



Ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011- 2013

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Ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011- 2013

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Evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011-2013

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABC Gates	Automated Border Control Gate
ACIS	Aero-Maritime Integrated System
AIS	Automatic Identification System
AP	Annual Programme
AWP	Annual Work Programme
BCP	Border Crossing Point
EASA	European Aviation Safety Agency
EBF	External Borders Fund
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument
ENPI CBC	ENPI Cross Border Cooperation programmes
EPN	European Patrols Network
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EUROSUR	European Border Surveillance System
Frontex	European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IBMS	Integrated Border Management System
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ILO	Immigration Liaison Officer
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ISCS	Integrated System for Control and Surveillance
ISS	Integrated System for Surveillance
ITech	Information Technology
MAP	Multiannual Programme
Marsur	Maritime Surveillance
MS	Member State
NCC	National Coordination Centre
NER	National Evaluation Report
PARAFE	Passage Rapide Aux Frontières Extérieures
PHARE	Programme of Community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe
RA	Responsible Authority
SF	Schengen Facility
SIAM	Système Intégré Aéro-Maritime
SIRENE	Supplementary Information Request at the National Entries
SIS	Schengen Information System
VIS	Visa Information System

LIST OF COUNTRY CODES

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
IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland
IT	Italy
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

Please note that in this report, the term '*Member State*' is used to refer to countries participating in the External Borders Fund, although countries participating in EBF are participants in the Schengen area but not necessarily Member States of the European Union, and not all EU28 Member States are part of Schengen.

ABSTRACT

The EBF, launched in 2007, aimed to establish financial solidarity between Schengen countries by supporting those countries for which the protection of the EU's external borders represented a heavy burden, due to significant migratory pressure at their borders. Over the 2011-13 period, the EU contribution amounted to over EUR 708 million.

Overall, the findings of the evaluation show that actions funded through the EBF contributed to achieving the Fund's objectives. The intervention was relevant to the identified needs, coherent with other existing sources of funding, effective in achieving its objectives, and efficient. This is particularly noteworthy given that the EBF was the first instrument of its kind developed in this policy area.

ÜBERSICHT

Der Europäische Außengrenzenfonds, eingeführt im Jahr 2007, hatte das Ziel finanzielle Solidarität zwischen den Schengen-Ländern zu schaffen, indem solche Länder unterstützt wurden, für die der Schutz der europäischen Außengrenzen aufgrund des Migrationsdrucks an ihren Grenzen eine schwere Belastung dargestellt hat. Im Zeitraum 2011-13 betrug der EU-Beitrag über EUR 850 Millionen.

Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse dieser Evaluation dass die durch den Außengrenzenfonds geförderten Maßnahmen dazu beigetragen haben, die Zielsetzungen des Fonds zu erreichen. Die Intervention war relevant im Bezug auf die identifizierten Bedürfnisse, kohärent mit anderen existierenden Förderquellen, hat effektiv die Zielsetzungen erreicht und war effizient. Dies ist besonders erwähnenswert, da der Fonds das erste Instrument seiner Art in diesem Politikbereich war.

ABREGE

Le FFE, lancé en 2007, visant à établir la solidarité financière entre les pays de l'espace Schengen en supportant les pays pour lesquels la protection des frontières extérieures de l'UE, représentait une lourde charge en raison de la pression migratoire importante à leurs frontières. Durant la période de 2011 à 2013, la contribution de l'EU s'est élevée à plus de 850 millions d'euros.

Dans l'ensemble, les résultats de l'évaluation montrent que les actions financées par le FFE (Fonds européen pour les Frontières Extérieures) ont contribué à la réalisation des objectifs du Fonds. L'intervention était pertinente aux besoins identifiés, cohérente avec d'autres sources de financement existantes et efficace dans la réalisation de ses objectifs. Ceci est particulièrement remarquable étant donné que le FFE a été le premier instrument du genre développé dans ce domaine politique.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scope and Methodology

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs commissioned Optimity Advisors and the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD) to undertake this 'ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011-2013' in the context of Article 18 of the Rule of Application (RAP) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union, as well as Article 51(2) and 52(3)(c) of the EBF Decision.¹

The objective of the evaluation was to examine the implementation of actions co-financed by the EBF under the 2011-2013 annual programmes implemented by the Member States (including the Special Transit Scheme), EBF 2010-2013 Community actions (including Emergency actions) and EBF 2010-2012 Specific actions. The evaluation covered actions funded in the participating 25 EU Member States and three Schengen Associated Countries.² The evaluation included the following evaluation criteria: **relevance, utility, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, complementarity and coherence and EU added value**, following the Commission's 'Better Regulation Guidelines'.

The data used to answer the evaluation questions was collected through desk research, interviews and case studies. The data collection was conducted between November 2015 and May 2016. **Desk research** included the review of programmatic documents (including multiannual programmes, annual programmes and final reports submitted by Member States), monitoring, evaluation and audit reports (including 26 national evaluation reports,³ Commission monitoring visits reports and reports from the Court of Auditors), relevant legal acts and implementation documents, as well as high-level contextual documents (e.g. Frontex Risk Analysis). In addition, the research team was given access to the SFC2007 database, including quantitative data on investments made for each activity in each country. **Interviews** were undertaken at the EU level (DG Home and Frontex) and at the national level, with the Responsible Authorities (RA) of the participating countries. Finally, 12 case studies were undertaken, which included field trips and additional focused interviews with the RA and beneficiaries. The case studies were selected on the basis of covering different EBF objectives and priorities, prioritising countries with high migratory pressures and significant shares of the total EBF investments made in the 2011-2013 period.

Country	Case Study subject
France	Spationav
Italy	Purchase of surveillance helicopters
Spain	SIVE National Command Centre
Germany	Dispatch of ILOs and Document Advisors
Czech Republic	SIS II upgrades
Finland	Purchase of land vehicles

¹ Decision of the European Parliament and the Council No 574/2007/EC establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'

² Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland.

³ All Member States, except for Denmark and Iceland, as these reports had not been received by the European Commission at the time the evaluation ended.

Country	Case Study subject
Greece	Special operation in response to immigration pressure
Switzerland	Large IT systems
Bulgaria	Surveillance equipment at green border
Poland	Surveillance equipment at green border
Hungary	Upgrade for BCP
Norway	ABC gate

Overall, around 140 interviews have taken place with RA, beneficiaries and other stakeholders and a public consultation was undertaken in 2016.

Certain **data limitations** should be noted:

- Some inconsistencies were found between the SFC2007 and the national evaluation reports (NER) provided by Member States.
- The quality and detail of the NER varied quite significantly:
 - Many of the NERs reported in a quite detailed manner on the output and results of the actions funded (e.g. the number of helicopters purchased for surveillance purposes). However, they did not provide that much detail on the impact of these investments at national level; or if they did, the objective or priority was restated without substantiating the answer.
 - The data collection in the NERs was not always consistent, especially with regard to output indicators. For example, Member States had different interpretations of what to record in the NER. Some recorded the total compound number relating to an indicator in a given year (i.e. the total of the year and all the previous ones), while others only provided the additional number of that year (i.e. the change in the number); some countries were not consistent in the units used for the indicators (e.g. number of hours of patrols conducted rather than the number of patrols conducted).

It is therefore important to note that detailed information for some Member States might be over-represented in the analysis, due to the high quality of the evaluation done at national level. Similarly, some countries are over-represented in some of the less positive points relating to the EBF, due to the high quality of the NERs. While the case studies and the interviews conducted with the RAs mitigate these risks, they could not substitute a detailed and well-researched NER. The analysis and judgement for each of the evaluation questions has been conducted by the evaluation team and a conscious effort has been made to ensure that sources different from the NER have been included (in particular the case studies).

Introduction

The EBF was established in 2007, on the basis of Decision No 574/2007/EC, as part of the policy toolbox of the Framework Programme on Solidarity and Migration Flows,⁴ which also includes the Frontex Agency, the Schengen Borders Code⁵ and the

⁴ COM (2005) 123 final, Communication establishing a framework programme on Solidarity and the Management of Migration Flows for the period 2007-2013, European Commission, 6 April 2005.

⁵ Regulation 562/2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), 15 March 2006.

Schengen Evaluation Mechanism⁶. The EBF aimed to establish financial solidarity between Schengen countries by supporting those countries for which the protection of the EU's external borders represented a heavy burden, due to significant migratory pressure at their borders. The Fund was implemented through National Actions (shared management), Community Actions (i.e. projects that support cooperation between Member States), Specific actions (i.e. projects that contribute to development of the **Integrated Border Management System** IBMS – discontinued since 2012) and Special Transit Scheme or STS (for Russian Federation citizens travelling on EU territory to and from the Kaliningrad region).

The EBF was to be implemented on the basis of the strategic guidelines and rules set out in Commission Decision No 2007/599/EC⁷ and Commission Decision 2008/456/EC⁸. Overall, 28 countries participated in the EBF in 2011-2013, namely all EU Member States,⁹ except for the UK and Ireland (which opted out of the Schengen Agreement) and Croatia,¹⁰ as well as three non-EU Member States (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland).

The general objectives of the EBF were as follows:

General Objectives EBF (2007-2013)	
General objective A:	The efficient organisation of control, covering both <u>checks and surveillance</u> tasks relating to the external borders;
General objective B:	The efficient management of the flows of persons at the external borders by the Member States in order to ensure, on the one hand, a high level of protection at the external borders and, on the other, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen <i>acquis</i> and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity;
General objective C:	The uniform application of the provisions of Community law on the crossing of external borders by border guards, in particular Regulation (EC) No 562/2006;
General objective D:	The improvement of the management of <u>activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries</u> as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States and the cooperation between Member States in this regard.

The EBF's financial contribution with regard to shared management is effectively summarised through the following data:

- **Total programmed EU contribution:** EUR 1,032,379,522.
- **Final EU contribution:** EUR 708,537,559.

⁶ Council Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 establishing an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen *acquis* and repealing the Decision of the Executive Committee of 16 September 1998 setting up a Standing Committee on the evaluation and implementation of Schengen, 7 October 2013.

⁷ Commission Decision 2007/599/EC implementing decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the adoption of strategic guidelines for 2007 to 2013, 27 August 2007.

⁸ Commission Decision 2008/456/EC laying down rules for the implementation of the EBF Decision, 5 March 2008.

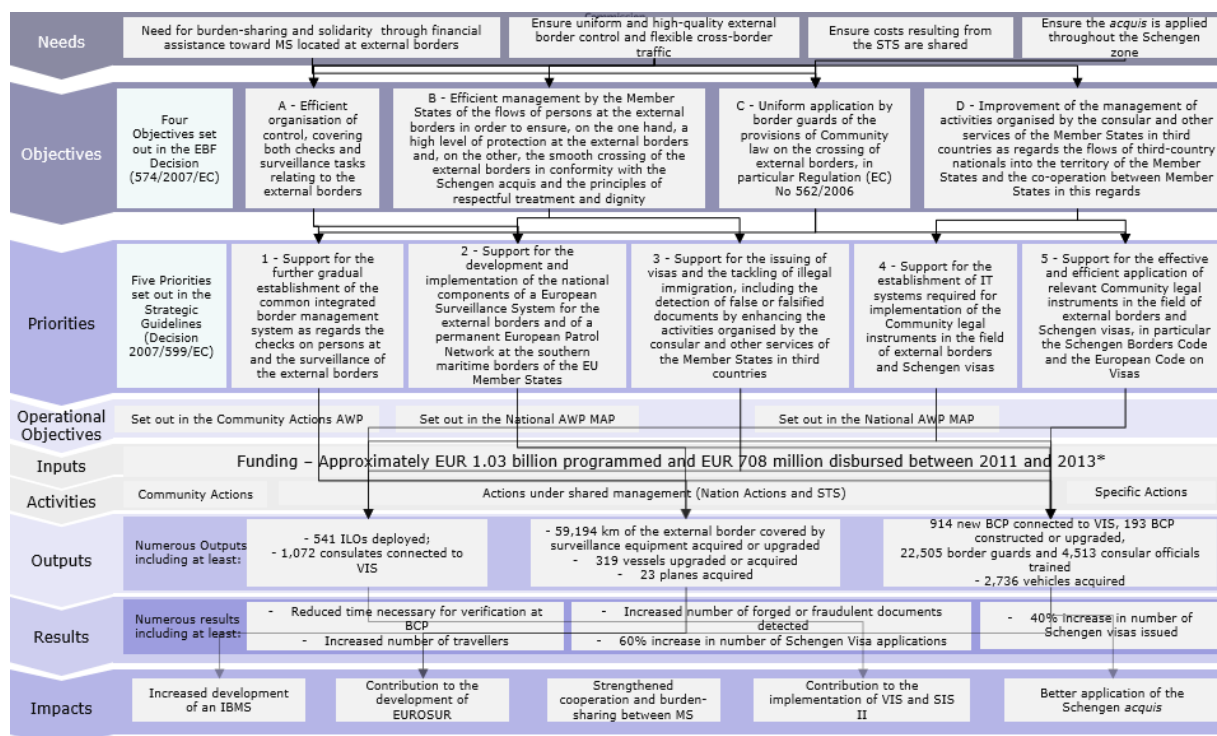
⁹ Bulgaria and Romania participated from 2010, the others since 2007.

¹⁰ Croatia was not entitled to the EBF 2013 allocation, because it received the Schengen Facility funding in 2013 and 2014.

- **Implementation rate** (i.e. the proportion of programmed funds utilised): 68.6% overall, and 84% when taking into account only the 'closed' programmes for 2013 (BG, EE, HU, LT, NO and SI)¹¹.

The intervention logic¹² developed for the EBF 2011-2013 is summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Intervention logic (specific to EBF)



Source: Optimity Advisors

Key Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

It should be noted that the EBF was the first financial instrument in the area of borders. The next financial framework (Internal Security Fund /Borders and Visa) aims to take into account most of the shortfalls identified as a consequence of the implementation of the EBF, e.g. more flexible multiannual programming (not relying on annual programmes which might have hampered, or at least artificially split, continuity of long-term actions), broader scope allowing for the MSs to finance measures which go beyond traditional border control and include for instance, compensatory measures (the link with border control should still be identified).

Throughout this evaluation, the different EBF actions have been linked back to the legal basis of the Fund, its objectives and priorities, as well as the needs it was intended to address. Thus, the EBF 2011-2013 actions have been assessed on the basis of their contribution to the establishment of the burden sharing and solidarity system required to ensure a *high and uniform level of control on persons and surveillance of the external borders* of the European Union in line with the legal basis.

It is important to remember that the EBF was conceived when the capacity of DG Home (DG JLS at the time) was much more limited than now and at a time when

¹¹ The programmes for 22 Member States had not yet been closed by 10.08.2016.

¹² Commission staff working document 'Better Regulation Guidelines', SWD(2015) 111 final

Frontex was a very new agency. As such, the Fund had to be built with limited operational expertise, with capacity and knowledge being gradually increased. It is a token of the Commission's responsiveness that most of the problems identified in this evaluation have already been addressed in the successor Fund (the Internal Security Fund – ISF).

Overall, the findings of the evaluation show that the EBF was generally perceived positively by RAs and beneficiaries, as it was seen as contributing to the national objectives relating to those of the EBF. While the overall conclusion of this evaluation is that the EBF has been extremely positive, there is unfortunately a lack of robust data and indicators to support these findings. In other words, the evaluators have been able to develop a positive story of the EBF based on the qualitative information collected which could not always be supported by quantitative information due to a lack of such data on the *status quo ante*.

Recommendations

- The nature of integrated systems means that they cannot be fully assessed until they are completed. Consequently, clear interim indicators should be identified to ensure adequate monitoring before their full implementation.
- While the EBF contributed to increasing the national capacity of Member States, very few activities under direct management were conducive to the development of cooperation between Member States. Given the importance of solidarity, future programmes should build in an incentive for Member States to cooperate together and apply for co-designed investments.
- Clear and agreed indicators should be developed at the inception of any programme to ensure that its success can be clearly assessed in the ex-post evaluation.
- When new indicators are designed, they should take into account the baseline in order to allow for the assessment of impacts.

Relevance and utility

The EBF investments of 2011-2013 were **relevant and had a high level of utility**. The Fund was flexible enough to respond to the actual and changing needs of the beneficiaries in a period where these altered considerably. Moreover, it had a positive overall impact in contributing to increase Member States' capability in the field of border control (checks on persons) and border surveillance, which corresponded to the problems faced by Member States.

Recommendations

- The **objectives of successor programmes should continue to be broad** in order to ensure that the actions progressively programmed and implemented in the framework of the Fund respond to ever-changing strategic and operational needs.
- Nevertheless, in order to ensure that proper monitoring can take place, the broad definition of the objectives should be balanced against the need to clearly assess the relevance of the investments. The overlap between the EBF's objective 1 and 2, for instance, did not harm the Fund's relevance, but made its evaluation more difficult.

Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the EBF 2011-13 should be assessed where possible against specific elements of the Union's overall borders policy architecture (such as EUROSUR, VIS or SIS II) and be seen as a series of building blocks in the development of the overarching policy objectives. Under the EBF, the basic EU co-

financing rate was 50% of the total costs. However, Member States benefiting from the Cohesion Funds (i.e. those whose Gross National Income per person was below 90% of the EU average), were eligible for a 75% EU co-financing rate. In order to encourage investments in the identified priorities, actions under each of the specific priorities could also benefit from a 75% EU co-financing rate.¹³ The increased co-financing rate of 75% for actions under specific priorities was an important factor in channelling investment in key areas where it was most needed (such as the completion of the SIS II and VIS systems).

The EBF investments furthered important building blocks of the Union's overall borders policy architecture, by contributing to the national components of the common **Integrated Border Management System** (IBMS) for the protection of the EU external borders, especially with regard to:

- **Checks on persons at BCPs:** The EBF promoted a homogenous approach to the checks on persons applied by the participating states at the EU external borders, and increased the overall quality of these checks, for example through the installation of ABC gates in several countries (BE, BG, EE, ES, FI, HU, IT, NL and NO) and the implementation of large information sharing systems such as VIS;
- **Surveillance:** The development and implementation of the national components of a **European Surveillance System** for the external borders, in particular permitting the upgrade of pre-existing national systems (e.g. radar, sensors), and increasing the patrolling capabilities of Member States;
- The **strengthening of cooperation** between different national and EU agencies involved in the protection of the borders, for example through the implementation of the information sharing system SIS II or other large surveillance systems that allow for sharing of information with other Member States (e.g. SPATIONAV in FR and SIVE in ES), through the deployment of immigration liaison officers and by allowing Frontex to use some of the equipment purchased. Some problems were identified in the rolling out of large IT systems, sometimes due to the different technical standards used by Member States. There was a trade-off between ensuring a system was built adequately and the need to do so in a timely manner, such as in FI where a temporary solution had to be developed.

An overall conclusion, which is particularly relevant to the evaluation criterion effectiveness, is the lack of coherence between Member States' understanding and reporting of the context and results / output indicators they were asked to provide (for example: not only numbers of irregular migrants detected, but also define whether they were detected at land vs maritime vs air border), or clarify whether the result indicators relate to the stock (i.e. the compound figure over the programming period) or the annual increase. At the moment it is quite difficult to measure the effectiveness of many investments and the RAs are generally not in a position to clarify or correct these indicators with the beneficiaries.

Recommendations

- Member States which did not automatically benefit from a 75% co-financing rate were prompt to identify activities under specific priorities which were the prerequisite for a 75% co-financing rate. The European Commission should continue using this increased co-financing rate as an incentivising tool for investments that are highly relevant to the EU and for which less appetite

¹³ Commission implementation decision 2007/599/EC implementing Decision 574/2007/EC.

exists at the national level.

- The European Commission should make it mandatory that information-sharing systems can be made compatible with other systems, if need be (i.e. using international norms). This would allow more cross-border cooperation for direct management actions in the future;
- The European Commission should review the output / result and the context indicators that RAs have to report back to DG Home and make them more specific, as the current indicators were interpreted differently among countries. This has affected the evaluation and the monitoring of those investments. The Commission has addressed this issue for the 2014-2020 programming period by developing a common monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. It includes evaluation questions and indicators, and foresees the issuance of a guidance document for Member States in order to help their M&E work (including the definition of indicators, sources of data, frequency of collection). An ad hoc template for the evaluation report to be submitted by the MSs is currently being developed.

Efficiency

The EBF investments in the timeframe 2011-2013 were **efficient** overall. The EBF promoted the reasonable use of EU financing in the field of border management, in particular prompting or contributing to the set-up of comprehensive management and control systems, including good coordination with the European Commission, the application of stringent procurement procedures, project audits and monitoring exercises.

Some difficulties with the annual programming cycle were reported, in terms of (i) finalising the acquisition of large and complex equipment and systems and (ii) the acquisition of large systems purchased over many years. The difficulty of having to attribute multiannual investments to specific annual programmes ones purely for programming purposes added a level of administrative burden and programming difficulty for RAs.

Recommendations

- The annual programming cycle created difficulties for some Member States in certain areas. The Commission should envisage adding some flexibility in the programming cycle, for instance by allowing for multiannual funding cycles in the case of large investments;
- Member States should ensure that adequate resources are mobilised at the level of the RA to (i) inform and support beneficiaries about the reporting requirements and (ii) ensure investment demands are done in an adequate way.

Sustainability

The EBF investments between 2011 and 2013 were **sustainable**: most of the assets acquired and knowledge generated were still being used at the time this evaluation was conducted (2016). The cost of updating and maintenance of the purchased equipment and systems will be and already is being borne by Member States. Some best practices were nevertheless identified, forming the basis for the recommendations listed below.

Recommendations

- Sustainability indicators should become a required part of the approval

process at project and annual programme levels. The Member States could find inspiration in the Polish example where an investment must clearly be accompanied by an explanation of how the equipment will be maintained over time;

- Ex-ante assessments of investments requiring significant maintenance and operating costs should be required, with commitment from beneficiaries to secure the estimated post-acquisition costs;
- Length of warranty, maintenance and training (when necessary) should become required elements and (where appropriate) award criteria in the procurement process.

Complementarity and coherence

The EBF investments of 2011-2013 were **complementary and coherent** with activities funded both under other EU funds related to the management of the European external borders (European Return Fund, European Refugee Fund, Neighbourhood policy), enlargement funds (Phare and the Schengen Facility), with Frontex activities (in particular those conducted in the field of rapid response capability, and training), as well as with national investments. The Fund was particularly important in ensuring the coherence of the systems which can only become operational and effective once all building blocks have been finalised (such as the SIS II and VIS) in a context where national government funding was scarce.

Recommendations

- Reference to coherence should be included not only between the programme and other related funds, but also internally, among the different actions, different national plans and different Member States;
- Frontex should be consulted by the Commission on draft multiannual programmes submitted by the Member States and on the strategic guidelines prepared by the Commission – *this is now the case under the Internal Security Fund (ISF)*;
- To increase consistency among the internal and external policies, specific references should be included to coherence with upcoming investments directed at promoting cooperation with third countries in the field of border management and control.

EU added value

EBF support was essential to carry out the investments required to improve the EU external border management systems, in a time of budget cuts and increased migratory pressures. **Added value** was most noticeable in the development at the national level of large IT systems such as VIS and SIS II, and in the development of consular cooperation with third countries.

As mentioned under the effectiveness conclusions, the completion of pan-EU systems such as VIS and SIS II, which might not have been priorities at the national level, are a clear value-added of the Fund.

Recommendations

- The Commission should continue using successor funds to prioritise the completion of systems with a clear EU value-added which might not be national priorities.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Geltungsbereich und Methodik

Die Generaldirektion für Migration und Inneres der Europäischen Kommission hat Optimity Advisors und das Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD) beauftragt, diese „Ex-post-Evaluierung des Außengrenzenfonds 2011-2013“ im Rahmen von Artikel 18 der Haushaltsordnung für den Gesamthaushaltsplan der Union sowie Artikel 51 Absatz 2 und Artikel 52 Absatz 3 Buchstabe c der Außengrenzenfonds-Entscheidung durchzuführen¹⁴.

Ziel der Evaluierung war es, die Durchführung der von dem Außengrenzenfonds kofinanzierten Maßnahmen im Rahmen der von den Mitgliedstaaten (einschließlich der Transit-Sonderregelung) durchgeführten Jahresprogramme 2011-2013, AGF 2010-2013 Gemeinschaftsmaßnahmen (einschließlich Notfallmaßnahmen) und AGF 2010-2012 Spezifische Maßnahmen, zu untersuchen. Die Evaluierung umfasste Maßnahmen, die in den beteiligten 25 EU-Mitgliedstaaten und drei Schengen-assoziierten Ländern finanziert wurden¹⁵. Die Evaluierung umfasste folgende Evaluierungskriterien; **Relevanz, Nutzen, Wirksamkeit, Effizienz, Nachhaltigkeit, Komplementarität und Kohärenz sowie EU-Mehrwert** in Anlehnung an die „Better Regulation Guidelines“ der Kommission.

Die Daten, die für die Beantwortung der Evaluationsfragen verwendet wurden, wurden durch **Literaturrecherche**, Interviews und Fallstudien erhoben. Die Datensammlung erfolgte zwischen November 2015 und Mai 2016. Die Forschungsarbeit umfasste die Überprüfung der programmatischen Dokumente (einschließlich der Mehrjahresprogramme, Jahresprogramme und Abschlussberichte der Mitgliedstaaten), Monitoring-, Evaluierungs- und Auditberichte (darunter 26 nationale Evaluierungsberichte¹⁶, Kontrollbesuche der Kommission und Berichte des Rechnungshofs), relevante Rechtsakte und Durchführungsdokumente sowie kontextbezogene Dokumente (z. B. Risikoanalysen von Frontex). Darüber hinaus wurde dem Forschungsteam Zugang zur SFC 2007 Datenbank gewährt, einschließlich quantitativer Daten über Investitionen, die für jede Maßnahme in jedem Land durchgeführt wurden. **Interviews** wurden auf EU-Ebene (DG Home und Frontex) und auf nationaler Ebene mit den zuständigen Behörden (ZB) der teilnehmenden Länder durchgeführt. Schließlich wurden 12 Fallstudien durchgeführt, darunter Exkursionen und zusätzliche fokussierte Interviews mit der ZB und den Empfängern. Die Fallstudien wurden auf der Grundlage verschiedener AGF-Ziele und -Prioritäten ausgewählt, wobei Länder mit hohem Migrationsdruck und einem hohen Anteil der gesamten AGF-Investitionen im Zeitraum 2011-2013 priorisiert wurden.

Land	Fallstudien-Gegenstand
Frankreich	Spatialnav
Italien	Erwerb von Überwachungshubschraubern
Spanien	SIVE Nationales Kommandozentrum
Deutschland	Versand von Verbindungsbeamten für

¹⁴ Beschluss des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates Nr. 574/2007 / EG zur Einrichtung des Außengrenzenfonds für den Zeitraum 2007-2013 als Teil des Rahmenprogramms „Solidarität und Steuerung der Migrationsströme“

¹⁵ Österreich, Belgien, Bulgarien, Zypern, Tschechien, Dänemark, Estland, Finnland, Frankreich, Deutschland, Griechenland, Ungarn, Italien, Lettland, Litauen, Luxemburg, Malta, Niederlande, Polen, Portugal, Rumänien, Slowakei, Slowenien, Spanien, Schweden, Island, Norwegen und die Schweiz.

¹⁶ Alle Mitgliedstaaten, mit Ausnahme von Dänemark und Island, da diese Berichte bei der Evaluierung nicht bei der Europäischen Kommission eingegangen waren.

Land	Fallstudien-Gegenstand
	Einwanderungsfragen und Dokumentenberatern
Tschechische Republik	SIS II-Upgrades
Finnland	Erwerb von Landfahrzeugen
Griechenland	Sondereinsatz als Reaktion auf den Zuwanderungsdruck
Schweiz	Große IT-Systeme
Bulgaria	Überwachungsausrüstung an der grünen Grenze
Polen	Überwachungsausrüstung an der grünen Grenze
Ungarn	Upgrade für Grenzkontrollstellen
Norwegen	Grenzkontrollspuren

Insgesamt haben rund 140 Interviews mit ZB, Empfängern und anderen Beteiligten stattgefunden.

Bestimmte **Datenbeschränkungen** sind zu beachten:

- Es gab einige Unstimmigkeiten zwischen der SFC 2007 und den nationalen Evaluierungsberichten (NEB) der Mitgliedstaaten.
- Die Qualität und die Ausführlichkeit der NEB variierten ganz erheblich:
 - Viele NEB enthielten detaillierte Aussagen über die im Rahmen der geförderten Maßnahmen geleistete Arbeit und erreichten Ergebnisse (z.B. die Anzahl der zu Überwachungszwecken erworbenen Helikopter). Allerdings enthielten sie nicht sehr viele Details zu den Auswirkungen dieser Investitionen auf nationaler Ebene; und selbst wenn das der Fall war, wurde das Ziel oder die Priorität einfach umformuliert, ohne eine konkrete Antwort zu geben.
 - Die Datensammlung in den NEB war nicht immer konsistent, insbesondere was die Indikatoren der geleisteten Arbeit anbelangte. Beispielsweise hatten die Mitgliedstaaten unterschiedliche Interpretationen dessen, was in die NEB aufgenommen werden musste. Einige enthielten die zusammengesetzte Gesamtzahl, die sich auf einen Indikator in einem bestimmten Jahr bezog (d.h. die Gesamtzahl für jenes Jahr sowie für alle Jahre davor), während andere nur die zusätzliche Zahl für jenes Jahr (d. h. die Änderung dieser Zahl) enthielten; einige Länder waren nicht konsistent im Hinblick auf die für die Indikatoren verwendeten Einheiten (z.B. Anzahl der Stunden der durchgeführten Patrouillen anstatt der Anzahl der durchgeführten Patrouillen).

Daher ist anzumerken, dass detaillierte Informationen für einige Mitgliedstaaten aufgrund der hohen Qualität der auf nationaler Ebene durchgeführten Evaluierungen in der Analyse überrepräsentiert sein könnten. Ebenso sind einige Länder in einigen der weniger positiven Punkte im Zusammenhang mit dem AGF aufgrund der hohen Qualität der NEB überrepräsentiert. Während die Fallstudien und die mit den ZB durchgeführten Interviews diese Risiken abschwächen, können sie keinen detaillierten und gut recherchierten NEB ersetzen. Die Analyse und Beurteilung der einzelnen Evaluationsfragen wurde vom Evaluationsteam durchgeführt, und es wurde bewusst darauf geachtet, dass andere Quellen, d.h. nicht die NEB, (insbesondere die Fallstudien) berücksichtigt wurden.

Einführung

Der AGF wurde im Jahr 2007 auf der Grundlage der Entscheidung Nr. 574/2007/EG als Teil der politischen Instrumente des Rahmenprogramms für Solidaritäts- und Migrationsströme gegründet¹⁷, zu der auch die Frontex-Agentur, der Schengener Grenzkodex¹⁸ und die Schengener-Evaluierungsmechanismen gehörten¹⁹. Der AGF zielte darauf ab, eine finanzielle Solidarität zwischen den Schengen-Ländern zu schaffen. Hierzu sollten Länder unterstützt werden, für die der Schutz der externen EU-Grenzen aufgrund des erheblichen Migrationsdrucks an den Grenzen eine schwere Belastung darstellte. Der Fonds wurde durch nationale Maßnahmen (geteilte Verwaltung), Gemeinschaftsmaßnahmen (d. h. Projekte, die die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten unterstützen), spezifische Maßnahmen (d.h. Projekte, die zur Entwicklung des Integrierten Grenzmanagementsystems IBMS beitrugen - seit 2012 eingestellt) und die Transit-Sonderregelung, oder TSR (für die Bürger der Russischen Föderation, die innerhalb des EU-Gebiets in die bzw. aus der Kaliningrader Region reisen) ins Leben gerufen.

Der AGF sollte auf der Grundlage der in der Entscheidung Nr. 2007/599/EG²⁰ der Kommission und der Entscheidung Nr. 2008/456/EG²¹ festgelegten strategischen Leitlinien und Regeln umgesetzt werden. Insgesamt nahmen 28 Länder am AGF 2011-2013 teil, nämlich alle EU-Mitgliedstaaten²², mit Ausnahme des Vereinigten Königreichs und Irlands (die keine Mitglieder des Schengener Abkommens sind) und Kroatien²³, sowie drei Nicht-EU-Mitgliedstaaten (Island, Norwegen und die Schweiz).

Die allgemeinen Ziele des AGF waren:

Allgemeine Ziele des AGF (2007-2013)

Allgemeines Ziel A:	Die effiziente Organisation der Kontrolle, die <u>sowohl die Prüfungs- als auch die Überwachungsaufgaben</u> an den Außengrenzen umfasst.
Allgemeines Ziel B:	Effiziente Steuerung der Verkehrsströme von Personen an den Außengrenzen durch die Mitgliedstaaten, damit einerseits ein hohes Maß an Schutz an den Außengrenzen und andererseits ein reibungsloses Überschreiten der Außengrenzen im Einklang mit dem Schengen-Besitzstand und den Grundsätzen der respektvollen Behandlung und der Achtung der Menschenwürde sichergestellt sind.
Allgemeines Ziel C:	Die einheitliche Anwendung der Bestimmungen des Gemeinschaftsrechts auf die Überschreitung der

¹⁷ COM (2005) 123 endg., Mitteilung über ein Rahmenprogramm für die Solidarität und die Steuerung der Migrationsströme für den Zeitraum 2007-2013, Europäische Kommission, 6. April 2005.

¹⁸ Verordnung (EG) Nr. 562/2006 des Rates zur Schaffung eines Gemeinschaftskodexes für den grenzüberschreitenden Personenverkehr (Schengener Grenzkodex) vom 15. März 2006.

¹⁹ Verordnung (EU) Nr. 1053/2013 des Rates zur Einführung eines Evaluierungs- und Überwachungsmechanismus zur Überprüfung der Anwendung des Schengen-Besitzstands und zur Aufhebung des Beschlusses des Exekutivsausschusses vom 16. September 1998 zur Einsetzung eines Ständigen Ausschusses für die Evaluierung und Umsetzung von Schengen vom 7. Oktober 2013.

²⁰ Beschluss 2007/599/EG der Kommission zur Umsetzung der Entscheidung Nr. 574/2007/EG des Europäischen Parlaments und des Rates im Hinblick auf die Annahme strategischer Leitlinien für die Jahre 2007 bis 2013, 27. August 2007.

²¹ Entscheidung 2008/456/EG der Kommission mit Durchführungsbestimmungen zur AGF-Entscheidung, 5. März 2008.

²² Bulgarien und Rumänien nahmen ab 2010, die anderen seit 2007 teil.

²³ Kroatien hatte keinen Anspruch auf die Zuteilung des AGF 2013, da sie 2013 und 2014 die Schengen-Fazilität erhielt.

Allgemeine Ziele des AGF (2007-2013)

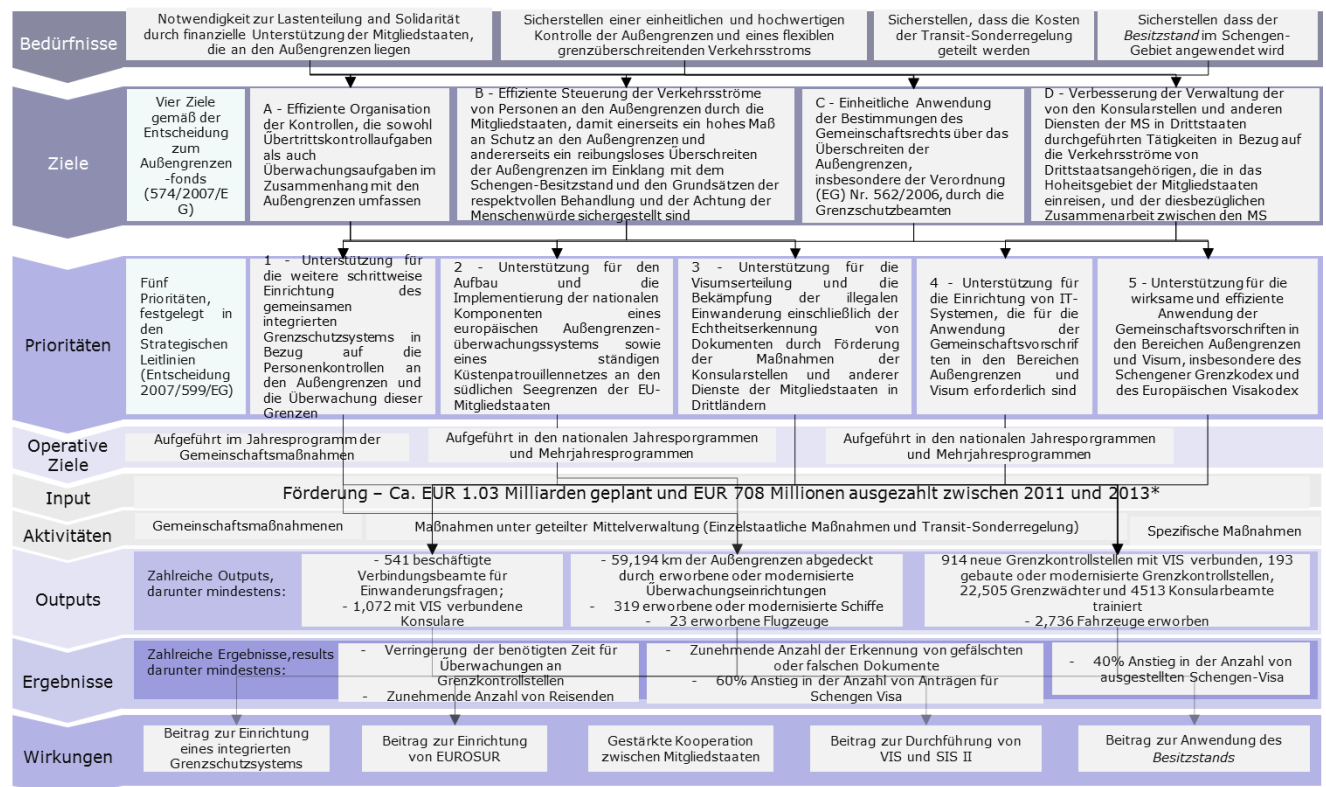
	Außengrenzen durch Grenzschutzbeamte, insbesondere der Verordnung (EG) Nr. 562/2006.
Allgemeines Ziel D:	Verbesserung der Verwaltung <u>der von den konsularischen und sonstigen Diensten der Mitgliedstaaten in Drittländern organisierten Maßnahmen</u> hinsichtlich der Flüsse von Drittstaatsangehörigen in das Hoheitsgebiet der Mitgliedstaaten und der diesbezüglichen Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten.

Der Finanzbeitrag des AGF im Hinblick auf die geteilte Verwaltung wird durch die folgenden Daten effektiv zusammengefasst:

- **Geplanter EU-Gesamtbeitrag:** 1.032.379.522 EURO.
- **Endgültiger EU-Beitrag:** 708.537.559 EURO.
- **Implementierungsrate** (d. h. der Anteil der geplanten Mittel): 68,6% insgesamt und 84% unter Berücksichtigung nur der „geschlossenen“ Programme für 2013 (BG, EE, HU, LT, NO und SI)²⁴.

Die für den AGF 2011-2013 entwickelte Interventionslogik²⁵ ist in der folgenden Abbildung zusammengefasst.

Figure 2: Interventionslogik (spezifisch für den AGF)



Quelle: Optimity Advisors

²⁴ Die Programme für 22 Mitgliedstaaten waren bis zum 10.08.2016 noch nicht abgeschlossen.

²⁵ Arbeitsdokument der Kommissionsdienststellen „Better Regulation Guidelines“, SWD (2015) 111 endgültig

Schlussfolgerungen und Empfehlungen

Es sei darauf hingewiesen, dass der AGF das erste Finanzinstrument im Bereich der Grenzen war. Der nächste Finanzrahmen (Internal Security Fund / Borders and Visa) zielt darauf ab, die meisten Defizite, die infolge der Umsetzung des AGF festgestellt wurden, zu berücksichtigen, z.B. flexiblere mehrjährige Programmplanung (die sich nicht auf Jahresprogramme stützt, die die Kontinuität langfristiger Maßnahmen behindert oder zumindest künstlich aufgeteilt haben könnten), einen breiteren Anwendungsbereich, der es den Mitgliedstaaten ermöglicht, Maßnahmen zu finanzieren, die über die herkömmliche Grenzkontrolle hinausgehen und beispielsweise umfassen, Ausgleichsmaßnahmen (die Verbindung mit der Grenzkontrolle sollte noch identifiziert werden).

Bei dieser Bewertung wurden die verschiedenen AGF-Maßnahmen auf die Rechtsgrundlage des Fonds, seine Ziele und Prioritäten sowie die damit verbundenen Bedürfnisse zurückgeführt. So wurden die Maßnahmen des AGF 2011-2013 auf der Grundlage ihres Beitrags zur Schaffung des Lastenverteilungs- und Solidaritätssystems bewertet, das erforderlich ist, um ein hohes und einheitliches Niveau der Kontrolle der Personen und der Überwachung der Außengrenzen der Europäischen Union zu gewährleisten.

Es ist wichtig sich daran zu erinnern, dass der AGF konzipiert wurde als die Kapazität der Generaldirektion Migration und Inneres (zu der Zeit DG JLS) viel begrenzter war als jetzt und zu einer Zeit, als Frontex eine sehr neue Agentur war. Daher musste der Fonds mit begrenzter operativer Kompetenz aufgebaut werden, wobei die Kapazität und das Wissen allmählich erhöht wurden. Es ist ein Zeichen der Reaktion der Kommission, dass die meisten der bei dieser Bewertung festgestellten Probleme bereits im Nachfolgefonds (ISF) behandelt wurden.

Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse der Evaluierung, dass der AGF generell von den RA und den Empfängern positiv aufgenommen wurde, da diese als Beitrag zu den nationalen Zielen des AGF angesehen wurde. Während die Gesamtbewertung dieser Evaluierung darin besteht, dass der AGF äußerst positiv war, fehlt es leider an robusten Daten und Indikatoren, um diese Ergebnisse zu unterstützen. Mit anderen Worten, das Evaluationsteam konnten ein positives Bild des AGF auf Grundlage der gesammelten qualitativen Informationen entwickeln, die nicht immer durch quantitative Informationen aufgrund fehlender Daten über den Status quo unterstützt werden konnten.

Empfehlungen

- Der Charakter der integrierten Systeme bedeutet, dass sie nicht vollständig beurteilt werden können bis die Arbeit abgeschlossen ist. Daher sollten klare vorläufige Indikatoren festgelegt werden, um eine angemessene Überwachung vor ihrer vollständigen Umsetzung sicherzustellen.
- Während der AGF zur Erhöhung der nationalen Kapazitäten der Mitgliedstaaten beigetragen hat, halfen nur sehr wenige direkte Maßnahmen bei der Entwicklung der Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Mitgliedstaaten. Angesichts der Wichtigkeit der Solidarität sollten künftige Programme einen Anreiz für die Mitgliedstaaten schaffen, miteinander zu kooperieren und gemeinsam geplante Investitionen zu beantragen.
- Klare und vereinbarte Indikatoren sollten zu Beginn eines Programms entwickelt werden, um sicherzustellen, dass der Erfolg des Programms in der Ex-post-Evaluierung klar beurteilt werden kann.
- Wenn neue Indikatoren entwickelt werden, sollten sie die Mindestbasis berücksichtigen, um die Evaluierung der Auswirkungen zu ermöglichen.

Relevanz und Nutzen

Die AGF-Investitionen von 2011-2013 waren **relevant und hatten einen hohen Nutzen**. Der Fonds war flexibel genug, um auf die tatsächlichen und sich ändernden Bedürfnisse der Empfänger in einem Zeitraum zu reagieren, in dem diese erheblich geändert wurden. Darüber hinaus hatte der Fonds eine positive allgemeine Auswirkung, indem er zur Steigerung der Fähigkeiten der Mitgliedstaaten im Bereich der Grenzkontrollen (Personenkontrollen) und der Grenzüberwachung beitrug, was den Problemen der Mitgliedstaaten entsprach.

Empfehlungen

- Die **Ziele der Nachfolgeprogramme sollten weiterhin umfassend sein**, um sicherzustellen, dass die im Rahmen des Fonds schrittweise geplanten und durchgeführten Maßnahmen auf die sich ständig ändernden strategischen und operativen Bedürfnisse reagieren.
- Um eine ordnungsgemäße Überwachung sicherzustellen, sollten sich jedoch eine breit angelegte Definition der Ziele und die Notwendigkeit, die Relevanz der Investitionen klar beurteilen zu können, die Waage halten. Die Überschneidungen zwischen Ziel 1 und 2 des AGF schaden nicht der Relevanz des Fonds, erschwerten jedoch seine Evaluierung.

Wirksamkeit

Die Gesamteffektivität des AGF 2011-2013 sollte nach Möglichkeit auf bestimmte Elemente der allgemeinen Grenzpolitikarchitektur der Union (z. B. EUROSUR, VIS oder SIS II) geprüft und als eine Reihe von Bausteinen bei der Entwicklung der übergreifenden Politikziele angesehen werden. Der erhöhte Kofinanzierungssatz von 75% für Maßnahmen im Rahmen spezifischer Prioritäten war ein wichtiger Faktor für die Vermittlung von Investitionen in Schlüsselbereiche, in denen diese am dringendsten benötigt wurden (wie die Fertigstellung der Systeme SIS II und VIS). Die AGF-Investitionen unterstützten wichtige Bausteine der allgemeinen Grenzpolitikarchitektur der Union, indem sie zu den nationalen Komponenten des **Integrierten Grenzmanagementsystems** (IBMS) zum Schutz der EU-Außengrenzen beitrugen, insbesondere im Bezug auf:

- **Personenkontrollen an Grenzkontrollstellen:** Der AGF förderte einen homogenen Ansatz bei der Kontrolle der Personen, die von den Teilnehmerstaaten an den EU-Außengrenzen angewandt werden, und erhöhte die Gesamtqualität dieser Kontrollen, etwa durch die Installation von Grenzkontrollspuren in mehreren Ländern (BE, BG, EE, ES, FI, HU, IT, NL und NO) sowie die Einführung großer Informationsaustauschsysteme wie VIS;
- **Überwachung:** Entwicklung und Umsetzung der nationalen Komponenten eines europäischen Überwachungssystems für die Außengrenzen, insbesondere für den Ausbau bereits bestehender nationaler Systeme (z. B. Radar, Sensoren) und Verbesserung der Fähigkeiten der Mitgliedstaaten zum Patrouillieren;
- **Stärkung der Zusammenarbeit** zwischen verschiedenen nationalen EU-Einrichtungen, die am Schutz der Grenzen beteiligt sind, beispielsweise durch die Einführung des Informationsaustauschsystems SIS II oder anderer großer Überwachungssysteme, die eine gemeinsame Nutzung von Informationen mit anderen Mitgliedstaaten ermöglichen (z. B. SPATIONAV in FR und SIVE in ES), durch den Einsatz von Verbindungsbeamten für Einwanderungsangelegenheiten und dadurch, dass Frontex erlaubt wird, einige der erworbenen Geräte zu nutzen. Einige Probleme wurden bei der Einführung von großen IT-Systemen festgestellt, was teilweise auf die unterschiedlichen technischen Normen der

Mitgliedstaaten zurückzuführen ist. Es gab einen Kompromiss zwischen der Sicherstellung eines angemessenen Systems und der Notwendigkeit, dies rechtzeitig zu tun, wie etwa in FI, wo eine temporäre Lösung entwickelt werden musste.

Eine Schlussfolgerung, die für die Wirksamkeit des Evaluierungskriteriums von besonderer Bedeutung ist, ist die mangelnde Kohärenz zwischen dem Verständnis der Mitgliedstaaten und der Berichterstattung über den Kontext und die Ergebnisse / Output-Indikatoren, um die sie gebeten wurden (zum Beispiel: nicht nur die Zahl der entdeckten irregulären Migranten, sondern auch ein Angaben darüber, ob sie an Landes-, See- oder Luftgrenzen entdeckt wurden), oder die Klärung, ob sich die Ergebnisindikatoren auf die Gesamtsumme (d.h. die zusammengesetzte Zahl über den Programmzeitraum) oder die jährliche Steigerung beziehen. Im Augenblick ist es sehr schwierig, die Wirksamkeit vieler Investitionen zu messen, und die ZB sind in der Regel nicht in der Lage, diese Indikatoren mit den Empfängern abzuklären oder zu korrigieren.

Empfehlungen

- Mitgliedstaaten, die nicht automatisch von einem Kofinanzierungssatz von 75% profitierten, identifizierten schnell Maßnahmen im Rahmen bestimmter Prioritäten, die die Voraussetzung für einen Kofinanzierungssatz von 75% waren. Die Europäische Kommission sollte diesen erhöhten Kofinanzierungssatz weiterhin als Anreiz für Investitionen einsetzen, die für die EU von großer Bedeutung sind und für die auf nationaler Ebene weniger Nachfrage besteht.
- Die Europäische Kommission sollte es zwingend vorschreiben, dass Informationsaustauschsysteme mit anderen Systemen kompatibel gemacht werden können, wenn dies (z.B. in Entsprechung mit internationalen Normen) erforderlich ist. Dies würde zukünftig eine stärkere grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit für direkte Verwaltungsmaßnahmen ermöglichen.
- Die Europäische Kommission sollte die Ergebnisse und die kontextbezogenen Indikatoren überprüfen, die die ZB dem Generaldirektor des Innenministeriums melden müssen, um sie spezifischer zu machen, da die aktuellen Indikatoren von verschiedenen Ländern unterschiedlich interpretiert wurden. Dies wirkt sich auf die Evaluierung und die Überwachung dieser Investitionen aus. Die Kommission hat zur Lösung dieses Problems für den Programmplanungszeitraum 2014-2020 durch die Entwicklung eines gemeinsamen Überwachungs- und Evaluierungsrahmens beigetragen. Dieser enthält Evaluierungsfragen und Indikatoren und sieht die Erstellung eines Leitfadens für die Mitgliedstaaten vor, um ihre Überwachungs- und Evaluierungsarbeit (einschließlich der Definition von Indikatoren, Datenquellen, Häufigkeit der Sammlung) zu unterstützen. Eine Ad-hoc-Vorlage für den von den Mitgliedstaaten vorzulegenden Evaluierungsbericht wird derzeit erarbeitet.

Wirkungsgrad

Die AGF-Investitionen im Zeitrahmen 2011-2013 waren insgesamt **effizient**. Der AGF förderte die vernünftige Nutzung der EU-Finanzierung im Bereich der Migration und des Grenzmanagements, insbesondere zur Einführung eines umfassenden Verwaltungs- und Kontrollsystems, einschließlich einer guten Koordinierung mit der Europäischen Kommission, der Anwendung strenger Beschaffungsverfahren, Projektprüfungen und Überwachungsaufgaben.

Einige Probleme mit dem jährlichen Programmplanungszyklus wurden in Bezug auf (i) den Abschluss des Erwerbs von großen und komplexen Geräten und Systemen und (ii)

den Erwerb von großen, über viele Jahre erworbenen Systemen gemeldet. Das Problem, dass Mehrjahresinvestitionen spezifischen Jahresprogrammen zugewiesen werden müssen, was lediglich für Programmierzwecke erforderlich ist, führte zu einem erhöhten Verwaltungsaufwand und zu Problemen bei der Planung für die ZB.

Empfehlungen

- Der jährliche Planungszyklus hat in einigen Bereichen Probleme für einige Mitgliedstaaten verursacht. Die Kommission sollte eine gewisse Flexibilität im Planungszyklus ins Auge fassen, etwa durch Mehrjahresfinanzierungszyklen bei großen Investitionen;
- Die Mitgliedstaaten sollten sicherstellen, dass auf der Ebene der ZB angemessene Mittel bereitgestellt werden, um (i) die Empfänger über die Meldeanforderungen zu unterrichten und zu unterstützen, und (ii) eine angemessene Bereitstellung von Investitionsanforderungen zu gewährleisten.

Nachhaltigkeit

Die AGF-Investitionen zwischen 2011 und 2013 waren **nachhaltig**: Die meisten erworbenen Vermögenswerte und das erworbene Wissen wurden zum Zeitpunkt der Evaluierung (2016) noch genutzt. Die Kosten der Aktualisierung und Wartung der gekauften Geräte und Systeme werden bereits von den Mitgliedstaaten getragen. Einige «Best Practices» wurden dennoch identifiziert und bilden die Grundlage für die unten aufgeführten Empfehlungen.

Empfehlungen

- Nachhaltigkeitsindikatoren sollten Teil des Genehmigungsprozesses auf Projekt- und Jahresprogrammebene werden. Die Mitgliedstaaten könnten im polnischen Beispiel Anregungen finden, wo eine Investition eindeutig mit einer Erklärung dafür, wie die Ausrüstung im Laufe der Zeit gewartet werden soll, einhergehen muss;
- Eine Ex-ante-Evaluierung von Investitionen, die erhebliche Instandhaltungs- und Betriebskosten erfordern, sollte unbedingt erforderlich sein, und die Empfänger sollten sich verpflichten, die geschätzten Nacherwerbskosten zu sichern;
- Die Dauer der Gewährleistung, Wartung und Schulung (falls erforderlich) sollten zu erforderlichen Elementen und ggf. zu Auswahlkriterien im Erwerbsprozess werden.

Komplementarität und Kohärenz

Die AGF-Investitionen von 2011-2013 waren **komplementär und kohärent** mit Maßnahmen, die im Rahmen anderer EU-Fonds im Zusammenhang mit der Verwaltung der Europäischen Außengrenzen (Europäischer Rückkehrfonds, Europäischer Flüchtlingsfonds, Nachbarschaftspolitik), Erweiterungsfonds (Phare und Schengen-Fazilität), mithilfe von Frontex-Aktivitäten (insbesondere auf dem Gebiet der schnellen Reaktionsfähigkeit und Ausbildung) sowie mithilfe nationaler Investitionen finanziert wurden. Der Fonds war besonders wichtig für die Sicherstellung der Kohärenz der Systeme, die erst dann in Kraft treten und wirksam werden können, wenn alle Bausteine (wie das SIS II und VIS) in einem Kontext abgeschlossen wurden, in dem die staatlichen Finanzierungen knapp waren.

Empfehlungen

- Der Hinweis auf Kohärenz sollte nicht nur zwischen dem Programm und anderen damit zusammenhängenden Mitteln, sondern auch intern zwischen den verschiedenen Aktionen, verschiedenen nationalen Plänen und verschiedenen Mitgliedstaaten, enthalten sein;
- Frontex sollte von der Kommission zu den von den Mitgliedstaaten vorgelegten Entwürfen für Mehrjahresprogramme und zu den von der Kommission aufgestellten strategischen Leitlinien konsultiert werden - Dies ist nun im Rahmen des ISF (Fonds für die Innere Sicherheit) der Fall.
- Um die Konsistenz zwischen der internen und externen Politik zu erhöhen, sollten spezifische Verweise auf die Kohärenz mit den bevorstehenden Investitionen zur Förderung der Zusammenarbeit mit Drittländern im Bereich des Grenzmanagements und der Grenzkontrolle aufgenommen werden.

EU-Mehrwert

Die AGF-Unterstützung war von wesentlicher Bedeutung, um die erforderlichen Investitionen zur Verbesserung der EU-Außengrenzschutzsysteme in Zeiten von Haushaltskürzungen und erhöhtem Migrationsdruck durchzuführen. Am deutlichsten zu sehen war der **Mehrwert** bei der Entwicklung von großen IT-Systemen wie VIS und SIS II auf nationaler Ebene und bei der Entwicklung der konsularischen Zusammenarbeit mit Drittländern.

Wie in den Schlussfolgerungen erwähnt, ist die Vollendung pan-europäischer Systeme wie VIS und SIS II, die möglicherweise keine Prioritäten auf nationaler Ebene darstellten, ein deutlicher Mehrwert des Fonds.

Empfehlungen

- Die Kommission sollte weiterhin Nachfolgefonds einsetzen, um die Fertigstellung von Systemen mit einer klaren EU-Wertschöpfung zu priorisieren, was möglicherweise nicht den nationalen Prioritäten entspricht.

RESUME

Portée et Méthodologie

La Direction Générale de la Commission Européenne pour les Migrations et les Affaires intérieures a chargé Optimity Advisors et le Centre d'Etude de la Démocratie d'entreprendre cette "Évaluation ex-post du Fonds pour les Frontières Extérieures 2011-2013" dans le contexte de l'article 18 des règles d'application applicables au budget général de l'Union, ainsi que celui des articles 51(2) et 52(3)(c) de la décision de la FFE²⁶.

L'objectif de l'évaluation était d'examiner la mise en œuvre des actions cofinancées par le FFE dans le cadre des programmes annuels de 2011-2013 réalisés par les États Membres (incluant le Régime de Transit Spécial), les actions communautaires (comprenant les mesures d'urgence) du FFE 2010-2013 et les actions spécifiques du FFE 2010-2012. L'évaluation a couvert les actions financées dans les 25 États membres de l'UE et les trois pays de l'espace Schengen participants²⁷. L'évaluation comprenait les critères d'évaluation suivants : **la pertinence, l'utilité, l'efficacité, l'efficience, la durabilité, la complémentarité, la cohérence et la valeur ajoutée européenne**, suivant "Les lignes directrices pour l'amélioration de la réglementation" de la commission.

Les données utilisées pour répondre aux questions de l'évaluation ont été recueillies à travers des études documentaires, des entretiens et des études de cas. La collecte des données a été réalisée entre Novembre 2015 et Mai 2016. **La recherche documentaire** comprenait l'examen des documents programmatiques (y compris les programmes pluriannuels, les programmes annuels et les rapports finaux soumis par les États membres), les rapports de suivi, d'évaluation et d'audit (dont 26 rapports nationaux d'évaluation²⁸, les rapports des visites de suivi de la Commission et les rapports de la Cour des comptes), les actes juridiques pertinents et les documents de mise en œuvre, ainsi que les documents contextuels de haut niveau (par exemple l'analyse des risques de Frontex). En outre, l'équipe de recherche a eu accès à la base de données du SFC 2007, y compris les données quantitatives sur les investissements effectués pour chaque activité dans chaque pays. Des entretiens ont été menés au niveau de l'UE (Direction Générale des affaires intérieures et Frontex) et au niveau national, avec les autorités responsables des pays participants. Enfin, 12 études de cas ont été entreprises, elles comprenaient des excursions et des interviews ciblées supplémentaires avec les autorités responsables et les bénéficiaires. Les études de cas ont été sélectionnées sur la base des différents objectifs et priorités du FFE, qui donnent la priorité aux pays subissant des pressions migratoires importantes et sur une part importante des investissements totaux du FFE effectués dans la période de 2011-2013.

Pays	Objet de l'étude de cas
France	Spatialnav
Italie	Achat d'hélicoptères de surveillance

26 Décision du Parlement Européen et du Conseil n° 574/2007/CE établissant le Fonds pour les Frontières Extérieures pour la période 2007-2013 dans le cadre du programme général 'Solidarité et gestion des flux migratoires'

27 Autriche, Belgique, Bulgarie, Chypre, République tchèque, Danemark, Estonie, Finlande, France, Allemagne, Grèce,

Hongrie, Italie, Lettonie, Lituanie, Luxembourg, Malte, Pays-Bas, Pologne, Portugal, Roumanie, Slovaquie, Slovénie, Espagne, Suède, Islande, Norvège et Suisse.

28 Tous les États membres, à l'exception du Danemark et de l'Islande, vu que ces rapports n'avaient pas été reçus par la Commission Européenne au moment de la fin de l'évaluation.

Pays	Objet de l'étude de cas
Espagne	Centre national de commande du système intégré de surveillance extérieure
Allemagne	Envoie des agents de liaison chargés de l'immigration et des conseillers en matière de documents
République Tchèque	Mise à niveau du Système d'information Schengen II
Finlande	Achat de véhicules terrestres
Grèce	Opération spéciale en réponse à la pression de l'immigration
Suisse	Grands systèmes informatiques
Bulgarie	L'équipement de surveillance à la frontière terrestre
Pologne	L'équipement de surveillance à la frontière terrestre
Hongrie	Mise à niveau des PPF
Norvège	Barrières de contrôle automatisées

Dans l'ensemble, environ 140 entrevues ont eu lieu avec les autorités responsables, les bénéficiaires et les autres parties prenantes.

Certaines **limites des données** doivent être notées :

- Certaines incohérences ont été relevées entre le SGF2007 et les rapports d'évaluation nationaux (NER) fournis par les États membres
- La qualité et le détail des NER varient très sensiblement :
 - Bon nombre des NER ont signalé d'une manière assez détaillée, la productivité et les résultats des actions financées (par exemple le nombre d'hélicoptères achetés à des fins de surveillance). Cependant, ils ne fournissent pas beaucoup de détails sur l'impact de ces investissements au niveau national, ou s'ils l'ont fait, l'objectif ou la priorité a été reprise sans étayer la réponse.
 - La collecte de données dans les NER n'a pas toujours été cohérente, notamment en ce qui concerne les indicateurs de productivité. Par exemple, les États membres ont des interprétations différentes de ce qui doit être enregistré dans le NER. Certains ont enregistré le nombre total de composants relatif à un indicateur dans une année donnée (à savoir le total de l'année et tous les précédents), tandis que d'autres fournissent seulement le nombre supplémentaire de cette année (à savoir le changement dans le nombre); certains pays ne sont pas cohérents dans les unités utilisées pour les indicateurs (par exemple nombre d'heures de patrouilles menées plutôt que le nombre de patrouilles menées).

Il est donc important de noter que des informations détaillées pour certains États membres pourraient être surreprésentées dans l'analyse, en raison de la haute qualité de l'évaluation effectuée au niveau national. De même, certains pays sont surreprésentés dans certains des points moins positifs relatifs au FFE, en raison de la grande qualité des NER. Tandis que les études de cas et les entrevues réalisées avec les autorités responsables atténuent ces risques, ils ne pouvaient pas remplacer un NER détaillé et bien documenté. L'analyse et le jugement pour chacune des questions d'évaluation ont été menés par l'équipe d'évaluation et un effort énorme a été fait pour veiller à ce que les différentes sources du NER soient incluses (en particulier les études de cas).

Introduction

Le FFE a été créé en 2007, sur la base de la décision n° 574/2007/CE, comme faisant partie de l'arsenal réglementaire définissant la politique du programme-cadre pour la solidarité et les flux migratoires²⁹, qui comprend également l'agence Frontex, le code des frontières Schengen³⁰ et l'évaluation du mécanisme Schengen³¹. Le FFE visait à établir la solidarité financière entre les pays de l'espace Schengen en supportant les pays pour lesquels la protection des frontières extérieures de l'UE, représentait une lourde charge en raison de la pression migratoire importante à leurs frontières. Le Fonds a été mis en œuvre par des actions nationales (gestion partagée), des actions communautaires (c'est à dire des projets qui soutiennent la coopération entre les États membres), des actions spécifiques (des projets qui contribuent au développement du **Système de Gestion Intégrée des Frontières** - interrompu depuis 2012) et Régime de Transit Spécial (pour les citoyens de la Fédération de Russie voyageant sur le territoire de l'UE, allant à ou en provenance de la région de Kaliningrad).

Le FFE devait être mis en œuvre sur la base des orientations stratégiques et des règles énoncées dans la décision n° 2007/599/CE du Conseil et la décision³² et la décision n° 2008/456/CE de la Commission³³. Dans l'ensemble, 28 pays ont participé au FFE de 2011-2013, à savoir tous les États membres de l'UE³⁴, à l'exception du Royaume-Uni et de l'Irlande (qui ont choisi de se retirer de l'accord de Schengen) et la Croatie³⁵, ainsi que trois États non membres de l'UE (L'Islande, la Norvège et la Suisse).

Les objectifs généraux du FFE étaient :

Objectifs généraux du FFE (2007-2013)

Objectif général A :	L'organisation efficace du contrôle, couvrant à la fois les tâches de <u>contrôles et de surveillances</u> liées aux frontières extérieures ;
Objectif général B :	La gestion efficace des flux de personnes aux frontières extérieures des États membres afin d'assurer, d'une part, un niveau élevé de protection aux frontières extérieures et, d'autre part, le franchissement aisé des frontières extérieures conformément à l'acquis de Schengen et les principes de traitement respectueux et de dignité.
Objectif général C :	L'application uniforme des dispositions du droit communautaire relatives au franchissement des frontières extérieures par les gardes-frontières, en particulier le règlement (CE) n° 562/2006.
Objectif général D :	L'amélioration de la gestion <u>des activités organisées par les services consulaires et autres des États membres dans les pays tiers</u> en ce qui concerne les flux des ressortissants de pays tiers sur le territoire des États membres et la coopération entre les États membres à cet

29 COM (2005) 123 final, Communication établissant un programme cadre de solidarité et de gestion des flux migratoires pour la période 2007-2013, Commission Européenne, le 6 Avril 2005.

30 Règlement N° 562/2006 établissant un Code Communautaire relatif au régime de franchissement des frontières par les personnes (code frontières Schengen), le 15 Mars 2006.

31 Le règlement (UE) n ° 1053/2013 du Conseil portant création d'un mécanisme d'évaluation et de contrôle destiné à vérifier l'application de l'acquis de Schengen et abrogeant la décision du comité exécutif du 16 septembre 1998 concernant la création d'une commission permanente d'évaluation et d'application de Schengen, le 7 Octobre 2013

32 Décision de la Commission 2007/599/CE mettant en œuvre la décision n° 574/2007/CE du Parlement européen et du Conseil relative à l'adoption d'orientations stratégiques pour la période de 2007 à 2013, le 27 Août 2007.

33 Décision de la Commission 2008/456/CE fixant les modalités pour la mise en œuvre de la décision du FFE, le 5 Mars de 2008.

34 La Bulgarie et la Roumanie ont participé à partir de 2010, les autres depuis 2007.

35 La Croatie n'a pas eu droit à l'allocation du FFE 2013, parce qu'elle a reçu le financement de la facilité Schengen en 2013 et 2014.

Objectifs généraux du FFE (2007-2013)

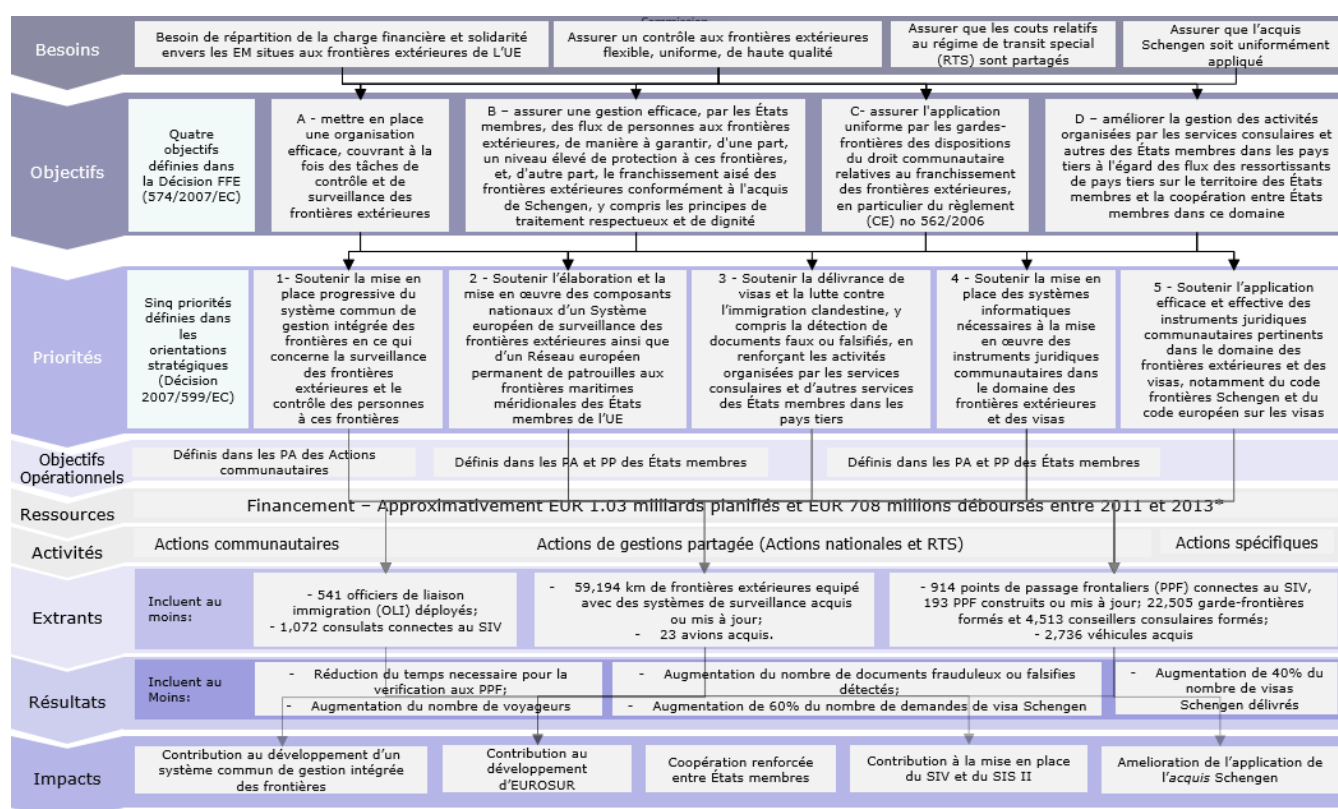
égard.

La contribution financière du FFE à l'égard de la gestion partagée est résumée par les données suivantes :

- **Contribution totale programmée de l'UE** : 1.032.379.522 Euros
- **Contribution finale de l'UE** : 708.537.559 Euros
- **Taux d'exécution** (à savoir la proportion de fonds programmés utilisés): 68,6% dans l'ensemble et 84% si l'on tient compte que des programmes « fermés » pour 2013 (BG, EE, HU, LT, NO et SI)³⁶.

La logique d'intervention³⁷ développé pour le FFE 2011-2013 est résumé dans le schéma ci-dessous.

Schéma 3: La logique d'intervention (spécifique au FFE)



Source: Optimity Advisors

Principales constatations, conclusions et recommandations

Il convient de noter que le FFE a été le premier instrument financier dans le domaine des frontières. Le prochain cadre financier (Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure / Frontières et Visa) vise à prendre en compte la plupart des lacunes identifiées à la suite de la mise en œuvre du FFE comme les programmation pluriannuelle plus flexibles (ne pas compter sur les programmes annuels qui auraient entravé ou au

36 Les programmes pour les 22 États membres n'avaient pas encore été fermés au 08/10/2016.

37 Document de travail de la Commission "Lignes directrices pour l'amélioration de la réglementation", SWD (2015) 111 final

moins artificiellement divisé la continuité des actions à long terme), la portée plus large permettant aux États Membres de financer des mesures qui vont au-delà de contrôle traditionnel des frontières et incluent, par exemple des mesures compensatoires (le lien avec le contrôle des frontières doit encore être identifié).

Tout au long de cette évaluation, les différentes actions du FFE ont été associées à la base juridique du Fonds, ses objectifs et ses priorités, ainsi que les besoins auxquels il était censé répondre. Ainsi, les actions du FFE 2011-2013 ont été évaluées sur la base de leur contribution à la mise en place du système de partage des charges et de solidarité nécessaire pour assurer un *niveau élevé et uniforme de contrôle des personnes et la surveillance des frontières extérieures* de l'Union européenne conformément à la base juridique.

Il est important de se rappeler que le FFE a été conçu lorsque la capacité de la Direction Générale des affaires intérieures (Direction Générale de la Justice, de la liberté et de la sécurité à l'époque) était beaucoup plus limitée que maintenant et à un moment où Frontex était une très nouvelle agence. À ce titre, le Fonds a dû être construit avec une expertise opérationnelle limitée, avec des capacités et des connaissances étant progressivement augmentés. C'est un signe de la réactivité de la Commission que la plupart des problèmes identifiés dans cette évaluation ont déjà été traités dans le Fonds de remplacement (le Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure).

Dans l'ensemble, les résultats de l'évaluation montrent que le FFE a été généralement perçue positivement par les autorités responsables et les bénéficiaires vu qu'il a été considéré comme contribuant aux objectifs nationaux relatifs à ceux du FFE. Alors que la conclusion générale de cette évaluation est que le FFE a été extrêmement positif, il y a malheureusement un manque de données et d'indicateurs solides pour appuyer ces conclusions. En d'autres termes, les évaluateurs ont été en mesure de développer une histoire positive sur le FFE à partir des informations qualitatives recueillies qui ne pouvaient pas toujours être pris en charge par les informations quantitatives en raison d'un manque de ces données sur le *statu quo ante*.

Recommandations

- La nature des systèmes intégrés signifie qu'ils ne peuvent pas être entièrement évalués avant leur achèvement. Par conséquent, des indicateurs provisoires doivent être clairement définis pour assurer une surveillance adéquate avant leur mise en œuvre intégrale.
- Alors que le FFE a contribué à accroître les capacités nationales des États membres, très peu d'activités en gestion directe favorisaient le développement de la coopération entre les États membres. Compte tenu de l'importance de la solidarité, les futurs programmes devraient être construits pour inciter les États membres à coopérer ensemble et à appliquer pour les investissements conçus simultanément.
- Des indicateurs clairs et convenus devraient être développés à la création d'un programme pour assurer que son succès peut être clairement appréciée dans l'évaluation ex post.
- Lorsque de nouveaux indicateurs sont conçus, ils devraient tenir compte de la base de référence afin de permettre l'évaluation des impacts.

Pertinence et utilité

Les investissements du FFE de 2011 à 2013 étaient **pertinents et avait un haut niveau d'utilité**. Le Fonds était suffisamment flexible pour répondre aux besoins réels des bénéficiaires et leurs évolutions dans une période où ceux-ci se modifiaient considérablement. En outre, il a eu un impact global positif en contribuant à accroître la capacité des États membres dans le domaine du contrôle aux frontières (contrôle

des personnes) et la surveillance des frontières, ce qui correspond aux problèmes rencontrés par les États membres.

Recommandations

- **Les objectifs des programmes de remplacement devraient continuer à être vastes**, afin de veiller à ce que les actions programmées progressivement et les réalisations dans le cadre du Fonds de répondre à l'évolution constante des besoins stratégiques et opérationnels.
- Néanmoins, afin de veiller à ce que la surveillance appropriée puisse avoir lieu, la définition générale des objectifs devrait être équilibrer contre la nécessité d'évaluer clairement la pertinence des investissements. La superposition entre l'objectif 1 et 2 du FFE par exemple, ne nuit pas à la pertinence du Fonds, mais a rend son évaluation plus difficile.

Efficacité

L'efficacité globale du FFE 2011-2013 devrait être évaluée si possible contre des éléments spécifiques de l'architecture de la politique des frontières globale de l'Union (tels que EUROSUR, Système d'Information en matière de Visas ou Système d'information Schengen II) et être vu comme une série de blocs de construction dans le développement de la politique globale objectifs. Le taux de cofinancement accru de 75% pour les actions suivant des priorités spécifiques, étaient un facteur important pour canaliser les investissements dans les domaines clés où ils ont été le plus nécessaires (comme l'achèvement des systèmes du Système d'information Schengen II et du Système d'Information en matière de Visas).

Les investissements du FFE ont favorisé des éléments importants de l'architecture de la politique des frontières globales de l'Union, en contribuant aux composantes nationales du système intégré de gestion des frontières pour la protection des frontières extérieures de l'UE, notamment en ce qui concerne :

- **Contrôle des personnes aux points de passages frontaliers:** Le FFE a promu une approche homogène aux contrôles des personnes appliqués par les États participants aux frontières extérieures de l'UE et une augmentation de la qualité globale de ces contrôles. Par exemple grâce à l'installation des barrières de contrôle automatisées dans plusieurs pays (BE, BG, EE, ES, FI, HU, IT, NL et NO) et la mise en œuvre de grands systèmes d'échange d'information comme le Système d'Information en matière de Visas.
- **Surveillance:** Le développement et la mise en œuvre des composantes nationales d'un système européen de surveillance des frontières extérieures, permettant en particulier la mise à niveau des systèmes préexistants nationaux (par exemple les radars, les capteurs), et augmentant les capacités de patrouille des États membres.
- **Le renforcement de la coopération** entre les différents organismes nationaux et européens impliqués dans la protection des frontières, par exemple à travers la mise en œuvre du partage de l'information système (Système d'information Schengen II) ou d'autres grands systèmes de surveillance qui permettent de partager des informations avec d'autres États membres (comme SPATIONAV en FR et le système intégré de surveillance extérieure en ES), à travers le déploiement d'officiers de liaison d'immigration et en permettant à Frontex d'utiliser une partie de l'équipement acheté. Certains problèmes ont été identifiés dans le déploiement de grands systèmes informatiques, parfois en raison des différentes normes techniques utilisées par les États membres. Il y avait un compromis entre la garantie d'un système construit de manière adéquate et la nécessité de le faire en temps opportun, comme en FI où une solution temporaire a dû être mise au point.

Une conclusion générale, qui est la particularité pertinente à l'efficacité du critère d'évaluation, est le manque de cohérence entre la compréhension des États membres et les rapports du contexte et des résultats / indicateurs de résultats qu'ils ont été invités à fournir (par exemple: non seulement le nombre de migrants irréguliers détectés, mais aussi de définir s'ils ont été détectés au niveau de la frontière terrestre, la frontière maritime ou la frontière aérienne), ou préciser si les indicateurs de résultats portent sur le stock (à savoir le chiffre composant la programmation au cours de la période) ou l'augmentation annuelle. À l'heure actuelle, il est très difficile de mesurer l'efficacité de nombreux investissements et les AR ne sont généralement pas en mesure de clarifier ou de corriger ces indicateurs avec les bénéficiaires.

Recommandations

- Les États membres qui ne bénéficient pas automatiquement d'un taux de cofinancement de 75% ont été prompts à identifier les activités sous des priorités spécifiques qui étaient les conditions pour un taux de cofinancement de 75%. La Commission européenne devrait continuer à utiliser ce taux de cofinancement accru comme un outil de motivation pour les investissements qui sont très pertinents pour l'UE et le sont moins au niveau national.
- La Commission européenne devrait rendre obligatoire que les systèmes de partage de l'information puissent être rendus compatibles avec d'autres systèmes, si nécessaire (par exemple en utilisant les normes internationales). Cela permettrait une coopération plus transfrontalière des actions de gestion directe à l'avenir.
- La Commission européenne devrait réexaminer le rendement / résultat et les indicateurs de contexte que les autorités responsables ont à rapporter à la Direction Générale des affaires intérieures et les rendre plus précis vu que les indicateurs actuels ont été interprétés différemment selon les pays. Cela a affecté l'évaluation et le suivi de ces investissements. La Commission a abordé cette question pour la période de programmation 2014-2020 par l'élaboration d'un système commun de suivi et d'évaluation. Il comprend des questions et des indicateurs d'évaluation, et prévoit la délivrance d'un document d'orientation pour les États membres afin d'aider à leur travail de suivi et d'évaluation (y compris la définition des indicateurs, les sources de données, la fréquence de la collecte). Un modèle ad hoc pour le rapport d'évaluation qui sera présenté par les États membres est en cours d'élaboration.

Efficacité

Les investissements du FFE pendant la période 2011-2013 étaient en général **efficaces**. Le FFE a encouragé l'utilisation raisonnable des financements de l'UE dans le domaine de la migration et de la gestion des frontières, notamment en incitant ou en contribuant à la mise en place d'une gestion globale et des systèmes de contrôle, y compris une bonne coordination avec la Commission européenne, l'application des procédures rigoureuses de passation de marché, des audits de projet et des exercices de suivi.

Quelques difficultés avec le cycle annuel de programmation ont été signalés, en termes de (i) la finalisation de l'acquisition de grands et complexes systèmes et équipements, (ii) l'acquisition de grands systèmes achetés depuis de nombreuses années. La difficulté d'avoir à attribuer des investissements pluriannuels à ceux spécifiques aux programmes annuels uniquement à des fins de programmation, a ajouté un autre niveau de charge administrative et une difficulté de programmation pour les autorités responsables.

Recommandations

- Le cycle annuel de programmation a créé des difficultés pour quelques États membres dans certains domaines. La Commission devrait envisager l'ajout d'une certaine flexibilité dans le cycle de programmation, par exemple en autorisant des cycles pluriannuels de financement dans le cas des investissements importants.
- Les États membres devraient veiller à ce que des ressources suffisantes soient mobilisées au niveau des autorités responsables pour (i) informer et soutenir les bénéficiaires au sujet des exigences de déclaration et (ii) assurer que les demandes d'investissements sont effectuées de manière adéquate.

Durabilité

Les investissements du FFE entre 2011 et 2013 étaient durables : la plupart des actifs acquis et des connaissances générées étaient encore utilisées au moment où cette évaluation a été réalisée (2016). Le coût de la mise à jour et la maintenance des équipements et des systèmes achetés seront et sont déjà pris en charge par les États membres. Quelques bonnes pratiques ont néanmoins été identifiés, formant la base pour les recommandations énumérées ci-dessous.

Recommandations

- Les indicateurs de durabilité doivent devenir une partie nécessaire du processus d'approbation au projet et aux niveaux des programmes annuels. Les États membres pourraient trouver l'inspiration dans l'exemple polonais, où un investissement doit clairement être accompagnée d'une explication de la façon dont l'équipement sera maintenu au fil du temps.
- Les évaluations préalables des investissements nécessitant des coûts d'entretiens et d'exploitations importants devraient être obligatoires, avec l'engagement des bénéficiaires pour s'assurer des coûts estimés après acquisition.
- Durée de la garantie, la maintenance et la formation (si nécessaire) devraient devenir des éléments et (le cas échéant) les critères de sélection dans le processus d'approvisionnement.

Complémentarité et cohérence

Les investissements du FFE de 2011-2013 étaient **complémentaires et cohérents** avec les activités financées à la fois au titre des autres fonds de l'UE liés à la gestion des frontières extérieures européennes (Fonds européen pour le retour, le Fonds européen pour les réfugiés, la politique de voisinage), des fonds d'élargissement (PHARE et la facilité Schengen) , avec des activités de Frontex (en particulier celles menées dans le domaine de la capacité de réaction rapide et de formation), ainsi qu'avec les investissements nationaux. Le Fonds a été particulièrement important pour assurer la cohérence des systèmes qui ne peuvent devenir opérationnels et efficaces qu'une fois que tous les blocs de construction ont été finalisés (tels que le Système d'information Schengen II et le Système d'Information en matière de Visas) dans un contexte où le financement du gouvernement national était rare.

Recommandations

- Devrait être incluse la référence à la cohérence non seulement entre le programme et les autres fonds liés, mais aussi à l'intérieur, entre les différentes actions, les différents plans nationaux et les différents États

membres.

- Frontex devrait être consulté par la Commission sur les projets de programmes pluriannuels présentés par les États membres et sur les orientations stratégiques élaborées par la Commission - *Ceci est le cas actuellement dans le cadre du Fonds pour la sécurité intérieure.*
- Pour accroître la consistance entre les politiques internes et externes, des références spécifiques devraient être incluses à la cohérence avec les investissements à venir visant à promouvoir la coopération avec les pays tiers dans le domaine de la gestion et du contrôle des frontières.

Valeur ajoutée européenne

Le soutien du FFE était essentiel pour réaliser les investissements nécessaires pour améliorer les systèmes de gestion des frontières extérieures de l'UE, dans une période de compressions budgétaires et d'augmentation des pressions migratoires. **La valeur ajoutée** est la plus évidente dans le développement au niveau national des grands systèmes informatiques tels que le Système d'Information Schengen II et le Système d'Information en matière de Visas, et dans le développement de la coopération consulaire avec les pays tiers.

Comme mentionné dans les conclusions de l'efficacité, l'achèvement des systèmes paneuropéens tels que le Système d'Information en matière de Visas et le Système d'information Schengen II, qui pourrait ne pas avoir été des priorités au niveau national, sont une valeur ajoutée évidente du Fonds.

Recommandations

- La Commission devrait continuer à utiliser les fonds de remplacement pour prioriser la réalisation de systèmes d'une valeur ajoutée de l'UE évidente qui pourrait ne pas être des priorités nationales.

1 OVERVIEW

This document constitutes the final report for the *Ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011-2013* commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG Home) and undertaken by Optimity Advisors and the Centre for the Study of Democracy (CSD).

This document is structured in seven chapters:

- An Overview (this chapter);
- A methodological note setting out the methodology used for this evaluation;
- A descriptive chapter on the background of the EBF;
- A chapter presenting the evaluation questions;
- A chapter describing the implementation of the EBF actions;
- The findings of the evaluation in the form of responses to the 16 evaluation questions;
- A chapter setting out the study's conclusions and recommendations.

In addition, this document contains three annexes:

- A list of stakeholders consulted;
- A statistical annex with information on the EBF 2007-2013 annual programmes; and
- The case study reports.

2 METHODOLOGY

Evaluation methodology

The framework used to answer the evaluation questions was developed to ensure a thorough independent evaluation, following the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines and according to what was deemed feasible within the timeframe and resources allocated for this study. The data were collected through desk research (mainly the NERs), interviews and case studies.

Data collection

Desk research was a key element of the data collection for this evaluation. Table 1 provides a short outline of the type of documents, the information they contain and the intervention logic or evaluation themes they relate to.

Table 1: Type of documents and evaluation theme they relate to

Type of document	Example	Evaluation aspect
Additional monitoring, evaluation and audit reports	National evaluation reports, Commission monitoring visits reports, reports from the Court of Auditors	<u>Intervention logic</u> : Needs, effects; <u>Evaluation questions</u> : Efficiency, effectiveness, EU added value, sustainability
Relevant legal acts and implementing documents	EBF Decision (574/2007/EC), EBF implementing Decisions (2007/599/EC and 2008/456/EC); Schengen Borders Code (Regulation 562/2006)	<u>Intervention logic</u> : Needs, objective of the EBF <u>Evaluation questions</u> : Relevance, utility, effectiveness and efficiency
High-level contextual documents	Biannual reports on the functioning of the Schengen Area, Frontex's risk analysis (FRAN) quarterly reports, Programmes of work and General Reports;	<u>Intervention logic</u> : Needs, effects <u>Evaluation questions</u> : Relevance, utility, EU added value, coherence and complementarity
Programmatic documents	Multiannual programmes Annual programmes Final reports	<u>Intervention logic</u> : inputs, activities, outputs <u>Evaluation questions</u> : Effectiveness

In addition to the NERs, interviews with a number of participating countries and EU-level stakeholders (European Commission, Frontex), alongside the 12 case studies, have been incorporated into the analysis. Three different types of **interview** were undertaken during the research, covering the different elements of the study:

- **EU-level interviews** – with relevant personnel currently or formerly working for DG Home, including those in charge of the management of community and Specific actions, as well as Frontex.
- **National interviews** – in each country in which the EBF is implemented, at least the RA has been interviewed to discuss the overall management and

implementation of the multiannual programmes and additional information than that collected in the NER;

- **Case study interviews** – for each case study (see below), a smaller number of focused interviews were conducted with Responsible Authorities (RAs) and beneficiaries.

Twelve **case studies** were also undertaken, which were selected according to the following criteria:

- **first**, the research team strived to achieve a representative coverage of the EBF objectives, priorities and respective interventions;
- **second**, the research team tried to cover countries at various external borders, giving priority to those facing the most serious immigration pressure in the evaluation time period (i.e. the countries on the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes);
- **third**, the study team selected interventions where significant amounts were invested as percentages of the overall EBF contributions; and
- **fourth**, the research team selected case studies which could provide information to cover all the evaluation questions (especially those relating to effectiveness).

Table 2 summarises the selected case studies, which can be found in Annex 3 of this report.

