk.**

23% of these 'non-users' are only just aware that IP is an issue (level 1) and a further 35% are only 'beginning to take some steps to manage IP' (level 2). Consequently, as well as the Helpdesk facing a major challenge in communicating the availability of its services, there is a more extensive **need for the research community to help SMEs in particular to improve their understanding of the significance of intellectual property and its role in the commercialisation of research results.** Research funders have a particular contribution to make in this respect.
22. When asked about the types of service they would require if seeking assistance, a majority of non-users indicated a need for assistance with IP management in EU supported research projects. This was the most frequently requested service.
23. The support provided by the Helpdesk to the beneficiaries of FP7 is considered by the stakeholders to be its unique selling point. Other IP service providers are usually not able to provide such support.

#### **Areas for Development and Improvement**

24. The main issue relating to the design of the Helpdesk services at a conceptual level concerns the scope of the services that are provided, including the groups to be targeted. The evaluation concludes that the current scope is coherent and provides a distinctive role for the European IPR Helpdesk, given the policy landscape and the existing provision of support on IP matters.
25. To perform its role, the Helpdesk needs to maintain itself as a centre of IP expertise and to continue to provide the current range of services – website, helpline enquiry service, awareness raising and training.
26. **A major part of the Helpdesk's activities consist of assisting FP7 participants to interpret and apply IP agreements. The assistance provided by the Helpdesk in this area is highly valued by participants in EU research programmes and is an essential part of the effective exploitation of research results. There is nonetheless scope to develop more extensive provision for clients at levels 3 and 4 in terms of their IP management capacity. This could include information and briefing material on the web site, training provision and direct advice.** Such a development is also

indicated by the greater emphasis on the active exploitation of the results of research in the policy orientations of EU-funded research.

27. However, **it is important not to neglect the development of the potential of clients that are at levels 1 and 2.**
28. Although the current consortium team have staff that are qualified to provide legal advice tailored to the individual client's specific circumstances, a service of this kind would go well beyond the generic legal advice that it currently gives and would represent a considerable departure from the usual practice of business support agencies. It would risk undermining the commercial services of private sector IP professionals.
29. Nonetheless the distinctive role of the Helpdesk as an honest broker in the research context could be applied in other circumstances, such as providing an independent assessment of IP elements within transnational co-operation agreements supported by the Enterprise Europe Network.
30. The organisation of training events responds to demand. The data suggest that Germany has been slightly over-represented as a host for training events.
31. The use of webinars and on-line training provision has already proved to be a cost-effective innovation. Their use could be increased and the material generated could be made available on-line.

### **Marketing and Communication**

32. **It is not clear that the Helpdesk has a marketing strategy. There is no document providing a statement of such a strategy and not even a clear Communications Plan.** (See section 3.4.2 of the main report). It is believed that other organisations, such as the China IPR Helpdesk, are more efficient in communicating their services to their target groups.
33. A marketing strategy would bring together the following elements:
  - an assessment of needs and the capacity of the Helpdesk to respond to them
  - a definition of targets
  - the determination of the optimal corresponding service offer
  - a description of means by which the service can be delivered most efficiently
  - A clear Communications Plan would set out, usually on an annual basis:
  - the key messages of awareness raising campaigns
  - the targets groups for the campaign
  - the instruments to be used and the actions to make potential clients aware of the existing services and instruments available
  - the partners expected to co-operate with organising events and publicising activity
  - the geographical coverage of the campaign
  - plans for background development of relationships with organisations with the capacity to act as multipliers, beyond those explicitly participating in the campaigns .

