

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

(1) Strengthen the analysis of problems. The report should provide more background information on various aspects, notably the nature of strategic partnership and the role of economic cooperation within EU foreign policy, the status of the ICI+ proposal and the specific issues surrounding past cooperation activities with Russia. In addition, the report should describe more precisely the exact scope of the problems identified, clarifying whether they are limited to the currently restricted geographical scope of economic (non-aid) cooperation or whether issues linked to the sectoral scope of financeable activities or the procedures for the mobilisation of funds are also relevant. In doing so, the report should provide concrete examples of how identified problems have affected results. It should also give a more precise description of both the positive and negative findings of existing evaluations. In this context, the report should clarify that no strategic evaluation of the ICI instrument was carried out and that no activity has yet been financed under the ICI+.

(2) Improve the design and the presentation of the policy options. The report should better present the scope and limitations of the available measures by highlighting clearly the boundaries between issues that have already been fixed by the Commission in the June MFF package, the decisions the report is meant to support and those which will be taken only during the programming and implementation stages (such as actual spending priorities, project identification and potential use of innovative financial instruments). The design of options should also explicitly take into account the ICI+ proposal, integrating it into the baseline and clearly identifying the differences between that proposal, that for the PI and the existing ICI (in terms of both geographical and sectoral scope, simplification and implementation modalities – triangular cooperation and joint action with Member States). A comparative table may be a useful illustrative tool in this respect. Finally, even if already decided, the foreseen budgetary allocation for the instrument should be explicitly mentioned and compared to relevant resource envelopes under the current financial framework, so as to provide a more comprehensive view of the changes implied by the current proposal.

(3) Better analyse expected impacts. The report should explicitly acknowledge that no precise direct impacts can be assessed given the nature of the regulation in question. Within these limits, however, the report should show in concrete terms how and to what extent the options considered would address the problems identified and lead to improved results. In doing so, the report should provide a more balanced view of potential impacts, taking into due account the size of the available budget, the scope of the instrument and the more general limits of cooperation activities in terms of their impact on the selected set of broad general objectives. The report should also provide a more comprehensive analysis of the reasons why option two is discarded, providing concrete examples of the identified disadvantages. Similarly, the assessment of option three should be based on a limited number of examples from past or potential activities rather than on a general discussion of a large array of potential projects. The report should also assess the trade-offs between a wider scope of the instrument and the potential dilution of funds that this may imply. Finally, impacts should be more clearly summarised and options compared in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency and coherence. Suggested monitoring indicators should be reviewed in favour of more operational ones.

(4) Expand the presentation of stakeholders' views. The report summarises the views expressed by stakeholders during the general public consultation on financial instruments

for EU external action. However, whenever particularly relevant for the proposed new instrument, the text should recall and discuss the specific views of the various categories of stakeholders.

(D) Procedure and presentation.

The report should be shortened by eliminating the discussion of those issues of a more general nature which are not of direct relevance to the identification of different options for the framework regulation and the analysis of their impacts. The report should also clarify when an evaluation of the proposed new instrument would be planned and how this would fit the decision-making needs for the next programming cycle. The examples of bilateral relations in annex 3 should be more representative of the variety of policy areas covered by current cooperation (thus also including actions in the social and environmental fields). Explicit references to the impact assessment report for the ICI+ proposal should be introduced where relevant.

(E) IAB scrutiny process

Reference number	2011/DEVCO+/004
External expertise used	No
Date of Board Meeting	Written Procedure