Table 2: Case studies

Country	Case Study subject
France	SPATIONAV
Italy	Purchase of surveillance helicopters
Spain	SIVE National Command Centre
Germany	Dispatch of ILOs and Document Advisors
Czech Republic	SIS II upgrades
Finland	Purchase of land vehicles
Greece	Special operation in response to immigration pressure
Switzerland	Large IT systems
Bulgaria	Surveillance equipment at green border
Poland	Surveillance equipment at green border
Hungary	Upgrade for BCP
Norway	ABC gate

Over 140 interviews have taken place with RA and beneficiaries. In addition, 12 field trips have taken place for the case studies.

Statistical data

A number of statistical data sources were used in order to conduct the analysis; these included:

- Official statistics from Eurostat, Risk assessments from Frontex, etc. (data such as number of border guards, illegal crossings, sightings of irregular migrants);
- Data extracted from the NERs, compiling context indicators (such as number of consulates capable of issuing Schengen visas) as well as output and result indicators (e.g. number of vehicles acquired, number of patrols undertaken using vehicles acquired);

- An extraction of financial data from the SFC2007³⁸ database 11 May 2016. These data have been used to describe the distribution of operations across and between Priorities and Specific Priorities. The extraction suffered from some issues which are highlighted below
- An extraction of financial data from ABAC on 10/08/2016 to examine programmed and net EU contributions and to calculate absorption rates.

Analysis

Once the data had been collected, they were analysed using data analysis methods that had been carefully tailored to ensure complete coverage of the evaluation questions. Reflecting on the overall objectives of the study, the evaluation questions and the need to ensure that the evaluation was developed in a critical and analytical manner, three different levels of analysis were used:

The first step of the analysis was **descriptive** and helped to provide context and a basis for the development of other types of analysis. All the data collected were collated and described. Quantitative data (based on the outputs of Tasks 15 and 16) on the implementation of the EBF was input in NVivo, cleaned and coded before being analysed. All documents, in particular the NERs, were also input in NVivo. This descriptive analysis involved using descriptive statistics to identify any trends or key messages emerging from the data (such as type of action or priority receiving funding). Through the descriptive analysis, the trends and key features of the activities examined were assessed.

The qualitative data collected from the document analysis, interviews and case studies (in particular context and result indicators) were described. The documents and the outputs of the different tasks were used to examine emerging **themes** and characteristics following the evaluation themes and the EBF's priorities.

The results of the descriptive and thematic analyses were examined to compare themes and characteristics with each other. The comparative analysis allowed the study team to assess the extent to which the research findings were coherent.

National evaluation reports (NER) submitted by Member States to the European Commission in November 2015 were a major input to this evaluation. However, at the time the evaluation ended, the evaluation reports from DK and IS had not been received.

Data limitations

Some inconsistencies were found between the SFC2007 and the National Evaluation Reports provided by Member States because the extraction date was slightly later than the deadline for NERs. To compensate for this, data from the SFC2007 database as of 11 May 2016 were only used to describe the distribution of funds across Priorities and Specific Priorities.

Where reference is made to the Programmed or NET EU contributions, the data have been extracted from the ABAC (Accrual Based Accounting) database at 10/08/2016, as they provide a more accurate and up-to-date picture of the situation. A number of Final Reports, especially for 2013, had been entered close to the deadline but not yet been accepted by the Commission,³⁹ and the status of the actions for these countries

³⁸ SFC2007 is the Commission's database comprising information on all SOLID funds.

³⁹ Deadline for submission was 31.03.2016

is marked as 'returned'. For the sake of completeness, these have nevertheless been included in the statistical analysis.

Although broadly consistent, the overall quality of data in SFC was occasionally spoilt by incorrect categorisations according to Priority and Specific Priority. For instance, one action relating to SPATIONAV in France, co-financed by the EBF, appears under Specific Priority 2.1 in the SFC2007 database, while it should have been under Specific Priority 2.2 (as per the 2012 Final Report and the NER).

Similarly, in ES, Action 7 of the 2012 Annual Programme 'Construction of Operations Room for the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre – Phase III (EBF12_GC_P202_20)' appears under Priority 1.3 in the SFC2007 database, instead of Specific Priority 2.2 as per the 2012 final report. However, the value of Action 40 in the SFC2007 database (EUR 4,768,044.51) is exactly the same as Action 7 of the 2012 Annual Programme, which seems to indicate discrepancies between the Final Reports and the SFC2007 database. These discrepancies mean that data presented in these reports relating to specific priorities might not be fully accurate and in line with the finalised SFC2007 database.

Many of the NERs reported in a quite detailed manner on the outputs and results of the actions funded (e.g. the number of helicopters purchased for surveillance purposes). However, they did not provide that much detail when it came to the impacts at national level; or if they did, the objective or priority was restated without substantiating the answer. As a result, the effectiveness section in this report is at risk of becoming too descriptive. In order to mitigate this, in information from (i) task 15 and 16 (section 6 and Annex 2, respectively), (ii) the case studies, (iii) interviews and (iv) the evaluators' judgement has been used.

The quality and detail of the NERs varied from country to country. It is therefore important to note that detailed information for some Member States might be over-represented in the analysis, due to the high quality of the evaluation done at national level. Similarly, some countries are over-represented in some of the less positive points relating to the EBF, which is due to the high quality of the NERs. While the case studies and the interviews conducted with the RAs mitigate these risks, these could not substitute for a detailed and well-researched NER. The analysis and judgement for each of the evaluation questions was conducted by the evaluation team and a conscious effort has been made to ensure that sources different from the NERs have been included (in particular the case studies).

Data collection in the NERs was not always consistent. In terms of output indicators, the following issues were encountered:

- For some indicators, the main issue was that Member States had different interpretations of what to record in the NER. Some recorded the total number relating to an indicator in a year while others added the additional number in a given year (i.e. the change in the number). When this was the case, clarification was sought with the RA. However, in most cases, the data collected at national level could not be revised as this would have required too much effort from the RA, or the data were simply not collected.
- Countries were not consistent in the units used for the indicators (e.g. number of hours of patrols conducted rather than the number of patrols conducted). Again, clarification was sought with the RA; however, these indicators are collected from the beneficiaries who often did not gather the information in a way to make it coherent with the indicators set out in the NER template.
- Some Member States have changed the wording of the indicators or provide several numbers for the same indicator.

Public Consultation

Finally, a public consultation was launched in parallel to this study by DG HOME. Very few responses were received in response to the twelve-question public consultation regarding the ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011-2013. Only 10 responses were received, all from representatives of public authorities, spanning eight Member States (CY, HU, LT, LV, MT, PT, SI, ES). This small sample limits the strength of the data.

Examining the limited responses, those consulted reported positive perceptions of the effects (Q1), relevance (Q8), efficiency (Q9), sustainability (Q10) and coherence and complementarity (Q11). 88% (43) of responses across these five questions were positive with only 2% (1 response, Q10) negative and 12% (6) 'I don't know'. Nine of ten respondents also reported that their country's activities were consistent with the EBF's general and specific objectives. However, Member States reported mixed results with regard to intensifying operational cooperation with other Member States and changing the way they apply EU external border policy standards.

Respondents were also asked about the objectives achieved (Q2), the coherence between EBF and national priorities (Q3) and the actions undertaken by Member States (Q5). The findings are outlined below:

- Q2 – the most commonly reported objectives that were achieved with EBF support were 'The efficient organisation and control of checks and surveillance tasks at the external borders' and 'The efficient management by the Member States of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure a high level of protection and the smooth crossing in conformity with the Schengen *acquis* and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity' (both 7 Member States). 'The uniform application of the provisions of community law on the crossing of external borders, in particular the Schengen borders code' was also achieved by 5 Member States.
- Q3 – the most commonly reported national priorities were 'Support for the further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders' (8 Member States) and 'Support for the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas' (5 Member States).
- Q5 – a variety of actions were reportedly undertaken by Member States including 'Investments in IT systems' (6 Member States); 'Investments in means of transport' (5); 'Investment in infrastructure' (5); and 'Investments in operating equipment' (5).

3 INTRODUCTION (TASK 1)

This ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund (EBF) 2011-2013 has been commissioned by DG Migration and Home Affairs in the context of Article 18 of the Rule of Application (RAP) of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union. Article 18 sets out the need for all programmes or activities financed 'above EUR 5 million [to] be subject to an [...] ex post evaluation'.⁴⁰

Furthermore, the need for financial instruments to be evaluated is now built into the legal basis establishing them. In the case of the EBF, Article 51(2) stipulates that the Fund 'shall be evaluated by the Commission in partnership with the Member States'. Article 52(3)(c) asks for the Commission to submit an evaluation of the 2011-2013 period by 31 December 2015.⁴¹ The Commission decided to extend the evaluation period to the end of 2016 to ensure that as much data as possible could be taken into account.

This study focuses on the implementation of the EBF between 2011 and 2013. The objective of the evaluation is to examine the implementation of actions co-financed by the EBF under the 2011-2013 annual programmes implemented by the Member States (including the Special Transit Scheme), EBF 2010-2013 Community actions (including Emergency Actions) and EBF 2010-2012 Specific actions.

Following the European Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines,⁴² and as per the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this study, the evaluation themes to be assessed will be **relevance, utility, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence** and **complementarity** and **EU added value**.

⁴⁰ Commission Delegated Regulation No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

⁴¹ Decision of the European Parliament and the Council No 574/2007/EC establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'.

⁴² Commission Staff Working Document. Better Regulation Guidelines SWD(2015)111 final.

4 DESCRIPTIVE CHAPTER ON THE EBF (TASK 6)

The Schengen Agreement, along with the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement (CISA),⁴³ abolished checks at the internal borders of a number of EU Member States by 1995, creating the 'Schengen Area'. The Schengen *acquis* provides for common rules and procedures to be applied by signatory States with regard to short-term visas and border controls. All signatory States thus needed to contribute to ensuring a 'high and uniform level of control on persons and surveillance of the external borders'.⁴⁴

However, the burden borne, in terms of the implementation of the common standards for control of the EU's external borders, varied significantly from country to country. These variations were explained through the differences between Member States in terms of their external borders' geography, the number of border crossing points, the level of migratory pressure, the risk and threats encountered as described in Frontex's risk analyses⁴⁵ and workload relating to visa applications.⁴⁶ Besides, **weaknesses at strategic border points** were identified, in terms of time to cross, visa checks and infrastructure.⁴⁷

As a result, in the context of **burden sharing and solidarity**⁴⁸ between Member States, the EBF was established in 2007.⁴⁹ One of the **needs** that the EBF sought to address was the need for '**Solidarity through financial assistance** to those Member States that apply the Schengen provisions on external borders' in order to 'help Schengen States comply with the obligation under the Schengen *acquis* to share the responsibility for efficient, high-level and uniform control of external borders'.⁵⁰ The financial solidarity mechanism was particularly needed for the following reasons:

- Member States 'who bear, for the benefit of the Community, **a lasting and heavy financial burden**'⁵¹;
- Member States with '**weaknesses at strategic border points**'⁵²;
- Member States which, at the time of the establishment of the EBF, had not yet applied all provisions of the Schengen *acquis*,⁵³ to **prepare them for full participation** as soon as possible.⁵⁴

The EBF was introduced in the Framework Programme on Solidarity and Migration Flows⁵⁵ and was part of a policy toolbox which also includes the Frontex Agency, the

⁴³ Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 between the Governments of the States of the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany and the French Republic on the gradual abolition of checks at their common borders, 14 June 1985.

⁴⁴ Decision 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF 'EBF Decision', preamble paragraph (1).

⁴⁵ See for instance FRAN Quarterly (Quarter 4, 2015).

⁴⁶ Ibid. preamble paragraph (2).

⁴⁷ Ibid. preamble paragraph (11).

⁴⁸ Ibid. Article 1.

⁴⁹ Decision 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the EBF for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows', 23 May 2007.

⁵⁰ Mid-term Review EBF (ICFI).

⁵¹ EBF Decision, preamble paragraph (4).

⁵² Ibid. preamble paragraph (11).

⁵³ In 2007 and 2008, when the Schengen *acquis* took effect in ten new countries.

⁵⁴ Decision 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF, preamble paragraph (7).

⁵⁵ COM (2005) 123 final, Communication establishing a framework programme on Solidarity and the Management of Migration Flows for the period 2007-2013, European Commission, 6 April 2005.

Schengen Borders Code⁵⁶ and the Schengen Evaluation Mechanism⁵⁷. The EBF was established in 2007 by Decision No 574/2007/EC, and was to be implemented on the basis of the strategic guidelines and rules set out in Commission Decision No. 2007/599/EC⁵⁸ and Commission Decision 2008/456/EC⁵⁹. The EBF was implemented by 28 countries, namely by all EU Member States,⁶⁰ except for the UK and Ireland (which opted out of the Schengen Agreement) and Croatia,⁶¹ as well as three non-EU Member States (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland). Since 2012, Liechtenstein has paid a contribution to the EBF, but waived the right to participate due to its lack of external borders and consulates.

The objectives with which the EBF was set up can be divided into:

- **General objectives & priorities:** Four general objectives are set out in Council Decision 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF, as well as five general priorities as set out in Decision 2007/599/EC;⁶²
- **Specific objectives & priorities:** A set of specific objectives are set out in Council Decisions 574/2007/EC, as well as 12 specific priorities as set out in Decision 2007/599/EC.

Article 3(1) of the EBF Decision⁶³ sets out the **general objectives** of the EBF (2007-2013), which are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: General objectives of the EBF

General Objectives EBF (2007-2013)	
General objective A:	The efficient organisation of control, covering both <u>checks and surveillance</u> tasks relating to the external borders;
General objective B:	The efficient management by the Member States of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure, on the one hand, a high level of protection at the external borders and, on the other, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen <i>acquis</i> and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity
General objective C:	The uniform application by border guards of the provisions of Community law on the crossing of external borders, in particular Regulation (EC) No 562/2006;
General objective D:	The improvement of the management of <u>activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries</u> as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of

⁵⁶ Regulation 562/2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code), 15 March 2006.

⁵⁷ Council Regulation (EU) No 1053/2013 establishing an evaluation and monitoring mechanism to verify the application of the Schengen *acquis* and repealing the Decision of the Executive Committee of 16 September 1998 setting up a Standing Committee on the evaluation and implementation of Schengen, 7 October 2013.

⁵⁸ Commission Decision 2007/599/EC implementing decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the adoption of strategic guidelines for 2007 to 2013, 27 August 2007.

⁵⁹ Commission Decision 2008/456/EC laying down rules for the implementation of the EBF Decision, 5 March 2008.

⁶⁰ Bulgaria and Romania participated from 2010, the others since 2007.

⁶¹ Croatia was not entitled to the EBF 2013 allocation, because it received the Schengen Facility funding in 2013 and 2014.

⁶² Commission Decision 2007/599/EC implementing decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the adoption of strategic guidelines for 2007 to 2013, 27 August 2007.

⁶³ Decision 574/2007/EC setting up the EBF, Article 3(1).

General Objectives EBF (2007-2013)

the Member States and the cooperation between Member States in this regard.

Source: Decision 574/2007/EC

Decision 2007/599/EC⁶⁴ lays down **strategic guidelines** setting out a framework for the multiannual programming period 2007 to 2013, which include **five priorities** as listed in Table 4. The priorities were adopted approximately three months later than the objectives and set out how they were to be operationalised.

Table 4: Priorities of the EBF (as per Decision 2007/599/EC)

Priorities for the multiannual programming period 2007 to 2013	
Priority 1	Support for the further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders;
Priority 2	Support for the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the EU Member States;
Priority 3	Support for the issuing of visas and the tackling of illegal immigration , including the detection of false or falsified documents by enhancing the activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries;
Priority 4	Support for the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas;
Priority 5	Support for the effective and efficient application of relevant Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas, in particular the Schengen Borders Code and the European Code on Visas.

Source: Decision 2007/599/EC

The five priorities closely match, but are not equivalent to, the general objectives of the EBF. According to the stakeholders from DG Home consulted for this study, the priorities were based on objectives, presenting more concretely what the general objectives describe.⁶⁵ The priorities were the areas falling under the objectives which were most stressed/most emphasised.⁶⁶ Another stakeholder from DG Home described the priorities as a 'methodology for programming', helping to define the countries' needs through a gap analysis (the gaps being the priorities).⁶⁷

Moreover, a higher level of co-financing existed under certain conditions, which included projects responding to the specific priorities (see next sub-section).⁶⁸ These higher levels of financing (75% co-financing) were designed as incentives for funding projects relating to the (specific) priorities underpinning the importance of the actions to achieve the overall objectives of the fund.⁶⁹ The specific priorities were unlikely to

⁶⁴ Commission Decision 2007/599/EC implementing decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the adoption of strategic guidelines for 2007 to 2013, 27 August 2007.

⁶⁵ Interview with DG Home, Unit C2 Border Management and Schengen.

⁶⁶ Interview with DG Home, Unit C2 Border Management and Schengen.

⁶⁷ Interview with DG Home, Unit SRD.01.

⁶⁸ Interview with DG Home, Unit C2 Border Management and Schengen.

⁶⁹ Interview with DG Home, Unit E3.

function as incentives for the Member States receiving support under the Cohesion Fund, as all EBF actions were co-financed at a 75% rate in those countries (even projects not falling under any of the specific priorities).⁷⁰

It is important to understand how the priorities and objectives relate to each other, as, according to the ToR, the study team evaluated the EBF according to its general and specific objectives, while the countries' annual programmes and final reports discuss projects according to the priorities. Therefore, it was crucial to map the EBF priorities to the objectives, in order to discuss the findings from these reports in the framework of the objectives.

In addition to the above-mentioned five priorities, Decision 2007/599/EC lays down 12 'specific priorities' setting out a framework for the multiannual programming period 2007 to 2013. These specific priorities are more concrete and seem more operational than the specific objectives and, as described above, are eligible for a co-financing rate of 75%.

The objectives and priorities do not match perfectly. Indeed, mapping the specific priorities to the general and specific objectives shows that many specific priorities fall under more than one specific objective. For instance, specific objective 1.f 'Setting up an effective, structural, strategic and operational coordination between all authorities operating at border crossing points', could fall under both Specific Priority 1.3 'purchase and/or upgrading of operating equipment in order to increase the capacity of Member States to take part in and/or contribute to operational cooperation between Member States as coordinated by the Frontex Agency' and 2.1 'investments in establishing or upgrading a single national coordination centre, which coordinates 24/7 the activities of all national authorities carrying out external border control tasks (detection, identification, and intervention) and which is able to exchange information with the national coordination centres in other Member States'. Moreover, it appears that some specific objectives have no priorities that correspond to them. However, this is not surprising as the priorities were never intended to cover all projects that could be implemented.

The EBF is implemented through different types of actions eligible for financing under the Fund. They consist of:

- **National actions** – Under the principle of shared management, each Member State⁷¹ prepared multiannual programmes (MAP), applying the strategic guidelines of the Commission⁷² and taking into account their specific needs. The multiannual programmes were implemented by means of annual programmes. The annual programmes set out the measures to be implemented in the Member States and specify their purpose, scope, the beneficiaries, the expected results and the financial envelope.
- **Community actions** – The EBF co-financed projects which support cooperation between Member States. Community actions were directly managed by the Commission and implemented by public bodies of the Member States. As part of Community actions, the EBF co-financed emergency actions to support Member States in duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action at external borders. Priorities and themes for projects are defined in the Commission's annual work programmes and calls for proposals.
- **Specific actions** – The Commission established annual work programmes listing Specific actions to be implemented by the Member States (including in

⁷⁰ Council Decision 574/2007/EC, Article 16 (4).

⁷¹ 25 Member States (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SK, SI, ES, SE) and three Schengen associated States (IC, NO, CH).

⁷² Commission Decision 2007/599/EC.

cooperation with Frontex), which should 'contribute to the development of the European common-integrated-border management system by addressing weaknesses at strategic border points identified in the risk analysis carried out by Frontex'.⁷³ The financing of such actions from the EBF is limited to six months. EBF Specific actions have been discontinued since 2012.⁷⁴ This was a result of the mid-term evaluation and above-mentioned European Court of Auditors' report which found that 'Specific actions were not well designed from the beginning' and had only been added to the EBF decision after amendments from the European Parliament⁷⁵.

- **Special Transit Scheme (STS)** – the EBF also financed the STS for Russian Federation citizens travelling on EU territory to and from the Kaliningrad region. The STS provides support to compensate for foregone transit fees and additional costs involved in implementing the scheme in accordance with the Protocols of the Act of Accession into the EU.⁷⁶ In the period 2011-2013, EUR 16 million have been available each year for Lithuania at a 100% financing rate.⁷⁷

The first three actions mentioned are set out in the Council Decision 574/2007/EC. These different types of actions are presented in greater detail below. Table 5 summarises the main characteristics of the different types of actions:

Table 5: Types of actions funded by the EBF

Type of management	Type of action		Managed by	Specificity
Shared management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National actions Special Transit Scheme (STS) 		Member States Lithuania	Bulk of the financing For the STS implemented by Lithuania
	Actions under direct management mode	Community actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency actions Other community actions 	European Commission
Specific actions		Limited to six months		

Source: *Optimity Advisors*

Intervention logic of the EBF

The intervention logic⁷⁸ developed for the EBF 2011-2013 is summarised in Figure 2.

⁷³ Article 19, Decision No 574/2007/EC.

⁷⁴ New Specific actions are being implemented under the AMIF and ISF national programmes; however these are different from EBF Specific actions (they are not implemented under the direct management, but within the ISF / AMIF national programmes).

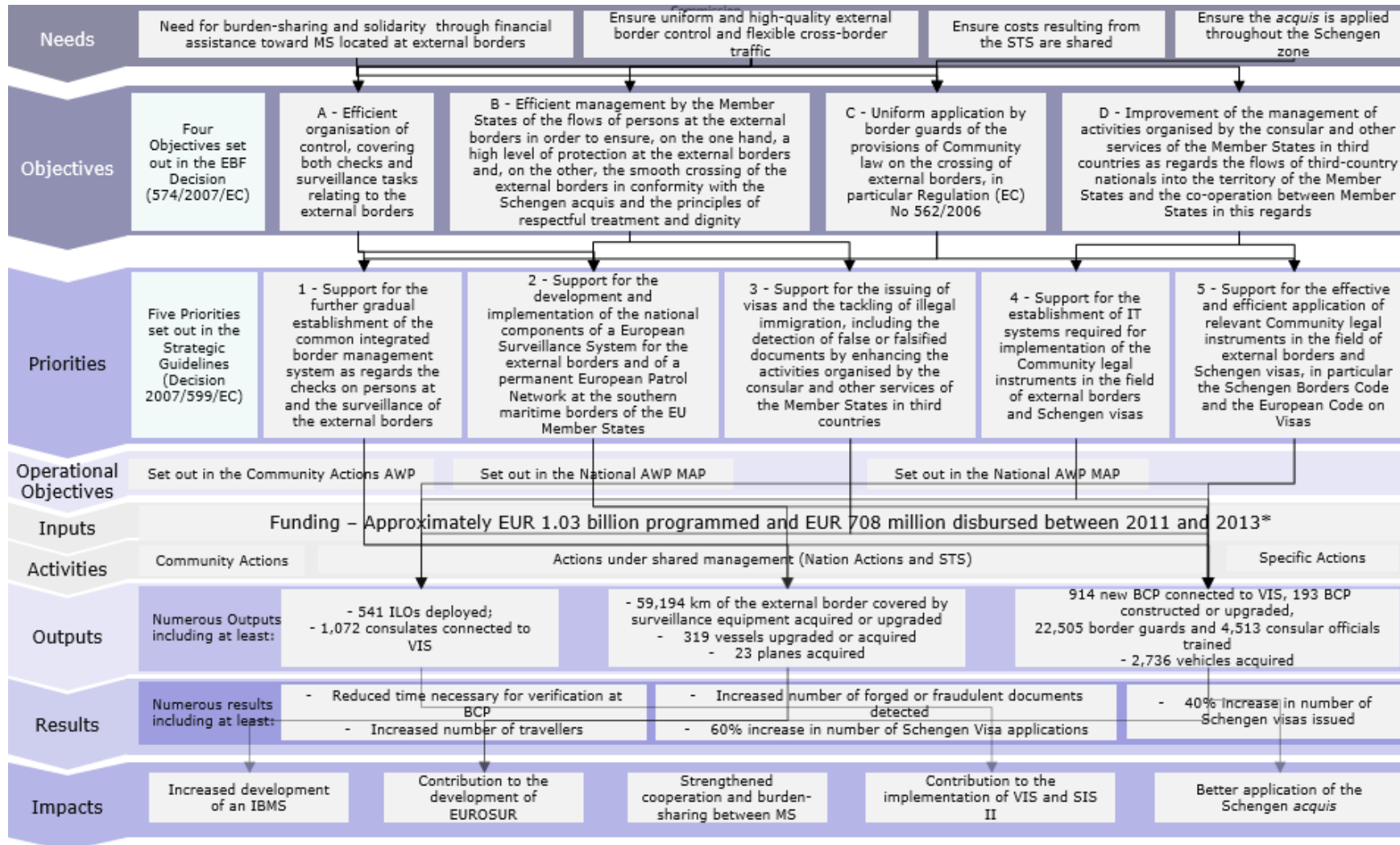
⁷⁵ European Parliament Briefing EBF, December 2014

⁷⁶ Article 6, Decision No 574/2007.

⁷⁷ European Court of Auditors (2014), The External Borders Fund has fostered financial solidarity but requires better measurement of results and needs to provide further EU added value. Special Report. Luxembourg: ECA, p. 12.

⁷⁸ Commission staff working document 'Better Regulation Guidelines', SWD (2015) 111 final.

Figure 4: Intervention logic (specific to EBF)



* Situation at 10.08.2016.

5 EVALUATION QUESTIONS (TASK 2)

These questions, formulated in the original terms of reference, formed the basis for the evaluation.

Theme 1(a) Relevance

1(a). To what extent did the objectives of the EBF correspond to the needs related to the management of the EU external borders and the processing of the Schengen visas?

Theme 1(b) Utility

1(b). To what extent did the actual effects of the EBF 2011-2013 actions correspond to the needs related to the management of the EU external borders and the processing of the Schengen visas?

Theme 2 Effectiveness

2. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the efficient organisation of control, covering both checks and surveillance tasks relating to the external borders?

3. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the efficient management by the Member States of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure, on the one hand, a high level of protection at the external borders and, on the other, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen *acquis* and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity?

4. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders?

5. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the EU Member States?

6. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the EU legal instruments in the field of external borders and Schengen visas?

7. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the uniform application by border guards of the provisions of EU law on the crossing of external borders, in particular Regulation (EC) No 562/2006?

8. To what extent were the EBF 2011-2013 actions, and in particular the EBF Community actions, effective in providing support services to Member States in duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action at external borders?

9. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions, and in particular the EBF Community actions, contribute to the improvement of the management of activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States and the cooperation between Member States in this regard?

10. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the effective processing of Schengen visas and the tackling of illegal immigration, including the detection of false or falsified documents, by enhancing the activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries?

11. To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the effective and efficient application of relevant EU legal instruments in the field of Schengen visas, in particular the Visa Code?

Theme 3 Efficiency

12. To what extent were the effects of the EBF 2011-2013 actions achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed?

Theme 4 Sustainability

13. To what extent have the positive effects of the EBF 2011-2013 actions lasted after the interventions were terminated?

Theme 5 Complementarity and coherence

14. To what extent were the EBF 2011-2013 actions coherent with and complementary to other actions related to the management of the EU external borders and the Schengen visa processing financed by other EU financial instruments and from national resources of the Member States?

15. To what extent were the EBF 2011-2013 actions complementary to the activities of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union?

Theme 6 EU added value

16. To what extent would the Member States be able to carry out the investments necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of border management and Schengen visa processing, and in particular the investments related to EUROSUR, VIS, SIS II, automatic border controls, consular cooperation and contributions to the Frontex joint operations, without the support of the EBF 2011-2013 actions?

6 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EBF (TASK 15)

This chapter will summarise the implementation of the EBF 2011-2013 actions and main results through the presentation of a number of important data points. First, the programmed and final financial EBF contributions are presented; these data are disaggregated by Priority and country. Second, data on the projects supported under the Community and Specific actions, including programmed and final contributions are discussed. Third, aggregated data on key output indicators are presented to demonstrate the main types of investments supported under the EBF 2011-2013.

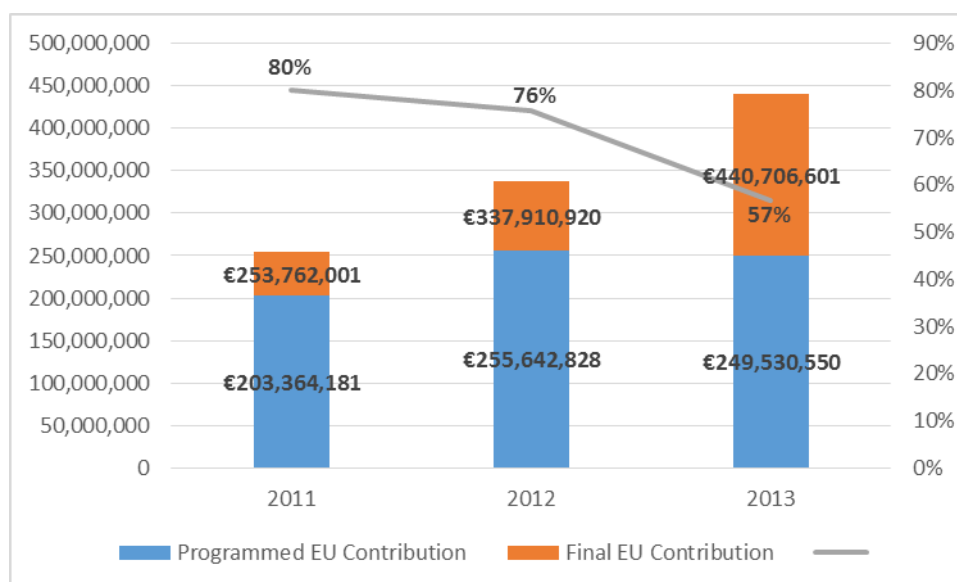
Methodological considerations: The financial data presented have been extracted from the latest version of the SFC2007 database.⁷⁹ Data related to the Community and Specific actions have been provided by DG Migration and Home Affairs. The output indicators presented have been extracted from the national evaluation reports of the Member States.

Financial inputs for the EBF annual programmes of the MS

As compiled in the SFC2007 database,⁸⁰ and presented in Figure 3, the EBF's financial contribution with regard to shared management is effectively summarised through the following data:

- **Total programmed EU contribution:** EUR 1,032,379,522.
- **Final EU contribution:** EUR 708,537,559.
- **Implementation rate** (i.e. the proportion of programmed funds utilised): 68.6% overall, and 84% when taking into account only the programmes reported as 'closed' for 2013 (BG, EE, HU, LT, NO and SI)⁸¹.

Figure 5: Programmed and net financial contributions of the EU (EUR million) and implementation rate (%), by programming year (2011-2013)⁸²



Source: ABAC (Situation at 10.08.2016)

⁷⁹ As provided to Optimity's Evaluation Team on 11 May 2016. This includes a number of actions marked as 'Returned'.

⁸⁰ Situation at 10.08.2016.

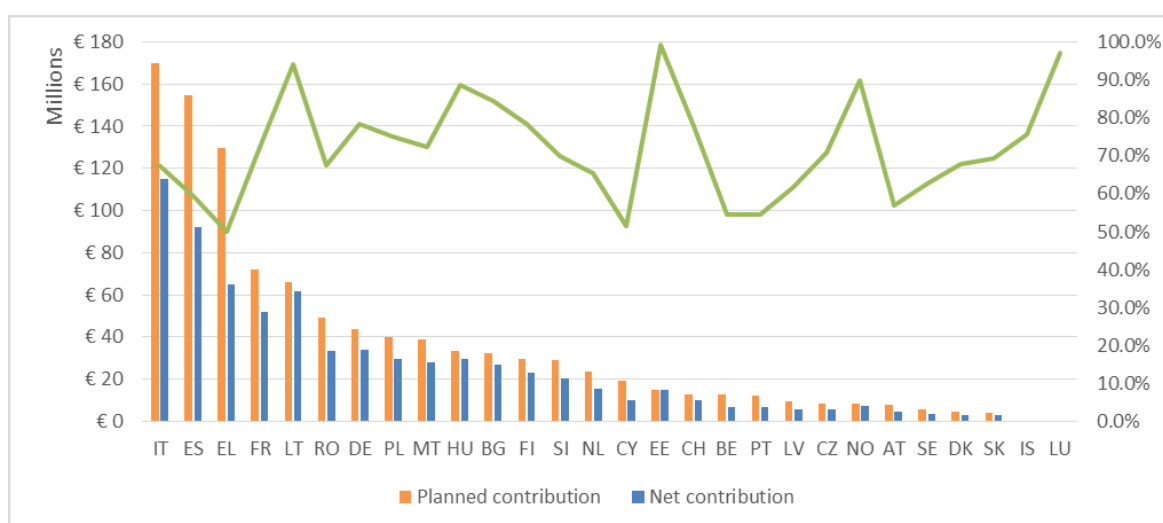
⁸¹ The programmes for 22 Member States had not yet been closed by 10.08.2016.

⁸² Data for 2013 are not finalised yet due to the recent end to the implementation period.

An analysis of the trends in EU financing across the three programming periods (2011, 2012 and 2013) further reveals that the programmed EU financing rose steadily from EUR 254 million in 2011 to EUR 441 million in 2013. The overall implementation rate remained fairly stable throughout (2011=80%; 2012=76%; 2013=84% in countries for which the programmes were closed, 59% otherwise).

Figure 4 examines the data on the programmed and final EU contributions, as well as the implementation rate, by country. As can be seen from the figure, programmed and utilised EU financing were highest in the countries at the southern maritime borders (IT, ES, EL and, to a lesser extent, FR). Combined, these four countries accounted for 51% of the total programmed and 46% of the total final EU contribution. Countries at the eastern external border of the EU (LT, RO, PL, HU), alongside DE and MT, formed the remainder of the top 10 countries for both programmed and final EU contribution.

Figure 6: Programmed and net financial contributions of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2011-2013)



Source: ABAC (Situation at 10.08.2016)

The implementation rates across the EU, as clearly demonstrated in Figure 4, vary greatly, ranging from 99.1% (EE) to 70.1% (SI) for those Member States for which the programmes have been closed and reported.

When cost claims visible in SFC2007 on 11/05/2016 are factored into the analysis, 16 countries have implementation rates of greater than 85% and 15 of those have rates higher than or equal to 90%.⁸³ At the time of writing, the average implementation rate had not reached the same level as in the previous programming period: 83% in 2011-2013 compared with 86.7% in 2007-2010. Given the steps taken after the first programming period (2007-2010) to address the '*limited administrative capacity and lengthy procurement procedures*',⁸⁴ which hindered the absorption of EU funds throughout that period, an increased implementation rate would have been expected. On the other hand, the increases in programmed EU contribution imply a corresponding increase in the volume of work in absolute terms for RAs. In this respect, section 7.4 on the efficiency of the EBF will discuss factors that had a

⁸³ Implementation rates of $\geq 90\%$ = CH, DE, FI, MT, LV, EE, LU, IS, LT, IT, NO, FR, HU, PL, SK; and 85-90% = BG.

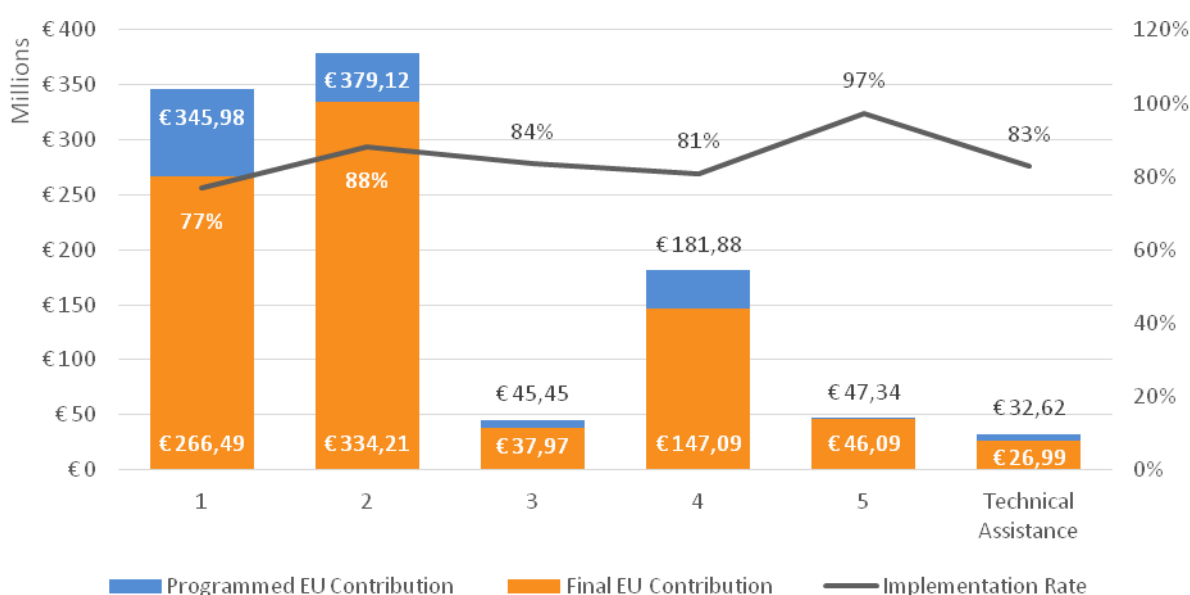
⁸⁴ European Court of Auditors, (2014) Special Report: The External Borders Fund has fostered financial solidarity but requires better measurement of results and needs to provide further EU added value, p. 51.

potentially negative influence on EBF implementation. These negative factors may have acted to counter these positive steps.

Figure 5 plots the programmed and final EU contributions, as well as implementation rates, by Priority. This figure also presents the data for technical assistance.

Priority 2 (support for the development and implementation of EUROSUR and the EPN) is the most commonly financed priority, by programmed (EUR 379 million) and final EU contributions (EUR 334 million). Priority 2 also has the second highest implementation rate (88%). Priority 1 (support for the establishment of the integrated border management system) is a close second in terms of financing (programmed: EUR 346 million; final: EUR 266 million; implementation rate: 77%). Priority 4 (support for the establishment of large-scale IT systems) is the third most funded priority (programmed: EUR 182 million; final: EUR 147 million; implementation rate: 81%). Priorities 3 (support for the issuing of visas and the tackling of illegal immigration) and 5 (support for the application of relevant Community legal instruments), and technical assistance, received significantly less funding, around 12% of the total programmed and 13% of the final EU contributions. Priority 5, in particular, returned a very high implementation rate of 97%.

Figure 7: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR



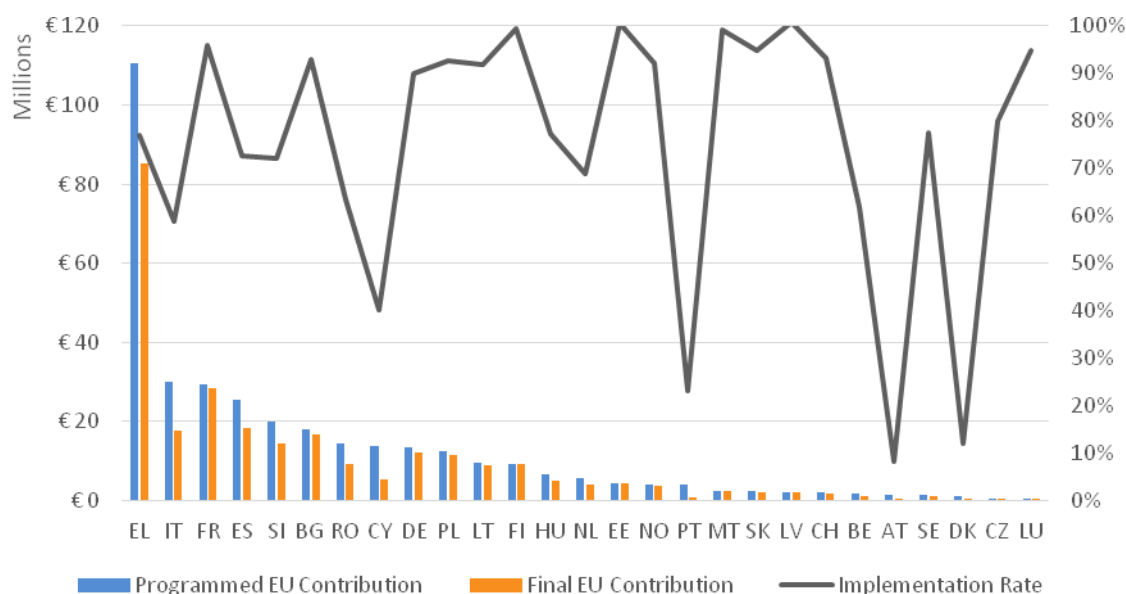
million) and implementation rate (in %), by priority (2011-2013)

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Figures 5 to 9 detail the programmed and final EU contribution by country for each priority (including Technical Assistance).

First, data for Priority 1 (*Support for the further gradual establishment of the common **integrated border management system** as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders*) are presented; all Member States except for IS programmed and were allocated EU funds under this. As can be seen in Figure 6, a significant proportion of the EU's contribution was programmed and utilised by EL; in fact, 32% of the total programmed contribution and total final EU contribution was allocated to EL (programmed: EUR 111 million; final: EUR 85 million).

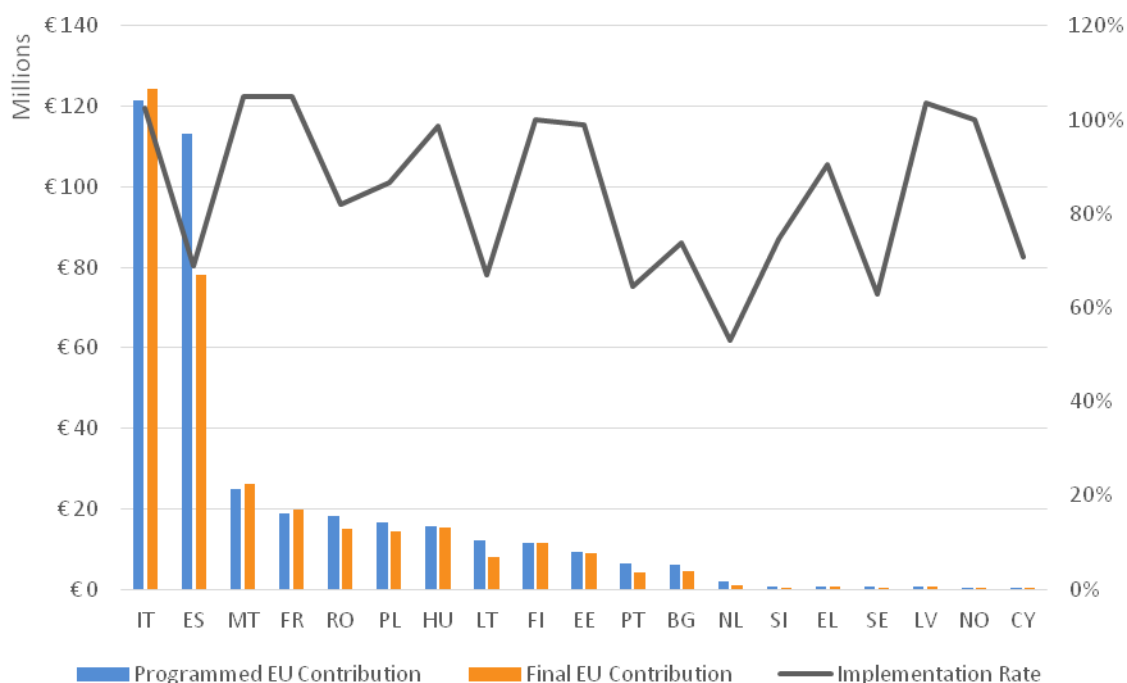
Figure 8: Priority 1: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (%), by country (2011-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Data related to Priority 2 (Support for the development and implementation of the national components of a **European Surveillance System** for the external borders and of a permanent **European Patrol Network** at the southern maritime borders of the EU Member States) are presented in Figure 7. Although this priority received the largest pledged and final EU contributions, only 19 countries have implemented actions under Priority 2. Of these funds, IT and ES had the highest programmed and final EU contributions under Priority 2; together they received 61% of the total final EU contribution under Priority 2.

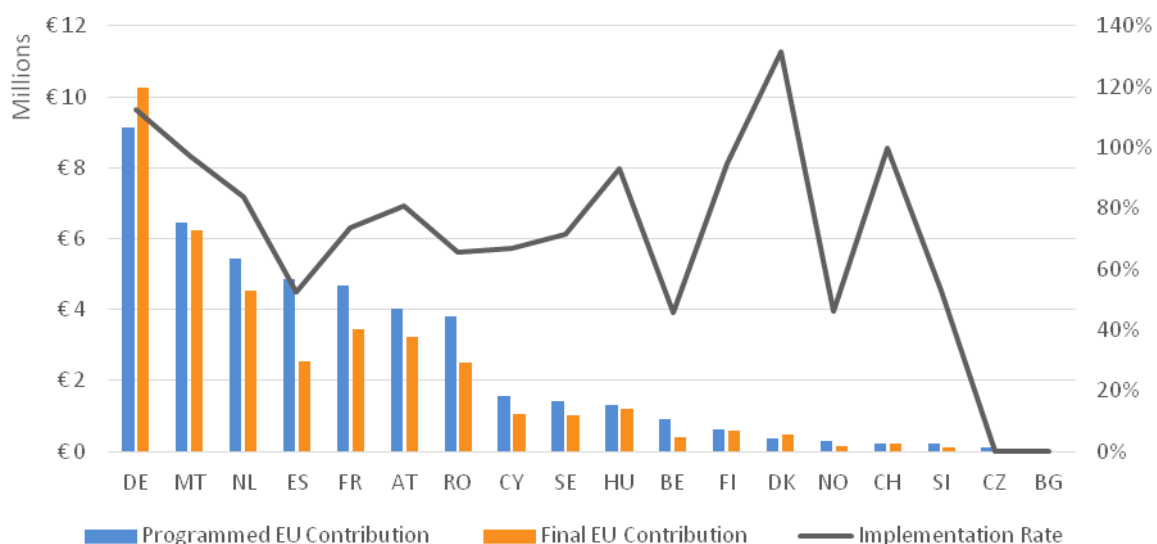
Figure 9: Priority 2: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (%), by country (2011-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 3 (Support for the issuing of **visas and the tackling of illegal immigration**, including the detection of false or falsified documents by enhancing the activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries), illustrated in Figure 8, received the smallest programmed and final EU contributions. Similarly, only 18 countries undertook EBF co-financed actions under Priority 3; the fewest countries involved in any priority. In addition, some countries that programmed and utilised the highest total amounts of EBF funding, including IT and EL, did not implement any actions under Priority 3.

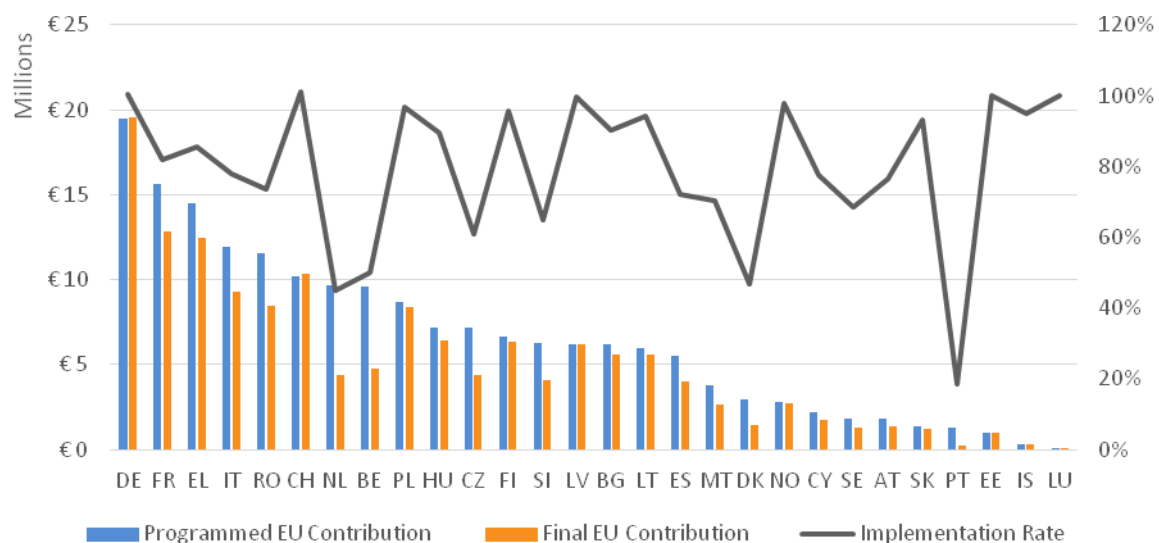
Figure 10: Priority 3: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (%), by country (2011-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 4 (Support for the establishment of **IT systems** required for implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas), as depicted in Figure 8, is the only priority where EU contributions were provided to all 28 Member States. The main recipients are similar to the total contributions by country: FR, EL and IT programmed the second, third and fourth highest amounts respectively. In addition, DE programmed the highest amount with regard to Priority 4.

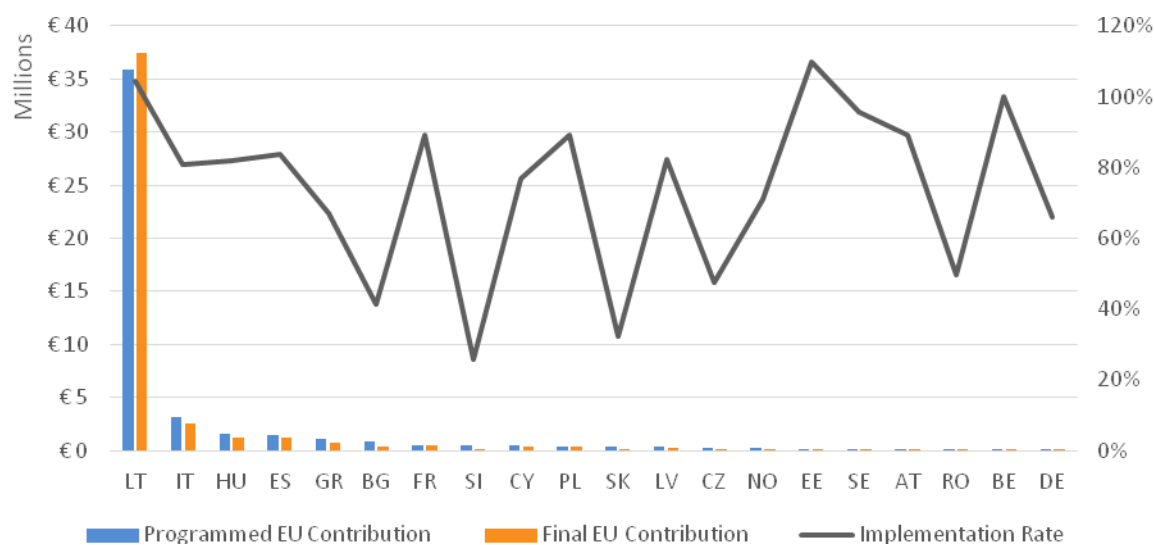
Figure 11: Priority 4: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (%), by country (2011-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 5 (Support for the effective and efficient **application of relevant Community legal instruments** in the field of external borders and visas, in particular the Schengen Borders Code and the European Code on Visas), as can be seen in Figure 10, is dominated by actions related to the Special Transit Scheme (STS) in LT. Actions related to the STS accounted for 76% of the total programmed EU contributions for Priority 5 and 81% of the total final EU contributions. Twenty-one Member States co-financed actions under Priority 5; however only 20 are represented in Figure 10. FI is not included as it reported an implementation rate of 690%. Action 5.1.1. of FI's 2011 Programme was initially programmed to receive only EUR 50,000. Due to the reallocation of EBF financing from other actions (due to them not being accepted by the Commission), Action 5.1.1. actually received EUR 345,025.

Figure 12: Priority 5: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (%), by country (2011-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Financial implementation within Member States

The SFC2007 database presents complete data on the **total programmed EU contribution**. As detailed in section 6, these data place the total programmed EU contribution at just over EUR 1,032 million. The **final EU contribution** is reported to be just over EUR 708 million.⁸⁵ Thus, the overall **implementation rate** of EU financing through the EBF was 68.6% overall, and 84% when taking into account only the 'closed' programmes.

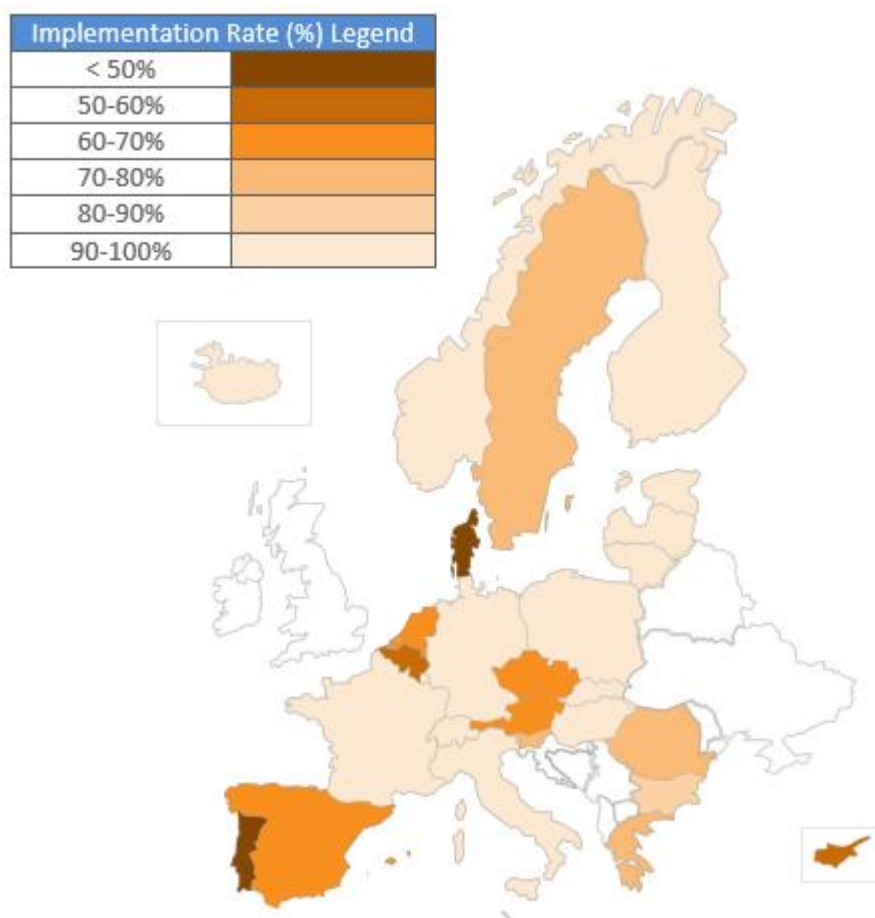
An analysis of the trends in EU financing between 2011 and 2013 further reveals that **as the programmed EU financing rose significantly (from EUR 254 million in 2011 to EUR 441 million in 2013), the implementation rate remained at a similar level (from 83% in 2011 to 85% in 2013)** for those Member States which have reported programmes as closed as of 10 August 2016 (BG, EE, HU, LT, NO and SI).

As can be seen so far in this section, implementation rates at EU level varied significantly by country and by Priority. At Member State level, this is also true and the APs and NERs provide some useful explanations. In the majority of cases, the lower implementation rates are related to issues such as an action being cancelled or changes to Specific actions (e.g. 32% for Priority 5 in SK, mainly due to the re-purposing and re-scoping of Action 9, AP 2012). In a few countries, however, the implementation rates are consistently low, indicating systemic issues (e.g. PT and DK reported overall implementation rates of 46%, CY reported a rate of 50% and BE 51%). These issues will be discussed in greater depth in the remainder of this section.

By country, the figures are detailed in section 6. The key findings from this evaluation include:

- **Increased EU contribution:** EBF contributions increased by 74% between 2011 and 2013 (33% from 2011 to 2012 and 30% from 2012 to 2013). 45% of the increased amount was allocated to ES, FR, EL and IT, the four largest recipients;
- **Very few countries have closed all their programmes:** Implementation rates ranged from 99.1% (EE) to 70.1% (SI) for those Member States for which the programmes have been closed and reported. Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Slovenia are the only MSs who had closed all three EBF annual programmes in August 2016. It is therefore not possible to draw broad conclusions on absorption rates at this stage;
- As envisaged, **Priorities 1 & 2 succeeded in implementing 70% of the EBF's contribution** to securing Europe's external borders;
- The **secondary focus on the EU's eastern external borders is maintained:** LT, RO, PL and HU were all in the top 10 for total programmed and final EU contribution.

⁸⁵ ABAC (Situation at 10.08.2016)

Figure 13: Implementation rates (in %) across the Member States 2011-2013 (including Technical Assistance)

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Community and Specific Actions

Data related to the Community and Specific actions have been initially provided by the DG HOME, which was compared to data from the DG Migration and Home Affairs webpage on Transnational actions under the EBF, and then verified and complemented by information provided upon consultation with Unit E.1 (EBF direct management team).

Table 6 presents the breakdown by year and type of action for the 77 projects undertaken under the Annual Work Programmes for Community and Specific actions 2010-2013. Two Specific actions (allocated under AWP 2010) were moved to Shared Management and have not been included here.

Table 6: Number of actions selected for funding under the Annual Work Programmes for Community and Specific actions 2010-2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Community	1	8	19	1	29
Emergency	3	11	5	6	25
Specific	9	4	10	-	23

Source: ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016)

Table 7 outlines the programmed EU contribution and committed and net EU financial contributions for the Community and Specific actions 2010-2013 excluding the amounts for procurement.

Table 7: Overview of programmed vs awarded budget for Community and Specific actions 2010-2013

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Community and Emergency Actions (EUR)					
Programmed EU contribution	11,650,000	16,000,000	21,607,080	11,848,562	61,105,642
Awarded EU contribution: Community Actions	60,165*	2,336,668	4,433,948	0	6,830,781
Awarded EU contribution: Emergency actions	6,078,132	13,409,973	10,469,979	9,999,610	39,957,693
Awarded EU contribution: Combined	6,140,307	15,748,651	14,905,939	10,001,623	46,788,474
Specific actions (EUR)					
Programmed EU contribution	10.000.000	5.000.000	10.000.000	-	25.000.000
Awarded EU contribution: Specific actions	8,705,101	4,976,765	8,854,870	-	22,266,735

*Not covered by the evaluation questions, as implemented before 1 January 2011.

Source: AWP for data related to programmed EU contribution and ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016) for data related to awarded amounts (Commitments)

Financial data presented here for Direct Management were extracted from ABAC on 18/11/2016. Eight projects are still running, so data refer to the remaining 69 projects. These projects include three Community Actions and one Specific action (AWP 2012) for which the grant agreements were subsequently terminated at the request of the implementing authorities, since the commitments had been engaged. The termination was an option that was activated on request of the beneficiaries in those cases either because of administrative complications or because the beneficiaries estimated that they were unable to finalise the action in the time given.⁸⁶

The final amounts of EU grants usually differ from the maximum grant amounts foreseen in the grant agreements. In many cases, the total actual costs are lower than the budgeted total costs; in some cases, the declared costs have been considered ineligible by the Commission (for example, falling outside the scope of the eligible activities, or outside the eligible territorial and temporal scope), hence the final amounts awarded differ from the amount of final accepted EU contribution at the time of selection.

Despite these setbacks, overall absorption for EBF Direct Management was 74.16% and is likely to increase once the remaining eight projects draw to a close.

YEAR	Commitments (CLOSED PROJECTS) EUR	Eligible costs of closed projects ABAC 18/11/2016	Absorption rate of closed projects
2010	14,843,397.41	9,909,362.97	66.76%

⁸⁶ EBF direct management team, Unit HOME E.1 Union Actions.

YEAR	Commitments (CLOSED PROJECTS) EUR	Eligible costs of closed projects ABAC 18/11/2016	Absorption rate of closed projects
2011	20,723,405.12	15,587,278.95	75.22%
2012	23,488,796.72	16,659,611.38	70.93%
2013	9,999,609.55	9,054,659.94	90.55%
TOTAL	69,055,208.80	51,210,913.24	74.16%

Source: ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016)

Interestingly, rates of absorption increase as the years progress. The 91% rate in 2013 can be attributed to a reduced number of actions (7), six of which were Emergency Measures. Emergency Measures have the highest rates of absorption (for further information please see the answers to evaluation question 8 and 9 in section 7.3).

TYPE OF ACTION	Commitments (CLOSED PROJECTS)	Eligible costs of closed projects ABAC 18/11/2016	Absorption rate of closed projects
CA	6,830,780.66	4,310,737.65	63.11%
EA/EM	39,957,693.00	31,976,217.72	80.03%
CA + EA/EM	46,788,473.66	36,286,955.37	77.56%
SA	22,266,735.14	14,923,957.87	67.02%
TOTAL	69,055,208.80	51,210,913.24	74.16%

Source: ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016). Note: CA stand for Community actions, EA stands for Emergency actions, EM stands for Emergency Measures, SA stands for Specific actions.

Output indicators

This section presents quantified aggregated information on the main types of investments supported under the EBF 2011-2013 national actions. Table 8 presents these data, which have been extracted from the 26 national evaluation reports.

Table 8: Aggregated output and result indicators covering all 26 countries that provided data

Output and Result Indicators	Total (EBF 2011-13)	Overall (context indicators)
Length of the external border covered by surveillance equipment acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes (km)	59,194	N/A
Number of border crossing points connected to VIS with the support of the 2011-2013 annual programmes	914	Out of 1,700 BCPs
Number of border crossing points constructed, renovated or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	193	
Number of border crossing points equipped with equipment acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	1,410	
Number of border guards trained under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	22,505	Out of 47,536

Output and Result Indicators	Total (EBF 2011-13)	Overall (context indicators)
Number of consular cooperation activities developed under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	49	N/A
Number of consular officials trained under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	4,513	N/A
Number of consulates connected to VIS with the support of the 2011-2013 annual programmes	1,072	out of 2,189
Number of consulates equipped with operating equipment for Schengen visa processing under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	889	
Number of consulates equipped with security enhancing equipment (security doors, bulletproof windows etc.) under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	100	
Number of detention facilities constructed or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	38	out of 375
Number of helicopters acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	66	out of 225
Number of ILOs and other advisors deployed under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	541	N/A
Number of places in detention facilities constructed or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	547	out of 7,989
Number of planes acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	23	out of 51
Number of Schengen visas issued in the period 2011-2013 at consulates constructed or renovated under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	3,301,228	out of 12,286,970
Number of vehicles acquired under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	2,736	out of 11,437
Number of vessels acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	319	out of 1,381

Source: National evaluation reports from 26 participating countries

The indicators that countries are most likely to provide outputs and results on include: the number of border crossing points equipped (data provided by 23 countries); the number of border guards trained (22 countries); length of external border covered by surveillance equipment acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes (km) (18 countries); number of consulates connected to VIS (17 countries); the number of vehicles acquired and the number of consular officials trained (both 16 countries). The indicators with the fewest data points concern the number of detention facilities constructed or upgraded and number of places in detention facilities (both completed by four countries). This is mainly due to the fact that Member States not acquiring certain type of investments did not report on them. A factor influencing these indicators surrounds the eligibility of detention facilities under the EBF. In practice, the same building can be financed by different sources as it can be used for the processing of migrants (costs eligible under the EBF), migrants accepted as refugees (costs eligible under the Refugee Fund) and migrants to be returned (costs eligible under the Return Fund). As per Article 4(3)(f) of the EBF's legal base, areas and centres for persons whose entry is refused are eligible under the EBF.

In addition to these indicators, outputs and results have not been readily reported on the number of planes acquired or upgraded (five countries); or the number of Schengen visas issued at constructed or renovated consulates (six countries).

Furthermore, countries, on average, were only able to provide data on 8.4 out of 18 indicators. The country providing data across the most indicators was ES (15 indicators); followed by FR (14); and BE, HU, LT (12 each). The countries providing data on the fewest indicators were LU (one indicator); CZ (three); and AT, CH, EE (four each). In total, 53% of the indicators were reported to be 0 or were not reported. However, it should be taken into account that not all countries had projects relating to all indicators. It is therefore logical that the number of indicators is lower for countries that received less funding through the EBF.

7 ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS (TASK 17)

7.1 Relevance

Key findings

- Overall, the actions funded by the EBF were relevant both at EU level and for individual Member States, with some caveats:
 - although the EBF objectives were sufficiently broad, there were eligibility limitations that prevented actions that could address the identified needs;
 - some countries also mentioned other needs that were not supported by the EBF 2011-2013, but in their opinion were part of the broader objective of improving border management and security.

Evaluation question 1(a)

To what extent did the objectives of the EBF correspond to the needs related to the management of the EU external borders and the processing of the Schengen visas?

Overall, the objectives of the EBF had, in the period under evaluation (2011-2013), a high degree of correspondence to the objectives related to the management of the EU external borders and the processing of the Schengen visas as set out in Council Decision 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF, and in Decision 2007/599/EC implementing the EBF.

Identification of needs

Evaluation reports and interviews with representatives of Responsible Authorities (RAs) and with beneficiaries indicated that potential beneficiaries of the EBF (in most cases, Border Police/National Police and various structures within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) or Ministries of the Interior (MOI)) were involved in the identification of high-priority needs related to their specific areas of responsibilities at the external borders and in the processing of Schengen visas. The elaboration of Multiannual Programmes (MAP) and Annual Programmes (AP) was a participatory process where the role of potential beneficiaries was to present their particular needs to the national RA and suggest investment solutions. The RA made sure the planned investments were eligible for EBF contributions and were in line with national strategic priorities (e.g. IT, PL, HU, RO, BG). This approach guaranteed that the projects selected for implementation under each Member State's AP corresponded to its actual needs as defined by the institutions directly in charge of management of the external borders and processing of Schengen visas.

In terms of prioritisation of needs, the major criterion with regard to investments at the external borders was the migration pressure in recent years.⁸⁷ Some countries claimed that while this was the most visible and measurable factor, investments were also needed at borders which did not experience immediate migratory pressure (e.g. the EU eastern and north-eastern external borders), as the situation in the immediate neighbourhood was volatile due to the instability in the relevant neighbouring countries and the responsive nature of migratory routes. The relevance of EBF objectives to the needs of Member States is demonstrated in the variety of investments selected for implementation. Thus, countries facing significant migration

⁸⁷ Interview with DG Migration and Home Affairs official.

pressure at the southern and south-eastern external borders invested heavily in surveillance systems and (in the case of Greece) in ad-hoc reinforcement of their capacities to control their borders, with less emphasis on actions related to Schengen visas, ITech systems or activities in third countries. On the other hand, Member States where migration pressure was relatively low invested in actions targeting the efficient management of the flows of persons at the external borders (e.g. ABC or upgrades of the BCPs) or in Schengen visa-related actions and actions in third countries (e.g. VIS upgrades or the deployment of Document and Visa Advisors in third countries).

Flexibility of the EBF

The relevance of the EBF was ensured by the way annual programmes were developed and revised. Recognising the ever-changing risks and priorities with regard to the management of external borders, the 2007-2013 MAPs defined national needs and priorities in very broad terms, while the APs provided an updated and more detailed analysis of needs and respective solutions. Unlike the MAPs, the annual programmes were subject to revisions initiated by the Member States. Most of them revised their APs at least twice in the 2011-2013 period, with some countries opting for multiple revisions of the same AP. While there were various reasons for the revisions (such as delays in the implementation of planned actions or lack of qualified contractors at the designated price levels), in many cases the revisions were prompted by changing needs and priorities of the Member States. Revisions included additional projects, cancellations of projects, modification of actions and of their budgets. Thus the option to revise the annual programmes contributed to the overall relevance of the investments. (As an example, IT introduced a total of 35 new actions in the 2011-2013 period through revisions in its APs.⁸⁸)

Community and Specific Actions

Community actions had separate objectives and priorities identified and agreed on an annual basis within work programmes drafted by the EBF direct management team in consultation with the policy units at DG Home to verify what specific objectives they want to achieve for the particular year.⁸⁹ While these objectives refer to those in the basic act, they do not directly correspond to Annual Programmes due to their ad-hoc nature. Annual objectives for Community actions are presented in Chapter 6.

In general priorities have been stable (e.g. EUROSUR cooperation, deployment of ILOs in third countries representing more than one MS), and there was little need to adjust them every year, as irregular migration was still relatively stable (compared to the next programme period) – hence it was clear what the Commission wanted to achieve each year through the Community actions. At the same time, they have been flexible enough to direct resources where most needed – for example to use the majority of annual funds for emergency assistance.

Interviews with DG Home policy officers indicate that **consular cooperation** between two MS and with third countries has been a high priority of the EBF in order to rationalise visa processing, pooling of resources, sharing of staff and co-locations.⁹⁰ This was translated into the AWP⁹¹ of the Community Actions into two specific annual objectives and priorities: 1) strengthening of the operational capacity and cooperation

⁸⁸ Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the EBF under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Italy – 10 actions in 2011, 16 in 2012 and 9 in 2013.

⁸⁹ Interview DG Home Border Management & Schengen Unit.

⁹⁰ Interview DG Home Visa policy unit; interview Unit HOME E.1 Internal Security Fund / EBF direct management.

⁹¹ External Borders Fund 2007-2013, Community Actions Annual Work Programme 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013.

of ILO officers in third countries; and 2) setting up and further development of regional consular cooperation programmes.

Specific actions have been directed towards addressing weaknesses and urgent needs at some border points arising from migration pressure / emergency situations. While the overall definition of eligible and high priority border sections was relevant to the actual situation on the ground (based on Frontex risk assessment), the assessment of specific needs and how these can be met through Specific actions was not specific enough, leading to implementation of actions that overlapped with other EBF parts, such as the Emergency actions or the national APs.

The main issues with Specific actions were already raised by the European Court of Auditors Special Report on the EBF (2014) and addressed by the Commission, including through abolishing Specific actions in the next programme period and the related legal framework. Problems were mainly related to the lack of coordination of the objectives – and the Specific actions funded – with the other parts of the EBF, and similar activities have been supported both under the Emergency actions but also under the national APs, while the EU added value was not always clear. Not all projects included clear monitoring indicators and reporting was poor in many instances.

Conclusions

Based on the evaluation reports and interviews with RAs and beneficiaries, one conclusion to be drawn is that Member States were satisfied overall with the degree of correspondence of EBF objectives to their needs. Most of the Member States confirmed that their identified needs were addressed by the actions supported by the EBF, and they pointed out that the programming process through which beneficiaries were able to suggest investments and get them approved contributed to the high relevance of the implemented EBF projects (e.g. BE, RO).

At the same time, some countries indicated certain issues with the relevance of the scope of approved and implemented actions. One of the concerns was that although the EBF objectives were sufficiently broad, there were eligibility limitations that prevented actions that could address the identified needs. An example quoted by several Member States was that upgrades of BCPs where border guards and customs officers work together in the same facilities were only partially eligible expenditures under the EBF, and were thus subject to the mixed use rule, i.e. such actions were only partially financed to the extent that they were linked to the objectives of the fund (HU, PL⁹²). However, while the legal basis did not allow for the financing of activities not related to border control, the Commission allowed for flexibility in proportionally funding some activities. Some Member States pointed out that eligibility rules did not allow them to get support for pressing needs like insufficient staffing at BCPs or inadequate national funds for maintenance of acquired equipment and vehicles (AT, EE⁹³); this issue was identified and has been addressed in the development of the ISF. It should be noted though that some of the investments (e.g. the introduction of ABC at main airport BCPs) had as one of the expected results a decrease in the number of border officers required for border checks. Thus, the need related to insufficient staffing was partially addressed by an EBF action.⁹⁴ Some countries also mentioned other needs that were not supported by the EBF 2011-2013, but in their opinion were part of the broader objective of improving border management and security such as IT

⁹² Interviews with Responsible Authorities in Hungary and Poland.

⁹³ AT NER EBF, EE NER.

⁹⁴ EE NER.

development and training for Schengen visas within the Schengen Area (and not only in third countries).⁹⁵

Community actions have been of high relevance for supporting the needs of broader and strategic EU-level initiatives such as EUROSUR through aiding the interlinking and exchange of information between MS National Coordination Centres. These activities have been prioritised in the AWP 2011-2013 objectives.

⁹⁵ HU NER.

7.2 Utility

Key findings

- Assessing the Fund's flexibility provides a good framework for differentiating utility from relevance.
- The EBF was flexible enough to shift resources to Member States having suddenly been the subject of high migratory pressure, especially through emergency actions (such as the added focus on EL).

Evaluation question 1(b)

To what extent did the actual effects of the EBF 2011-2013 actions correspond to the needs related to the management of the EU external borders and the processing of the Schengen visas?

Assessing the utility of an intervention implies looking at the extent to which its effects were in line with the needs identified by the Member State's authorities at national level. As a baseline, if the programme is found to be relevant (as is the case with the EBF 2011-13), it is likely, if effectiveness is proven (see below) that it will have a high level of utility. However, in order to provide more insight than simply aggregating findings on relevance and effectiveness, it is interesting to look at the dynamic and evolving situation in the area of external borders and processing of Schengen visas.

One of the main aspects differentiating utility from relevance is that assessing the needs relating to the management of EU external borders is more dynamic than assessing the objectives of the programme. To give a concrete example, the migration situation was very different in 2007 (140,000 irregular migrants detected) than in 2011 (189,000 irregular migrants detected), and again in 2014 (322,000 irregular migrants detected). The Arab Spring in 2011 played an important role in shifting the needs that some Member States identified. One of the most striking examples of the utility of the EBF over the 2011-13 period is that of EL.⁹⁶ The country had not experienced high migratory pressures when the fund was set up. The increasing use of the East Mediterranean (and Balkan) route for migrants meant that EL found itself at the forefront of the EU's external borders.⁹⁷ 2010 also saw a shift in migration routes into EL from sea entry to entry through the Evros river (EL NER). According to the EL MAP developed in 2007, the main need was to develop situational awareness at the external borders, in order to provide the best reaction capability to threats and incidents (EL MAP). By 2010, the needs had evolved and, as a result, resources were shifted to address the country's needs and EL became one of the largest beneficiaries of the EBF between 2011 and 2013.⁹⁸

Overall, the EBF's effects (outputs, results and impacts) corresponded to the needs identified both at the inception of the programme (2007) and at the beginning of the period under review (2011), highlighting the flexibility of the programme. Almost all countries reported a high level of utility, stating, as was the case with EL, a high level of flexibility in order to fund national needs. In the case of some investments (such as SIS II and VIS-related ones), the needs of the countries were very much in line with the objectives of the EBF. Consequently, the majority of countries (such as AT, BE, BG, FR and SE to name a few), reported a high level of utility relating to the SIS II

⁹⁶ See in particular Frontex's FRAN over the period in question.

⁹⁷ Interview with DG Home.

⁹⁸ See chapter 6.

and VIS systems, given that the effects of the actions were in line with the needs identified and objectives of the MAPs and APs.

Only two countries reported some issues. In NL, the flexibility of EBF funding was questioned given that 'the possibilities with the EBF are limited in relation to the needs', which led to a lower than hoped for implementation rate. The main criticism related to the inadequacy of the annual instalment way of funding projects, which did not allow enough time to set up and implement projects (NL NER). In PT, investments under Priority 1 were found to have 'only partially' fulfilled their utility criterion. This was based on the fact that some projects were not implemented, while others did not achieve their objectives (PT NER). In both cases, the negative judgement stems from the inability of the projects to have had the desired effects rather than any shortcoming at EU level.

Conclusions

Overall, the majority of Member States found projects funded by the EBF 2011-13 to have a high level of utility. Assessing the Fund's flexibility provides an interesting way of differentiating utility from relevance. The EBF's ability to shift resources to a country such as EL, having suddenly been the subject of high migratory pressure, highlights its utility. While the MAP developed at the inception of the EBF in 2007 planned for EUR 82 million EU co-financing rates in the 2011-2013 period, the final EU contribution for these years was over EUR 100 million.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ EL MAP and SFC2007 database

7.3 Effectiveness

As described in chapter 3, the EBF has been divided into objectives and priorities. While the legal basis establishing the EBF provides the objectives of the fund (against which it consequently must be evaluated), priorities were set out in the implementing decision – 2007/599/EC. Member States' programming and reporting (including Annual Programmes, Final Reports and National Evaluation Reports) were structured around priorities.

These priorities and objectives partly overlap and, given that the evaluation questions under the 'Effectiveness' theme mirror these, two or more questions might cover similar thematic areas. In order to facilitate the understanding and analysis of the 'Effectiveness' criterion, the evaluation questions have been reorganised, with **answers to the questions relating to priorities** brought forward and focusing on the activities and outputs. These are followed by answers to the **questions on the objectives of the EBF** where an evaluation judgement is provided on the impacts of the EBF making use of context indicators. An overall assessment on the effectiveness of the EBF 2011-2013 concludes this chapter.

Key findings

- Given the increased migratory pressures faced by the EU and the fact that the needs to be addressed by the Fund's objectives outlive the EBF (as demonstrated by the similar ISF objectives), the overall effectiveness of the EBF should be assessed against specific elements of the Union's overall borders policy architecture (such as EUROSUR, VIS or SIS II) and be seen as a series of building blocks in the development of the overarching policy objectives.
- The bulk of the EU contribution to the EBF related to Priorities 1 and 2 (72% of the overall EU contribution), reflecting the type of investment under these priorities.
- The increased co-financing rate for specific priorities has had a positive impact in channelling funding towards them. However, in Member States benefiting from cohesion funds, where the EU co-financing rate was 75%, this effect is more difficult to assess given that there was little or no incentive to specify whether an investment was made under a specific priority.
- While not harmful to the implementation of the EBF, the partial overlap between the EBF's objectives and priorities adds a challenge to the assessment of the Fund's effectiveness. In order to circumvent this, the assessment of priorities focuses on the national level and outputs, while the assessment of the objectives focuses on wider results and impacts at EU level.
- Under the period evaluated, the EBF has contributed to:
 - the establishment of a common Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) as regards the checks on persons at BCPs;
 - the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders;
 - the effective processing of Schengen visas and the tackling of illegal immigration;
 - the establishment of ITech systems required for implementation of the EU legal instruments in the field of external borders and Schengen visas;
 - the application of relevant EU legal instruments in the field of Schengen visas, in particular the Visa Code.

Evaluation question 4

*To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders? – **Priority 1***

In order to answer this evaluation question on Priority 1, the first need is to clarify and understand the concepts used in the Priority. 'Integrated Border Management' (IBM) is key to the European border management strategy. It should be noted however that the concept of IBM is broader than the scope of the EBF which does not cover all its elements, e.g. compensatory measures within the territory. The Council has defined IBM of external borders as consisting of three components:¹⁰⁰

- **A common corpus of legislation**, in particular the Schengen Borders Code as well as the Regulation on local border traffic.
- **Operational cooperation** between Member States, including cooperation as coordinated by the Frontex;
- **Solidarity** between Member States and the Community through the establishment of an External Borders Fund.

In 2007, for the purpose of the Guidelines for IBM in the Western Balkans, the European Commission included other types of cooperation, namely intra-service cooperation and coordination (between the different levels of hierarchy within an agency or ministry), intra-agency cooperation (between different ministries and agencies) and international cooperation (with agencies and ministries of other states or international organisations).¹⁰¹

Examples of actions suggested by the European Commission to be undertaken by Member States include the establishment of a specific regime for low-risk travellers from non-EU countries, automated gates, the introduction of an automatic system registering the time and place of entry and exit of non-EU Member Country nationals admitted for short stays (both those who require a visa and those who do not), using the same technical platform as the SIS II and VIS, and finally, the introduction of an electronic system of travel authorisation (ESTA).¹⁰²

This evaluation question relates to the widest range of activities funded under the EBF. An integrated border management system includes a large spectrum of activities both at BCPs (facilitating border crossing for bona fide travellers, creation of a system to register the entry/exit of third-country nationals) and surveillance activities at the external borders between BCPs (surveillance systems).

There are important overlaps between the activities funded under Priority 1 and Priority 2 (see next question). Under both Priority 1 and 2, equipment was purchased, such as vessels, vehicles and detection equipment (video, radars, sensors, etc.).

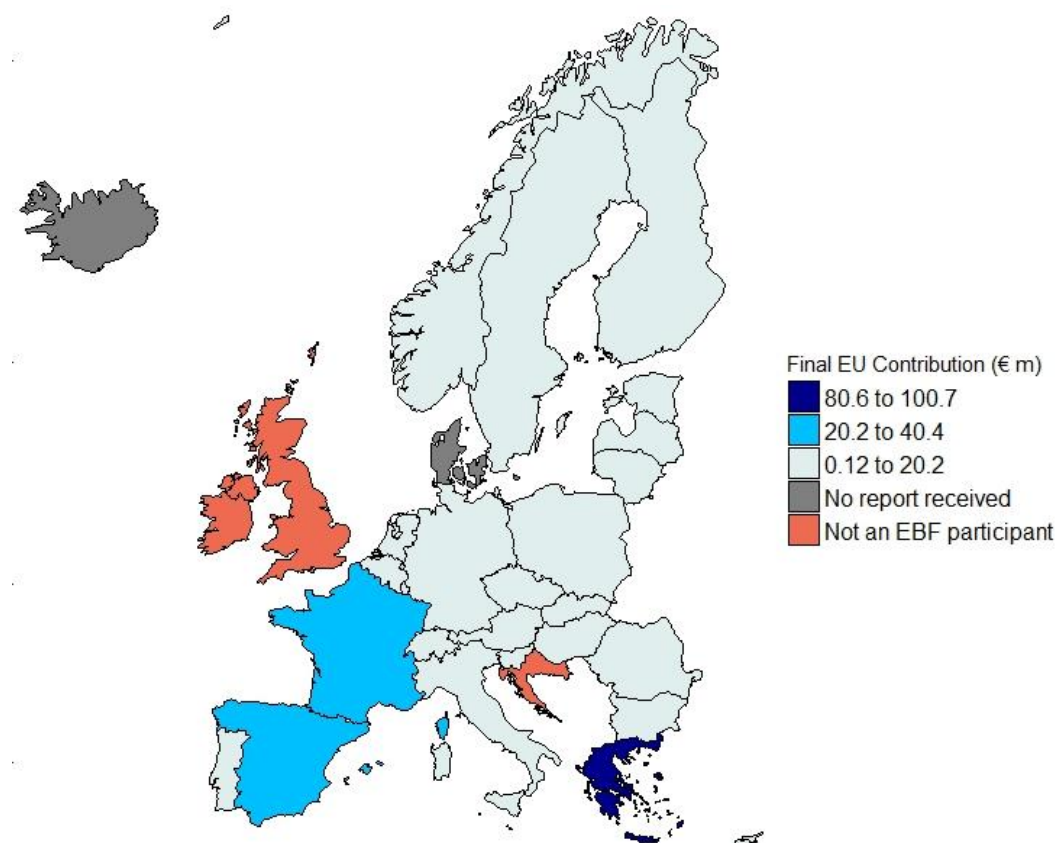
¹⁰⁰ Council Conclusions, Justice and Home Affairs, 2768th Council Meeting, Brussels, 4-5 December 2006.

¹⁰¹ Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in the Western Balkans, European Commission, January 2007.

¹⁰² Communication of 13 February 2008 from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Preparing the next steps in border management in the European Union COM(2008) 69 final.

However, this is not surprising as both Priority 1 and Priority 2 have an aspect of 'surveillance' to them: P1 concerns a 'common integrated border management system as regards [...] the surveillance of the external borders' while Priority 2 concerns a 'European Surveillance System for the external borders'. While this does not affect the implementation of the Fund, it does create a challenge for its evaluation.

Figure 14: EBF 2011-13: Priority 1 Expenditure by Member State



Of the participating countries evaluated,¹⁰³ all countries received funding for actions under Priority 1. The total EBF programmed contribution for Priority 1 was EUR 346 million, and the final EBF contribution on Priority 1 amounted to EUR 266 million; an average implementation rate of 78%. The four largest recipients of EBF funding under Priority 1 are EL (EUR 110.7 million), IT (EUR 30 million), FR (EUR 29.5 million) and ES (EUR 25.3 million). With regard to EL, the budget under this priority accounted for 87% of the total EBF in 2011-2013 (EL NER).

The actions funded under Priority 1 related to the improvement of both border control (checks on persons and infrastructure: the construction or upgrading of buildings – BCPs and centres for persons whose entry is refused) and surveillance activities, through the purchase of equipment, and the establishment of surveillance and/or information systems.

SP 1.1: Upgrading of the **national communication systems** to make them interoperable with other Member States

¹⁰³ At the time of writing, no evaluation report had been received from IS and DK. Interviews were conducted with the RA from both countries and their input has been included where relevant.

Countries that received funding under Specific Priority 1.1 (SP1.1) include BG, DE, ES, FR and SI. For FR, this included the setting up of the SIAM system (FR NER), and for ES actions funded included the maintenance and improvement of the SEAHORSE communications networks and integration of the civil-guards maritime coastal and border surveillance systems into EUROSUR (ES NER). As can be seen in Table 9, while in 2011 a relatively small proportion of the funding under Priority 1 was used for Specific Priority 1.1 (2%), this increased throughout 2012 and 2013.

Table 9: Actions funded by the EBF under Specific Priority 1.1

Year	MS with actions funded under SP1.1 ¹⁰⁴	Total –Final EU contribution SP 1.1 in EUR	Total –Final EU contribution Priority 1	% SP 1.1 of Priority 1
2011	BG (2x), DE, FR, SI	1,419,565	67,779,390	2%
2012	BG, ES (3x), FR (2x), SI	4,480,945	77,177,069	6%
2013	DE, ES, FR, SI	12,255,361	121,531,964	10%
Total		18,155,871	266,488,423	7%

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

SP 1.2: Purchase and/or upgrading of **operating equipment** to control external borders which is interoperable with other Member States and takes into account the results of the common integrated risk analysis

As can be seen in Table 10, a relatively large proportion of the funding under Priority 1 was used for Specific Priority 1.2 (18% in 2011 and 16% in 2012, with an increase in 2013 to 26%). Of the three specific priorities under Priority 1, most countries have received funding under Specific Priority 1.2 (incl. AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, LU, NO and SE).¹⁰⁵ The actions funded seem quite different from one another and range from the development of E-gates (e.g. AT, BE, ES, NO) to the acquisition of four rigid inflatable boats for the coastal stations of the Port and Marine Police Unit and in 2012 (CY).¹⁰⁶

Table 10: Actions funded by the EBF under Specific Priority 1.2

Year	MS with actions funded under SP1.2 ¹⁰⁷	Total –Final EU contribution SP 1.2 in EUR	Total –Final EU contribution Priority 1	% SP 1.2 of Priority 1
2011	BG (7x), CH, DE (2x), EE, ES, FR (4x), LU, NO.	12,115,116	67,779,390	18%
2012	AT, BE, BG, CY (2x), DK, ES, FR (3x), LU, SE	12,115,512	77,177,069	16%
2013	BE (2x), BG, CH, ES	32,135,870	121,531,964	26%

¹⁰⁴ If more than one action was funded by the EBF under SP1.1, this is indicated in brackets [number of actions]x

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ SFP 2007 database

¹⁰⁷ If more than one action was funded by the EBF under SP1.1, this is indicated in brackets [number of actions]x

Year	MS with actions funded under SP1.2 ¹⁰⁷	Total –Final EU contribution SP 1.2 in EUR	Total –Final EU contribution Priority 1	% SP 1.2 of Priority 1
	(5x), FI, FR (3x), SE			
Total		56,366,498	266,488,423	21%

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

SP 1.3: Purchase and/or upgrading of **operating equipment** to increase the capacity of Member States to take part in and/or contribute to **operational cooperation** between Member States as coordinated by the Frontex Agency.

