



ISA WORK PROGRAMME

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SECTION I

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Introduction

1. THE CONTEXT

1.1 THE NEED FOR THE ISA PROGRAMME

In today's Europe, citizens are free to work in and re-locate to any country within the European Union and enterprises are similarly free to trade and carry out business. They frequently have to interact with Member States' administrations, which is increasingly being done electronically. To facilitate electronic interaction with citizens and enterprises, Member States have gradually transformed their administrations, improving their business processes and the way they interact with citizens and enterprises, thereby reducing much of the administrative burden and costs while increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.

However, there is a high risk that this transformation will give rise to electronic barriers ('e-barriers') due to both the national dimension and a lack of interoperability at European level, making it impossible for citizens and enterprises to interact electronically with a national administration abroad with the same ease as locals. This could impede the functioning of the internal market and freedom of movement, with a negative impact on the openness and competitiveness of markets and mobility across borders and on the delivery of services of general interest to citizens and enterprises, whether economic or non-economic.

At the same time, the challenges facing Europe today increasingly require common policy responses, so Member States must join forces to put them into effect. The implementation of a broad range of legislative acts is, in fact, the shared responsibility of the Member States and the European Commission. This requires interaction across borders and sectors by means of information and communication technologies (ICTs), which is today an integral part of most legislative procedures and a key instrument for interaction between administrations.

The Member States and the Commission need to step up their efforts to achieve interoperability between national and EU ICT solutions, promote commonly agreed solutions and reusable cost-saving tools, and avoid path dependence, with a view to ensuring efficient and effective interaction between European public administrations to support the delivery of electronic public services and the implementation of EU policies and activities.

1.2 THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

The ISA programme has to be seen in the overall context of a number of other EU initiatives:

- a) The Europe 2020 strategy proposed by the European Commission seeks to turn the European Union into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. In this strategy, seven flagship initiatives are announced, including 'A Digital Agenda for Europe'. The overall aim of the Digital Agenda is to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits with a digital single market based on fast and ultra-fast internet and interoperable applications.¹

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/>

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- b) The European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015, established by the European Commission in response to the Malmö Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment,² was approved by the European Commission on 15 December 2010.³
 - c) The European Interoperability Strategy (EIS), developed in close cooperation with the Member States, defines a common, coherent approach to interoperability based on an agreed vision.⁴
 - d) The European Commission has decided to launch a major rationalisation of its investment in information technologies and adopt new governance arrangements, applicable to all projects it initiates.

Furthermore, the ISA work programme contributes to the modernisation of public administrations, one of the major priorities of the Commission in its Annual Growth Survey 2013⁵. Interoperability between public administrations is key to increasing efficiency, transparency and quality of service, coping with the ongoing pressure on public finances, helping to remove obstacles to the mobility of businesses and citizens across the EU and reducing the fragmentation of the European market, a crucial element of competitiveness.

In its report A7-0083/2012 of 3 April 2012, the European Parliament underlined the unique role of the ISA programme in the development of interoperability between European public administrations.

2. THE ISA PROGRAMME

The Decision on Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 16 September 2009.⁶ The objective of the programme is to support cooperation between European public administrations by facilitating efficient and effective electronic cross-border and cross-sector interaction between administrations, including bodies performing public functions on their behalf, enabling the delivery of electronic public services supporting the implementation of EU policies and activities. The ISA programme will support and promote:

- a) the creation and improvement of common frameworks in support of interoperability across borders and sectors;
- b) assessment of the ICT implications of proposed or adopted EU legislation and planning for the introduction of ICT systems to support the implementation of such legislation;

² <http://www.epractice.eu/files/Malmo%20Ministerial%20Declaration%202009.pdf>.

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0743:FIN:EN:PDF>.

⁴ See Annex I of the Communication 'Towards interoperability for European public services'. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0744:FIN:EN:PDF>.

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/ags2013_en.pdf

⁶ Decision No 922/2009/EC, OJ L 260; 3.10.2009, p. 20.