### **Relationship with Other IP Service Providers and with Multipliers**

34. There is a strategic role for the IPR Helpdesk in contributing to the development of IP awareness in Europe, but the Helpdesk alone is not able to deliver such a service. It has to pursue such a goal in active collaboration with a range of other IP service providers.
35. Overlaps and duplication of the services of the Helpdesk with that of national IPOs could easily arise, especially given the continuing development of the latter's services for SMEs. There are also potential overlaps with organisations specialising in various forms of technology transfer, regional development agencies and general business support organisations and with projects supported under FP7 to assist other projects with the exploitation of their research results (See section 3.4.4 the Report).
36. However, in practice, there appear to be no major problems arising from such overlaps. In the survey, 42.6% of users indicated that there are similar services in their counties, but the majority of users consider them to be either complementary or healthily competitive.
37. Co-operation with a wide range of IP service providers could be developed, both in order to improve the effectiveness of a 'no wrong door' policy and to address areas of common concern. This would need to build on the co-operation that already exists in the provision of training and could be made more systematic as part of a planned programme within a marketing strategy.
- 38. Of greater significance, however, is the scope for a significant reinforcement of the relationship of the Helpdesk with multipliers, and particularly the Enterprise Europe Network.** This issue is considered extensively, particularly in section 3.4.4 of the report. The following summarises the main points.
39. There is a developing relationship with the Network in general and, through the 'ambassadors' scheme, with a group of Network members specialising in IP matters. However, the scheme has not been implemented consistently across the Network and has scope for substantial additional expansion, especially under the revised contractual arrangements, in the next phase of the Network's development.
- 40. The Helpdesk and the Enterprise Europe Network have a series of characteristics that indicate that a more structured and integrated relationship is both feasible and desirable.** These include a common European vocation, a significant overlap in the client base and the presence of the Network on the ground at a regional level in all EU Member States and beyond. There is also a good fit in terms of the interrelationship of the services offered by the two bodies.
41. Through its internal organisation the Network has been strengthening its provision of information and support on IP matters, including through the development of the Ambassadors scheme. The Helpdesk is clearly in a position to support this process, acting as a major resource providing specialised information and advice on a case by case basis and also high quality support material - newsletters featuring recent developments, support documents, frequently-asked questions (FAQ)s, brochures, e-learning tools and case studies.

42. The Helpdesk could assist the further development of the IP capacity of the Network, by participating in the Network's training programme on a regular basis.
43. The Network members organise a large number of events and training sessions and already often co-operate with the Helpdesk to cover IP, research and innovation matters. This process could be organised much more systematically.
44. Local knowledge and language capability enable the Network to deliver services better tailored to the main target groups, especially SMEs and those at levels 1 & 2 in terms of their awareness of IP and its management.
45. The Helpdesk and the Enterprise Europe Network both have contractual and strong operational relationships with DG Enterprise & Industry and the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation. These links could facilitate a much closer operational relationship in ways that are not possible with other organisations.

The combination of all these characteristics means that **there is a unique opportunity to develop a close and mutually advantageous relationship between the Enterprise Europe and the Helpdesk.**

46. A more systematic relationship with the Enterprise Europe Network could have several advantages, including higher quality services, a more extensive interaction with potential and actual participants in research programmes and more effectively supported to the Network in its increasing coverage of IP issues.
47. The Helpdesk could more effectively develop a role as a centre of specialised expertise in IP matters, with a close working relationship with members of the Network. This would lead to a more intensive use of the Helpdesk's key resources and specialised knowledge.
48. Participants in research programmes could more easily be assisted in their own language and by staff sensitive to local circumstances.
49. A more effective division of labour could be established in which the Helpdesk dealt directly with enterprises at levels 3 & 4 in terms of their IP capabilities, whereas those at levels 1 & 2 would be assisted by their local Enterprise Europe Network member.
50. As working with network members became more systematic, the Helpdesk would be able to strengthen inputs into the IP dimension of other aspects of the Network's work, notably in assisting clients in the process of negotiating or concluding transnational partnership agreements.
51. There may be scope for extending the application of the Helpdesk's role as honest broker in consortium agreements on research exploitation to other areas, such as brokering IP agreements in other areas of transnational co-operation.
52. With the changing role of the Helpdesk, as it develops its links with the Enterprise Europe Network, it would be necessary to change relationships with other IP organisations, notably the China and other Helpdesks, in that their spheres of activity will overlap more than was the case in the past.
53. Subsequently, it may be possible to strengthen further the relationship with other agencies actively supporting enterprises and other organisations in their management of IP:

- The national Intellectual Property Offices and other agencies have a common interest in raising awareness of IP and helping their clients to manage it effectively. (levels 1 & 2). Mutual cross-reference could be strengthened.
- The Helpdesk already has relationships with a number of innovation or technology support organisations (53 of them were among the registered users responding to the survey). Their survey responses suggest that they tend to refer to the Helpdesk for its more specialised services. As this element of the Helpdesk's services is developed, assisting these organisations, particularly with cross-border aspects of their activities, could be organised more systematically.
- From interview feedback, there appears to be scope especially for developing relationships through European and national networks of innovation and technology centres.