As can be seen in Table 11, a relatively small proportion of the funding under Priority 1 was used for Specific Priority 1.3. Member States that received funding under Specific Priority 1.3 include BE, DE and ES.¹⁰⁸ Belgium purchased a video platform with the EU funding in 2011 under this specific priority, which was used to equip a helicopter which enabled the Federal Police to perform around 300 hours of border surveillance on a yearly basis at its maritime borders (BE NER). The largest action funded was the purchase by Spain of SIRDEE communications terminals for the CNP's/GC's border control units at the Mediterranean Basin, Balearic Islands and Canary Islands (ES FR 2012). The latter action contributed to operational cooperation as the SIRDEE network with the new handheld radios allowed Spanish law enforcement agencies and border control units to perform secure voice and data communications throughout the national territory (ES FR 2012).

This equipment should then have been put at the disposal of Frontex via a specific database, which could be used, in case of need, in common operations as coordinated by Frontex.

Table 11: Actions funded by the EBF under Specific Priority 1.3

Year	MS with actions funded under SP1.3 ¹⁰⁹	Total –Final EU contribution SP 1.3 in EUR	Total –Final EU contribution Priority 1	% SP 1.3 of Priority 1
2011	BE, DE	193,194	67,779,390	0.29%
2012	ES	3,693,672	77,177,069	4.79%
2013	ES	16,053	121,531,964	0.01%
Total		3,902,919	266,488,423	1.46%

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Border crossing points

Most EBF funding under Priority 1 has been spent on equipment as well as software and hardware aimed to improve border controls at the land border, maritime border and airports.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ If more than one action was funded by the EBF under SP1.1, this is indicated in brackets [number of actions]

In terms of border control at BCPs, Table 12 shows that in total 1,700 BCPs were equipped under EBF funding in the period 2011-2013. The subsection below provides more detailed information on this type of equipment, as well as surveillance equipment and systems, by each type of border (land, maritime, air).

Table 12: Number of border crossing points equipped by equipment acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes

Year	Number of border crossing points equipped
2011	158 (BE, CH, ES, FI, FR, EL, NO, SE, SI, MT)
2012	381 (BE, CH, DE, EL, ES, FR, HU, LT, MT, RO, SE, SI, SK)
2013	405 (BE, BG, CH, EE, EL, ES, FR, LT, LV, MT, RO, SE, SI)
2014	284 (BE, BG, CH, DE, EL, ES, FR, HU, LT, MT, NL, NO, PL, RO, SE, SI)
TOTAL	1,410¹¹⁰ (out of 1,700)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

Construction / upgrade of BCPs, centres for persons whose entry is refused and other infrastructure (2)

Several countries used EBF funding to construct, renovate or upgrade border crossing points (see Table 13), infrastructure at BCP (e.g. EL, HU, IT, NO) or reception centres (e.g. EL) and screening and centres for persons whose entry is refused (see Table 14), as well as a helicopter hangar (e.g. EE), vehicle parking lots at a BCP (e.g. LT), and refurbishment of consular premises (e.g. LT).

HU spent the most in this regard, upgrading two BCPs at the Ukrainian and Serbian borders, which involved lane expansion, infrastructure improvement and new border check booths. HU reportedly found this action effective, as it had increased the throughput capacity at public road border crossings and increased the level of satisfaction for travellers (HU NER).

Table 13: Number of border crossing points constructed, renovated or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes

Year	Number of border crossing points constructed, renovated or upgraded
2011	10 (NO, SI, SK)
2012	7 (ES, FR, PL, SI)
2013	73 (ES, SE, SI)
2014	34 (FR, HU, PT, SE, SI, RO)
TOTAL	193 BCP¹¹¹ (out of 1,700)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

As can be seen in Table 14, in total 38 detention facilities¹¹² were constructed or upgraded, and 547 places within detention facilities were constructed or upgraded through EBF funding 2011-2013. Given the way in which the investments made

¹¹⁰ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹¹¹ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹¹² While the legal basis refers to these centres as 'centres for persons whose entry is refused', the indicators in the NERs refer to 'detention facilities'.

through the EBF have to be linked to an annual programme, the detention facility in EL is recorded under 2012, while the number of places in the facility have been recorded under 2013.

Table 14: Number of detention facilities, and places within detention facilities) constructed or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes

Year	Number of detention facilities constructed or upgraded	Number of places in detention facilities constructed or upgraded
2011	0	0
2012	1 (EL)	0
2013	19 (CY, EL, LT, RO)	511 (CY, EL, LT, RO, of which 503 EL)
2014	10 (CY, EL, LT, RO)	3 (RO)
TOTAL	38¹¹³ (out of 375 in 2014)	547¹¹⁴ (out of 7,989 in 2014)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

The countries constructing or upgrading the most detention facilities are EL and RO, with 20 and 12 facilities constructed/upgraded respectively (EL, RO NERs). Reported effects and impact of upgrading the screening and detention facilities include the improvement of accommodation and living conditions (including health and safety conditions) for the apprehended irregular immigrants (EL NER) and improvement of security and surveillance of foreigners in public custody and overall reduction of the risks of occurrence of special events / security incidents at Arad Centre (RO NER).

Different types of equipment and software/hardware were purchased for **border control at land BCPs** under Priority 1, such as monocular microscopes (e.g. BG), devices for the detection of hidden persons (e.g. BG), X-ray scanning equipment used to inspect freight vehicles (e.g. LT), the establishment of a border control information system (e.g. EE) and fingerprint readers (e.g. SE). BG noted in this regard that the equipment significantly reduced the time for border checks and made it more efficient; for example between July and December 2013, 19 irregular migrants were detected using the movement detector system (BG NER).

Equipment/systems at airports (BCPs)

In terms of countries' expenditure under EBF Priority 1 on border control equipment used at airports, countries' actions included primarily the setting up of automated border control systems, referred to as ABC Gates or e-gates at airports¹¹⁵ (see Table 15), the establishment of information systems on air passengers (e.g. DE, EE, FR and NL) and surveillance cameras for airports (e.g. SE).

Table 15: Number of e-gates purchased under EBF 2011-2013

Country	Number of E-gates
BE	6 at Brussels Airport
BG	2 (4 lines each) at Varna and Bourgas Airport
EE	2 (3 kiosks per gate) at Tallinn airport
ES	15 (for pedestrian traffic from Spain to Gibraltar)
FI	20 at Helsinki airport and 3 (2-way) at port

¹¹³ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹¹⁴ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹¹⁵ With the exception of Spain, which installed the system for pedestrian traffic.

Country	Number of E-gates
HU	1 at Ferenc Liszt International Airport
IT	3 at Milano Malpensa Airport
NL	36 at Schiphol Airport
NO	4 at Oslo Airport Gardermoen

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

Generally, e-gates enable citizens of the EU, European Economic Area and Schengen Area, who hold the chipped passport, to cross the external border without the intervention of a border guard official. In terms of the effectiveness of e-gates, countries reported an increase in efficiency of border checks of travellers (BE, FI, IT, NL), reducing the processing time per passenger (BE), more effective use of human resources (BE, EE, NO) and the quality/security of border checks through facial recognition and document check (BE, NL, NO). Other countries noted that the e-gates contributed to smooth border crossings (FI, NL), reduced queuing (FI, NL) and improved customer satisfaction (FI, NO). The Netherlands reported that 74% of passengers with e-passports used the e-gates, 24% more than expected, and noted the importance of the e-gates in order to maintain passenger mobility considering the growing passenger flows (NL NER). One action funded in FI included the piloting of e-gates for third-country nationals, which included facial recognition matching systems and fingerprint-recognition systems to compare fingerprints as required by the VIS controls (FI NER).

However, BG and NO noted that the time spent at border controls did not necessarily shorten for passengers using the automated border control check (BG NER and NO case study). NO reported an increase in waiting time for passengers, from five seconds through border guard checks to 15 seconds through e-gate checks, as well as security risks when the machines did not work properly on certain occasions (NO case study, see reasons below). However, it should be noted that a more appropriate indicator would be waiting time per passenger, which includes waiting in line before the passport check that takes 5-15 seconds. However, the context indicators available do not allow for a distinction between BCPs using ABC gates and others.

BG and HU (see reason below) also noted the lower than expected usage rate/capacity utilisation by passengers. Reasons mentioned for this included passengers' preference for human interaction/them being uncomfortable with using new technology (BG); passengers' lack of awareness of e-gates (BG); passengers' previous negative experiences (e.g. due to technical problems) (BG) and the lack of certificates for national documents other than Norwegian (NO case study). One must also take into account the relatively lower number of passengers travelling through these MS.

Concerns noted by NO in terms of implementation of the e-gates included the need to train personnel (and therefore an initial increased workload), provision of additional staff to guide passengers, and complications experienced during their development (delays, discovery that more than three were needed to ensure efficiency gains) (NO NER). However, all in all NO found the investment to be positive, as it resulted in more efficient use of border control resources (NO case study, see also text box below). In AT, the project was not implemented as part of the EBF, as the research and development phase took longer than expected (AT NER).

Box 1: e-gates (NO case study)

The investment at Gardermoen airport initially resulted in increased workload for border guards and delays for passengers. However, following a period of testing and training there are currently 10 master users who can train all other staff to use the e-

gates. The airport authority has provided floorwalkers that guide the passenger flows and can provide assistance to first time users of the e-gates. Signage for passengers has been improved. In terms of technical capacity, the obtaining of more Certificates of EU/EEA MS has allowed more passengers to be able to use the e-gates. With the putting together of the Schengen Master list in spring 2016 this problem is expected to be fully resolved.

Interviewed police and border officials shared the challenges related to the effective operation of the e-gates but expressed confidence that these challenges have been overcome and they were satisfied with the results of the project. They are also making plans for future expansion of e-gates to other sections of the airport (departures), to the new airport being constructed and also to other BCPs and also at maritime ports.

Several countries also developed **information systems on air passenger data** under Priority 1. For example, the French 'Passage Rapide Aux Frontières Extérieures' (PARAFE) system (EUR 2 million over 2011-2013) was set up to collect and store fingerprints of air passengers in a central database, which improved the quality of controls. NL reported that, as a result of its project API 3.0, all passengers on incoming flights can be automatically checked, which increases accuracy and timeliness, and their details are compared before arrival (NL NER). Moreover, the NL reported that the project had contributed on the one hand to effective and efficient border checks, ensured security and countered illegal migration, and on the other hand addressed the increasing mobility of predominantly bona fide travellers (NL NER). EE reported that its system allowed for the development of pre-control lists of air and ship passengers, enabled to make queries to relevant EU systems (e.g. SIS and VIS, Interpol), was more user friendly and linked up the existing technological means used in border control (e.g. passport and fingerprint scanners, mobile control equipment) (EE NER). DE also noted as an effect the possibility to monitor an increasing amount of flight passenger data and identify wanted persons.

Equipment & Systems – identification of false documents at BCPs

Finally, a number of countries acquired equipment or set up systems aimed at improving the detection of false travel documents or visas, such as providing access to databases or setting up data systems for the verification of validity and authenticity of documents (BE, DE, NO), equipment for checking security features on travel documents and detecting counterfeits (EE, EL, FR, IT, LT).

Those countries that commented on effectiveness of the above investments were positive. For example, IT stated that the considerable increase of false documents detected at BCP in the last five years was due, at least partially, to the investments made, as described above (IT NER). Other examples are BE and SE, which subscribed successfully to the Public Key Directory (PKD) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which allows countries to authenticate the certificate of the chips in the electronic passports (BE NER), and therefore helps to discover more forged and manipulated passports (SE NER).

BG established a National Centre to detect falsified and forged documents and equipped it with modern technical means to examine documents from third countries such as Syria, Iraq and Turkey. Moreover, it also conducted training courses for at least 22 officials on the use of the equipment. BG reported that the centres were used and they enhanced the capacity for identification and analysis of tendencies in document-related crimes (BG NER). In DE, the EBF funding was used to link the national police databases with the Interpol ASF SLTD database, to enable the immediate checking of all travel documents during entry controls of non-EU nationals with the documents registered as stolen or lost with Interpol (DE NER). Moreover, the

system allows countries to communicate and exchange this information with other countries, improving the control of the external borders (SE NER).

However, when looking at the context indicators in Table 16, it seems there was no increase in the number of false /falsified travel documents or Schengen visas detected at BCPs between 2011 and 2014. While this indicator has been collected in NERs, it could be the result of an increased detection rate in parallel with a lower number of people using forged or falsified documents as a result of the stronger deterrent. In fact, Table 16 shows a decrease of detections between 2012 and 2014. However, this could also be the result of the fact that less people with false documents crossed the BCP in the first place, e.g. because of the deterrent effect of other measures or because the false documents were detected before the BCP was reached (e.g. by document advisors, see Priority 3).

Table 16: Context Indicator: Number of false or falsified travel documents or false or falsified Schengen visas detected at the border crossing points

Year	Number of false /falsified travel documents or Schengen visas detected at BCP
2011	29,788
2012	41,045
2013	36,644
2014	34,153
TOTAL	180,290¹¹⁶

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

However, when looking at the related output and result indicators (see Table 17), most countries reported a positive change in terms of the number of false or falsified travel documents detected at BCPs with equipment acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 APs. These data would thus suggest that the number of false or falsified travel documents detected has increased at BCPs with equipment acquired or upgraded, while it has decreased at BCPs where no equipment was acquired or upgraded. However, in order to make such a statement, we would require data on the number of false /falsified travel documents or Schengen visas detected at BCP where no equipment acquired or upgraded with EBF funding exists.

Table 17: Change in the number of false or falsified travel documents detected at border crossing points equipped or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes (in %) – for countries where data were available

Country	2011	2012	2013	2014
EL	1.0%	10%	5%	10%
HU	N/A	N/A	18%	10.9%
IT	0.1%	21.6%	9.3%	15.1%
LT	-10%	35%	56%	N/A
NO	N/A	N/A	9.8 %	21.4 %
SK	22%	38%	-35%	N/A
RO	N/A	-12%	23%	17%

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

¹¹⁶ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

Border & surveillance equipment and systems

Surveillance equipment/systems – Land borders

In terms of expenditure on border control and surveillance equipment at the countries' land borders under Priority 1, many countries purchased **vehicles**, including patrol vehicles, snowmobiles, off-road vehicles and motorcycles. As can be seen in Table 18, in total 2,736 vehicles were bought with EBF funding (2011-2013) across 14 countries. It should be noted that given the overlap between Priorities 1 and 2, not all of the purchases included in the table fall under Priority 1 (i.e. some fall under Priority 2); however, these are presented here for the sake of clarity.

Table 18: Number of vehicles acquired under the 2011-2013 annual programmes¹¹⁷

Year	Countries	Number of vehicles
2011	FI, MT	10
2012	ES, FI, IT, NO, SI, SK, MT	184 (53 IT; 46 SK; 36 ES)
2013	BG, ES, FI, EL, HU, IT, PT, SI, RO	972 (291 RO; 267 IT; 157 ES; 130 FI)
2014	ES, EL, HU, IT, LT, PL, SE, SI, RO	1,096 (321 SI; 263 EL; 152 IT; 136 PL; 125 RO)
TOTAL	-	2,736 vehicles¹¹⁸ (out of 11,437)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

The vehicles have different purposes, from patrolling (for most countries) to transportation of illegal migrants. For example, EL purchased 65 4x4 off road patrol vehicles (EUR 3.4 million), as well as 30 buses for the transportation to the first reception centres (and then to the detention centres, if needed) of irregular migrants apprehended at the border, 32 patrol motorcycles for the Hellenic Coast Guard and three mobile screening systems (vans) (EL NER). The buses served to improve the transportation and safety conditions for all passengers, decrease the number of migrant escapes, contribute to more efficient transportation operations and therefore increased border security (EL NER). The 4x4s and motorcycles served to enhance the reaction capability to illegal immigration incidents in areas that are inaccessible by conventional vehicles and the vans served to increase the action capability with regard to detection and interception of immigrants illegally present in the country or illegal crossers of the borders (EL NER).

Box 2: Example of activity supporting land surveillance – acquiring new vehicles and replacing old vehicles used for border security activities and surveillance (FI case study)

As a result of the output, the Finnish Border Guard (FBG) increased their capacity to respond to signals and incidents in all weather conditions and terrain types in a timely manner. [...] Overall, according to the conducted interviews, the new vehicles are more powerful, reliable and better-suited for the functions of the border guards [...]. The strategy of the FBG has involved modernising the Border Guard so that response time, patrol coverage, effectiveness and efficiency of patrolling and surveillance operations are improved without resorting to hiring new staff.

¹¹⁷ Data for 2014 refer to vehicles acquired under one of the annual programmes under review but delivered in 2014.

¹¹⁸ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

Some vehicles' communication systems were stated to be compatible with systems of other authorities (e.g. FI), or were equipped with portable check devices (e.g. FI, EL) or specialised technical means for detection of persons (beating heart or carbon dioxide detectors (BG)). Such equipment resulted in those vehicles not being used as mere patrol or surveillance vehicles, but rather as mobile border check/check on person units used to undertake mobile border controls (BG, LT, NO, SE). For example, BG acquired vehicles equipped with mobile devices for real-time check of documents. However, it should be noted in the case of NO that the vehicles were not utilised sufficiently, due to a lack of human resources for conducting the checks. As a consequence, one of the vehicles has now been reassigned to another border district (NO NER) and is therefore used in line with the initial purpose of the acquisition.¹¹⁹ In some cases, the officers were able to check the SIS from the vehicles (SE NER).

Overall, most countries reported positively on the purchase of vehicles, commenting on the increased efficiency of patrolling and checks on persons at harder-to-reach parts of the Schengen external border.

Finally, some countries acquired other **surveillance equipment** or set up surveillance systems, including radar installations (radars), sensors, electrification systems and video surveillance platforms (e.g. FI), thermal cameras improving night vision during patrols (e.g. MT) or radios enhancing the efficiency of border controls through improved communication between border guards and field officers (e.g. MT). Some countries installed such equipment along parts of the border(s). BG set up its Integrated System for Control and Surveillance (ISCS) along the border of BG with Turkey (BG NER) and HU installed or modernised 241 fixed and 38 rotated CCTVs at the Serbian and Ukrainian border sections, and bought over 300 document checking devices as well as 27 service dogs (HU NER). BG reported that the ISCS had enhanced rates of detection of attempts of illegal crossings and decreased response time to suspected incident areas (BG CS).

Box 3: Example of activity supporting land surveillance – ISCS completion (BG case study)

The completion of Stage I-III of the ISCS through AP 2011-2013 has dramatically changed the operational and strategic capabilities of border management. The results contributed to the development and implementation of the Integrated Border Management strategy of Bulgaria adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision No. 47/27.01.2006 and put forward by the Council of Ministers in 2006, 2010 and 2014. The completion of the action has brought Bulgarian border management considerably closer to fulfilling the requirements for membership in the Schengen Area. In addition, the implementation of AP 2011-2013 is an important step towards the further development of EUROSUR and the improvement of the overall management of the EU's external borders.

Surveillance equipment/systems – Maritime borders

In terms of countries' expenditure under the EBF on border control equipment at the country's maritime borders (seas and coastal areas), most countries purchased vessels, such as coastal patrol vessels (e.g. EL, FR) and rigid inflatable boats (e.g. CY, FR), as well as planes (e.g. FR) and video platforms for helicopters (e.g. BE).

As can be seen in Table 19, overall, 14 countries acquired or upgraded 127 vessels through EBF funding in the timeframe 2011-2013. It should be noted that some of the purchases included in the table were done under Priority 2, instead of Priority 1 (e.g. NL). These data are presented together here for the sake of clarity.

¹¹⁹ NO interview

Table 19: Number of vessels acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes¹²⁰

Year	Countries	Number of vessels acquired or upgraded
2011	N/A	0
2012	FI, FR, EL, IT, MT	63 (of which 44 by EL and 13 by FI)
2013	DE, FI, EL, IT, PT, MT, RO	64 (of which 44 by Romania, 6 by Italy and 5 by DE and EL)
2014	EE, ES, EL, IT, RO	67
2015	ES, FR, EL, HU, IT, LT, NL, NO, RO	114
TOTAL	-	319 vessels¹²¹ (out of 1,381 used in 2014)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

For example, EL purchased a coastal patrol vessel for surveillance purposes (EUR 1.8 million) and an offshore (open sea) patrol vessel (EUR 18.9 million). FR bought a 'patrouilleur hauturier' offshore patrol vessel (EUR 9.2 million in 2012 and 2013) for surveillance on the Mediterranean Sea, which will also be used in Frontex operations.

Countries reported positively on the purchase of boats, stating that the boats optimised surveillance of the external maritime borders, both in terms of the area covered (e.g. DE) and conditions in which they can be deployed (i.e. in bad weather conditions and at night). With regard to the latter, FI for example noted the seaworthiness of the vessels it acquired in difficult conditions and their ability to patrol at night due to the multi-sensor camera systems on the patrol vessels. Moreover, EL more generally mentioned the increase in the country's reaction capability with regard to detection and interception of irregular migrants and smugglers at sea. Another example is FR, which acquired a semi-rigid boat in 2011 that is now based in Corsica. For the period from May 2012 to April 2013, the semi-rigid boat has completed 80 hours of patrols, checking 130 vessels and 150 people, aimed solely at the fight against irregular migration. In addition, the French purchase of a patrol vessel enabled the control of 179 ships in 2012, thereby, according to FR, contributing effectively to the enhancement of maritime border surveillance (FR NER).

The EU contributed EUR 6.5 million in 2011 and around EUR 1 million in 2013¹²² on a French multi-mission **aeroplane** for the purpose of surveillance of the Mediterranean coast.¹²³ The RA reported that the acquisition of the plane resulted in the extension of the patrol areas and enabled the areas to be more frequently covered, optimising its detection capabilities (maximum detection reliability and high number of tracks) (NER FR).

Some countries purchased equipment for vessels or aircraft to improve the communication and coordination of the different maritime surveillance authorities. For example, DE purchased multi-sensor platforms for ships, which allowed for live transmission of high-definition images (photographs) to authorities and organisations responsible for deploying ships for maritime surveillance (DE NER). Similarly, ES purchased and installed a video platform on one helicopter, which was reportedly very

¹²⁰ Data for 2014 and 2015 refer to vessels acquired under one of the annual programmes under review but delivered in 2014 and 2015.

¹²¹ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹²² This was the amount programmed for 2013 for this aeroplane, as data on the financial implementation was not available in the NER.

¹²³ It should be noted that the French NER mentioned the plane as falling under Priority 1 in the tables, but under Priority 2 in its answers to the evaluation questions – effectiveness.

useful and effective as it provided clear aerial images both day and night (ES NER). MT also acquired multiband radios enabling coordination between maritime patrols and the land-based command centre. CY set up a Coastal Surveillance System which includes two observation platforms along Cyprus's coastline. Similarly, FR set up the '*Système Intégré Aéro-Maritime*' or SIAM (EUR 4 million over 2011-2013). This aero-maritime integrated system (ACIS) secures multichannel transmission (radio and satellite) between naval, air and land patrol units, which harmonised working methods and increased the exchange of information (NER FR).

Other actions funded under Priority 1

Other actions, not related to the above, funded under Priority 1, include (at the air border): support and inspection of helicopters (CY), training in the use of helicopters (CY) and the data collection and analysis of cross-border air traffic (BE). Other actions funded under Priority 1 relating to the land border include, for example, the deployment of additional forces (EL). With regard to the latter, the EBF funded under Priority 1 the deployment of additional forces in EL at the land border with Turkey, the Evros region, in order to improve border control activities and to prevent illegal border crossings (EL, NER, see more information below) and training for staff on document fraud (BG, FR NERs).

Box 4: Example of other actions funded under Priority 1 – deploying additional forces at the land border with Turkey (EL case study)¹²⁴

The reinforcement operation achieved its objective of strengthening border surveillance at the Greek-Turkish land border and reducing to a minimum the number of illegal border crossings at the Greek-Turkish land border. Thanks to the increased capacity in the Evros region, the Hellenic police acquired additional understanding of the facilitators' modus operandi, apprehended vehicles used in people smuggling and arrested facilitators. The wider objectives of improving the border management system at the external borders of the EU were only partially achieved, as the reinforcement operation resulted in redirection of the migration pressure and irregular border crossings to other sections of the Greek-Turkish border (sea border).

Conclusions

Overall, the aims of Priority 1 have been achieved and were perceived to be effective.

Firstly, it can be concluded that **several actions funded under EBF 2011-2013 have contributed to the establishment of a common Integrated Border Management System (IBMS) as regards the checks on persons at BCPs**, namely the construction and updating of BCPs (1), the acquisition of equipment and ITech to be used to undertake checks on persons and the validity/authenticity of documents (2), the construction of first reception and detention facilities for irregular migrants (3) and finally the purchase and installation of ABC gates (E-gates) (4). All actions were perceived to be effective, with the exception of the e-gates, where two countries noted that the time spent at border controls did not necessarily shorten for passengers using the e-gates. However, as it is unclear whether the waiting time before the passport check at the e-gate was shortened (which would be a more appropriate indicator), and as the majority of countries that purchased e-gates did find them effective, it can still be stated overall that the purchase of e-gates has been effective.

¹²⁴ See Annex 3

Secondly, it can be concluded that **several actions funded under the EBF 2011-2013 have contributed to the establishment of the common Integrated Border Management System as regards the surveillance of the external borders**, namely the acquisition of vehicles, vessels and aircraft used for patrolling the external borders, ITech and the development of surveillance systems, allowing for closer and more extensive monitoring of the external borders, and in many cases increased the ability to exchange information (e.g. aerial pictures) between the different national surveillance authorities. **However, it should be noted that similar investments were made under Priority 2, suggesting an overlay in the two priorities.**

Although some countries acquired similar types of equipment, it should be noted that countries did invest in a wide array of equipment/ITech and systems; therefore whether the IBMS is a 'common' one between all participating countries is a difficult question to answer. However, it seems that the investments made under Priority 1 serve a similar purpose, namely increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the surveillance of external borders, as well as checks on persons.

When going back to the components of 'Integrated Border Management' as discussed in the beginning of this section, in terms of cooperation, it appears that most investments funded under Priority 1 served to increase:

- **intra-service cooperation:** for example with regard to systems or equipment such as radars and video platforms that allow for the transmission of information between border guards);
- **inter-agency cooperation** (e.g. the French SPATIONAV surveillance system, which allows for the sharing of data between different ministries and law enforcement bodies);
- **International cooperation:** e.g. the surveillance systems that allow for the sharing of data between different Member States, or with the EU (e.g. systems connected to EUROSUR).

Moreover, as stated above, the European Commission suggested in 2008 that countries install automated gates, as one of the next steps towards integrated border management in the EU. The installation of e-gates under this Priority corresponds to this suggestion.

However, it is more difficult to argue that there was an increase in cooperation for other actions such as the construction of first reception and detention facilities for irregular migrants. On the other hand, having similar first reception facilities for migrants does make the EU more 'integrated' in the sense that wherever a migrant arrives in the EU, they are received in similar circumstances/conditions.

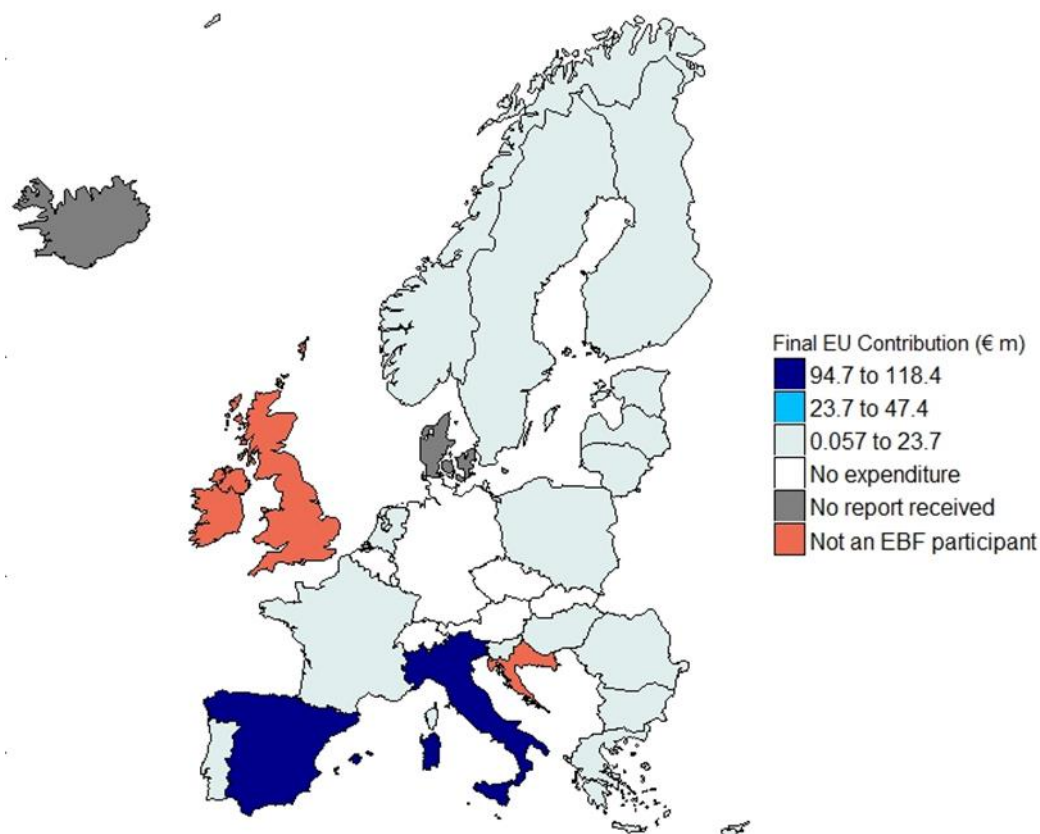
Evaluation question 5

To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the EU Member States? –Priority 2

Priority 2 of the EBF supports two key elements. This first one is the creation of a European external border surveillance system (EUROSUR), an information exchange framework to increase situational awareness and reaction capability in (i) reducing the number of illegal immigrants entering the EU undetected, (ii) contributing to the fight

against cross-border crime and (iii) enhancing the EU's search and rescue capacity.¹²⁵ In practical terms, each Participating State was to set up a National Coordination Centre (NCC) coordinating their national surveillance activities and serving as a hub for information exchange with other countries.

Figure 15: EBF 2011-2013: Priority 2 Expenditure by Member State



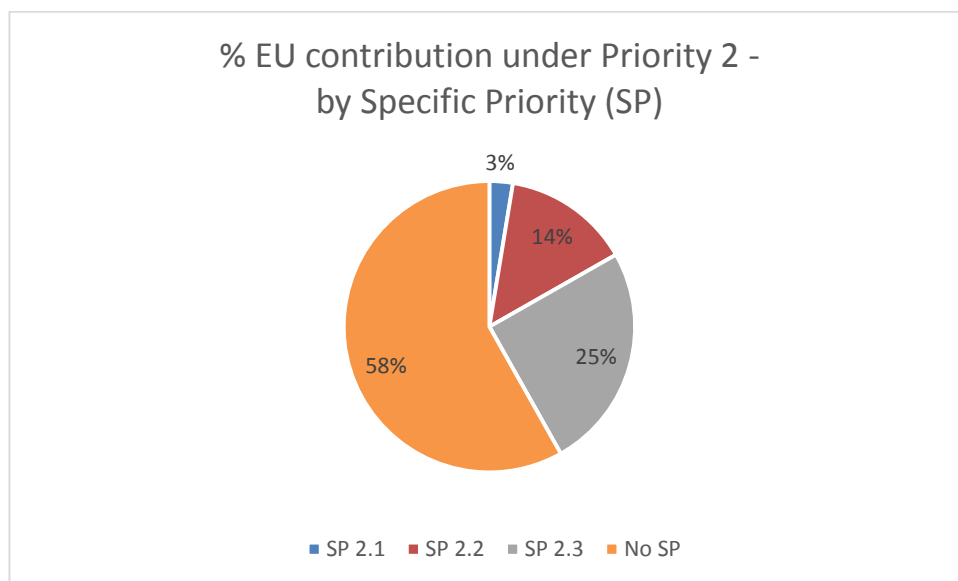
The second element to be supported under Priority 2 was the development and implementation of European Patrols Network (EPN) at the southern maritime borders. This was to be done through patrolling activities covering defined maritime areas and the exchange of information between countries. Ultimately, the EPN and EUROSUR are to be integrated into a single system.

Of the participating countries evaluated, 20 countries received funding for actions under Priority 2 (all except for AT, BE, CH, CZ, DE, SK). The total programmed EU contribution under Priority 2 was EUR 383 million, and EBF expenditure (final contribution) on Priority 2 was EUR 343 million, with an average implementation rate of 89.5%.¹²⁶ More generally, under Priority 2, IT and ES have received the most funding (i.e. over EUR 100 million each). In IT, 69 out of 126 actions were related to Priority 2, taking about 74% of the total EBF funding to IT in the timeframe 2011-2013 (IT NER).

As can be seen in Figure 14, more than half of the final EU contributions under Priority 2 were not assigned to any specific priority, while a quarter was assigned to Specific Priority 2.3, and 14% to Specific Priority 2.2.

¹²⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Examining the creation of a European border surveillance system (EUROSUR) COM(2008)68 final.

¹²⁶ See chapter 6.

Figure 16: EU contribution by specific priority 2011-2013

SP 2.1: Investments in establishing or upgrading a single national **coordination centre**, which coordinates 24/7 the activities of all national authorities carrying out external border control tasks (detection, identification, and intervention) and which is able to exchange information with the national coordination centres in other Member States

As can be seen in Figure 14, only 3% of the EU contributions under Priority 2 were allocated to projects under Specific Priority 2.1 in the period 2011-2013.

Table 20: Actions funded by the EBF under Specific Priority 2.1

Year	Countries with actions funded under SP 2.1	Total – Final EU contribution SP 2.1 in EUR	Total – Final EU contribution Priority 2	% SP 2.1 of Priority 2
2011	ES	144,690	64,023,633	0.2%
2012	ES, FR, SI	7,569,410	107,200,158	7.1%
2013 ¹²⁷	NO, SI	966,437	162,989,503	0.6%
Total		8,680,537	334,213,294	2.6%

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

As can be seen in Table 20, only four countries established or upgraded National Coordination Centres (NCC) with EBF funding in the timeframe 2011-2013, thus contributing to the implementation of the national components of EUROSUR (i.e. ES, FR, NO and SI¹²⁸) and responding to **Specific Priority 2.1**.

All actions in this regard were perceived as effective. In this regard, ES used the EBF funding to create and activate the Mediterranean Regional Centre in Valencia and to establish a new CCTV command and control centre at the land border of Melilla.

¹²⁷ Data incomplete for 2013

¹²⁸ It should be noted that two projects related to EUROSUR under the IS 2013 AP were not implemented.

The Norwegian NCC coordinates Norwegian efforts in the Mediterranean Sea and is responsible to EUROSUR for the operations of the two Norwegian vessels stationed there. NO reported that through the NCC, member countries are not only able to track irregular activities at their own borders, but also to compare the national situation to that of other participating countries. As a result, the system allows for a more comprehensive understanding and overview of the overall situation at the Schengen external borders (NO NER). SI mentioned as key impacts the high-quality data collection and exchange of data about the traffic in the Slovene sea, as well as the fast exchange of data with other states and Frontex.

SP 2.2: Investments in establishing or upgrading a single national **surveillance system**, which covers all or selected parts of the external border and enables the dissemination of information 24/7 between all authorities involved in external border control

Over the period 2011-2013, 14% of the EU contributions under Priority 2 were allocated to projects under Specific Priority 2.2., amounting to EUR 47.3 million.

Table 21: Actions funded by the EBF under Specific Priority 2.2.

Year	MS with actions funded under SP 2.2	Total – Final EU contribution SP 2.2 in EUR	Total – Final EU contribution Priority 2	% SP 2.2 of Priority 2
2011	EE, ES, FR, HU	16,875,987	64,023,633	26%
2012	EE, ES, HU	12,578,993	107,200,158	12%
2013	EE, ES, FR, HU	17,894,566	162,989,503	11%
Total		47,349,546	334,213,294	14.17%

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

As can be seen in Table 21, only four countries undertook actions establishing or upgrading the national surveillance system (i.e. EE, ES, FR, HU), **responding to Specific Priority 2.2.** As these countries already had surveillance systems established by 2011, the investments were aimed at upgrading or improving current systems.

The beneficiary with the largest investment under Specific Priority 2.2 was ES, with an overall EU contribution of EUR 28 million under Specific Priority 2.2. Firstly, ES funded the **construction of an operations room for the Centre for Coordination of Maritime Surveillance of Coasts and Borders** in 2011 and 2012, as well as equipment and furniture for the operations room in 2013¹²⁹ (final EU contribution of around EUR 16 million). In this regard, ES reported significant positive benefits, especially in terms of information exchange (ES case study). One could have argued that this investment could also have been funded under Specific Priority 2.1, as it relates to 'establishing or upgrading a single national coordination centre' (as per Specific Priority 2.1).

Case study Spain

The NCC was successfully built and opened in 2013. The NCC increased Spain's ability to cooperate, coordinate and share information regarding maritime surveillance activities with national authorities both internally and externally (including countries outside the EU), as well as EU agencies. It was stated by the beneficiary that the

¹²⁹ SFC2007 database, extracted on 11 May 2016. The ES FR 2013 has not been finalised yet, and the status of this action (project code 11, 2013) is currently as 'returned'.

NCC's ability in these areas has improved significantly due to increased connectivity, increased resources and increased space.

In addition, ES also made investments related to the improvement of the Civil Guard Integrated External Surveillance System (SIVE) in 2012 and 2013¹³⁰ with EBF funding, as well as the updating of the SIVE fixed deployments in Granada, Málaga and Ceuta in 2013¹³¹ (final EU contribution of EUR 12 million), which reportedly increased the system's operating capacity and therefore impacted on greater security at its external border (ES NER).

The second largest investment in this regard was the **French 'SPATIONAV' action, with an overall EU contribution of almost EUR 20 million over the period 2011, 2012 and 2013.** SPATIONAV is a maritime surveillance system, which assists authorities to gather information and direct maritime surveillance and intervention at sea, connecting all the existing Mediterranean signal stations. **According to FR, this action was effective, offering a very wide coverage of the metropolitan coastline** (83% in 2013) and increasing the identification rate of vessels at its maritime external borders (FR NER).

In terms of upgrading, EE upgraded its Maritime Surveillance Information System by implementing Stage II; i.e. the transmission network and the telemetry system were renewed (final EU contribution of EUR 2.5 million), which increased the data transfer speed of the network and its reliability. The system allows for visual identification by using the procured surveillance cameras and the vessels entering or exiting Estonian waters in the Baltic Sea (EE NER). Some countries established or upgraded national surveillance systems, however not under Specific Priority 2.2 – namely EL and LT. The reason that these countries did not have these projects funded under Specific Priority 2.2 could be related to the fact that these countries are Cohesion Fund Countries and therefore already received a 75% co-financing rate. For example, EL funded a technical study for the design of an integrated borders surveillance system operating along the riverine borderline of the Evros region, as well as preliminary actions for the extension of the automated Border Surveillance System in Evros. Results reported by EL included the increase in information exchange and cooperation at national and European level, the creation of an integrated borders surveillance picture and increased border security (EL NER). In LT, a land border surveillance system was installed along the 27 km long Russia-Lithuania border in 2011, as well as along the 66.04 km long Belarus-Lithuania border section in 2012 (final EU contribution of EUR 5.6 million). The system indicates security violations 24/7, which can be communicated to the Vilnius Frontier District or National Coordination Centre via the telecommunication network of the Interior (VRTT). According to LT, as a result the efficiency in detecting illegal immigrants at the Lithuanian external borders has been ensured, and the ability of authorities to execute control and surveillance has increased. At blue borders (Baltic Sea), LT established one regional maritime border surveillance centre along with three local maritime surveillance points which are connected to the NCC, therefore contributing to the development of EUROSUR (LT NER).

SP 2.3: Purchase and/or upgrading of **equipment for detection, identification and intervention at the borders** (e.g. vehicles, vessels, aircraft, helicopters, sensors, cameras, etc.), provided the need for this equipment has been clearly identified at European level

¹³⁰ SFC2007 database, extracted on 11 May 2016. The ES FR 2013 has not been finalised yet, and the status of these actions (project code 12, 2013) is currently as 'returned'.

¹³¹ SFC2007 database, extracted on 11 May 2016. The ES FR 2013 has not been finalised yet, and the status of these actions (project code 13, 2013) is currently as 'returned'.

Over the period 2011-2013, 25% of the EU contributions under Priority 2 were allocated to projects under Specific Priority 2.3, amounting to EUR 87.3 million. EU contributions under Specific Priority 2.3 were received by seven countries (see Table 22).

Table 22: Actions funded by the EBF under Specific Priority 2.3

Year	MS with actions funded under SP 2.3	Total –Final EU contribution SP 2.3 in EUR	Total – Final EU contribution Priority 2	% SP 2.3 of Priority 2
2011	BG, EE, ES	17,642,340	64,023,633	28%
2012	BG, EE, ES, FI, IT, MT	37,710,297	107,200,158	35%
2013	EE, ES, FI, NL	31,949,703	162,989,503	17%
Total		87,302,340	334,213,294	26%

Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Most EBF funding under Priority 2 resulted in the purchasing, upgrading or repairing of different types of equipment for detection, identification and intervention at the borders, responding to **Specific Priority 2.3**, including:

- thermal, night vision and/or infrared cameras (e.g. EE);
- radars and/or sensors (e.g. EE);
- helicopters & aircraft (ES, FI, IT and MT);
- vessels/boats (e.g. ES, IT, NL);
- 2,736 vehicles (e.g. ES and IT).

In addition to the countries mentioned in Table 22, several other countries also purchased similar equipment (e.g. HU, LT and SE). However, this equipment was not funded under Specific Priority 2.3. For example, LT received EUR 2.5 million to purchase a patrol craft. As stated above, the reason that these countries did not have these projects funded under Specific Priority 2.3 could be related to the fact that some of these countries are Cohesion Fund Countries and therefore already received a 75% co-financing rate.

The purchase of surveillance equipment such as video **cameras, radars and/or sensors** enabled the countries to increase the capacity of the border surveillance to detect irregular migrants at the border and improve the reaction capacity (e.g. HU NER). The acquisition of video cameras in particular enabled countries to visually identify for example vessels entering/exiting and navigating on the territorial and internal sea of states, improving monitoring and surveillance. Two countries (EE and SE) noted that, as a large part of the surveillance activities are conducted at night-time or in the winter season in their countries, infrared and night vision cameras helped to improve visibility and enabled detection of vessels at the sea border and irregular migrants at the land border (NER EE, SE). The context indicator on the number of irregular migrants detected supports these suggestions: in all countries but Spain, Italy and Sweden, the number of migrants detected at the external border increased in the period 2011-2013. However, the increase in detections could also be related to an increase in the number of migrants trying to enter the EU external borders irregularly. On the other hand, a decrease in detection could also mean that the purchases of border control equipment had a dissuasive effect (France case study).

Some countries purchased several of the above types of equipment, establishing a **surveillance or communication system**, which was perceived as effective. For example, EE's purchase of thermal cameras benefited its Maritime Surveillance

Information system (MSIS) by increasing the border area covered through technical surveillance and enabled the transmission of relevant data to control station, patrols and to cooperation partners if needed. EE also stated that the purchase of electronic data exchange, monitoring and mobile sensors had also reduced the overall cost and working hours of border officers, as the investments resulted in a decrease in false alarms because the new mobile sensors made it possible to determine whether there was a need to visit the guarded area or not. Finally, EE noted an increase in inter-agency cooperation and exchange of information, and its potential usage by other countries in the future through Frontex.

The Member States that purchased **aeroplanes and helicopters** mentioned as effects the greater efficiency in detecting irregular migrants and, as a result, a reduction in number of irregular migrants reaching European territory (e.g. Spain: from a forecast of 15% to 6.04%). Some of these aircraft were equipped with sensors, cameras and videos, which are connected in a system through which pictures, film and text can be transferred to the command and control centre or other units (e.g. SE). For its part, Spain installed 31 digital image reception stations on the ground at the Spanish coast, enabling images of targets identified by the maritime surveillance aircraft undertaking surveillance of the Mediterranean Sea and in the Strait of Gibraltar to be transmitted in real time to the Spanish Civil Guard, for onward dissemination to the Civil Guard's Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre and to other national and EU authorities involved in the control of external borders (ES NER). With regard to the latter, the Spanish Coordination Centre shares data with EU actors and Member States through joint operations, such as INDALO and HERA; networks, including EPN and EUROSUR; and through direct partnerships with, for example, Frontex, Portugal and third countries in North-West Africa (ES CS). According to Spain, the impact of this system for reception of images was 'the enhancement of the Civil Guard's communications systems to achieve greater interoperability in the EU' (ES NER). Moreover, the reception system permitted the identification of targets that were beyond the current range of the optronic sensors of the fixed SIVE stations (ES NER).

Table 23: Number of aircraft and helicopters acquired or upgraded under the 2011-2013 annual programmes¹³²

Year	Countries	Aircraft	Countries	Helicopters
2011	SE	3	BE, CY, ES, SI	13
2012	SE	3	CY, ES, FI, SI	4
2013	ES	2	CY, ES, EL, IT, SI	12
2014	EL	1	CY, ES, EL, IT, SI, MT	26
TOTAL	-	23 aircraft¹³³ (out of 51 used for border surveillance in 2014¹³⁴)	-	66 helicopters¹³⁵ (out of 225 used for border surveillance in 2014¹³⁶)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

¹³² Data for 2014 refer to aircraft and helicopters acquired under one of the annual programmes under review but delivered in 2014.

¹³³ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹³⁴ According to the NERs

¹³⁵ Total does not equal sum of years as some Member States only reported the total number for the programming period.

¹³⁶ According to the NERs

Other Member States mentioned as the main advantage the possibility to use the new helicopters at night (i.e. FI and MT) and in bad weather conditions (FI). FI stated that the latter, in combination with an improved communication system and a high-performance thermal imaging camera and night vision devices, would improve the effectiveness and the coverage of surveillance by 30%. In MT, travel times were shortened by 30%, whilst the endurance of the helicopter increased by a further 50% and the helicopters would allow the armed forces of MT to participate with other Mediterranean EU Member States in joint operations (MT NER). Italy also reported positive effects from the purchase of two AW 139 helicopters for the National Border Police (IT case study, see also below).

Case study Italy

Since the implementation of Action 3.2.3, the National Border Police can participate in maritime border surveillance activities in coordination with other institutional actors responsible, both at the national and EU level, for the permanent patrolling of EU external maritime borders. The two AW 139 helicopters purchased under AP 2011 present the technical capacity and operational and security features required to rapidly reach and patrol critical sectors of the EU external maritime borders such as the Southern and Central Mediterranean. The helicopters take 20 to 30 minutes to reach the Sicilian Strait, or the international waters in proximity to Libya and Tunisia, and have a fuel autonomy allowing them to overfly the allocated intervention areas for a time ranging from 2 to 3 hours, before returning to the National Police base in Lampedusa. Thanks to both the constant monitoring of the vehicles' functionality (done remotely by the Agusta S.p.A. technicians, and *in situ* by the beneficiary's experts), and the rapidity of the AW 139 maintenance and repair processes, at least one of the two helicopters purchased through the project can always be used for either training or border control purposes.

In terms of the **vessels purchased**, effects appear to be positive as well. For example, ES also reported positive effects in relation to the purchase of its nine rigid inflatable boats and high-speed medium-sized patrol vessel for the Civil Guard Maritime Service, namely an increased operational efficiency of its patrolling at sea, and a reduction in the threat of illegal immigration (ES NER).

In a similar way to the aircraft, some vessels were equipped with cameras and sensors. For example, LT invested in a vessel with an infrared night vision system whose main purpose was patrolling, although it also facilitated search and rescue activities in the LT territorial waters and exclusive economic zone in the Baltic Sea (LT NER). In ES, broadband satellite communications systems, as well as optronic sensors, were installed on the several patrol boats and vessels it acquired for the Civil Guard (ES NER).

Regarding examples of effects related to the purchase of **vehicles**, ES mentioned the higher number of border control operations and rescue actions, forecast at 12-15% (162 operations), increased to 34% (217 operations) (ES NER). HU reported that the equipment and vehicles procured under Priority 2 provided significant support to border surveillance, particularly at the Serbian border at the beginning of the migration wave (HU NER).

Table 24: Context indicators related to surveillance flights and patrols performed

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	% increase between 2010-2014
Number of border surveillance flights performed	14,559	15,886	15,067	15,254	16,314	12%

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	% increase between 2010-2014
Number of border surveillance patrols using vehicles	647,518	717,455	787,713	822,006	781,455	21%
Number of border surveillance patrols using vessels	60,438	66,192	62,071	67,513	69,801	15%

Investments made under Specific Priority 2.3 were extremely capital-intensive. As can be seen in Table 24, the investments appear to have been effective: the numbers of border surveillance flights performed have increased, as well as the border surveillance patrols using vehicles and vessels. However, it cannot be stated with certainty whether this increase in patrols was the reason for the 610% increase in the detection of migrants in that same period.¹³⁷ In Italy, for example, those pilots that were interviewed as part of the case study did not report having identified any vessels with irregular migrants while performing surveillance flights with the helicopters purchased with EBF funding. However, it should be noted that no other data were available on the number of migrants detected through the helicopter patrol flights by Italy, or by any other Member State that purchased planes, helicopters, vessels or vehicles, etc. The indicators provided in the NER only provide the overall number of irregular migrants detected at the external border. Any causal link between this number and the purchases is therefore difficult to establish with certainty.

It is important to remember that Priority 2 sought to support the development of EUROSUR and EPN; the effectiveness of these actions should therefore be measured against the development of these two components of European border surveillance rather than specific indicators.

Finally, several countries have funded actions related to the **construction of buildings and infrastructure**, outside of the three specific priorities, such as a border police air base (BG), border police port (BG), a helicopter landing site (HU), the refurbishment of an existing hangar together with ancillary facilities (MT), and the provision of adequate infrastructure to support EBF-funded vessels (MT). PL used EBF funding for the construction of seven new observation towers equipped with optoelectronic systems (including cooled thermal camera, daylight camera, laser rangefinder systems and auxiliary equipment), allowing constant observation of the border strip at a distance of 7 to 10 km on each side of the tower (PL NER).

Conclusions

Overall, it can be concluded that **actions funded under Priority 2 had a positive effect in terms of an increase of the surveillance capacity of states at the external borders**. This is mostly the case due to the implementation of border surveillance systems and the purchase of equipment which supports these systems, such as aircraft, vessels, vehicles, radios, camera, radars and sensors. Only in a few countries were output or result indicators not fulfilled (HU, IT) or large parts of EBF funding not used (LT, PT, SI). Reasons included lack of funds for the national part of the co-financing (SI), issues in the national public procurement regulations (LT) or a rise in prices leading to a lower quantity of equipment purchased (HU). In the case of IT, reasons included the actions' high technological complexity and the time necessary

¹³⁷ NER data compiled by Optimity Advisors

for undergoing technical and administrative procedures: the time available had only allowed for the so-called prototypical installation, so that the expected results and outputs were not achieved.

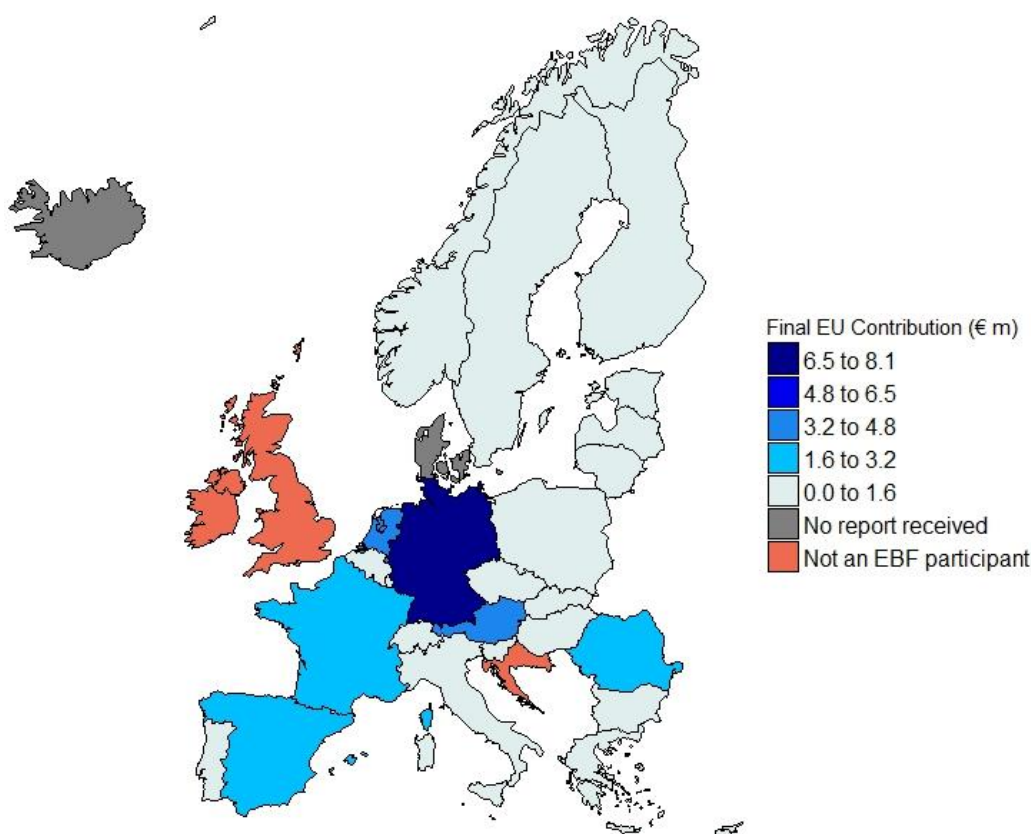
Overall, it can be concluded that the **actions funded under Priority 2 contributed to the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders**. Several countries have established sophisticated surveillance systems with EBF funding, in particular ES (SIVE) and FR (SPATIONAV) in terms of maritime surveillance systems. At the land border, EL undertook a technical study for the establishment of an integrated border surveillance system in the Evros region. It should also be noted that some countries received funding under Priority 1 in this regard, for example BG established an Integrated System for Surveillance (ISS) along the border with Turkey under Priority 1 as a result of the 'considerable increase of migration pressure on the Bulgarian-Turkish border relating to the constantly growing number of migrants from high-risk countries in neighbouring Turkey' (BG NER). Other important investments under Priority 2 in this regard include the establishment of NCCs that supported these surveillance systems and functioned as the backbone of EUROSUR.

EBF 2011-2013 **actions funded under Priority 2 have contributed to the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the EU**. ES, FR and IT have all used EBF funding to acquire different equipment such as aircraft, helicopters and vessels equipped with modern technology to increase and improve the capacity of their patrolling of the Mediterranean Sea. Several countries have used EBF funding to enhance surveillance and patrolling of the Baltic Sea (e.g. LT and EE) and therefore contributed to the enhancement of the surveillance of EU external borders. Equipment used for maritime border surveillance was also purchased under Priority 1, and therefore also contributing to the aim of Priority 2. This overlap between priorities does not appear to have affected the overall effectiveness of the intervention.

Evaluation question 10

To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the effective processing of Schengen visas and the tackling of illegal immigration, including the detection of false or falsified documents by enhancing the activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries? – **Priority 3**

Figure 17: EBF 2011-2013: Priority 3 Expenditure by Member State



Under Priority 3, which is the focus of this evaluation question, EUR 42.4 million were programmed to be spent; the final EU contribution stood at EUR 31.5 million, a total implementation rate of 74%. While 17 countries had co-funded actions programmed under the priority (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FI, FR, HU, MT, NL, NO, RO, SE, SI),¹³⁸ three countries (DE, MT and NL) accounted for 50% of the programmed and 58% of the final EU contribution for Priority 3.

Commission decision 2007/599/EC set out two specific priorities for which EU co-financing could be increased to 75%: (i) promotion of cooperation between consular services in the field of visas and (ii) initiatives to develop co-location and common visa application centres for reception, and processing of visas. Based on information available on the SFC2007 database (not including 2013), around 50% of projects funded under Priority 3 were under one of these two specific priorities.

The type of projects funded under Priority 3 focused on **three main types of activities**:

¹³⁸ CZ had one project planned under Priority 3 which was not implemented due to budgetary reasons (CZ NER).

- The deployment of **document advisors** in third countries;
- The deployment of **immigration liaison offices (ILOs)**; and
- The **upgrade and enhancement of security systems at consulates** issuing Schengen visas.

The relevant indicators for this evaluation question are presented in Table 25.

Table 25: Priority 3 – output and result indicators

Relevant indicator	Total
Number of consulates equipped with security enhancing equipment (security doors, bulletproof windows etc.) under the 2011-2013 annual programmes;	100 out of 2,189 consulates
Number of consulates equipped with operating equipment for Schengen visa processing under the 2011-2013 annual programmes;	889 out of 2,189 consulates
Number of ILOs and other advisors deployed under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	541

Source: *NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors*

Document advisors

While **document advisors** and ILOs have different roles, the types of indicators used to assess their impacts are similar. According to data from the national evaluation reports, a total of 541 ILOs and document advisors / year¹³⁹ have been deployed under the 2011-13 EBF programming period, the bulk of which (366) were deployed by Germany. The projects generally either attained or outperformed their objectives in terms of output indicators as demonstrated in the case study as the number of rejections of visa applications, and passengers being excluded from flights based on the assumption that they were using counterfeit border-crossing documents, has significantly increased. The deployment of document advisors appears to have been particularly effective for HU, where document experts have detected 802 cases of visa fraud, which was 40% more than was set out in the annual programmes (HU NER). The deployment of ILOs resulted in the identification of an estimated 1,100 suspected cases of illegal activity, exceeding the target indicator by 65%. The effectiveness of the actions was also enhanced by the increased cooperation between some countries. EE, SI, AT and HU cooperated in the implementation of the projects in partnership. The deployment of a document advisor in Thailand, for instance was planned from the outset as a joint deployment by several Member States (AT NER).

In DE, the deployment of between 42 and 49 document advisors per year in between 25 and 27 locations led to 46,541 visa applications being rejected and over 26,000 passengers being excluded from flights between 2011 and 2013. Overall, there was a 74.63% increase in passenger exclusions from flights between 2011 and 2014 due to the advice provided by the document advisors on counterfeit border crossing documents or missing visas.¹⁴⁰ Overall, the objectives set out in the DE annual programmes were achieved.

Box 5: Germany Case Study

Case study – Document advisors (Germany) - Secondment of Federal Police

¹³⁹ The data appear to show the number of deployed personnel over a period of one year; an ILO deployed for three years will therefore count as three in the figures.

¹⁴⁰ DE case study.

document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)

The project's main objective was to reduce illegal immigration to the EU through the deployment of document advisors to assist airline staff, embassies or consulate employees in third countries in detecting attempts to enter the EU illegally.

The objectives of the project were achieved. The number of rejections of visa applications, and passengers being excluded from flights based on the suspicion that they were using counterfeit border-crossing documents, significantly increased. In addition, the number of trainings for airline as well as consulate / embassy staff as well as the number of trainees increased in the timeframe 2011-2013.

As a result, the project has been considered as a best practice example due to its well-established, wide network of advisors as a part of the implementation of Integrated Border Management Concept in third countries.¹⁴¹

Priority 3 accounted for 70% of the total EBF investment in AT, with over 99% of the funds deployed under this priority focusing on the deployment of ILOs and documents advisors. While the AT NER is generally critical of other measures, it highlighted that the deployment of ILOs and document advisors made the most important contribution to the 'first filter' approach (AT NER), according to which illegal entries into the EU should first be targeted in the country of origin or transit.

Other types of projects fitting within the overarching 'first filter' activities conducted in the countries of origin or transit were also funded. The BE '**field workers**' project¹⁴² is of particular interest. Field workers were recruited in consulates experiencing a high number of fraudulent Schengen visa applications. Their role is to check some of the documents supporting visa applications such as bank statements, civil status certificates etc. According to the BE RA, the project greatly contributed to the identification of fraudulently obtained documents, allowing the visa agents to give better motivated advice on visa applications (BE NER). The field workers have a different role than ILOs; they are responsible for checking supporting documents at the point a visa is applied for (birth certificates, bank statements etc.). Field workers therefore deal with fraudulently obtained documents rather than forged documents. Unfortunately, no data were collected by BE to empirically confirm this statement. The only quantitative data collected by RAs related to the indicators asked for by the Commission. According to the BE NER, field workers showed 'great results', a judgement confirmed by the RA, but no quantitative indicator was collected on the results of these actions.

Consulates

Over the programming period, 889 consulates were equipped with operating equipment for Schengen visa processing. ES was the most active participating state, with 100 consulates upgraded. However, despite the outputs of these actions being finalised and the security for visa applicants and consular employees being enhanced, the results of the actions did not reach the expected levels at their outset. Only

¹⁴¹ Proposal for a Council recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation on the application of the Schengen *acquis* in the field of management of the external border by Germany, p. 4.

¹⁴² Action 3, 2011 AP, Action 8 2012 AP.

40,525 visa applicants were served in consulates that had been upgraded (against a target of 145,000)¹⁴³ as a result of a lower than expected number of applicants.

The objectives of MT, one of the largest beneficiaries of Priority 3, were to extend the country's ability to issue visas through mobile consulates as well as setting up Schengen compliant consulates in Tripoli, Misrata, Doha, Shanghai, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait City. However, due to the critical political situation in Libya, the Misrata consulate could not be opened. The Doha consulate was not opened either due to difficult bilateral relationship between the Qatari and Maltese governments. The EBF allowed MT to increase the number of Schengen processing consulates from 31 to 35. The impact of the activities are less clear, given that the number of Schengen visa applications increased from 42,000 to 82,000 between 2010 and 2013 before falling after the additional consulates opened,¹⁴⁴ reflecting the wider trend in Schengen visas issued (11.8 million in 2010, 17.2 million in 2013 down to 15.4 million in 2015)¹⁴⁵.

Consulates were also opened or upgraded in CY in view of the country's expected accession to the Schengen Area. In HU, an analysis on visa administration was carried out at five Hungarian representations (Moscow, Kiev, Baku, Almaty, Yekaterinburg) in order to assess the situation and ultimately adopt measures to increase the procedural efficiency (funded outside of the EBF). SI purchased safes to store visas and visa stickers.

External factors, such as difficult diplomatic relations or the situation on the ground, turned out to be a barrier for the implementation of some of the projects. In addition to the difficulties experienced by MT in opening visa stations in Misrata and Doha, the FI ILOs posted intermittently in St Petersburg experienced difficulties due to issues including the political situation with Russia following the Maidan movement and the Russian annexation of Crimea.

While some of the international cooperation between Member States has been effective, this was not the case for all projects. The BE consular cooperation action in Gaza (establishing a common application centre – CAC) was ineffective due to factors such as a lower than expected interest from Member States (only DK and SE expressed interest), reducing the potential economies of scale, the instability in the region and a lower than expected number of visa applications. **The action was therefore discontinued and the processing of visa applications in the territory has been outsourced to a private organisation (BE NER)**, with the visas now being processed in Jerusalem, as was the case before the project.

Issues in the planning of projects also impacted negatively on the effectiveness of the EBF under Priority 3. The CZ 2013 AP planned for the upgrade of consular sections in Colombia and Armenia,¹⁴⁶ two countries that were soon to sign visa facilitation agreements with the EU. The projects were not, however, accepted by DG Home given their lack of relevance (CZ NER).

Conclusions

The effectiveness of the actions conducted under Priority 3 are difficult to assess given (i) the importance of exogenous factors and the fact that (ii) actions were taking place in third countries, making their evaluation more difficult than other actions as they

¹⁴³ Actions 11 and 12, ES 2011 AP

¹⁴⁴ NERs – data aggregated by Optimity Advisors.

¹⁴⁵ Data collected from the DG Home website: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/index_en.htm last updated on 15/03/2016

¹⁴⁶ CZ 2013 AP.

would require travelling to these countries for the appropriate evaluation of each activity.

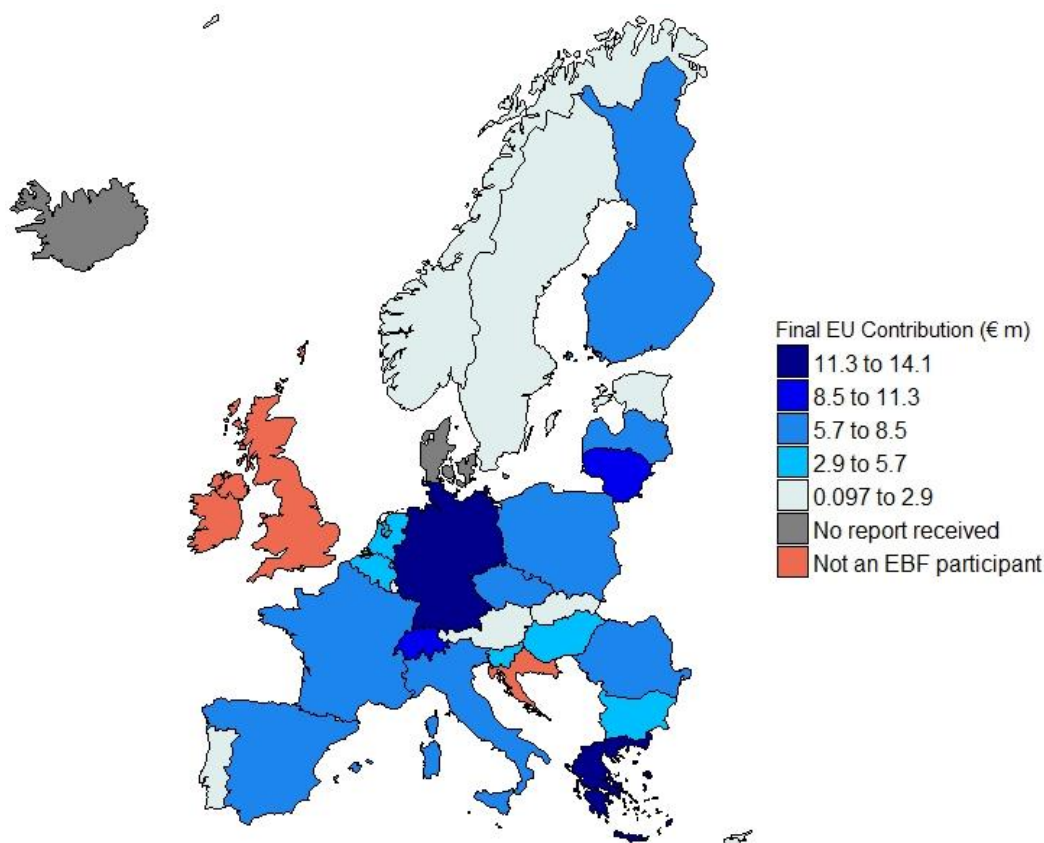
Given the predominance of external factors such as the Arab Spring, the situation in countries such as Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan makes it nearly impossible to assess the impact of the actions taken under Priority 3 of the EBF on the fight against irregular migration based on their outputs. Most of the information available on Priority 3 relates to output indicators for EBF-funded actions, with very little information on their wider results and impacts. **It does appear that the deployments of document advisors and ILOs have been effective based on the evidence from the NER and the DE case study.** However, the increase from 155,793 irregular migrants detected at BCPs in 2012 to 268,106 in the first three months of 2015 cannot be seen as a lack of effectiveness of the EBF. This point is discussed further in the overall effectiveness conclusions.

The effectiveness of the upgrading of consular buildings appears less evident. While the output indicators relating to the detection of false or falsified documents have been positive and, in some cases, go beyond the objectives set out in the annual programmes, the extent to which the impacts of the activities are achieved and therefore the extent to which they relate to the wider objectives of the priority, in particular the tackling of illegal immigration, is more difficult to establish.

Evaluation question 6

To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the EU legal instruments in the field of external borders and Schengen visas? – **Priority 4**

Figure 18: EBF 2011-2013: Priority 4 Final EU Contribution by Member State



This evaluation question, which focuses on the general objectives set out in Priority 4 of the Commission's Decision implementing the EBF,¹⁴⁷ involves assessing issues relating mainly to investments linked to VIS and SIS II. The Priority accounted for 19% of expenditure under the EBF (2007-2010)¹⁴⁸ and for 17% of the EBF funds invested in national actions. Given the need to launch SIS II in 2013 and the rolling out of the VIS between 2011 and 2015, the Commission identified investments linked to the SIS and the VIS as specific priorities under Priority 4,¹⁴⁹ allowing for 75% EU co-financing for relevant projects. According to the SFC2007 database, this applied to 80% of all projects funded under Priority 4 (147 out of 180). All Member States received at least some funding under Priority 4, but no individual country received an amount much larger than the others, with DE being the largest beneficiary with 11.2% of the programmed contribution.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Commission Decision 2007/599/EC.

¹⁴⁸ *op. cit.* ECA report, 2014, p.10.

¹⁴⁹ Commission Decision 2007/599/EC.

¹⁵⁰ Data compiled from the NER.

The evaluation question relates to the EBF contribution to the success in implementing and operationalising the establishment of the second generation of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) and the Visa Information System (VIS). This includes the capacity of consulates to have access and input into VIS as well as the possibility for border guards at border crossing points to access SIS.

Table 26: Output and result indicators relevant to Priority 4

Relevant indicator	Total
Number of consulates connected to VIS with the support of the 2011-2013 annual programmes	1,072 out of 2,189 consulates
Number of border crossing points connected to VIS with the support of the 2011-2013 annual programmes	914 out of 1,700 BCPs at external borders
Number of consulates equipped with operating equipment for Schengen visa processing under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	889 out of 2,189 consulates

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

Visa Information System (VIS)

The overall objective of EBF investments relating to the VIS has been achieved, as the European Commission announced in December 2015 that the system had been rolled out and was fully operational.¹⁵¹ The focus of this evaluation question should therefore be less on the effects (i.e. the successful implementation of the VIS) and more on the extent to which the EBF contributed to these effects. Over 1,000 consulates were connected to the VIS with the support of the 2011-13 annual programmes. According to 2015 data, there were 1,628 consulates of EBF Member States in non-Schengen countries.¹⁵² Accordingly, the EBF supported the connection of 63.3% of all consulates between 2011 and 2013. Based on figures available through Schengen states notification under Article 34 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (Schengen Border Code), there are approximately 1,700 sea, air and land BCPs with non-Schengen states.¹⁵³ Based on this estimate, it is possible to deduct that the EBF between 2011 and 2013 was responsible for supporting the connection of over half the BCPs operating in the Schengen Area.¹⁵⁴

While some projects suffered setbacks mainly because of delays in the VIS implementation at the EU level which were independent of the EBF, all Member States have reported that the results of the activities supporting the VIS implementation have been achieved. Interestingly, **some countries highlighted that while the ultimate results of the activities were met, not all the targets have been met as planned.** In IT, one of the actions was not completed due to a proposed system not being bought and changes in the licensing policy of the software supplier. This type of situation, where the results of an investment have been met but not the target indicators, highlights some issues in terms of the monitoring of the activities. These results indicate an inaccurate selection of output indicators and a lack of sufficient monitoring. The IT NER pointed out that this was due to indicators not being adequately identified early in the process, leading to a misleading judgement when estimating the results during the implementation of the Programme (IT NER).

¹⁵¹ European Commission daily news briefing, 2 December 2015: *Schengen Visa Information System now fully operational worldwide* – <http://europa.eu/rapid/midday-express-02-12-2015.htm>

¹⁵² DG HOME data, 'visa policy' section – where RO, BG and CY were considered part of the Schengen Area.

¹⁵³ Optimity calculations based on notifications under article 34 of Regulation (EC) No562/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2006 establishing a Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (Schengen Borders Code).

¹⁵⁴ These figures take into account RO, BG and CY as they are legally obliged to join the Schengen Area.

PT experienced important setbacks in the implementation of VIS, because of some issues explored under the efficiency criteria. The PT NER highlights a number of issues in the implementation of projects relating to VIS, with some projects not having been implemented and others being revoked by the RA. Despite these problems, the objective of the priority was assessed as positive (PT NER). This outcome illustrates how the output indicators and the results of the actions might not be linked. Indeed, the VIS system was implemented, while the outputs of the activities were not achieved due to excessive national bureaucracy and respective issues with the public procurement process.

VIS-related investments were used to purchase hardware such as PCs, fingerprint scanners etc. (CY, BE), ensuring the trouble-free and failure-resilient operation of the National Visa System (BG) or ensuring the interface between national N-VIS systems and the VIS (EL, BE).

The CH case study provides interesting insights into the implementation of the VIS. In addition to having fully achieved its objectives, the programme was also found by end-users to be user-friendly, understandable and easy to learn.¹⁵⁵ The system was also perceived to have positive results in terms of fraud detection, protection of travellers, processing of asylum applications and security. Additional positive impacts stemming from the implementation of the projects were the strengthening of CH's capacities to achieve its duties and obligations to ensure uniform, effective and efficient control at the external borders.

Box 6: Case study Switzerland

Case study – N-VIS (Switzerland)

Introduction of the national visa system and its connection to the CS-VIS and introduction of a new software system – ORBIS.

On accession to the Schengen Area, CH was obliged (among other requirements) to link its national visa system (N-VIS) to the central visa information system (CS-VIS). The project's objectives were the fulfilment of CH's obligations as a Schengen-associated state and the facilitation of the common visa policies, improvement of consular cooperation and communication among authorities in charge of visas.

The projects resulted in the connection of the N-VIS to the CSVIS system according to the EU's roll-out plan. The new visa system software (ORBIS) was introduced and the end-users were comprehensively trained to work with it.

Schengen Information System (SIS II)

SIS II, which was planned to be launched in 2008, experienced implementation delays. In order to speed up the process, a Specific Priority (4.1) under Priority 4 was set up to ensure a 75% EU co-financing rate for projects 'linked to the SIS'.¹⁵⁶ SIS II was finally implemented in April 2013. In a similar way as with VIS, the focus of this evaluation question will therefore be on the extent to which the EBF contributed to the implementation of the system.

The SIS II is a system which supports external border control and law enforcement cooperation, allowing signatories of the Schengen Agreement to share data on suspected criminals, on people who may not have the right to enter or stay in the EU,

¹⁵⁵ Survey of end-users

¹⁵⁶ Specific priority 4(2).

on missing persons and on stolen, misappropriated or lost property. The main activities undertaken under this specific priority related to (i) the development, testing and implementation of national SIS II systems and (ii) projects relating to the upgrading or modernisation of the SIRENE bureaux. SIRENE bureaux are responsible for any supplementary information exchange and coordination of activities connected to SIS alerts; as such, they are a key link in the successful implementation of the SIS.

As with VIS, NERs reflected the overall effectiveness of the EBF in achieving the implementation of SIS II as demonstrated by the following examples. According to the AT NER, the successful commissioning of SIS II improved the information available and the facility for searches, and massively reduced problems. In EE, the N-SIS is now linked to and can exchange data with SIS II (EE NER), one of the key objectives identified in the EE MAP. In NO, the two projects linked to SIS achieved their objectives (which were in line with the identified needs), leading to the successful integration of NO into the SIS in 2013 (NO NER).

SIS II upgrade (CZ case study)

The SIS upgrade project was specifically meant to ensure an efficient, real-time consultation of data at border crossing points through the use of large-scale IT systems – not only through the Schengen Information System but also the Visa Information System and an operative information exchange system.¹⁵⁷

The project achieved its objectives, as evidenced by the responsible authority for the EBF in the Czech Republic; by senior experts from the Operations and IT Technical Support Department (OPKTPIT) of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic who have implemented the projects and the end-users of the SIS II at SIRENE at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic. Together with the SIS upgrade, the functionalities of the Foreign Information System and of the OBZOR system were also expanded.

The SIS II can now manage 90 million alerts a year, and the fully functional database and backup centre are ensuring the high availability of the system at all times. The system was built to fulfil the requirements of the maximum downtime of five minutes per month. All data are replicated by the ORACLE technology to the backup centre in real time, ensuring the functionality and availability of the backup centre if needed, including a backup energy source – diesel aggregator.¹⁵⁸

Some issues were identified in the effective implementation of the SIS II at national level. In RO, not all the planned hardware could be acquired on time and some actions were not completed as a result of a lack of offers to the public procurement procedure. FI also experienced issues in the implementation of SIS II. An alternative short-term plan had to be put in place in order to circumvent issues relating to the lack of experience and understanding of what was required to integrate the national system with SIS II. The implementation of SIS II therefore required an interim solution. While the interim solution negatively affected the overall efficiency of SIS II's introduction, it did not have an impact on its overall effectiveness. Despite these issues, the project's objectives were eventually achieved.

¹⁵⁷ Annual Programme 2011, p. 8.

¹⁵⁸ Per interviews with OPKTPIT at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

Other ITech systems were also financed and implemented through Priority 4. The Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS) was implemented in MT, allowing the border management authorities access to information from all airlines operating in the country (MT NER). In SK, an automated fingerprint identification system (AFIS) was developed in order to identify suspected people smugglers; the system also allows for the identification of people suspected of participating in trans-national organised crime, although this latter element is not covered by the EBF. The system reached its objectives as the time needed to identify a person's fingerprints reduced from minutes to approximately two seconds (SK NER).

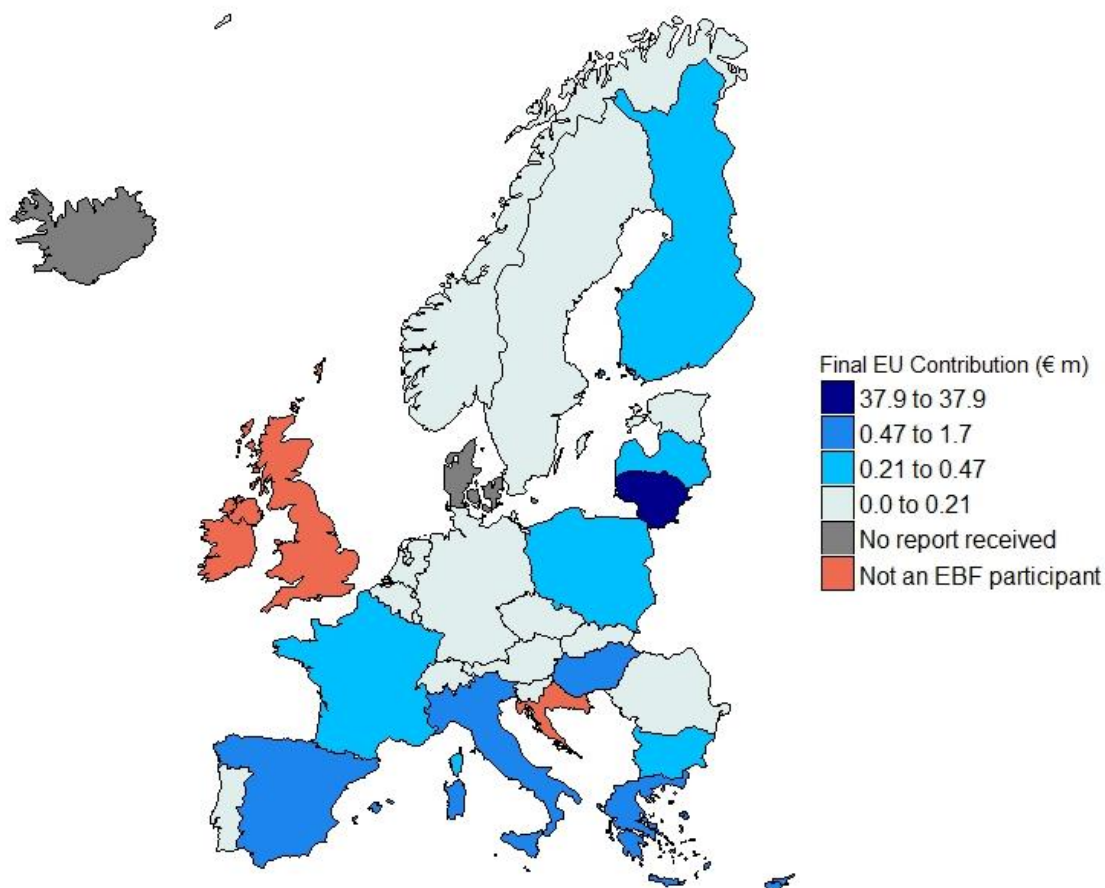
Conclusions

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that actions funded under Priority 4 have generally been effective, especially in reaching the goals of fully implementing the VIS and SIS II systems. While the impact of the actions is clear, the efficiency of the actions funded under Priority 4 was not always ensured, with large IT systems not funded in the most efficient way. A particular problem is the number of projects not having achieved their output or outcome indicators while achieving their impacts. As both the VIS and SIS II systems were funded through the EBF as well as other sources, the two systems became operational through alternative funding. The ultimate objectives of implementing VIS and SIS II were therefore achieved without all EBF-funded activities having been successfully completed. This suggests that some projects were not adequately planned.

Evaluation question 11

To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the effective and efficient application of relevant EU legal instruments in the field of Schengen visas, in particular the Visa Code? – **Priority 5**

Figure 19: EBF 2011-2013: Priority 5 Final EU Contribution by Member State



Priority 5, which is the focus of this evaluation question, is the one under which the lowest amount has been pledged and disbursed. The overall programmed EU contribution for the period was EUR 47.34 million. The final contribution of EUR 46.09 million accounted for 5.39% of the overall EBF contribution.¹⁵⁹ However, this figure is misleading as over EUR 40 million of the programmes funds for Priority 5 benefited the Special Transit Scheme.

Box 7: The Special Transit Scheme

Article 6 of decision 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF set up the Special Transit Scheme (STS) recognising the additional cost resulting from *the specific requirements of implementing the operation of the special transit scheme*¹⁶⁰ resulting from the number of transit visas having to be issued from travellers between the Kaliningrad Oblast enclave and the mainland of the Russian Federation.

¹⁵⁹ Data collected from the National Evaluation Reports, and presented in chapter 6.

¹⁶⁰ Decision 574/2007/EC, article 6.

Three types of eligible actions are: (i) infrastructures, (ii) training of staff and (iii) operational costs. Part of the training and the operational costs are covered by Priority 5.

Overall 21 actions were funded under the STS, focusing on training on the operational functioning and proper implementation of the STS (including language courses, driving classes etc.). The vehicles (minibuses) are used in case of incidents at Kaliningrad transit railway strip. Part of the STS related to the need to ensure that travellers carrying transit visas cross the country without illegally disappearing during transit through LT. Operational costs such as those covering patrols in the country have therefore also been included.¹⁶¹

The actions funded appear to have been effective in achieving the objective of training staff to ensure the functionality of the STS, and the less sustainable objective of covering the operational costs of the transit of foreign nationals. 1,400 people were trained on the practical aspects of the STS and e-learning programmes have been set up.¹⁶²

The remaining EU contribution under Priority 5 is therefore EUR 7.72 million (less than 1% of the total EBF contribution through national actions). This low figure is mainly due to the nature of the activities funded under the priority, which include:

- the development and delivery of training programmes and modules for border guards and other officials;
- delivering language courses and classes to border guards and other officials; and
- in a limited number of cases, the construction or procurement of facilities to provide this training.

IT, ES, HU and EL accounted for 68% of the total EU contribution for Priority 5. Out of the nine Member States for which data are available, 22,505 people have been trained through different actions under Priority 5.

Table 27: Output and result indicators relevant to Priority 5

Relevant indicator	Total
Number of border guards trained under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	22,505 (out of 47,536 – 47.3%)
Number of consular officials trained under the 2011-2013 annual programmes	4,513

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

According to Commission Decision 2007/599/EC, Priority 5 'could involve dissemination of information [...] as well as training activities targeting officials from border guard services and at consulates'.¹⁶³ Most countries used Priority 5 to fund training of staff and in some cases to support actions funded through other priorities. In IT, for instance, actions under Priority 5 have been used to train pilots using the helicopters purchased (see case study IT), in order to increase the number of pilots (by 16%) and experts of the State Police as part of border guard services (by 20%), who are qualified for the use of AW139 helicopters (IT NER).

¹⁶¹ LT NER, p. 42

¹⁶² LT NER, p. 14

¹⁶³ Commission Decision 2007/599/EC, Annex.

The majority of Member States who had actions funded under Priority 5 focused on **training of personnel and specific courses** (in particular language classes). In FR, the number of ILOs trained in order to be deployed was higher than initially planned and the satisfaction rate of the people trained deemed 'excellent' (FR NER).

Language courses were also provided in a number of countries. The effect of operational staff being able to speak more languages and therefore communicate with their counterparts (English, French in the case of ES), or migrants (Arabic, French and English) was overall positive. In IT, 36% of all border guards were given foreign language training, therefore increasing their ability to conduct 'border interviews' with migrants. Over 400 navy personnel were also given Arabic and English classes to be able to communicate with migrants intercepted or rescued at sea.

More **sustainable investments** were also funded. In HU for instance, a training centre was set up in Szeged comprising a classroom, training room, accommodation for 14 people and an outdoor simulation centre. The new centre provided optimal conditions for border guards to be trained and therefore become more effective in the conduct of their duties (HU NER), with a total of 1,459 border guards trained between 2013 and 2015. SE developed an interactive training programme aimed at personnel located at BCPs. Despite some delay in the development of the programme, it now allows for the training of operational personnel, 5,000 of whom had been trained by 2013.

Some **unintended consequences** were also identified in the course of the evaluation exercise. One of the most common ones is that the training of such a large number of staff has strengthened the networking and cooperation of staff from different organisations and agencies as a result of meeting during the training sessions (HU NER).

Conclusions

A number of factors **harmed the effectiveness of actions funded under Priority 5**. The most common issue relates to the lower number of staff trained compared to what was expected. Causes mentioned include the need to strike a balance between training and operations activities; in HU, only 240 out of the planned 500 border guards could attend a specific training course as it would have resulted otherwise in problems at BCPs (HU NER). Similarly, in IT, some targets were not achieved (by 20% in two cases) given the difficulty of striking a balance between training needs and day-to-day operational activities (IT NER). In EE, the lower than expected number of border guards attending training was blamed on events in Ukraine, putting the country's border guards on higher alert. Other issues are more problematic. In AT for instance, high staff turnover has negatively impacted on the effectiveness of language courses provided to visa officials (AT NER).

With an implementation rate of between 73% in 2013 and 93% in 2011, Priority 5 fares on average better than the other priorities. There were nevertheless some instances where planned activities were not implemented. In BG, the effectiveness of the intervention was limited as two of the four planned actions under Priority 5 were cancelled. Given the small size of the investments under Priority 5, cancelling action 17 (Development of new modules and training materials) had a disproportionately low impact on the implementation rate. Similarly, in FI an inspection hall which was planned to be built as a space to provide training was only partly constructed. However, the National Evaluation Report highlights that the learning environment has improved. The part of the project aimed at the construction of a building for vehicle training was not completed. However, given that the facility used for training in the

detection of irregular migration has been completed, the negative impact on the priority's effectiveness has been mitigated.¹⁶⁴

Finally, the training of honorary consuls in NO was not deemed effective as, while the training of the honorary consul took place in Miami in 2011 as planned,¹⁶⁵ they were not authorised to register biometric data and therefore no longer able to process visa applications after the implementation of VIS. Their training on the use of the VIS system was therefore redundant (NO NER).

