



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Impact Assessment Board

Brussels,
D(2011)

Opinion

Title **DG DEVCO - Impact Assessment for Development Cooperation Instrument**

(draft version of 5 August 2011)

(A) Context

The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) was established for the 2007-2013 period with the primary and overarching objective of eradicating poverty in partner countries and regions. It is one of the key EU instruments providing development assistance to non-European countries, alongside the European Development Fund (EDF) and the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI). It is organised into three categories of programmes: (i) bilateral and regional geographic programmes covering cooperation with Asia, Latin America, Central Asia, the Middle East and South Africa; (ii) thematic programmes covering the following issues: investing in people, environment and sustainable management of natural resources, Non-State Actors and local authorities, food security, and migration and asylum; and (iii) sugar accompanying measures.

New challenges, together with the priorities set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy, have prompted the Commission to make proposals to review and adapt the EU's development policy through the upcoming Communication "Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: An Agenda for Change". This Impact Assessment assesses the impact of proposed changes to the DCI.

The IAB has focused on the policy choices not yet fixed in the MFF June package.

(B) Overall assessment

The report needs to be strengthened significantly in several important respects. First, the report should better explain the scope of the measures proposed, clearly distinguishing the choices to be made for this Instrument from decisions that have already been taken e.g. in the June MFF package. Second, the problem definition should contain a general assessment of the overall strengths and weaknesses of EU development cooperation with specific examples. Third, the report should consider a broader and deeper range of options, beyond simply a comparison between the status quo and the preferred option. The report should describe more precisely, on the basis of evidence and using examples where relevant, how the preferred option(s) would be implemented and how they would address the problems identified and lead to improved results.

Unless considerable improvements are made to address the recommendations above, this IA report cannot be considered to provide the evidence base to support decision-making that is normally expected from an impact assessment.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

(1) Better present the scope of the instruments and impact assessment. The report should better present the scope and limitations of the measures proposed by highlighting clearly the boundaries between: (1) the issues relating to development cooperation that are pre-defined, such as under the Treaty or other existing legislation/international agreements, or that have already been fixed by the Commission in the June MFF package; (2) the decisions to be taken now and which this Impact Assessment is intended to support and, (3) the decisions that will need to be taken in the future under annual programming such as the actual spending priorities.

(2) Assessment of the overall strengths and weaknesses of EU development cooperation. In order to aid a better understanding of the specific problems identified and how these are linked to outcomes, the report should include a general assessment of the effectiveness of EU development cooperation, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses, taking account of the international context in which EU aid is placed. The report should provide concrete examples of how the identified problems have affected results.

(3) Broader and deeper discussion of options. Within the limits of the boundaries outlined above, the report should consider a broader and deeper range of options, beyond simply a comparison between the status quo and the preferred option. For example, the report could consider alternative ways in which objectives such as increased concentration of aid, reduced fragmentation and greater flexibility could be achieved. While acknowledging that the report cannot be specific on detailed spending allocations at this stage, the Impact Assessment could nevertheless be more explicit in terms of where the emphasis should be in terms of priorities and should signal the political feasibility of alternative approaches, providing concrete examples where possible.

(4) Improve the assessment of impacts. The report should describe more precisely, on the basis of evidence and using examples where relevant, how the preferred option(s) would be implemented and how they would address the problems identified and lead to improved results. The report should assess what would be the impact of the proposed budget increase on the overarching objectives such as the Millennium Development Goals. The report should also provide a more structured assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each option clearly highlighting the trade-offs that exist between the various options such as between increased flexibility and the risk of greater fragmentation.

Some more technical comments have been transmitted directly to the author DG and are expected to be incorporated in the final version of the impact assessment report.

(D) Procedure and presentation

The report should clarify how monitoring of its implementation will ensure the meeting of its objectives (for instance in terms of reduced fragmentation and greater effectiveness). The report should also clarify arrangements for evaluation of the instrument and its timing in accordance with the decision-making needs of the next programming cycle.

(E) IAB scrutiny process	
Reference number	2011/DEVCO+/004
External expertise used	No
Date of IAB meeting	14 September 2011