### **Operational Issues**

54. The overall conclusion from the limited information available on the budget is that the costs of particular activities appear to be in line with expectations, but that **the budget distribution is turning out to be substantially different from the expected outcome**, with expenditure on training and awareness raising increasing considerably in response to demand and expenditure on stakeholder management falling below the level anticipated. This suggests that in any future Helpdesk contract, there should be considerably more attention paid to planning such activities and that the search for alternative (and cheaper) solutions, such as the greater use of webinars, should be stepped up.
55. The contractual relationship that the Commission has with the consortium responsible for the Helpdesk – a service contract – poses problems because of its inflexibility, while the use of grant agreements also has its difficulties, such as the need for beneficiaries to make a financial contribution to the project. Other contractual possibilities need to be investigated.
56. A majority of the interviewees think that the contract duration should be extended in order to deliver the most efficient support throughout the financing period of research programmes.
57. The reporting systems to the Commission and the EACI have evolved in such a way that they could now be streamlined and in some parts replaced by modern real time reporting systems, such as are already used internally by the Helpdesk consortium.
58. The Helpdesk did encounter certain difficulties in its communication efforts resulting from a requirement to change its logo and web design to conform to the Commission's house style. As well as involving a certain amount of disruption in the communication activities of the Helpdesk at the time, stemming from the need to redesign the web site and rebrand information material, the change may have also undermined the Helpdesk's reputation for independence and impartiality and may deter some of the potential users of the Helpdesk's services, especially SMEs.

### **The Professionalism of the Service**

59. The Helpdesk contractors have stated that they are committed to implementing best practice in professional business support services, as identified, for instance in the 'Making IPR Work for SMEs'

report and that on 'Creating Effective IPR Enforcement Support for SMEs' addressed to national IPOs under the IPEuropAware project.

60. The services are based on a capacity building approach that seeks in its encounters with clients to strengthen their ability to address IPR problems more generally rather than simply responding to the immediate problem and, in particular, to encourage enterprises to adopt the Intellectual Asset Management approach to the development and exploitation of their IPR (See section 3.4.3 of the Report).
61. The Helpdesk staff clearly understand the importance of tailoring information and support material to the current needs of their clients and the significance of a 'No wrong door' policy for handling approaches from a variety of organisations with different levels of knowledge and expertise. (See section 3.4.4).
62. 97.5% of users of the services consider the Helpdesk to be complying with generally recognised professional practice in the orientation and delivery of its business support services.

## Recommendations

The recommendations primarily concern developments in the objectives and operation of the Helpdesk itself, although there are also recommendations, primarily to the Commission services on actions that could be taken to support the Helpdesk's work. They are as follows:

### **The Scope and Targets of the Helpdesk's Services**

- In view of its relative strengths in the area, **the prime focus of the European IPR Helpdesk should continue to be on helping participants in research, development and innovation with a European dimension, and especially SMEs, to exploit their results through the effective management of intellectual property.** A continuing service to all research participants at a European level should be ensured.
- However, any future mandate should be expressed in terms that put the promotion of competitiveness and growth, and the greater emphasis on downstream activities that flows from this, more clearly at the centre of its activities
- The shift in policy emphasis towards promoting a greater exploitation of research results and innovation in commercial products and services implies for all concerned that more attention should be directed towards downstream applications. For the Helpdesk, this would imply a shift towards provision of services adapted to enterprises at Level 4 in terms of their knowledge of IP and its management.
- As a result of concentrating more on relatively sophisticated IP services in a European context, the Helpdesk will be in a position to extend its actions beyond those supporting clients directly involved in EU-funded research and innovation projects to IP aspects of other forms of transnational co-operation, such as technology transfer. The Helpdesk should do this as part of consolidating its position.