The short- and medium-term outputs and results of the actions funded under Priority 5 appear to be clearly positive (number of staff trained, increase in the understanding and application of the Visa Code, operation of the STS and support to other priorities through training of personnel). According to the data provided in the national evaluation reports received, 22,505 border guards and 4,513 consular officials have been trained under the EBF 2011-2013 programme.¹⁶⁶ The impact of this increasingly trained corpus of border guards and consular officials is likely to have been positive. While it is not possible to assess the overall impact of the training of border guards, these activities have been influential in ensuring that results under other priorities have been achieved (e.g. identification of forged documents at BCPs, number and processing time for visa applications at consulates etc.). Overall, the EBF 2011-2013 appears to have played an effective and efficient role in the application of relevant EU legal instruments through the training of border guards on the Schengen Border Code and consular officials on the European code on visas. In addition, actions financed under Priority 5 played a role in ensuring the adequate use of the investments made under other priorities (such as the training of helicopter pilots in Italy or Cyprus).

Evaluation question 2

To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the efficient organisation of control, covering both checks and surveillance tasks relating to the external borders? – Objective A

In order for General Objective A¹⁶⁷ to be achieved, the EBF needs to have fostered an 'efficient organisation of control, covering both checks and surveillance tasks relating to the external borders'. In order for the EU to have such an efficient organisation of control, certain elements need to be in place such as:

- Implementation of the recommendations, operational standards and best practices resulting from the operational cooperation between Member States (SOA1)
- Equipment to enable the checking of persons at BCP (covered under General Objective B);
- Equipment to enable the surveillance of the external borders (SOA2 and SOA3);
- Systems and processes to deal with the flow of persons at BCP (SOA4);
- Human resources to undertake the Border Checks and surveillance tasks (SOA7);
- Data collection on the mobility flows and types of activities undertaken (SOA3 and SOA5);

¹⁶⁴ FI 2011 FR

¹⁶⁵ NO 2011 FR

¹⁶⁶ See chapter 6.

¹⁶⁷ Defined in Article 3(1)(a) of Decision No 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF.

- Coordination and cooperation between the different authorities at the national level, as well as between Member States (SOA1, SOA6 and SOA8).

The first specific objective, relating to the implementation of the recommendations, operational standards and best practices resulting from the operational cooperation between Member States in the field of border control (B), has not been the subject of any particular action under the EBF, but rather could be achieved through the implementation of other specific objectives described below.

Equipment to enable the surveillance of the external borders (SOA2 and SOA3);

Table 28: Context indicators – General Objective A (1)

Context indicator	Value (2014 unless specified)	% change 2010 – 2014
Number of irregular migrants detected at the external border	282,962	104,060 (+172%)

Source: Frontex

Many countries invested in the development of **surveillance systems**, through the acquisition of equipment, software and hardware, to **improve surveillance** between BCPs (as per **SOA2**), such as vehicles to survey land borders, and vessels and aircraft to survey the maritime borders. Countries noted these investments as effective as they extended the external borders covered by patrolling more generally, as well as hard-to-reach parts of the external borders. These vehicles, vessels and aircraft were often equipped with modern technology, such as cameras (including infrared and thermal), radars and sensors enabling surveillance activities in more challenging conditions, such as at night and in difficult weather conditions.

Some of these investments, when put together, formed an effective surveillance system, **gathering relevant information with respect to the evolving situation on the ground** close to, at and immediately beyond the external borders (as per **SOA3**). For example, BG set up its Integrated System for Control and Surveillance (ISCS), which included perimeter signal guarding systems (i.e. sensors, cameras), stationary and mobile surveillance posts and local and regional coordination centres along the border of BG with Turkey (BG NER), and HU installed or modernised 241 fixed and 38 rotated CCTV at the Serbian and Ukrainian border sections (HU NER). PL invested in the construction of seven new observation towers equipped with optoelectronic systems (including cooled thermal camera, daylight camera, laser rangefinder systems and auxiliary equipment), allowing constant observation of the border strip at a distance of 7 to 10 km on each side of the tower (PL NER).

The number of irregular migrants detected at the external borders increased dramatically between 2011 and 2014, although this is likely to be the result of exogenous factors and the influx of migrants from the Maghreb and the Mashreq. **The effectiveness of actions funded under the EBF for the surveillance of borders is therefore difficult to assess quantitatively.** Qualitative evidence from beneficiaries explored under Priorities 1 and 2 does suggest that the actions were nevertheless effective. Despite the high influx of refugees in 2015, Member States have been able to meet the challenges relating to the surveillance of external borders, indicating a positive aspect of the measures funded under the EBF.

Systems and processes to deal with the flow of persons at BCPs (SOA4)

Some countries used the EBF to fund actions aiming to ensure the adequate registration of the number of persons crossing at the BCPs of the Schengen external

borders (land, air, sea)¹⁶⁸ (as per **SOA4**). 'First filter' actions were taken through the deployment of ILOs and document advisors in third countries. Some Member States acquired equipment or set up systems aimed at improving the detection of false travel documents or visas, such as providing access to databases or setting up data systems for the verification of validity and authenticity of documents (BE, DE, NO), and equipment for checking security features on travel documents and detecting counterfeits (EE, EL, FR, IT, LT).

Improvement to the capacity and qualification of border guards to undertake the Border Checks and surveillance tasks (SOA7)

Some countries invested in actions aimed to improve the capacity and the qualifications of border guards in executing their surveillance, advisory and control tasks (as per **SOA7**). Through actions funded by the EBF, more than 22,505 border guards have received different types of training, ranging from language classes and training in interview techniques to training on the Schengen Borders Code.

Table 29: Context indicators – General Objective A (2)

Context indicator	Value (2014 unless specified)	% change 2010 – 2014
Average time necessary for the verification of a traveller's entry at border crossing points (seconds)	58	-5% (61 in 2010)
Average waiting time for travellers at border crossing points (minutes)	11	-21% (14 in 2010)
Estimated number of travellers crossing the external border	658,000	+19.6% (550,000 in 2010)
Average intervention time (time between the alert and arrival on the spot) (minutes)	44 minutes	-10% (49 in 2010)
Number of false or falsified travel documents or false or falsified Schengen visas detected at the border crossing points	34,153	+40% (24,327 in 2010)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

The available context indicators do not suggest important changes in the efficiency of processing time at BCPs. This does not necessarily mean that the situation worsened, and can be partly explained by the increasing number of travellers crossing the external borders (+19% between 2011 and 2014) and the apparent increase in the detection of false or falsified visas at BCP (+40.4%) according to aggregated data from the NERs.

Data collection on the mobility flows and types of activities undertaken (SOA3 and SOA5)

In a few countries, the EBF funded the 'introduction of measures or development of effective systems enabling a methodical gathering of relevant information with respect to the evolving situation on the ground, close to, at and immediately beyond the external borders' (as per **SOA3**), however not with the purpose of surveillance (as described above), but for the purpose of risk analysis. For example, in BE, an action related to the data collection and analysis of cross-border air traffic (BE NER) and SI mentioned as an impact of establishing its NCC the improved data collection on the traffic in the Slovene sea (SI NER).

¹⁶⁸ As per Article 34 of Regulation (EC) No 562/2006 (Schengen Border Code)

A few countries invested in actions introducing or upgrading a system of collection of statistical and administrative data with respect to the categories of travellers, the number and nature of checks and surveillance measures at the different types of external borders, based on registration and other sources for data collection (as per **SOA5**). With regard to **data collection on the categories of travellers**, a number of countries developed information systems on air passenger data (e.g. DE, EE, FR, MT and NL), allowing them to monitor the increasing amount of flight passenger data and identify wanted persons.

Coordination & Cooperation (SOA1, SOA6 and SOA8)

Firstly, some investments made under the EBF included the setting up of effective structural, strategic and operational coordination between all authorities operating at BCPs at the national level, as well as the VIS and SIS II systems which ensure that information gathered elsewhere is accessible at BCPs (as per **SOA6**). Few actions seem to have been funded to improve cooperation between different BCPs (one exception being the BC information system project in EE), however some actions improved coordination between authorities undertaking surveillance activities. For example, the acquisition of different equipment, such as multiband radios (e.g. MT), multisensory platforms for ships (e.g. DE) or the establishment of surveillance systems (e.g. SIAM and SPATIONAV in FR), allowed for communication and information exchange between the different maritime surveillance authorities in the country, and therefore helped improve coordination between them. In MT and EE, the equipment was also used to improve communication between officers at BCP and field/patrol officers (MT and EE NER). BG installed communication equipment securing the transmission of video information and other data between the sections of ISCS, the local centre in Elhovo and to the National Centre in Sofia (BG case study).

Some actions improved information exchange at national level between the authorities responsible for external border management and between these authorities and others responsible for migration, asylum and other related matters (as per **SOA8**). In addition, projects funding the deployment of ILOs helped in the gathering of information in third countries and between Member States on changing circumstances which could affect migratory pressures.

Finally, some actions funded under the EBF 2011-2013 fostered **operational cooperation** between Member States in the field of border control (as per **SOA1**), such as the establishment of National Coordination Centres (e.g. ES, NO and SI; see under Priority 2), VIS and SIS II (Priority 4). Furthermore, some countries have subscribed to international databases /systems allowing them to authenticate and check travel documents, such as the Public Key Directory of the ICAO (e.g. BE and SE) and the Interpol ASF SLTD (e.g. DE, see under Priority 1). However, **beyond the implementation of the VIS and SIS II, it remains unclear whether this operational cooperation has led to the implementation of the recommendations, operational standards or best practices, as defined under SOA1.**

Except for the training provided to border guards and consular officials described under Priority 5, no evidence was found of any actions promoting the quality management standards (as per **SOA9**).

Table 30: Context indicators – General Objective A (3)

Context indicator	Value (2014 unless specified)	% change 2010 – 2014 (unless specified)
Number of ILOs and other special staff (e.g. document security advisors) posted	680	+40.2% (485 in 2010)

Context indicator	Value (2014 unless specified)	% change 2010 – 2014 (unless specified)
Number of false or falsified travel documents detected at consulates	34,153	+40.4% (24,327 in 2010)
Number of consular officials processing Schengen visas (full-time equivalent)	4,022	+33.44% (3,014 in 2010)
Number of consulates processing Schengen visas	1,866	-6.47% (1,995 in 2010)
Number of Schengen visa applications	13,169,970	+60.61% (8,200,192 in 2010)
Number of Schengen visas issued	12,286,970	+42.98% (8,593,543 in 2010)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

Cooperation in third countries, and in particular the deployment of ILOs, appears to have been effective in developing a 'first filter' to detect falsified documents at consulates. Actions funded under the 2011-13 programming period accounted for 541 of the 676 ILOs deployed, which suggests a high level of effectiveness and is in line with the feedback from NERs. Furthermore, there has been a fall in the number of consulates processing Schengen visas, suggesting a greater level of cooperation between Member States in the delivery of visas and the development of common visa processing centres. The increased efficiency in the processing of visas is also demonstrated by the fact that while visa applications rose by over 60%, the number of FTEs processing visas only increased by 26% according to the NERs.

Overall, and taking into account the relevant context indicators for which enough information has been collected, **the impacts of the EBF appear to have fulfilled the objectives set out under Article 3(1)(a) of the EBF Decision.**¹⁶⁹

Evaluation question 3

To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the efficient management by the Member States of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure, on the one hand, a high level of protection at the external borders and, on the other, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen acquis and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity? – Objective B

In order for General Objective B¹⁷⁰ to be fulfilled, the EBF should have achieved an 'efficient management by the Member States of the flows of persons at the external borders' through its funding. For the Member States to efficiently manage the flow of persons, certain elements need to have been fulfilled in order to achieve the specific objectives set out in Article 4(2)(a-e), such as:

- Equipment and IT systems to enable the checking of persons at BCP (SOB1, SOB2 and SOB4);
- Human resources capable of undertaking the border check tasks using the equipment and IT systems (i.e. through training) (SOB2 and SOB3);
- Cooperation/Information exchange
 - on forged or false travel documents (SOB3)
 - between all BCPs along the external borders in real time (SOB4).

¹⁶⁹ Decision 574/2007/EC.

¹⁷⁰ Defined in Article 3(1)(b) of Decision No 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF.

Equipment and IT systems to enable the checking of persons at BCP (SOB1, SOB2 and SOB4)

In many countries, the EBF has funded the development of new working methods, logistical measures and state-of-the-art technology to strengthen systematic controls of persons on entry and exit at BCPs (as per **SOB1**). This is achieved through (i) first-line collection of information at the point of visa application and (ii) second-line identification of false or forged documents at BCPs. Context indicators for these specific objectives have been provided above (Table 29).

The **integration of Member States' information systems into the VIS ensures a level of consistency in visa security and applications and therefore reduces 'visa shopping'**. This has been achieved at least partly through EBF-funded actions (Priority 4). At BCPs, at least one third of the Member States have installed e-gates or ABC Gates at their airports with the aim of increasing the efficiency of checking travellers. Other technology acquired to improve border control activities includes equipment allowing the detection of irregular migrants, such as X-ray scanning equipment or heartbeat or carbon dioxide detectors (e.g. BG, LT), equipment to verify the validity and authenticity of documents (e.g. EE, EL, FR, IT, LT) or equipment to register persons (e.g. fingerprint readers acquired by FR and SE). It should be noted that some countries equipped vehicles with this type of technology, so they could be used outside BCPs as mobile border checks/checks on person units to undertake mobile border controls (e.g. BG, FI, LT, NO, SE).

Promotion of the use of technology – in particular VIS and SIS II at BCPs (SOB4)

The research findings suggest that the **implementation of the VIS, which can be at least partly attributed to the EBF (Priority 4), allows for the real-time identification of forged and falsified documents at BCPs**. All Member States have implemented actions relating to VIS or SIS II; indeed, some countries (such as IS) only participated in the EBF to get specific funding relating to these actions¹⁷¹. In some countries (e.g. MT), actions were funded to provide BCPs with the ability to perform biometric tests at the point of entry. This also links to the introduction of e-gates specifically for third-country nationals travelling on a Schengen visa (e.g. NL). The implementation of SIS II in itself also ensures that personnel at BCPs have the tools to identify criminals, third-country nationals who have overstayed their visa or people who might not have the right to enter the Schengen Area.

Table 31: Context indicators – General Objective B

Context indicator	Value (2014 unless specified)	% change 2011 – 2014 (unless specified)
Number of consulates connected to VIS	1,072	+366% (230 in 2010)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

The number of consulates connected to VIS increased by 573% over the period, and data suggest that the majority of them have done so through EBF-supported actions.

Human resources capable to undertake border check tasks using the equipment and IT systems (i.e. through training) (SOB2 and SOB3)

¹⁷¹ Interview with IS RA.

While limited information is available on the effectiveness of the training provided through Priority 5, the number of border guards (22,505) and consular officials (4,513) that have been trained points towards a certain level of effectiveness. The DE case study demonstrates how the deployment of document advisors has improved the ability of personnel in consulates and airlines in third countries to identify forged or false travel documents.

Cooperation/ Information exchange (SOB3 and SOB4)

Firstly, some actions funded under the EBF 2011-2013 aimed to improve cooperation and exchange information with regard to intelligence on **forged or false travel documents** (as per **SOB3**). For example, a number of countries' actions funded related to the provision of access to an international databases or data system for the verification of validity and authenticity of documents, such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) e.g. BE and NO.

In addition, some countries invested in the development and distribution of common tools and practices for the detection of forged or false travel documents (as per **SOB3**), through the cooperation of ILOs and document advisors in third countries, as described above. Some actions funded under the EBF 2011-2013 aimed to improve **cooperation and exchange information between BCPs**, through the use of large-scale IT systems, in particular VIS and SIS II mentioned above (**SOB4**). Apart from VIS and SIS II, no other actions have been funded under EBF 2011-2013 to ensure 'effective exchange of information between all border crossing points along the external borders in real time' (SOB4).

In the same way that little data collection and risk analysis has been funded under the EBF 2011-2013 (see under SOA3), few actions have been funded under **SOB5** on 'ensuring the optimal implementation at operational and technical level of the results of the risk analyses'.

Conclusions

Overall, **the impacts of the EBF appear to have fulfilled the objective set out under Article 3(1)(b) of the EBF Decision.**¹⁷² The specific objective relating to the implementation of the risk analyses is one exception, as no evidence could be found by this evaluation. It is important to reiterate that the dichotomy between the Objectives and Priorities and the use of the latter in the Member States' practical operationalisation of the EBF means that **while specific objectives might have been achieved, they have not always been reported in NERs.**

Evaluation question 7

*To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the uniform application by border guards of the provisions of EU law on the crossing of external borders, in particular Regulation (EC) No 562/2006? – **Objective C***

In order for General Objective C to be fulfilled, activities funded through the EBF should have achieved the 'uniform application by border guards of the provisions of Community law on the crossing of external borders, in particular Regulation (EC) No 562/2006'.¹⁷³ In order to do so, the following elements need to be fulfilled to reach the specific objectives set out in Article 4(3)(a-g):

¹⁷² Decision 574/2007/EC.

¹⁷³ Defined in Article 3(1)(c) of Decision No 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF.

- Comprehensive training of border guards in particular regarding the Core Curriculum, practical core handbook and personnel exchange (**SOC1, SOC2, SOC5**);
- Training in and practical use of the VIS and SIS II at BCPs and in consulates (**SOC3, SOC4**);
- Construction and upgrading of BCPs, detention and first reception centres (**SOC6** and **SOC7**)

General objective C is very similar in its scope to Priority 5. The sheer number of border guards that have been trained through actions funded by the EBF (over 22,500 of a total of 42,000 border guards operating in Member States) suggests that the specific objectives (**SOC1, SOC2, SOC5**) have been achieved. Training in the use of VIS and SIS II at BCPs and in consulates (**SOC3, SOC4**) appears to have been effective given the full implementation of both systems, which required relevant personnel to be trained in addition to ITech investment.

Construction and upgrading of BCPs, centres for persons whose entry is refused and first reception centres (SOC6 and SOC7)

Only a few countries have invested in the building and upgrading of areas and centres for persons whose entry is refused and for persons who are intercepted after having crossed the border illegally or when approaching the external borders with a view to illegally entering the territory of the Member States (i.e. **SOC6**). Given that eligibility for EBF funding relates only to border and not the related areas of return or refugees (covered by the Return Fund and the Refugee Fund respectively), interviews highlighted difficulties in assessing exactly which element of funding was relevant for which fund. As a result, the number of centres for persons whose entry is refused was very low. As can be seen in Table 14, four countries (CY, EL, LT and RO) invested in the construction/upgrading of 38 detention facilities and construction/upgrading of 547 places within detention facilities (of which 1,006 were accounted for by EL) through EBF funding 2011-2013 (EL NER).

Table 32 suggests that, given the small increase in the overall number of available places, these investments related more to the upgrading rather than the construction of detention facilities.

Table 32: Context indicators – General Objective C (1)

Context indicator	Value (2014 unless specified)	% change 2011–2014 (unless specified)
Number of facilities used for the detention of third-country nationals apprehended in connection to an irregular border crossing	375	-1.32% (380 in 2010)
Number of places in facilities used for the detention of third-country nationals apprehended in connection to an irregular border crossing	7,989	+0.9% (7,918 in 2010)

Source: NERs – data compiled by Optimity Advisors

A larger number of countries used EBF funding for the upgrading of BCPs. In total, 13 countries used EBF funding to construct, renovate or upgrade border crossing points. However, it is unclear how many of these investments increased 'the security at the premises of BCPs to secure the safety of border guards and the protection of equipment, surveillance systems and means of transport' (as per **SOC7**). The number of BCPs increased by 6.4% to 1,521 between 2011 and 2014, according to data from the NERs.

The fulfilment of the objective set out under Article 3(1)(c) of the EBF Decision¹⁷⁴ is difficult to assess given its 'soft' nature. Output and result indicators and the overall achievement of the other general objectives set out in the decision suggest that the application of the Schengen Borders Code has improved over the programming period.

Evaluation question 8

To what extent were the EBF 2011-2013 actions, and in particular the EBF Community actions, effective in providing support services to Member States in duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action at external borders?

Over the period covered by this evaluation (2011-2013), there have been 25 Emergency actions under the EBF Community actions for a total of EUR 39.96 million.¹⁷⁵ The bulk of the actions focused on the following countries:

- **IT** – first aid and medical assistance for search and rescue operations, internal transfer of migrants until first reception, deployment of multidisciplinary teams for first reception response and interpretation / cultural mediation services to assist border police during screening procedures;
- **ES** – reinforcing BCPs in Ceuta and Melilla;
- **BG, EL** – reinforcing first reception services, additional deployment of border guards and covering essential needs for migrant reception, as well as multi-disciplinary teams.
- In addition to actions dedicated to managing migration flows, in 2011 it was decided to allocate part of the emergency assistance to assisting eight countries (CY, CZ, EE, LU, MT, NL, PT, SK) in the final stages of the **SIS II** development. The successful launch of SIS II indicates that these Emergency actions achieved their objectives.¹⁷⁶

In order to address this question, a brief overview of migration pressure and emergency dynamics is necessary, against which specific outputs can be assessed. In general, Emergency actions were effective in providing support and assistance to those MS facing the greatest migration pressure. Emergency situations arose mainly due to external factors (increased migration flows) and hence could not be foreseen in full in the national programmes due to the longer planning period underlying APs and MAPs.¹⁷⁷ The same applies to the SIS II development, although this need arose due to delays at EU level.¹⁷⁸ There were many reasons for the delay of SIS II implementation and the revision of the planned end date from 2006 to 2008, then to 2010 and finally to 2013, including an unrealistic initial deadline not based on adequate technical

¹⁷⁴ Decision 574/2007/EC.

¹⁷⁵ Optimity Advisors calculations based on programming documents

¹⁷⁶ Commission Response to the ECA Report, 2014.

¹⁷⁷ Interview DG Home, Unit E.1, co-ordinator of the EBF direct management team

¹⁷⁸ In 2001 the Council tasked the Commission to develop the second-generation SIS II system (the decision was made by Schengen countries back in 1996) in order to connect new EU members after 2004 to the Schengen Area and to enhance the system functions, with an initial planned end of 2006, later revised to 2008 and 2010. In 2010 the Commission issued a final schedule after having more complete information on the system requirements and having put in place a more efficient management system. In 2011, emergency assistance was allocated to MS with very low EBF allocations and/or whose EBF resources were absorbed by other key priorities in the area of external borders. The system became fully operational in May 2013 and replaced SIS I. Court of Auditors (2014) Special Report No 3/2014, Lessons from the European Commission's development of the second generation Schengen information system (SIS II).

analysis, evolving system requirements, changing costs and expected benefits, insufficient allocation of staff for management and supervision, and tender difficulties. Through the EBF Emergency actions, in 2011 the Commission made significant efforts to mitigate the risk of further delays of SIS II implementation due to Member States lacking financing. The 2010-2011 political developments following the Arab Spring have brought strong instability in most North African countries, leading to a situation of humanitarian crisis. This has necessitated a quick response to emergency situations relating to the management of the migration influx via the Mediterranean routes, better surveillance and detection of illegal crossings, search and rescue operations at sea and the first reception of migrants at the external borders, mainly along the Mediterranean routes.¹⁷⁹

The situation was particularly critical in 2011 and 2013, when large numbers of irregular migrants began reaching above all IT and MT from the North African countries.¹⁸⁰ Italy received a total of more than 60,000 migrants in 2011 (from January to end of November).¹⁸¹ Emergency actions under the 2010 AWP were allocated mainly to IT (three projects worth EUR 6 million), implemented after January 2011. Two of the actions were related to the transport to first reception centres of migrants and one related to identity equipment (fingerprint scanner and photo signalling). The evaluation confirms concerns raised by the European Court of Auditors report¹⁸² that these actions are characterised by insufficiently specific performance indicators and targets, while one of the actions was also financed under the Specific actions.

With the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in August 2011, the migratory pressure almost dropped completely and in 2012 migrant flows through the Central Mediterranean route remained very low.¹⁸³ Hence, the re-direction of the majority of the emergency assistance under the 2011 AWP towards supporting certain countries in implementing SIS II in order to catch up with the delayed transition period appears relevant. Eight countries (CY, CZ, EE, LU, MT, NL, PT, SK) were awarded emergency assistance for SIS II activities (implemented in late 2011 and 2012).

However, the following year (2013) saw a second peak of migrants departing from Libya; migration flows surged again and many more illegal border crossings in the Mediterranean were detected in 2013 than in 2012 – even more than during the 2011 Arab Spring, mainly via the Central and Western Mediterranean routes.¹⁸⁴ Emergency assistance under the 2013 AWP was therefore directed mainly towards ES and IT. By 2012, joint patrolling activities by ES and Morocco also contributed to the containment of migration streams via the Western Mediterranean route, although numbers surged in the first quarter of 2013, hence the allocation of emergency assistance to ES under the 2013 AWP is in accordance with those needs. The number of immigrants intercepted rose to 4,417 in 2013, a much higher number than the 100 forecast, due to the evolution of migratory pressures.¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁹ See in particular *A study on smuggling of migrants – Characteristics, responses and cooperation with third countries*, conducted by Optimity advisors for DG Home, September 2015.

¹⁸⁰ EBF 2007-2013, Community actions Annual Work Programme 2012. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/pdf/borders/ebf_awp_community_actions_2012_en.pdf

¹⁸¹ Frontex Annual Risk Assessment 2012.

¹⁸² Op. cit. ECA, 2014.

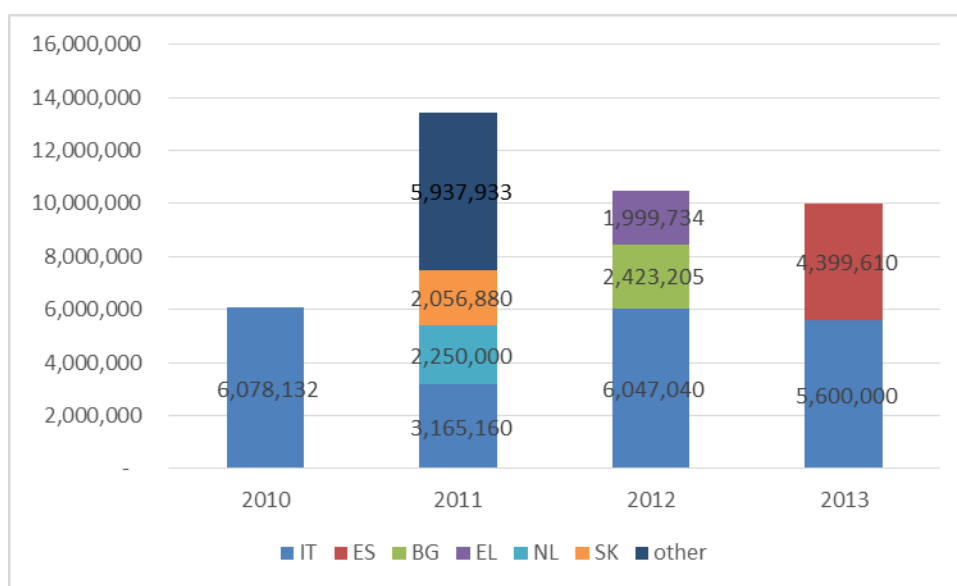
¹⁸³ Manrique Gil, M. et al (2014) *In-depth analysis: Mediterranean flows into Europe: Migration and the EU's foreign policy*. Brussels, European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies. DG EXPO/B/PolDep/Note/2014_5.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ ES NER.

With respect to EL and the Eastern Mediterranean route, operations at the Greek-Turkish border in mid-2012 led to the shift of migration flows via the Aegean Sea and the Bulgarian-Turkish border. An increase of 213.53% in arrests at the sea borders was recorded in comparison to 2012, while arrests at the Greek-Turkish land border decreased by 96.31% in comparison with 2012.¹⁸⁶ Two emergency projects were implemented in EL in 2013 (stretching to 2014) dealing with first reception of migrants arriving in the Evros region and on Aegean islands. At the same time, BG faced much higher arrivals at the Turkish border at the end of August 2013 and had an emergency action approved.

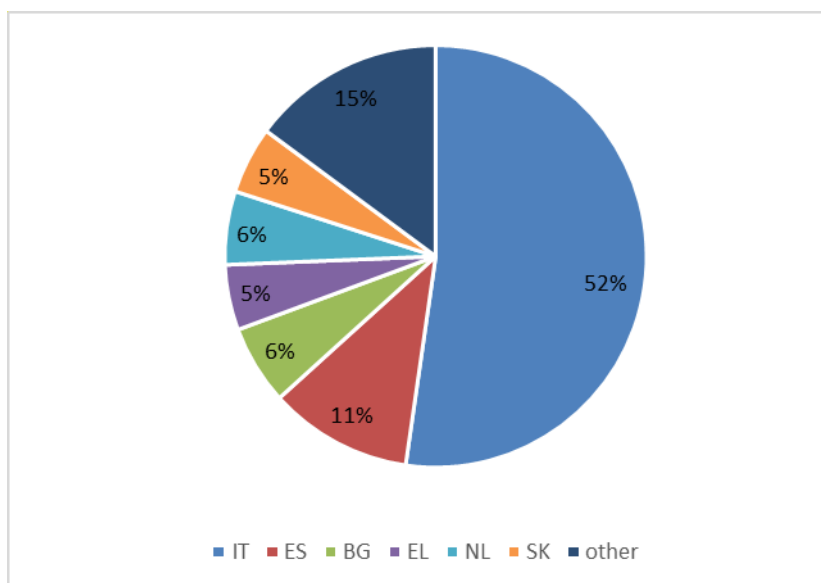
Figure 20: Emergency actions awarded in EUR per year and MS (2010-2013)*



Source: ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016)

*It should be noted that the years in the graph refer to the AWP under which emergency assistance was budgeted, while the actions were in most cases awarded in the following year. The implementation of some of the actions continued in the year after the award.

¹⁸⁶ UNHRC, Interim Report: Strengthening of the first reception response to new arrivals in mixed migratory movements at the borders in the region of Evros and on the Aegean islands in Greece. Grant Agreement Home/2011/EBFX /CA/EA/2012.

Figure 21: Allocation of Emergency actions 2010-2013 per MS in %

Source: ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016)

Outputs and results of the Emergency actions included mainly:

- Reinforcement of means of transport (for border patrolling activities and internal relocation of migrants), which led to immediate relief of crowding of first arrival places and more efficient registration of migrants, as well as increased patrolling and surveillance capacity.
- Operational costs addressing immediate needs (fuel costs, deployment of additional personnel, repair of equipment, refurbishing first reception centres, consumables for first reception centres) to react to unplanned events and migration influx.
- Deployment and training of multidisciplinary teams for first reception,¹⁸⁷ search and rescue operations¹⁸⁸. Where information is available, it can be concluded that these resulted in more efficient identification of arriving migrants who received information, counselling, aid packages and medical assistance (for example, in some projects 95% of new arrivals were covered), as well as identification and recovery of disaster victims.
- SIS II – system testing and implementation costs, contributing to the successful launch of SIS II in all MS.

¹⁸⁷ For example, the project 'Rescue and Identification of migrants as victims of disasters and as victims of trafficking of human beings' (HOME/2011/EBFX/CA/EA/2011), implemented by the Central Directorate of Immigration and Border Police of the Italian Ministry of Interior. The action included training and deployment of 170 multidisciplinary operators (forensic pathologists, biologists and psychologists) from DVI Italia in the aftermath of the Lampedusa disaster (Source: Technical Implementation Report, HOME/2011/EBFX/CA/EA/2011). Another example is the project 'Supporting emergency actions – measures to tackle migratory pressure – cultural and linguistic mediation', also implemented by IT (HOME/2012/EBFX/CA/EA/3003). It included the permanent and on-demand deployment of linguistic/cultural mediators and psychologists at first reception of migrants / landing places and at navy ships involved in search and rescue operations.

¹⁸⁸ There were three Emergency actions related to search and rescue operations implemented by IT: 1) 'Operation Mare Nostrum' (HOME/2012/EBFX/CA/EA/3004); 2) 'SAR operations – Service of first aid during search and rescue at sea' (HOME/2013/EBFX/CA/EA/2001); 3) 'SAR operations II – Service of first aid during search and rescue at sea' (HOME/2013/EBFX/CA/EA/2003).

The effects of the **Emergency actions** and how they correspond to Member States' needs are more difficult to establish, as assistance has been released in highly dynamic and quickly changing circumstances, hence integrating target indicators into the actions was not the highest priority. Emergency actions follow no strict definition/scope; rather, funding under this type of action was assessed on a case by case basis.¹⁸⁹ It was more important to address the urgent need than to develop detailed indicators and targets.¹⁹⁰

Furthermore, criticism¹⁹¹ has been raised regarding the limited EU added value (as in many cases operational costs, as opposed to investments and capacity building, have been funded) and limited sustainability, but these have not been, per default, part of the core objectives of the actions.

Nevertheless, it is evident that emergency assistance has reached those Member States whose external borders were facing the strongest migration pressure in accordance with the evolution of migration flows. An interview with a beneficiary country confirmed that emergency assistance was instrumental to handling critical situations, mainly because no other part of the EBF was so flexible and allowed funding to be released so quickly where most needed.¹⁹² In the case of Greece, however, in 2012 emergency assistance was also provided under the national AP in order to deal with migration pressure at the Turkish border.¹⁹³

For example, emergency assistance was highly effective in supporting BG authorities, who in general had very little experience of handling migration influx to the extent seen in the second half of 2013. The funding was used for a wide variety of activities, including covering consumables and operational costs for border guards deployed additionally at the border with Turkey, repair of surveillance equipment, but also for refurbishing first reception facilities and improvement of sanitary and overall conditions. In 2014, the number of irregular migrants apprehended decreased by 60%, which can at least partially be attributed to the emergency assistance (through the improvement of border surveillance equipment and additional staff), but also to national projects (construction of a fence) and to external developments of migration flows. A high level of sustainability can be expected in the use of the refurbished first reception and distribution facilities in subsequent migration events.

Representatives of an Implementing Authority from IT highlighted the specific challenges related to implementing Emergency (and Specific) actions and assessing their effectiveness.¹⁹⁴ According to them, specific reporting duties based on pre-established indicators should have been introduced ex-ante, so that effectiveness can be assessed. Given the absence of precise reporting duties and indicators for the beneficiaries to report on immediately after the implementation of the actions (e.g. after every single intervention involving the use of EBF-purchased fuel), it was not possible to assess ex-post the outcomes/results of the different interventions conducted with the Emergency actions' support. The interviewees from IT reported that since the implementation of the Emergency actions, there has been a 30% improvement in the IT authorities' intervention performances, but it was difficult to measure the extent to which this improvement is due to the EBF (given the absence of precise reporting indicators and duties established ex-ante for the actions conducted

¹⁸⁹ Interview Border Management & Schengen Unit.

¹⁹⁰ Interview Unit E.1, EBF direct management team.

¹⁹¹ Op. cit. ECA, 2014.

¹⁹² Interview with a Technical Assistant from the RA of Spain.

¹⁹³ See also EL case study.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with two representatives of the Central Directorate for Technical-Logistic Services and Assets Management, IT Ministry of Interior, responsible mainly for public procurement.

using EBF-purchased goods/resources). At the same time, introducing reporting duties for the beneficiaries seemed at odds with the emergency nature of the implemented actions – which aimed at supporting those Member States facing sudden rises in border crossings. In the case of IT, the emergency actions helped a great variety of different beneficiaries operating at different border crossing/arrival points. In order to precisely assess the outcome's/results, it would have been necessary to register every single operation conducted using tools/resources obtained through the EBF – but this would have constituted a further burden for the authorities engaged in the actual operations. Further difficulties were reported with lengthy and cumbersome national public procurement procedures (IT, ES), which was not compatible with the objectives and needs underlying the actions.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Interviews with representatives of Implementing Authorities from ES and IT.

Evaluation question 9

*To what extent did the EBF 2011-2013 actions, and in particular the EBF Community actions, contribute to the improvement of the management of activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States and the co-operation between Member States in this regards? – **Objective D***

In order for General Objective D to be fulfilled, activities funded through the EBF should have achieved an 'improvement of the management of activities organised by the consular and other services of the Member States in third countries as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States and the cooperation between Member States in this regard'¹⁹⁶ through its funding. In order for the Member States to efficiently manage the flow of persons, certain elements need to be in place such as:

- Common investigative practices, uniform administrative procedures and decisions on visas by the consular service (**SOD6** and **SOD8**);
- Carriers abiding by their obligation to communicate passenger data (**SOD2**);
- Improved quality management systems in terms of facilities and services in the visa application process (**SOD4**);
- Improved cooperation:
 - between Member States (**SOD1, SOD5, SOD7** and **SOD9**);
 - between Member States and carriers (**SOD3**).

Common investigative practices, uniform administrative procedures and decisions on visas by the consular service (**SOD6** and **DSO8**) have benefited from EBF investments under general objective C, especially those relating to training and cooperation (common visa processing centre, etc.).

Carriers abiding by their obligation to communicate passenger data (SOD2)

As stated before, several countries (e.g. DE, EE, FR, NL) set up **information systems on air passenger data** under Priority 1, in line with the obligation under Council Directive 2004/82/EC of 29 April 2004 on carriers to communicate passenger data and of Article 26 of the Schengen Convention in order to prevent illegal arrivals at the external borders (as per **SOD2**). Document advisors deployed under Priority 3 assisting airline staff in identifying false or falsified documents and visas also had an impact on this specific objective. In DE, their deployment resulted in 26,000 passengers being excluded from flights into the Schengen Area (**SOD3**)¹⁹⁷ between 2011 and 2013.

Improved cooperation between Member States (**SOD1, SOD5, SOD7** and **SOD9**) through national actions is covered under Priority 3. However, community grants also played an important role. These related mainly to:

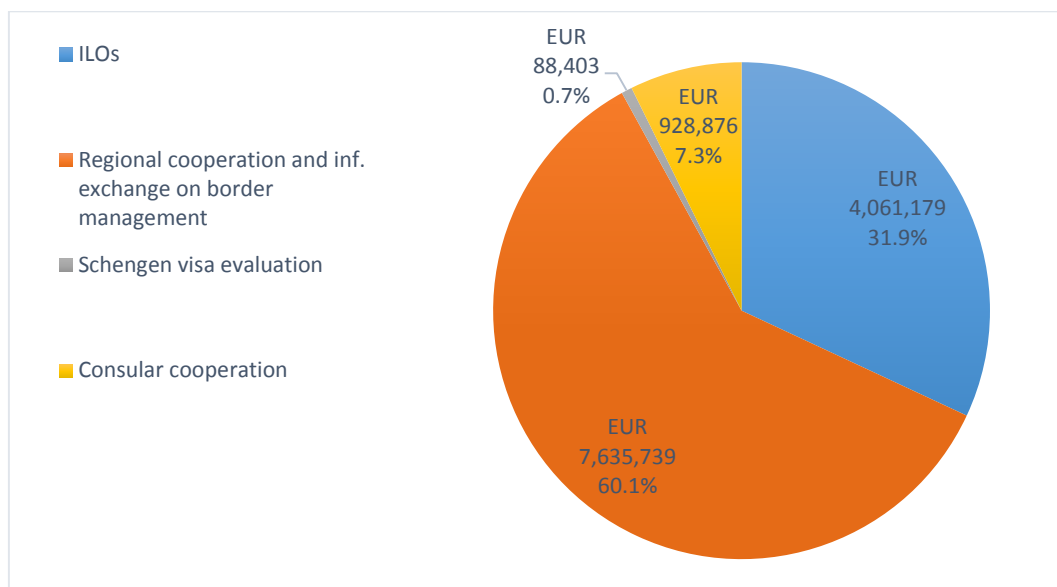
- Measures reinforcing the cooperation and networking capabilities of the ILOs, cooperation with third parties such as carriers in airports, cooperation between Member States;
- Measures promoting the cooperation and exchange of information between Member States, such as information exchange, common investigative techniques and consular cooperation.

¹⁹⁶ Defined in Article 3(1)(d) of Decision No 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF.

¹⁹⁷ DE case study.

- Under the Community actions there were two main annual priorities dealing with issues relevant to this question: strengthening consular cooperation (accounting for only 7.3% of all grants allocated) and enhancing ILO activities (32% of community funds approved).

Figure 22: Community grants awarded (2011-2013) in EUR and % of total budget per priority (excluding emergency actions)



Source: ABAC (Situation at 22.11.2016)

The **outputs of the Community Actions 2011-2013 relating to the objectives (consular cooperation and ILOs) show that they have been only partially achieved** due to the small number of projects implemented as a proportion of the overall grants approved. The key issues related to the implementation of Community Actions related to consular cooperation, including ILOs, have been the low level of interest on behalf of Member States in developing such projects. The establishment of common visa application centres or common ILO points has not proved sustainable,¹⁹⁸ as Member States perceived them to be too costly or elected to keep their representations in third countries. Other countries showed very little interest in cooperation, as the visa system was not seen by MS as an area where they wanted to cooperate and share costs.

Cooperation between Member States (SOD1, SOD5, SOD7 and SOD9)

As is the case with national actions, limited results have been achieved with respect to consular cooperation under Community Actions, with only two projects implemented (a follow-up project for a visa application centre – see the Box below; and a common immigration advisor on fraud).

Box 8: Common visa application centre in Cape Verde¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Interview Unit E.3 Internal Security Fund.

¹⁹⁹ Progress Report HOME/2011/EBFX/CA/2004, Title: Further Development of the Common Visa Application Centre in Cape Verde.

Under the 2011 AWP, a Community Action was awarded to PT in partnership with BE and LU, concerning the further development of a **common visa application centre** (CVC) in Cape Verde (also covering Boa Vista Island). This was a follow-up project of an initiative already established under the previous programme period (funded under the 2007 and 2009 AWP). The objective of the centre was to strengthen cooperation at local level with other MS and to reduce costs for the implementation of VIS and the Visa Code. It also aimed at increasing the Schengen visa applications made on behalf of several MS (PT, BE, LU, AT, SK, CZ, IT, SL, SE, FI, FR, NL, DE – the latter two joined the CVC within the reviewed project in March 2014). The **outputs** included trainings of consular staff and local authorities, conferences and local meetings, promotion activities, computer equipment, and document fraud laboratories. Mobile consulates / mobile equipment were introduced in several islands in order to extend the service coverage of the CVC.

The **results** included a **647% increase** registered at the CVC in visa applications requested on behalf of the partners and represented MS, consolidation of CVC activities and expansion of coverage and visibility. The DG Home Mission Report conducted in 2014 described the project as an EU flagship project, and noted its **added value** and **sustainability** as being on track.

The only other visa application centre established under the EBF Community actions was implemented in the previous period (under the 2007 AWP) – concerning the establishment of a Schengen visa application centre in Kinshasa by BE.

With respect to consular cooperation and exchange of information on common challenges, only one project was developed under the 2012 AWP, by NL for the deployment of **Common Immigration Advisors** on combating fraud in migration procedures, deployed between 2014 and 2015 in Accra (Ghana). Although the project's results were assessed as successful due to increased cooperation between MS at local level and increased awareness of migration-related fraud, the 12-month placement was also seen by the implementing body as too short to ensure the sustainability of efforts.²⁰⁰ Some of the results included the review/investigation of 320 cases for potential fraud, the launch of four joint investigations with the UK, DE, PT and BE, and a 40% detection fraud rate in all different procedures conducted. A follow-up project under the 2014 ISF Specific actions was approved for a Regional Schengen Cooperation Officer.²⁰¹ The specific results achieved by these two projects speak of a high level of impact and effective response against the set objectives.

The set-up of ILOs has been an important objective of DG Home's policy units, which was emphasised in each of the AWPs and calls for proposals, except in 2013 when it was excluded and the focus was more on regional cooperation, emergency assistance and the strengthening of consular cooperation.²⁰² For the period under review, **17 community projects** were approved for funding for the priority 'Enhancement of activities of ILOs in several regions or /and in third countries' (corresponding to the specific annual objective 'Promotion of the establishment and/or further development of the ILO networks'). The overall value of Community actions approved for financing under this priority amount to EUR 4.94 million (36% of all Community Actions for 2010-2013 – excluding emergency assistance). Upon being approved for funding, one of the grant agreements for setting up common ILO points was terminated and

²⁰⁰ Technical Implementation Report, HOME/2012/EBFX/CA/2012, 'Combating Fraud in Migration Procedures (Common Advisor on Immigration)'.
²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Annual Work Programme 2013.

funding was subsequently recovered.²⁰³ Therefore, the actual amount of funds disbursed under this priority was EUR 4,061,179 (32% of Community funds allocated). In the previous funding period (2007-2009) there were 14 projects for deployment of common ILO points in third countries, with an overall approved budget similar in scope to that allocated in 2011-13.

Regarding the two categories of eligible activities under this priority, most projects (13) focused on setting up or maintaining **ILO points acting on behalf of several countries** (DE, LV, EE PT), while only two projects dealt with promoting **ILO networks** (NL, HU) through meetings, conferences, exchange of information and training.

Not only was the number of actions similar to the 2007-2009 programming period, but countries applying for community funds were the same (mainly DE, LV (on behalf of EE and LT), PT, NL). Several of the actions implemented in 2010-2013 were follow-up projects from the previous EBF period and the majority were implemented by countries with previous experience of deploying ILOs to third countries and cooperating with other Member States. The region most intensively covered by ILO cooperation was Eastern Europe (Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus) on the part of the Baltic States.

Overall, ILO-related Community Actions depended on the willingness of Member States to apply,²⁰⁴ rather than on the actual need for the deployment of ILOs in third countries.²⁰⁵ Hence, the priority has not been fully addressed in terms of number and scope of outputs (projects) implemented, although the outputs are similar to the previous programme period.

It should be noted that final reports (technical implementation reports) for ILO-related actions implemented in 2012 and after had not been submitted at the time of the evaluation, hence they cannot be reviewed.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the review of the available technical implementation reports shows that they were well executed and reporting is comprehensive and clear in terms of targets and reporting indicators. **Looking at the outputs and results of the implemented projects, most of the objectives expected from ILO postings to third countries have been achieved in line with Regulation 377/2004.**²⁰⁷

The more notable positive examples concern a few Member States which applied consistently for Community Assistance related to ILO activities. A good level of cooperation seems to have been achieved between the Baltic States through three projects deploying ILOs by EE or LV, also acting on behalf of LT and FI. The ILOs were posted in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova, identified as source countries of significant illegal migration flows. Similarly, ES, PT and FR have enhanced the activities of their common ILO in locations in Africa.

Due to the low level of utilisation of **Community funds** for consular cooperation activities, the Commission has decided to incentivise this area through a 90% co-financing rate in national programmes in the next programme period under the ISF, while the scope has been extended beyond common application centres to include

²⁰³ One NL project was terminated because of changed external circumstances in Iraq, which was considered unsafe for an ILO to be deployed.

²⁰⁴ Interview former Unit E.3, EBF direct management.

²⁰⁵ Interview with DG Home Policy Officer on Illegal Migration and Return scheduled for 21-23 March 2016.

²⁰⁶ Due to the timing of delays on the part of the beneficiaries.

²⁰⁷ Council Regulation (EC) No 377/2004 of 19 February 2004 on the creation of an immigration liaison officers network.

other types of consular cooperation in addition to renovations, adaptation and/or equipping of consulates.²⁰⁸

Activities carried out to achieve the objective set out under Article 3(1)(d) of the EBF Decision²⁰⁹ included both national and community actions. **While some issues were identified (e.g. the BE common visa processing centre in Gaza), most actions under this objective were effective.**

OVERALL CONCLUSION FOR EFFECTIVENESS

Overall, and as described in the answers to the evaluation questions above, the EBF has generally been effective at the national level. Assessment of the effectiveness of the sum of the funded actions (i.e. of the EBF between 2011 and 2013) needs to be conducted at the EU level. There are a number of difficulties in assessing the overall effectiveness of the EBF. The first one relates to the large influx of migrants after the programming period, which makes comparisons with the *status quo ante* void. The second difficulty in assessing whether the fund has been effective relates to its general objectives according to the legal basis, which were not expected to be achieved by the end of the EBF but were rather longer-term goals. This is particularly clear when comparing the objectives of the successor fund (ISF) with that of the EBF. Article 3 of the Regulation establishing the ISF²¹⁰ sets out very similar objectives relating to 'supporting integrated border management', the 'reinforcement of external border checks and surveillance systems', and 'measures on document security, identity management and the interoperability of acquired technical equipment'.

The overall effectiveness of the EBF 2011-13 should therefore (i) be assessed where possible against specific elements of the Union's overall borders policy architecture (such as EUROSUR, VIS or SIS II) and (ii) be seen as a series of building blocks in the development of the overarching policy objectives.

The majority of the EBF contributions went to investments made under Priority 1 and 2 (71% in total). Priority 1 and 2 are both focused for the EU to have integrated border management (IBM) in place. IBM includes activities related to undertaking checks on persons at border crossing points (BCPs), controlling the entry and exit of people at BCPs, as well as surveillance activities to make sure no persons are entering the EU irregularly outside BCPs.

In terms of **checks on persons**, investments included the purchase of e-gates in over nine countries, of equipment for the detection of false documents, the upgrading and modernisation of BCPs and related infrastructure, as well as centres for persons whose entry is refused and first reception centres. As a result, it appears the checks on persons are done in a more homogenous way across the EU: a person arriving at a BCP of a Member State is more likely to find similar facilities, or at least of the same 'quality', and would spend similar time at a border check.

In terms of surveillance, through the EBF the EU overall increased its surveillance capacity:

²⁰⁸ Reply of the Commission to the ECA report (2014).

²⁰⁹ Decision 574/2007/EC.

²¹⁰ Regulation 515/2014 establishing, as part of the Internal Security Fund, the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa and repealing Decision No 574/2007/EC.

- because different countries developed or upgraded different surveillance systems (e.g. SPATIONAV in France or SIVE in Spain), as well as equipment that formed part of these systems (e.g. radars and sensors),
- because the patrolling capacity of countries has increased: as countries have invested in different patrolling equipment such as vehicles, vessels, planes, helicopters and related equipment (e.g. sensors on the vehicles).

Moreover, the European Commission has defined IBM as covering 'coordination and cooperation among all the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation to establish effective, efficient and integrated border management systems, in order to reach the common goal of open, but controlled and secure borders'. Within the investments made under Priority 1 and 2, it appears that the investments were most focused on the aspect of cooperation within the countries themselves, between different agencies involved in the protection of the borders; although some investments also allowed for sharing of information with other countries or the EU, this did not always appear to be the main focus.

The investments carried out under the EBF played a role in ensuring that the goal of developing **EUROSUR** was achieved. In 2015, the Commission reported that the system has been extended from the initial 19 to all 30 participating countries.²¹¹ The EBF clearly played a role in the achievement of these objectives through the building and upgrading of NCCs and other related surveillance systems.

The successful implementation of the **VIS** and **SIS II** can also be considered to be at least partly an impact of EBF funding, as it co-financed an important number of actions relating to these two systems. While the value for money and efficiency of some projects can be questioned, this overall effectiveness is clearly demonstrated in the Commission's 7th biannual report on the functioning of the Schengen Area.²¹² While testing and investigations took place, this related to the use of SIS II, not the fact that it had not been implemented.²¹³ On the other hand, while the VIS is still being rolled out, the connection of consulates and BCPs to the system has allowed the introduction of mandatory fingerprint checks for visa holders whose data are stored in the VIS.

Ultimately, while not fully in place, the EBF has been effective in building national capacity in terms of border surveillance and checks.

²¹¹ Seventh bi-annual report on the functioning of the Schengen Area – COM(2015)236.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Eighth bi-annual report on the functioning of the Schengen Area – COM(2015)675.

7.4 Efficiency

Evaluation question 12

To what extent were the effects of the EBF 2011-2013 actions achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed?

Key findings

- EBF inputs were focused on Southern and Eastern EU external borders and implementation rates were positive.
- Participating countries, as well as the European Commission, implemented a range of measures to ensure the efficient use of funds, including public procurement procedures, project audits and monitoring exercises.
- Positive elements of the EBF's management include good coordination within the Commission, as well as with Member States, and the flexibility of the Fund.
- However, various issues have challenged the efficient implementation of the EBF:
 - Participating countries reported additional issues relating to the timeliness of the programming cycle length; interpretation of the scope of the EBF; and dissatisfaction with the perceived high administrative and management costs.
 - Project-specific issues have been identified at national level, including insufficient financial and HR capacity, incorrect interpretation of priorities and public procurement challenges; and
 - Projects implemented under Priority 4, in particular, faced efficiency challenges.

Assessing efficiency requires a discussion on the relationship between the inputs utilised – including time, human resources and financial inputs – and the effects achieved by the EBF 2011-2013. With this in mind, it is important to examine i) what these inputs were; ii) how these inputs have been used in order to achieve the effects; and iii) the extent to which this use of inputs is reasonable.

There are two approaches in determining whether an action was efficient: 1) compare cost with other similar actions, or with some average market price – in most cases of the EBF this is practically impossible to do; and 2) examine the procurement procedures that determined the cost of the action (the assumption is that if fair tendering took place, then this was the reasonable cost that the market could offer). Furthermore, there are two levels at which these questions need to be answered:

- **National level**, considering the efficiency of the RA and beneficiaries of a Participating State; and
- **European level**, considering the efficiency of the European Commission and its interaction with the participating countries.

Efficiency of the procurement procedures

The case studies provide the bulk of the information on the efficiency of actions in terms of public procurement. Overall, the findings appear to show high levels of efficiency in the processes used, despite the pressures to complete the procedures in a limited amount of time. In Italy for instance, the limited time made available by the EBF annual programme conditioned the choice of the specific type of public procurement process adopted for the implementation of the action. As confirmed in a Commission's audit conducted on Action 3.2.2 AP 2011, 'the reasons for a restricted accelerated procedure were attributed to the delay in the Commission in approving the

annual programme (2011) thus reducing the effective period till the expiry date of the eligibility period of the AP during which the helicopters would be procured, delivered and commissioned. [...]'.²¹⁴ The project was therefore implemented through a restricted and accelerated procedure within the EU/WTO. Given both the complexity of the project and the limited time available for its implementation, another type of procedure (not restricted/accelerated) would not have allowed the conclusion of the action within the imposed timeframe; however, it emerged that there was some delay in the actual initiation of the project. In fact, the drafting of the tender specification only started at the end of 2011, meaning a few months after the COM approved 2011 AP in August 2011. Given this delay, in January 2012 an extension for the delivery and testing of the two helicopters was agreed (IT NER).

In Switzerland, the costs of the contracts were determined only after negotiation procedures between the contracting authority, relevant stakeholders and the contractors. The cost-effectiveness of the projects cannot be compared to other similar projects in Switzerland.²¹⁵ The costs were based to a large extent on hourly rates for expert work, which allowed some comparison to market prices and were determined in the most efficient way.²¹⁶ Under the contracts with the IT Service Centre a significant part of the services were delivered by regular personnel. In addition, a monitoring and supervision system ensured that the resources were allocated and spent efficiently.²¹⁷ An ad-hoc audit on all public procurement relevant to the EBF was conducted by the Swiss Federal Audit Office. The European Commission identified irregularities on two contracts of the AP 2011 due to conflict of interests, yet established that this did not lead to financial loss for the contracting authority. The European Commission however applied a 100% financial correction on the affected contracts and decreased the amount of the EBF contribution (CH case study).

Existing frameworks also played an important role in ensuring the efficiency of the procedures. In Finland, the central purchasing body of the government signed framework contracts with vehicle suppliers, whereby the RA and Finnish Border Guard (FBG) had input in specifying requirements. In this way the process of selecting and acquiring the desired vehicles was simplified, particularly for the FBG and the vehicle acquisition manager. After logging onto the system's website the manager could select the most appropriate vehicle with options such as drivetrain, power, level of equipment, etc. After making all desired selections the results were filtered by price and by vehicle maker. By law the lowest price was the selection criterion.²¹⁸ This approach eliminated lengthy tender procedures, negotiations and appeals, and guaranteed maximum efficiency (FI case study).

Efficiency of the EBF at national level

Participating countries were required to evaluate and report on the efficiency of the actions they undertook under the EBF. The majority of countries reported that, to a large extent, EBF-funded actions were undertaken in an efficient manner, with the 'value for money' principle considered a key driver.²¹⁹

The national management and control systems were vital to ensuring efficiency. The AT Federal Ministry (BMI), for example, stated that 'processing the EBF required an appropriate management and control system'. Explaining this, the AT NER outlined a

²¹⁴ See, European Commission DG Migration and Home Affairs, Final Report (CE 3420696), 6 November 2013.

²¹⁵ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013.

²¹⁶ Interviews with the beneficiary.

²¹⁷ Data provided by the beneficiary.

²¹⁸ The process was demonstrated to the evaluators.

²¹⁹ BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IS, IT, LT, MT, NL, NO, PL, RO, SE, SI and SK.

number of different measures responsible for ensuring the efficient use of inputs. These measures included project and system audits; verification of eligibility and appropriate use of funds; and ongoing monitoring, including spot checks. According to the evaluation report, these elements were subject to 'very exacting national and European requirements' (AT NER).

In addition, countries reported that implementing public procurement procedures was an effective way of ensuring efficient use of inputs. RO stated that following public procurement regulations was the main instrument to ensure efficiency of the resources utilised (RO NER). Furthermore, in LT, it was essential that public procurement procedures be undertaken in accordance with national procurement law as well as Article 11 of the EBF Implementing Rules. The LT NER further states that these procedures are 'constantly monitored and controlled by responsible public institutions'. The LT NER validated this assumption (i.e. public procurement equals efficiency) by stating that these measures enable the funding decisions to be based on 'reasonable and properly selected criteria' (LT NER), including quality and cost, as well as ensuring their comparability to other public procurement procedures.

Additional success factors reported by countries include: i) the presence of staff that have experience in the management of EU funds; and ii) continuity of staff (i.e. minimal turnover of staff) (AT, BG, RO).

In contrast to the above positive evaluations of efficiency, the majority of countries also reported on issues they faced. In some cases, they were wide-ranging and significant (see Box 9 – in PT it was not possible to evaluate efficiency due to numerous limitations in the management and control of the EBF); in most cases, however, these issues were restricted to specific projects. The types of issues faced are discussed below.

Box 9: PT NER – Example of country-level efficiency issues

PT reported a number of issues around EBF programme planning. The PT NER states that efficiency could not be evaluated due to the lack of foresight at national level in determining relevant and consistent impact, result and output indicators, as well as implementing a system to collect such data. Furthermore, PT reported additional barriers such as internal difficulties approving projects, which ultimately resulted in several dropouts, and problems in the field of public procurement due to a lack of familiarity with EU legislation on public procurement (PT NER).

Besides the issues highlighted by the PT NER, the difficulties experienced within national frameworks for the delivery of EBF programmes included insufficient financial and HR capacities (e.g. AT, BE, PT, CZ, EE, EL, FI, IT, RO); incorrect interpretation of priorities (e.g. BE, PT); and issues arising from specific national public procurement regulations, such as the need to impose financial corrections on contractors and/or difficulties in appealing against public procurement decisions (BG, CZ, EE, IT, RO).

With regard to specific types of projects, many countries commented on the relative inefficiency of ITech projects, particularly those related to Priority 4 'Support for the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas'. Priority 4 projects accounted for around 17% of the total EU financial contribution (EUR 147 million). An outlier, IT reported that ITech projects had the highest efficiency rates, on average generating 5% of savings against programmed EU contribution (IT NER). Aside from IT, however, countries perceived ITech projects to be relatively inefficient (e.g. AT, EE, FI, NO, RO). For instance, in NO, where ITech projects comprised two thirds of total funding across 2011-2013, cost readjustments were required due to larger than expected implementation costs (NO NER). While the effectiveness of the EBF was achieved, the way in which this was done was not adequate.

In terms of human resources necessary to administer the EBF at national level, the situation varies between Member States. Regardless of the size of the funding, there is a minimum level of financial and human input necessary to administer the EBF at national level. As an example, each Member State was asked to develop an NER, which requires a minimum amount of resources, even if the EU contribution to national actions was small. In DK, for instance, the responsible authority calculated that the management and administrative cost required to implement the EBF (and not covered by the EBF) was equivalent to 40% of the total funds received by the country. The IS RA also stated that the EBF administration was a significant workload. On the other hand, countries that received large amounts of funding felt differently. Furthermore, in some MS, the units in charge of administering the EBF were also in charge of other SOLID funds (the European Return Fund, European Refugee Fund (ERF) and European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EIF)), leading to economies of scale.

Efficiency of the EBF at European level

In addition to the evaluation of national-level efficiency, countries also reported on their interaction with the European Commission and their perceptions of the requirements for administration, management and control of EBF financing laid down by the Commission.

Data from the Commission complement this by highlighting the measures in place at EU level to ensure the efficient operation of the EBF. In this regard, Commission representatives stated that 20-30% of Commission EBF resources were committed to the development and adoption of annual programmes; 20% were used to interact with countries throughout implementation; and 40-50% were used during the project closure phase. The Commission has a number of Units involved in the management and control of the EBF, all of which play a role in ensuring efficiency of these resources and the participating countries. For example, Units E2 and E3 within DG Home verify payments and are responsible for the recovery of money where necessary; and Unit C2 assesses the technical and final reports related to border management and Schengen. Other measures in place included the ability to monitor the implementation of EBF projects (e.g. Unit E2/E3, Unit B2); and undertake budget control and ex-post audits (e.g. Unit SRD.01). Furthermore, Commission personnel reported that coordination between units was very good in the period 2011-2013.²²⁰ In addition to informal cooperation, the financial units and auditors conduct a formal weekly meeting, and cooperation between the policy units and the country desks is required at the adoption and closure of annual programmes. In addition to the stringent rules put in place in the Implementing Rules²²¹ (e.g. Article 11 on public procurement), these findings suggest a dedication to ensuring efficiency within the Commission.

To complement the above findings on the Commission's approach to efficiency, participating countries reported a number of positive elements, related to the Fund's management, that improved its efficiency. First, good cooperation between the participating countries and Commission's desk officers was highlighted. For example, the AT NER stated that frequent consultation with the Commission was considered very useful, particularly as they had the same desk officer throughout the Fund's lifetime.²²² Second, it was reported that the Fund demonstrated good flexibility in a number of cases. A prominent example is elaborated in the ES case study and relates to the construction of the Operations Room for the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre. In this case, the EBF was able to co-finance 95% of

²²⁰ Interviews with DG Home officials.

²²¹ Commission Decision No 574/2007/EC, Article 11.

²²² Interview with AT RA representative.

the related actions (against initial decisions and in line with the updated legal basis – Decision 259/2013/EU) due to the prevailing economic situation in Spain. Without this flexibility, these actions would not have been implemented. Furthermore, a representative of the DK RA stated that many of the issues with the fund, detailed below, have been addressed for the ISF (e.g. removal of Annual Programmes).

However, Commission representatives and the majority of countries reported efficiency-related issues with the EBF. A key example from the Commission was the lack of human resource capacity to monitor implementation of national actions (INT EC). Additional issues noted by both Commission representatives and countries include timeliness related to the programming cycle length (See Box 10 – e.g. EC, AT, BE, IT, NL, NO, RO); interpretation of the scope of the EBF (e.g. EC, MT); and issues relating to project implementation (e.g. EC). In addition, countries often reported dissatisfaction with the level of administrative and management costs they had to contribute (e.g. AT, BE, DK, DE, EE, FI, IS, IT, NL, PT). Box 11 illustrates a key factor contributing to this dissatisfaction – the issue around proportionality of the management costs against the volume of funds received.

Additional factors influencing this dissatisfaction included: i) the use of EU procurement procedures alongside national rules (e.g. DK reported that this was a particular burden given that many EBF-funded actions were smaller elements of larger, nationally funded projects); ii) unfamiliarity with EBF rules and procedures and difficulty implementing these rules (e.g. AT reported high costs associated with the development of comprehensive specifications and control systems); and iii) lack of programme planning at national and EU level (e.g. IS stated that the lack of defined quantifiable measures in the MAP and APs led to significant challenges at the evaluation phase).

Box 10: Timeliness – Example of European-level efficiency issues

With regard to **timeliness**, action 3.2.3 of the IT AP 2011 (covered in detail by the IT case study) provides an example. Under Priority 2, IT planned to purchase two AW 139 helicopters for the National Border Police. However, it was reported that the **efficiency of the action was compromised by the time-restrictive programming cycle length**. As a result of the limited time available to implement the full programming cycle, this project was implemented utilising a restricted and accelerated public procurement procedure within the EU/WTO.

This type of procedure was reported to be unsuitable for a project of this type. The procedure resulted in restrictions on the number of entities allowed to bid for the work and also necessitated premature tendering, i.e. before the needs of the beneficiary and the requirements for the equipment were fully known. These factors ultimately resulted in project inefficiencies through delays experienced in the initiation of the project.

Box 11: Management costs – Example of European-level efficiency issues

As mentioned in the main text, a number of participating countries reported dissatisfaction with the EBF-related administrative and management costs. The proportionality of management costs is a key factor contributing to this dissatisfaction. The functioning of the fund required a minimum level of input from all countries regardless of the volume of funds received. Thus proportionally higher management costs were experienced by countries receiving smaller volumes of funds.

Poignant examples of the impact of this issue come from DK and LU, two countries that received a combined EUR 2,369,994 (EBF 2011-2012; SFC2007); only 0.5% of the total EU contribution.

Representatives of the DK responsible authority calculated that the management and administrative costs required to implement the EBF (and not covered by the EBF) were equivalent to 40% of the total funds received by DK. This figure was based on EBF 2007-2010; however, the representative reported that the situation did not change in the period 2011-2013.

LU received EUR 218,119 across the EBF 2011-2013 programming period. Representatives of the LU responsible authority remarked that management and administrative costs totalled approximately EUR 40,000 per year; equivalent to 55% of the total funds received by LU.

Conclusions

In conclusion, **the implementation rate of the EBF 2011-2013 is interpreted to be positive**. However, even with the steps implemented as a result of the 2007-2010 programming period, the overall implementation rate is below that of the previous programming period. This is mainly due to the fact that only six Member States had closed the reporting of their 2013 programmes at the time of writing (see chapter 6 on implementation). The gap between planned and final contributions is, in most cases, the result of issues with, or changes to, Specific actions or Priorities during the annual programming cycle (i.e. the intention to change an action often resulted in cancelling the action rather than changing it).

At national level, it has been reported that EBF actions, for the most part, have been implemented efficiently. Comprehensive management and control systems, including stringent procurement procedures, have contributed greatly to this. The issues faced by countries have, in most cases, been limited to specific projects.

At European level, it has been found that the Commission was dedicated to ensuring efficiency through a number of measures, including the time committed to the management of the EBF and the support of participating countries, as well as audits and monitoring processes. A selection of countries reported positive interactions with the Commission, highlighting the flexibility of the Fund and the fact that the ISF has already addressed a number of the EBF's challenges. However, **most countries underlined issues with elements of the EBF that hindered efficient national-level management and control of EBF financing**. These issues included the perceived high level of administrative and management costs, and the timeliness of programming cycle lengths.

Although issues were reported, it is clear that relevant steps have been taken at both national and European level to ensure the use of financing is reasonable. With this in mind, and given the positive evaluations of effectiveness detailed in section 7.3, **the overall evaluation of efficiency is that the observed effects of the EBF have been achieved, in the vast majority of cases, at a reasonable cost.**

7.5 Sustainability

Key findings

- Overall, the actions funded by the EBF in the 2011-13 period were sustainable.
- Most of the assets acquired and knowledge generated were still being used at the time this evaluation was conducted (2016).
- The interoperability of the systems funded through the EBF also has a

positive impact on the internal coherence of the actions and therefore on their sustainability.

Evaluation question 13

To what extent have the positive effects of the EBF 2011-2013 actions lasted after the interventions were terminated?

This evaluation concludes that, overall, the sustainability of the EBF 2011-2013 actions has been good, with certain exceptions and with various degrees of sustainability depending on the type of investment.

The evaluation of sustainability relies mostly on qualitative criteria, as there are few measurable quantitative indicators of sustainability. Neither the annual programmes nor the national evaluation reports contain quantitative data related to the sustainability of the investments and their impact. Another issue with the evaluation of sustainability is that the EBF 2011-2013 actions covered a broad spectrum of interventions, with very different sustainability expectations. The required life-span of assets provides some guidance for evaluation (three years or more for ICT equipment, five or more for operating equipment and means of transport, and 10 years for helicopters, vessels and aircraft),²²³ but the life-span of assets is only one aspect of sustainability and it does not cover actions like system and facilities upgrades, training, or support of Immigration Liaison Officers in third countries.

A critical issue in evaluating sustainability of results is the need for additional funding after the intervention is terminated. The type of investment defines to a large extent the specific sustainability expectations. For instance, investments in infrastructure and facilities have relatively high sustainability, as they usually require much smaller maintenance costs compared to the initial investments. On the other hand, training of staff has relatively low sustainability due to the need for continuous training (to keep up with changing technologies and risks, or with personnel mobility).

The evaluation of sustainability, taking into account the different life-spans and respective maintenance costs, has focused on the following questions:

- Is the acquired asset or knowledge still in use?
- Is there reliable warranty for the acquired assets?
- Is there adequate financial support for the maintenance of the acquired assets?
- Is the future usage of the asset secured by adequate training of users?

Individual national evaluation reports have indicated additional factors that guarantee the overall sustainability of the EBF 2011-2013 actions:

- high relevance of the interventions to the needs and priorities of the MS is a factor enhancing sustainability (BG NER);
- complementarity with the objectives of the subsequent strategic period;
- continuation of the added value of the actions through the new strategic period 2014–2020;

²²³ 2011/148/EU: Commission Decision of 2 March 2011, amending Decision 2008/456/EC laying down rules for the implementation of Decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows' as regards Member States' management and control systems, the rules for administrative and financial management and the eligibility of expenditure on projects co-financed by the Fund.

- award process in the procurement stage emphasising maintenance and warranty requirements (RO, PL);
- performance/high quality of acquired assets (EE NER); and
- flexibility of results to accommodate future needs (e.g. adaptability of national SIS to changes in the central SIS (RO NER), or of N-VIS to changes in CS-VIS²²⁴).

Based on national evaluation reports and the case studies undertaken for this evaluation, the conclusion can be drawn that the EBF 2011-2013 actions were sustainable, as the vast majority of acquired assets and knowledge were being used at the time of the national evaluation reports and the interviews. There were minor exceptions which were due to delays (e.g. mobile surveillance posts that are part of the integrated surveillance system at the Bulgarian-Turkish border were introduced only in March 2016 due to administrative obstacles²²⁵) or lack of trained personnel (e.g., mobile border check units in NO were reported to be utilised to a limited extent due to a lack of operators (NO NER)).

Warranty for the acquired equipment and means of transport is a guarantee that in case of malfunction the acquired assets will be repaired or replaced at no additional cost to the beneficiaries. According to interviews with beneficiaries and the RAs, warranties were in place for all acquired assets. A good practice concerning warranty was identified in PL, where in order to secure a longer useful life of the purchased equipment, award criteria in the procurement of surveillance equipment included the length of warranty terms and the technical support offered.²²⁶ Thus, most of the acquired equipment obtained a five-year warranty. In addition, border officers were required to purchase personal accident insurance, covering the personal use equipment.²²⁷ Similar practice was identified in Romania (RO NER).

Most of the evaluation reports and interviewed officers from the RAs claimed that financial support for the continued utilisation of acquired assets is secured either through national budgets or through the ISF (NL, RO). At the same time, the issue of insufficient finances or finances not guaranteed is of serious concern for a number of investments. For instance, when helicopters were acquired under the 2011 AP in IT, operational and maintenance costs were not secured in the budget of the beneficiary (National Police), as no ex-ante assessment of the investment was carried out. The sustainability of the acquired helicopters is also jeopardised by the process of fuel procurement. As public tenders are applied, the beneficiary expressed concerns that the lengthy procedures may lead to interruptions in the availability of the helicopters for emergency response.²²⁸ National evaluation reports also mention concerns that the sustainability of ICT is dependent on further changes at central systems (SIS, VIS), or changes in EU legislation.

Other projects which faced financial constraints and therefore raised sustainability concerns were:

- the deployment of ILOs in third countries, as it requires significant operating costs after the EBF actions were terminated (HU, CH NER);

²²⁴ CH case study

²²⁵ Interview with Bulgaria's RA and Beneficiary (Border Police).

²²⁶ Interviews with beneficiary in PL (Border Guard).

²²⁷ Information provided by the PL Border Guard.

²²⁸ IT case study.

- the consular cooperation in third countries, as it also involves recurring costs for the common application centres;²²⁹
- the deployment of sufficient border guard officers in EL after the end of the ad-hoc reinforcement operation at the land border with Turkey (by design, the ad-hoc operation had very limited sustainability, as it covered operational costs for the redeployment of EL police officers);²³⁰

The training of users of the acquired assets is an important aspect of sustainability. According to interviews with RAs and beneficiaries,²³¹ for complex equipment and systems (such as surveillance systems, unmanned aircraft, thermovision cameras, helicopters) the terms of procurement included training of end-users. This training secured the sustainability of the assets, as trainees shared their knowledge and skills with additional end-users, including new recruits and replacements (MT). Some MS mentioned that when the intervention itself was training of staff, the sustainability of the positive effects was shorter due to changing technologies and practices and the need for continuous training (NO, HU). The high turnover of personnel is also quoted as a negative factor affecting sustainability of training projects (HU and AT).

Community and Specific Actions

The different types of activities funded under Community actions do not allow a general statement regarding their sustainability. ILOs and common visa application centres were generally assessed as unsustainable beyond the end of the particular project due to the high running costs involved.²³² Due to the low level of utilisation of Community funds for consular cooperation activities, the Commission has decided to incentivise this area through 90% co-financing in national programmes in the next programme period, while the scope has been extended beyond common application centres to include other types of consular cooperation in addition to renovations, adaptation and/or equipping of consulates.²³³

Investments made in surveillance capacities and interoperability of surveillance tools is expected to be sustainable due to the continued need for their use under EUROSUR integration.

In some cases there was interest on behalf of beneficiaries to continue emergency assistance with follow-up actions (BG), but the need for this was assessed based on developments of migration pressure predominantly, not so much with a view to the sustainability of results achieved, which reflects the nature of the emergency actions.²³⁴

Conclusions

With some minor exceptions explained above, actions funded under the EBF in the 2011-13 period were sustainable. Most of the assets acquired and knowledge generated were still being used at the time the national evaluation reports were developed (2015) and interviews conducted for this evaluation (2016).

²²⁹ BE NER; interview with DG Migration and Home Affairs officer.

²³⁰ EL case study.

²³¹ Interviews with beneficiaries in PL, BG, IT.

²³² Interview DG Home, Unit E.3 Internal Security Fund.

²³³ Reply of the Commission to the ECA report (2014).

²³⁴ Monitoring mission report, Bulgaria.

7.6 Complementarity and coherence

Evaluation question 14

To what extent were the EBF 2011-2013 actions coherent with and complementary to other actions related to the management of the EU external borders and the Schengen visa processing financed by other EU financial instruments and from national resources of the Member States?

Key findings

- A good level of coordination can be observed between the overall strategic planning of the EBF and that of other EU funds related to the management of the European external borders.
- The degree of complementarity between EBF actions and interventions implemented under other EU financing tools varied across the Member States.
- Actions planned and implemented under the different EBF priorities proved to be especially coherent with and complementary to investments made under the European Return Fund, the European Refugee Fund, Phare, the Schengen Facility, and in the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy's cross-border cooperation programmes.
- Different examples of cross-sectoral coordination and complementarity have been identified between the EBF actions, and projects financed through the European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF and Interreg II, III and IV Community initiatives), the European Social Fund, and other EU programmes (e.g. Lifelong Learning Programme, FP7, Culture Programme, Youth in Action Programme, and OLAF's Hercule II).
- Projects implemented under the different EBF priorities complemented most of Frontex's core activities, and in particular those conducted in the field of rapid response capability, and training.

Complementary actions financed by other EU financial instruments

The actions funded through the EBF respond to objectives and priorities which may overlap with or be complementary to other EU instruments. This section assesses the complementarity of the EBF with funds and programmes which are closely interlinked with the EBF's objectives and actions implemented over the 2011-2013 period.

The EBF, together with the European Refugee Fund, European Integration Fund and European Return Fund, form the **SOLID Funds**.²³⁵ The four SOLID funds were meant to be interconnected, even though dual financing from more than one fund was precluded.²³⁶ Links have been identified between actions developed under the different EBF priorities (and in particular priority no. 1, 2, and 3) and funds allocated through the European Return Fund, as well as the European Refugee Fund. For example, the investments made in RO in the Border Police sector's infrastructure and endowment are complementary with projects regarding forced returns funded by the Return Fund. In fact, in Romania the Border Police is one of the main organisations detecting illegal border crossing and undertaking the return of illegal migrants from the national territory. Another example of synergies between the EBF and the Return Fund can be seen in the action that CY implemented under the Return Fund to co-finance the operational expenses of the centres for persons whose entry is refused in Menoyia, which was erected partly with EBF funding.²³⁷ Therefore, both actions aimed at

²³⁵ General programme Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows (Decision No 574/2007/EC).

²³⁶ AT NER

²³⁷ CY NER.

enhancing CY's return policy overall, while at the same time enhancing the country's capabilities in monitoring its external borders. In Finland, asylum authorities have access to search the fingerprint data in the EBF-supported VIS, although solely for the purposes of determining the EU country responsible for the examination of an asylum application.²³⁸ These specific examples, as well as explicit references made in other countries' NERs,²³⁹ indicate that a good level of coordination has been ensured between the strategic planning of the EBF and that of the other SOLID funds. Lack of evidence in relation to complementarities between the EBF and the European Integration Fund can be explained by the fact that the actions implemented with the support of the latter financial instrument do not directly relate to border control and management activities.

There are several examples of complementarity in investments and continuity of funding between the **Schengen Facility** (SF) and the EBF, as well as between the Programme of Community Aid to the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe (**Phare**) and the EBF.²⁴⁰ In some countries (e.g. HU) the 2011-2013 EBF annual programmes constituted a direct continuation of the previous financing from the SF. At project level, synergies can also be observed between actions realised through the SF and Phare, and the different EBF priorities. In BG, the SF created significant infrastructures (e.g. the Digital TETRA Radio Communication System), provided resources for the purchasing of hardware and software (e.g. the communication network for the Special Centre for Temporary Accommodation of Third Country Nationals in Sofia and Lyubimets), and contributed to the purchase of mobility equipment and transportation vehicles (e.g. two helicopters purchased under the 2007-9 National Indicative Programme). These were complementary with the EBF Priorities 1 and 2. In LT, an EBF-supported multiannual project resulted in the purchase of 17 off-road vehicles, three four-wheel motorcycles and three trailers for tracker dogs.²⁴¹ This action is a follow-up on the Special Kaliningrad Transit programme for 2004-2006, as equipment needed to be replaced. Phare projects harmonised the IT security standards for prevention and investigation of criminal activities by upgrading the criminal information system and improving management techniques.²⁴² These initiatives are complementary with subsequent EBF actions conducted in the framework of Priority 4. Training carried out through Phare and the SF is complementary with EBF actions conducted under Priority 5. In EE, the 2006 SF programme financed English and Russian language classes for border guards, training in interviewing techniques and document controlling. The action 'Training of border guard officials'²⁴³ complemented the SF by providing training to the officials who had not received relevant training before and officials who needed additional preparation due to the implementation of new border control measures in line with the Schengen Borders Code.²⁴⁴

In some Member States, synergies have been developed between the EBF and EU initiatives undertaken under the **Neighbourhood Policy** framework. For example, within the **Estonia-Latvia-Russia cross-border cooperation Programme** financed through the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) 2007-2013,²⁴⁵ the measures on 'Transport, logistics and communication solutions' included a project called 'Complex reconstruction of border crossing points in Ivangorod and in Narva', which contributed to increase EE's throughput capacity by providing smooth border

²³⁸ FI NER.

²³⁹ FR and HU NERs.

²⁴⁰ Interview with DG Home.

²⁴¹ LT NER.

²⁴² BG NER.

²⁴³ EE AP 2011-2013.

²⁴⁴ Regulation (EC) 562/2006.

²⁴⁵ EC Implementing Decision C(2012) 2664 of 26 April 2012.

crossing.²⁴⁶ Examples of synergies also emerged in relation to three ENPI Cross Border Cooperation programmes (ENPI CBC) implemented across the FI and Russian border during the 2007–2013 programming period (i.e. the Kolarctic, Karelia, and South-Eastern Finland-Russia Programmes).²⁴⁷ Infrastructure developments and modernisation at the Ukrainian-Hungarian border was also financed through a multilateral project, which started under the 2011 ENPI Cross-border Cooperation Programme.²⁴⁸ Therefore, the complementarities identified between the Neighbourhood Policy and the EBF mainly relate to initiatives implemented in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus. No direct links have been observed between specific EBF projects and other cross-border cooperation initiatives established in the framework of the ENP-South.

In some countries, this evaluation found some complementarity between the EBF and the **European Structural and Investment Funds**,²⁴⁹ and in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Examples include the Common Fisheries Policy's support of the Italian Coast Guard actions, but also the purchase of fingerprint scanners financed under the European Territorial Cooperation 'Greece-Cyprus', an EU programme which prompted CY and EL to cooperate under the INTERREG IVC. Complementarities thus emerged between the EBF and the 2nd and 3rd Community Support Frameworks, especially programmes under the **Interreg** II and III Community initiatives²⁵⁰ (in terms of their cross-border aspects), the EQUAL Community initiative²⁵¹, and the OISIN joint actions^{252, 253}.

Synergies were also identified with the **European Social Fund**. For example, RO referred to projects financed by the European Social Fund (the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development 2007–2013) which contributed to create an information system for the management of foreigners taken into custody to provide evidence by the General Inspectorate for Immigration.²⁵⁴ To avoid overlaps, actions conducted under the EBF were carried out taking into account interventions realised through other EU programmes (e.g. Lifelong Learning Programme, Culture Programme, Youth in Action Programme, FP7²⁵⁵, OLAF's Hercule II Programme²⁵⁶), and funding from international financial institutions²⁵⁷. Beside the above-mentioned financial instruments, no other EU funds were reported to be complementary with EBF measures.

The degree of complementarity between the EBF and other EU financing tools varied significantly across Member States. BG, EE, HU, LT, RO and SI, which benefited from the SF and PHARE, underlined strong programmatic and operational interlinks between these funds and the EBF. At the same time, AT, DK and NL indicated that the projects

²⁴⁶ EE NER.

²⁴⁷ FI NER.

²⁴⁸ HU NER.

²⁴⁹ EE, EL and IT NERs.

²⁵⁰ Programmes under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to stimulate cooperation between Member States.

²⁵¹ A community initiative within the European Social Fund concerning the transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market between 2001 and 2007.

²⁵² 97/12/JHA: Joint Action of 20 December 1996 adopted by the Council on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union providing a common programme for the exchange and training of, and cooperation between, law enforcement authorities ('Oisin').

²⁵³ EL NER.

²⁵⁴ RO NER.

²⁵⁵ RO NER.

²⁵⁶ NO NER.

²⁵⁷ NO NER.

funded under the EBF were isolated activities, and that no other EU financial instruments were used for actions in the field of external border and Schengen visa processing. In other countries (e.g. EL, ES, IT and CY), EBF priorities were complemented by EU funds not specifically directed at supporting border control and visa processing activities. In ES, for instance, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) supported the cost of training National Police Corps personnel as well as the technical maintenance of the EC-135 helicopters co-financed under the 2011 AP.²⁵⁸

More generally, some Member States (AT, BU, EE, LT, PT) noted how they built on the knowledge and experience gained through the implementation of previous and/or interrelated EU funds for the implementation of EBF actions. In EE, for example, the procurement of mobile sensors purchased in 2011 through the EBF²⁵⁹ had already started in 2010, within the framework of an ERDF-supported project²⁶⁰. In LT, training projects carried out under the EBF's Priority 5 (STS) are the follow-up of the Special Kaliningrad Transit programme for 2004-2006, the training financed by the European Social Fund (project 'Developing the competence of police officers'), but also by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (under the topic 'International cooperation against crime in Europe'). These trainings corresponded highly to those financed by the EBF, and further enhanced the skills of officers used in the Schengen visa processing and external EU border control systems.

Capitalising on these good practices, and in order to ensure strategic consistency and operative complementarity in a longer-term perspective, future disbursements of EU funds (i.e. through the Internal Security Fund) in the area of external border management and visa processing shall align with and build on the achievements of the EBF-funded actions.

Community and Specific Actions

Complementarity and coherence issues have been raised mainly with respect to Emergency actions. Emergency situations have been also dealt with through the National AP (EL) or through Specific actions.

Community actions related to information exchange (between NCCs) and common surveillance tools are expected to have a high EU added value and complementarity as they are likely to facilitate the linking of NCC to EUROSUR and exchange of National Situational Pictures. Potentially this could have a positive impact on the establishment of an integrated surveillance system. No final reports are available yet for those actions for more detailed review.

Complementary actions financed through national resources

Most Member States identified complementarity between the EBF and national activities relating to external borders and short-term visa processing.

A number of countries (AT, BG, CZ, DK, EL, ES, FR, HU, FI, IT and NO) reported that the 2011-2013 EBF APs were implemented as components of larger national projects and were supplementing other strategies and activities financed from national budgets. For example, in EL the actions of the 2011-2013 financial period were fully aligned with the Greek Action Plan on Management of Migration Flows. In IT, significant synergies have been established between the EBF 2011-2013 APs and the National Operational Programme (NOP) 'Security for the development – Convergence

²⁵⁸ ES NER.

²⁵⁹ 'Updating and upgrading of surveillance equipment at the Estonian external border together with improving the infrastructure'.

²⁶⁰ 'Smart sensor network and data exchange system for ensuring border security'.

Objective 2007-2013',²⁶¹ co-financed by the ERDF. In particular, the NOP's operational objectives 1.2 and 2.1 were complementary to actions related to the EBF's Priorities 1 and 2. For example, there is complementarity between the EBF actions carried out by the Italian Coast Guard and the actions envisaged by the NOP Security for the implementation of the 'Information System for investigative analysis to contrast illegal activities in ports'. In BG, the actions implemented under the EBF 2011-2013 APs are aligned with the government's 'Vision: Bulgaria in NATO and the European Defence 2020',²⁶² and therefore complement international commitments undertaken by the country on a higher security level.

CZ, FR, ES and NL also reported that complementarity was ensured by avoiding overlaps and double financing. FR, in particular, signalled a strong complementarity among EBF and national contributions, especially in the area of visa equipment, where EBF funds covered 93% of the total public expenditures in 2012. NL, where the volume of EBF funds has been relatively limited in relation to the total expenditure in the field of external borders and Schengen visa processing, opted for a highly concentrated deployment of EBF funds for some Specific actions (e.g. related to the implementation of the EU VIS) in order to meet EU legal obligations and joining in on some of the common EU priorities. In PT, Priorities 3 and 5 of the EBF were secured solely by national funds, which demonstrates complementarity between national and European funds.

Overall, **EBF actions were not in competition with nationally funded actions and projects, but rather functioned as a complement to them.** Among the EBF projects described as creating especially strong synergies with other EU and nationally funded actions, AT, BE, DE, LT and NL NERs noted that EBF projects involving the deployment of ILOs and document advisors (DA) in third countries helped to promote systematic and regular cooperation between the consular services and other services of the Member States, generated synergies between sectors (asylum sector, criminal investigation sector, return, etc.), and contributed to redistribute the heavy financial burden related to the maintenance of consulates and visa application centres. The NERs of BE, ES, FI, FR, LT and NL also indicated that projects relating to ITech systems (and in particular, VIS, SIS II and EUROSUR) created strong complementarities, by way of connecting all national and European partners (e.g. eu-LISA,²⁶³ and AENEAS²⁶⁴) involved in Schengen visa processing and border controlling to the same centralised platforms. This helped increase cooperation and communication on efficiency and reliability, making actions more coherent.

At the same time, there were significant differences in the inter-institutional mechanisms adopted by Member States to coordinate the EBF and other EU funds, as well as the EBF and national funds. Examples of different coordination mechanisms are provided in Table 33.

Table 33: Example of EBF and national coordination

Country	Coordination Mechanism
ES	The RA had total visibility over the application of the different national and community financing instruments. In the process of selecting projects susceptible for financing, possible beneficiaries are required to include, together with the economic and operational data of the project,

²⁶¹ Multiregional operational programme 2007-2013 'Security for development' for the regions of Calabria, Campania, Apulia and Sicily – programme under the 'Convergence Objective', co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

²⁶² Republic of Bulgaria Council of Ministers Decision No. 690/03.10.2014.

²⁶³ EU Agency for large-scale IT systems

²⁶⁴ Programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the area of migration and asylum

Country	Coordination Mechanism
	<p>information about possible complementary financing with other initiatives. In the Annual Programmes implemented no problem has been detected in relation to complementary financing and/or synergies with other programmes and/or European financing instruments. In terms of Spain's cooperation with Frontex, a framework agreement was signed with the Ministry of the Interior State Secretariat for Security in December 2003, with a validity of four years, to regulate coordination between both parties.</p>
EL	<p>The actions implemented under the 2011-2013 MAP were selected and designed upon examination of other pertinent National and European Funds' financed actions already implemented in the near timeframe at central, regional and local levels, or that were to be utilised under the National and European Programmes. This was accomplished by bilateral meetings with the competent authorities managing the operational and national programmes related to border surveillance and cross-border cooperation. Consequently, all the resulting factions were complementary both to one another and to the whole programme, as well as to the actions and strategies of other instruments.</p>
AT	<p>The EBF projects were often implemented as components of larger ministry projects, but there was no national central coordination body acting on the basis of a national strategy and/or a national action plan and associated requirement analyses. On the other hand, regular participation by Austria in Council Working Party and technical panel meetings helped to increase coherence. Overall, the National Evaluation Report suggests that cooperation and coordination between national operators and between Member States increased over the period under review. However, no other financing instruments were identified as complementary to the EBF and no funds from other programmes were used. Information on complementarity with similar EU-financed measures was obtained for reporting purposes.</p>

Source: ES, EL, and AT NERs

Evaluation question 15

To what extent were the EBF 2011-2013 actions complementary to the activities of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union?

The EBF has similar objectives to those of Frontex, but while financial support from the agency is usually deployed to cover operational costs and support purchased assets, the EBF is used for long-term investments and training.²⁶⁵ At the same time, a series of projects supported by the EBF over the 2011-2013 period complemented activities conducted by Frontex to perform its tasks. More precisely, NERs provide significant examples of how projects implemented under the different EBF priorities complemented most of Frontex's core activities.

FI, FR, EL and IT confirmed that the actions conducted in the framework of the EBF were coherent with Frontex's objectives of increasing the Member States' **response rapidity and overall capability**. In general, the actions conducted under the EBF's Priorities 1 and 2, which resulted in the acquisition of vehicles and equipment destined to increase the effectiveness of border patrolling at the external borders, are coherent and complementary with Frontex's mandate. Good examples of complementarity in this domain are provided by the two AW 139 helicopters purchased by the Italian National Police under the 2011 AP,²⁶⁶ as well as by the van purchased by Swedish Border Guards under the 'Effective border control' action of EBF 2012 AP²⁶⁷.

ES, IT, FI, LT, NL, PT, RO and SE reported and/or indicated that when implementing EBF-supported actions directed at the purchase of aircraft, vessels, vehicles and equipment, the ability to conduct joint operations has been expressly taken into account. For example, through the 2012 AP, the Italian Coast Guard purchased seven naval units – six class S700 patrol boats (Action 5.2.16) and one Class '300' offshore patrol vessel – which were made available to Frontex in 2014 and 2015 but without claiming Specific Priority 1.3. Also, EBF actions directed at updating air, sea and terrestrial assets (for example, by installing appropriate new technologies on board to help carry out surveillance activities), implemented through the EBF, allowed national border guards to increasingly take part (using their own means) in the operational activities promoted by Frontex. For example, the IT Coast Guard's Vega boat (Nave Vega) and 11 class 300 patrol boats, which have been made available to Frontex, have been updated/upgraded thanks to the actions falling under all three Annual Programmes. In 2012, Romanian Border Police participated in 19 joint operations organised by Frontex, 11 in 2013, three pilot projects and several joint missions in 2014. For all communal operations and pilot projects, Romanian Border Police used vehicles and surveillance equipment purchased or upgraded under EBF 2011-2013 APs. More generally, the EL NER mentioned that authorities paid attention to the coordination of the MAP and the revised 2011-2013 APs with the operations conducted by Frontex in the country.

BE, BG, EE, FI, HU, IT and RO referred to EBF contribution in aligning the **training** activities delivered to border authorities to the common training standards developed by Frontex. In fact, BG confirmed that the training courses implemented under EBF corresponded to the Common Core Curriculum and were intended to extend and specialise the knowledge and abilities of border police guards, gained in the basic training. BE authorities coordinated with Frontex to ensure that the training activities delivered by its border guards in third countries with a risk profile for illegal migration

²⁶⁵ DG Home interview.

²⁶⁶ IT case study.

²⁶⁷ Interview with SE RA.

are similar to (but not overlapping) the ones conducted by the agency. In IT, some of the training activities delivered to EBF actions' beneficiaries have been carried out by and in partnership with the National Police Training Centre in Cesena, which is the headquarters of the Italian Frontex Partnership Academy. In FI, the new investigation and inspection building realised through EBF funds belongs to the Border Coast Guard.

National evaluation reports for BG, CY, EE, IT and FI confirmed that when these countries have acquired new equipment and technologies, compatibility and information-sharing with Frontex has played an important role. A good example of complementarity in this field is provided by the second-line control initiative. This EBF action aimed at enabling an exchange of experience and best practices related to second-line verifications among the Schengen Member States. This project was not launched under the Belgian 2013 AP, but a similar one was developed by Frontex with a larger scope (including also document falsification, for instance) to continue the exchange of information. In the context of this action, complementarities in time were thus identified in addition to complementarities in scope.

The NERs for BE, ES, and FI confirmed that actions implemented under the EBF 2011-2013 APs have also contributed to Frontex's tasks related to information analysis, in particular to **risk analysis and strategic analysis**. In general, it can be noted that the improvements brought by the EBF to Member States' surveillance and information systems facilitated the provision of relevant and high-quality data which can be used by Frontex, for instance, in building up an image of the situation, patterns and trends in irregular migration and cross-border criminal activities at the external borders. In BE, for example, the mapping of risk areas related to the illegal border crossing actions is currently communicated to and used by Frontex, which aggregates these findings with the ones from the other Schengen Member States.

In some countries (EE and FI), synergies have been identified between EBF actions and Frontex's role in the field of research and development; for example, the 'fully automated border control equipment' acquired within the EBF action in EE and established at Tallinn Airport, followed recommendations (best practices) set for this system by Frontex.

As for the Frontex task to provide assistance to Member States in joint return operations, no relevant examples of synergies have been provided in Member States' NERs.

On a more general note, it is worth noting that while some EU countries (i.e. CZ) mentioned that none of the activities implemented under the 2011-2013 EBF APs contributed to creating synergies with Frontex, others (i.e. NO) underlined that despite being involved in the activities concerned by the agency only to a limited degree, participation in Frontex activities has increased during the programmes' periods.

Conclusions

Overall, the assessment of the complementarity and coherence of the EBF actions with other EU and national interventions related to the management of the EU external borders and the Schengen visa shows that **a good level of coordination has been achieved at both the strategic and operational level**. Complementarities identified between actions implemented under the EBF, ERF, RF, EUSF²⁶⁸, and Phare, but also the ENP, the ERDF and the European Social Fund, confirm alignment in scope among different EU financial instruments, and policy areas. The **EBF complemented national resources** that Member States engaged to comply with both relevant EU legislation in the field of border management and visa processing, and international

²⁶⁸ EU Solidarity Fund

commitments undertaken at the higher security level. **Synergies between the overall EBF programming and the activities conducted by Frontex** have also been identified. In particular, the Agency used the data made available by the Member States, the Frontex Risk Analysis Network, and information obtained from Frontex Joint Operation and open sources, to support the Commission in the performance of the (country by country) threat assessment for the EBF. At the same time, while the data and analysis provided by Frontex reflected abrupt and rapidly changing trends in irregular border crossings at the EU external border, the Agency's threat assessments were used in the framework of a multiannual programming and implementation exercise.²⁶⁹ This seems to suggest that the EBF was probably more adept at mitigating structural shortcomings rather than conjectural circumstances.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Frontex.

7.7 EU added value

Evaluation question 16

To what extent would the Member States be able to carry out the investments necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of border management and Schengen visa processing and in particular the investments related to EUROSUR, VIS, SIS II, automatic border controls, consular co-operation and contribute to the Frontex joint operations, without the support of the EBF 2011-2013 actions?

Key findings

- The EBF support was essential to carry out the investments required to improve the EU external border management systems. This was confirmed by Member States which are responsible for the surveillance of critical sections of the EU external borders, and which have faced a drastic increase in migratory pressure since 2013.
- The EBF contributed crucially to the application of the Schengen *acquis* over the 2011-2013 period, in particular supporting Member States to significantly develop and improve the national components of large IT systems such as SIS II and VIS, and to develop consular cooperation with third countries.
- The EBF added value was particularly significant for Member States facing budgetary constraints and/or with limited financial resources.
- Freeing otherwise unavailable national resources, the EBF had the incentive effect to multiply Member States' investments in joint EU border management systems.

For the EBF, EU added value is evaluated on the basis of the fund's capacity to contribute to Member States' expenses related to: external border management; the application of the Schengen *acquis*, and the participation in Frontex activities and operations.

According to the volume, scope, role and effects of the financial support granted by the EBF in the above-mentioned areas (each related to EBF specific priorities), EU added value of the fund has been evaluated as: essential (when the investments would not have been possible without the EBF); considerable (when the investments would not have been carried out to the same extent and/or in the same timeframe without the EBF); low (where the same project could have been realised even without the EBF).

In relation to **border management**, different degrees of EU added value have emerged for EBF interventions supporting Member States: compliance with the EUROSUR regulation and, more in general, the Commission's Smart Borders Package; establishment of Automatic Border Controls (ABC); and participation in the European Patrols Network.

Most of the NERs analysed for this evaluation indicated that investments related to EUROSUR would not have been possible without EBF contributions. Significantly, this was confirmed by countries such as IT, EL and ES, which are responsible for the surveillance of critical sections of the EU external borders, and had to deal with increasing influxes of migrants since the launch of the programme.

Box 12: EU added value – EUROSUR – ES, EL, IT

Interviews conducted during the ES case study visit confirmed that the **construction of the operations centre for the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Control Centre** would not have taken place without EBF funding, to such an extent that the EBF provided 95% of the funds for these actions. The

inability to invest in these actions would have resulted in the loss of significant, positive effects. Alongside improving the ability to comply with the EUROSUR regulation, these actions have resulted in the creation of synergies, consisting in particular in improvements in cooperation and information sharing with, among others, EU Member States, Frontex, and selected third countries. It was reported that Frontex is promoting the replication of the Coordination Centre by other Member States in order to comply with the EUROSUR regulation. In Greece, a technical study and some preliminary actions for the preparation of the technical specification of the project related to the establishment of a National Coordination Centre for the surveillance of the external borders and the control of migration flows related to EUROSUR, would not have been conducted without the support of the EBF.²⁷⁰ In IT, EBF investments were determining for eight actions relating to EUROSUR, for a total value of EUR 68.5 million (nearly 56% of the total for this priority, excluding the actions for which the information about the value added is not available). It has also been noted that interventions on 14 actions, for an amount of almost EUR 17 million, would have been not only delayed, but also downsized, without the Fund's support.²⁷¹

For the above-mentioned Member States (but also for LT, PT and SI), EBF contributions were therefore essential in order to ensure EUROSUR-related investments. In other countries (DE, EE, FI), the EBF had a considerable added value in the area of Smart Borders Package, as it either made available funds which were not available to the required extent and for the purpose of improving the sustainability of surveillance (including information) systems, both on land and sea border, or significantly speeded up the upgrade and renewal of operational equipment for border surveillance. No country reported low EU added value in this specific field.

In relation to investments made for the conducting of border management activities more in general, a significant number of NERs (BE, BG, HU, EE, ES, IT) refer to the EBF either as an essential or substantial source of financial support. Reportedly, without the EBF, the overall development of border management capabilities would not have been possible in countries such as BG and HU, which have faced a drastic increase in migratory pressure since 2013. Instead, it seems that the **EBF had only limited added value for the acquisition of state-of-the-art technology at the EU external borders**. Only one Member State (SI) reported EBF support as essential for the overall Automatic Border Controls domain, and one country (FI) assessed the EBF added value in this area as considerable.

The EBF contribution to the **establishment and development of IT systems, and in particular of VIS and SIS II, was referred to as essential, or at least considerable, by several Member States** (CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, IT, LT, PT, SI). The EU added value of the EBF in this intervention area has been esteemed in both quantitative (e.g. 75-95% of the total investment required for upgrading and extending the VIS was covered by the EBF in CY, and the same ratio was 100% in SI; in BE, the number of national SIS II projects launched and implemented significantly increased after the EBF activation), and qualitative terms (e.g. according to IT beneficiaries, the use of only national resources would bring about a significant worsening in the service, and make it impossible to comply with EU standards; in ES, the EBF allowed an extension of VIS and SIS II scope and quality). In some cases (e.g. EE, HU, LT), the EBF added value in the implementation of VIS and SIS II consisted in the facilitation of software development processes. FI and SE stated that

²⁷⁰ EL NER.

²⁷¹ IT NER.

the projects would not have been carried out within the given timeframe without the support of the Fund.

Consular cooperation is another area where the EBF contributions allowed several beneficiary countries to implement measures that could not have been implemented, or not to the same extent, by the sole means of national funding. Due either to the high costs related to consular cooperation activities, or the pressures to cut external representation expenditures, countries such as AT, BE, BG, FI and HU reported that EBF support was essential, or at least very substantial. In the field of consular cooperation, the ILOs have been pointed at as one of the projects where EBF support had particular added value. In HU, for example, training of consular officials would have been carried out to a much lower extent, and language training would not have been realised without EBF co-financing. **Training** on specific technologies, foreign languages, and professional education is described as an area where EBF had elevated added value.²⁷² This is mainly due to the reduction of expenditure concerning education 'imposed' at the national level, which focuses on initial training at the expense of professional updating. It is important to note that some types of training courses, particularly those for initial training of eight pilots and 15 experts of the National Police on AW 139 helicopters (Action 5.5.1), are extremely expensive but necessary for the proper use of the equipment.

Also with regard to the **contribution to Participatory States' capability to take part in Frontex operations**, the EBF achieved a good degree of added value. In particular, beneficiaries in IT, SE²⁷³ and BG affirmed that the EBF financial support allowed both an increase in the number of available assets, and an improvement of the technical features of vehicles that have been put at the disposal of Frontex.

Conclusions

In conclusion, from the analysis of the NERs, interviews conducted with the Member States' RAs, and case studies, it emerged that **the EBF helped significantly to fill gaps in national public funding, and supported the national efforts in the implementation of the different priorities underlying the funds.** The EBF added value has been particularly high in countries with limited financial resources and/or facing tight budgetary constraints, as expressly confirmed in the CY, EL, FI, FR, IT, LT, NL, NO, PT and RO NERs. According to these countries, the EBF helped to make possible large investments which would not have been made otherwise, or would have been possible only with significant delays occurring in all areas of intervention of the EBF. A particularly significant example is provided by IT, where the EBF ensured that 65% of the total number of actions were implemented in compliance with the deadlines and contents envisaged.²⁷⁴ Thanks to the EBF funding, the operations could be done in reasonable time, and the EU money made it possible to innovate and develop systems in new ways. In addition, some actions would have been downsized because it would not have been possible to find the entire amount of resources needed.²⁷⁵

In addition, **without EBF contributions, a strict prioritisation of available resources would have had to be made.**²⁷⁶ This would have resulted not only in significant delays in the implementation of a number of actions, but also in the non-realisation of implemented projects which were not necessarily responding to EU legal

²⁷² IT, EE, LT, SI NER.

²⁷³ IT case study; interview with SE RA.

²⁷⁴ IT NER.

²⁷⁵ IT NER.

²⁷⁶ NO NER; interview with SE RA.

obligations/requirements. For example, without the Fund the investment for SIS II would have been made using national resources, because the good functioning of SIS II is an essential condition for Member States to stay in, or become part of, the Schengen Area. However, this would have engendered a lack of resources for other initiatives which proved not only to be relevant to the beneficiary's needs and the overall EBF objectives, but also complementary to Frontex's activities.²⁷⁷ At the same time it has been noted that, where the volume of EBF funds has been relatively limited in relation to the total national expenditure in the field of external borders and Schengen visa processing, the incentive effect to make investments in joint EU border management systems has probably been the most valuable contribution of the EBF.²⁷⁸ In this sense, it is possible to say that driving the EBF offered better value for money, as it performed a **lever effect which allowed for the multiplication of Member States' investments** in border management systems, infrastructure and activities.

By tackling fragmentation (e.g. contribution to the establishment of the EU integrated border management system), fostering a better use of resources (e.g. multiplication of relevant national investments), and creating synergies (e.g. improved information sharing mechanisms), the EBF added value has been substantial. Considering both the increase of migration flows which some Member States have been experiencing since 2011 and the financial constraints faced by many Member States over the period considered, the opportunity that EBF actions gave to national authorities to carry out the interventions in the shortest possible time and with the expected size and costs was important, and in the context of the current migratory emergency has become crucial.

²⁷⁷ Interview with SE RA.

²⁷⁸ NL NER.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 7 provides a detailed evaluation of the extent to which the different EBF actions contributed to the **relevance, utility, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, complementarity and coherence**, and **EU added value** of the Fund. This chapter summarises these findings and provides an assessment of the EBF's overall role in the implementation of effective and common standards for control and surveillance of the external borders. For each of the evaluation criteria as well as at a general level, conclusions and relevant recommendations are presented below.

Throughout this evaluation, the different EBF actions have been linked back to the legal basis of the Fund, its objectives and priorities, as well as the needs it was intended to address. Thus, the EBF 2011-2013 actions have been assessed on the basis of their contribution to the establishment of the burden sharing and solidarity system required to ensure a *high and uniform level of control on persons and surveillance of the external borders* of the European Union in line with the legal basis.

It is important to remember that the EBF was conceived when the capacity of DG HOME (DG JLS at the time) was much more limited than now and at a time when Frontex was a very new agency. As such, the Fund had to be built with limited operational expertise, with capacity and knowledge being gradually increased. It is a token of the Commission's responsiveness that most of the problems identified in this evaluation have already been addressed in the successor Fund (the Internal Security Fund – ISF).

Overall conclusions

Overall, the findings of the evaluation show that the EBF was generally perceived positively by RAs and beneficiaries as it was seen as contributing to the national objectives relating to those of the EBF. While the overall conclusion of this evaluation is that the EBF has been extremely positive, there is unfortunately a lack of robust data and indicators to support these findings. In other words, the evaluators have been able to develop a positive story of the EBF based on the qualitative information collected which could not always be supported by quantitative information due to a lack of such data on the *status quo ante*.

The EBF has strengthened Member States' capacity to implement the operational aspects of external border management, developed and interlinked the different components of the IBMS, and fostered complementarities between different actors, programmes, and activities related to the integrated management of the EU's external borders. **The solidarity expressed by the EBF through financial assistance globally contributed to the development and implementation of EU policy and legislation** in the field of migration and border control.

Besides the positive effects produced by the EBF, a few weaknesses were identified, which could hinder the overall impact of the EBF. In the first place, and despite the wide scope of the EBF's objectives, a series of **eligibility limitations** prevented the implementation of a few very Specific actions that could have addressed identified needs (such as visa checking at military bases). Furthermore, while the Fund significantly increased the participating countries' border management capabilities and cooperation at the national level within different bodies involved in border control, a relatively low share of these investments under shared management allow for direct operational cooperation with other Member States or third countries. Actions under direct management, such as the connection of the PT and ES maritime border surveillance systems which was supported under the EBF Community action, were nevertheless used to support cross-border actions. One important challenge here is the lack of compatibility between some information systems in place in the different countries (not VIS or SIS II). According to a French stakeholder, this could be solved

by making it mandatory for states receiving EBF funding to purchase systems with international norms. To a certain extent, the weaknesses identified in terms of EBF actions' internal coherence is a result of difficulties at EU level rather than being specific to the EBF.

The nature of the objectives of the EBF means that they cannot be fully assessed until complete. This creates difficulties in the interim assessment of their fulfilment. While the effects of the EBF are clearly positive, the quantification of the outputs and outcomes is much more difficult to assess given the piecemeal way in which the indicators have been reported. A small investment in ensuring the comparability of the indicators would have a big impact on the positive narrative which could be made of the impact of the EBF.

Overall recommendations

- The nature of integrated systems means that they cannot be fully assessed until they are completed. Consequently, clear interim indicators should be identified to ensure adequate monitoring before their full implementation.
- While the EBF contributed to increasing the national capacity of Member States, very few activities under direct management were conducive to the development of cooperation between Member States. Given the importance of solidarity, future programmes should build in an incentive for Member States to cooperate together and apply for co-designed investments.
- Clear and agreed indicators should be developed at the inception of any programme to ensure that its success can be clearly assessed in the ex-post evaluation.
- When new indicators are designed, they should take into account the baseline in order to allow for the assessment of impacts.

Relevance and utility

Conclusions

The EBF investments of 2011-2013 were **relevant and had a high level of utility**. The Fund was flexible enough to respond to the actual and changing needs of the beneficiaries in a period where these altered considerably. Moreover, it had a positive overall impact in contributing to increase Member States' capability in the field of border control (checks on persons) and border surveillance, which corresponded to the problems faced by Member States. Some problems were reported in terms of the relevance of the eligibility of some investments relating to BCPs (i.e. difficulties in assessing whether facilities shared by border guards and customs officers were eligible). The flexibility and broadness of the priorities were welcomed as, apart from a few exceptions (in-depth check, IT systems for visa applications within the Schengen zone and some infrastructure relating to people denied entry at BCPs), the needs faced by Member States could be addressed through EBF investments. Finally, investments could be justified under more than one priority (especially Priorities 1 and 2). While this did not affect the overall relevance of the Fund, it has created issues in terms of its monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

- The **objectives of successor programmes should continue to be broad** in order to ensure that the actions progressively programmed and implemented in the framework of the Fund respond to ever-changing strategic and operational needs.

- Nevertheless, in order to ensure that proper monitoring can take place, the broad definition of the objectives should be balanced against the need to clearly assess the relevance of the investments. The overlap between the EBF's objective 1 and 2, for instance, did not harm the Fund's relevance, but made its evaluation more difficult.

Article 3 of Regulation EU 515/2014 establishing the ISF-Borders and Visa, includes a general objective, two specific objectives and seven operation objectives, which are broad enough to allow for the fund to respond to changing needs. In addition, Article 9 states a further eight objectives to be pursued under the national programmes. Finally, the ISF- Borders and Visa Work Programmes define clusters of priorities on an annual basis for Union Actions. For example the Annex to the Commission Implementing Decision concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2014 and the financing for Union actions and emergency assistance within the framework of the Internal Security Fund – the instrument for financial support for external borders and visa states 5 clusters of priorities.

Effectiveness

Conclusions

The overall effectiveness of the EBF 2011-13 should be assessed where possible against specific elements of the Union's overall borders policy architecture (such as EUROSUR, VIS or SIS II) and be seen as a series of building blocks in the development of the overarching policy objectives. The increased co-financing rate of 75% for actions under specific priorities was an important factor in channelling investment in key areas where it was most needed (such as the completion of the SIS II and VIS systems).

The EBF investments furthered important building blocks of the Union's overall borders policy architecture, by contributing to the national components of the common **Integrated Border Management System** (IBMS) for the protection of the EU external borders, especially with regard to:

- **Checks on persons at BCPs:** The EBF promoted a homogenous approach to the checks on persons applied by the participating states at the EU external borders, and increased the overall quality of these checks, for example through the installation of ABC gates in several countries (BE, BG, EE, ES, FI, HU, IT, NL and NO) and the implementation of large information sharing systems such as VIS;
- **Surveillance:** The development and implementation of the national components of a **European Surveillance System** for the external borders, in particular permitting the upgrade of pre-existing national systems (e.g. radar, sensors), and increasing the patrolling capabilities of Member States;
- The **strengthening of cooperation** between different national and EU agencies involved in the protection of the borders, for example through the implementation of the information sharing system SIS II or other large surveillance systems that allow for sharing of information with other Member States (e.g. SPATIONAV in FR and SIVE in ES), through the deployment of immigration liaison officers and by allowing Frontex to use some of the equipment purchased. Some problems were identified in the rolling out of large IT systems, sometimes due to the different technical standards used by Member States. There was a trade-off between ensuring a system was built adequately and the need to do so in a timely manner, such as in FI where a temporary solution had to be developed.

An overall conclusion, which is particularly relevant to the evaluation criterion effectiveness, is the lack of coherence between Member States' understanding and reporting of the context and results / output indicators they were asked to provide (for example: not only numbers of irregular migrants detected, but also define at land vs maritime vs air border), or clarify whether the result indicators relate to the stock (i.e. the compound figure over the programming period) or the annual increase. At the moment it is quite difficult to measure the effectiveness of many investments and the RAs are generally not in a position to clarify or correct these indicators with the beneficiaries.

Recommendations

- Member States which did not automatically benefit from a 75% co-financing rate were prompt to identify activities under specific priorities which were the prerequisite for a 75% co-financing rate. The European Commission should continue using this increased co-financing rate as an incentivising tool for investments that are highly relevant to the EU and for which less appetite exists at the national level.
- The European Commission should make it mandatory that information-sharing systems can be made compatible with other systems, if need be (i.e. using international norms). This would allow more cross-border cooperation for direct management actions in the future;
- The European Commission should review the output / result and the context indicators that RAs have to report back to DG Home and make them more specific as the current indicators were interpreted differently among countries. This has affected the evaluation and the monitoring of those investments. The Commission has addressed this issue for the 2014-2020 programming period by developing a common monitoring and evaluation framework. It includes evaluation questions and indicators, and foresees the issuance of a guidance document for Member States in order to help their M&E work (including the definition of indicators, sources of data, frequency of collection). An ad hoc template for the evaluation report to be submitted by the MSs is currently being developed.

Some of these recommendation have already been implemented under the new ISF Instrument. Under the ISF, the EU has continued using increase co-financing rates for Union Actions under direct management (up to 95%). In addition, a list of common indicators for the measurement of the specific objectives has been annexed to Regulation EU 515/2014 establishing the ISF for borders and visa (Annex IV), in order to measure the achievements of the Fund. The Regulation further states that 'The indicators, including relevant baselines, should provide the minimum basis for evaluating the extent to which the objectives of the Instrument have been achieved' (para 39). Also the template for the evaluation reports under ISF, include a baseline and target value.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ Annex to the COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 799/2014, establishing models for annual and final implementation reports pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, prevention and combating crime and crisis management, 24 July 2014, p. 4 (section 3).

Efficiency

Conclusions

The EBF investments in the timeframe 2011-2013 were overall **efficient**. The EBF promoted the reasonable use of EU financing in the field of border management, in particular prompting or contributing to the set-up of comprehensive management and control systems, including good coordination with the European Commission, the application of stringent procurement procedures, project audits and monitoring exercises.

Some difficulties with the annual programming cycle were reported, in terms of (i) finalising the acquisition of large and complex equipment and systems (as was the case for the IT Case Study) and (ii) the acquisition of large systems purchased over many years. The difficulty of dividing multiannual investments into smaller annual ones purely for programming purposes added a level of administrative burden and programming difficulty for RAs.

In some Member States, the RAs expressed a lack of resources which meant they could not efficiently fulfil their tasks (such as the reporting back to DG HOME). This was particularly the case for Member States receiving a small amount through the EBF (IS, LU, DK), as there is a minimum level of time necessary to administer the national component of such a Fund. However, the lack of resources was also expressed as being an issue by Member States with larger investments.

Recommendations

- The annual programming cycle created difficulties for some Member States in certain areas. The Commission should envisage adding some flexibility in the programming cycle, for instance by allowing for multiannual funding cycles in the case of large investments;
- Member States should ensure that adequate resources are mobilised at the level of the RA to (i) inform and support beneficiaries about the reporting requirements and (ii) ensure investment demands are done in an adequate way.

Sustainability

Conclusions

Overall, the EBF investments between 2011 and 2013 were **sustainable**: most of the assets acquired and knowledge generated were still being used at the time this evaluation was conducted (2016). The cost of updating and maintenance to the purchased equipment and systems will be and already is being borne by Member States. Some best practices were nevertheless identified, forming the basis for the recommendations listed below.

Recommendations

- Sustainability indicators should become a required part of the approval process at project and annual programme levels. The Member States could

find inspiration in the Polish example where an investment must clearly be accompanied by an explanation of how the equipment will be maintained over time;

- Ex-ante assessments of investments requiring significant maintenance and operating costs should be required, with commitment from beneficiaries to secure the estimated post-acquisition costs;
- Length of warranty, maintenance and training (when necessary) should become required elements and (where appropriate) award criteria in the procurement process.

Complementarity and coherence

Conclusions

The EBF investments of 2011-2013 were **complementary and coherent** with activities funded both under other EU funds related to the management of the European external borders (European Return Fund, European Refugee Fund, Neighbourhood policy), enlargement funds (Phare and the Schengen Facility), with Frontex activities (in particular those conducted in the field of rapid response capability, and training), as well as with national investments. The Fund was particularly important in ensuring the coherence of the systems which can only become operational and effective once all building blocks have been finalised (such as the SIS II and VIS) in a context where national government funding was scarce.

Recommendations

- Reference to coherence should be included not only between the programme and other related funds, but also internally, among the different actions, different national plans and different Member States;
- Frontex should be consulted by the Commission on draft multiannual programmes submitted by the Member States and on the strategic guidelines prepared by the Commission – *This is now the case under the Internal Security Fund (ISF)*;
- To increase consistency among the internal and external policies, specific references should be included to the coherence with upcoming investments directed at promoting cooperation with third countries in the field of border management and control.

With regard to the second recommendation, it should be noted that the ISF Regulation encourages Member States to use part of the resources available under their national programmes for specific priorities defined by the Union, such as the purchase of technical equipment needed by the Frontex Agency. In addition article 9 (4) of the Regulation establishing the ISF stated that the Commission shall consult Frontex on draft national programmes submitted by Member States, among other reasons to 'ensure consistency and to avoid cost inefficiency'.

EU added value

Conclusions

EBF support was essential to carry out the investments required to improve the EU external border management systems, in a time of budget cuts and increased migratory pressures. Added value was most noticeable in the development at the national level of large IT systems such as VIS and SIS II, and in the development of consular cooperation with third countries.

As mentioned under the effectiveness conclusions, the completion of pan-EU systems such as VIS and SIS II, which might not have been priorities at the national level, are a clear value-added of the Fund.

Recommendations

- The Commission should continue using successor funds to prioritise the completion of systems with a clear EU value-added, which might not be national priorities.

For example under the ISF, with regard to the Union Actions, the Commission prioritised activities related to cooperation within the framework of EUROSUR, as well as activities related to the implementation of the Smart Borders Package.

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

Position	Institution	Country
Co-ordinator for the EBF direct management team	DG Home, Unit E.1, Union Actions (before former Unit E.3 Internal Security Fund)	Commission
	DG Home, Unit C2 Border Management and Schengen	Commission
	DG Home, Unit C2 Border Management and Schengen	Commission
	DG Home, Unit SRD.01 Budget control and ex-post audits	Commission
	DG Home, Unit B.2 Visa Policy	Commission
	DG Home, unit B.1 Legal Migration and Integration (before former Unit E.3 Internal Security Fund)	Commission
	DG Home, Unit B.3 – Information Systems for Borders and Security	Commission
	DG Home, Unit B.3 – Information Systems for Borders and Security	Commission
Coordinator of the EBF shared management team (until 30/06/2015)	DG Home, Unit C.2 Border Management and Schengen Former (before former Unit E.3 Internal Security Fund)	Commission
Programme Manager EU Policies	DG Home, Unit E.2 National programmes for south and east Europe, evaluation, AMIF/ISF Committee (before former Unit E.3 Internal Security Fund)	Commission
	Strategic Analysis Sector	Frontex
	Head of Finance and Procurement	Frontex
	Strategic Adviser to the High-level Management	Frontex
Head of Unit II/3/d (Internal Security and External Borders Fund)	Ministry of the Interior (Responsible Authority EBF)	AT
Head of Unit of the External Borders Fund	Immigration Office (Responsible Authority for EBF and RTF), Federal Public Service Home Affairs	BE
Attaché at 'Entry and Residence Direction' – Ministry of Interior	Immigration Office (Responsible Authority for EBF and RTF), Federal Public Service Home Affairs	BE
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	Head of Department 'Technical Surveillance'	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	Head of Sector 'Technical Surveillance'	BG
Ministry of Interior, Bulgaria	Head of Monitoring and Coordination section in Directorate 'International Projects'	BG
Ministry of Interior, Bulgaria	Expert in Directorate 'International Projects'	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	Chief of Border Police Station Elhovo	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	Chief of Regional Border Police Directorate Elhovo	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	Chief of Border Police Station Bolyarovo	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	Operative in the Regional Border Police in Elhovo	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	LCC Elhovo operative	BG
Chief Directorate	LCC Elhovo operative	BG

Position	Institution	Country
Border Police, Bulgaria		
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	RCC Elhovo operative	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	RCC Elhovo operative	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	LCC Bolyarovo operative	BG
Chief Directorate Border Police, Bulgaria	LCC Bolyarovo operative	BG
Head of Section Europe and Head of Responsible authority	Section Europe within the State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland – Responsible authority	CH
Policy Advisor European Funds, Section Europe / Responsible authority EBF	Section Europe within the State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland – Responsible authority	CH
Co-Head, Visa Policy Section, Entry Division Responsible for the project preparation and implementation	State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland – Beneficiary	CH
Policy Advisor, Visa Policy Section, Entry Division Participated in the project preparation and implementation	State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland – Beneficiary	CH
Specialist, End-user of the N- VIS system	Division Admission and Stay, Section 'German-speaking Switzerland 2' at the State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police of Switzerland	CH
Administrative Officer	Responsible Authority for the EBF, European Funds Unit, Ministry of Interior	CY
Head of unit	Responsible Authority for the EBF of the Ministry of Interior	CZ
Sr. expert	Responsible Authority for the EBF of the Ministry of Interior	CZ
Sr. expert who implemented the SIS II upgrade	Operations and IT Technical Support Department (OPKTPIT) at the Police Presidium	CZ
Sr. expert who implemented the SIS II upgrade	Operations and IT Technical Support Department (OPKTPIT) at the Police Presidium	CZ
Sr. Expert who implemented the SIS II upgrade	Operations and IT Technical Support Department (OPKTPIT) at the Police Presidium	CZ
End user	SIRENE bureau at the Police Presidium	CZ
End user	SIRENE bureau at the Police Presidium	CZ
	Europäischer Außengrenzenfonds/ Fonds Innere Sicherheit – Grenzen – Zuständige Behörde	DE
	Europäischer Außengrenzenfonds/ Fonds Innere	DE

Position	Institution	Country
Expert		
Builders Work Expert		ES
Head of European Funds Office		ES
Head of International Cooperation		ES
Head of Unit of Verifications		ES
Technical assistance		ES
Border Guard	Finnish Border Guard	FI
Border Guard	Finnish Border Guard	FI
Chief of Kolmikanta Border Guard Station	Finnish Border Guard	FI
Deputy Chief Kolmikanta Border Guard Station	Finnish Border Guard	FI
Officer, European Funds unit	Mission Fonds Européens Sous-direction de la lutte contre l'immigration irrégulière Direction de l'immigration Direction générale des étrangers en France Ministry of Interior (Responsible Authority)	FR
Project Manager (IC2ETA)	Research and development service, Ministry of Defence	FR
Financial Officer	Research and development service, Ministry of Defence	FR
Commander of the 14 semaphores (Premier Metre-CPTO)	French Navy, Ministry of Defence	FR
Chef de Poste	French Navy, Ministry of Defence	FR
Adjoint	French Navy, Ministry of Defence	FR
Matelot	French Navy, Ministry of Defence	FR
Captain de Corvette, Lieutenant Commander	French Navy, Ministry of Defence	FR
Head of Department of Support Coordination	Department of Support Coordination, Ministry of Interior (Responsible Authority)	HU
Deputy Head of department	Department of Support Coordination, Ministry of Interior (Responsible Authority)	HU
Programme coordinator	Department of Support Coordination, Ministry of Interior (Responsible Authority)	HU
Major, advisor	Department of Support Coordination, Ministry of Interior (Responsible Authority)	HU
Lieutenant-colonel	National Police	HU
Project manager	National Police	HU
Head of unit	National Tax and Customs Administration	HU
Project manager	National Tax and Customs Administration	HU
head of border policing department	Szeged Border Police Office	HU
head of office	Szeged Border Police Office	HU
deputy head of Regional Directorate General	National Tax and Customs Administration	HU
Head of unit	National Tax and Customs Administration	HU
Senior referent for international affairs	National Tax and Customs Administration	HU
Head of border policing department	Záhony Border Police Office	HU
Senior border policeman	Záhony Border Police Office	HU
Director of finance	Icelandic police, Acting Head of Responsible Authority	IS

Position	Institution	Country
and IT	EBF	
Director of EU Funds Secretariat, Department of Public Security, Responsible Authority for the European External Borders Fund 2007-2013.	Italian Ministry of Interior	IT
Expert of the EU Funds Secretariat, Department of Public Security	Italian Ministry of Interior	IT
Expert at the Central Directorate for Technical-Logistic Services and Assets Management.	Italian Ministry of Interior	IT
Expert at the Central Directorate for Technical-Logistic Services and Assets Management.	Italian Ministry of Interior	IT
Expert at the Central Directorate for Technical-Logistic Services and Assets Management.	Italian Ministry of Interior	IT
Expert at the Central Directorate for Technical-Logistic Services and Assets Management	Italian Ministry of Interior	IT
Pilots and technicians responsible for the maintenance and technical control of the AW139 helicopters	Italian Border Police	IT
Senior Administrative Officer	European Affairs and International Co-operation Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Latvia – Responsible Authority for the European Borders Fund, European Refugee Fund, Return Fund	LV
Chief Specialist	Ministry of Interior	LT
Audit partners to the Ministry of Interior	UAB 'AUDITAS'	LT
Director of Budget and Equipment	Police Grand-Ducale	LX
Deputy Director of Budget and Equipment	Police Grand-Ducale	LX
	Office of the Prime Minister	MT
Head of Responsible Authority Unit AMIF/ISF	Migration Policy Department – Ministry of Security and Justice	NL
	Migration Policy Department – Ministry of Security and Justice	NL
Project owner 2011-2 'Introduction of Automatic Border	National Police Directorate	NO

Position	Institution	Country
Control (e-gates)' Senior adviser, Borders and Immigration Section	National Police Directorate	NO
Leader of steering group for 'Introduction of Automatic Border Control (e-gates)'	National Police Directorate	NO
EBF/ISF Responsible Authority, Financial coordinator	National Police Directorate	NO
EBF/ISF Responsible Authority, Financial controller	National Police Directorate	NO
EBF/ISF Responsible Authority, Programme coordinator	National Police Directorate	NO
Product manager, Border Control and Biometrics	Norwegian Police ICT services	NO
Procurement manager	Norwegian Police Shared Services	NO
Head of Unit for Border Control	Oslo Airport, East Police District	NO
Border control officer Director	Oslo Airport, East Police District	NO
	International Cooperation and European Funds Department at the Ministry of Interior and Administration	PL
Senior expert	International Cooperation and European Funds Department at the Ministry of Interior and Administration	PL
Senior expert	European Project Implementation Centre (Delegated Authority)	PL
Expert in the International Cooperation Bureau	Border Guard (beneficiary)	PL
Head of the Economic section	Border Guard (beneficiary)	PL
Expert from the Technical and supply Bureau	Border Guard (beneficiary)	PL
Head of the Aviation section	Border Guard (beneficiary)	PL
Deputy Commander of the Border Guard Division (Podlaski)	Border Guard (beneficiary)	PL
Deputy Commander of the Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
Head of Procurement section	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
Head of IT section	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
Head of Technical Supply section	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
Members of the Special intervention team (in charge of drones operation)	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
Members of the Special intervention	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL

Position	Institution	Country
team (in charge of drones operation)		
Members of the Special intervention team (in charge of drones operation)	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
shift leader	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
deputy shift leader	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
patrol officer	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
patrol officer	Border Guard Post in Szudzialow	PL
Officer at EU Funds Management Department	General Secretariat of the Ministry of Home Affairs	PT
Head of European Funds Unit	Schengen Directorate, Ministry of Internal Affairs (Responsible Authority)	RO
Coordinator	Internal Security Fund and External Borders Fund, Ministry of Interior	SK
Project Coordinator External Border Fund,	National Operations Department, Border Policing Section, Swedish Police	SE

ANNEX 2 – STATISTICAL ANNEX (TASK 16)

This annex summarises the implementation of the EBF 2007-2013 through the presentation of a number of important data points. First, the programmed and final financial EBF contributions are presented; these data will be disaggregated by Priority and country. Second, aggregated data on key output indicators are presented to demonstrate the main types of investments supported under the EBF 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 programming periods.

Some inconsistencies were found between the SFC2007 and the Final Reports provided by Member States. In order to ensure consistency, financial figures used in the report were extracted from the SFC2007 database on 11 May 2016 and are presented as such when comparisons are made. Where reference is made to total EU contribution we have provided data from SFC and ABAC at 10/08/2016.²⁸⁰ In addition, the output and result indicators presented for 2011-2013 have been extracted from the 26 available national evaluation reports. Denmark and Iceland are yet to submit national evaluation reports to the European Commission. The indicators for 2007-2010 have been extracted from the Synthesis of the findings in the national EBF 2007-2010 ex-post evaluation reports.

Financial inputs

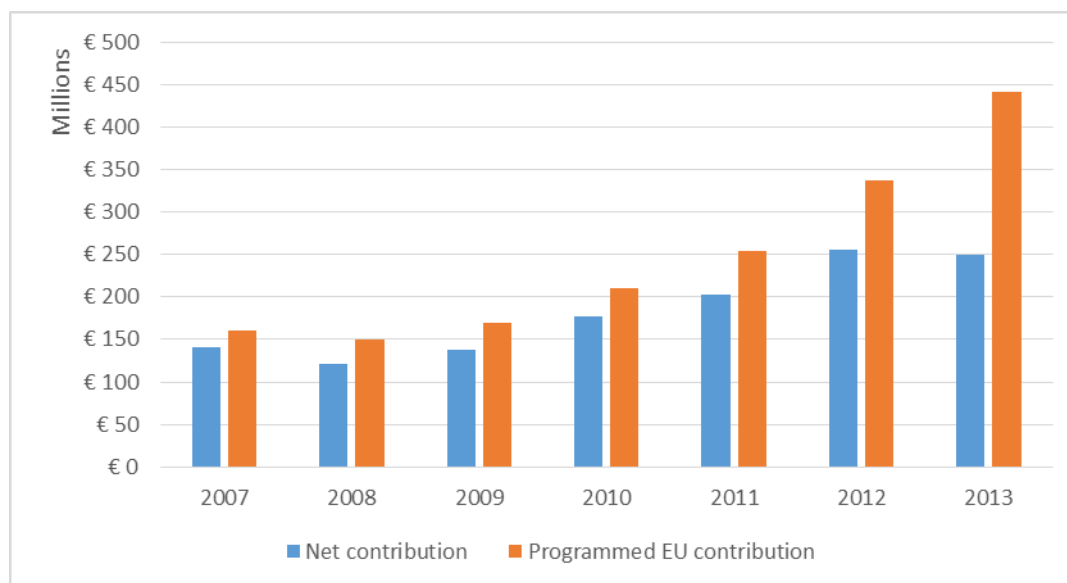
As documented in the SFC2007 database, and presented in Figure 21, key financial metrics for the EBF (2007-2012) encompass the following:

- **Total programmed EU contribution:** EUR 1,722,398,841;
- **Final EU contribution:** EUR 1,285,951,035; and
- **Implementation rate** (i.e. the proportion of programmed funds utilised): 74.6% (81% if one disregards 2013)

These metrics are disaggregated by programming year in Figure 21. Both programmed and final EU contribution amounts increased throughout the EBF, particularly in the 2011-2013 programming period – programmed EU contribution increased from EUR 160 million in 2007 to EUR 441 million in 2013, and final EU contribution increased from EUR 141 million in 2007 to EUR 255 million in 2012 (EUR 249 million provisionally for 2013). Furthermore, the implementation rate has decreased throughout this time from 88% in 2007 to 76% in 2012.

²⁸⁰ As provided to Optimity's Evaluation Team on 11 May 2016. This includes a number of actions marked as 'Returned'.

Figure 23: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) by programming year (2007-2013)

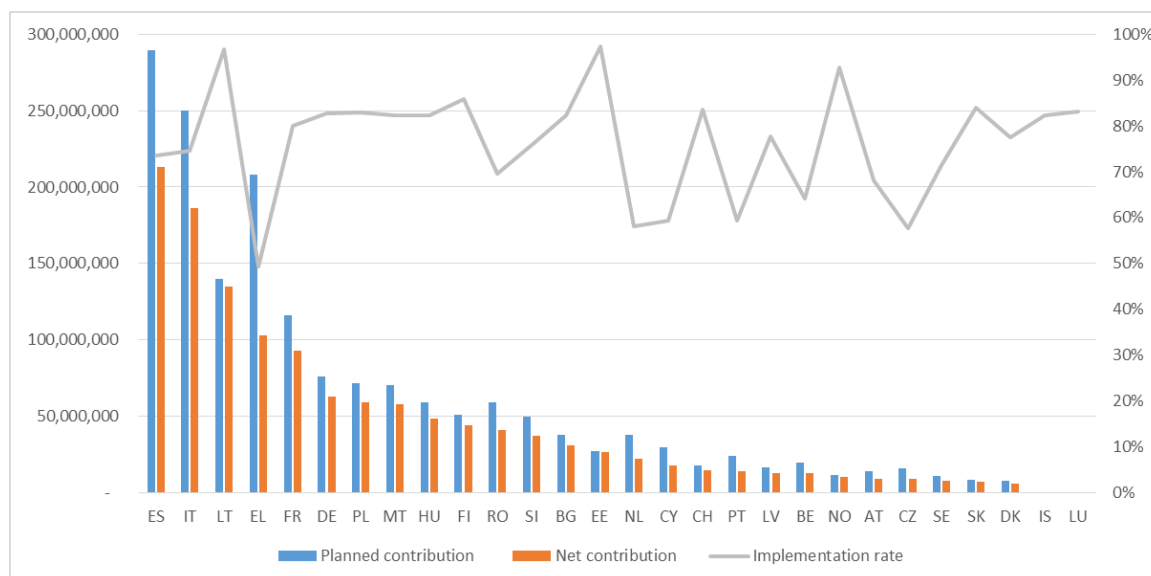


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 10.08.2016)

When disaggregated by participating country, it is clear that countries at the Southern, Mediterranean and Eastern external borders of the EU programmed and received the highest level of financial support through the EBF. As can be seen below, ES, IT, EL, FR and MT are all in the top 10, alongside LT, PL, HU and RO. In addition, these countries programmed and utilised a significant proportion of the EU contribution. The top five countries in terms of programmed EU contribution (i.e. ES, IT, EL, LT and FR) accounted for 58% of the total programmed EU contributions. Similarly, the top five countries for final EU contribution accounted for 58% of the total final EU contribution.

In terms of implementation rate across the countries, no clear trends emerge. It is clear, however, that implementation rates vary significantly across the participating countries.

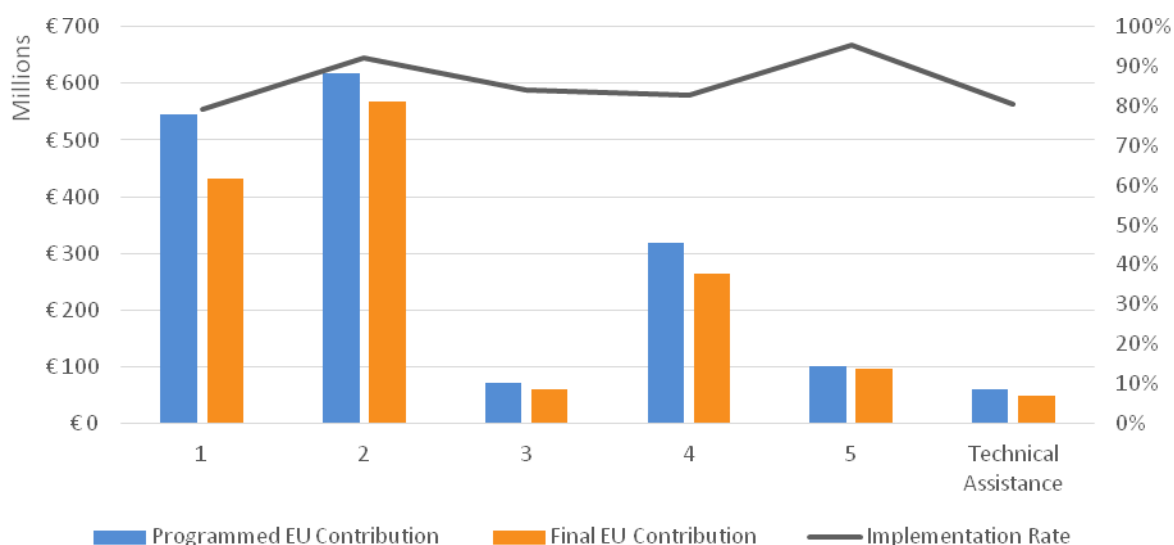
Figure 24: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 10.08.2016)

By priority, Figure 23 demonstrates that the majority of EBF funding has been programmed and received under Priorities 1, 2 and 4. Together, Priorities 1 and 2 account for 68% of both the total programmed and final EU contributions. Priority 4 accounts for an additional 19% of the total programmed EU contributions and 18% of the total final EU contributions. The implementation rates are relatively similar across the priorities. Priority 5 has the highest rate at 95%, followed closely by Priority 2 (92%). Priorities 3 and 4 have implementation rates of 83% and 84%, respectively. Priority 1 has the lowest implementation rate at 79%.

Figure 25: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by priority (2007-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Figures 24 to 32 disaggregate the priority level data by country and, where applicable, by specific priority. It is important to note at this point that implementation rates will not be discussed in relation to the disaggregation by country; this is due to the

significant variance in implementation rates across participating countries as well as the fact that no trends have emerged from the dataset.

Under the EBF, participating countries were eligible for 75% co-financing if the actions related to specific priorities stipulated under the main five priorities. A summary of the specific priorities is presented in Table 34.

Table 34: Overview of the EBF's Specific Priorities, as per Commission Decision 2007/599/EC

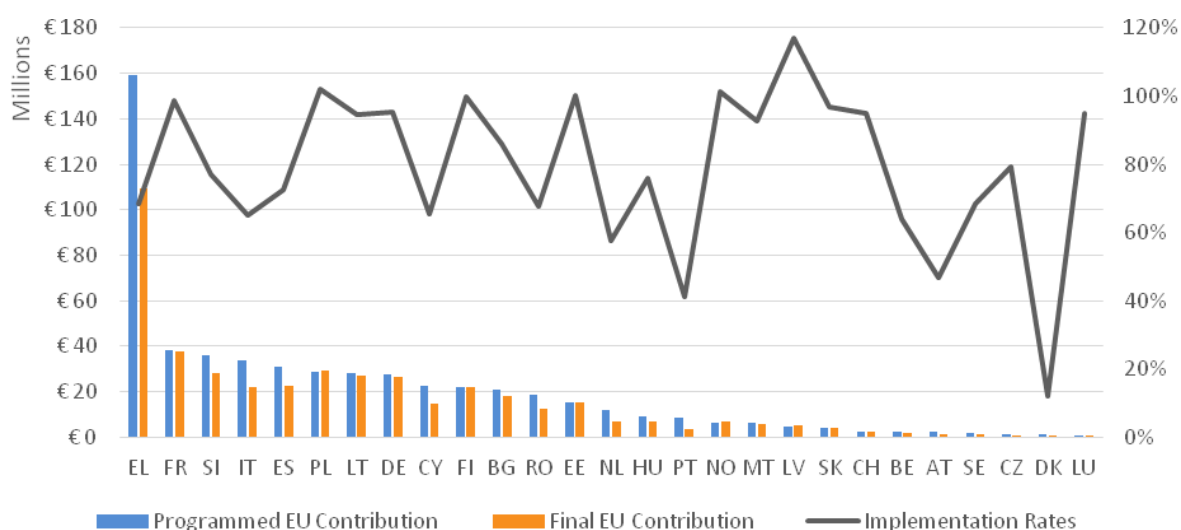
Specific Priorities	
Under Priority 1	
1.1	Upgrading of the national communication systems to make them interoperable with other Member States
1.2	Purchase and/or upgrading of operating equipment to control external borders which is interoperable with other Member States and takes into account the results of the common integrated risk analysis
1.3	Purchase and/or upgrading of operating equipment in order to increase the capacity of Member States to take part in and/or contribute to operational cooperation between Member States as coordinated by the Frontex Agency
Under Priority 2	
2.1	Investments in establishing or upgrading a single national coordination centre, which coordinates 24/7 the activities of all national authorities carrying out external border control tasks (detection, identification, and intervention) and which is able to exchange information with the national coordination centres in other Member States
2.2	Investments in establishing or upgrading a single national surveillance system, which covers all or selected parts of the external border and enables the dissemination of information 24/7 between all authorities involved in external border control
2.3	Purchase and/or upgrading of equipment for detection, identification and intervention at the borders (e.g. vehicles, vessels, aircraft, helicopters, sensors, cameras, etc.), provided the need for this equipment has been clearly identified at European level
Under Priority 3	
3.1	Promotion of systematic and regular cooperation between the consular services of Member States and between the consular and other services of different Member States in the visa field
3.2	Initiatives to develop and establish limited representation, co-location or common visa application centres for, initially, reception and, at a later stage, processing of visa applications
Under Priority 4	
4.1	Investments linked to the Schengen Information System (SIS)
4.2	Investments linked to the Visa Information System (VIS)
Under Priority 5	
5.1	Implementation at national level of the common core curriculum for border

	guards' training
5.2	Enhancing the quality of the national input into the common integrated risk analysis model.

Priority 1

For Priority 1, EL programmed a significant proportion of the total EU funds; around 29%. This proportion decreased to 25% with regard to final EU contribution but EL remained the highest recipient of funds relating to Priority 1; it utilised EUR 46 million more than PL, the second highest country.

Figure 26: Priority 1: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)

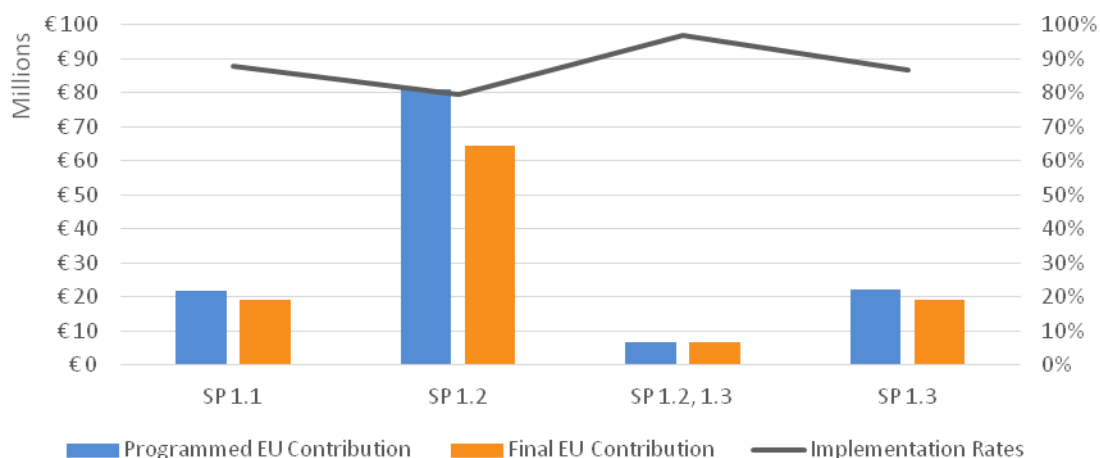


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

For Specific Priorities under Priority 1, a total of EUR 132 million was programmed, and EUR 110 million was utilised. The majority of this funding was allocated and utilised under Specific Priority 1.2 'Purchase and/or upgrading of operating equipment to control external borders which is interoperable with other Member States and takes into account the results of the common integrated risk analysis'; 54% of the total programmed EU contribution and 50% of total final EU contribution.

In addition, it should be noted that a number of actions were allocated across both Specific Priority 1.2 and Specific Priority 1.3 'Purchase and/or upgrading of operating equipment to increase the capacity of Member States to take part in and/or contribute to operational cooperation between Member States as coordinated by the Frontex Agency'; this suggests that there were overlaps between the operating equipment specified in the two specific priorities as some equipment could be claimed under SP 1.2 but would also have been eligible under SP 1.3. As analysed in section 7.3, the identified overlaps did not impact on the effectiveness of the EBF. Furthermore, the implementation rates for these specific priorities were between 80% and 97%.

Figure 27: Priority 1: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by specific priority (2007-2013)

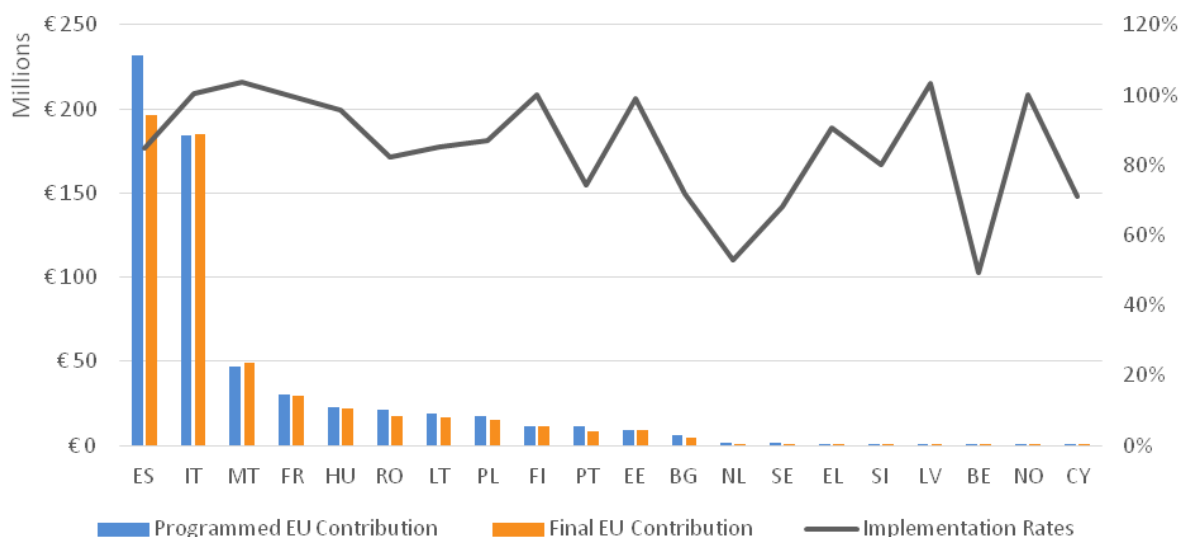


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 2

As mentioned previously, not all countries implemented actions under Priority 2. Twenty countries received funding under this priority. The main beneficiaries from funds related to Priority 2 are ES and IT; together they accounted for 67% of the total programmed and final EU contributions.

Figure 28: Priority 2: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)

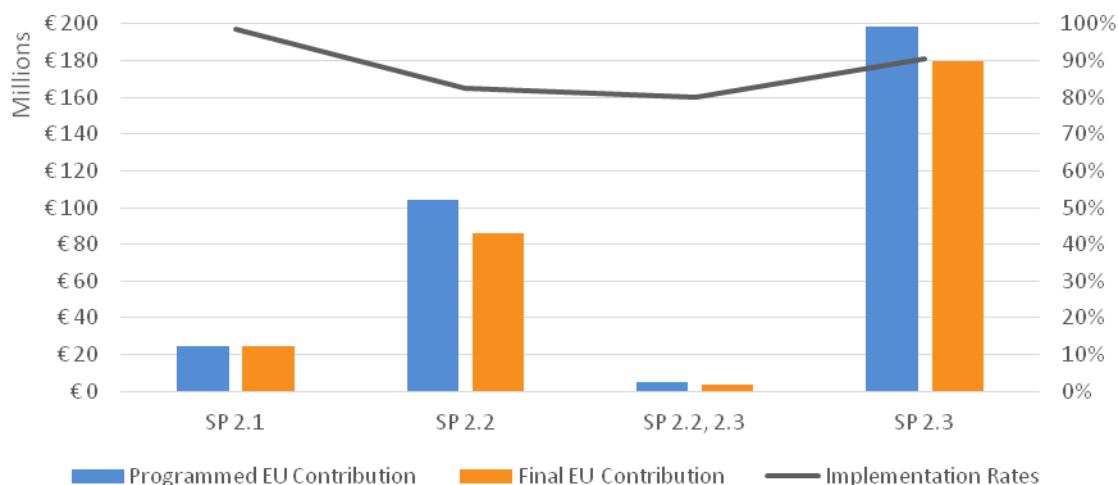


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

The specific priorities related to Priority 2 had a total programmed EU contribution of EUR 333 million and a total final EU contribution of EUR 294 million. The majority of these funds (61%) were received under Specific Priority 2.3 'Purchase and/or upgrading of equipment for detection, identification and intervention at the borders (e.g. vehicles, vessels, aircraft, helicopters, sensors, cameras, etc.), provided the need for this equipment has been clearly identified at European level'. As for Priority 1, there was a small amount of overlap reported between specific priorities 2.2 and 2.3; both specific priorities supported investments in surveillance equipment. As above, this did not impact the effectiveness of the intervention. The implementation

rates across these specific priorities were all above 80%; Specific Priority 2.2 had the highest implementation rate (99%).

Figure 29: Priority 2: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by specific priority (2007-2013)

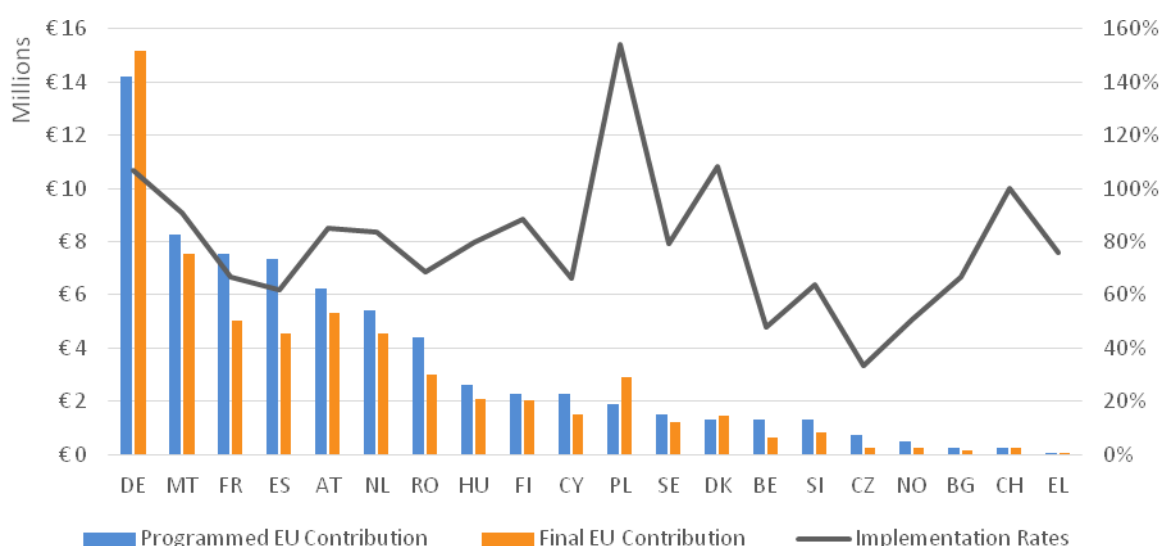


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 3

Twenty countries programmed, and received, EBF funding for actions related to Priority 3. DE programmed and utilised the most funding in relation to this priority; 20% of the total programmed EU contribution and 26% of the total final EU contribution.

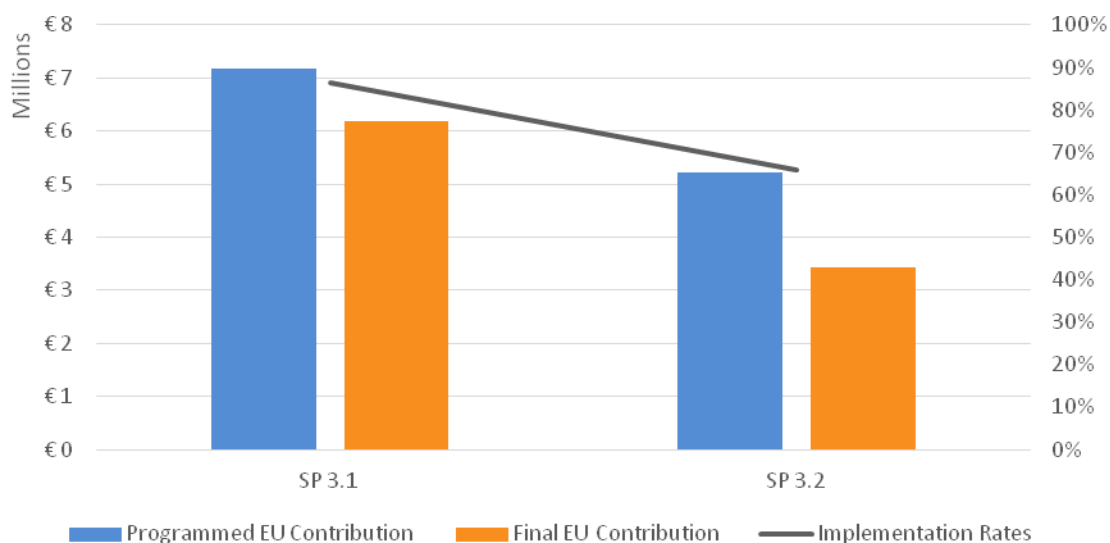
Figure 30: Priority 3: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Specific priorities 3.1 and 3.2, under Priority 3, programmed a total of EUR 12.4 million in EU contributions and utilised EUR 9.6 million. Specific Priority 3.1 received 58% of these funds; with Specific Priority 2 receiving the remaining 42%. In addition, Specific Priority 3.1 reported a markedly better implementation rate (86%) than Specific Priority 3.2 (66%).

Figure 31: Priority 3: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by specific priority (2007-2013)

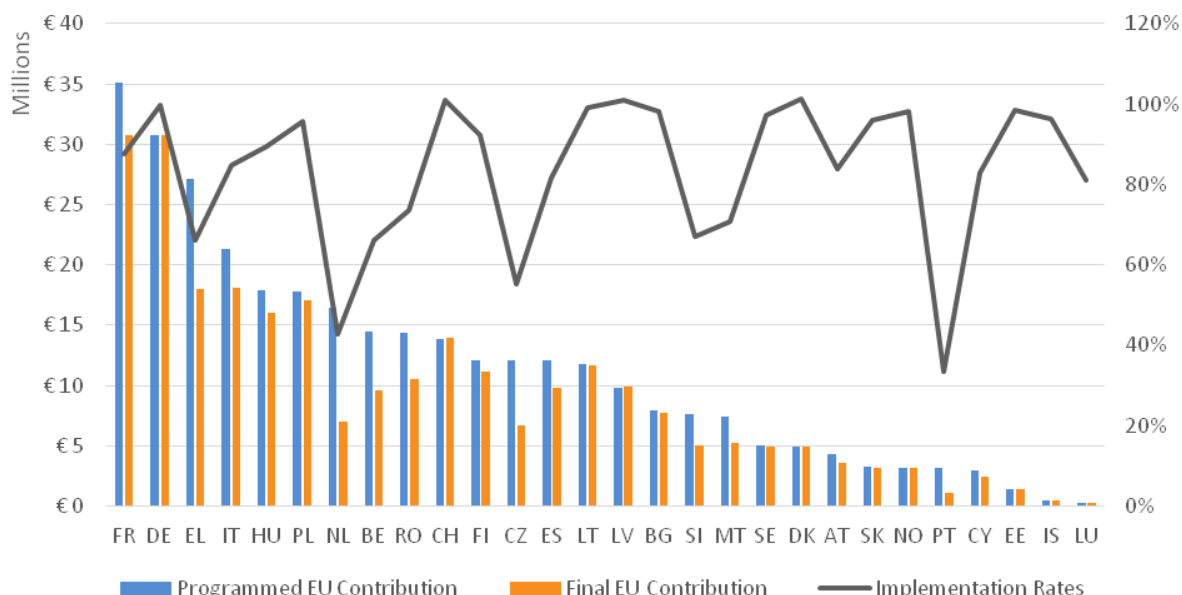


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 4

Programmed and utilised EU funding for Priority 4 was focused on the countries on the Southern, Mediterranean external borders of the EU; namely FR, EL and IT. Additionally, DE received significant funds under this priority. These four countries accounted for 36% of programmed and 37% of final EU financing under Priority 4.

Figure 32: Priority 4: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)

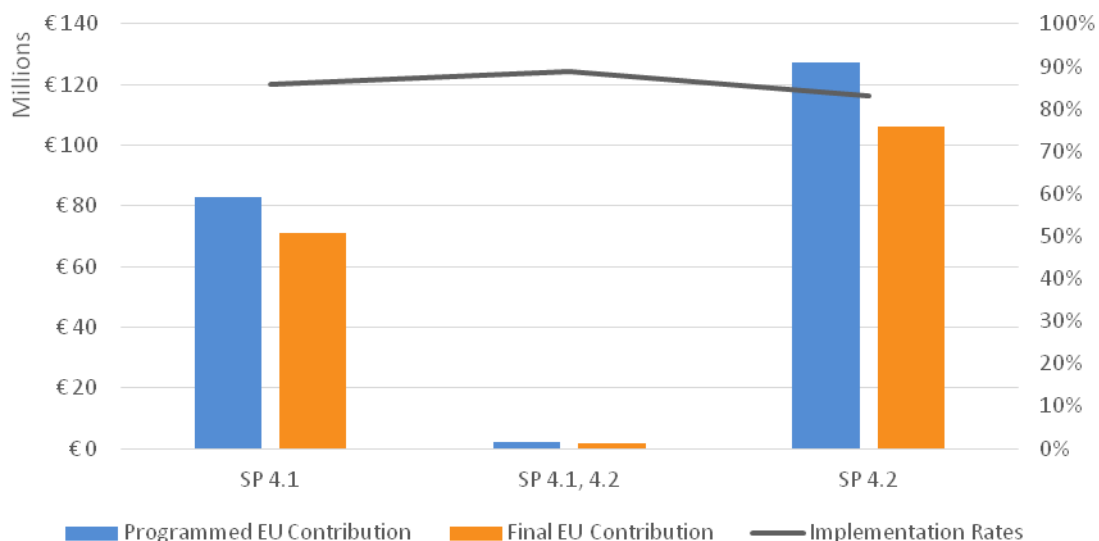


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Under Priority 4's specific priorities, a total of EUR 212 million in EU contributions was programmed, and EUR 179 million was utilised. As can be seen in Figure 31, the majority of specific priority financing under Priority 4 was programmed and utilised under Specific Priority 4.2, 'investments linked to the Visa Information System (VIS)'. 60% of the programmed funds were allocated to Specific Priority 4.2 and 59% of the

final EU contribution was allocated to this specific priority. The implementation rates for these specific priorities were all above 83%.

Figure 33: Priority 4: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by specific priority (2007-2013)

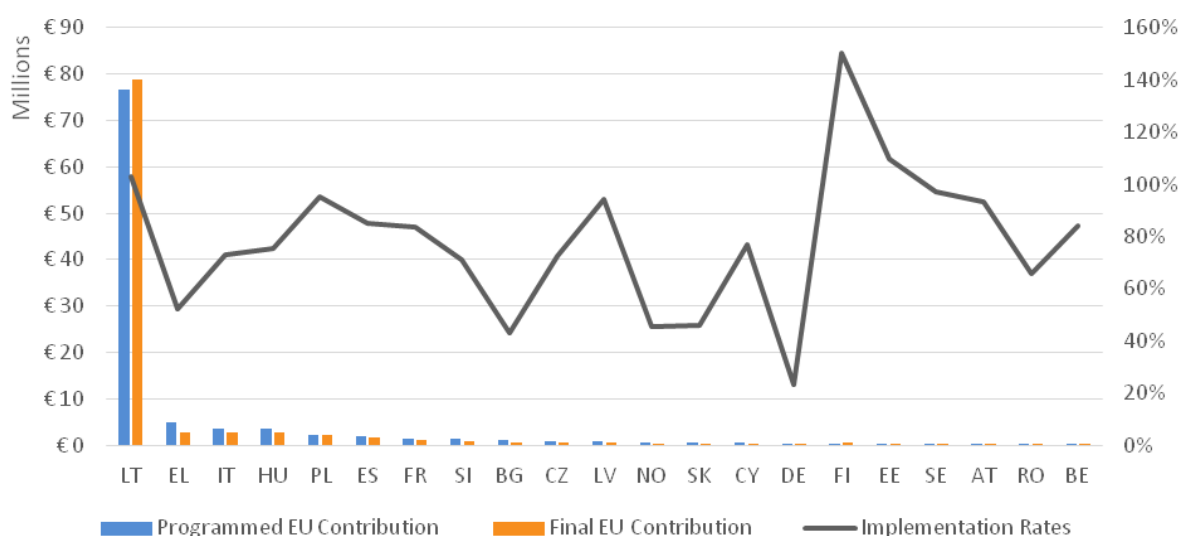


Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Priority 5

A total of EUR 101 million was programmed under Priority 5 and EUR 96 million in final EU contributions were provided to participating countries. The majority of these funds were allocated to LT due to its need to invest in the Special Transit Scheme. LT accounted for 76% of the total programmed EU contribution under Priority 5 and 82% of the final EU contribution.

Figure 34: Priority 5: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

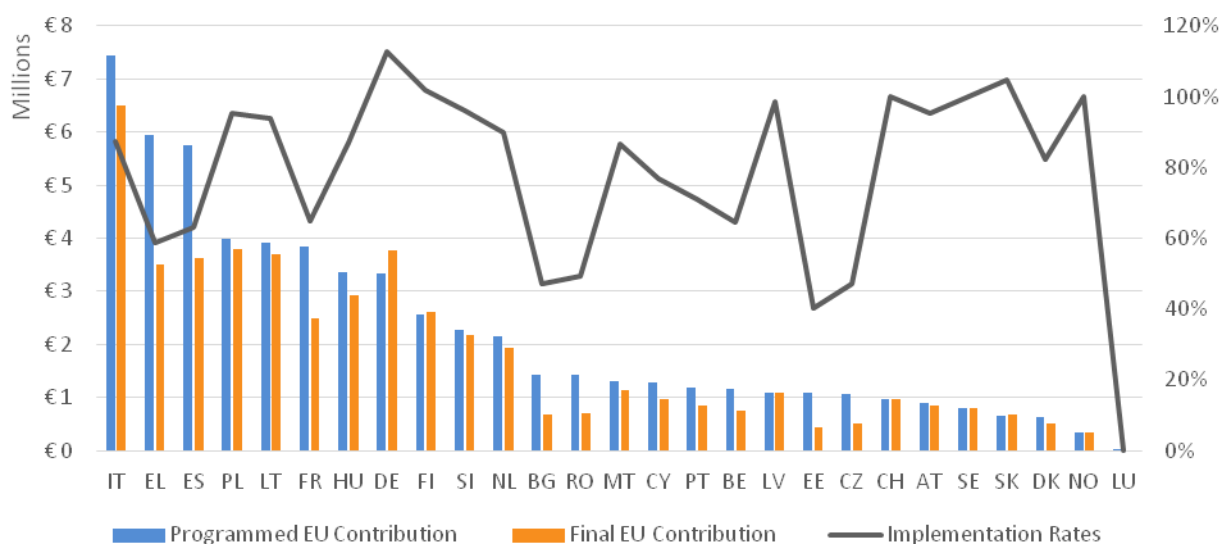
As per Commission Decision 2007/599/EC, Priority 5 had two specific priorities. However, throughout the EBF 2007-2013, only the first specific priority (5.1) – ‘Implementation at national level of the common core curriculum for border guards’

training’ – received EBF funding. This specific priority had a programmed EU contribution of EUR 4.9 million and a final EU contribution of EUR 3.7 million at an implementation rate of 76%.

Technical Assistance

As can be seen in Figure 33, Technical Assistance funds were programmed by all Member States bar IS and used by all bar IS and LU. As for overall funding, the main Member States programming and using Technical Assistance are those with Southern, Mediterranean and Eastern European external borders.

Figure 35: Technical Assistance: Programmed and final financial contribution of the EU (in EUR million) and implementation rate (in %), by country (2007-2013)



Source: SFC2007 Database (version 11.05.2016)

Output and result indicators

Table 35 combines the indicators extracted from the 26 national evaluation reports covering the 2011-2013 EBF programming period with the indicators extracted from the Synthesis of the findings in the national EBF 2007-2010 ex-post evaluation reports. It is not recommended that data from the two programming periods be compared, due to significant differences in data collection and reporting, but it is possible to provide an overall value for each indicator across the life of the EBF. This total is conservative, particularly due to the sparse coverage provided by the data from 2007-2010, but it provides an insight into the overall outputs and results of the EBF.

In addition, Table 35 includes two indicators that were not collected or reported under the 2011-2013 EBF programming period. These indicators (number of patrol missions performed and equipment acquired), however, were collected under the 2007-2010 programming period and received significant responses.

Table 35: Overview of output and result indicators for the 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 programming periods, as well as overall.

Indicator	2011-2013	2007-2010	Overall
Length of the external border covered by surveillance equipment acquired or upgraded under the EBF (km)	59,194	3,482	62,676
Number of border crossing points connected to VIS with the support of the EBF	914	407	1,321
Number of border crossing points constructed, renovated or upgraded under the EBF	193	108	301
Number of border crossing points equipped by equipment acquired or upgraded under the EBF	1,410	-	1,410
Number of border guards trained under the EBF	22,505	32,056 ²⁸¹	54,561
Number of consular cooperation activities developed under the EBF	49	24	73
Number of consular officials trained under the EBF	4,513	538	5,051
Number of consulates connected to VIS with the support of the EBF	1,072	378	1,450
Number of consulates equipped with operating equipment for Schengen visa processing under the EBF	889	-	889
Number of consulates equipped with security enhancing equipment (security doors, bulletproof windows etc.) under the EBF	100	257	357
Number of detention facilities constructed or upgraded under the EBF	38	6	44
Number of helicopters acquired or upgraded under the EBF	66	34	100
Number of ILOs deployed under the EBF	541	270	811
Number of places in detention facilities constructed or upgraded under the EBF	547	710	1,257
Number of planes acquired or upgraded under the EBF	23	6	29

²⁸¹ Approximation based on the overall number of persons trained (32,594) minus the number of consular officials trained (538).

Ex-post evaluation of the External Borders Fund 2011-2013

Indicator	2011-2013	2007-2010	Overall
Number of Schengen visas issued at consulates constructed or renovated under the EBF	3,301,228	>1,800,000	>5,101,228
Number of vehicles acquired under the EBF	2,736	2,933 ²⁸²	5,669
Number of vessels acquired or upgraded under the EBF	319	103	422
2007-2010 indicators not collected for the 2011-2013 programming period			
Number of patrol missions performed	-	3,600,000	3,600,000
Surveillance and operational equipment acquired or upgraded	-	235,773	235,773

²⁸² An additional 119 means of transport were acquired under the 2007-2010 programming period without specifying what types of transport.

ANNEX 3 – CASE STUDIES

Czech Republic – SIS II upgrades

Summary

Country Study ID	Case	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS CZ		SIS II upgrades	Priority 4	General objectives 1 and 2	2011-2013	4,731,661	6,378,536
(1) Objective(s)		<p>(2) Priority 4: Support for the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas</p> <p>(3) MAP: further building of national communication interface for SIS II in accordance with final specification and functioning of central part of SIS II and respective software and hardware specifications</p> <p>(4) Implemented projects: promotion of efficient, real-time consultation of data at border crossing points through the use of large-scale IT systems – SIS; and an effective exchange of information between all border crossing points along the external borders in real time.</p>					
(5) Methodology		(6) Desk research, interviews					
(7) Indicators		<p>(8) Creation of a database for depositing 70 alerts</p> <p>(9) Successful testing</p> <p>(10) Renewal of the infrastructure of the SIS II</p>					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 annual programmes, the 2007-2013 Multi-annual programme, the 2011 final report, the 2012 final report, the 2011-2013 evaluation report, EC monitoring mission report (Oct 2014);
- 2) Interviews with the Responsible Authority for the EBF of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic;
- 3) Interviews with senior experts from the Operations and IT Technical Support Department (OPKTPIT) at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic who have implemented the projects;
- 4) Site visit and interviews with end-users of the SIS II at SIRENE at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic.

Description of the needs underlying the projects: 2011-2013

The Czech Republic entered the European Union in 2004 and sought to fulfil the criteria for entering the Schengen Area by creating the National Schengen Information System (N-SIS) in order to enable the exchange of information with other Member States.²⁸³

Prior to the launch of the EBF projects, the original platforms delivered with the initial launch of the Schengen Information System (SIS) were used, corresponding to the parameters originally demanded for the project back in 2006.²⁸⁴ However, as the volume of data stored and processed was constantly rising, the systems were outdated before the actual launch of the SIS II, therefore there was a need for renewal of both the applications and the hardware to fulfil the requirements for increasing the capacity for storing data for tests and for routine operation. The N-SIS had to process the much higher volumes of data while maintaining high accessibility. There was also an issue with the obsolescence of technology, as system components gradually lost manufacturers' warranty and support.²⁸⁵ As the interviewed beneficiaries confirmed, support from the EBF was essential in order to fulfil these requirements on time.

Description of the project's objectives

The SIS upgrade project was specifically meant to ensure an efficient, real-time consultation of data at border crossing points through the use of large-scale IT systems – not only through the Schengen Information System but also the Visa Information System (VIS) and an operative information exchange system.²⁸⁶

Particularly when it comes to the project 'Disk array for SIS II tests' the main purpose of this part of the project was the purchase of supplementary technology for data storage (disk array). This upgrade was designed to provide 35TB for storage of the required volume of SIS II data – 70 million alerts, including corresponding firmware licences for control, capacity utilisation and setting security parameters.²⁸⁷

The main objective of the project 'Renewal of the SIS II infrastructure before start-up' was the renewal of technical equipment to enable the future services of the NS-SIS II to perform the following activities:

- (1) Analysis of the needs and impacts on the existing state of NS-SIS II;
- (2) Creation of a system project and keeping of the project documentation;
- (3) Proposal for the manner of switching to the renewed technical and programme infrastructure;
- (4) Implementation of the renewal of the technical and programme infrastructure;
- (5) Backup setting;
- (6) Solution testing;
- (7) Creation of the operating and technical documentation;

²⁸³ Annual Programme 2011, p. 8.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 10.

²⁸⁵ Per interviews with the OPKTPIT at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic (Feb 2016)

²⁸⁶ Annual Programme 2011, p. 8.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 9.

(8) Analysis and proposal of the implementation of the necessary tests towards the central system;

(9) Implementation of tests of the national solution on the renewed infrastructure.²⁸⁸

The last project related to the SIS upgrade, 'Increasing the capacity, availability and effectiveness of the SIS II system', aimed to increase the performance of the purchased technology, as the use of virtualisation processes allowed realisation of a higher rate of synergy with the parameters of the main centre in the backup locale.²⁸⁹ Four main targets were identified to increase the capacity, availability and effectiveness of the SIS II systems: 1) enhancing the high availability of the system via both locales; 2) completion and stabilisation of the test environment; 3) enhancement and improvement of the system operation supervision system and upgrades for the current SIS alerts; and 4) training of police staff.²⁹⁰

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for the management

The responsible authority for implementation of the projects in the Czech Republic was the Asylum and Migration Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic. The beneficiary for the SIS upgrade was the Operations and IT Technical Support Department (OPKTPIT) of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic. The institutions which are authorised to search data in the SIS II (and also benefited from the upgrade) are: Police; Customs Administration; Ministry of the Interior, Department for Asylum and Migration Policy and Municipal Offices (limited access).

Financial resources

Disk array for SIS II tests

The disk arrays were purchased from national sources in the minimum necessary scope and were extended to its final capacity using EBF resources.

2011 AP Planned EU contribution EUR 495,000 (used EUR 473,556 – 95.7%)
Public National contribution EUR 165,000

2012 AP Planned EU contribution EUR 807,000 (used EUR 769,241 – 95.3%)
Public National contribution EUR 269,000²⁹¹

Renewal for the SIS II infrastructure before start-up

The renewal of the obsolete and underperforming original SIS II technology (servers, communication components) was financed from the EBF as follows:

2011 AP Planned EU contribution EUR 1,406,600 (used EUR 1,351,578 – 96.1%)

Public contribution EUR 468,866

²⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 10-11.

²⁸⁹ Annual Programme 2013, p. 9.

²⁹⁰ Ibid, pp. 17-18.

²⁹¹ Evaluation Report 2011-2013, p. 11.

2012 AP Planned EU contribution EUR 1,092,026 (used EUR 1,037,258 – 94.9%)
Public National contribution EUR 364,008²⁹²

Increasing the capacity, availability, and effectiveness of the SIS II system was financed as follows:

2013 AP Planned EU contribution EUR 1,140,000 (used EUR 1,100,025 – 96.5%)
Public National contribution EUR 380,000²⁹³

Description of activities conducted under project

The projects included the following activities:

- 1) Disk array for SIS II tests
 - Supply of HW components for the SIS II system;
 - installation of the components as supplied;
 - integration with existing NS-SIS II HW components;
 - incorporation into the NS-SIS II applications environment;
 - migration of data to the extended disk drive;
 - testing;
 - publicity and administration for the project.²⁹⁴

- 2) Renewal of the infrastructure of SIS II before start-up
 - Supply of a HW platform for all solution levels;
 - supply of SW licences for database and application layers;
 - installation of the components as supplied;
 - testing;
 - documentation and training;
 - publicity and administration for the project.²⁹⁵

- 3) Increasing the capacity, availability and effectiveness of the SIS II system
 - Enhancing the high availability of the system via both locales;
 - Completion and stabilisation of the test environment;
 - Enhancement and improvement of the system operation supervision system;
 - Training of Police of the Czech Republic staff on following technologies: HP Unix (for example, HP-UX Performance and Tuning is suitable) and Oracle Database and WebLogic technologies – Performance Tuning, Steria Interconnection Box (SIB).²⁹⁶

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid, p. 12.