### **Marketing Strategy and Communication Plan**

- **The service provider has to develop and implement a clear and effective marketing strategy and Communications Plan.** The marketing strategy needs to take into account the definition of targets, the determination of the corresponding service offer and a delineation of the means by which the service can be delivered most efficiently, including budgetary provisions. The Communications Plan, which should be derived from the marketing strategy, should set out on an annual basis the key messages of awareness raising campaigns and a programme of actions to make potential clients aware of the existing services and instruments available.
- The budgeting of service provision needs to be derived from the marketing strategy and the expenditure on training should be subject to the planning exercise. Cheaper forms of training provision, such as webinars, need to be explored further.

### **The Development of Closer Relationships with Multipliers**

- **In view of the strategic opportunity presented for both sides, the Helpdesk, assisted by the Commission services and the EACI, needs to make a sustained effort to develop an integrated relationship with the Enterprise Europe Network, as the prime target for reinforcing its relationship with multipliers.**
- Such a development would strengthen the Enterprise Europe Network's work in promoting participation in research and innovation programmes, technology transfer and in developing transnational co-operation and would allow the Helpdesk to concentrate more on downstream activities, while continuing to make provision for enterprises only just beginning to manage their IP. As now, the Helpdesk could support the Network, but the IP service should be integrated more clearly into the core set of services offered by the Enterprise Europe Network.
- In order to ensure that there is a consistent and effective coverage of all regions by an IP multiplier service offered by the Enterprise Europe Network, a requirement that each regional consortium should include a professional IP support capability will need to be written into the terms of reference for the new Network contract.
- An effective relationship of the kind proposed between the Helpdesk and the Enterprise Europe Network will need close co-ordination within the Commission and the EACI, between the staff responsible for the Network and those responsible for the Helpdesk. Close institutional arrangements would facilitate this co-ordination.
- Relationships with other IP service providers at European and national levels should be developed more systematically as part of the marketing strategy

### **Support from the Commission Services**

- **The Commission should develop actions in support of the Helpdesk,** such as the following:
  - Raising the visibility of the Helpdesk among national bodies and in policy fora, including at ministerial level;
  - Raising the visibility of the Helpdesk within the Commission services;

- Emphasising, wherever possible, the importance of IP management as an effective tool for exploiting research results;
- Making participants in EU supported research and innovation programmes more aware of the usefulness/relevance of the services provided by the Helpdesk.
- Beyond bringing attention to the Helpdesk's services, **there is an on-going need in research and innovation policy to increase the awareness of the research community, and in particular SMEs participating in research and innovation programmes, of intellectual property and its management as an important element in the innovation cycle and especially in the process of bringing new ideas to market.** Closer co-operation should be developed between the Helpdesk and Commission and Research Agency staff responsible for calls for proposals, contracts and assessment of projects, in order to increase the appreciation of participants in EU-funded research of the importance of IP management and the assistance that can be provided in this area by the Helpdesk and its multipliers.
- NCPs should be involved in the promotion of the Helpdesk e.g. through participation of speakers from the IPR Helpdesk at the NCP network meetings. It is understood that action to raise awareness of the Helpdesk among NCPs is to take place in the near future.
- The Commission should also reflect on whether conformity with the Commission's house style for the Helpdesk's web site and publications is really beneficial for the promotion of the Helpdesk's services.

### **Operational Developments**

- In the remaining period of the current Helpdesk contract, it might be beneficial for the contractor to contribute to training and awareness raising events in those countries that have tended to be under-represented as users of the Helpdesk. For a future contract, a detailed Work Plan for training activities should be developed, including a minimum target of training events and detailed guidelines on where the training and awareness activities should take place in order to cover countries which are unrepresented. The Plan should allow a balance between fully planned and demand driven provision.
- The legal basis for a renewed contract needs to be explored further, and especially the possibility of providing greater flexibility within the contractual form, while still complying with procurement law. The issue with the length of the contract could be accommodated through adding the possibility of a year or two years extension (3+1 or 3+2), depending on the performance of the contractor. This would not only maintain the motivation to provide the best quality services but also improve the performance of the contractor by providing the incentive of having the contract extended.
- The reporting requirements of the Helpdesk contract should be streamlined, made more strategic with coverage of results and impacts and be partially replaced by modern real time reporting systems, such as those already used by the Helpdesk for internal management purposes.

- Reports should contain information on performance indicators that go beyond outputs to include greater reference to results and longer term impacts, especially on client performance. Although there are difficulties in obtaining such information, certain elements could be obtained from more developed client management systems.