²⁹⁴ Final Report 2011, p. 5.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

²⁹⁶ Annual Programme 2013, pp. 17-18.

Effects

Outputs

The projects delivered the following outputs:

- 28 pcs 4x600GB disk drives and 4 pcs 4x2TB disk drives, 2 pcs Switch Hewlett Packard/HP SAN 96/48, including service which has integrated these into the NS-SIS II;²⁹⁷
- Blade technology servers, accessories for server infrastructure, redundant network communication elements, licences for the database layers and monitoring SW for the infrastructure elements including the installation and integration of these components;²⁹⁸
- HW technologies compatible with technologies in the Schengen Information System (Blade-type communication servers with Intel Itanium CPU, HP-UX); Oracle DB SW technology; WebLogic technologies – Performance Tuning, Steria Interconnection Box; Configuration and installation services related to integration into the SIS environment and the development of NS-SIS II;²⁹⁹
- HW technologies for the deployment of control monitoring tools; SW monitoring tools providing consolidated information about the operating parameters of the systems that will be compatible with the existing tools operated for monitoring Schengen Information System systems.³⁰⁰

Results

The system was strengthened to manage the increasing number of alerts – the database and backup centre was set up and is now fully functional.

After the upgrade of the SIS, end-users confirmed that the system was more user-friendly and they also pointed out that the main added value was the possibility to upload and process more information into the system, including pictures. The possibility of uploading pictures into the system makes alerts more efficient and easier to work with when looking for matches.³⁰¹

There is no longer a need for different versions, and algorithms for different agencies, as the huge number of queries which would slow down the system in the past can be handled now. There is more room for different versions of queries – sub-queries, which can for example cover variations of a name to increase the chance of a match.³⁰²

Projects ensured the high availability of the system as well as the backup centre, with very limited downtime. Both centres now have a backup electricity source – a diesel aggregate.

The implementation of the project makes it possible for testing and training to be conducted at the same time, whereas in the past these activities had to be coordinated and done separately. Supported projects also expanded functionalities of domestic information systems – OBZOR and CIS.³⁰³

²⁹⁷ Final Report 2011, p. 5. Final Report 2012, p. 5.

²⁹⁸ Final Report 2011, p. 6. Final Report 2012, p. 6.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Annual Programme 2013, pp. 17-18.

³⁰¹ Per interviews with the end-users of the SIS II at SIRENE at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic (March 2016)

³⁰² Per interviews with OPKTPIT at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

³⁰³ Ibid.

Impacts

The actions contributed to the improvement and utilisation of SIS II in the Czech Republic and thus to the establishment of IT systems required for the implementation of the Union's legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas.

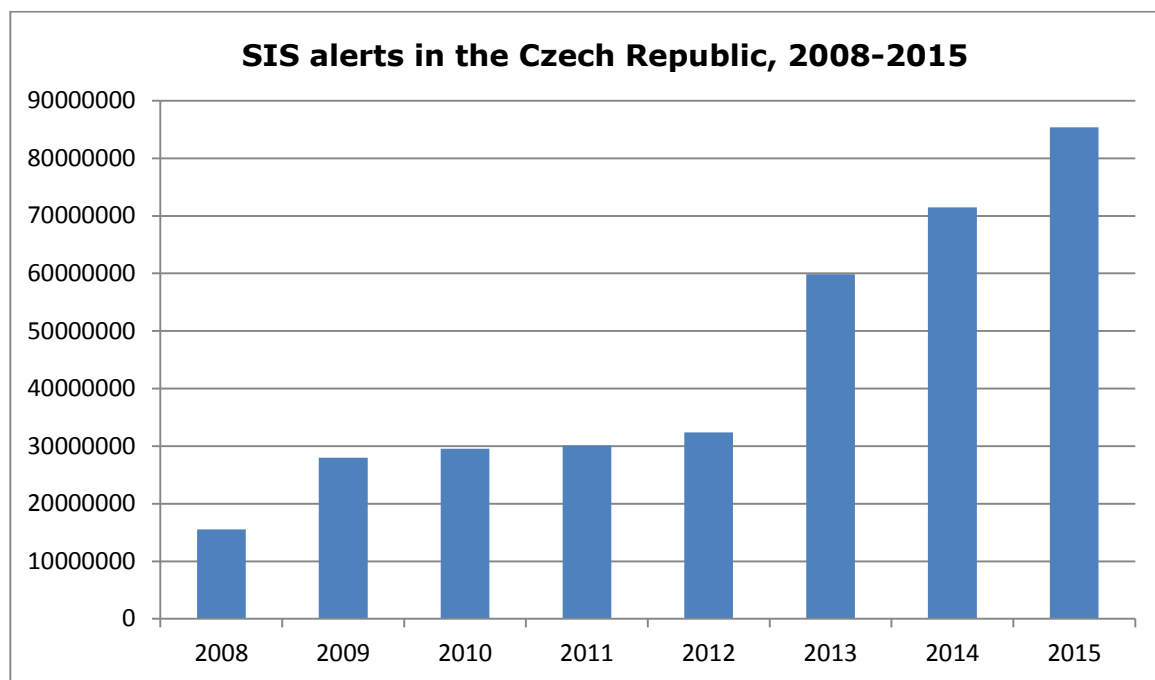
Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The projects were highly relevant, as they addressed the need for the Czech Republic to meet the Schengen requirements for external border protection on time. The upgrades were particularly necessary considering the growing capacity demands as the national SIS was expected to manage 5.5 times more data than initially – rising from 15 million alerts in 2008 to 85 million alerts in 2015. Moreover, the upgrade of the system was essential to ensure the high availability of data in the national SIS II main and backup centres.

Figure 1 demonstrates the gradual annual increase of queries in the SIS leading to the need of system expansion.

Figure 36: Increase in the volume of alerts (2008-2015)



Source: OPKTPIT at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

Utility

The investment had a high utility, as its results met the identified need to enhance the performance of the SIS II. The high availability facilitated by the EBF project resulted in improved security as the system is responding quickly and manages the increasing number of alerts without any disruptions.

The projects provided a solution to the previous conflict between testing and training, which could not be done simultaneously.³⁰⁴ Furthermore, the end-users at the NC SIRENE pointed out that the possibility to insert more information into the system, including pictures, made their work easier. On the other hand, at night-time and over the weekends, when the system is going through updates and cleaning, the response time of the SIS II is up to two hours, which can be an impediment to utility. The staff at NC SIRENE however stated that this issue is hard to address and has neither improved nor become worse with the upgrade of the SIS.³⁰⁵

Efficiency

The effects of the actions performed under the project were achieved at a reasonable cost. The beneficiaries confirmed satisfaction with the contracting company, including the training for administrators and predictive support.

Due to software copyright restrictions (banning third parties from making improvements to the original system), some of the procurement procedures could not be carried out in open public tenders. The OPKTPIT team at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic pointed this out as lessons learned, explaining they now have a contract which in the end makes them owners with full rights.

The only criterion in the open call was the lowest price.

Complementarity and coherence

The projects related to the upgrade of SIS were coherent and complementary to other projects, including projects under the EBF. In particular, the following projects had similar and complementary impact in terms of fulfilling the Schengen *acquis* and strengthening the reliability of information systems:

- Upgrade of NS-VIS system processes in view of the requirements for handling at the external borders
- Renewal of HW and work stations within NS-VIS system
- Integration of VISION and VIS Mail to NS-VIS (VIS Mail – phase 2)
- Renewal of NS-VIS HW (server part)
- Expansion of functionalities of the OBZOR system
- Expansion of the functionalities of the ZC-CIS system

Effectiveness

The project achieved its objectives, as evidenced by the responsible authority for the EBF in the Czech Republic, by senior experts from the OPKTPIT of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic who have implemented the projects, and the end-users of the SIS II at SIRENE at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic. Along with the SIS upgrade, the functionalities of the Foreign Information System and the OBZOR system were also expanded.

The SIS II can now manage 90 million alerts a year, and the fully functional database and backup centre are ensuring the high availability of the system at all times. The system was built to fulfil the requirements of the maximum downtime of five minutes per

³⁰⁴ Per interviews with OPKTPIT at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

³⁰⁵ Per interviews with the end-users of the SIS II at SIRENE at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic (March 2016)

month. All data are replicated by the ORACLE technology to the backup centre in real time ensuring the functionality and availability of the backup centre if needed, including a backup energy source – diesel aggregator.³⁰⁶

Sustainability

When it comes to the sustainability issue, as with any technology it is possible that the IT equipment obtained will become obsolete before the expiration of its expected lifespan, and another upgrade will be required. Nonetheless the beneficiary at the OPKTPIT stated that the outcome is flexible enough for future expansions, which would only require the purchase of new disk arrays in order to handle a higher alert flow.³⁰⁷

The beneficiaries at the OPKTPIT have been trained in the use of specific technologies. The interviewed end-users confirmed that they did not need any training after the upgrade of the SIS, as the system interface remained the same, only more information could be processed.

The system is being monitored by predictive support 24/7 in order to foresee errors and solve them, ensuring an undisrupted functioning of the SIS II.³⁰⁸

EU added value

Most of the activities concerning the introduction of information systems would probably have been carried out in the Czech Republic regardless of the financial funds provided from the EBF. Nonetheless, according to the interviewed beneficiaries at the police service of the Czech Republic, the requirements would not have been fulfilled on time.

General conclusions

The investment was in response to the repeatedly delayed launch of the SIS II, which caused the technology to become obsolete and unable to cope with the increasing number of alerts. The EBF contribution was therefore needed in order to manage the SIS II upgrades on time. The major objective of the projects was to ensure efficient, real-time consultation of data at border crossing points and within the country through the use of SIS II; and an effective exchange of information between all Member States in real time.

The objective of the projects was achieved with the upgrade, and the Czech Republic is operating a highly reliable system capable of managing 70-90 million alerts a year. The possibility of expansion by purchase of new disk arrays increases the sustainability and efficiency of this investment. The investment made possible simultaneous testing and training. The upgraded system enables the end-users to input more information, including pictures, which leads to a more convenient identification of hits.

As the interviewed representatives of the Responsible Authority for AMIF and ISF of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic stated, the added value of the result would be easier to demonstrate if the European Commission had set the monitoring tools clearly at the beginning or if the monitoring requirements had not been changed during the project. This would have made the evaluation process more efficient and reliable, as some of the data could not be traced back.

³⁰⁶ Per interviews with OPKTPIT at the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

France – SPATIONAV

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS FR	Maritime surveillance	Priority 2 (S.P. 2.2)	General Objective A	2011	2,379,167	3,172,223
				2012	7,380,842	9,841,123
				2013	9,961,262	13,281,683
Objective(s)	<p>Action 2.1: Improvement of SPATIONAV system and acquisition of maritime surveillance and satellite services (FR 2011, 2012, 2013).</p> <p>Strategic objective of action 2.1 as per the French MAP is the 'improvement of the means of detection and monitoring of maritime external borders' (FR 2011, 2012, 2013).</p>					
Methodology	Document review and three field trips (Carteret, La Hague and Paris) in which interviews were undertaken.					
Indicators	<p>The French Multi-Annual Programme (MAP)³⁰⁹ suggested the following indicators for the SPATIONAV actions:</p> <p>Output indicator: Number of suspicious vessels / number of ships tracked by the SPATIONAV device</p> <p>Outcome indicator: Number of vessels having committed an offence relating to illegal immigration without early warning / number of vessels included in the SPATIONAV system</p> <p>Impact indicator:</p> <p>Number of circuits patrols classification SPATIONAV / number of buildings detected suspicious</p> <p>Number of entries regularly by sea / number of returnees irregularly undetected ship</p> <p>The French Final Reports consider the following indicators to assess SPATIONAV:</p> <p>percentage of the coastline covered;</p> <p>percentage of the territorial waters covered;</p> <p>rate of identification of vessels.</p> <p>The relevant context indicator from the French NER: 'Number of irregular migrants detected'</p> <p>In addition, an indicator used for the case study report is the stakeholder perception on the relevance, utility, efficiency, complementarity and coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and EU added value of SPATIONAV.</p>					

³⁰⁹ MAP France, p. 27.

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

Document review in April-May 2016: the review of the French Multiannual Programme, French Final Reports for 2011, 2012 and 2013, as well as the French National Evaluation Report (NER)³¹⁰, as well as the SFC 2007 database.

Three **field trips** in May 2016:

- Field trip to the semaphore (signal station) in Carteret, on 13 May 2016, where interviews were undertaken with several members of the French Navy and the Ministry of Defence (DGA);
- Field trip to the semaphores (signal stations) in La Hague, on 13 May 2016, where interviews were undertaken with the French Navy and the Ministry of Defence (DGA).
- Field trip to the operational centre of the French Navy, as well as the operational centre of the function of the border guards, situated within the Ministry of Defence in Paris, on Tuesday 24 May 2016. In addition, an interview was undertaken with the Ministry of the Interior (DGEF).

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

France has an exclusive economic zone of almost 11 million square metres and is exposed to risks caused by maritime activity, including smuggling, illegal immigration, illegal fishing, pollution and piracy.³¹¹ In 2001 a boat with 910 irregular migrants arrived undetected at the beaches of St Raphael³¹² on the Mediterranean coast to ask for asylum. As a result it was decided that France needed to improve its information systems and coordination mechanism for the purpose of maritime surveillance, in order to prevent such events from happening in the future. This resulted in the establishment of SPATIONAV Version 0 in 2002.³¹³

- By 2005, SPATIONAV version 0 was installed into the semaphores (signal stations) on the Mediterranean coast, which allowed for the exchange of information between the semaphores.³¹⁴ The navy's operational centre of Toulon created a picture of the maritime areas, using sensors and radar installations (radars), through data fusion, to obtain a full tactical image.³¹⁵
- SPATIONAV version 1 was launched in 2006, and included a change of system, as well as the purchase of additional sensors (Automatic Identification System (AIS)), which enables the automatic identification of big vessels at sea in the system) and the deployment of the system at the Atlantic Ocean and Channel coast, in addition to those already in place in the Mediterranean. Moreover, version 1 included the installation of SPATIONAV on aircraft (Falcon 50), to increase the maritime zone covered by the system, as well as the enlargement of users of other administrations than the French MoD, and finally the interconnection with the Trafic 2000 database.³¹⁶

³¹⁰ Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 annual programmes for France, 13 November 2015.

³¹¹ Video available here: <http://signalis.com/metamenu/multimedia/spationav/>

³¹² Note DG Home/E3, Programmation France (FFE) sur le SPATIONAV 2007-2013 – Aperçu global du cofinancement de l'UE – January 2015.

³¹³ MAP France; Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³¹⁴ MAP France; Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³¹⁵ SPATIONAV, Video on Signalis website, available here: <http://signalis.com/metamenu/multimedia/spationav/>

³¹⁶ MAP France, p. 19 and p. 26

- Since the incident of 2001, where over 900 irregular migrants arrived on French shores, no arrivals of high numbers of irregular migrants have been observed. However, the French authorities considered that a number of small vessels along French coasts were not detected by the authorities. As a result, the French authorities decided to launch SPATIONAV version 2 to complete and improve radar detection. The replacement of the old radar was needed as by then the radars used were 30 years old, which meant they were expensive in terms of maintenance and had become obsolete.³¹⁷ To address this need, SPATIONAV version 2 included the replacement of further old radars with new sensors and radars of high frequency, as well as adaptations to the SPATIONAV system so it would allow information exchange in real time, notably with other actors, such as the gendarmerie, customs (douane) and EU.³¹⁸ The MAP also aimed to improve long-range detection through the integration of new drone information and satellite views.³¹⁹ However, although SPATIONAV is able to integrate satellite and drone images, this function has not been tested yet.³²⁰ Version 2 also aimed to develop the system further to allow for better cooperation with other EU Member States.³²¹

Immediately after the first deployment of SPATIONAV V2 in 2013, the effect was a first detection and the interception of a speed boat near Perpignan in 2014. After this, this kind of vessel disappeared from French coasts (it seems that they now remain along the Spanish coast).³²²

In 2016, the number of migrants detected at the French maritime borders, especially in the Channel region, increased. These migrants were trying to reach the UK by boat from the French maritime borders. For example, between February and April 2016, four migrant boats were detected in Pas de Calais³²³ and two boats in Carteret.³²⁴ Some of these vessels were inflatable boats, which are considered very dangerous for the migrants, considering the strong current in the area. One of the boats was stolen in Germany – from the Danube.³²⁵

It was assumed that this route is gaining popularity among migrants, as a result of the strict border control checks at Calais, for persons boarding the Eurotunnel train and ferry to the UK.³²⁶ But, according to the French authorities, as a result of the actions undertaken by the French authorities using SPATIONAV, the number of arrivals of irregular migrants has remained low because it has been possible to stop the flow through detection by SPATIONAV, avoiding a dramatic situation.³²⁷

³¹⁷ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³¹⁸ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³¹⁹ MAP France, p.19 and p.27.

³²⁰ DGA, Ministry of Defence

³²¹ MAP France, p.27.

³²² DGA, Ministry of Defence

³²³ See also : Dunkerque-des migrants tentent de rejoindre l'Angleterre par la mer, la préfecture maritime s'inquiète, La Voix du Nord, 7 April 2016, available here : <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/region/dunkerque-des-migrants-tentent-de-rejoindre-ia17b47588n3433135>; Embarcation de migrants interceptée à Sangatte : deux passeurs interpellés, La Voix du Nord, 9 April 2016, available here : <http://www.lavoixdunord.fr/region/embarcation-de-migrants-interceptee-a-sangatte-deux-ia33b48611n3436352>; Iranian migrant pair found floating in inflatable dinghy in English Channel after mobile phone light alerts ship, the *Independent*, 14 April 2016, available at : <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/iranian-migrant-pair-found-floating-in-inflatable-dinghy-in-english-channel-after-mobile-phone-light-a6983921.html>

³²⁴ Interview Chef de Poste Site de Carteret, French Navy, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³²⁵ Interview Chef de Poste Site de Carteret, French Navy, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³²⁶ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³²⁷ DGA, Ministry of Defence

Description of the project's objectives

- Overall, the objective of the SPATIONAV maritime surveillance was to improve maritime border surveillance and to combat irregular migration, by giving the maritime prefects and coordination/surveillance centres responsible for the surveillance of external borders real-time information on the situation at maritime borders, in order to increase surveillance and improve the coordination of state action at the maritime border.³²⁸ The strategic objective for the actions funded in 2011-2013 related to SPATIONAV is the 'improvement of the means of detection and monitoring of maritime external borders'.
- The name of the action already gives away the objective of the actions, namely the 'Improvement of SPATIONAV system and acquisition of maritime surveillance and satellite services'. In terms of the activities funded between 2011 and 2013 to SPATIONAV version 1 and version 2 (see above), this improvement related to:
 - Enabling real-time information exchange of the local situation for each semaphore and CROSS between the French Navy, French Maritime Affairs, Customs (Douane), Maritime Prefects and Maritime Gendarmerie, and coast guard operational centre responding directly to French Prime Minister (COFGC);
 - Enabling high-level information exchange with other EU Member States on certain operations and with third countries;³²⁹
 - Interconnectivity with EUROSUR (depending on the progress made by EUROSUR);³³⁰
 - Adding or replacing radars on the French coast to ensure complete coverage of the French coast.

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for the management of EU contribution

The resources mobilised at the national level, for the management of EU contribution, are part of the indirect costs (see below). Within the Ministry of Defence (DGA, French Navy, support services), the equivalent of three people were involved in managing the SPATIONAV project, on a full-time basis.³³¹

Financial resources

The EU Contribution to SPATIONAV in 2011-2013 amounted to 75% of the total (direct declared) costs, as they corresponded to the EBF Specific Priority 2.2. In the period 2011-2013 the EU contributed over EUR 19 million to the SPATIONAV project. A breakdown of the EU contribution through EBF, the national contribution and the overall contribution is provided in Table 1.

Table 36: Breakdown of contributions to SPATIONAV

Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	National Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
2011	2,379,167	793,055	3,172,223

³²⁸ Final Report France 2011, 2012

³²⁹ France MAP, p. 27; France Final Report 2011, p. 42

³³⁰ Final Report 2012, pp. 50-51.

³³¹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	National Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
2012	7,380,842	2,460,281	9,841,123
2013	9,961,262	3,320,420	13,281,683
TOTAL	19,721,271	6,576,076	26,295,029

Source: SFP Database 2007³³²

The overall contribution can be split up into equipment and indirect costs.³³³ Equipment includes the actions under SPATIONAV version 1 and version 2 as well as SPOTIMAGE. Indirect cost includes French Ministry of Defence staff managing the project.³³⁴ In 2011 and 2012, this indirect cost amounted to 2.5% of the overall contribution.³³⁵

In addition (outside the SPATIONAV action), at the national level, France has contributed to SPATIONAV by covering the following costs:

- Costs related to the network of data of the Ministry of Defence, developed for SPATIONAV,³³⁶ which were about EUR 10 million for SPATIONAV V1 and V2 between 2006 and 2016;³³⁷
- Other systems used by the operators of the semaphores to do their job (e.g. complementary information systems, radios and telephones);³³⁸
- Maintenance costs of old radars which were never funded through EBF, and maintenance cost of SPATIONAV V1 after September 2014, and maintenance of SPATIONAV V2 after 3 years for new radars (with effect from December 2015) and of the system (from December 2016), representing about EUR 2 million a year (1 million for radars and 1 million for the rest of the system).³³⁹
- Other maintenance and renovation costs for SPATIONAV, for the infrastructure of the semaphores (which on average need two major renovations a year) and related systems, outside those covered by the EBF.³⁴⁰ One stakeholder estimated these costs as close to EUR 2 million a year.³⁴¹
- Personnel cost: over 600 people work in the semaphores (around 10 watch keepers for each of the 63 semaphores that are using SPATIONAV) and another 100 working at the CROSS;³⁴² One stakeholder estimated these costs as close to EUR 28 million a year.
- Costs related to SPATIONAV at France's external border located outside the EU.³⁴³

³³² Although the SFP database had recorded the 2012 contributions under a different priority.

³³³ France Final Report 2011, 2012 and 2013.

³³⁴ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³³⁵ Final Report France, 2011, 2012, 2013.

³³⁶ Note DG Home/E3, Programmation France (FFE) sur le SPATIONAV 2007-2013 – Aperçu global du cofinancement de l'UE – January 2015, pp. 2-3.

³³⁷ DGA, Ministry of Defence

³³⁸ Note DG Home/E3, Programmation France (FFE) sur le SPATIONAV 2007-2013 – Aperçu global du cofinancement de l'UE – January 2015, p. 3.

³³⁹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁴⁰ Note DG Home/E3, Programmation France (FFE) sur le SPATIONAV 2007-2013 – Aperçu global du cofinancement de l'UE – January 2015, p. 3.

³⁴¹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁴² Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016; Note DG Home/E3, Programmation France (FFE) sur le SPATIONAV 2007-2013 – Aperçu global du cofinancement de l'UE – January 2015, p. 3.

³⁴³ Note DG Home/E3, Programmation France (FFE) sur le SPATIONAV 2007-2013 – Aperçu global du cofinancement de l'UE – January 2015, p. 2.

Organisation: roles and responsibilities

The responsible authority is the Immigration Directorate, Aliens office in France, Ministry of the Interior.³⁴⁴ The beneficiary is the Research and development service, Ministry of Defence,³⁴⁵ managing the SPATIONAV actions.

Description of activities conducted under project

The activities undertaken as part of the SPATIONAV action in the period 2011-2013 are related to different versions of SPATIONAV, namely version 1 and version 2. All the activities undertaken related to SPATIONAV version 1 and version 2 between 2011 and 2013 are listed in Table 2.

Table 37: Activities conducted under SPATIONAV project

Year	Activity
SPATIONAV version 1	
2011, 2012, 2013	Maintenance of the system at an operational condition (TC7)
2011	Equip French Navy airplanes (Falcon 50) with the SPATIONAV system (TC 8)
2011	Integration of a Belgian radar and UK radar at the CROSS Gris-Nez (TC 13)
2011	Connect three additional radars to the SPATIONAV system and ensure the functionality of the SPATIOWEB (includes exporting information from the system) (TC 14)
SPATIONAV version 2	
2011, 2013	Design and integration of SPATIONAV software, including adaptation to French MoD network of data, capacity to accept external data that as satellite or other vessel traffic system, informatics control and security (poste 1.1 to 1.5)
2013	Furniture of the gateway allowing SPATIONAV to connect with international systems (poste 1.2)
2013	Deployment of SPATIONAV V2 on the Mediterranean coast (poste 1.6)
2014	Deployment of SPATIONAV V2 on the Channel-Atlantic coast (poste 16.1)
2011- 2012	Renovation of the radar of 9 semaphores: Sagro, Villerville, Bec de l'Aigle, Porquerolles, Dramont, Ferrat, Cap Corse, Ile Rousse, la Parata (poste 10-19)

³⁴⁴ Mission Fonds Européens, Sous-direction de la lutte contre l'immigration irrégulière, Direction de l'immigration, Direction générale des étrangers en France, Ministère de l'intérieur.

³⁴⁵ Direction Générale de l'Armement (DGA), Ministère de la Défense.

Year	Activity
2012	Renovation of radars at sites subject to performance requirement of moderate detection: 21 first sites (poste 2)
2012	Renovation of radars at sites subject to performance requirement of moderate detection: 21 last sites (TC 32)
2014	Renovation of the radar of Vigie du Portzic.
2014	Purchase, installation and integration with SPATIONAV of an AIS station at two semaphores (Brignogan and Leucate).
Other	
2011	Study evaluating the operational purpose/need of satellite services
2012	Technical study on the capacity of infrared surveillance (TC28)

Source: France Final Report 2011, 2012, 2013

Effects

Outputs

Not all outputs for the SPATIONAV action are quantitative; for example, one of the outputs is the maintenance of the SPATIONAV system at an operational condition, and another is the development of the gateway allowing SPATIONAV to connect with international systems.

- Quantitative outputs include:
- Installation of SPATIONAV system on two French Navy planes (Falcon 50);
- The deployment of SPATIONAV V2 on the Mediterranean coast:
- In 2011 SPATIONAV V1 was deployed on 68 sites.
- In 2013 SPATIONAV V2 was deployed on 19 local sites on the Mediterranean coast, as well as two regional sites in Toulouse and Marseille, and one site in Paris;³⁴⁶
- In 2013 goniometers were deployed at 31 local sites;
- Deployment of SPATIONAV V2 on the Channel-Atlantic coast, which included the purchase of equipment for 40 local sites and 4 regional sites (in 2014);
- The renovation of 52 radars (2011-2015);
- The renovation of thermal cameras in Toulon and Brest (in 2014);
- Purchase, installation and integration with SPATIONAV of 2 AIS station at the semaphores in Brignogan and Leucate;
- Two studies undertaken (on the need for satellite services and on infrared surveillance).

Results

The main result of the deployment of SPATIONAV and improvements made to SPATIONAV between 2011 and 2013 is that now information can be shared in real time

³⁴⁶ France Final Report 2013, p. 37.

between the different relevant actors involved in maritime surveillance. The data collected at semaphores (through the different radars and sensors) are sent to the Operational Command of the Navy or COMs ('Commandement Opérationnel de la Marine'), located in Brest and Toulon.³⁴⁷ These COMs redistribute the information to:

- each other;
- the central site (the third main COM) in Paris;
- the 59 semaphores located at the French coast;
- the three Regional operational centres of surveillance and rescue or CROSS ('Centres régionaux opérationnels de surveillance et de sauvetage'), part of the Maritime Affairs;
- 5 sites of the French Customs (Douane);
- the French Gendarmerie (9 sites);
- other French administrations coastal information systems;
- EU level (EMSA for AIS).

And these COMs are able now to exchange data with EU Member States having a normal exchange data standard.

This allows the different national actors to have the full picture of what is happening at the French maritime borders, which was not possible before.³⁴⁸ The French Navy, Customs and Gendarmerie maritime (coastguard) use SPATIONAV to combat migrant smuggling and for other traffic, and for administrative and judicial matters.³⁴⁹ Maritime affairs feeds information coming from its radars (including a Belgian connected radar) to SPATIONAV, and uses in return the information of SPATIONAV for maritime safety.

It is expected that in the future SPATIONAV will allow for data exchange with the UK, Belgium, Italy and Spain. Discussion in this regard is currently taking place.³⁵⁰ However, on certain occasions SPATIONAV has already been used by other Member States. For example, the UK used the SPATIONAV system to carry out surveillance of the Channel during the Olympic Games in 2012. One CROSS (Gris-nez) is already receiving information from a Belgian radar.³⁵¹

³⁴⁷ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

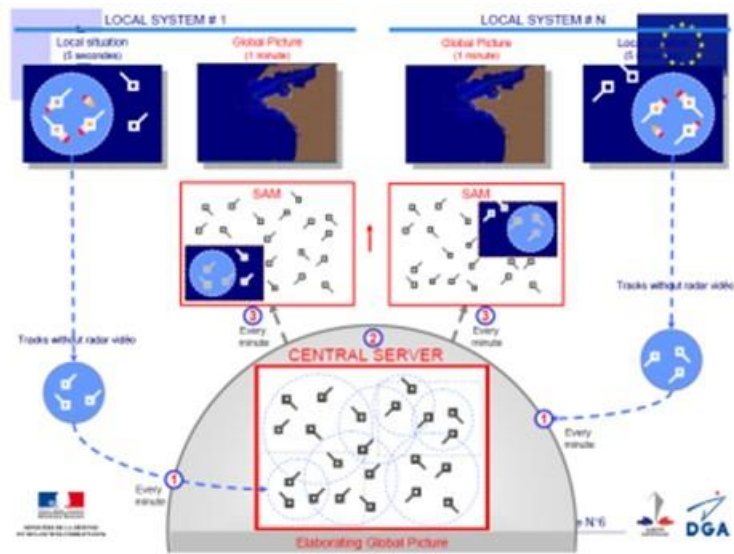
³⁴⁸ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁴⁹ SPATIONAV, Video on signalis website, available at: <http://signalis.com/metamenu/multimedia/spationav/>

³⁵⁰ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁵¹ France Final Report, p. 40.

Figure 37: SPATIONAV information flow



The information shared includes a map of the current situation at sea, showing the location of different vessels, and where available the information included in the AIS for each vessel, such as the name of the vessel, the vessels' registration number, the length and width of the vessel, the type of vessel, the coordinates of the location of the vessel, the destination, the people aboard etc.³⁵²

According to the indicators in the Final Reports (see Table 3), the percentage of the coastline covered has not increased between 2011 and 2013; however, this is because old radars were already in place, and these have been replaced by new ones. The new radars however, are more efficient in that they allow the French navy officers in the semaphores to detect vessels even further from the coast, while the old radars were not able to detect small vessels. The new radars are more powerful and allow every kind of vessel to be seen better and from further away.³⁵³ After this replacement period, the indicator '% of the territorial waters covered' increased from 75% in 2011 to 83% in 2013. The beneficiary also noted that new radars had expanded the percentage of the territorial waters covered through surveillance. The French coastline still has some surveillance these gaps have been filled since 2013 or are in the process of being filled.³⁵⁴

Table 38: Indicators for success of SPATIONAV 2

(11) Indicator	(12) 2011	(13) 2012	(14) 2013
(15) % of the coastline covered	(16) 90%	(17) 90%	(18) 90%
(19) % of territorial waters covered	(20) 75%	(21) 83%	(22) 83%
(23) Rate of identification	(24) 0.8	(25) N/A	(26) 0.9

³⁵² Field trip, 13 May 2016.

³⁵³ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁵⁴ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

vessels			
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Source: France Final Report 2011, 2012, 2013.

Moreover, the indicators (see Table 3) show that the identification rate of vessels has increased from 0.8 in 2011 to 0.9 in 2013. The French NER states that the high coverage offered by SPATIONAV and the increase in vessel identification by SPATIONAV reinforced France's border surveillance resources/capacity.³⁵⁵

Finally, the French NER mentioned SPATIONAV as one of the projects which resulted in an improvement of the technological and IT border control capabilities at the maritime border.³⁵⁶

Impacts

Firstly, it should be noted that it is difficult to identify the impacts of the SPATIONAV actions funded between 2011 and 2013 in isolation, without considering the SPATIONAV project overall which was launched in 2002. The deployment of SPATIONAV version 2 and the additional radars definitely had an impact (see below), but should be seen as part of the greater SPATIONAV project as a whole.

According to all those spoken to during the field trip on 13 May 2016, the SPATIONAV action overall had a positive impact on the efficiency of the work of the French Navy: SPATIONAV allows officers in semaphores to monitor the vessels in the sea easily, having all the relevant information on one screen. They no longer need to call every boat to identify and register the ship; this is done automatically through AIS. Moreover, information is now automatically shared with the other semaphores and other relevant actors, saving time.

The context indicator of the NER 'Number of irregular migrants detected' could not be used as evidence to show the effectiveness of SPATIONAV to better detect irregular migrants, as the indicator also included detections outside the maritime border (e.g. at the land border).

Although the new radars purchased can detect smaller boats at a further distance than the old radars,³⁵⁷ according to the stakeholders, the number of irregular migrants detected over the period 2011 to 2013 at the French maritime border was low. However, it should be noted that the radar replacement was not finished by then. Moreover, this cannot be considered an indicator for effectiveness of the SPATIONAV action, as the number of irregular migrants arriving at the French maritime border is related to other factors as well. It was argued by a stakeholder from DGA that this low detection rate meant that SPATIONAV was effective as a dissuasive tool, in terms of migrants arriving at the French Mediterranean coast to enter the EU.

One major result of the renewal of radars and the development of SPATIONAV V2 has been observed by the French authorities in 2016, as migrants began to try to leave the French coast for the UK. The radars on the semaphores on the French coast are quite large and noticeable to everyone when standing on the beach, including migrants. According to the French authorities, once a migrant had made an attempt and was detected, the French customs administration and coastguard would work to identify and arrest the smugglers. So migrants would not be able to take this route a second time.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ France NER, pp. 25 and 42

³⁵⁶ France NER, p. 25.

³⁵⁷ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁵⁸ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

As a result, SPATIONAV is considered by the French administration as an essential system to avoid massive migrant arrivals by sea.

Finally, it was noted that the EBF funding for SPATIONAV had allowed for this inter-ministerial project (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance, Overseas Ministry and Ministry of Defence), which otherwise would not have been funded.³⁵⁹

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The investment for the SPATIONAV action was overall relevant to France's need to improve the surveillance of its maritime borders and to tackle illegal immigration by deploying the system at different sites and replacing radars.

Utility

The investment resulted in the increase of the percentage of the territorial waters covered (75% in 2011 to 83% in 2013), as well as an increase of the identification rate of vessels (0.8 in 2011 to 0.9 in 2013).³⁶⁰ Thus, overall, these effects resulted in improved surveillance of the French maritime borders.

Efficiency

According to the beneficiary, the SPATIONAV project was cost-effective and the equipment purchased not expensive. As such systems are used outside the public domain (by civilians), it was possible to buy it cheap and add some technology to make it work for the purpose of national border surveillance. The technology and equipment purchased was not of the highest price. For example, a radar can cost up to EUR 10 million for air survey; however, within this project radars were bought generally for EUR 100,000.³⁶¹

The project was awarded to the French company Signalis³⁶² after holding a national procurement procedure. One of the eight competing companies which was not awarded the project went to court to challenge the decision of the Ministry of the Interior. However, this company lost the case.³⁶³

SPATIONAV version 2 seems to be working well enough: according to a stakeholder from the DGA no major changes will be needed, only some small adaptations.³⁶⁴

The stakeholder also noted that the system itself increases the effectiveness of the maritime border surveillance at the French coast.³⁶⁵

In terms of the efficiency of managing and running the funds and related SPATIONAV project, the beneficiary stated that the administrative burden was heavy, when one included the audits and controls at the EU and national level. However, the beneficiary also noted that these controls were normal, considering the large sum involved in this project. According to the Ministry of Defence, the action was purposefully set up in a

³⁵⁹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁶⁰ France Final Report 2011, 2012, 2013.

³⁶¹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁶² <http://signalis.com/multimedia/spationav/>

³⁶³ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁶⁴ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁶⁵ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

simple way, by only requesting EU funding for the direct costs related to main contracts, in order to make management, verification and control easier.³⁶⁶ The Ministry of the Interior stated that SPATIONAV was not set up any differently than any of the other EBF-funded actions.³⁶⁷

Complementarity and coherence

No other EU funds have funded similar actions in France because the French administration decided at prime ministerial level that SPATIONAV would be the tool to produce a global French coast survey picture. Therefore, the question to what extent the project's actions were coherent with and complementary to other actions related to establishing a European surveillance system, financed by other EU financial instruments, cannot be answered.

However, at the international level SPATIONAV could be technically coherent and complementary with any other information exchange system. The SPATIONAV system is set up using international norms, and can therefore easily be made compatible with other systems, allowing for exchange of information.³⁶⁸ It is for example compatible with the French integrated aero-maritime system SIAM ('Système Intégré Aéro-Maritime'), which allows for the secure transmission of data via radio and satellite between naval, air and land customs units.³⁶⁹

At the EU level, SPATIONAV should also be coherent with EUROSUR in the long term. However, at the moment EUROSUR systems does not have a stable interface. As data requirements change regularly, the French enter their information manually into the system. However once the EUROSUR interface has stabilised, SPATIONAV will be adapted to enable automatic data exchange with EUROSUR.³⁷⁰

The SPATIONAV action is complementary at the national level, which is apparent according to the NER from the fact that no equivalent project is run by the state.³⁷¹

Effectiveness

The strategic objective of SPATIONAV, 'improvement of the means of detection and monitoring of maritime external borders' has been achieved. SPATIONAV system V2 is operational and is being used by all semaphores on the French coast and all administrations interested in sea affairs. The system had some minor problems in the beginning, but SPATIONAV works well now. SPATIONAV allows for real-time data exchange of surveillance information between the French Navy based at different semaphores on the coastline with different national actors, namely the French Navy, the coastguard, the customs and the Ministry of Defence in France. As a result all the relevant actors can have a full picture of the situation at sea. Moreover, the detection range of the semaphores has been improved by the newly purchased radars.

Figure 38: Pictures taken during the field visit at the Semaphore de Carteret, on 13 May 2016. From left to right: radar (2), information provided through

³⁶⁶ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁶⁷ DGEF, Ministry of the Interior

³⁶⁸ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁶⁹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁷⁰ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁷¹ France NER, p. 51.

SPATIONAV (3), the modem behind SPATIONAV (4), the new radar purchased through EBF and the goniometer (6).



The overarching objective of the SPATIONAV maritime surveillance, to combat irregular migration, is harder to evidence, as other external factors can be the cause of an increasing or decreasing irregular migration flow.

In terms of the more specific objectives of the improvement activities funded between 2011 and 2013 to SPATIONAV version 1 and version 2 (see above), most have been achieved. The improvements to SPATIONAV enabled real-time information exchange of the local situation for each semaphore and CROSS between the French Navy, French Maritime Affairs, customs, and maritime gendarmerie (coastguard) under the responsibility of maritime prefects.³⁷² Moreover, 52 radars have been replaced across the French coastline.

However, it should be noted that the plan of enabling high-level information exchange with other EU Member States on certain operations and with third countries³⁷³ has not been achieved in its totality. Although the SPATIONAV system is compatible with international norms, which would enable it to be connected to other foreign systems, this has not yet been realised. However, discussions in this regard are currently taking place with the relevant authorities of Belgium, Italy, Spain and the UK.³⁷⁴ However, on certain occasions SPATIONAV has already been used by other Member States. For example the UK used the SPATIONAV system to do surveillance of the Channel during the Olympic Games in 2012.³⁷⁵ One CROSS (Gris-nez) is already receiving information from a Belgian radar.³⁷⁶

³⁷² Final Report 2013, p. 35.

³⁷³ France MAP, p. 27; France Final Report 2011, p. 42

³⁷⁴ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁷⁵ France Final Report 2012, p. 53.

³⁷⁶ France Final Report, p. 40.

Secondly, the objective of SPATIONAV being interconnected with EUROSUR has not been achieved in its totality either. As stated before, SPATIONAV would be able to connect with EUROSUR. However, EUROSUR systems does not currently have a stable interface. As data requirements change regularly, the French enter their information manually into the system. However once the EUROSUR interface has stabilised, SPATIONAV will be adapted to enable automatic data exchange with EUROSUR.³⁷⁷

Figure 39: Pictures taken during the field visit at the Semaphore de la Hague, on 13 May 2016. F.L.T.R. and T.T.B: the radar purchased with EBF funding (2) ; the information returned through SPATIONAV (3); the AIS information provided when clicking on a vessel in SPATIONAV System (4).



Sustainability

The positive effects of the SPATIONAV-related actions lasted after the interventions were terminated. When the field visits were undertaken at the semaphore in Carteret and La Hague, as well as at the operational centre in Paris, it became apparent how much the navy is now reliant on the information captured through SPATIONAV. One stakeholder even mentioned that his officers would now find it hard to work without the system, for example when the system was down for a while because of technical problem.³⁷⁸

It is estimated the new radars should, if maintained to operational condition, function properly for another 15 years minimum.

There are maintenance costs for the SPATIONAV system and radars, which are currently being borne at national level. However, no large upgrade is planned at the moment because the system is considered to be globally efficient enough now.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁷⁸ Interview Commander, French Navy, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

³⁷⁹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016.

EU added value

As stated in the NER, as well as through interviews with the Responsible Authorities and the beneficiary, the SPATIONAV project 2011-2013 would not have been funded without co-financing by the EU. This is mostly related to two main reasons:

- Due to the financial crisis, less budget was available for the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Defence. In 2011, there was no more budget for this quite financially heavy project. THE EBF had a leveraging effect here, especially on heavy equipment such as SPATIONAV.³⁸⁰
- As there is not a unique ministry in charge of guarding the coast in France, no administration had the task and the budget to finance alone a global system like SPATIONAV, particularly in link with European policy.

General conclusions

- SPATIONAV V2 is operational and is being used by all semaphores on the French coast, and the whole administration in charge of sea affairs. The project still had some small technological problems in the beginning (which is normal for such a huge system covering the French coast), but the system works well now.
- SPATIONAV V2 allows for real-time data exchange of surveillance information with different national actors (including the coastguard, customs (douane), and maritime affairs) allowing all semaphores, as well as the Ministry of Defence in Paris, to have the full picture of what is happening at the French maritime borders, which was not possible before.
- The new radars purchased are better at detecting smaller vessels and vessels which are further away from the coast.
- New radars have expanded the percentage of the coastline covered. The French coastline still has some surveillance 'gaps' around Corsica, but overall coverage has been increased through SPATIONAV and the gaps are currently being filled.
- Another impact noted by the beneficiary is that SPATIONAV (and the related reactivity of French administration to arrest smugglers) seems to have been working in a dissuasive manner, in terms of migrants arriving at the French Mediterranean coast to enter the EU, as well as in terms of leaving the French coast for the UK. This could be evidenced by the small number of migrant boats that has been detected. However, this cannot be said with certainty as other external factors could have contributed to a low number of detections.
- Allowed for inter-ministerial project, which otherwise would not have been funded.
- The SPATIONAV system is set up using international norms, and can therefore easily be made compatible with other systems, allowing for exchange of information. It is for example compatible with the French SIAM system. However, this is not the case for many other systems; for example, Marsur was not set up according to international norms. It was suggested in this regard that this should be made mandatory and that countries should, for example, include this in the procurement procedure.³⁸¹
- Although on certain occasions information was shared through SPATIONAV between France and other Member States, information exchange through SPATIONAV has not been realised on a structural basis. Discussion and preparations are being carried out to share data with Spain, Italy, Belgium and the UK. Moreover, the system is currently not connected with EUROSUR. However the reason for this is rather related to EUROSUR requirements itself, which change regularly.

³⁸⁰ France NER, p.52

³⁸¹ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016

The radars purchased in 2013 are more modern and therefore more effective. They should allow the detection of smaller vessels, which is important as irregular migrants seem to only use small vessels now.³⁸² However, the detection of smaller boats remains challenging.³⁸³

³⁸² France Final Report 2013, p. 37.

³⁸³ Interview DGA, Ministry of Defence, 13 May 2016; Interview Ministry of the Interior, 23 May 2016.

Norway – ABC gates**Summary**

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS NO	Automatic Border Controls (ABC)/ e-gates-airport	Priority 1	Action 2	2011	905,344	1,258,872
Short Description	Introduction of Automatic Border Control (e-gates) at Oslo Gardermoen airport to improve security					
Objective(s)	<p>EBF Objective: EBF 2011-2013 objectives of 1) more efficient border checks and simplification of procedures for entry and exit of persons and 2) more secure identification of persons crossing the external borders.</p> <p>Priority 1 – Support for the further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders.</p> <p>AP 2011 – to contribute to more efficient border checks at selected border crossing points for <i>bona fide</i> travellers</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, site visit					
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the efficiency of border checks for travellers from trusted countries • More efficient use of border controls • Increased control of false documents 					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the: Norway AP 2011, Norway AP 2011 – Revised, the Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Norway; EC Audit 2010-2013 Final report; Final report on the implementation of AP 2011
- 2) Interviews with:
 - National Police Directorate (six interviews):
 - Project owner 2011-2 'Introduction of Automatic Border Control (e-gates)'
 - Senior advisor, Borders and Immigration Section
 - Leader of steering group for project 2011-12 'Introduction of Automatic Border Control (e-gates)'
 - Financial coordinator, EBF/ISF Responsible Authority
 - Financial controller, EBF/ISF Responsible Authority
 - Programme coordinator, EBF/ISF Responsible Authority

Norwegian Police ICT services (former Norwegian Police Data and Material Services) (one interview):
Product manager, Border Control and Biometrics

Norwegian Police Shared Services (former Norwegian Police Data and Material Services) (one interview)
Procurement manager

- 3) Site visits and interviews with operational staff at Oslo Gardermoen airport (two interviews):
Head of Unit for Border Control, Oslo Airport, East Police District
Border control officer, Oslo Airport, East Police District

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

Oslo Airport Gardermoen is by far the largest Norwegian airport with more than 10 million passengers in international traffic per year. Gardermoen Police Station is in charge of the airport, including the border control.³⁸⁴

A study from the National Police Directorate in 2010 established that there was a lack of staff at the border control section at Oslo Airport. In addition, a study regarding the efficiency of e-gates was made by the airport owner Oslo Lufthavn AS, a company wholly owned by Avinor, a state-owned company responsible for operating 46 Norwegian airports. There was no other feasibility study done by the Responsible Authority prior to the investment.³⁸⁵

A revision of the 2011 annual programme was performed before 31 March 2013, which was the deadline for revisions that had been set by the EC. The revision was adopted on 6 June 2013. The revision included changes in the scope – reduction of the number of e-gates from seven to four and installing these gates only at Oslo Airport. The total grant committed was reduced to EUR 1,258,872 and the rate of funding from EBF increased to 75%.³⁸⁶

Description of the project's objectives

The project objectives were to contribute to more efficient border checks at selected border crossing points by investing in automatic border control solutions (ABC), also called e-gates. 'Trusted' travellers are entitled to scan their travel documents in a reading device, and subsequently pass through the gate by showing a photo. In the context of this action the term 'trusted traveller'/bona fide traveller is to be understood as EU/Schengen citizens carrying EU/Schengen travel documents. The procedure is verified through data from the chip in the travel document, but does not imply storing of data.

This fell into the broader EBF 2011-2013 objectives of 1) more efficient border checks and simplification of procedures for entry and exit of persons and 2) more secure identification of persons crossing the external borders.

This in turn coincided with one of the five priorities stated in the common Strategic Guidelines (2007/599/EC, Commission Decision of 27 August 2007): Support for the

³⁸⁴ EBF MAP 2010-2013 Norway

³⁸⁵ Interview with National Police Directorate, February 2016

³⁸⁶ Evaluation of Norway's annual 2011-2013 annual EBF programmes

establishment of IT systems required implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas.³⁸⁷

The specific objectives of the investment were the following:³⁸⁸

- Increase the efficiency of border checks for travellers from trusted countries
- Utilise border control resources more efficiently
- Increase control of false documents.

The objective was to introduce seven Automatic Border Controls at the main Norwegian airport Gardermoen (Oslo) and at the BCP with Russia at Storskog. After the revision only four e-gates were introduced in Gardermoen, as this was decided to be the optimal number of gates given the operability and the available space. The BCP at Storskog will need to undergo improvements before e-gates can be installed. The e-gates are placed at the non-Schengen arrival section at the airport and are aimed to make passenger flows faster, checks more efficient and secure and utilisation of border guard resources more efficient.

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for management

The project was planned as part of the 2011 AP, and was implemented in the time period 2011 to June 2013.

The beneficiary of the Automatic Border Controls (e-gates) was the Police Data and Material Service (PDMT), and its successor the Norwegian Police ICT Services. The Responsible Authority is the National Police Directorate and the Police District at Oslo Airport is operating the e-gates. The Norwegian Police Shared Services (also part of the former PDMT) was responsible for carrying out the tender procedure.³⁸⁹

Financial resources

In the 2011 AP, the estimated cost of the project was EUR 1,406,250, with the EBF and the National contribution each at 50% – EUR 703,125. This was included in the Financial Plan of the Annual Programme adopted on 17 August 2011.³⁹⁰

In the original version of AP 2011, Action 2 was adopted by the EC under Priority 1, specific priority 1.2 in accordance with the 2007-599-EC Strategic guidelines of the External Borders Fund, thus allowing this action to be financed up to 75%. Nevertheless, the co-financing rate for this project was set to 50% in the original AP 2011. However, as a result of the revision of the annual programme adopted on 06 June 2013, the co-financing rate for this action has been increased to 75%, resulting in total budget cost of EUR 1,258,872 with an EBF grant of EUR 905,344 (75%) and national contribution EUR 353,528 (25%)³⁹¹.

Description of activities conducted under project

The implementation of the project started in 2011 with the elaboration of the procurement requirements started in April 2011. Gemalto (Finland) was chosen to supply

³⁸⁷ Evaluation of Norway's annual 2011-2013 annual EBF programmes

³⁸⁸ NO 2011 AP

³⁸⁹ Interview with National Police Directorate, February 2016

³⁹⁰ AP 2011 Norway

³⁹¹ AP 2011 Norway Revised

the gates (the software is provided by another company, Visionbox (Portugal). The contract was signed in December 2011.

The pilot phase started on 17 December 2011 with the introduction of two e-gates at Gardermoen. The pilot revealed that at least four ABCs are necessary to obtain a rationalisation profit. Furthermore, Storskog (Norway's and the Russian Federation's common border) had several practical obstacles and a new building was being planned, so it was decided to delay the introduction of e-gates at that BCP. The steering group decided to introduce two more ABCs at Oslo Airport, Gardermoen and the budget was adjusted accordingly.

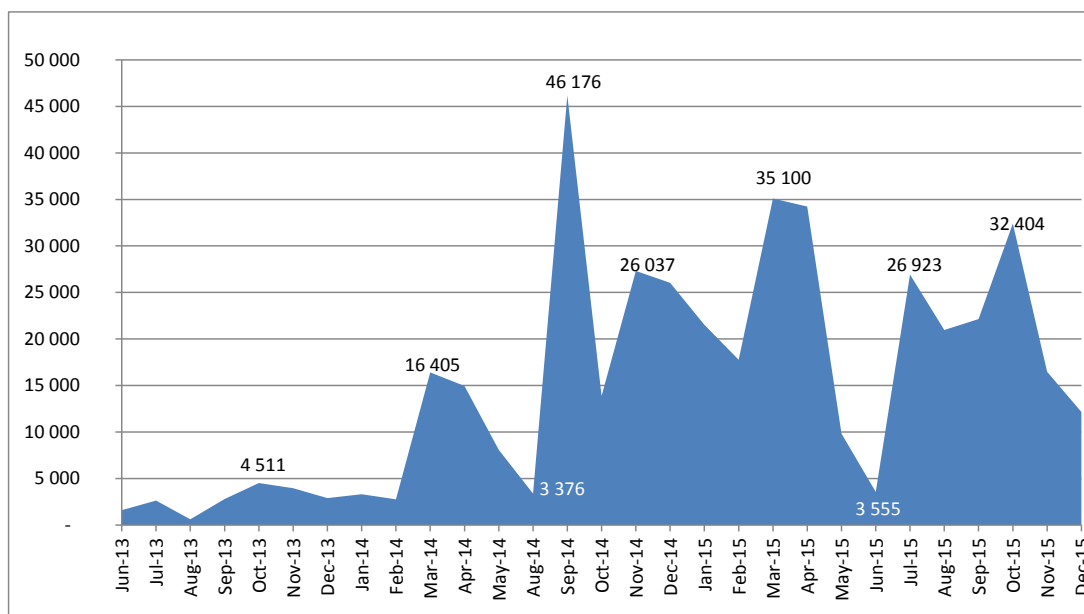
In 2012 the project was stopped by the Ministry of Justice on the basis of the issue of certificates. At this stage it emerged that there was an issue not previously considered regarding the obtaining of certificates from Member States of their electronic passports. Because it was decided to obtain the certificates by going through official diplomatic channels (instead of commercially obtaining these certificates available on the market) the e-gates were initially in use only for Norwegian travellers.

In April 2013 two more machines were introduced at the non-Schengen arrivals of the airport; initially they were also used only by Norwegian nationals.

Gradually the target group is being expanded and currently it includes seven more EU/EEA nationalities: Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Iceland, the UK, Czech Republic and Spain.³⁹²

The figures below illustrate the dynamics of passenger traffic through the e-gates at Gardermoen airport for the period June 2013 (introduction of the gates) to December 2015:

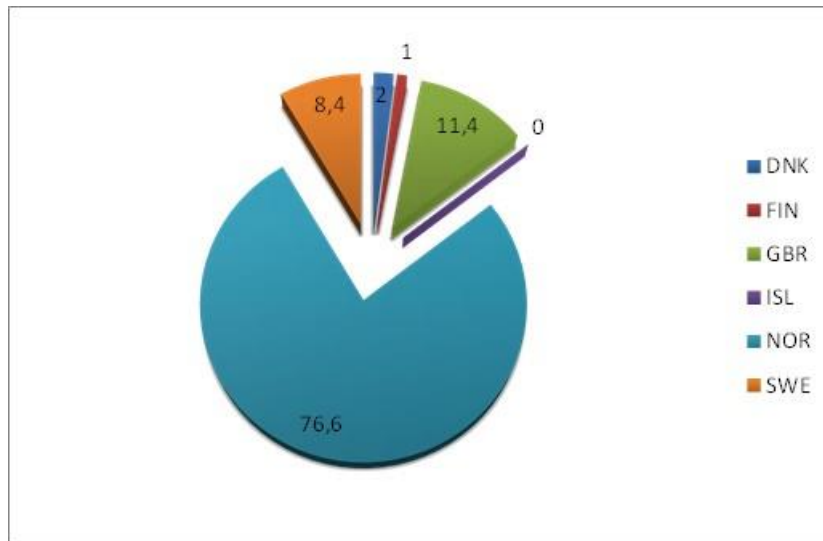
Figure 40: Number of passengers using the e-gates at Oslo Gardermoen airport



Source: Oslo Airport Police District

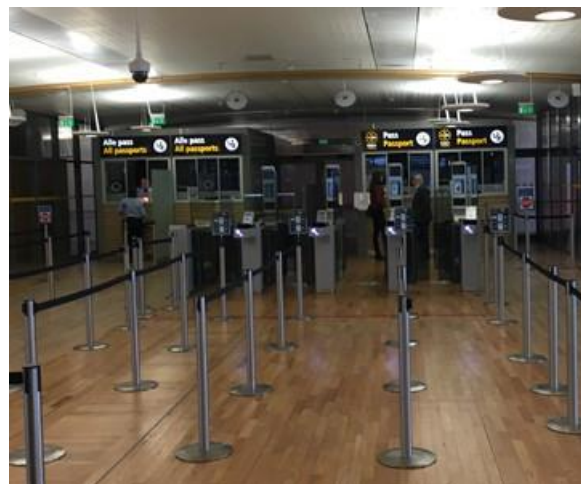
³⁹² Presentation and interviews, National Police Directorate, February 2016

Figure 41 : Share of nationalities using the e-gates over a period of five months



Source: Oslo Airport Police District

Figure 42: The four e-gates at Oslo Gardermoen airport³⁹³



³⁹³ Pictures taken during evaluation site visit, February 2016.

Figure 43: E-gates with instructions at Oslo Gardermoen airport Arrivals



Effects

- Outputs:** The Arrival section at Oslo Airport has received four e-gates, with the aim being to increase border control capacity at the airport and improve security checks. In quantitative terms the output of the project provided four new e-gates at the arrival section for non-Schengen flights of the airport.
- Results:** As a result of this output, the border control capacity has been increased and improved as the e-gates allow for control of all documents, which is not carried out during manual checks. Customer satisfaction is high and there is interest on the part of the airport authority to speed up controls. In terms of actual detections of fraudulent or falsified documents it is unclear whether the e-gates have led to an increase in detection. This is due to the fact that if the machine detects a problem with the document it does not indicate what the problem is, but the passenger is sent to manual control. However, when he/she reaches manual control the border guard does not know if they have had a problem with the e-gate. Processing time for the e-gates is approximately 15 seconds (it is up to five seconds for manual checks), so the time for control per se is not reduced, but one border guard can operate up to six e-gates and then the resource is used efficiently. Customer satisfaction from the use of e-gates is generally high, indicated by the information from the machines at the end of the border control area which ask customers to rate their satisfaction by pressing buttons with happy or sad faces on them.
- Impacts:** The action contributed to the EBF objective of providing 'more efficient border checks and simplification of procedures for entry and exit of persons and more secure identification of persons crossing the external borders'. However, there is a need for the facilities to be fully operational for this to be the case, and technical problems reduce the impact.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The need addressed by the project was the shortage of staff at Gardermoen airport. The investment was considered beneficial by the National Police Directorate, as it improves the security checks at the border. It is considered to be in line with future developments and is also favoured by the airport authority as a more efficient method of passenger flow control.

Utility

The investment at Gardermoen airport initially resulted in an increased workload for border guards and delays for passengers.

However, following a period of testing and training there are currently 10 master users who can train all other staff to use the e-gates. The airport authority has provided floorwalkers that guide the passenger flows and can provide assistance to first-time users of the e-gates. Signage for passengers has been improved.

In terms of technical capacity, the obtaining of more Certificate of EU/EEA MS has allowed more passengers to be able to use the e-gates. With the putting together of the Schengen Master list in spring 2016 this problem is expected to be fully resolved.

Interviewed police and border officials noted the challenges related to the effective operation of the e-gates but expressed confidence that these challenges have been overcome and they were satisfied with the results of the project. They are also making plans for future expansion of e-gates to other sections of the airport (Departures), to the new airport being constructed and also to other BCPs and also at maritime ports.

Efficiency

The effects of the actions performed under the project were achieved at a lower price than initially planned.

There was a restricted tender procedures carried out by the Norwegian Police Data and Material Services (PDMT), which was monitored by the steering group of the project. The procurement was for the supply of e-gates including border crossing gates, a related surveillance and control system and the necessary installation and support services. The award criteria for the bid were price (55%) and quality and functional properties (45%). There were 11 bidders and the bid of Gemalto (Finland) was selected after receiving the highest grade 5.5 for price and 4.5 for quality of the technical proposal. There was a complaint from one bidder (Muehlbauer), which provided a higher price for the tender.³⁹⁴

Taking into account the volume of the design and construction work involved, and the tendering procedures, it can be concluded that the funds were used in a transparent, cost-effective way and the investment was efficient.

The interviewees were generally satisfied with the functioning of the e-gates but expressed dissatisfaction with the software provided by a different supplier.

Interviewees also noted the limitations to efficiency caused by the limited space available. One border guard can efficiently monitor six e-gates so there is capacity for two more but due to the lack of space there is no possibility for this at the moment.

³⁹⁴ Administrative regulations for the competition specification Framework agreement for the procurement of e-gate and related system for automated border control, 201100139

Complementarity and coherence

The e-gates project falls in line with both the national strategic priorities of the EBF and the National Police Directorate. There are a number of other related projects such as the PKD system, which has been online since June 2015. The SPOK system introduced in consulates for visa issuing is also relevant.

Effectiveness

The project achieved its objectives, as it improved the security of checks through facial recognition and document check.

When the machines are fully operational there is an increase in security; however, there have been instances when the machines have not been working properly (in June 2015 after a software upgrade) and this not only reduces the security effects but poses an actual security risk, as no controls are taking place.

There have been no detections of fraudulent documents at the e-gates, but some lost documents have been detected. There has been one detection of a Norwegian person convicted of a crime, who may have been allowed to pass through if he had passed through the manual check.

It has raised the waiting time for passengers, as on average checks through the e-gates take approximately 15 seconds and a border guard only takes up to five seconds. Despite this, traveller satisfaction seems to be high. There has been no official survey but from the use of the satisfaction indicators (smiley faces), it seems passengers are content.³⁹⁵

The effect on the workload for border guards has not been straightforward. Initially, lack of experience and trust increased the work of border guards. The technical problems experienced with the machines also do not allow for the full effect to be felt. There were also not enough trained staff who could operate the e-gates.

However, following this initial stage 10 super users have been trained to use the e-gates and now they can train all newcomers so that there are enough staff who can operate the system.

There have also been effectiveness issues due to the lack of passengers willing to use the e-gates. The improved signage and, more importantly, the use of floorwalkers has increased the use of the e-gates. The airport authority providing floorwalkers has also reduced the workload on border guards.

There have been problems when the machines are not operating fully, or there is a technical fault. However, because there are only four machines this does not justify a full-time maintenance staff member to be appointed and hence there are long waiting periods.

Interviewees have expressed concerns about the possibility of applying risk analysis warnings to border checks with e-gates.

An important external factor behind the introduction of the e-gates is also the desire of the airport authority to speed up passenger thoroughfare through security so they have more time for duty free shopping, which in Norway is very important.

³⁹⁵ Interview with National Police Directorate, February 2016

Sustainability

The effects of the action are unclear in terms of sustainability due to a number of issues relating to maintenance and contacts with the supplier.

The interviewees mentioned that the small number of e-gates does not justify a full-time repair person and thus the maintenance of the e-gates is sometimes delayed. If there is a bigger problem, they have to wait for the company to send someone from Finland or if it is a software problem someone has to come from Portugal. A new maintenance contract is being negotiated that will address some of these issues.

Enlargement of the whole airport is envisaged for 2017; a new section for non-Schengen flights will also be constructed with more throughput capacity. There will be new e-gates installed there but it has not yet been established if they will be of the same type.

The National Police Directorate considers the e-gates 'here to stay' and views the challenges in the initial introduction as a learning curve, which will allow them to install and operate new e-gates more efficiently in the future.

EU added value

The EBF provided funding for the implementation of this project, which otherwise may not have been available from the national budget at that particular time.

General conclusions

The investment was in response to the need to use border control resources more efficiently and, following the initial introductory stage when it actually put more demand on existing resources, it has now become more effective in terms of human resources.

The objective of the project was achieved in terms of increasing the efficiency of border checks of travellers from trusted countries, with regard to Norwegians and some other nationalities. However, the e-gates still lack certificates for nearly 20 EEA/EU nationalities. Passenger satisfaction also seems to have increased.

The introduction of the e-gates has been a learning curve for the Norwegian National Police Directorate. Throughout this five-year period, capacities were developed in terms of learning more about the e-gates, obtaining passport certificates, training of border guards, provision of additional staff to guide passengers, and improving knowledge of the e-gates among passengers.

The sustainability of the investment can be evaluated as relatively high and the Norwegian National Police sees the e-gates as 'here to stay'. Due to technical problems with the specific machines, consideration is being given to changing the model for a newer and less space demanding alternative.

Italy – Helicopters

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
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CS IT	Maritime-Surveillance	Priority 2	General Objective A	2011	11,762,400	11,762,400
Short Description	Purchase of two helicopters AW139 for the National Border Police					
Objective(s)	<p>EBF Objective A: The efficient organisation and control of check and surveillance at the External Borders.</p> <p>Specific objectives: 1.b;1.c; 1.f; 1.h</p> <p>Priority 2: Support for the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the MS</p> <p>IT MAP: Planning and management of the activities at sea aimed at preventing and countering illegal immigration in line with the objectives pursued by the European network of coastal patrolling – European Patrols Network – a two-phase pilot project by Frontex.</p> <p>AP 2011: Action 3.2.3</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, field visit					
Indicators	<p>Relevance/Utility: Amount of flight time and type of utilisation; design and technical features of the helicopters; type of operations in which the helicopters can be deployed; degree of satisfaction expressed by the helicopter users.</p> <p>Effectiveness: Sections of external borders covered; operational changes noted by helicopter users.</p> <p>Efficiency: Public procurement procedure followed; time spent in management.</p> <p>Sustainability: Prospected duration of project's inputs and results; maintenance costs; operational costs; refuelling procedures.</p> <p>Complementarity and coherence: Links with EBF national actions implemented under the AP 2012 and 2013; operative contexts in which the helicopters are deployed; participation in Frontex-led operations; type of coordination with other border guards services/responsible authorities.</p>					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 MAP and of annual programmes, the AP 2011 final report, the 2011-2013 evaluation report;
- 2) Interviews with the RA (one interview performed with representatives from the Italian Ministry of the Interior); and the beneficiary (one interview conducted with the Ministry of the Interior's officials appointed to the public procurement process, as well as with Technical Experts responsible for the drafting of the tender specification).
- 3) Site visit at the Air Force Base located in Pratica di Mare (PM), and interviews with National Police pilots and technicians responsible for the maintenance and

technical control of the helicopters (five Technical and Operative staff involved in the interview);

- 4) Follow up telephone conversations (tbc).

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

Due to Italy's geographical position in the centre of the Mediterranean, total length of maritime borders³⁹⁶, and consequent need to tackle irregular migration by sea, the National Police forces in general and the Border Police in particular need the permanent availability of air means in order to ensure constant maritime patrolling activities through a coordinated and integrated multi-agency approach.

Before the intervention, the aeronautical fleet at disposal of the National Police included approximately 60 first-generation helicopters (category 'Utility'). Most of these first-generation helicopters are now timeworn. In fact, while some of the models available before the EBF intervention have been produced since the late 1950s, the most recent ones went out of production from the end of the 1990s. Their age caused difficulties in obtaining spare parts for repairs. Furthermore, the aircraft had to be completely disassembled in order to detect and address any technical and operational dysfunction. In some cases, the maintenance and repair procedure took between a year and a year and a half. Due to such complex and costly maintenance processes the helicopters were underutilised, with an average utilisation rate of only 60% of their full potential.

Most importantly, a series of technical deficiencies impeded their effective and safe deployment in zones where they could identify irregular immigration at sea. In fact, the first-generation vehicles were not specifically set up for carrying out maritime border patrolling operations, but rather designed for the performance of more general public order duties, such as providing aerial support to police forces during large-scale public events. Substantial operative limitations depended, in the first place, on the limited fuel capacity of the first-generation helicopters. These vehicles did not have the autonomy to operate far from the Italian coast. This meant that the old helicopters could not be deployed in the patrolling of critical sectors of the EU external maritime border.

Out of the 60 available aircraft, only four were equipped with cameras, but none had infrared devices installed. Furthermore, the old helicopters did not dispose of built-in inflatable rafts and landing bladder. In case of a splashdown, the security of pilots could only rely on the installation of removable sea-landing security devices. However, once installed on the 'first generation' helicopters, these devices interfered with the correct functioning of the geared rescue winch. Despite being incorporated in the first generation vehicles, the rescue winch cannot be activated in the context of search and rescue operations.

Before the EBF intervention, the only National Police bases responsible for the conduction of maritime border patrolling operations that disposed of helicopters were in Reggio Calabria and Palermo.

Description of the project's objectives

Specific objectives of the action linked to needs underlying the intervention

The project's objectives were to increase the National Police's overall maritime border surveillance, coordination and intervention capacity through the purchase and deployment of additional and more modern aircraft.

³⁹⁶ Art. 14, paragraph 6, letter b of the Decision 574/2007/CE or referring to the outer limit of the territorial Italian sea.

Per the 2011 AP, the action aimed at purchasing two helicopters with the technical capacity and operational and security features required to ensure adequate aerial support to both the National Police forces and other institutional actors responsible for the permanent patrolling of EU external borders, and for the monitoring and overall management of migrants' routes in the Southern and Central Mediterranean.

Description of project's inputs

Financial resources

The total cost for the implementation of the project was EUR 23,524,800.88, of which EUR 11,762,400.00 was financed through EBF money.

Organisation: roles and responsibilities

Representing the Italian Ministry of the Interior in all communication with the EU, the Responsible Authority (RA)³⁹⁷ acted as the executive body responsible for the justification of the project. Operating under the RA's supervision, technical experts from the Ministry of the Interior³⁹⁸ prepared the tender specification and monitored the implementation of the action, reporting regularly to the Responsible Authority. Officials from the Ministry of the Interior's Central Direction for Immigration were also consulted throughout the drafting exercise of the tender specifications for Action 3.2.3. According to a memorandum of understanding drawn up with the beneficiary, the execution of the public procurement process was entrusted to the Ministry of Defence.³⁹⁹

Management and coordination

Once approved, the implementation of Action 3.2.3 involved an intense coordination exercise that engaged both technical experts from the Italian Ministry of the Interior and partner beneficiaries. The Ministry of the Interior's experts ensured that the public procurement procedure followed for the purchase of the two helicopters was in line with national and EU legal requirements; and that the description of the vehicles in the tender's specification fully reflected the operational needs of the beneficiary officials responsible for piloting and the maintenance of the helicopters respectively.

Time spent

The decision to include Action 3.2.3 in the 2011 AP was adopted in the follow-up to the Drafting Group meeting held on 10 October 2010, and after the RA evaluated the different proposals made by all interested beneficiaries. On 11 February 2011, Action 3.2.3 was included among other 19 projects proposed for the 2011 IT AP, and submitted to the European Commission for approval. The European Commission (COM) approved the IT 2011 AP on 5 August 2011, after having received some additional information from the RA. Subsequently, a Grant Agreement was signed between the RA and the beneficiary, and the implementation process for Action 3.2.3 formally started. The implementation of the action was ensured through a restricted and accelerated public procurement procedure within the EU/WTO. The contract for the provision of the helicopters was signed between the beneficiary authority and AgustaWestland S.p.A. on 4 July 2012. An extended deadline for the conclusion of the project was set on 30 June 2013. The project was completed on time.

³⁹⁷ Department of Public Security, Responsible Authority for the European External Borders Fund 2007-2013.

³⁹⁸ Central Directorate for Technical-Logistic Services and Assets Management.

³⁹⁹ General Directorate for the Aircraft Weapons.

Description of activities conducted under project

The project included the following activities:

- 1) On 30 June 2013 the two AW139 helicopters provided by AgustaWestland S.p.A. were successfully tested.
- 2) The two helicopters have been assigned to the National Police I Air Unit, based in Pratica di Mare. They are transferred to the National Police base of Lampedusa when it is necessary to deploy the helicopters in the patrolling of maritime borders.
- 3) Agusta S.p.A. provides a maintenance service to ensure a yearly total of 300 flight hours for each of the helicopters. This covers all type of dysfunction, including the repair and substitution of single components of the helicopters.
- 4) The National Police officers assigned to the piloting of the helicopters undertake specialised training, and regularly undergo tests and simulations.

Figure 9: *First-generation helicopters*



Figure 10: *One of the AW139 helicopters – Serial No. PS108*



Effects

- **Outputs:** The AW139 model has a fuel economy allowing the helicopters to fly for 350 miles, good weather conditions permitting. The onboard technology is state-of-the-art. This include: a geolocation system allowing users to identify specific points on a map and draw itineraries; an autopilot system that, once activated, allows the human operators to focus on the detection of specific geographical points identified by the incorporated GPS system; incorporated cameras allowing operators to record and transmit clear and infrared images; a state-of art cockpit which comprises five screens reporting real-time data concerning the functioning of the machines, weather conditions, as well as the images filmed by the three cameras installed on the vehicles. Both helicopters have an incorporated rescue winch capable of holding up to 270 kg.
- **Results:** The two AW139 helicopters have been used to patrol the EU external maritime borders in the Strait of Sicily (Sicilian Channel), and deployed to fly over international waters in proximity of Tunisia and Libya. The aircraft have been used in the framework of the 'Mare Nostrum' programme, and subsequently in the context of the Frontex-led 'Triton' operations. So far, the operations are mainly conducted during daytime. During the interview, the pilots underlined a significant improvement in the overall beneficiary's capacity to patrol important sections of the EU external maritime borders. This improvement mainly derives from the radical increase in the beneficiary's ability to detect vessels at sea, and the possibility to transmit real-time images and information to both the national authority responsible for overseeing and coordinating external border surveillance activities⁴⁰⁰, and other border guards operating in the field.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The action was highly relevant to Italy's need to ensure the permanent patrolling of the maritime borders, and increase the border guards' intervention capacity, operational rapidity and coordination capability. Since the purchase of the two AW139, each helicopter has been flying 300 hours every year. This flight time includes both the training of pilots in Pratica di Mare, and the actual patrolling operations conducted from the National Police base in Lampedusa. As such, the allocation of the AW139 helicopters to the beneficiary's logistic and managerial hub of the Pratica di Mare Air base not only ensured the availability of two state-of-the-art aircraft which are ready to be deployed in the patrolling of maritime borders, but also responded to the increased training needs derived from further purchases of these last generation vehicles. In fact, the aircraft acquired through action 3.2.3 were used to provide in-service training to pilots now operating other helicopters of the same model that have been purchased through EBF financing received under the APs 2012 (Action 5.2.8) and 2013 (Action 6.2.11).

Utility

The investment resulted in an increase of the National Police's capacity to conduct continuous maritime borders patrolling operations, and in an improvement of the security conditions of the beneficiary's officials operating the aircraft, thus corresponding to the identified needs.

Thanks to the technical devices installed in the new vehicles, pilots can constantly monitor their location over the assigned section of maritime border, and are kept informed by the Navy of the different national and European border guards vessels

⁴⁰⁰ Direzione Centrale dell'Immigrazione e della Polizia delle Frontiere.

present in proximity of the areas patrolled. The incorporated cameras allow the operating officials to record and transmit high-resolution images (clear and infrared). A light which follows the movement of the frontal camera allows the helicopters to detect vessels and record images during the night. The recorded images can be transmitted in real time to both the offices of the national authority responsible for coordinating the detection and contrast of irregular migrations flows, and other vehicles/units simultaneously responsible for the conduction of border patrolling operations. It is possible to transmit images to the National Police's local offices and national headquarters, as well as to the Ministry officials responsible for collection and elaboration of data concerning irregular migration at the national level. Altogether, these features contribute to the development of the Italian component of the European system for EU external border surveillance.

Figure 44: State-of-the-art cockpit in the AW139



At the same time, the geolocation devices installed in the AW 139 allow the National Police to carry out search and rescue operations in line with internationally approved protocols (a 'pettine'; 'settori'; 'spiralì'). Built-in inflatable rafts and landing bladder allow the helicopters to descend to sea level, facilitating the manoeuvres required for the detection of vessels. A radio installed on the rescue winch allows the operator to communicate directly with the pilots. A series of redundancies (i.e. duplications of components of the helicopters) improve the security features of the vehicles.

The technicians and pilots interviewed confirmed that the two helicopters meet the highest technological standards currently achieved in the field. The pilots and technical experts interviewed confirmed their satisfaction with the results of the project, which they claim has contributed significantly to upgrade the National Police's fleet and increase the beneficiary's overall border control operational capability and readiness.

Efficiency

The Ministry of the Interiors' experts explained that the limited time made available by the EBF annual programme conditioned the choice of the specific type of public procurement process adopted for the implementation of the action. The project was therefore implemented through a restricted and accelerated procedure within the EU/WTO. Given both the complexity of the project and the limited time available for its implementation, another type of procedure (not restricted/accelerated) would not have allowed the conclusion of the action within the imposed timeframe.

Concerning the timeframe to be respected for the conclusion of the action, the interviewed officials affirmed that the deadline imposed by the EBF programming cycle required significant organisational efforts from all the authorities involved in the implementation. The officials interviewed stated that the action would not have been completed within the given eligibility period for the actions included in the 2011 AP, if the

call for proposals had been published after the tender specifications were completed. In fact, the call for proposals was already open when the national experts were still defining the operational needs of the beneficiary, and conducting research on the characteristics of the latest generation helicopters.

The Ministry of the Interior's officials responsible for the different stages and aspects of the public procurement process affirmed that a standardised implementation timeframe and peremptory terms for the completion of all EBF actions do not suit the production process of helicopters. These are complex machines built through a customised design and assembling procedure that needs to be tailored on the specific operational needs of the buyer.

However, it emerged that there has been some delay in the actual initiation of the project. In fact, the drafting of the tender specification only started at the end of 2011, meaning a few months after the COM approved 2011 AP in August 2011. Given this delay, in January 2012 an extension for the delivery and testing of the two vehicles was agreed.

Complementarity and coherence

The action was coherent and complementary with other projects financed through both national and EU funds – including the EBF funds. In particular, six other AW 139 helicopters have been purchased under action 5.2.8 of the IT Annual Programme 2012 (three AW 139s, for a total cost of EUR 36,715,133.18), and action 6.2.11 of IT Annual Programme 2013 (three AW 139s, for a total cost of EUR 37,800,000.00). Acquired to increase the National Police's availability of aircraft deployed in border patrolling operations, these new helicopters can be piloted by the same personnel which are now being trained with the first two AW 139 exemplars purchased through action 3.2.3 AP 2011.

The AW 139 helicopters have been deployed in patrolling operations involving other national authorities (e.g. Italian Navy; tax police; coastguard; carabinieri), and were involved in Frontex-led 'Triton' operations. Furthermore, the devices installed on the helicopters rely on the 'Telecommunication Integrated System' (network infrastructure) – financed by the European Union through the NOP (National Operational Programme) 'Security for the Development of Southern Italy' – 2000/2006 – for the real-time transmission of images and information.

Effectiveness

The project achieved its objectives, as underlined by all officers interviewed in the course of the field visit.

When departing from the National Police base located in Lampedusa, the helicopters take 20 to 30 minutes to reach the intervention areas, these being either in the Strait of Sicily or over international waters in proximity to Libya and Tunisia. On average, each of the helicopters overflies the sector allocated (39 Alpha Whiskey) of the EU external maritime borders for a time ranging from two to three hours, before returning to the National Police base in Lampedusa.

The maintenance service provided by Agusta S.p.A. allowed the beneficiary to use all the 300 hours of flight insured for each of the two AW 139 helicopters every year. In addition, the experts interviewed in Pratica Mare estimated that the vehicles are now available for use almost every day of the year (97% of yearly availability). In fact, the smooth functioning of the helicopters is constantly monitored through a system which automatically detects and identifies dysfunctions and directly communicates technical problems to both AgustaWestland S.p.A, and the beneficiary's technicians responsible for the maintenance and repair of the helicopters. Thanks to both the constant monitoring of the vehicles' functionality (made remotely by Agusta S.p.A. technicians, and *in situ* by

the beneficiary's experts), and the rapidity of the AW 139 maintenance and repair processes, at least one of the two helicopters purchased through the project can always be used for either training or border control purposes. The engine works with any kind of fuel.

As such, the National Police can now count on the continuous availability of trained pilots and aircraft for the conduction of sea borders patrolling operations.

Sustainability

The technicians responsible for monitoring of the helicopters' operational conditions in Pratica di Mare estimated that the AW139 helicopters will be fully operational for a period of at least 20 years.

However, due to operational expenses deriving from the AW139's high consumption of fuel, and also to additional costs deriving from the pilots' duty travel expenses, a sustainability problem seems to affect the future use of the helicopters.

The beneficiary's experts interviewed in Rome highlighted that the operational costs involved in non-Frontex-led interventions were difficult to sustain exclusively through the national funds available to the National Police forces. They claimed that since the EBF did not cover operational costs, an *ex-ante* maintenance costs assessment should have been carried out to verify the level of sustainability of the project.

Furthermore, it has been noted that currently the purchase of fuel is made through public procurement procedure. According to the Ministry of the Interior's officials interviewed, this can also affect the sustainability of the project. In fact, in the medium to long term, the length of this procedure risks undermining the prospect of maintaining the helicopters constantly operative and ready to cope with unforeseen influxes of migrants by sea.

EU added value

All the interviewed officials confirmed that it would not have been possible to realise the project without the EBF contribution. EU funding was therefore essential to the achievement of the project's objective.

General conclusions

The investment aimed at making available to the National Police aircraft with the operational capacity and technical features required to enhance the beneficiary's contribution to the development of the European Patrol Network. More specifically, the project was directed at allowing the National Police to participate in maritime border surveillance activities in cooperation with the air and naval units of the Navy, the Guardia di Finanza and Harbour Offices (Italian Coast Guard), and under the coordination of the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior (General Directorate for Immigration and Border Police).

The objective of the project has been achieved in terms of increased beneficiary preparedness and capacity of intervention. The AW 139 helicopters can be used throughout the year to patrol crucial sectors of the EU external borders, survey international waters, and conduct search and rescue operations in line with internationally agreed protocols. The border staff satisfaction with the upgrade is significant. At the same time, some criticalities emerged in relation to the project's implementation process, as well as to its financial and operational sustainability under the EBF programme

The impact of the investment is well matched with the effects of several other national and EU projects (including EBF projects) designed to increase the security of EU external maritime borders.

Bulgaria – Integrated System for Control and Surveillance

Summary

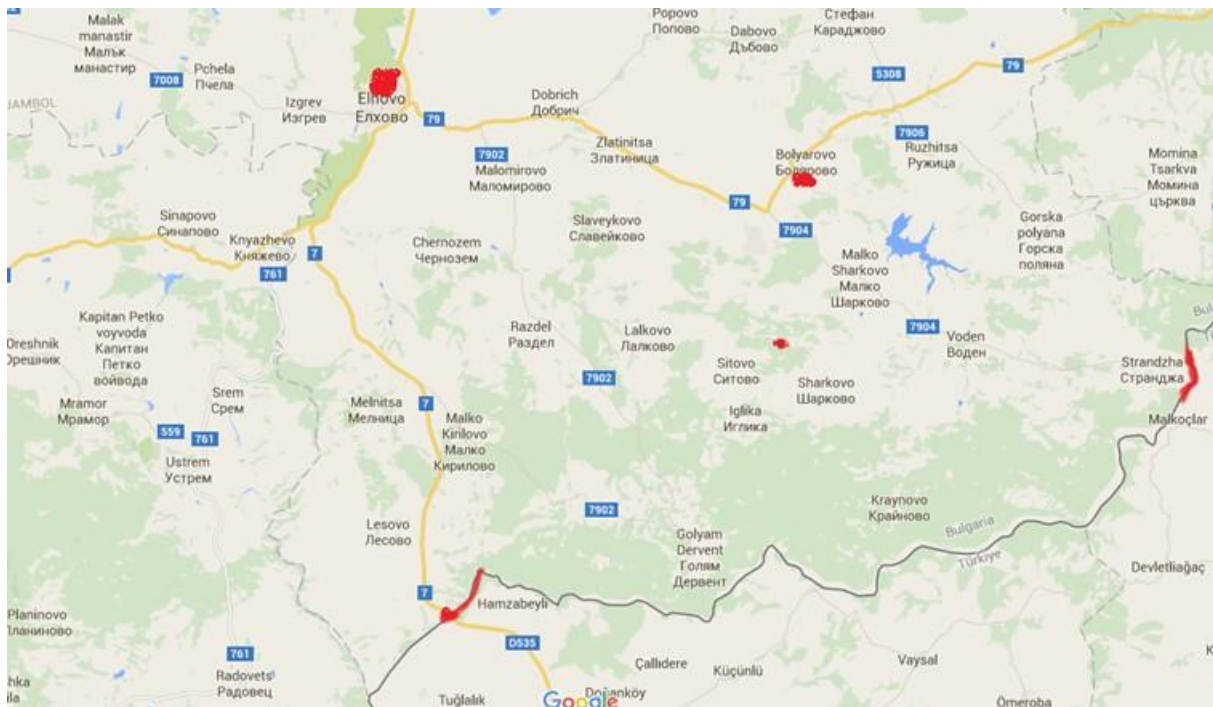
Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS BG	Border surveillance – land	Priority 1	General Objectives A and B	2011-2013	13,015,652.75	17,354,203
Short Description	Building up an integrated system for control and surveillance (ISCS ⁴⁰¹) along the border with the Republic of Turkey					
Objective(s)	<p>EBF Objective: to support the establishment of a European common-integrated-border management system.</p> <p>Priority 1 – Support for further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons and the surveillance of the external borders.</p> <p>MAP – Further development and elaboration of the activity in connection with the abolishment of the common internal borders and the control and surveillance of the external borders and related activities at the national level to integrate delivered technical equipment capable of active and adequate participation in the European EUROSUR programme.</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews and onsite visits.					
Indicators	<p>Output: construction of the ISCS</p> <p>Outcome: capability to monitor and register by way of video surveillance persons in the scope of the ISCS</p> <p>Impact: enhanced rates of detection of attempts of illegal crossings; decreased response time to suspected incident areas.</p>					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 MAP and of annual programmes, the AP 2011 final report and the 2011-2013 evaluation report;
- 2) Interviews with representatives of the RA (Ministry of the Interior – three interviews) and the beneficiary (Chief Directorate Border Police – three interviews) in Sofia;
- 3) Site visits and interviews with operational staff at the two Local Coordination Centres (LCC) in Elhovo and Bolyarovo (four interviews), the Regional Coordination Centre in Elhovo (two interviews), two stationary posts (near Lesovo and near Bolyarovo), BCP Lesovo and two stretches of the perimeter surveillance systems – one within Elhovo LCC and one within Bolyarovo LCC.

⁴⁰¹ In various documents the surveillance system is represented by different acronyms, e.g. ISS and IBSS (in Frontex reports). In this report ISCS will be used in accordance with the text in the MAP 2011-2013.

Figure 45: Visited ISCS elements in red

LCC and RCC in Elhovo; LCC in Bolyarovo; SPP Chal Baba (centre-right); BCP Lesovo, perimeter system and SPP (lower-left); perimeter system under Bolyarovo LCC (right)

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

The risks related to the external border security of Bulgaria stem from the geopolitical situation of the country in a region of ethnic, religious, economic and cultural differences. Major threats to the security of the state border have been illegal migration and trafficking in human beings. Immigration flows through the country consist mainly of nationals of countries in the Middle and Near East, North Africa and the former CIS Republics. Attempts at illegal border crossings take diverse forms: individual cases of illegal crossing, organised trafficking in human beings through green border and BCPs as well as attempts to cross BCPs with forged documents or by concealment in vehicles. The Bulgarian-Turkish border is the main route for illegal border crossing attempts.

In the last ten years two developments have dramatically changed the operational situation along the external borders. The Bulgarian accession to the EU and the introduction of visas for citizens of neighbouring countries led to an increase in the number of refusals of entry, which predetermined the increased use of false and forged documents, including falsified visas, respectively increasing the attempts to illegally cross the green border. It is expected that once Bulgaria joins in the Schengen Area, it will take over the task of controlling the external borders of the Area on behalf of all other Schengen Area members. It can be assumed that Bulgaria will become a much more attractive entry point and transit country for irregular migrants, criminals and illegal goods which can then easily travel within the Schengen Area. The second factor that shapes the operational situation is the constant migratory pressure linked to poverty, instability and armed conflict in some of the EU neighbouring regions as well as the perceived better economic opportunities in destination countries within the EU. The ongoing Syrian and Middle Eastern migrant and refugee crisis is an extreme manifestation of these conditions.

Bulgaria has adopted a comprehensive Integrated Border Management Strategy (IBMS) in order to address requirements for entry into the Schengen Area and to enhance its external border security. The first draft of the strategy was passed in 2006 with Council of Ministers Decision No. 47/27.01.2006. The strategy was being implemented in two

phases: first phase – up until the accession of Bulgaria to the EU, and second phase – up until the full application of the Schengen *acquis*. The strategy is a complex and comprehensive set of measures, aimed at building a system for integrated border management with the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of border management while observing the right of free movement of people. The latest version of the strategy was adopted in 2014.

The Bulgarian-Turkish border includes 271 kilometres, of which 149 kilometres is a land border and 122 kilometres is a river border, and is managed by the Regional Directorate of Border Police Elhovo. The Chief Directorate Border Police (CDBP) has employed a two-pronged operational approach to increasing external green border security: implementing a land border integrated surveillance and control system (ISCS) and developing an optimal response capacity. The integrated system for surveillance and control of the green border with Republic of Turkey (section 1 – between Svilengrad and Lesovo) were included in the National Indicative Programme under the Schengen Facility. The activities for expansion and improvement of the ISCS of the green border with Republic of Turkey (section 2 – between Lesovo and the outfall of Rezovska River) were envisaged for implementation under EBF financing.

The implementation of an integrated system for control and surveillance all along the Bulgarian-Turkish border is vital as this section of the state border is exposed to the highest migration pressure. The Bulgarian-Turkish border is part of the designated Eastern Mediterranean migration route which in 2013 was used by at least 25,000 migrants.⁴⁰² However, as a consequence of increased Bulgarian operational measures, including an Integrated System for Control and Surveillance (ISCS) and a special police operation, the level of detections decreased compared to 2013 and tended to be mostly reported from the eastern part of the border, not covered by the ISCS.⁴⁰³ The two main modes of illegal crossing include a) crossing on foot, individually or in groups, and b) clandestine crossing in cargo trucks and other commercial vehicles. At the Bulgarian-Turkish border detections of clandestine entry in vehicles increased sharply from 599 in 2013 to 3,052 in 2014. The increase was due to a tenfold increase in detections reported from the Bulgarian BCPs along the land border with Turkey. It is argued that the increase was 'an indirect consequence of enhanced measures at the green border that might have caused a partial displacement of the flow from green border to BCPs, by way of clandestine entries'.⁴⁰⁴

Table 4: Distribution of migration pressure 2008-2013⁴⁰⁵

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1/1/2015 - 30/6/2015
Number of irregular migrants detected at the external green border	311	484	886	835	2068	13,983	8300	7349

Around 99% of all detections of illegal green external border crossing have occurred at the Bulgarian-Turkish border. Most of the migrants deliberately seek illegal passage

⁴⁰² *Annual Risk Analysis 2013*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2013.

⁴⁰³ *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2015.

⁴⁰⁴ *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2015.

⁴⁰⁵ According to data from the Ministry of the Interior.

through Bulgaria and on to Western European states as they try to avoid being registered as refugees or asylum seekers, fearing that if later apprehended in another MS they will be returned to Bulgaria.⁴⁰⁶

Description of the project's objectives

The overall long-term objective of the project was to build up the existing ISCS completed under the NIP Schengen (from BCP Kapitan Andreevo to BCP Lesovo) through the AP 2011-2013 EBF funding, in order to complete a comprehensive ISCS covering the whole length of the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The stretch of the Bulgarian-Turkish border to the east of BCP Lesovo and up to Strandzha Mountain and the beginning of the river border with Turkey is relatively easy to negotiate in terms of topography. Therefore, the CDBP priority in AP 2011 and 2012 was to focus on first constructing the ISS in areas of that stretch where illegal crossings have been most intercepted and were most likely to occur. Within the AP 2011-2012 the objectives of the project were to construct the first stages of the envisaged comprehensive ISCS along the whole of the Bulgarian-Turkish border east of BCP Lesovo. In effect this is an effort to fulfil the development of the national components related to the establishment of the 'Integrated system for surveillance of the EU external borders'. The overall objective is the implementation of ISCS all along the Bulgarian-Turkish border in order to achieve better efficiency in the detection of attempts at illegal migration through the external border.⁴⁰⁷ The technical capabilities provided by the ISCS combined with the border police patrols will ensure an effective border control system not only for an early detection of illegal border crossing attempts but also for the interception of the detected irregular immigrants.

The planned ISCS consists of the following control and communication structure:

1. Peripheral surveillance systems which consist of:

1.1. Perimeter signal guarding systems (PSGS) – consist of seismic sensors for detection and fixing of illegal border crossing attempts, thermovisual cameras will be used for classification of the detected objects (for instance human, animal, etc.);

1.2. Stationary surveillance posts (SSP) – automatic radiolocation systems which are operated from the LCC (with provision for local control) providing early warning, thermovisual cameras will be used for classification of the detected objects.

1.3. Mobile surveillance posts (MSP) will be used for border police operations – Cross-country vehicles equipped with thermovisual and TV cameras, radiolocation system and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle. The gathered information will be send to the LCC and RCC.

2. Local coordination centre (LCC) will be equipped with servers and other equipment for processing of the information gathered by the abovementioned systems. It will be used for decision-making and management of the border police patrols on a tactical level.

3. Regional coordination centre (RCC) will be equipped with servers and other equipment for processing and recording of the gathered information. It will be used for decision-making and management of the border police patrols on a regional level.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ *Risk Analysis 2014*. Chief Directorate Border Police. Ministry of the Interior. Sofia.2014

⁴⁰⁷ BG 2011 AP Annual Program 2011: 3.1.1.1 Action 1 – Building up an Integrated system for surveillance (ISCS) along the border with Republic of Turkey.

⁴⁰⁸ BG 2011 AP Annual Program 2011: 3.1.1.1 Action 1 – Building up an Integrated system for surveillance (ISCS) along the border with Republic of Turkey.

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for management

The projects were planned as part of the 2011 and 2012 AP and were implemented in the time period 2011 to June 2013.

The sole beneficiary for the ISCS construction is the CDBP. The Responsible Authority was the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), part of which is the CDBP. The MoI carried out the tender procedures for the construction works and upgrades under AP 2011-2013. Both at the ministerial level and in CDBP staff have been assigned as project managers for the implementation of work related to the ISCS.

Financial resources

The total cost of the 2011 AP funded project was EUR 2,700,000 with EUR 2,025,000 (75%) coming from the EBF, and 675,000 (25%) from the Bulgarian national budget. For the 2012 AP period the project totalled EUR 5,491,419 with EUR 4,118,564 (75%) financed by the EBF and EUR 1,372,855 (25%) by public spending. The AP 2013 involved a total of EUR 9,162,785 in funding, of which EUR 6,872,088.75 or 75% was from the EBF.

Description of activities conducted under project

The specific objectives completed in the 2011-2012 AP include:

For AP 2011

- Setting up a component of the ISCS with local coordination centre (LCC) in Elhovo and systems for surveillance in a section of 13,000 m;
- Installation of perimeter signal guarding systems located along the state border line (16.5 km length);
- Establishment of a stationary post for technical and video surveillance – unmanned (independent, operated from a working place in the local centre in Elhovo);
- Installation of communication equipment securing the transmission of video information, data, etc. between the sections of ISCS, the local centre in Elhovo and to the National Centre in Sofia.

For AP 2012

- Setting up a local coordination centre (LCC) in Border Police Unit in Bolyarovo;
- Installation of a 9.5 km long perimeter signal guarding system in the area of responsibility of LLC Elhovo and 13 km long perimeter signal guarding system in the area of responsibility of LLC Bolyarovo;
- Establishing two stationary posts for technical and video surveillance in the area of responsibility of LCC Bolyarovo;
- Upgrade of the Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) in Elhovo built under objective 1, measure 3, action 1 under Schengen facility AIP 2007-2009;
- Upgrade of the National Coordination Centre (NCC) in Sofia;
- Delivery, installation and putting into exploitation of communication equipment for the purposes of video information and data transfer between the separate ISS elements;
- Training for Ministry of the Interior (MoI) officials. Equipment under DES-38//30.04.2013 was delivered and installed at four different sites according to the technical specifications:

- a) Border Police Unit in Bolyarovo – LCC: Office furniture for the workplaces – desks, chairs, shelves, etc.; Rest and food premises – microwave oven, fridge, furniture, etc.; PC, monitors and a situational display; Main and backup power supply; Access control system; Fire alarm and fire extinguisher systems; Air-conditioning; Database and archive servers;
 - b) Stationary Posts for Technical Surveillance in the area of responsibility of LCC Bolyarovo; – Electronic and optical equipment – thermovision and daytime camera, laser rangefinder, panoramic device; Ground location system; Main and backup power supply; Local signal and security system; Fire alarm and fire extinguisher systems; air-conditioning; Module booth for the equipment and the operator; Working place for the operator – PC, monitor, desk, etc.; Mast for the installation of the outside equipment; Lighting for the perimeter.
- Perimeter Signal Security System 7 km long along the border line – Thermovision cameras (four models) – total 53 pcs; Seismic sensors – 190 pcs; Additional equipment – racks, pylons of different height for the installation of the cameras, lightning protection system, etc.; Communication equipment was also delivered for the transfer of information and data between the separate ISS elements. The equipment is situated at the different sites of the ISS including both perimeter signal security system 7 km, LCC and RCC, Stationary Post for Technical Surveillance. Construction works were performed at the sites of the ISS – Perimeter Signal Security System 7 km, LCC and RCC, Stationary Post for Technical Surveillance.

For AP 2013:

- Establishment of two local coordination centres in Sredetz and Malko Tarnovo towns with the respective access control systems, fire extinguisher and air-conditioning system. Management of the databases as well as control of the peripheral surveillance systems will be conducted from the working places in LCC. LCC will ensure the 24/7 surveillance of the area of responsibility.
- Establishment of two stationary surveillance posts (one in the zone of responsibility of LCC Sredetz and the other in the zone of responsibility of LCC Malko Tarnovo) – unmanned (independent, operated from working places in the respective LCC). The posts will be equipped with electronic optical equipment – thermovisual and TV cameras and panoramic device, land based radiolocation system, basic and reserve power supply, local signal guarding systems, fire-extinguisher system, air-conditioning system;
- Delivery of four mobile surveillance posts (one will be assigned in the zone of responsibility of each LCC Elhovo, Bolyarovo, Sredetz and Malko Tarnovo). The mobile surveillance posts will be equipped with electronic optical equipment – thermovisual and TV cameras and panoramic device – action delayed.
- Installation of perimeter signal guarding systems located along the state border line – 16 km length in the area of responsibility of LCC in Sredetz and 14 km length in the area of responsibility of LCC Malko Tarnovo. The systems will consist of central station and sensors for detection and identification of border violators as well as thermovision cameras for tracing of their activities;
- Integration of the video information available through air surveillance operations in the ISS zone (the aircraft was delivered under AIP 2008 under the Schengen Facility);
- Setting up video surveillance systems in the zone of Border Crossing Point (BCP) Lesovo and BCP Malko Tarnovo. Integration of the developed systems in the ISS.
- Upgrade of Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) in Elhovo which is built with national resources under Annual Indicative Programme 2007 under Schengen Facility. The upgrade is needed because of the significant increase of information flow (data, video etc.) from the LCCs, envisaged for construction under AP 2013. The upgrade of RCC will provide the necessary technical means needed to process the information received from newly established LCC Sredetz and LCC Malko

Tarnovo. Supply of a video wall for observation of the operational situation is also envisaged.

- Upgrade of the National Coordination Centre in Sofia in order to provide the additional workplace set up under AP 2011 with access to the information available in Regional coordination centre Elhovo.
- Installation of communication equipment securing the transmission of video information, data, etc. between the sections of ISS.
- Training of the CDBP personnel to operate the components of ISS delivered under this Annual programme.

Effects

- **Outputs:** The combined output of 2011 (Stage I), 2012 AP (Stage II) and AP 2013 (Stage III) set up the LCCs at Elhovo, Bolyarovo, Sredets and Malko Tarnovo. The RCC at Elhovo and NCC in Sofia, set up through objective 1, measure 3, action 1 under Schengen facility AIP 2007-2009, were upgraded. A total of 15.5 km of perimeter signal guarding system under the remit of LCC Elhovo, 13 km under LCC Bolyarovo, 16 km under LCC Sredetz and 14 km LCC Malko Tarnovo were installed. Five stationary posts for technical and video surveillance were constructed and connected to the ICSC – one under Elhovo LCC, two under Bolyarovo LCC, one under Sredets LCC and one under Malko Tarnovo LCC. Surveillance equipment covering the complete perimeter of BCP Lesovo had been installed and incorporated in the ISCS. In addition, communications equipment securing the transmission of data between the sections of ISCS was installed. In both programme periods CDBP staff were trained on operating with ICSC equipment.
- **Results:** The completion of Stage I-III of the ICSC resulted in capabilities for the CDBP that were previously unavailable or rudimentary in this particular stretch of the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The border police can now monitor and detect movement along the borderline thanks to the installed perimeter surveillance system (thermovisual cameras and seismic sensors). The five stationary surveillance posts allow for monitoring of movement within Turkish territory, which according to interviewed staff provides effective prevention thanks to in part to good cooperation with Turkish counterparts.⁴⁰⁹ Both features result in a capability for early and preventative action in case of suspect and/or identified illegal border crossings. The installed relay systems and various ICT components provide for comprehensive and uninterrupted connectivity of the various components so as to ensure the continuous availability of the data flows. The five stationary posts can operate independently from the LCCs and the RCC, therefore ensuring business process continuity and disaster readiness for the surveillance, detection and monitoring processes. The installed equipment enables a comprehensive connectivity of video surveillance feeds from the various components – feed from the thermovisual stationary cameras, wide-range SSP cameras, BCP cameras, helicopter cameras and mobile stations cameras is available to be accessed from the LCCs, RCC and NCC. Overall the outputs from AP 2011-2013 resulted in improved capacity to detect, identify and monitor movement along the Bulgarian-Turkish border, enhanced ability to undertake preventative measures in order to decrease instances of illegal border crossing, and improved efficiency and effectiveness of resource allocation, particularly with regard to response time of dispatched patrols.

⁴⁰⁹ Interviews with operational staff in Elhovo and Bolyarovo.

- **Impacts:** The completion of Stage I-III of the ISCS through AP 2011-2013 has dramatically changed the operational and strategic capabilities of border management. The results contributed to the development and implementation of the Integrated Border Management strategy of Bulgaria adopted by the Council of Ministers Decision No. 47/27.01.2006 and put forward by the council of ministers in 2006, 2010 and 2014. The completion of the action has brought Bulgarian border management considerably closer to fulfilling the requirements for membership in the Schengen Area. In addition, the implementation of AP 2011-2013 is an important step toward the further development of EUROSUR and the improvement of the overall management of the EU's external borders.

More specifically, feedback from the onsite visits has been overwhelmingly positive regarding the impact the ISCS has had on activities related to monitoring and detecting movement along the border line and preventing illegal border crossings.⁴¹⁰ Information gathering and analysis is now swifter and more efficient, enabling the CDBP to assess the border situation in real time. Patrol response time has been greatly reduced owing to surveillance feed coming into the LCCs and RCC. Preventative cooperative measures with the Turkish counterpart have improved in effectiveness and efficiency thanks to enhanced ability to detect movement deep in Turkish territory with the high quality cameras mounted on the SSPs. Overall, detections and preventions of illegal crossings have both increased following the installation of the surveillance equipment.

It must be noted that facilitators, smugglers and traffickers have become aware of the new CDBP capabilities and have subsequently begun to avoid areas where components of the ISCS have been installed and are operational. This has caused illegal crossing points to shift to areas where risk of detection is assessed by the perpetrators to be lower. Therefore, the CDBP has had to focus regular/scheduled patrols on areas which are not covered by the ISCS. In this way, the efficiency of regular/scheduled patrolling activities has increased. Further expansion of the ISCS will contribute to the decrease of the risk of illegal crossing by installing a comprehensive ISCS along the full length of the Bulgarian-Turkish Border.

According to interview data one major advantage of the new ISCS is that once the system issues an alarm, border patrols can be alerted to take immediate action. Without the surveillance cameras, it could take up to 24 hours before a border violation was detected. Another important advantage of the system is that it provides early warning of violators who approach the external border but have not crossed it yet (the five stationary posts installed at high spots with good visibility within the territory of Turkey are particularly useful in this respect). Thanks to collaboration with the Turkish border guards, migrants approaching the green border can be apprehended on the territory of Turkey. Even if the Turkish border police fail to stop potential violators, the warnings issued by Bulgarian border police patrols are often sufficient to make violators change their mind and abandon their plan for illegal crossing of the green border. Other advantages of the ISS mentioned by interviewees are the integration of aerial surveillance. Helicopters acquired through the Schengen Facility II make 3-4 flights per week and feed live situational data to the coordination centres. The operators at the Regional Coordination Centre have a two-way voice communication with the pilots and can navigate them to particular sites of interest.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The AP 2011-2-13 investments were highly relevant for both Bulgaria's strategy for an Integrated Border Management system and for EU-wide strategic priorities, such as

⁴¹⁰ Interviews with operational staff in Elhovo and Bolyarovo.

strengthening and expanding the Schengen Area and completing EUROSUR. In addition, illegal immigration pressure had been increasing steadily at the Bulgarian-Turkish border since entry into the EU in 2007 (see Table 4). During the ongoing immigrant and refugee crisis Bulgaria has been one of the key land entry points into the EU through the Eastern Mediterranean immigration route out of the Middle East and Central Asia.⁴¹¹ Therefore, it may be concluded that the EBF funding of the ISCS along the Bulgarian-Turkish border has been highly relevant and necessary for both EU and Bulgarian border security.

Utility

The onsite visits and interviews with operational staff confirm the usefulness of the installed ISCS components. The most highlighted features of the ISCS are that border patrols at the green border are able to arrive immediately at the spot of attempted border crossings and that fewer resources are spent on mobile patrols to control the green border. The overall impressions from the inspections and interviews may be summarised as follows:

- The Integrated Surveillance and Control System (ISCS) provides valuable access to information.
- The ISCS generates alarms in real time, which proves vital for effective and efficient response and resource allocation. The ISCS also makes possible an enhanced risk management.
- Before the ISS was operational, all response, detection and prevention activities took considerably longer to conduct and complete.
- The stationary surveillance posts (SSP) allow for deep visual penetration into Turkish territory, which allows for early warning to send to the Turkish counterparts, whereby potential illegal crossings are halted before they actually reach the border.
- On average, about 2000 alarms are triggered during a shift at the RCC Elhovo, of which about 30% are so-called false alarms – adverse weather conditions, explosions from a nearby Turkish mining operation, etc.

Figure 46: Bolyarovo LCC



Additional training of officers was provided under AP 2012 and 2013 for staff at Elhovo, Bolyarovo, Sredets and Malko Tarnovo. The NCC in Sofia and RCC in Elhovo were upgraded and the latter now includes a facility for rest and recreation.

⁴¹¹ *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2015.

Figure 47: Stationary Surveillance Post

The perimeter surveillance system relies on video feed by thermovisual cameras. The cameras are triggered by seismic sensors – when a camera is triggered it is known as an alarm. Interviewees noted that after initial installation and exploitation the seismic sensors were not adequately configured and produced an overwhelming number of false alarms, greatly decreasing the utility of the system. False alarms, i.e. the camera is switched on after triggering of seismic sensor, were being generated by the slightest changes in conditions, such as environmental/weather conditions, small animals, low-flying aircraft, demolitions at a mining operation nearby across the Turkish border, etc. Negotiations with the contractor were successful in demanding that the system is tuned up to the desired effectiveness and usability. As of the evaluators' visit, most cameras were being activated as envisioned and the number of false alarms has been significantly reduced. Still, statistics corroborating this are currently absent. One reason for the lack of data for analysis is that CDBP has not collected information uniformly on the outputs of the system. Data was initially being collected on the number of triggered seismic sensors, whereas more recently only the number of activated cameras has been accounted for.⁴¹² It should be noted that the ISCS was installed in several phases (moving from west to east). The latest sections of the ISCS were equipped with an improved version of firmware which drastically reduced the occurrence of 'false alarms'. The contractor then upgraded all sections with the latest firmware, thus resolving the issue of an unreasonably high number of alerts not involving illegal border crossings.

Traffic surveillance cameras at BCP Lesovo, installed under AP 2013, are also connected to the LCC and RCC in Elhovo. The new system replaced a previous one which was rendered non-operational after being damaged in a lightning storm and a consequent lack of resources. High definition cameras located above the traffic lanes enable the CDBP operators at the BCP to detect discrepancies (patched up holes, used for entry into the cargo area of a truck, which appear as irregular shades on the cargo truck cover) in the external covers of cargo trucks, which are indicative of a risk for concealed illegal migrants.⁴¹³

⁴¹² Interview with CDBP representatives

⁴¹³ The capability of the system was demonstrated to the evaluators during the field visit.

Figure 48: Perimeter surveillance camera and fence

As a result detections of clandestine illegal entries at BCPs along the Bulgarian-Turkish border increased tenfold from 2013 to 2014.⁴¹⁴ This increase might be related to changes in the patterns and flow of illegal migration routes, as control along the green border with Turkey had tightened.⁴¹⁵ In addition to increased technical capabilities the complementarity and coherence are further highlighted by the enhanced risk management capacity of the CDBP, owing to other externally funded projects.⁴¹⁶ The BCP Lesovo project achieved the following utilities:

- Some 98% coverage of all outdoor areas within the BCP, allowing visibility to all attempts at illegal border crossings at the BCP premises (the older system used twice as many cameras to cover indoor facilities used by border police, but did not provide sufficient coverage of the most risky outdoor areas);
- Enhanced ability for detailed monitoring of vehicles and pedestrians at the BCP;
- Unlike the older system, the new ISS is connected with the local coordination centre at Elhovo and secures live data feed.

The stationary surveillance posts (SSP) are equipped with cameras capable of human (facial) recognition at 8-10 km. Therefore, SSPs built on within the territory are aimed at recognising potential irregularities at the border line, while SSPs at the perimeter system are designed to provide early warning to Turkish counterparts. Live views from both SSPs visited was provided to the evaluators at the RCC. The stationary posts are equipped to function fully independently. In case the LCC and/or RCC lose contact/feed from the SSP an operator is tasked immediately to travel to the post and man the station. The posts are integrated into the respective LCC systems and the physical operator of the SSP has the same level of access to the ISCS as an operator in the LCC. The evaluators were granted access to the SSP at 265 km. The SSP's immediate surroundings are secured through a fence, an external locking door and surveillance security cameras providing coverage of the SSP surroundings. The cameras were triggered upon arrival of evaluators, and later the footage was demonstrated in RCC Elhovo. Independent power is provided by a diesel-fuel generator just outside the facility post and within the fenced perimeter.

Efficiency

⁴¹⁴ *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2015.

⁴¹⁵ *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2015.

⁴¹⁶ Risk Management Concept for Chief Directorate Border police (ref. № 12875/30.04.2009), aiming at introducing the Frontex CIRAM

The effects of the actions performed under the project were achieved at a reasonable cost.

The tender procedures under AP 2011 and 2012 included a variety of components of the planned ISCS including technical equipment, software and construction work. The usual criterion for contractor selection is lowest price. Although statutory requirements for transparency and competitiveness in the tendering process were met by the RA, there had been 11 tenders in the AP 2011-2013 period with a single applicant.⁴¹⁷ Therefore, the degree of efficiency for the 11 contracts may not be reasonably presumed.

In addition, many of the ISCS deliverables are custom-designed and built, and as such comparison with alternative systems, so as to compare and assess efficiency of implemented deliverables, may not be plausible in each case. Interviewees, however, were satisfied with the negotiated conditions for delivery and operation of components of the ISCS. They were particularly reassured by the warranties and maintenance negotiated with the contractor; for example, cameras that are malfunctioning within the warranted lifespan are being promptly replaced by the contractor at no extra cost. In implementing the envisioned components of the ISCS under AP 2012 the contractor failed to deliver the required outputs within the planned timeframe. The contractual conditions, however, enabled the RA to require the necessary corrections from the contractor, and as a result the outputs had been successfully delivered as planned.

Complementarity and coherence

The building of an integrated system for control and surveillance all along the Bulgarian-Turkish border is deemed highly necessary as this section of the state border is exposed to the biggest migration pressure. A part of the ISCS – from BCP Kapitan Andreevo to BCP Lesovo – was built with national resources under the Schengen Facility AP (Annual Indicative Program) 2007, Objective 1 Measure 3, Action 1 (the contract has been signed and the implementation of the first stage from BCP Kapitan Andreevo to BCP Lesovo started in 2010). The remaining part of the system covering the Bulgarian-Turkish border from BCP Lesovo to the outfall of Rezovska River in the Black Sea was being funded under the EBF.

The ISCS in its substance consists of various components delivered and implemented under different time periods and programmes with both public and EU financing. Interviewees voiced their positive opinion on the complementarity of older and new components of the system. For example, equipment such as cameras is being used and connected to the centralised video feed as long as it remains operational. In addition, new communication equipment is compatible with the already operational TETRA system.

The ISCS under AP 2011-2013 was designed to fully cover the Bulgarian-Turkish border in stages. In this sense each completed stage of the ISCS is complementary to previously completed components under EBF, other EU funding, non-EU external financing and local public funding. As a whole the ISCS built with EBF financing is complementary and in coherence with the initial stage of the ISCS (between BCP Lesovo and BCP Kapitan Andreevo) implemented with public funding under Council of Ministers Decree No. 17/15.02.2010 as part of the Schengen Facility National Indicative Programme 2007-2009. Equipment delivered with EBF funding under the AP 2011-2013 (e.g. stationary surveillance posts) is compatible with the TETRA communications system in use by the MoI, delivered, developed and modernised by previous projects under PHARE (PHARE project BG 0005.02 'Modernising Border Police Equipment at the Turkish Border'), nationally funded projects for communication modernisation – BG 2004/016-711.08.06

⁴¹⁷ According to data from the RA

and BG 2005/017-353.07.05⁴¹⁸, projects under Annual Indicative Programme 2008 under Schengen Facility Objective 3, Measure 2.⁴¹⁹

The ISCS components built with EBF funding are also complementary and in coherence with the field of air surveillance performed with helicopters delivered under Objective 1, Measure 4 of the National Indicative Programme 2007-2009 under Schengen Facility 'Delivery of 2 helicopters'. The video surveillance feed from the helicopters is accessible by operators in the LCCs, RCC and NCC, built and/or upgraded with EBF financing.

Overall, the deliverables related to the implementation of the ISCS under AP 2011-2013 (priority 1, action 1) are envisioned as integral parts of the Bulgarian strategy for integrated border control.⁴²⁰ As such their complementarity and coherence are built in conceptually as building blocks of a larger deliverable, which ultimately is aimed to contribute to fulfilling the requirements of the Schengen *acquis*, enhancing EUROSUR and improving the overall security of the EU's external borders.

The project appears complementary with the building of a fence all along the Bulgarian-Turkish border, which is funded by the Bulgarian government. Border officers stated that the surveillance system and the fence have had a preventive effect, forcing many migrants to either cancel their attempt to cross the border, or to look for sections of the border that are still easier to cross illegally. Although the construction of the fence has allegedly exerted some negative impact on the functioning of the ISCS, the general agreement is that once completed the fence and ISCS act in a complimentary and coherent manner to each other.

Effectiveness

According to interviewed MoI officials and operational staff at BCP Lesovo, LCC and RCC Elhovo and LCC Bolyarovo, the project has achieved its objectives. The ISCS completed under AP 2011-2013 greatly increased the capacity of the CDBP to detect and apprehend offenders of the border regime, i.e. illegal crossings at the green border. The effectiveness of the ISCS is evidenced by the fact that the flow of illegal migrants has decreased and shifted to areas of the border not covered by the ISCS. According to Frontex in Bulgaria, as a consequence of increased Bulgarian operational measures, including an Integrated Border Surveillance System (IBSS) and a special police operation, the level of detections decreased compared to 2013, when the system saw a peak in detection, and tended to be mostly reported from the eastern part of the border, not covered by the IBSS.⁴²¹

Interviewees at both operational and managerial level at the CDBP insisted that one of the major improvements to border management provided by the ISCS's stationary surveillance posts is the capability to detect movement within Turkish territory and undertake preventative measure with the Turkish authorities before potential illegal crossing occurs.

Four mobiles surveillance vehicles, financed through the AP 2013 were still not operational at the time of the onsite visits. Delivery delays and administrative inadequacies (e.g. failure to register the vehicles in a timely manner) are among the

⁴¹⁸ 'Further Strengthening of Border Control and Management of the Future EU External Borders through Modernisation of Technical Equipment, Development of Centralised Information Systems and Introduction of EU Best Practices and Standards in the Field of Border Control'

⁴¹⁹ 'Development of Digital TETRA Radio Communication System along the Western border and extension of the existing network along the South-East border and "blue" border';

⁴²⁰ See: *Strategy for Integrated Border Management of the Republic of Bulgaria*, Council of Ministers, Sofia, 2014.

⁴²¹ *Annual Risk Analysis 2015*. Frontex. Warsaw. 2015.

reasons given for this ineffectiveness. Mobile surveillance posts are a critical element of the ISCS, as they can be placed at spots with higher risk of violation (in particular in areas where the stationary posts and the peripheral system do not have coverage).

Sustainability

The effects of the action are sustainable as maintenance is included in the conditions of delivery by the contractor. The cameras in the stationary and perimeter surveillance elements have a warranted lifetime and are being replaced by the contractor at no cost during the warranty period in case of malfunction. The thermo-visual cameras in the perimeter system have a warranty of 10,000 working hours. The running maintenance costs of the perimeter system includes electricity and replacement of cooling devices for the camera, which are replaced by the contractor during the warranty period.

The accepted norm in the value of technical products is that same specifications will be considerably cheaper in the future than they are at time of delivery.

Obsolescence is an accepted risk. However, no upgrades of the technical capabilities of the system are deemed as crucial in the near future – i.e. the current technical specifications appear adequate for their intended purpose.

Trainings to operate with the ISCS have been conducted under each AP, where contractor representatives had trained internal trainers for the CDBP. In addition, more trainings are being planned by the CDBP which involve representatives from the contractor. CDBP deems that active participation of the contractor in the training greatly increases the quality of the results.

A particular concern voiced by operational and managerial staff in the CDBP is the poor conditions of the road infrastructure to and around the components of the ISCS. This often jeopardises maintenance efforts as many routes remain inaccessible, particularly in adverse weather conditions. The situation in some areas has been ameliorated to a degree thanks to the ongoing construction of a fence along the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The fence is constructed along the border line and in most occasions runs in very close proximity and parallel to the installed ISCS. As specialised and heavy equipment is needed to access the terrain for construction purposes, roads in those areas have been improved.

EU added value

The construction of the ISCS would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the EBF. Considering the scope and gravity of the ongoing migrant and refugee crisis the construction of the ISCS along a key entry point in the EU, which is the Bulgarian-Turkish border, has been crucial in providing adequate security at EU's external border.

Moreover, it may be speculated that EBF funding for the ISCS freed up sufficient local resources to enable the construction of a fence with local public funds. The construction of the fence along parts of the Bulgarian-Turkish border has sufficiently reduced the risk of illegal entry into EU territory.

General conclusions and recommendations

The investment was a response to rising migrant pressure on the Bulgarian-Turkish border and part of Bulgaria's strategic approach to completing an Integrated Border Management System that is in line with EU priorities the strengthening and enlargement of the Schengen Area and the further development of EUROSUR.

The objectives of the AP 2011-2013 have been achieved with good overall efficiency and effectiveness. The feedback from the conducted interviews reflects an overwhelmingly

positive experience with the newly operational components of the ISCS. Statistics, as communicated by the MoI, CDBP and Frontex on numbers of detections, crossings and shifts in migration routes corroborate to a large extent the positive impact the ISCS has had on overall border management, particularly in a period of unprecedented migrant crisis.

Nevertheless, there are a number of issues that remain outstanding and need to be addressed:

- The fence along the Bulgarian-Turkish border was built after the ISCS was conceived, designed and installed. This has had some negative impact on the functioning of the ISCS: 1) construction activities for the fence caused alerting of the respective cameras of the ISCS, thus increasing the share of 'false alarms'; 2) at some spots of the border, the 'fence' is built too close to the surveillance cameras and thus obscures the view of a very small number of cameras. A potential solution would be raising the cameras higher; however, as this is not part of the initial assignment, it would require additional investment. Nevertheless, the overall opinion of the interviewees was that the fence, in combination with the ISCS, has made the border more secure and the two facilities complement each other in preventing illegal border crossings.
- The ISCS, more precisely the perimeter surveillance systems, have thus far been completed by two different projects and funding types (Schengen and EBF) under different contractors. As such, currently, the management and functionality of both system suffers from a software incompatibility, i.e. both systems are independently operated with two different operational software systems.
- The portion of the ISCS built under Schengen financial instruments (from BCP Kapitan Andreevo to BCP Lesovo) is aligned deeper within the national territory of Bulgaria than the one being built with EBF, therefore it detects movement that is occurring within the national borders, and not at the border itself or within Turkish territory as is with the EBF-funded part of the ISCS.

The ISCS's effectiveness is decreased during bad weather conditions. However, this is accepted as a normal limitation in a system that involves visual recognition in a natural environment.

Hungary – Upgrade of two BCPs

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
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CS HU	Border checks – land	Priority 1	General Objectives A and B	2011	1,800,131	2,400,175
Short Description	Upgrade of two BCPs at the Ukrainian and Serbian borders (lane expansion, infrastructure improvement, new border check booths)					
Objective(s)	<p>EBF Objective: The efficient management by the MS of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure, a high level of protection and the smooth crossing in conformity with the Schengen <i>acquis</i> and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity</p> <p>Priority 1 – Support for the further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders</p> <p>MAP – Development of the control of cross-border traffic: further investments are necessary at the border crossing points for improving the existing equipment and systems.</p> <p>AP 2011 – Increasing the throughput capacity at public road border crossings (Röszke and Záhony)</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, survey					
Indicators	Increase of the throughput capacity and reduction of waiting times at entry and exit of the Hungarian borders; better working environment for officers at the BCPs.					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 MAP and of annual programmes, the AP 2011 final report, the 2011-2013 evaluation report, EC monitoring mission report (Sept 2014);
- 2) Interviews with representatives of the RA (three interviews) and the Beneficiaries (National Tax and Customs Administration – two interviews, and National Police – one interview) in Budapest;
- 3) Site visits and interviews with operational staff at the two BCPs, Röszke (five interviews) and Záhony (five interviews);
- 4) Survey of customs and national police officers working at the two BCPs (results expected by end of February 2016).

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

The Röszke BCP and the Záhony BCP are the two largest in Hungary, serving as gateways to the EU from the western Balkans and from Ukraine respectively. The traffic structure is different, with about 50% non-EU traffic at Röszke, and about 75-80% non-EU traffic at Záhony. Prior to the EBF investment, both BCPs experienced excessive waiting times and needed an increase in their throughput capacity to be able to secure

smooth crossing in conformity with the Schengen *acquis* and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity.

The **Röszke BCP** is located on the highway connecting Hungary and Serbia. It was built with funds from the PHARE programme in 1993. At the time of designing the BCP, the expectations were that it would be able to accommodate traffic growth. However, per interviews with Hungarian National Police officers, the Röszke BCP reached its capacity limit around 2004-2005.⁴²² The waiting times during the seasonal peaks (summer vacations, Easter and Christmas/New Year holidays) were unreasonably long (up to six hours), as the throughput capacity of the BCP was limited by the number of car lanes and the single bus lane that was used for both EU and non-EU traffic. The long queues at the border were causing inconveniences to travellers and also created environmental hazards (gas emissions of waiting cars, lack of toilet facilities along the road). In addition to the increased traffic (from about 700,000 incoming passengers in 2004-2005 to about 1 million in 2008), waiting times were affected by longer processing times as a result of compliance with VIS requirements.⁴²³

The **Záhony BCP** was experiencing even more severe waiting times. While there are several other smaller BCPs at the Hungarian-Ukrainian border, the Záhony one is the only one equipped to process all kinds of freight traffic, including hazardous materials. Unlike the Röszke BCP, where the peaks were seasonal, traffic at the Záhony BCP was more or less constant throughout the year, with weekly peaks around the weekends related to the movement of Ukrainian guest workers. Waiting times at Záhony were as high as 24 hours for passengers and 2-3 days for freight traffic.⁴²⁴ The location of the BCP did not allow for opening of additional lanes (it is adjacent to a bridge on the river Tisza and is surrounded by commercial properties on the Hungarian side, with no space for expansion). Several factors contributed to the increased traffic and longer waiting times at Záhony: 1) a larger number of Ukrainian citizens travelled abroad on a regular basis, e.g. as guest workers, for educational exchanges and even for medical checks in Hungary; 2) roads leading to Záhony, in particular on the Hungarian side of the border, improved, making the BCP a preferred crossing point; 3) checks in the VIS and SIS required more time; 4) stricter border checks were introduced in response to various violations (such as document fraud, smuggling of fuel, cigarettes and firearms, import to Ukraine of stolen vehicles, sometimes disassembled in parts).

Figures 16 and 17 illustrate the dynamics of passenger traffic at Röszke and Záhony BCPs for 2011 and for 2015:

⁴²² Interviews with Hungarian National Police officers (Jan 2016)

⁴²³ Data provided by the Hungarian National Police officers

⁴²⁴ Interviews with Hungarian National Tax and Customs Administration and National Police officers (Jan 2016)

Figure 49: Traffic pattern at Röszke BCP (outgoing and incoming travellers), 2011 and 2015

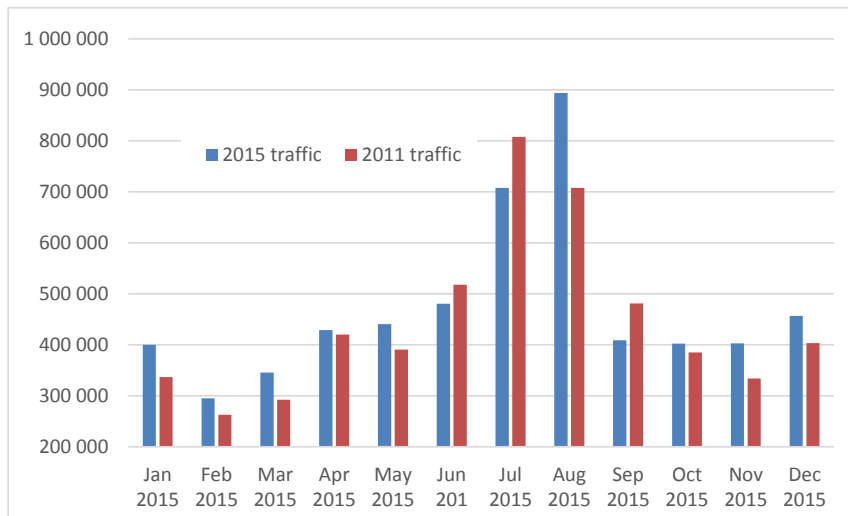
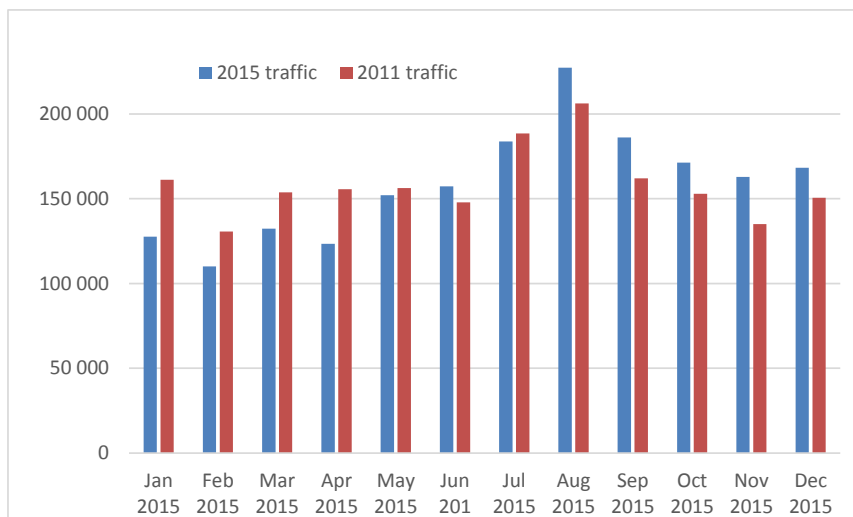


Figure 50: Traffic pattern at Záhony BCP (outgoing and incoming travellers), 2011 and 2015



Description of the project's objectives

The project's objectives were to increase the throughput capacities at both BCPs by opening additional lanes and modernising the border check booths. The desired impact of the investment was the reduction of waiting times for passengers and vehicles crossing the border, and the improvement of the working environment for the customs and police officers working at the two BCPs.⁴²⁵

The specific objectives of the investment were the following:⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ HU 2011 AP (Actions implementing Priority 1: Increasing the throughput capacity at public road border crossings)

⁴²⁶HU 2011 AP (Actions implementing Priority 1: Increasing the throughput capacity at public road border crossings)

At the Röske BCP: 1) construction of two lanes in both directions in addition to the present lanes, which will result in a significant increase in the throughput capacity of the border crossing; 2) widening of the lane leading to the bus control point so that two vehicles would be able to pass by each other in safety. This will enable the separation of vehicles registered in EU/EEA states and those registered in third countries, significantly reducing the waiting times for EU/EEA citizens.

At the Záhony BCP, the objective was to replace the approximately ten-year-old control booths. The existing booths were at some distance away from the designated control line, and the infrastructure was not suitable for single-stop controls. By installing integrated booths (for passport and customs control) which meet the significantly altered requirements and which are aligned with the control line, the control time per vehicle and per passenger was to be reduced, and thus the throughput capacity at the border crossing would be increased. In addition, a rain roof and an inspection station were to be built at the passport control point for incoming freight traffic, so that passport controllers and inspectors would be able to carry out border crossing tasks in a proper environment.

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for management

The project was planned as part of the 2011 AP and was implemented in the time period 2011 – June 2013.

The beneficiaries for the two BCP upgrades were the National Police (in charge of border control) and the National Tax and Customs Administration (in charge of customs control). As explained by the Responsible Authority, at the time of initiating and implementing the project the National Tax and Customs Administration was the institution operating all BCPs in Hungary. The project affected the working space for both police and customs checks, and the two institutions planned and implemented the investment in close cooperation. The Responsible Authority was the Ministry of the Interior, part of which is the National Police. The National Tax and Customs Administration carried out the tender procedures for the construction works and upgrades at the two BCPs. In 2014, the operation of BCPs was transferred to the National Police.⁴²⁷

Financial resources

In the 2011 AP, the estimated cost of the project was EUR 2,599,714, with EUR 1,892,502 (74%) coming from the EBF, and EUR 667,212 (26%) coming from the Hungarian national budget. At the completion of the project, the actual cost was EUR 2,400,175, with EBF contribution of EUR 1,800,131 (75%).⁴²⁸

Description of activities conducted under project

The project included the following activities⁴²⁹:

- opening up of two additional lanes at both directions (entry and exit) for the passenger traffic at Röske BCP;
- extension of the existing bus lane and adding a second lane for separation of traffic from EU/EEA and third countries at Röske BCP;
- installation of 17 new control booths for one-stop border and customs checks at Záhony BCP;

⁴²⁷ Per interviews with the National Tax and Customs Administration and the National Police (Jan 2016).

⁴²⁸ Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Hungary; HU 2011 FR

⁴²⁹ HU 2011 FR and interviews with National Tax and Customs Administration and National Police.

- construction of rain roof for passport control and inspection of freight traffic at Záhony BCP.

Figure 51: View of the Röszke BCP after the upgrade⁴³⁰



Figure 52: Exterior of the new integrated booths installed at Záhony BCP



⁴³⁰ All pictures provided by the Hungarian National Police.

Figure 20: Interior of the new integrated booths installed at Záhony BCP



Effects

- **Outputs:** The two BCPs received infrastructural upgrades designed to reduce waiting times at peak hours and to improve the working environment for police and customs officers performing checks of passengers and vehicles. In quantitative terms the output of the project provided: 1) two additional lanes in both directions; 2) one additional bus lane; 3) 17 new integrated booths for passport and customs checks; 4) one rain roof for checking of freight traffic.
- **Results:** As a result of this output, excessive waiting times were drastically reduced at both BCPs, despite several factors that had adverse effect on waiting times, such as stricter border checks, increased risk of violations and increased cross-border mobility of EU and third-country citizens. The improvements completed at both BCPs did provide a more comfortable experience for passengers and drivers and thus met the objective of ensuring smooth border crossing in conformity with the Schengen *acquis* and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity.
- **Impacts:** The action contributed to the EBF objective of providing 'efficient management by the MS of the flows of persons at the external borders in order to ensure, a high level of protection and the smooth crossing in conformity with the Schengen *acquis* and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity'. However, as traffic patterns evolve, new improvements may be needed in response to changing needs of travellers and priorities of border checks. The action had a positive environmental impact on the areas adjacent to the two BCPs, as long queues at the border created environmental hazards before the implementation of the project.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The investment was highly relevant to Hungary's needs in 2011, as long waiting lines at its borders with Serbia and Ukraine caused significant inconvenience for passenger and freight traffic entering and exiting the EU, and presented a challenge for police and customs officers. The long queues at the border presented an environmental threat to the areas adjacent to the border. Numerous complaints and negative media coverage also affected the reputation of the institutions performing border control.

Utility

The investment at both BCPs resulted in significant reduction of overall waiting time, and thus corresponded to the identified needs.

Working conditions improved dramatically at the Záhony BCP, where the existing booths before the project were in very poor condition (broken floors, narrow booths, inconvenient layout for passport and customs checks). The new booths were equipped with glass that blocked visual access from outside. They provided more space for the equipment and the officers, air-conditioning and overall safer and more ergonomic working conditions. At Röszke BCP, the improved infrastructure included parking lanes and pedestrian islands on the territory of the BCP.

Interviewed police and customs officers at both BCPs were very satisfied with the results of the project. Apart from the reduced waiting time, they pointed that the upgrade reduced the number of complaints from passengers crossing the border, and the number of critical media pieces dedicated to the long queues at the borders.

Efficiency

The effects of the actions performed under the project were achieved at a reasonable cost.

The tender procedures for both BCPs were only for the construction work. The design for the upgrade was negotiated, as the original designer of the BCP facilities had copyright for their upgrade. The selection criterion in the tenders was lowest price, and the available budget for the construction work was not disclosed to the bidders. There were five bidders in both tenders, and four bids were accepted as valid (one bidder was disqualified in each tender due to not meeting qualification criteria or not submitting requested documents).

Given the specific nature of the design and construction work for the upgrade of the two BCPs, it is not possible to compare the costs of the investment to similar projects in other MSs. Taking into account the volume of the design and construction work involved, and the tendering procedures (with no complaints from the losing bidders), it can be concluded that the funds were used in the most cost-effective way and the investment was efficient.

Officers interviewed at the Röszke BCP pointed out that during the upgrade the existing infrastructure has been utilised as much as possible. For instance, the existing bus lane had the width of a bus and a half, so only small stripe of asphalt was added to get two bus lanes. The existing lighting for the single lane was used for the new bus lane.

Complementarity and coherence

The projects at both BCPs were coherent and complementary to other projects completed with national and EU funds, including projects under the EBF. In particular, the following projects had similar and complementary impact in terms of improving throughout capacity and reducing waiting times at the BCPs:

An additional BCP designed to serve local traffic was re-opened (Röszke-Horgos BCP) in the vicinity of the highway Röszke BCP (financed by EBF AP 2013). The project alleviated the burden on the Röszke motorway border crossing point since local pedestrians, cyclists, slow vehicles and agricultural vehicles could be reoriented through this new BCP.

Under another EBF project (2012 AP), based on an agreement reached between Hungary and Serbia on the control of border traffic by road, rail and waterway, a common Hungarian-Serbian contact point was established at the Röszke road border crossing.

A new BCP is planned to be opened at the Ukrainian border to ease the burden at Záhony BCP. Its preparation – environmental impact assessment and draft plans – has been

funded by the EBF (2013 AP). The construction of the BCP will be implemented under the ISF.

Schengen buses acquired under EBF (2011-2013 APs) have been utilised for both surveillance and control needs, adding throughput capacity to BCPs experiencing peaks in traffic.⁴³¹

Effectiveness

The project achieved its objectives, as evidenced by officers of the National Police and the National Tax and Customs Administration interviewed in Budapest and at the two BCPs. Waiting times at peak periods have been reduced and travellers' satisfaction has increased.

The number of days when waiting time exceeded 30 minutes was reduced from 97 to 87 at entry, and 36 to 32 at exit (Röszke BCP), and from 97 to 89 in both directions (Záhony BCP). On a regular day in 2015, there were no waiting times for passenger cars. Minibuses used for transportation of both passengers and goods experience longer waiting times, in particular at exit, due to stricter checks. The irregular pattern of the traffic (for instance trucks or buses moving in groups and arriving at the same time at the BCPs) still can cause delays that are difficult to predict or avoid.

Apart from the reduced waiting time, they pointed out that the upgrade reduced the number of complaints from passengers crossing the border, and the number of critical media pieces dedicated to the long queues at the borders.

An important external factor driving the waiting times at the two BCPs is the throughput capacity on the other side of the border. At the Röszke BCP, for instance, outgoing traffic may be delayed due to lower capacity to process passengers and vehicles on the Serbian side.

Sustainability

The effects of the action are sustainable as the upgrades are well maintained and continue to serve their intended purpose, with maintenance costs covered by the national budget.⁴³²

New enlargements of the two BCP are not envisioned for the near future. At Záhony, a bridge enlargement may be needed at some point, but this would need to be coordinated with the Ukrainian authorities. The most viable alternative suggested by officers at both BCPs is to provide live information to passengers at times of unusually intense traffic when the adjacent BCP may ease the waiting times. However, the existing road infrastructure at both sides of the borders with Serbia and Ukraine funnels the traffic through Röszke and Záhony, respectively, and despite communication efforts by the National Police through various channels (radio, information boards at the highway suggesting alternative routes), the traffic patterns have proved resistant to change.

The National Police is attempting to optimise traffic management through analysis of traffic patterns and predicting traffic peaks. For instance, national holidays in Germany may generate increased traffic of guest workers going home.

⁴³¹ Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Hungary

⁴³² Per observation during field visits and interviews with officers at the two BCPs.

A new BCP is being constructed at the Ukrainian border (in Nagyhodos), financed by the ISF, which is expected to ease the waiting times at peak hours at Záhony. The new BCP will be open 12 hours a day.

In July 2014 an alternative BCP close to the Rösztke highway BCP was opened, designed to serve local cross-border traffic (e.g. Serbians or Hungarians crossing the border for shopping).

An important external factor driving the waiting times at the two BCPs is the throughput capacity on the other side of the border. At the Rösztke BCP, for instance, outgoing traffic may be delayed due to lower capacity to process passengers and vehicles on the Serbian side.

EU added value

The re-construction and upgrade projects completed at the two BCPs required significant investments that would not have been made without the support of the EBF. The investment at the EU external borders with Serbia and Ukraine had a positive impact on travellers who were generally travelling to and from other Member States.

General conclusions

The investment was in response to severe delays at two major external border crossing points where a significant share of the passenger and freight traffic exited and entered the EU. The major objective of the investment was to reduce waiting time and secure respectful treatment and dignity for travellers crossing the Hungarian border with Serbia and Ukraine.

The objectives of the projects were achieved in terms of reducing extreme waiting times during peak periods. At the same time, due to external factors such as higher than expected cross-border traffic, the need for stricter passport and customs control, lack of alternative BCPs or the unwillingness of travellers to use alternative routes, waiting times may remain high during peak times (summer and Easter/Christmas/New Year vacations at Rösztke BCP, and weekly peaks at the Záhony BCP.)

Both travellers' and border staff's satisfaction with the upgrade is high. The impact of the project was well matched with the effect of several other EBF and future ISF projects designed to provide a smooth border crossing experience for legal traffic.

The sustainability of the investment can be evaluated as very high. The upgraded facilities are used at their capacity, while constant efforts are being made to analyse traffic patterns and risks and to respond accordingly in order to keep waiting times as low as possible.

Greece – ad hoc control at green borders

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS EL	Border control – ad hoc	Priority 1 and 2	General Objectives A and B	2011-2013	38,244,301	43,680,898
Short Description	The project’s objectives were to improve the capacity of the two police directorates in the Evros region (Orestiada and Alexandroupolis) to respond to the emergency situation at the land border with Turkey and inside the county as a result of the high number of illegal border crossings.					
Objective(s)	Improvement of the border control activities and prevention of illegal border crossings by deploying additional forces at the land border with Turkey (Evros region).					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, site visit					
Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) number of police officers deployed to reinforce the local Police Directorates in Orestiada and Alexandroupolis; 2) number of people apprehended at the land border with Turkey; 3) immigration pressure (attempts at illegal border crossing) at the land border with Turkey. 					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 MAP and of annual programmes, the AP 2011 final reports, the 2011-2013 evaluation report, audit reports (Performance audit on the effectiveness of the External Borders Fund, MS Greece (Nov 2013), ‘Migration and asylum: mounting tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean’ report of PACE (Jan 2013); risk analysis of Frontex; independent investigative reports on the situation at the Greek-Turkish border in the period 2011-2015
- 2) Site visits and interviews with representatives of the RA (two interviews) and the Beneficiaries (Police Directorate of Orestiada) – three interviews with senior officials in Orestiada, and five interviews with officers who participated in the reinforcement operation;

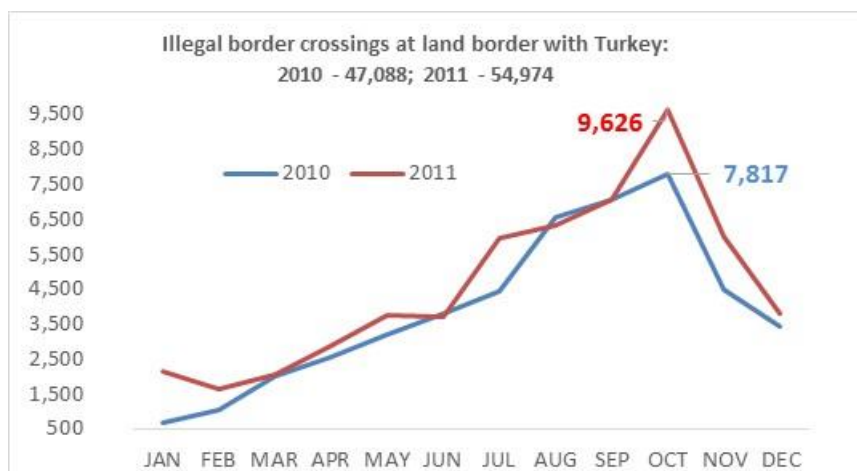
Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

The migration pressure at Greece’s land border with Turkey was growing every month in 2010, reaching a peak of 7,817 illegal border crossings in the month of October. The total number for 2010 only at the land border with Turkey was 47,088 (per data presented by the Hellenic Police). This was more than five times the number in 2009. It was obvious that the available human resources, patrol vehicles and surveillance

equipment in the Evros region (i.e. the region where the land border with Turkey is) could not be sufficient to respond to this fivefold increase. It should be noted that unlike the current situation, when most of the migrants entering Greece choose the sea route, in 2010 only 6,204 illegal border crossing took place at the Greek-Turkish sea borders. To deal with the migration pressure at its borders and inside the country, Greece received financial support through several EU funds (European Refugee Fund, Return Fund and EBF), and operational support from Frontex through joint operations (Poseidon Land and Poseidon Sea). In October 2010, Greece requested the assistance of the Rapid Border Intervention Teams (RABIT), indicating that despite its efforts and its ongoing collaboration with Frontex it was facing exceptional pressure due to the large number of people crossing the border irregularly every day. The deployment of RABIT provided substantial relief at the Greek-Turkish land border, reducing the irregular border crossings to almost a quarter compared to the beginning of the operation. However, the RABIT forces could only be deployed for a limited time. The operation lasted for four months and ended on 2 March 2011. During the RABIT intervention, 200 well-trained guest officers from 26 Member States assisted their Greek colleagues in controlling the border areas as well as in identifying the apprehended irregular immigrants.⁴³³

While the strategic impact of the RABIT operation should not be underestimated, as soon as the operation ended the dynamics of illegal border crossings at the land border with Turkey returned to the patterns observed in 2010, with peaks in the summer and autumn months that exceeded those in 2010. The total number of detections in 2011 was 54,974 (17% increase compared to 2010). The peak, again in October, was 9,626 illegal border crossings.

Figure 53: Illegal border crossing at border with Turkey



Source: Hellenic Police (Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the EBF under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Greece)

The Police Directorates of Orestiada and of Alexandroupolis needed additional border guards to secure the 270-km long land border with Turkey. The plan was to redeploy a large number of officers at the beginning of the reinforcement operation (about 1,800) from other police directorates in Greece, and to try to reduce their number gradually, as the emergency situation at the border came under control. In the second half of 2012, the number of detections at the land border dropped dramatically, from a peak of 6,914 in July, to less than 100 detections per month in November and December 2012.⁴³⁴ Thus,

⁴³³ MEMO/11/130, *Frontex and the RABIT Operation at the Greek-Turkish Border*, EC (Brussels, 2 March 2011)

⁴³⁴ Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Greece, Annex B: Irregular migration data for the 2010-2015 period.

according to the data presented by the Hellenic Police, the reinforcement operation, launched in August 2012, had an immediate impact on the number of illegal border crossings at the Greek-Turkish land border. The number of detections in 2013 was only 1,109, and in 2014 1,914. At the end of 2012, a barbed wire fence was completed, sealing the small portion of the Greek-Turkish border (about 10.5 km) not delineated by the river Evros, where a significant share of the illegal border crossings were taking place.

The Eastern Mediterranean Route is the route taken by illegal migrants transiting through Turkey and entering the EU through eastern Greece, southern Bulgaria or Cyprus. In 2010, irregular migration between Turkey and Greece on the Eastern Mediterranean Route (land and sea borders) was undoubtedly the main challenge at the EU level. At this border, detections of illegal border-crossing by migrants who invariably intended to transit Greece to settle in other Member States, increased by 45% between 2009 and 2010. This was one of the largest single episodes of illegal border-crossing into the EU ever recorded. In 2010, the Greek authorities reported 47,706 detections at the land border with Turkey. In 2011, there were a total of 57,000 illegal border crossings along the Turkish frontier.

The situation at EU external borders changed in 2012, when illegal border-crossing dropped sharply by 49% compared to 2011, due mainly to the combined effects of enhanced surveillance at the land border between Greece and Turkey, where detections decreased by 44%, and to a sharp drop in the Central Mediterranean, where detections fell from 59,000 in 2011, mostly in connection to the Arab Spring, to 10,379 in 2012.⁴³⁵ In 2012, the nationality with the most dramatic change in the number of detections were Syrians, both in terms of relative growth and absolute number, from 1,616 in 2011 to 7,903 in 2012 (+389%). A large majority of all detected Syrian migrants were reported from the Greek land border with Turkey. In 2013, detections of illegal border-crossing along the EU's external borders sharply increased between 2012 and 2013, from 72,437 to 107,365, which represented an annual increase of 48%. In terms of nationalities, Syrians, Eritreans, Afghans and Albanians together accounted for 52% of total detections (or 55,359). Syrians alone (25,546) represented almost a quarter of the total for the year 2013. In 2014, the Eastern Mediterranean Route was the second largest area for detections of illegal border-crossing in the European Union, almost twice as much as in 2013. In fact, 50,800 detections were reported from the area, representing 18% of the EU total. Year 2015 marked the explosion of the refugee crisis, with Greece receiving thousands of migrants and refugees every day.

Description of the project's objectives

The project's objectives were to improve the capacity of the two police directorates in the Evros region (Orestiada and Alexandroupolis) to respond to the emergency situation at the land border with Turkey and inside the county as a result of the high number of illegal border crossings. In particular, the reinforcement operation in Evros involved the redeployment of border guards and equipment from other regions with the purpose of strengthening border surveillance and prevention of illegal entries into the country. An additional task of the redeployed officers was to assist in the screening and asylum processing of irregular migrants who were already in the Evros region.

Effects

- **Outputs:** The project was financed under the 2011, 2012 and 2013 AP and its main output was the covering of the cost of redeployment of border guards from

⁴³⁵ Frontex Annual Risk Analysis 2013.

other regions in the region of Evros. Between August 2012 and June 2015, a total of 5,861 were redeployed in the Evros region. The EBF contribution was used to cover the following costs:

- Travel and per diem expenses for the police personnel that were moved to the Evros region;
- Purchase of personal protective equipment and sanitary materials against mosquito bites;
- Supply of repair and maintenance services for patrol vehicles;
- Purchase and installation of 42 tents used for ambushes.

Resources mobilised for the management of EU contribution

The Responsible Authority (Ministry of Public Order & Citizen Protection/ European & Development Programs Division) acted as the executing body, and the final beneficiary for the project was the Hellenic Police. As the project covered basically operating costs for redeployment of regular personnel, the management of the project did not require the mobilisation of additional resources.

Time spent

The reinforcement operation was covered by the 2011, 2012 and 2013 AP. The operation itself was launched in August 2012 and lasted through 30 June 2015.

Description of activities conducted under project

There are three potential sources documenting activities: Initial activity from annual reports; activities as documented in the final report; and activities as documented in the interview.

Per the Final Report for 2011 AP, the following activities were completed:

- 1) provision of catering services for the redeployed officers;
- 2) transportation services for redeployed officers;
- 3) supply of personal protective equipment and sanitary materials;
- 4) supply of repair and maintenance services and corresponding spare parts for the vehicles redeployed in the reinforcement operation;
- 5) travel expenses and per diem compensation for the police personnel re-assigned to the Evros region

It should be noted that the cost of travel and per diem for redeployed officers amounted to about 97% of all eligible costs of the project under the 2011 AP.⁴³⁶

A detailed breakdown of costs under the 2012 and 2013 AP was not available. It is very likely that the share of travel expenses and per diem was similar to the 2011 AP.

Per interviews at the Orestiada police directorate, the majority of redeployed officers have been utilised to staff patrols along the border. Additional tasks have been the screening and processing of apprehended irregular migrants located in the Evros region.

⁴³⁶ Final Report on Implementation of AP 2011, Greece, Ministry of Public Order and Citizen Protection (Action 3.1.18, p.94).

Effects

- **Outputs** – redeployment of a total of 5,861 police officers to reinforce the capacity of the Orestiada and Alexandroupolis police directorates in the framework of an operation designed to provide adequate response to a wave of irregular migration at the Greek-Turkish land border.
- **Results** – as a result of the reinforcement of the two police directorates at the Greek-Turkish land border, the Evros region was no longer the preferred entry point into Greece on the East Mediterranean Route. The illegal border crossings dropped from several thousand per month prior to the operation to almost none in the following months. The operation also sent a definitive message to facilitators that the EU external border is under intense surveillance and irregular crossing is not tolerated;
- **Impacts** – the immediate impact of the reinforcement operation met the EBF objective of strengthening the control at EU external borders. At the same time, the operation had a partial displacement effect, as gradually the flow of migrants from Turkey was re-directed to the Aegean Sea border and the Greek islands close to the Turkish shore. While the cumulative number of irregular border crossings in 2012 and 2013 did come down in comparison to 2011, in 2014 it started to grow again, and in 2015 exploded to over 5 times the 2011 entries. The 2015 migration wave was certainly not related to the reinforcement operation in the Evros region, nor could it be foreseen in the context of the 2011-2013 EBF activities.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The reinforcement operation in the Evros region was relevant to the need for Greece to secure adequate border control at its land border with Turkey in an emergency situation created by a significant surge in the number of irregular border crossings. Securing the Greek-Turkish border was a prerequisite for the implementation of other EBF projects under the 2011-2013 APs that had a more direct relevance for the needs of Greece and the EBF priorities and objectives, in particular the efficient organisation and control of surveillance and the development of the national components of a European Surveillance System (Priority 1 and 2).

As long as the immediate need of protecting the Greek-Turkish land border is concerned, the project was highly relevant, as it responded quickly to the need for a much higher number of border guards than the ones available before the launching of the operation.

Utility

The utility of the project was high, as it brought immediate relief of the emergency situation it was designed to resolve. It had not only a short-term effect in stopping the flow of illegal border crossings, but it also helped further risk analysis by providing intelligence on the modus operandi of facilitator networks and the most frequently used routes for smuggling of people. In the course of the operation, cooperation with the Turkish border guards was improved. Per interviews at the Orestiada police directorate, the operation also addressed concerns of the local population on both sides of the border, as it was suffering certain damages due to the uncontrolled movement of people.

Efficiency

Per interviews with Hellenic Police officers in Orestiada, all travel expenses and per diem compensation (i.e. roughly 97% of all costs of the project) were in line with official rates and tariffs for employees' work-related travel.⁴³⁷ In particular, the per diem cost per Police Officer deployed to Evros region was EUR 29.35, with EUR 35.22 to EUR 45.00 for accommodation (depending on the period) and EUR 100 for transportation costs (depending on the distance from the Service of origin to Evros).⁴³⁸ However, a breakdown of these costs (number of redeployed officers, number of days, etc.) that could verify the amounts claimed under the EBF was not provided by the Responsible Authority or by the final beneficiary, as the accounting system was not able to provide the requested information.

Thus, we cannot confirm whether the claimed amounts under the EBF were used as intended. An audit report by the European Court of Auditors from November 2013 had the following finding: 'There were no procurement procedures for operational costs related to purchases and insufficient verification by the RA that expenditure related to the EBF. As a result, the principles of Sound Financial Management were compromised.'⁴³⁹

An analysis of the number of irregular border crossings per year for the period 2011-2014 shows that while the pressure at the Greek-Turkish border was placed under control at the end of 2012 / beginning of 2013, expenditure under the reinforcement operation remained relatively high throughout the eligibility period of the 2013 AP (through 30 June 2015). While the EBF contribution under the 2012 AP was EUR 13 million (compared to EUR 18 million under the 2011 AP), the number of illegal border crossings in 2013 and 2014 were only 1,109 and 1,914 respectively. The number of deployed officers under the 2012 AP was 1,631 and under the 2013 AP it was 1,321.⁴⁴⁰ On the one hand, it can be claimed that the reduced pressure at the border was achieved thanks to the high number of additional officers that were deployed. On the other hand, one could expect that with the reduction of the pressure in the Evros region, the number of additional police officers could have been decreased.

Another point is that while the reinforcement operation was financed as a response to an emergency situation under the 2011 AP, the efficiency of its extension under the 2012 and 2013 AP can be questioned. If the protection of the land border with Turkey did require the deployment of a much higher level of human resources, they could be permanently relocated to the two police directorates in the Evros region, instead of being redeployed from other regions (and thus requiring additional travel and per diem compensation).

In view of the above considerations, we believe that the project's efficiency was low, in particular the extension of the project under the 2012 and 2013 AP.

Complementarity and coherence

The project built upon the Frontex joint operations Poseidon Land (starting in 2011), and the RABIT operation at the end of 2011 and beginning of 2012. While the Frontex operations involved deployment of guest border guards from other Member States to help with the migration pressure at the external EU borders of Greece and Bulgaria, this project consisted of redeployment of Greek police officers from other border regions.

⁴³⁷ Greek national Law 2685/1999 (as quoted by the Hellenic Police).

⁴³⁸ Per data presented by the Hellenic Police.

⁴³⁹ Audit report by the European Court of Auditors, Nov 2013 – Ref. PF-5956.

⁴⁴⁰ Data of illegal border crossings in the Evros region presented by the Hellenic Police.

Among the numerous EBF projects that were coherent with and complementary to the objectives of the reinforcement operation at the land border with Turkey the following should be mentioned:

- Upgrading of the police services' infrastructures at the external land borders involved in the border control, including the establishment/upgrading of Screening Centres and temporary screening and detention facilities (AP 2011, 2012);
- Establishment of First Reception Centres in Evros region and for the operation of the First Reception Service (AP 2011)
- Purchase of patrol motorcycles, off-road vehicles, police patrol dogs, vehicles for the transportation of the apprehended illegal immigrants and a patrol vessel (AP 2012-2013)
- Support of the operational and management costs related to the implementation of integrated border management system at the land Greek-Turkish border and First Reception Centres (AP 2011-2013)

Effectiveness

The reinforcement operation achieved its objective of strengthening border surveillance at the Greek-Turkish land border and reducing to a minimum the number of illegal border crossings at the Greek-Turkish land border. Thanks to the increased capacity in the Evros region, the Hellenic police acquired additional understanding of the facilitators' modus operandi, apprehended vehicles used in people smuggling and arrested facilitators.

Sustainability

By definition, as the reinforcement operation covered operating costs for the deployment of additional personnel at the Greek-Turkish land border, its sustainability was low. The displacement effect that shifted the migration pressure to the Greek islands may be lost if the land border is not protected with adequate technical and human resources.

Per data provided by the Hellenic Police, after the end of the EBF-supported operation, an additional 150 police officers were deployed for two months in the Evros region with Emergency Assistance 2015 of ISF in the amount of EUR 733,532, while the estimated budget under ISF Multi Annual Programme is about EUR 4 million (to begin in the first half of 2016).

EU added value

Per interviews with representatives of the Police Directorates and the Responsible Authority, Greece did not have the necessary funding from the national budget to support the reinforcement operation at the Greek-Turkish border and the support from the EBF was indispensable in meeting the needs of additional personnel to patrol the border at times of extreme migration pressure.

General conclusions

The reinforcement operation in the Evros region had a strong and quick impact on the migration pressure experienced at the Greek-Turkish land border in 2011 and 2012. It demonstrated that EU funds can be quickly channelled to respond to emergency situations at the EU external borders.

The overall efficiency of the operation can be questioned, as it was extended for 34 months, which we believe is a very long period for an emergency response.

Another consequence of the reinforcement operation in the Evros region is that it absorbed a significant share of the EBF contributions to Greece (50% of the AP 2011 contributions, 33% of the 2012 AP and 17% of the 2013 AP).

One of the impacts of the operation was to displace the migration flow from the land border with Turkey to the sea border (the eastern and northern islands of the Aegean Sea). Thus, from the point of view of Greek national and EU external borders, the operation did not achieve better control on the entire border on the East Mediterranean migration route, but only on one section of the border.

Switzerland – N-VIS

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority (EBF-Related Objectives	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS CH	Introduction of N-VIS system	Priority 4	General Objectives B and D	2011 /multiannual project 2010-2011/ 2012	6,336,660	8,999,640
Short Description	Introduction of the national visa system and its connection to the CS-VIS and introduction of a new software system – ORBIS					
Objective(s)	EBF and MAP – Priority 4: Support for the establishment of IT systems required for implementation of the Community legal instruments in the field of external borders and visas. MAP Operational objective 2.2.3 – Successful and efficient introduction of the VIS and its associated actions.					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, survey					
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of the user and acceptance tests • Introduction of a national interface (N-VIS) and connection to the CS-VIS • Number of consular offices and national offices connected to the system • Successful development, launch of the application and separation from Zemis /the central system • Processing of visa applications by the new system • Visa filling is customer- and user-friendly • Possibility of creating online applications is introduced • Shortening of the clerks' working hours • Time savings through online processing of application data • Successful replacing the EVA components by Java components • Use of Java components enables easier and more efficient cooperation with various authorities 					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 Multi annual programme (MAP) and 2011-2013 Annual programmes (AP); Final reports on implementation of the annual programmes 2011-2012; Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Switzerland; EC monitoring mission report (Sept 2014); Description of management and control system of the EBF /Version 5, 30 June 2014/; Commission answer to the proposal of the Swiss Authorities on the financial correction on the 2011 Annual Programme, Letter from the EU Commission DG HOME from 26.11.2015 (Commission answer on financial corrections); Projects implementation reports of the beneficiary
- 2) Interviews with representatives of:

- the responsible authority of the EBF – Section Europe within the State Secretariat for Migration, Federal Department of Justice and Police /an interview with the Head of Section Europe and Head of Responsible authority; an interview with a Policy advisor European funds at Section Europe
 - the beneficiary of the projects – the Federal office for Migration /an interview with Co-Head of Visa Policy Section in Entry Division and an interview with a Policy Advisor at Visa Policy Section, Entry Division
 - end-users of VIS /one interview with a specialist from Division Admission and Stay at the Federal Office for Migration
- 3) Site visit at the test centre of the N-VIS at the Office for Migration in Bern;
- 4) Survey – review of the results of survey conducted in June/July 2015 for the Ex-post evaluation report 2010-2013. A total of 360 end-users were surveyed. The survey questionnaire covered the experience with the N-VIS system, its user-friendliness and the end-user training.

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

Since the implementation of the Schengen *acquis* in October 2008 Switzerland has been taking part in the Schengen cooperation at an operational level.⁴⁴¹ On accession to the Schengen Area, Switzerland was obliged (among other requirements) to link its national visa system (N-VIS) to the central visa information system (CS-VIS) of the EU. The primary aim of this link was to contribute to internal security, to ease the control at EU external borders and to fight against visa falsification. Switzerland started participating in the EBF in 2010 and by that time it had already started its preparation of the connection of the national system to the CS-VIS.⁴⁴²

Following the elimination of checks at internal borders, Switzerland does not apply systematic checks at the internal land borders anymore. To make the border control more effective and efficient, Switzerland strived to implement the improvements established under the Schengen accession.⁴⁴³ During the preparation of the MAP the following two priorities were identified:

- 1) the need to constantly invest in the technical infrastructure and to train staff in its use; and
- 2) the evaluation of the measures taken in origin and transit countries to prevent irregular migration showed that Switzerland was in rather weak position compared to other Schengen member states.⁴⁴⁴

Thus, the following specific needs were defined: more efficient information exchange, more effective border controls, introduction of powerful and compatible search and information systems through modern IT systems, education and training of relevant authorities and consular staff.

By October 2010 the old Swiss visa issuing system (EVA) was adapted to the VIS requirements, complying with the VIS Regulation and the Visa Code. The Swiss representations abroad were prepared for necessary field tests and rollout of the VIS-enabled system on time. Simultaneously to the implementation of the visa system, the

⁴⁴¹ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁴⁴² MAP 2011-2013; interviews with the Swiss Responsible Authority

⁴⁴³ MAP 2011-2013

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

introduction of the communication tool 'VIS Mail' was planned. In connection with the introduction of N-VIS, a limited number of trainings were carried out for domestic authorities. As part of the VIS rollout, from mid-2011, comprehensive training measures were necessary – both on the technical know-how to collect biometric data and the specialist knowledge needed for issuing of visas. At the same time preparation for the introduction of systems for recording of biometric data was underway.⁴⁴⁵

Therefore the intervention logic of the MAP included investments linked to the visa information system and support for the establishment of IT systems required for the implementation of the Schengen legislation in the areas of external borders and visas (commissioning of the national VIS). The measures had to contribute to increased security not only in Switzerland but in the entire Schengen Area.

Description of the project's objectives

Overall objectives of the actions were in the first place the fulfilment of Switzerland's obligations as a Schengen associated state and the facilitation of the common visa policies, improvement of consulate cooperation and the communication among authorities in charge of visas.

The operational objective identified in the 2011-2013 MAP was 'Successful and efficient introduction of the VIS and its associated action'.⁴⁴⁶ It included contribution to the introduction of a VIS-capable system within the deadline laid down by the European Commission (Multiannual project 2010-2011) and replacement of the existing national visa issuing system with a new one (project under AP 2012).⁴⁴⁷

Specific objectives of the projects are identified as follows:

- Improved data exchange between Member States on visa applications and related decisions;
- Effective and efficient application of EU legislation in the fields of external borders and visas;
- Improved data verification process and efficient issuance of visa applications.

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for management

The introduction of the VIS system took place in stages. The first preparatory stage was planned as a multiannual project; it began in 2010 and continued under the AP 2011 with the project '*Preparation for introduction of VIS /N-VIS RE 2*'. This project included the linkage of the national system to the CS-VIS system according to EU schedule.⁴⁴⁸ A separate project: '*Preparation for introduction of N-VIS RE 3*' was realised under AP 2012.⁴⁴⁹ The entire process ended with the launch of the new system (ORBIS) – in January 2014.⁴⁵⁰

The responsible authority for the implementation of the MAP in Switzerland was 'Section Europe' within the Federal Office for Migration (renamed State Secretariat for Migration in

⁴⁴⁵ Final report 2011 and Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013 and interviews with beneficiary

⁴⁴⁶ MAP 2011-2013

⁴⁴⁷ MAP 2011-2013

⁴⁴⁸ AP 2011

⁴⁴⁹ AP 2012

⁴⁵⁰ Final report 2012

2015) of the Federal Department of Justice and Police. The Federal Office for Migration (FOM) was the beneficiary of the projects. FOM (at federal level) was entrusted with the implementation and application tasks relating to Schengen membership, particularly with respect to external borders. The N-VIS system is used by cantonal migration offices, border guards and representations of Switzerland abroad.

Financial resources

Financial plan and amendments as well as financial implementation are presented in Table 5.⁴⁵¹

Table 5: Financial information for Swiss N-VIS programme

Action	Programmed EU contribution (EUR)	Programmed total public contribution (EUR)	Final EU contribution (EUR)	Implementation rate (%)
Financial plan of the 2010 Annual Programme adopted on 14.03.2011				
Action 2: Preparation for introduction of VIS – N-VIS RE 2 (2010 – 2)	3,646,043	6,072,785	3,646,043	100
Financial plan of the 2011 Annual Programme adopted on 16.08.2011				
Action 2: Preparation for introduction of VIS – N-VIS RE 2 (Continuation from 2010, 2011 – 2)	2,284,508	1,115,492	Not applicable	Not applicable -
Financial plan of the revised 2011 Annual Programme adopted on 27.06.2013*				
Action 2: Preparation for introduction of VIS – N-VIS RE 2 (Continuation from 2010, 2011 – 2)	2,676,000	892,000	2,459,160	91
Financial plan of the 2012 Annual Programme adopted on 27.02.2012				
Action 2: Preparation for introduction of VIS -N-VIS RE3, ORBIS (2012 – 2)	3,877,500	1,292,500	3,877,500	100

An amendment of the AP 2011 programme was necessary because the original measure under action 1 of AP 2011 was not fully achieved within the funding period. The budget was revised and the EU contribution to the N-VIS project was also increased to 75% in order to absorb funds freed up from action 1.⁴⁵²

A financial correction of EUR 216,839.88 was implemented by the Commission on the AP 2010 contribution due to reported conflict of interests on two contracts. The responsible authority was informed of the decision in November 2015; thus the final amount of EBF funding changed in comparison to that reported in the national evaluation report 2010-2013.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ AP and Final report 2011, AP and Final report 2012 and Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁴⁵² Final report 2011

⁴⁵³ Commission answer on financial corrections

Description of activities conducted under project

Switzerland was obliged to connect its national visa system to the EU's central visa system, thereby creating the basis for capturing and forwarding biometric data to the VIS and CS-VIS. The project was initially supported in the 2010 AP and was continued under the 2011 AP.⁴⁵⁴ It involved the development of the necessary interfaces, functionalities and system components which were vital for connecting the national operation system to the CS-VIS. It followed the EU's roll-out plan, which was postponed a few times, and the launch was finally completed in October 2011. All national offices dealing with visas and 120 foreign representations were connected to the system and in addition the system for registration of biometric data was introduced (financed by national funding⁴⁵⁵)⁴⁵⁶. Switzerland was in principle technically ready for connection to the central system in June 2011.⁴⁵⁷ The repeated postponement of the introduction of the VIS slightly increased its cost. The postponements however enabled the FOM to conduct additional tests.⁴⁵⁸ It was possible to keep the risks associated with the introduction to a minimum through the comprehensive tests and system optimisation. No severe problems with the system have been reported since the connection.⁴⁵⁹⁴⁶⁰

In a separate project financed under the 2012 AP, the existing VIS system (the so-called EVA) was replaced with a new interface – the JAVA-based ORBIS system. The EVA system was outdated and did not meet all needs of the end-users after its connection to the CS-VIS.⁴⁶¹ The new ORBIS system fully complies with the visa registration process according to the Schengen code requirements and is online based. It is connected to the system for registration of biometric data. It includes communication tools for information exchange between authorities and with other member states. The system was introduced in January 2014 in all locations at once. No interruptions or problems with the system have been reported since⁴⁶² Relevant training courses were organised for the end-users of the system.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁴ AP 2010 and AP 2011

⁴⁵⁵ Interviews with beneficiary

⁴⁵⁶ Projects implementation reports

⁴⁵⁷ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Interviews with the beneficiary

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ AP 2012 and Final report 2012; Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

Figure 54: N-VIS ORBIS system – test visa application registration process

The screenshot displays the N-VIS ORBIS system interface for a test visa application registration process. The interface is organized into several sections:

- Navigation:** Top bar with 'News', 'Application', 'Information', 'Reports', 'Administration', and 'Help'.
- Form Progress:** 'Basic data', 'Form data', and 'Release' tabs.
- Form Fields:**
 - Basic data:** MIRZ, Application (Test, User, 10.10.1980, Male, ALB / Albania), Registered (2051493), Modified, ZEMIS no., Application no., Fingerprints, Facial image.
 - Release:** Type of visa (Schengen), Representation for, Subsequent registration.
 - Personal data:** ZEMIS no., Surname(s), Date of birth, Sex (Male, Female, Unknown), Nationality, National ID no.
 - Travel document:** Number of travel document, Valid until, Issued by.
 - Biometrics:** Facial image (Capture, Copy, No picture), Fingerprints (Capture, Copy, Exempt), Reason for exemption, Mobile eDoc station.
 - Fees:** Subject to charge, Service, Booking description, Amount, Total fees.
- Visa Sticker Search:** A section for searching and checking visa stickers, including fields for Location, Visa sticker status, Number from/to, and Date from/to. A table below shows search results.

Batch	Visa sticker number	Location	Application no.	User	Date
300016001 - 300016500	CHE300016202	Bern, FDJP, SEM, AuG		2051493	23.02.2016
300016001 - 300016500	CHE300016203	Bern, FDJP, SEM, AuG		2051493	23.02.2016
300016001 - 300016500	CHE300016205	Bern, FDJP, SEM, AuG		2051493	23.02.2016

Source: Test centre at the Office for Migration, Bern

Effects

• Outputs:

- 1) Development of new applications and national interface (N-VIS), which allows connection to the CS-VIS
- 2) Connection of the national visa system to the CS-VIS according to the EU roll-out plan
- 3) Field test at Switzerland's representation in Istanbul from 23 March to 8 April 2011, including an analysis of results and assessment of lessons learned
- 4) Worldwide launch of the new Java-based visa application ORBIS on 20 January 2014, replacing the outdated national electronic visa issuing system (EVA)
- 5) ORBIS is separated from the central migration information system of Switzerland (ZEMIS)
- 6) Interface for online visa application developed
- 7) 11 training missions at 18 locations abroad and over 20 ORBIS introductory courses in Switzerland organised (October 2013-January 2014)
- 8) Training version of ORBIS and an eLearning tool created for access by end-users

- **Results:**

The projects resulted in connection of the N-VIS to the CS-VIS system according to the EU's roll-out plan. The new visa system software – ORBIS – was introduced and the end-users were comprehensively trained to work with it. This led to more effective, user-friendly and secure work by the respective authorities with visa applications, and also contributed to improved communication among local authorities and with other Member States. The system complies with the Schengen visa registration process requirements and is online based. It is connected to the system for registration of biometric data. It reduced the working time of the staff. The new system has positive impacts on fighting visa policy violations, protection of travellers, processing of asylum applications and security.

- **Impacts:**

- Schengen legal and technical requirements have been transposed to the national system and successfully introduced;
- Improved implementation of the common visa policy, consular cooperation and consultation between central visa authorities and other Member States;
- Contribution to the security of the Schengen Area and efficient management of flow of persons;
- Improvement of the management of activities organised by the consular and other services of the MS in third countries as regards the flows of third-country nationals into the territory of the MS and the cooperation between MS in this regard.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The investment was highly relevant to Switzerland's obligations within the Schengen agreement. The EBF objectives and the MAP operational objectives reflected to a high degree the needs of Switzerland in terms of visa policy and the introduction of the N-VIS system and the linkage of the national VIS system to CS-VIS.

Utility

Switzerland's needs in the area of border control and visa identified in the MAP concerned the fulfilment of the commitments under the Schengen agreement of the state. These needs were fully met with the implementation of the EBF projects /introduction of the N-VIS system and its linkage to the CS-VIS, and in the second Schengen evaluation in 2014,⁴⁶⁴ Switzerland received a very positive assessment. The following needs were met:

- Current information about the conditions in the source and transit regions of illegal migration;
- Improved equipment of border control authorities and automated border control;
- Powerful and compatible search and information systems through modern IT systems.

There are no discrepancies between the identified needs in the area of border control and visas, the objectives of the EBF and the achieved results.

Efficiency

⁴⁶⁴ Data provided by the beneficiary

All selected contracts implemented in conjunction with the projects were awarded in line with national legislation.⁴⁶⁵ It has to be underlined that the actions co-financed by the EBF N-VIS projects were part of bigger projects and their efficiency must be evaluated in this context.

The procurement procedures were for services and were conducted in compliance with Art. 10 of the Agreement between the European Community and the Swiss Confederation on supplementary rules in relation to the EBF for the period 2007-2013⁴⁶⁶ according to the national law on public procurement. The development work was implemented according to the legislation by the in-house entity the IT Service Centre ISC-FDJP which operates and maintains the system (five contracts). An additional six contracts were awarded to external contractors. All of them were directly awarded, which was duly justified by the applicable rules: two of the contracts were awarded to the contractors in order to 'ensure interchangeability'⁴⁶⁷, two contracts were awarded to the contractors due to urgency⁴⁶⁸, one direct award was based on the rule for 'technical and/or artistic needs and to protect intellectual property'⁴⁶⁹ and one was under the national direct award threshold⁴⁷⁰.

The costs of the contracts were determined only after negotiation procedures between the contracting authority, relevant stakeholders and the contractors. The cost-effectiveness of the projects cannot be compared to other similar projects in Switzerland.⁴⁷¹ The costs were based to a large extent on hourly rates for expert work which allowed some comparison to market prices and were determined in the most efficient way.⁴⁷² Under the contracts with the IT Service Centre a significant part of the services were delivered by regular personnel. In addition, a monitoring and supervision system ensured that the resources were allocated and spent efficiently.⁴⁷³ An ad-hoc audit on all public procurement relevant to the EBF was conducted by the Swiss Federal Audit Office. The European Commission identified irregularities on two contracts of the AP 2011 due to conflict of interests, yet established that this did not lead to financial loss for the contracting authority. The European Commission however applied a 100% financial correction on the affected contracts and decreased the amount of the EBF contribution.⁴⁷⁴

Complementarity and coherence

The measures implemented under the EBF in 2011-2013 in Switzerland were in this period the only ones supported by EU funding measures on external borders and visas. The cooperation with Frontex was limited to the posting of experts. Switzerland did not take part in the other three Funds of the SOLID programme since they do not constitute Schengen development.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁶⁵ Final Reports 2011, 2012, Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013, Interviews data

⁴⁶⁶ Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Norway, the Republic of Iceland, the Swiss Confederation and the Principality of Liechtenstein on supplementary rules in relation to the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013

⁴⁶⁷ Art. 13, 1 (f) of the Federal Ordinance on Public Procurement (OPP)

⁴⁶⁸ Decision by the federal Council of 31 October 2007 and Art. 13, 1 (d) of OPP

⁴⁶⁹ Art. 13, 1 (c) of OPP

⁴⁷⁰ OPP and Federal Act on Public Procurement

⁴⁷¹ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁴⁷² Interviews with the beneficiary

⁴⁷³ Data provided by the beneficiary

⁴⁷⁴ Commission answer on financial corrections

⁴⁷⁵ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

At an EBF level all projects implemented by Switzerland were dominated by the overall objective to cover Schengen requirements. Under Priority 1 of the MAP implemented measures MAPP and GREKO NG enable efficient verification and collection of biometric data in the passage controls at the external borders and also contribute to the further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system and control of persons at the external borders.

The realisation of the projects was only partly funded by the EBF. The rest of the investments connected to the N-VIS and the fulfilment of the Schengen *acquis* were carried out by national financing – the specific hardware and software for the collection of biometric data which is connected to the N-VIS was financed by own funds. In this sense the EBF and national resources were efficiently combined in order to implement all project elements.

Effectiveness

The objective of introducing the N-VIS has been fully achieved. The 2011 AP project resulted in connection of the N-VIS to the CSVIS system according to the EU's roll-out plan. Under the 2012 AP project the new visa system software – ORBIS was introduced and the end-users were comprehensively trained to work with it.⁴⁷⁶ Over one third of the surveyed end-users evaluated the training activities as useful and complete. All technical requirements planned in the project's preparation stage and identified indicators were met and the system has been running smoothly and without interruption or errors since its launch. According to the system's end-users, it is user-friendly, understandable and easy to learn.⁴⁷⁷ According to the survey its principal characteristics are that it is understandable (12%⁴⁷⁸), easy to learn (10.6%), user-friendly (10.1%) and simple (9.3%). As a negative characteristic it was mentioned in the first place that the system is slow; however, this could be due to slower responses from the central system.⁴⁷⁹

Thus the project implementation led to more effective and secure work by the respective authorities with visa applications /registration, check-ups, control, information exchange, as well as contributed to improved communication among local authorities and with other Member States.⁴⁸⁰ The system entirely follows the visa registering process according to the Schengen requirements and is online. It is connected to the system for registering of biometric data. It reduced staff working time.⁴⁸¹⁴⁸² Thus the Schengen requirements for connection of the N-VIS to the CS-VIS were met in an effective and efficient way. The new system has positive impacts on fraud detection, protection of travellers, processing of asylum applications and security. Additional positive impacts stemming from the implementation of the projects were the strengthening of Switzerland's capacities to achieve its tasks and obligations to ensure uniform, effective and efficient control at the external borders. The EBF contributed to application of the Schengen *acquis* in Switzerland and to the establishment of financial and political solidarity among the states, which is of great value both for Switzerland and for the Community.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁶ Final report 2011-2013

⁴⁷⁷ Survey of end-users

⁴⁷⁸ Each respondent could select up to five features of the system in their evaluation. 75% of the selections were related to positive features

⁴⁷⁹ Interviews with the beneficiary

⁴⁸⁰ Survey among final system users – more than 70% of all end-user respondents agreed that the recording and processing of visa applications is more effective, and information exchange with other authorities is easier

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Interviews with beneficiary and end-user

⁴⁸³ Confirmed during interviews with representatives of the responsible authority

Sustainability

Since its launch, the new N-VIS system has been used on a daily basis. The system is adaptable and is constantly being improved. Maintenance costs are planned accordingly in multi-annual budget plans and in annual resource distribution plans.⁴⁸⁴ The system is monitored and supported regularly.⁴⁸⁵ The system allows significant upgrades and the FOM is already conceptualising the future system optimisations and their costs.

On the other hand, with the project implementation the national VIS system was connected with the CS-VIS, and its sustainability in the future depends also on the development of VIS at European level.

EU added value

The integration of the national VIS system was mandatory for Switzerland as a Schengen associated state and the investment would have been made without the EBF support. The projects were planned and budgeted before Switzerland joined the EBF in 2010. The support was in line with the aims of the EBF to support the states that bear financial burden to the benefit of the EU,⁴⁸⁶ and it did significantly decrease the national financing.

General conclusions

From a political and strategic perspective, Switzerland's overall objective was to fulfil its commitments under the Schengen *acquis* with the support of the EBF and to ensure the appropriate use of EU funds allocated to Switzerland. The case study on the projects for introduction of the N-VIS system and its connection to the CS-VIS proves that these objectives have been achieved in an efficient and effective way with EBF support. The results correspond to a high degree to the needs of Switzerland to meet the Schengen agreement's requirements and contribute to the establishment of a more secure Schengen Area.

From an operational perspective, the projects achieved their objectives and planned results. The implementation of the N-VIS system and of the ORBIS system was efficient and useful and with a high sustainability rate.

Nevertheless, the projects would have been implemented without the EBF support. What constitutes an added value in this case and could not have been achieved otherwise is the stronger involvement of Switzerland in the Schengen cooperation and a more intensive, regular exchange with other Schengen states. The most significant added value of participating in the EBF is that Switzerland demonstrated and contributed to the solidarity of the load balancing in the management of the external borders.

⁴⁸⁴ Interviews with the responsible authority and beneficiary

⁴⁸⁵ Interviews with the beneficiary

⁴⁸⁶ Decision 574/2007/EC establishing the EBF

Poland – Surveillance system at external borders**Summary**

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS PL	Surveillance system at external border /land/	Priority 2	General Objective A and B	2013	13,974,303	14,392,670
Short Description	Construction of seven new observation towers at land border, equipping 12 observation towers with optoelectronic systems, purchase of special technical equipment, and supplying the Border Guard with aircraft fitted with observation cameras					
Objective(s)	<p>EBF Objective: Efficient organisation and control at the external borders and efficient management by the MS of the flow of persons at the external borders in order to ensure a high level of protection and the smooth crossing in conformity with the Schengen <i>acquis</i> and the principles of respectful treatment and dignity</p> <p>Priority 2 /EBF and MAP/ – Support for the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the EU Member States</p> <p>Operational objective 3 /MAP/ Development of surveillance systems at the European Union external border</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, site visits					
Indicators	Number of observation towers constructed, installation of optoelectronic devices, number of special surveillance technical equipment, number of purchased aircraft					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) **Document review:** main sources of information are the Multi annual programme 2007-2013; Final Report 'Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Poland'; annual programmes 2011-2013 and final reports 2011–2012, Frontex risk analyses; information, provided by Border Guard.
- 2) **Interviews** with representatives of:
 - Responsible Authority – the International Cooperation and European Funds Department at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (MOIA) in Warsaw

(three interviews): with the Director of the International Cooperation and European Funds Department and with a senior specialist and a specialist from the same department;

- Delegated Authority – European Project Implementation Centre (COPE) of the MOIA (1 interview);
- Beneficiary – the Border Guard (15 interviews): interviews with an expert from the International Cooperation Bureau; the Head of the Economic Section; an expert from the Technical and Supply Bureau; Head of the Aviation section. In Podlaski Border Guard Division, Bialystok – interviews with Deputy Commander of the Border Guard Division (Podlaski), Deputy Commander of the Border Guard Post in Szudzialow, Head of Procurement section, Head of IT section, Head of Technical Supply section, members of the Special intervention team (in charge of drones operation), shift leader, deputy shift leader, patrol officers (Szudzialow Border Guard Post)

- 3) **Site visits:** Podlaski Border Guard Division, Bialystok; site visit at the Krynki tower

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

The land border of Poland is one of the longest external borders guarded by one Member State (ca. 1,185 km), and Poland has a major responsibility in providing security and control at EU external borders.⁴⁸⁷ The country borders with three non-EU states: Ukraine, Belarus and Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast). The main direction of migration risk remains Ukraine, both as a migration channel for persons coming from third countries and as a source country.⁴⁸⁸ During the period covered by the evaluation, there was some increase in migration pressure. In the period 2011–2015, the Border Guard reported the incidence of illegal border crossings, with Poland not necessarily being a final destination of the migrants, as it often serves merely as a transit country (mainly the Polish-Ukrainian stretch).⁴⁸⁹ Frontex risk analyses also reported an increasing number of illegal border crossings, smuggling, and use of falsified travel documents in the period 2010-2014 at the eastern borders.⁴⁹⁰ However, the migration pressure was not as high as on the southern European borders and the threat remained relatively low.⁴⁹¹ Still the unstable political situation in all of the three border countries constitutes a constant risk. Poland's strategic objective is to be prepared for a mass influx of migrants from any of its neighbours, as political instability there may lead to abrupt changes of the situation at the border. Maintaining a high level of security was seen as good preventive strategy even in the absence of immediate risks at the border.⁴⁹² In particular, the existing surveillance infrastructure covered a limited portion of the border, requiring constant patrolling, while personal surveillance equipment (such as cameras and binoculars) was outdated and did not allow recordings. The low technical standards of the equipment used by the Border Guard was identified as a problem as well.⁴⁹³

The following country-specific needs related to the land surveillance and border protection were identified: 'Modernisation consisting in the introduction of special technique equipment and transport equipment of the best and most adequate technical and operating parameters and Development of surveillance systems of the external

⁴⁸⁷ MAP 2007-2013

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ex-post Evaluation report 2011-2013

⁴⁹⁰ Eastern Border Risk Analysis for 2013, 2014, 2015, Frontex

⁴⁹¹ Eastern Border Annual risk analysis 2014, Frontex

⁴⁹² Interviews with the responsible authority and Border Guard

⁴⁹³ MAP 2007-2013; interviews with the Responsible Authority and Border Guard

border of the EU'.⁴⁹⁴ The identification of needs was a joint process between final beneficiaries at the border posts, the Border Guard headquarters and the Responsible Authority.⁴⁹⁵

Description of the project's objectives

The main objective of the actions was defined in Operational objective 3 of MAP as 'Development of surveillance systems at the European Union external border'.⁴⁹⁶ The projects aimed at investments in the modernisation of the technical equipment of the Border Guard as preventive measures.

Specific objectives of the actions were:

- Providing Border Guard services with aircraft equipment including air surveillance system.
- Construction of observation towers with surveillance systems
- Providing Border Guard with special use equipment.⁴⁹⁷

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for management

The actions were planned as part of the 2013 AP and were implemented in the time period 2013–2015.

The Border Guard was the main beneficiary and partner of the projects. The Border Guard is supervised by the Minister of the Interior and Administration.

The Responsible Authority was the International Cooperation and European Funds Department at the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (MOIA). Delegated Authority was the European Project Implementation Centre (COPE) of the MOIA.

Financial resources

Planned costs for the Action 'Development of technical border surveillance systems' under the AP 2013 were as follows: Planned overall cost of the action: EUR 22,017,856 of which EU contribution: EUR 16,513,392.⁴⁹⁸ This amount was revised in 2014 and total planned contribution was reduced to EUR 21,605,250, of which EU contribution was EUR 16,203,937. The final EU contribution was EUR 13,974,303 (implementation rate of 87%)⁴⁹⁹, and total project costs were EUR 14,392,670.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁴ MAP 2007-2013

⁴⁹⁵ Interviews with the Responsible Authority

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ AP 2013

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁹ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁵⁰⁰ Information provided by the Border Guard

Description of activities conducted under project

Under the 2013 AP, Action 3.2.1: Development of technical border surveillance systems included the following seven projects:⁵⁰¹

- **Construction of five observation towers in Warmińsko-Mazurski Border Guard Regional Unit** – a system of observation towers including surveillance auxiliary infrastructure was created at the Russian border on the following locations in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship: Żardyny, Parkoszewo, Góry, Kiekskiejmy, Oszarniki

Figure 55: Observation towers built at the Russian border – height 50 and 35 m respectively



Source: Border Guard

- **Construction of an observation tower in Krynki** – a 50 m observation tower was constructed in Krynki, Podlaskie Voivodeship at the Belarus border. Equipment for radio communications, observation and reception of the image was installed.
- **Construction of an observation tower in Starzawa** – a tower was constructed in Podkarpackie Voivodeship at the Ukraine border. It was also equipped with a surveillance technical system.

⁵⁰¹ Based on Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013 and information provided by Border Guard

Figure 56: Observation tower in Starzawa at the Ukrainian border and surveillance equipment



Source: Border Guard

- **Providing Border Guard services with aircraft equipment including air surveillance system** – the project initially envisaged purchase of helicopters and aircraft but in the course of the public procurement procedures were changed to the purchase and delivery of two aircraft piston single-engine and four sets of unmanned aerial vehicles.⁵⁰² The aircraft were equipped with surveillance systems such as recording and transmitting equipment, including infrared cameras.

Figure 57: Single engine aircraft



Source: Border Guard

⁵⁰² Information on public procurement procedures provided by the Border Guard

Figure 58: Unmanned aircraft



Source: Border Guard

- **Providing Border Guard with portable thermovision cameras** – Under the project 14 sets of portable uncooled ALICE-HH infrared cameras were purchased. These cameras allow stable pictures to be obtained and enable the object to be identified at a long distance. The cameras can take photos and record videos. Cameras were distributed to various locations of the Border Guard.
- **Providing Border Guard with special use equipment** – prismatic binoculars, binoculars with image recording feature and night-vision goggles which facilitate observation were purchased. The equipment was allocated at different Border Guard posts in proportion to the size of the posts, the length of the protected section of the state border and the border threats.⁵⁰³
- **Purchase and installation of optoelectronic systems at 12 towers** – altogether 12 optoelectronic systems each equipped with: cooled thermal camera, daylight camera, laser rangefinder, systems and auxiliary equipment. The systems were installed on all of the seven newly built towers and on five existing ones. The signals from all surveillance towers are monitored by the respective border guard posts (usually located in close proximity to the towers). Each tower equipped with the optoelectronic system allows constant observation of the border strip at a distance of 7 to 10 km on each side of the tower, i.e. an area 10 km in radius on average (total width from 14 to 20 km depending on the time of day, time of year and weather conditions).⁵⁰⁴

Effects

- **Outputs:**
 - 7 observation towers with an observation range of up to 20 km each constructed;
 - 2 manned and 12 unmanned aircraft were purchased;
 - purchase of 53 binoculars with image recording;
 - purchase of 600 prismatic binoculars;
 - purchase of 37 portable thermovision cameras;

⁵⁰³ Interviews with Border Guard

⁵⁰⁴ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013 – Case study EBF project implemented as part of Priority 2

- purchase of optoelectronic devices installed in 13 locations including the 7 newly constructed towers⁵⁰⁵

- **Results:**

The investments resulted in a broadening of possibilities when it comes to using aircraft whenever fast response is required to any activity that could threaten the security of the EU external border.⁵⁰⁶ The projects led to a substantial technological leap and the modernisation of surveillance facilities. The observation towers provided broader coverage of the external border assigned for protection within a given border section with the use of observation towers featuring day and night technical surveillance systems.⁵⁰⁷ The Border Guard posts within whose territorial reach the installations of optoelectronic devices at the observation towers were deployed were provided with devices for the continuous monitoring and recording of events in the areas under their observation. As a result of the project, the number of towers equipped with optoelectronic systems increased on a national scale from 11 to 23. Utilisation of optoelectronic systems installed in the observation towers resulted in increase of effectiveness of border surveillance. Another result of the projects was the coverage of a substantial area of the land protected by respective Border Guard Units (e.g. ca. 70% in the case of the Warmińsko-Mazurski Border Guard Regional Unit) with high-quality stationary equipment for border control. An additional effect is the ability to service the towers with substantially smaller crews. This has allowed some changes in the frequency and number of vehicle and on-foot patrols formerly assigned to protect those areas – now they can be assigned to patrol other locations, with the consequence of improved security of the entire border section subject to protection.⁵⁰⁸

Furthermore, Border Guard organisational units in charge of protecting the Polish border were equipped with advanced devices for visual observation which allows the observation, detection and recording of illegal border crossings or other violations at the border. These systems are used for long-distance observation of uncovered areas.⁵⁰⁹

- **Impacts:**

The actions contributed to more effective organisation and control at the external borders and efficient management by the MS of the flow of persons at the external borders. The realisation of the projects upgraded the surveillance system and strengthened the protection of the external EU border. The investment was part of the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The investment measures were relevant to the identified needs. The projects directly addressed the issues identified as key for the surveillance and protection of the external EU borders with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, thus improving border security and control through preventive measures. The activities increased the portion of the land border

⁵⁰⁵ Ex-post evaluation report 2010-2013; interview with Border Guard; Site visit

⁵⁰⁶ Ex-post evaluation report 2010-2013; Interviews with Border Guard

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ex-post evaluation report 2010-2013

⁵⁰⁹ Information provided by Border Guard

covered by state-of-the-art surveillance infrastructure, thus taking preventive measures against potential migration pressure.⁵¹⁰

The actions directly contribute to achieving the objectives of the EBF for the efficient management of the EU external borders. The actions correspond to Poland's need to respond to the illegal migration pressure at the borders, and the need for modernisation and expansion of the border infrastructure and the surveillance system.

Utility

The need to modernise the surveillance system at the external borders was met, thus improving the security of the EU external border, in accordance with the applicable EU technological standards.⁵¹¹

The watchtowers, which were equipped with remote sensing equipment, and the aircraft acquired under the EBF, expanded the areas of coverage and enhanced the surveillance capacity of the Border Guard.⁵¹² An advantage of the investment is that the towers provide regular surveillance of selected critical areas. At the same time, it should be noted that the utility of the solutions is limited, as the investments do not cover the entire external border, which will reduce the preventive effects of the activity within the next few years.⁵¹³ Five out of the seven towers are located at the Russian border, which was not identified as main risk for migration pressure, and the intervention logic for this is not based on actual critical situations but is rather preventive in nature.

The unmanned aircraft acquired under the EBF expanded the ability of the Border Guard to react quickly to any attempted illegal border crossings. They are particularly useful for surveillance purposes, as they were quiet, they could be easily deployed at any point of the border where there was a need for observation of suspicious activities, and they could cover areas of the border that were currently not covered by the surveillance towers.⁵¹⁴ The signal from the drones is transmitted live and thus patrols on the ground can react immediately to any violations at the border.⁵¹⁵

The project has also improved human resource management. Areas covered by stationary surveillance or aircraft have their staffing needs considerably reduced. Therefore, changes in the frequency of mobile and foot patrols assigned to such areas are possible, namely delegating such patrols to watch over other areas, which results in increased surveillance of the entire border.⁵¹⁶

Efficiency

The measures taken under the EBF were carried out with good efficiency. During the project preparations the Responsible Authority controlled the investments to avoid acquisition of equipment with high maintenance costs that would have limited utility, and the objective in all cases was to find a cost-efficient solution.⁵¹⁷ The costs for purchasing aircraft represented ca. 47% of total action cost. Thus, after public tenders proved that helicopters and manned aircraft were beyond the designated budget (no offers were

⁵¹⁰ Interviews with responsible authority and Border Guard

⁵¹¹ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁵¹² Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013, interviews with the Border Guard

⁵¹³ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁵¹⁴ Interviews with direct users of the aircraft from Border Guard

⁵¹⁵ Interviews with Border Guard

⁵¹⁶ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013 – Case study EBF project implemented as part of Priority 2

⁵¹⁷ Interviews with the Responsible Authority

submitted within the budget), unmanned aircraft became the preferred solution. Without the higher maintenance costs, unmanned aircraft provided the advantage of quiet surveillance and the coverage of new areas of the border.⁵¹⁸ For the purchase of the aircraft (two procedures) and surveillance equipment (four procedures) open tender procedures were announced. Before the start of each of the procurement procedures, Border Guard experts estimated the contract value, through the analysis of offers received from contractors during the initial market research.⁵¹⁹ During each tender between two and 10 offers were received. For the award of the contracts the 'lowest price' criterion was predominant. For the aircraft an additional selection criterion was the warranty terms.⁵²⁰

Complementarity and coherence

The projects were to a high degree coherent with and complemented other projects funded by national and EU funds, including other actions supported by the EBF. Some of the projects implemented under the 2011–2013 Annual Programmes were a continuation of the activities launched during the Phare or the Schengen Fund programming.⁵²¹ Complementary projects were financed under the Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, the Support Fund of the Lublin Voivodeship and other national co-financing. Representatives of the Border Guard participated in numerous training projects coordinated and/or supervised by Frontex which contributed to strengthening the border control capacity of Poland.⁵²² Training courses for the Border Guard officers on operating with the optoelectronic devices and enhancing qualifications of services executing tasks related to the protection of the state border with the use of aircraft were also supported under the EBF 2007-2013.⁵²³

For the coming years Poland is planning a series of investments to complement the surveillance system at the borders, including the purchase of aircraft, replacement of vehicles, additional surveillance equipment, and modernisation of IT systems. Provisional sources of financing are national funding and the Internal Security Fund.

Effectiveness

All planned outputs and indicators were achieved, which resulted in the Border Guard being equipped with modern surveillance devices and in overall improvement of the border management and security. The actions contributed to the achievement of the objective of the MAP: 'Development of surveillance systems at the European Union external border'. The investments led to the creation of more effective and efficient organisation and control at the external borders and efficient management of the risks of various pressures at the external borders.⁵²⁴ The action contributed to a high extent to the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders.⁵²⁵

The construction of seven observation towers with necessary auxiliary infrastructure and the purchase of aircraft led to increased territorial coverage of the surveillance system. The unmanned aircraft provided the advantage of quiet surveillance and the coverage of

⁵¹⁸ Interviews with Border Guard

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Information provided by the Border Guard

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Information provided by the Border Guard

⁵²³ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁵²⁴ Interviews with Border Guard

⁵²⁵ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

new areas of the border. The recording capabilities of cameras and binoculars were particularly useful for investigations and for the training of border guard officers. The equipment provided new opportunities such as: using records in investigations of border violations; using records as intelligence means against violators and facilitators (e.g. their features can be communicated to other border posts); records of violations can be used for training purposes. An additional effect is the ability to deploy substantially smaller crews in the areas covered by the observation towers. This has allowed some changes in the frequency and number of vehicle and on-foot patrols formerly assigned to protect those areas – now they can be assigned to patrol other locations, with the consequence of improved security of the entire border section subject to protection. Furthermore, purchasing advanced devices for visual observation made it possible for all Border Guard patrols to make use of special-technique devices and to maintain a high standard of controls and effective protection of the external border in Poland.⁵²⁶

Sustainability

The sustainability of the investment was ensured with the beneficiary's own resources. No high risk of failure of the achieved results was identified.⁵²⁷ By national law, beneficiaries had to ensure that they have sufficient budget to maintain any equipment or system financed by public funds.⁵²⁸ Maintenance costs would be necessary to sustain the results of the interventions – e.g. the newly built infrastructure requires maintenance and the specific technical devices (e.g. optoelectronic system or unmanned aircraft) are sensitive and additional costs for safety, regular inspection and servicing apply. Compared to manned aircraft, the unmanned ones require significantly lower maintenance costs. To secure longer useful life of the purchased equipment, selection criteria included the length of warranty terms and the offered technical support. Most equipment acquired has five-year warranty.⁵²⁹ The warranty period for the unmanned aircraft is 36 months or 1500 hours of work – whichever occurs first. In addition, border officers are required to purchase personal accident insurance, covering the personal use equipment. All suppliers of the equipment carried out training for the Border Guard officers in the regions where the equipment is deployed.⁵³⁰

EU added value

The investments indicate a high level of EU added value. They are not a substitute for regular infrastructural expenditure but would not have been achieved without the EBF support.⁵³¹ Without the EBF financing, the modernisation of the surveillance system at the external borders would have taken much longer and would have been limited to a smaller scope.⁵³²

General conclusions

Through the construction of new observation towers and equipping them with optoelectronic systems, the purchase of special technique equipment, and supplying the Border Guard with aircraft fitted with high-end observation cameras, the activities undertaken under the EBF have contributed to the more effective protection of the green border on the external border of the EU. The investments resulted in extending the

⁵²⁶ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013; Interviews with Border Guard and Responsible Authority; site visit

⁵²⁷ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁵²⁸ Interviews with the Responsible Authority

⁵²⁹ Information provided by the Border Guard

⁵³⁰ Interviews with the Border Guard

⁵³¹ Ex-post evaluation report 2011-2013

⁵³² Interviews with the Responsible Authority and the Border Guard

coverage area of the surveillance. The purchased unmanned aircraft are a technological leap and are a very cost-effective solution.

Germany – DVB / ALO

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS DE	Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)	Priority 3	General Objective D	2012	5,494,000	10,988,000
Objective(s)	<p>The secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB) to third countries is in line with the key objectives outlined in the MAP 2007-2013⁵³³ regarding the prevention of illegal immigration through the so called 'advance deployment strategy'. The project falls under Priority 3 of the EBF, and more specifically under measure 5 of the 2012 annual programme (AP), relating to the operative strengthening of the fight against illegal immigration.</p> <p>In line with the MAP 2007-2013 and the 2012 AP, the main objective of seconding Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB) to third countries is therefore to reduce illegal immigration to Germany and the European Union. The 'advance deployment strategy' is instrumental to early detection in the countries of origin or transit of illegal migrants.</p> <p>The use of document and visa advisors is expected to bring about an effective reduction in unauthorised entry by air, not only in Germany, but in the entire Schengen Area. In addition, the project also aims to contribute to the cooperation with other German and European administrations and organisations working in the</p>					

⁵³³ Mehrjahresprogramm 2007-2013, Bundesrepublik Deutschland, p. 8

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS DE	Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)	Priority 3	General Objective D	2012	5,494,000	10,988,000
	area of security in third countries.					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews, survey with DVBS					
Indicators	<p>According to the 2012 AP, the main indicators for the project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of exclusions from flights as a result of the advice given by DVBS; • Number of rejections of visa applications in the embassies as a result of work undertaken by the DVBS; • Number of trained users as a result of DVB training for officials of airlines as well as representations abroad to recognise fraudulent documents; • Number of trainings to recognise counterfeit border crossing documents. 					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

1. Review of the 2011-2013 MAP and of the annual programmes, the 2012 FR, the 2011-2013 evaluation report;
2. Site visit interviews with representatives of the Responsible Authority (RA);
3. Face-to-face interviews in Potsdam, Germany, with six individuals involved in the implementation of the EBF, as well as the project;
4. Survey with DVBS.

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

The project 'Secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)' (Project 6 under measure 5 in the 2012 AP) is one of the priorities for Germany's internal security.⁵³⁴ The main need underlying the project is to reduce illegal immigration (i.e. through the use of fraudulent documents) to the EU within the framework of integrated border management. Given the increased number of air traffic passengers over the last decade, airlines are used more and more for illegal immigration and smuggling. In order to tackle this development, the idea of the project was for document and visa advisors to assist airline staff as well as staff in embassies or consulates in various locations in third countries (which are countries of origin and transit of illegal migrants) to detect attempts, as part of the 'advance deployment strategy', to illegally enter the EU.

⁵³⁴ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

DVBs have been deployed since 2007/2008, before EBF funding was available. A specific project was then developed and integrated into the EBF co-funding structure. In addition, project 6 in the 2012 AP is a continuation of a measure included in the 2011 AP.

Interviews with the RA outlined the difficulty of separating the needs underlying the project between the different annual programmes.⁵³⁵ It was explained that the deployment of DVBs should rather be seen as a whole initiative. Depending on the migration situation, new locations for the DVBs are opened and old ones closed over the years, in order to react to new migration pressure points.

Description of the project's objectives

The main objective of seconding Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB) to third countries is to reduce illegal immigration to the EU. As per the 2012 AP, the document and visa advisors were tasked to prevent the use of fraudulent visas and illegal entry into the EU, with a focus on German consulates and airlines in third countries. This 'advance deployment strategy', i.e. tackling the problem in various locations in countries of origin and transit of illegal migration, is instrumental in the early detection of illegal immigrants. The use of document and visa advisors is therefore expected to bring about an effective reduction in unauthorised entry by air, not only to Germany, but to the entire Schengen Area.

Description of project's inputs

The 'Secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)' was set out as a multiannual project. The 2012 AP, which was agreed on by the European Commission, originally only included the costs for the 2012 and 2013 calendar years. However, according to the 2012 final report (FR), the whole funding period for the project up until 30 June 2014 was eventually considered, as is further detailed below.

Resources mobilised for the management of EU contribution

Throughout the implementation of the EBF (including the years 2011-2013), one person spent 100% of his time on the EBF administration – this had not been planned, but was necessary given the administrative burden, for example to report expenses.

Financial resources

The 2012 AP outlined that the costs of the project were to include direct personnel costs, incidental wage costs, and other expenses incurred by the document and visa advisors or their local staff (i.e. means of transport or operating equipment) in 2012 and 2013. Contrary to what was stipulated in the 2012 AP, eventually the costs for the whole funding period up until 30 June 2014 were recognised as eligible to be included in the overall funding amount (also due to the fact that funding from other projects could be freed up)⁵³⁶:

Total cost:	EUR 10,988,000
EBF-funding:	EUR 5,494,000
National funding:	EUR 5,494,000

Hence, the financial resources included EUR **977,850 of additional EBF funding** compared to what was originally envisaged in the 2012 AP.

⁵³⁵ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

⁵³⁶ 2012 FR, p. 21f.

Description of activities conducted under project

As per the 2012 and 2013 APs, the DVBs were tasked to undertake the following activities:

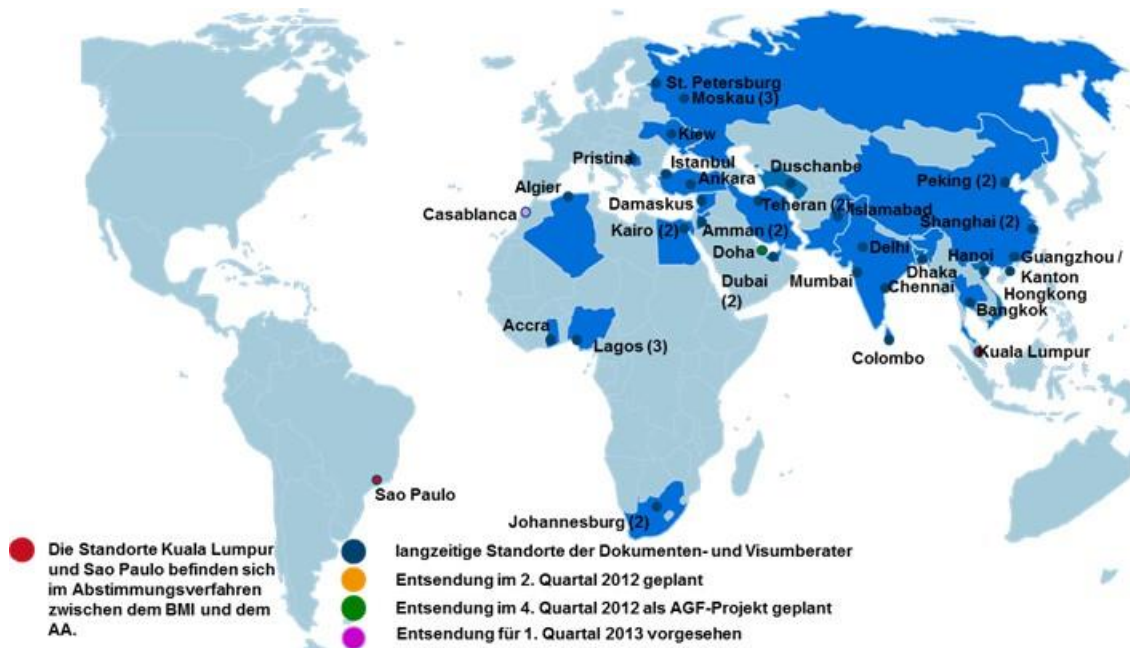
- Support German embassies and consulates in third countries in their decision whether to issue a visa or not (usually through training of staff working for embassies and consulates, and checking of applications for documents forgeries and EU entry requirements, as well as scrutinising visa applications).
- Provide support and advice to airlines at selected airports in third countries regarding the validity and document control of border crossing documents and the authenticity check of any kind of travel documents such as passports and visas.
- Organise training for airline employees to detect counterfeit border-crossing documents and raise awareness in identifying clues regarding smuggling offences.
- Support the consulates of other Schengen countries in their decision-making whether to issue visas or not.

DVBs are usually posted to locations for four years. In addition to the advisory and training measures, practice has shown that long-term postings to particularly problematic foreign airports have proved an effective tool in preventing illegal immigration by air.

The activities not only safeguard and represent national interests, but also those of other Member States and/or European interests. The assigned DVBs will, upon request, also advise diplomatic missions of other Schengen countries on visa decisions.⁵³⁷

Figure 27 below shows the locations of the DVBs as per 19 April 2012.

Figure 59: Locations of DVBs as per 19 April 2012



Source: Presentation provided by the Federal Police Germany

Effects

The project achieved the following effects:

⁵³⁷ 2012 FR, p. 24

- **Outputs:**

For the years 2012 and 2013, as well as the first six months of 2014, the following outputs, i.e. number of seconded DVBs to locations in third countries, were recorded (planned vs. actual):

Table 6: Overview of planned vs. actual outputs for the years 2012 and 2013

Year	Planned	Actual
2012	39 DVBs in 28 locations	49 DVBs in 27 locations
2013	37 DVBs and 7 local advisors	49 DVBs in 25 locations
First 6 months in 2014	N/A	42 DVBs in 27 locations

Source: 2012 FR, p. 22f.

According to the 2012 FR, the increased use of advisors was related to the fact that more than one advisor was sent to some of the locations and because there were some changes in other locations.⁵³⁸

- **Results:**

As a result of these outputs, i.e. number of seconded DVBs to locations in third countries, an increased number of trainees, number of rejected visa applications, number of exclusions from flights as well as number of trainings for airline and embassy staff delivered overall was achieved.

For example, in terms of number of trainees in the various different locations, the following results were accomplished overall:

Table 7: Overview of number of trainees

Year	Number of trainees
2012	7,950
2013	9,205
2014	7,561

Source: 2012 FR, p. 23

In addition, the following results were achieved regarding the rejection of visa applications in consulates and embassies in third countries, as well as the exclusion of passengers from flights, due to the work of the DVBs:

Table 8: Overview of number of rejections of visa applications

Year	Number of rejections
2012	14,298
2013	14,501
2014	Envisaged target: 17,742

Source: 2012 FR, p. 23

Thus, there was an increase of 203 rejections of visa applications between 2012 and 2013.

Table 9: Overview of number of passengers being excluded from flights

Year	Number of exclusions
2012	5,692
2013	8,819

⁵³⁸ 2012 FR, p. 22f.

2014 11,519

Source: 2012 FR, p. 24

Thus, there was an increase of 102% between 2012 and 2014 of passengers being excluded from flights as a result of the support and advice undertaken by DVBs to airline staff regarding the validity of documents and document control.

Finally, the following results were achieved regarding the number of trainings for airline and embassy staff overall:

Table 10: Overview of number of trainings carried out

Year	Number of trainings
2012	501
2013	545
2014	Envisaged target: 321

Source: Presentation provided by the Federal Police Germany, Slide 12

- **Impacts:**

In summary, the deployment of DVBs resulted in a tangible increase in qualitative advice and intelligence. In addition, there has been an increase in quantitative numbers for certain indicators, such as number of rejections of visa applications and number of passengers being excluded from flights, which resulted in the positive findings made by DVBs regarding attempts at illegal immigration, compared to recent years.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The investment for the secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors was overall relevant to Germany's need to reduce illegal immigration by assisting airline staff as well as staff in embassies or consulates in third countries to detect counterfeit border-crossing documents and prevent attempts at illegal immigration to Germany and the EU. According to the 2012 FR, as well as the interviews carried out with members at the RA, the 'advance deployment strategy' played a very important role in addressing this need, as it provided for the prevention of illegal immigration in the countries of origin or transit by the means of an 'early warning system'.⁵³⁹

Utility

The investment resulted in an increase in the number of exclusions of passengers from flights due to the detection of fraudulent visas (5,692 in 2012, 8,819 in 2013 and 11,519 in 2014⁵⁴⁰), an increased number of rejections of visa applications in consulates and embassies due to the increased ability of staff to detect fraudulent applications (13,298 rejections in 2012, 14,501 in 2014, and an envisaged target of 17,742 in 2014⁵⁴¹), a relatively stable number of trainees from airlines and consulates / embassies to detect fraudulent documents (7,950 trainees in 2012, 9,205 in 2013 and 7,561 in 2014⁵⁴²), however a fluctuating number of trainings of said staff as such (501 trainings in 2012, 545 trainings in 2013; the envisaged target for 2014 was 321⁵⁴³, so slightly lower than in

⁵³⁹ 2012 FR, p. 24

⁵⁴⁰ 2012 FR, p. 24

⁵⁴¹ 2012 FR, p. 23

⁵⁴² 2012 FR, p. 23

⁵⁴³ Presentation provided by the Federal Police Germany, Slide 12

the previous years). Overall, these effects resulted in a reduced number of irregular immigrants in the EU.

Efficiency

Interviews with the RA confirmed that the financial structure of the EBF in the years up to 2011 in Germany was set up in a less optimal way: the annual programmes were drafted fairly late for the next year (i.e. the 2012 AP was drafted in November 2011), which meant that the budgeting for individual projects had already been completed (usually in the previous year).⁵⁴⁴ In addition, the EBF funding was granted relatively late, i.e. in mid-2012, when the projects were already well underway. Hence, the funding was only really useful if additional activities were foreseen (for example as part of projects), which was not often the case.

More specifically, however, the effects of the actions performed under the project 'Secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)' were reported by the RA to have been achieved at a reasonable cost overall.⁵⁴⁵

One of the main challenges for the RA, at least in the beginning of the EBF funding period, was to provide evidence of all the project costs. As highlighted above, one member of staff of the RA spent almost 100% of his time on the EBF administration – in particular the issue of project expenses – which had originally not been planned for by the RA.⁵⁴⁶ In particular, the travel costs of the DVBS were often divided into too many small sections for them to be included in the final expense accounting, or travel documents (i.e. taxi receipts in third countries) which had to be included in the financial reporting, were missing. This resulted in costs that could not be recognised. In addition, some costs incurred were not submitted in the reporting to the Commission, i.e. the export of cars from Germany to third countries, for which the customs took a long time.

Table 11 provides an overview of the costs and accounting for the project (from 2011 until 2014):

Table 11: Overview of different cost items related to the project

AP	Annual costs	Submitted direct costs	Costs not recognised	Additional costs for local staff	Additional travel costs in 3 rd country locations	Additional production costs	Purchase of vehicles with additional charges	Overall costs not considered
2011		€3,994,705	€235,579.00	€0			€57,245	€57,245
2012	2012	€4,339,900		€0			€26,913	€26,913
	2013	€4,320,100	€585,512.00	€0	€197,000	€119,800	€0	€316,800
	2014	€2,304,971		€45,000	€128,000	€105,800	€0	€278,800

Source: Presentation provided by the Federal Police Germany

Complementarity and coherence

The project has a unique feature and no other similar projects in Germany existed that were related to the same objectives or had the same scope as the 'Secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors (DVB / ALO)'. In addition, there were no other EBF-funded projects, including any projects that were funded previously, that were related to the same objectives or scope as this project.

⁵⁴⁴ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

⁵⁴⁵ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

⁵⁴⁶ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

However, the RA reported that there is a good collaboration between Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, where similar projects exist. However, this cooperation is organised by the European Commission directly, and is not part of the EBF.

Effectiveness

According to the 2012 AP, a number of indicators were set to measure the effects (i.e. the results and impacts) of the project. These included:

- Number of exclusions from flight due to the advice provided by the DVBs regarding fraudulent documents or missing visa;
- Number of rejections of visa applications in consulates or embassies due to the advice provided by the DVBs;
- Number of trained users through document training for staff of airlines and consulates to detect fraudulent documents;
- Number of trainings to detect fraudulent documents.

The documented results of the project, as outlined above, show that the objectives of the project were achieved.

As evidenced in the 2012 FR, there was an increase in exclusions from flights of 74.63% between 2011 and 2014 due to the advice provided by the DVBs regarding counterfeit border-crossing documents or missing visas. In addition, between 2011 and 2013 there was an increase of ca. 5% of rejected visa applications in consulates or embassies due to the advice provided by the DVBs. Between 2011 and 2013, there was an increase of 47.11% of trained staff of airlines and consulates to detect fraudulent documents, which had an overall positive impact on the general competence of staff.⁵⁴⁷

Thus, overall, there has been a continuous increase in the number of detections (and hence prevention) of attempted illegal immigration to Germany and the EU, which can be attributed to the secondment of Federal Police document and visa advisors in third countries.⁵⁴⁸ In addition, the secondment of the document and visa advisors has resulted in the development of a wider network of (German) advisors across third countries, which contributes to the collection of qualitative and quantitative information regarding migration pressures and flows globally.⁵⁴⁹

As a result, the project has been considered as a best practice example due to its well-established wide network of advisors as a part of the implementation of Integrated Border Management Concept in third countries.⁵⁵⁰

For the concept of 'train the trainers', there is a perceived lack of effectiveness as shown in the responses to the online survey with the DVBs. Main concerns around this concept were related to the high turnover of staff within airlines and consulates / embassies in third countries, which meant that the training had to be repeated continuously and new people had to be trained. The high turnover of staff was also quoted as the reason why 'train the trainers' was not implemented as a concept in certain countries.

Sustainability

⁵⁴⁷ 2012 FR, p. 22ff.

⁵⁴⁸ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

⁵⁴⁹ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

⁵⁵⁰ Proposal for a Council recommendation on addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation on the application of the Schengen *acquis* in the field of management of the external border by Germany, p. 4.

The project is sustainable and has been designed as a multi-annual project.

Due to the concept of 'train the trainers', some of the DVB locations such as Hong Kong or Islamabad have subsequently been closed given that the airlines as well as consulates and embassies no longer need the advice of the DVBS, due to the training they received, and can now communicate directly with Germany.⁵⁵¹ However, occasional checks are still being carried out by the DVBS in these locations.

In addition, new locations are opened where new migration pressures are identified. For example, a new location is Seoul, where the German DVBS will be the only European advisors for the time being, as well as Abu Dhabi. There are also two new locations for the Schengen representation in Addis Ababa and Beirut, where DVBS will be employed.

Beyond the funding period 2011-2013, the project still exists (through national funding as well as (reduced) funding of the ISF) and the targeted number of DVBS is increasing.

EU added value

Given that the project had already started in 2007/2008, and was only later integrated into the EBF co-funding structure, it had been possible to run and implement the project without EU funding in the past. However, the growing scope and objectives of the project and its increased outreach, as well as the formation of the DBV network, were largely enabled by the EBF funding in the period 2011-2013.⁵⁵²

General conclusions

The EBF-funding was invested as part of the 'advance deployment strategy' and in response to preventing illegal immigration into Germany and the EU through early detection of attempts at illegal immigration by way of air traffic and the use of counterfeit border-crossing documents in third countries.

The objectives of the project were achieved. The number of rejections of visa applications, and passengers being excluded from flights based on the assumption that they were using counterfeit border-crossing documents, has significantly increased. In addition, the number of trainings for airline as well as consulate / embassy staff as well as the number of trainees increased in this timeframe.

GERMANY CASE STUDY – ANNEX

As part of the Germany Case study research, a survey was undertaken with Federal Police document and visa advisors (Dokumenten- und Visumsberater – DVB) to third countries. Overall, there were five survey questions (of which three were open-ended questions) asking about the location of DVBS during the timeframe 2011-2013, their general level of satisfaction with the project, the perceived success (or lack thereof) of specific activities. Respondents also had the opportunity to make general comments related to the project as well as specific activities.

The link to the online survey, which was uploaded on the platform SurveyMonkey, was sent by the RA to an unspecified number of DVBS. The survey was online from April to June 2016 and generated 16 responses overall.

⁵⁵¹ Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

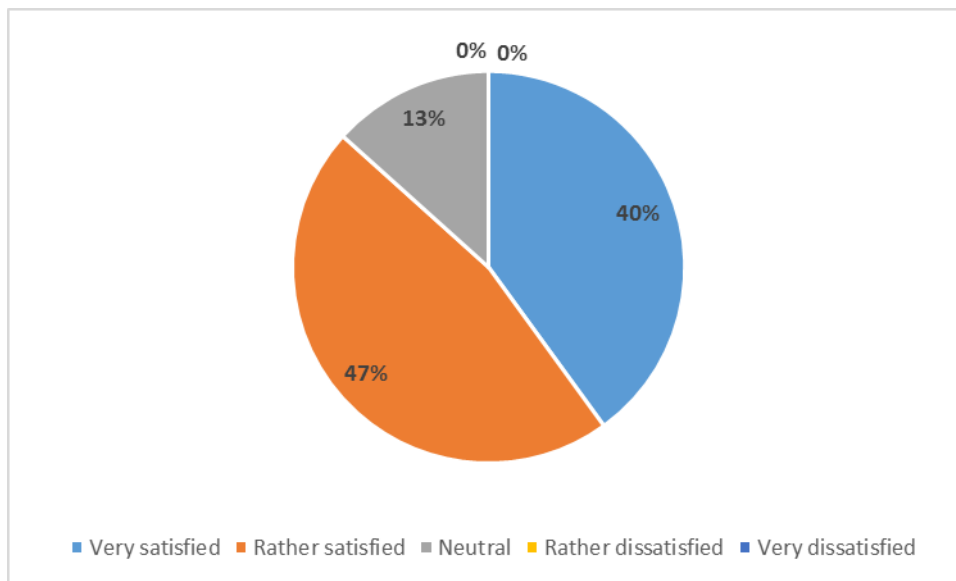
⁵⁵² Interviews with the RA, carried out on 2 March 2016 in Potsdam

DVBs who responded to the survey had been based in the following locations during the timeframe 2011-2013 (this question received 15 responses – one DVB stated he had worked in two different locations during the timeframe 2011-2013):

- Amman (1)
- Colombo/Sri Lanka (1)
- Lagos/Nigeria (3)
- Accra (1)
- Cairo (1)
- Dubai (1)
- South Africa (2)
- Pristina (since June 2013) (1)
- Doha / Qatar (1)
- Istanbul (1)
- Syria (1)
- New Delhi (1)
- Ankara / Turkey (1)

When asked how satisfied they were overall with the project, the majority of respondents (n=15) were positive, with 40% (six respondents) indicating that they were very satisfied, and 47% (seven respondents) stating that they were rather satisfied with the projects, while 13% (two respondents) indicated they were 'neutral'. No negative responses were recorded for this question.

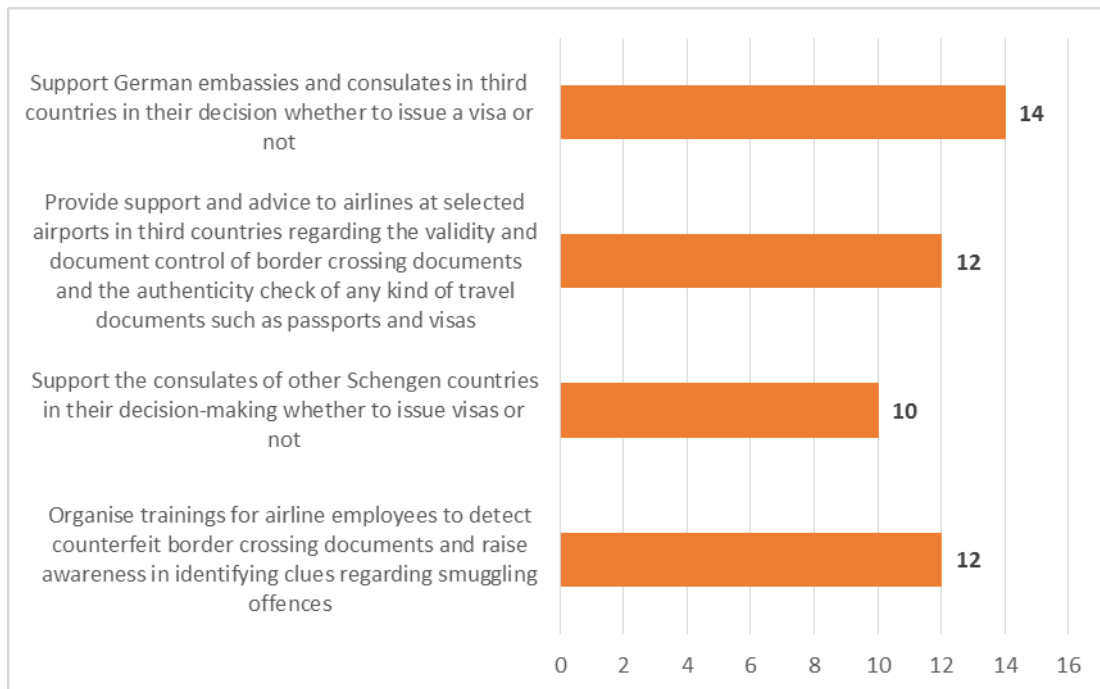
Figure 60: How satisfied overall were you with the project?



N=15

Asked about the success of specific individual activities, respondents indicated that they deemed the support given to German embassies and consulates in third countries in their decision whether to issue a visa or not as having been mainly successful (14 respondents), followed by the organisation of trainings for airline employees to detect counterfeit border-crossing documents and raise awareness in identifying clues regarding smuggling offences (12 respondents). Multiple answers for this questions were possible.

Figure 61: Which of the activities you were involved in during the timeframe 2011-2013 were particularly successful?



Individual respondents also highlighted the importance of support provided to the border police in Syria and Lebanon, and claimed that the established contacts helped to prevent many illegal migration movements towards Europe.

DVBs were asked in which areas they saw room for improvement. The majority of responses were related to improvements in the cooperation with airlines. Individuals said that there was a lack of long-term planning by airlines in terms of personnel. Due to changing staff, in particular the 'train the trainer' activities proved to be very challenging. Therefore, continuous interaction with and training for airline employees is necessary. In addition, it was suggested that one DVB in one country might sometimes not be sufficient. In countries where the embassies or consulates are very large, and where DVBs have to attend to more than one airport, there is no backup for their work. It was suggested that additional DVBs could be financed by Frontex in order to guarantee a maximum level of security at airports.

The support provided to border police was described by one individual as particularly challenging due to the lack of knowledge or awareness of how to identify false documents. In addition, it was suggested that training material should be provided to those being trained, as participants could then use the material after the training to look up information provided.

Room for improvement was also identified in the interaction with the RA. Individuals mentioned that requests for advice (in particular strategic advice) were not answered, which was due to specific units being understaffed. It was highlighted that this made optimal support of the DVBs abroad very difficult. In addition, individual respondents mentioned that the administrative tasks are increasing and have an impact on the actual work that DVBs are supposed to undertake.

Respondents were asked how well – in their opinion – the concept of 'train the trainer' worked, and whether it contributed to the sustainability of the project / their work. Responses to this question were very mixed. Three respondents perceived the concept as

useful, as long as the most relevant individuals are being trained, and also stated that trainings have to be repeated and trainers need to stay in touch with those they train. One individual stated that the concept was more sustainable in the work with airlines rather than embassies and consulates (however, without providing an explanation why this was the case).

Six respondents had mixed opinions about the 'train the trainer' concept. This was mainly due to the high turnover of staff working for airlines as well as embassies and consulates. Therefore, they argued that the sustainability of the concept cannot be guaranteed.

Four respondents stated that the 'train the trainer' concept was not used in the countries they were working in. This was mainly due to the fact that authorities in the given countries did not see the value of this training, or because DVBs perceived the high turnover of staff as hindering the success of such training.

Finland – Acquiring and replacing vehicles used for border surveillance**Summary**

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority(ies)	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS FI	Border mobility – land	Priority 1	A and B	2011 and 2013	2,439,468	7,318,405
Short Description	Acquiring new and replacing old vehicles used for border security activities and surveillance					
Objective(s)	<p>EBF Objective: Improving border surveillance at the land borders</p> <p>Priority 1 – Support for the further gradual establishment of the common integrated border management system as regards the checks on persons at and the surveillance of the external borders</p> <p>MAP – acquiring new and replacing old equipment/vehicles for border patrol and surveillance</p> <p>AP 2011 and AP 2013 – Increasing border security through enhancing border guard mobility along the Finnish-Russian border.</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, interviews					
Indicators	Increasing effectiveness of border patrols and surveillance by enhancing response time and vehicle service life; better working environment for officers at the BCPs.					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project (case study)

The research methods included:

- 1) Review of the 2011-2013 MAP and of annual programmes, the 2011-2013 evaluation report, EC monitoring mission report (Sept 2014);
- 2) Interviews with representatives of the RA (one interview) in Helsinki and one phone interview;
- 3) Site visit and interviews with the Finnish Border Guard (FBG) vehicle manager (one interview), Border Guard Station Chief (one interview) and operational staff at the Kolmikanta border station (four interviews);

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

Finland is responsible for guarding 1340 km of external EU border with Russia, which is managed by some 20 Border Guard and Border Control Stations. The surveillance of the border is actively performed by patrolling activities with vehicles and means most suitable for the seasonal and terrain conditions – these include a combination of off-road vehicles, snowmobiles, off-road motorcycles and bicycles and cross-country skiing. Dogs

are also being used in patrol and surveillance activities and are deemed essential in detecting irregularities. Compared to other MSs the situation at the Finnish-Russian border, particularly in relation to the recent refugee and migrant crises in Europe, has remained relatively calm and unchanged (see table 1). For example, within the area of responsibility of the Kolmikanta Border Guard there has been only one case of illegal crossing, which involved the discovery of four Syrian nationals by local residents.⁵⁵³

Table 12: Cases of illegal green border crossings⁵⁵⁴

Region	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Lapin rajavartiosto	0	2	3	3	5
Kainuun rajavartiosto	1	3	5	0	6
Pohjois-Karjalan rajavartiosto	4	4	4	3	5
Kaakkois-Suomen rajavartiosto	7	10	9	9	13
Total	12	19	21	15	29

Figure 30: Location of Kolmikanta Border Station



Kolmikanta is located some 300 km northeast of Helsinki next to a border crossing with Russia connecting Finland road 4012 with Russian 86K-91. In addition to the BCP Parikkala the Kolmikanta border police staff are responsible for guarding an approximately 50 km stretch of the border with Russia. The Kolmikanta border guard station in the Southeast Finland Border Guard District is located some 0.5 km from the border crossing point in Parikkala. The border guard station building is a new building and the other facilities have been renovated within the last five years. The facility can hold approximately 60 employees. The Parikkala BCP is one of the temporary BCPs operating along the Finnish-Russian border and as such it exclusively services traffic between the two counties. It is considered a key point in the Midnordic Green Transport Corridor connecting Russia with the countries in the Scandinavian Peninsula. As a temporary BCP it helps reduce traffic congestion in the main BCPs to the south-west. Plans are underway to open Parikkala BCP to international traffic in 2018.

⁵⁵³ Interviews with Border Guards

⁵⁵⁴ Data received from Finnish Ministry of the Interior. Cases may involve more than one person.

Figure 62: Office facility at the Kolmikanta Border



Currently, BCP Parikkala mainly serves the import of timber from Russia to Finland. Traffic volumes have been on the increase (see Table 13). In 2014, a total of 13,900 trucks, 740 passenger cars, and 15,300 people crossed the border at Parikkala. Between January and May 2015, the volume of heavy traffic increased by 12% and the volume of passengers by 9.5%. Traffic through the BCP is expected to continue to grow, with some speculating it will become one of the top five busiest BCPs with Russia.⁵⁵⁵

Figure 63: Canteen, rest and recreation facility



Table 13: Parikkala BCP crossings⁵⁵⁶

2012	2013	2014	2015
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⁵⁵⁵ *Parikkala–Syväoro aimed to become an international border crossing point.* The Regional Council of South Karelia.2015.

⁵⁵⁶ Source: Finnish Border Guard at <http://www.raja.fi>

2012	2013	2014	2015
12,637	10,555	15,278	20,655

Finland's involvement with the EBF reflects the country's national strategy and its adherence to common EU goals of protecting the external borders and improving cross-border traffic. Finland has developed a comprehensive approach for enhancing economic and financial exchange with Russia by focusing resources on the development of infrastructure in the border regions, including the expansion and modernisation of the network of BCPs. In a time of austerity and an economy that is recovering at a slower rate than other Western European states, the efficient allocation of resources is deemed of high importance. To secure efficiency and effectiveness of border management Finland has re-allocated human resources from the FBG to manage the increasing traffic between Finland and Russia at existing, expanded and newly functional BCPs. Still, in order to compensate for the flow of staff away from guarding and patrolling duties the FBG had undertaken an ambitious plan for modernisation, which includes acquiring new and replacing old vehicles used in border control activities.⁵⁵⁷ Therefore, the effectiveness and efficiency of border control may be guaranteed despite the re-allocation of some staff to BCPs. The new vehicles have better technical specifications selected in accordance with the needs of the border guards, which corresponds to shorter response time, larger area covered by single patrol, longer service life and cheaper maintenance. Apart from the above needs, the FBG deemed it necessary to standardise vehicle types and specifications so that some interchangeability is achieved and staff around the county are trained and able to operate the necessary equipment at any other border guard station.⁵⁵⁸

Description of the project's objectives

The project's objectives were to increase the mobility of the border guards and their surveillance capabilities by replacing old vehicles and acquiring new ones. Older vehicles were beginning to require considerable maintenance. This increased the cost of operation and more importantly prevented the vehicle from being used in border control activities, thereby decreasing border protection effectiveness and efficiency. It should be noted that EBF funding has mostly been used for replacing old vehicles with new ones.

The specific objectives of the investment were the following:

Under AP 2011 – to acquire 15 new vehicles: 3 Toyota Hilux – Dog Patrol; and 11 VW Transporter – Dog Patrol; 1 VW Transporter Lockup;

⁵⁵⁷ Interviews with RA officials

⁵⁵⁸ Interviews with FBG representatives

Figure 64: Left: a VW Transporter under AP 2011; Right: a new and Modified VW Transporter under AP 2013



Under AP 2013 – to acquire 130 new vehicles: 85 snowmobiles; 15 Road Traffic ATVs (ATVs permitted to move on regular roads); 12 VW Transporter Dog Patrol Cars; 5 VW Transporters with lock up and dog cage; 4 Cross country motorcycles; 3 VW Transporters Lockup Cars; 3 VW Amarok Pickups; 2 Jeeps; 1 Tractor ATV.

Figure 65: Lynx snowmobiles under AP 2013



Figure 66: VW Transporter with dog cage under AP 2013



Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for management

The beneficiary of the project was the Finnish Border Guard (FBG). The Responsible Authority was the Ministry of the Interior, part of which is the FBG. The project was assigned a manager within the FBG who was in charge of land/road vehicle management for all border guard stations in Finland. In this particular case, no tender procedures had been necessary because of framework agreements. The Finnish government employs Hansel⁵⁵⁹, which is a central government purchasing body that pre-approves suppliers and signs framework contracts. This greatly expedites the public procurement, selecting, ordering and delivery of vehicles, as orders may be completed online, on Hansel's website⁵⁶⁰.

Financial resources

In the 2011 AP, the estimated cost of the project was EUR 1,775,919, with EUR 591, 973 (33%) coming from the EBF, and EUR 1,183,946 (77%) coming from the Finnish national budget. In the 2013 AP the estimated cost stood at EUR 5,542,486 with EUR 1,847,495 (33%) coming from the EBF.

⁵⁵⁹ For a review of Hansel see: www.hansel.fi

⁵⁶⁰ Interviews with FBG vehicle acquisition manager and representatives of the RA

Description of activities conducted under project

The project included the following activities:

- 1) Delivery of a total of 145 new vehicles
- 2) Providing suitable vehicles with the necessary communication equipment (this is performed by the Ministry of the Interior)

Effects

- **Outputs:** Overall 145 vehicles were delivered to 11 border guard stations along the Finnish-Russian border within the AP 2011 and 2013. All appropriate vehicles have been equipped with the necessary communication devices – tetra radios, connection with police communication system (access to registration plates database), etc.
- **Results:** As a result of the output the FBG increased its capacity to respond to signals and incidents in all weather conditions and terrain types in a timely manner. The new VW Transporters have separate dog cages at the back which have an independent air-conditioning unit. This is important in maintaining the canine assistant in optimal shape and state of readiness to respond to commands. The inside height clearance of the VW Transporters has been increased to provide more room for officers when equipping gear and changing into suitable clothing. The audio-visual signalling system of the new VW Transporters has been amplified and made more visible than the ones acquired under the AP 2011. Vehicles prior to the acquisition under AP 2011 had no audio-visual signalling system. Vehicles for lockup and transport of persons have also been delivered in greater numbers than before EBF funding, improving FBG capacity to apprehend potential offenders of the border regime, in case a risk of increased illegal crossings is realised. Overall, according to the interviews conducted, the new vehicles are more powerful, reliable and better-suited for the functions of the border guards.⁵⁶¹
- **Impacts:** The strategy of the FBG has involved modernising the border guard so that response time, patrol coverage, effectiveness and efficiency of patrolling and surveillance operations are improved without resorting to hiring new staff. The action greatly reduced the costs for maintenance of the vehicle fleet as the average age of vehicles in use has decreased, therefore the need for maintenance was diminished (see table 4). It was not uncommon for maintenance expenses to reach some EUR 6,000 per year or EUR 30,000-40,000 during the lifetime of some vehicles.⁵⁶² Less maintenance translates into raised efficiency and effectiveness of resources used to patrol and conduct surveillance as vehicles' readiness and availability has greatly improved. FBG operational staff were very satisfied with the new vehicles, as they stated that old ones spent much time in the repair shops, instead of out in the field on duty.

The considerable length of the Finnish-Russian border, as well as its climate and terrain extremities, set in a scarcely populated area, necessitate swift response by the FBG. The ability to reliably reach and patrol every segment of the border is crucial in conducting effective surveillance. In this sense FBG's performance in

⁵⁶¹ Interviews with border guards

⁵⁶² Interviews with FBG

protecting the border area depends on mobility – increased mobility improves border protection. In addition, each border guard station must be able to rely on mobility in various types of terrain and weather conditions, requiring the utilisation of a diverse set of vehicles. The project has considered that circumstance and the delivered vehicles reflect an assessment of these needs as well, i.e. each border guard station has diverse fleet of vehicles – off-road vehicles, ATVs, snowmobiles – allowing swift response to be realised in extreme conditions of snow, mud, ice.⁵⁶³

In addition, more reliable equipment raises staff morale as they feel more confident in their working environment.

Therefore, it may be concluded that the action has had the desired impact and is in line with EBF objectives in improving security on the EU's external borders.

Table 39: Condition of the vehicle fleet at Kolmikanta Border Guard Station (excluding snowmobiles, ATVs and motorcycles)⁵⁶⁴

Year	2013	2014	2015
Number of EBF funded vehicles	1 of 7	2 of 6	6 of 7
Average age of all vehicles	7	4	3

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The investment is highly relevant for Finland's needs in the period 2011-2013. The relocation of some resources toward managing and improving the increasing cross-border traffic with Russia meant that resources left with a remit in border protection had to be utilised more efficiently and effectively. As mobility is key in the current Finnish approach to border patrol and surveillance, improving the technical equipment, such as vehicles, was the logical direction that the FBG undertook in order to increase both effectiveness and efficiency in performing its duties. Although there is an agreement among interviewees that Finland is capable of protecting its borders in the current situation without external assistance, it would have done so at a greatly reduced efficiency as, some argue, half the vehicles would not have been acquired without assistance through the EBF mechanism in AP 2011 and AP 2013.⁵⁶⁵ The replacing of obsolete and inefficient equipment is deemed a necessary condition for providing an optimal level of border security.

Utility

In the Finnish context vehicles are vital in fulfilling duties related to the protection of the border with Russia. As a result of the new equipment working conditions have improved for the border guards. Interviewed operational staff share the opinion that the quality of patrols has increased owing to faster, more powerful, more reliable and more convenient

⁵⁶³ The exception are off-road motorcycles, all of which have been delivered in the Lapland region, where illegal crossings have been most common (interview with border guards)

⁵⁶⁴ Based on data received from the FBG

⁵⁶⁵ Interviews with RA and FBG

equipment.⁵⁶⁶ Standardisation of patrol and surveillance equipment is expected to have a favourable impact on overall utility, as well.

The advantages of renewing the vehicles may be summarised as follows:

- Improved mobility – vehicles have better performance indicators
- Improved reliability – vehicles are new and in warranty
- Enhanced convenience and working conditions – vehicles are specified in accordance with the needs of operational staff (more room in the vans; separate cage and air-conditioning for dogs; compartmentalised interiors for improved usability, etc.)
- Enhanced cooperation abilities – compatibility with police communication systems
- Improved ability to detect irregularities – combined result of enhanced reliability, mobility and communication.

Efficiency

The effects of the actions performed under the project were achieved at a reasonable cost.

Hansel – the central purchasing body of the Finnish government – has signed framework contracts with vehicle suppliers, whereby the RA and FBG have had input in specifying requirements. In this way the process of selecting and acquiring the desired vehicles is simplified, particularly for the FBG and the vehicle acquisition manager. After logging onto Hansel's website the manager has available all options needed to select the most appropriate vehicle – such as drivetrain, power, level of equipment, etc. After making all desired selections the results are filtered by price and by vehicle maker. By law the lowest price is the selection criterion.⁵⁶⁷ This approach eliminated lengthy tender procedures, negotiations and appeals, and guaranteed maximum efficiency.

Complementarity and coherence

The projects were coherent and complementary to other projects completed with national and EU funds, including projects under the EBF. Appropriate vehicles are equipped with tetra communication devices and have access to police vehicle registration database. These vehicles are also linked to a police geolocation visualisation service that enables them to locate police patrols in real time.

The projects are complementary with national cross-border initiatives and programmes to foster economic and law-enforcement cooperation with Russia, such as the Kolarctic Cross-border cooperation ENPI CBC, South-Eastern Finland-Russia Programme and the Midnordic Green Traffic Corridor initiative, among others.⁵⁶⁸

The projects are coherent with Finland's national strategy for FBG modernisation and border management, wherein one facet of increasing border security is through improved vehicle mobility and reliability.

⁵⁶⁶ Interviews with border guards

⁵⁶⁷ The process was demonstrated to the evaluators.

⁵⁶⁸ See: Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Finland, p. 43

Effectiveness

All vehicles were delivered within the designated timeframe and are currently operational. All are suitably equipped for particular purpose, terrain and weather, and are connected to the FBG communications systems.

The project achieved its objectives, as evidenced by FBG officers. Patrol and surveillance mobility has been increased with the newly acquired vehicles. One of the most highlighted results of the project was the enhanced reliability of new vehicles.

The vehicles delivered under AP 2011 and AP 2013 increased holding capacity for apprehending potential offenders of the border regimes, as Finland makes contingency plans for increased illegal crossing pressure.

The separate compartments for dog cages, with their own independent air-conditioning in the newly acquired VW Transporters, provide for better conditioning of the dogs, which are an integral part of the patrol and surveillance activities.

Sustainability

The effects of the action are sustainable. The FBG has designed a schedule through which age and mileage of the vehicles are monitored and projected into the next several years. Vehicles nearing the 300,000 km mark were scheduled for replacement. In addition, the vehicles acquired under AP 2011 and 2013 were new and covered by manufacturer's warranty. The expected lifespan of vehicles enables effective planning of maintenance and replacement cycles.

EU added value

The EBF assistance is assessed as highly relevant, particularly in a period of poor economic performance, austerity and limited human resources. Although modernisation of FBG's fleet of vehicles would have been possible without external assistance, an overall evaluation is that the EBF has enabled and sped up processes of upgrading and renewing operational equipment for border surveillance. In most of the cases this also serves the EUROSUR as the renewed and updated vehicles have a uniform communication system and they improve situational awareness.⁵⁶⁹

General conclusions

The FBG modernisation drive, with which the AP 2011 and AP 2013 were coherent and complementary, is to a large degree in response to the need to manage and improve the increasing cross-border traffic with Russia. Resources had been focused on and shifted toward BCP management and enlargement. In a period of poor economic performance one approach of the FBG strategy to enhance border control and security includes improving the mobility and reliability of patrol and surveillance vehicles.

The objectives of the project were achieved effectively and efficiently. The system of framework contracting through Hansel deserves particular mention as it greatly facilitated the acquisition of EBF-funded vehicles with maximum efficiency.

Border guards' satisfaction with the new equipment is high, as they claim it is more reliable and convenient, thereby enhancing their performance. At the time of the

⁵⁶⁹ Ex-post evaluation of actions co-financed by the External Borders Fund under the 2011-2013 Annual Programmes for Finland.

evaluation, however, no statistics were available to corroborate officers' statement of increased mobility and faster response times.

Overall the project has been executed quite successfully. All vehicles were delivered within the timeframe in an efficient manner and minimal to none hindrance cause by tendering procedures. Sustainability is assessed at a very high level as it was built in the project by way of setting indicators/thresholds for replacement to be monitored and projected. The risk of increasing illegal border crossings has also been factored in by increasing the number of lockup vehicles capable of transporting potential offenders.

Spain – National Coordination Centre

Summary

Country Case Study ID	Topic	EBF-Related Priority	EBF-Related Objective(s)	Annual Programme	EBF Contribution (EUR)	Overall Contribution (EUR)
CS ES	Maritime Surveillance	Priority 2 SP 2.2	General Objective A	2011	14,259,355.46	15,009,847.86
				2012	4,529,642.26	4,768,044.49
Objective(s)	<p>General objectives: Reinforcement of the surveillance and control of the external borders</p> <p>Specific objectives: Integration with higher levels and development of a national coordination centre</p> <p>Operational objectives: Development of National Coordination Centre for Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance</p>					
Methodology	Desk research, site visit, interviews					
Contribution to evaluation questions	<p>Effectiveness – significant positive benefits, in terms of information exchange, as a result of the actions.</p> <p>Coherence & Complementarity – these actions have significantly improved the Spanish NCCs cooperation and coordination with other EU measures/actors (e.g. EUROSUR, EPN, Frontex, SEAHORSE), as well as with national actors, other EU Member States and third countries.</p> <p>EU Added Value – these actions, and their significant impact, would not have happened without EBF funding.</p>					

Explanation of research methods adopted in the evaluation of the project

This case study evaluates the following two actions implemented in Spain: Action 8 of the 2011 Annual Programme and Action 7 of the 2012 Annual Programme, implementing phases II and III of the 'Construction of the Operations Room for the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre' (Centro de Coordinación para la Vigilancia Marítima Costas y Fronteras). These actions were funded under EBF priority 2, specific priority 2.2⁵⁷⁰ and objective A⁵⁷¹, as described below:

- **Priority 2:** Support for the development and implementation of the national components of a European Surveillance System for the external borders and of a permanent European Patrol Network at the southern maritime borders of the EU Member States.
- **Specific Priority 2.2:** Investments in establishing or upgrading a single national surveillance system, which covers all or selected parts of the external border and enables the dissemination of information 24/7 between all authorities involved in external border control.
- **Objective A:** Efficient organisation of control, covering both checks and surveillance tasks relating to the external borders.

The research methods used are as follows:

⁵⁷⁰ Commission Decision of 27 August 2007 implementing Decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the adoption of strategic guidelines for 2007 to 2013 (2007/599/EC)

⁵⁷¹ Decision No 574/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 May 2007 establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'

- 1) **Preparatory document review** covering the 2011-2013 Multi-Annual Programme (MAP); the 2011 and 2012 annual programmes (AP); the 2011 and 2012 final reports; the 2011-2013 ES National Evaluation Report; and the description of the ES management and control systems (MCS);
- 2) **Site visit** at the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre on the premises of the beneficiary (Guardia Civil), Madrid. The individuals present included representatives of the Responsible Authority (Ministry of the Interior, 2 individuals) and representatives of the beneficiary, including officials-in-charge and operational staff (8 individuals). Presentations were given by the beneficiary's officials-in-charge (outlining the situation before and after the action and the effects of the action) and a group interview was conducted with all individuals;
- 3) **Conference meeting** with representatives of Spain's three Regional Coordination Centres (6 individuals), located in the Mediterranean (Valencia), the Strait of Gibraltar (Algeciras) and the Atlantic (Las Palmas); and
- 4) **Post-visit document review** covering relevant documents presented by the Responsible Authority covering the public procurement procedures as well as the presentations noted above.

Description of the needs underlying the project: 2011-2013

The Spanish National Coordination Centre (NCC) for the management of irregular migration was first established in 2008 as part of the Guardia Civil's new approach to border management. Alongside the establishment of the NCC, the Guardia Civil implemented numerous bilateral agreements with third countries and the 'four-tier' model, consisting of liaison officers in countries of migrant origin and departure, cooperation in third countries, the expansion of border surveillance systems (i.e. the SIVE surveillance system) and national actions (i.e. the implementation of Regional Coordination Centres).

These first steps, and in particular the NCC, were initiated in response to a number of needs: i) the Cayucos Crisis, described as the first irregular migration crisis in Europe; ii) the 'MEDSEA' study presented by Frontex in July 2006, which recommended the creation of national level coordination centres⁵⁷²; iii) the European Commission Communication of 30 November 2006, which presents the basis for the definition of a European Border Surveillance System⁵⁷³; and iv) the Communication of 13 February 2008 examining the creation of a European Border surveillance system (Eurosur)⁵⁷⁴.

However, by 2013, before the opening of the NCC's new operations room, the NCC was struggling to cope with its tasks and commitments, which was particularly pertinent given the imminent publication of Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 establishing Eurosur.⁵⁷⁵ Among other issues, the following were reported by representatives of the beneficiary:

- Operating twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, as stipulated in Article 5, paragraph 4 of Regulation 1052/2013, was not possible;

⁵⁷² <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/european-patrols-network--Weca9H>

⁵⁷³ Communication from the Commission to the Council Reinforcing the management of the European Union's Southern Maritime Borders, COM(2006) 733

⁵⁷⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Examining the creation of a European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), COM(2008) 68

⁵⁷⁵ Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2013 establishing the European Border Surveillance System (Eurosur)

- Adequate equipment was not available to manage a crisis situation;
- Connecting efficiently and effectively with new acquisitions, such as surveillance vessels and SIVE deployments, was not possible;
- Permanent connections with international and national surveillance centres were not possible; and
- Hosting the daily operations of INDALO and HERA, when required, were not possible due to limited space.

In this context, the underlying needs related to the actions included: the need to:

- i) Permanently connect and interact with Spain's three Regional Coordination Centres, as well as other relevant stakeholders (e.g. Frontex, other Member States and third countries);
- ii) Increase Human Resource capacity in order to operate 24/7; and
- iii) To connect and interact with all relevant systems and surveillance resources (e.g. SIVE).

Description of the project's objectives

Spain's 2011 AP details the objectives for Phases II and III of the construction of the operations room. It states that the centre was created to equip the Guardia Civil with an appropriate organisational structure in order to; i) coordinate, advise upon and oversee maritime surveillance operations on coasts and borders; ii) coordinate with other national entities; and iii) monitor crisis situations in this field.

In addition, Action 8 (2011) and Action 7 (2012) relate to the following overarching objectives:

- **General objectives:** Reinforcement of the surveillance and control of the external borders;
- **Specific objectives:** Integration with higher levels and development of a national coordination centre;
- **Operational objectives:** Development of National Coordination Centre for Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance and upgrading of equipment.

Description of project's inputs

Resources mobilised for the management of EU contribution

The following human resources were mobilised for the management of the Action 8 (2011) and Action 7 (2012):

- Financial and Logistic Division (European Funds Office, Contracting Service, Civilian Work Service (Barracks));
- Operations Division (General Staff, Centre of Maritime Surveillance);
- Human Resources Division (Security, Internal Rules);
- Tailored working group, involving representatives of every unit, formed for the preparation and execution of the project.

Financial resources

Initially, the construction of the new Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre was programmed to cost **EUR 15,653,880**. However, two significant incidents arose during the excavation phase of the project which resulted in modifications to the plans and the financial inputs.

First, the soil was found to be less cohesive than originally thought. This necessitated changes to the building plans. Second, the soil was found to be contaminated with hydrocarbons. This was due to oil deposits leaking from adjacent land and caused delays in the process. These issues resulted in a budgetary increase of EUR 860,463.31.

The cost of site management, not included in the original financing request, was deemed eligible and was included in the revised 2011 AP. This resulted in an additional budgetary increase of EUR 1,227,752.49. Furthermore, an additional EUR 318,678.69 was included under the revised budget due to an increase in the applicable VAT rate, from 18% to 21%. Thus, in the revised version of the 2011 AP, the programmed amount was **EUR 18,060,774.49**.

However, as documented in the 2011 Final Report, the delays referred to above resulted in delays to the completion and payment for some of the later deliverables. The final amount allocated to Action 8 of the 2011 AP was therefore **EUR 15,009,847.86**. The outstanding deliverables were carried over to the 2012 programming period and implemented through Action 7 (2012). Action 7 (2012) had a programmed and final expenditure of **EUR 4,768,044.49**.

Thus, the overall expenditure on the construction of facilities for the new Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre (Phases II and III) was EUR 19,777,892.35; the co-financing rate was 95%; and the EBF contribution was EUR 18,788,997.72.

The final financial resources are summarised in the following table:

Table 40: Overview of total cost and EU contribution by action

AP	Action	Eligible cost (EUR)	% EU Contribution	EU Contribution
2011	Action 8: Planning, contract tendering and construction of facilities for the new Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre (Phase II)	15,009,847.86	95%	14,259,355.46
2012	Action 7: Planning, contract tendering and construction of facilities for the new Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre (Phase III)	4,768,044.49	95%	4,529,642.26
Total:		19,777,892.35	95%	18,788,997.72

Description of activities conducted under project

The activities related to the project included the following:

- Civil works and installation of technological equipment;
- Project technical direction.

The expenditure per activity were as follows:

Table 41: Overview of expenditure by activity for Action 8 (2011) and Action 7 (2012)

AP	Activity	Eligible cost (EUR)
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AP	Activity	Eligible cost (EUR)
2011	Civil works and installation of technological equipment	13,943,687.22
	Project technical direction	1,066,160.64
2012	Civil works and installation of technological equipment	4,490,158.91
	Project technical direction	161,591.81
	Indirect cost	116,293.77
Total:		19,777,892.35

Effects

The actions achieved the following effects:

Outputs:

The operations room for the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre was built and officially delivered to the beneficiary on 16 September 2013. It is located in the courtyard of the headquarters of the Directorate-General of the Civil Guard in Guzman el Bueno Street, No. 110, Madrid, Spain. It has a total built-up surface area of 5,920 m². Urbanisation and landscaping was also carried out on an area of 4,800 m².

In terms of the investments in technological equipment, the means necessary for the implementation of the integrated communications system, the display system and the security system were acquired. These are detailed below:

Table 42: Detailed overview of outputs related to investments in technological equipment

Sys tem	Subsys tem	Equipment installed
Inte grate d com mu nica tion s sys tem	Manage ment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gemyc System with arrays, servers, 15" touch screens, headphones, speakers, GSM modem and antennas, IP recorder player, PA system, 42 UA 600 x 1000 racks, computers for the operator posts and a multi-management workstation.
	Voice and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wifi network including RFID locator with access to the Internet, as well as installation of the SEAHORSE, Malla B, SIRDEE, HF, GSM_UMTS, Ministry of Defence networks, linked to the DMZ for the Intranet and security servers, together with the electronics and the corresponding wiring Video conferencing and telepresence system VOIP telephone system
	Simulta neous Interpre tation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simultaneous interpretation booths in conference rooms
	Interco m and sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audio devices in the conference room
Dis play sys tem	Manage ment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACTIVU management system
	Present ation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video wall in the video wall/operators' rooms, equipment racks, conference room, crisis room and coordination room (see Figure 36). SV-SP-OVI system for integration of the headquarters into the display system

Sys tem	Subsys tem	Equipment installed
Sec urit y syst em	Identific ation and authenti cation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access control system with software and dedicated computers • Scanner, WTMD and metal detectors • Biometric and ID-passport information readers
	Video surveilla nce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alarm detection and video surveillance system with high capacity server • Central alarm station and intercom • Video surveillance cameras with dedicated servers for recording images

In addition, a plaque indicating co-financing from the EBF was placed on the façade of the Centre. The outputs cover all expected outputs, as listed in the 2011 AP.

Figure 67: Videowall in the new Operations Room (24 video cubes) (left) compared with the videowall from the original NCC premises (4 cubes) (right)



Source: Optimity Advisors.

Results:

Table 18 shows the achieved results against the expected results.

Table 43: Overview of expected and achieved results

Expected results	Achieved results
Increased information exchange and cooperation at the national scale	100% increase in connection of the National Centre to EUROSUR, thereby unifying the national border security scheme of this Centre with those at the regional centres in the Mediterranean (Valencia), Straits of Gibraltar (Algeciras) and Atlantic (Las Palmas).
Enhanced potential for cooperation with other Member States	Enhanced connection of the National Centre to the EUROSUR National Centres Network, due to 100% increase in video conferencing and conference calling capacity.

Impacts:

The expected impact, as per the 2011 and 2012 APs, was enhanced security of Europe's southern external maritime borders. Relevant indicators presented by the beneficiary include:

- Reported decrease in the interception time for sea operations;

- Reported decrease in the ratio of number of hours patrolled for number of boats rescued;
- Reported increase in the number of operations per year.

Assessment of EBF evaluation questions

Relevance

The objectives related to Action 8 (2011 AP) and Action 7 (2012 AP) meet the needs identified by the beneficiary. In this instance, the beneficiary needed the equipment and facilities to increase integration and coordination of maritime surveillance activities within Spain, as well as with third countries, other Member States and Frontex. The objective, to ensure the NCC can coordinate effectively and efficiently with national and international entities in the field of maritime surveillance, appropriately addresses the identified needs.

Utility

The actual effects observed as a result of Action 8 (2011 AP) and Action 7 (2012 AP), have significantly addressed the needs of the beneficiary. In the first instance, the required equipment and facilities were implemented successfully. The operations room was opened in September 2013 and the necessary technological equipment was incorporated into the centre (i.e. integrated communications system, display system and security system). These outputs allowed the actions to achieve results of great importance to addressing the needs of the beneficiary. For example, a 100% increase was seen in the ability of the Centre to connect with EUROSUR, as well as the Regional Coordination Centres; this demonstrates that the action met the need for increased connectivity and interaction with relevant stakeholders within Spain and internationally.

Efficiency

Action 8 (2011 AP) experienced two incidents in the excavation phase of the project, as described above. It was not possible to foresee these incidents but they did impact the programming timeframe for the project and ultimately resulted in additional expenditure. These setbacks necessitated the creation of Action 7 (2012 AP) in order to complete the project and resulted in overall increased expenditure of EUR 4,124,012.35.

The beneficiary underwent a stringent procurement process, allowing the five most prominent construction companies in Spain to bid competitively to carry out the building works. In addition, the beneficiary was able to build the operations room on the existing premises of the Guardia Civil, thereby avoiding the expensive purchase of suitable land. This, in addition to the three-year maintenance guarantee, significantly offsets the setbacks and suggests that the action, and its observed effects, was implemented at a reasonable cost.

Furthermore, neither the responsible authority nor the beneficiary perceived the administrative costs associated with the actions to be an issue.

Complementarity and coherence

Action 8 (2011 AP) and Action 7 (2012 AP) significantly complement, and are coherent with, other actions related to the objectives and priorities of the EBF. Most notably, it was reported that the operations room has received positive feedback from Frontex and is being presented as a best practice model for cooperation and coordination of maritime surveillance activities. Furthermore, the construction of the operations room has allowed greater integration with EUROSUR, as well as increased coordination with Frontex, the EPN, third countries and other MS.

For example, the Guardia Civil now has the ability to permanently connect with, among others, the following centres: COVAM (Spanish Navy); SASEMAR (Spanish Search and Rescue Service); DAVA (Spanish Customs); Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) Morocco; and the SEAHORSE network (see Figure 37) among others.

The operations room has also provided the Guardia Civil with the means to host recent INDALO (includes BE, FI, FR, DE, IS, IT, LU, NL, PT and SK) and HERA (FR, DE, IT, LU and PT, as well as Senegal and Mauritania) joint operations. In addition, the Guardia Civil is now able to take part in a wide range of European projects, including the testing and piloting of novel technologies. Examples include: EUCISE 2020; CLOSEEYE; CIRCUS; and EBF Community Actions such as CAPSAT, SIVE-SIVIC and MLA.

Effectiveness

The effects of Action 8 (2011 AP) and Action 7 (2012 AP), in relation to achieving the objectives set out, were perceived to be extremely positive by all levels of staff working in the new operations room.

The specific objectives of integration with higher levels and the development of an NCC have been achieved. The operations room was successfully built and opened in 2013. With regard to integration with higher levels, this was determined to mean increasing the NCC's ability to cooperate, coordinate and share information regarding maritime surveillance activities with both national, EU and international authorities. It was stated by the beneficiary that the NCC's ability in these regards has improved significantly due to increased connectivity, increased resources and increased space. For example, the ES 2011 Final Report reported a 100% increase in connection to EUROSUR, alongside increased connection with the ES Regional Coordination Centres.

The other objectives identified include ensuring the Guardia Civil has the appropriate instruments to: i) coordinate, advise upon and oversee maritime surveillance operations on coasts and borders; ii) coordinate with other national entities; and iii) monitor crisis situations in this field. With regard to point i), the operations room has significantly enhanced the Guardia Civil's ability to coordinate, advise and oversee maritime surveillance. Now the Guardia Civil is in permanent connection with the Regional Coordination Centres and has the ability to hold video conference calls with all three simultaneously (see Figure 37). It was reported that this significantly improves the coordination of maritime surveillance efforts and the allocation of resources.

In the same vein, these developments have significantly improved the Guardia Civil's ability to coordinate with other national entities within Spain, as well as externally. For example, the Guardia Civil now has the capability to host Frontex-led joint operations, such as INDALO and HERA. The operations room has an international coordination centre specifically for this purpose, which regularly hosts individuals from Frontex. It also has the capacity to host awareness-raising, conferences and training seminars in its purpose-built lecture room (see Figure 37). Prior to the development of the operations room, none of these coordination mechanisms were possible.

Finally, the operations room was built with a crisis room, as well as significant technological advancements in the form of the new integrated communications system, display system and security system, that have significantly enhanced the ability of the Guardia Civil to monitor and undertake crisis operations.

Figure 68: Lecture hall in the new operations room (top left); video conference call with all three Regional Coordination Centres in the new operations room (top right); original operations room (bottom left); new operations room (bottom centre).



Source: *Optimity Advisors*

Sustainability

The operations room has a three-year maintenance guarantee from the contractors and the funding required to run the operations room is reported to be sustainable, even if further EU funding is not possible. Furthermore, the beneficiary perceives that the positive effects of the operations centre will not only be maintained but will continue to grow as it develops further.

EU added value

The EU added value related to these actions is significant. First, the development of the operations room would not have taken place without EBF funding. In addition, the actions were funded under specific priority 2.2 and therefore received 95% co-financing overall. This flexibility was reported to be a significant bonus of the EBF.

Furthermore, it was reported that Frontex has praised the Guardia Civil for their work and is promoting the operations room as a model for replication by other Member States in order to comply with the EUROSUR regulation. These actions have also resulted in significant improvements in cooperation and information sharing with, among others, EU Member States, EUROSUR, Frontex and third countries.

General conclusions

Action 8 (2011 AP) and Action 7 (2012 AP) concerned the construction of the operations room for the Maritime Border and Coastal Surveillance Coordination Centre. They were co-financed under priority 2; specific priority 2.2 and objective A. With regard to the EBF priorities and objectives, these actions can be considered a success. The national

components of EUROSUR and a permanent European Patrol Network (EPN) are now in place in ES (Priority 2). In addition, significant investments were made in the NCC's surveillance infrastructure (specific priority 2.2); and these investments have substantially improved the coordination and organisation of control relating to the external borders (objective A).

These actions also addressed the specific needs of the beneficiary; achieved the objectives set out in the Annual Programmes; and brought extensive positive benefits. In particular, the positive effects relate to the significant increase in the NCC's information sharing and connectivity capabilities, spanning the national, EU and international levels.

Furthermore, due to the focus of these actions on improving information exchange and connectivity, it has delivered significant improvements to the EU, national and international approach to maritime surveillance by complementing other EU and international-level actions.

Lastly, it is important to note the significant EU added value related to these actions. Not only would the construction of the operations room not have been possible without EU funding, it is serving as a model for replication due to its positive impact.