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- c) the operation and improvement of existing common services as well as the establishment, industrialisation, operation and improvement of new common services;
 - d) the improvement of existing reusable generic tools as well as the establishment, provision and improvement of new reusable generic tools.

The ISA programme is implemented by means of actions, i.e. studies and projects, and accompanying measures supporting implementation. In this connection, due consideration will be given to the policy context, in particular the European Interoperability Strategy, as well as the European Interoperability Framework.⁷

For implementation purposes, the Commission is to establish a rolling work programme covering the full duration of the ISA programme. This document comprises the rolling work programme referred to in the ISA Decision.

3. THE EUROPEAN INTEROPERABILITY STRATEGY

In close cooperation with Member State representatives at the level of Chief Information Officer (CIO) and through workshops with national experts and a variety of Commission services, the Commission in 2009 drew up the European Interoperability Strategy (EIS) as an IDABC⁸ action. The EIS aims to provide direction and to prioritise actions designed to improve interaction, exchange and cooperation among European public administrations across borders and sectors. According to the EIS, interoperability activities should fall within three clusters:

- a) Trusted information exchange;
- b) Interoperability architecture;
- c) Assessment of the ICT implications of new EU legislation.

These activities should be supported by accompanying measures for interoperability awareness-raising and best practice sharing.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE ISA WORK PROGRAMME

The ISA work programme is structured in accordance with the activity clusters and accompanying measures defined in the EIS. Part 1 of the Annex provides the detailed information on the individual actions required by Article 9 of the ISA Decision. Part 2 of the Annex gives an overview of the spending of the ISA budget.

⁷ See Annex II of the Communication 'Towards interoperability for European public services'. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0744:FIN:EN:PDF>.

⁸ Programme on interoperable delivery of pan-European eGovernment services to administrations, businesses and citizens, OJ L 144, 30.4.2004, p. 62 (Decision in OJ L 181, 18.5.2004, p. 25).

The actions are defined on the basis of proposals made by the Commission and/or Member States. Actions relevant to particular policy areas are defined in close coordination with the Commission service(s) responsible for the policy area and in line with the IT governance of the Commission.

Actions launched under the ISA programme are continuously coordinated and aligned with ongoing work under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)⁹ and/or with the Commission's internal ICT strategy¹⁰ and actions under the European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015.

Cluster on Trusted Information Exchange

For the cluster on Trusted Information Exchange, the EIS approach is:

- a) to focus on politically relevant and concrete projects at EU and Member State level that have a multi-sector impact and contribute to cross-sector harmonisation and interoperability;
- b) to identify, promote and support the definition and implementation of key interoperability enablers such as access to base registers, catalogues of public services, electronic identity and electronic signature, in close collaboration with the CIP ICT-PSP programme;
- c) to continue work on semantic interoperability via the SEMIC¹¹ approach and collaborative platform;
- d) to work towards opening up base registries, taking into account best practice, risks and opportunities, as well as the various needs and expectations of the main stakeholders.

1. SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS WITH A MULTI-SECTOR IMPACT

Focusing on politically relevant and concrete projects contributing to interoperability at a multi-sector level, the following actions will be funded by the ISA programme in 2013:

- (Action 1.6) Sustainability of Common Infrastructure for Public Administrations (CIPA), and Action 1.19 PEPPOL sustainability. PEPPOL is one of the large-scale pilots funded by the CIP ICT-PSP programme that ended on August 2012. Its results will be taken forward under Action 1.6 as regards its technical specifications and software and Action 1.19 (new action) for running of the PEPPOL Service Metadata Locator (SML) .
- (Action 1.7)¹² Tools to support electronic procurement. The ePrior electronic procurement platform will be further developed with a view to enabling the European Commission to use

⁹ <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/ict-policy-support-programme>

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/ecom/index_en.htm.

¹¹ <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/community/semic/description>

¹² The action number refers to the corresponding action number in the Annex.

the PEPPOL¹³ infrastructure, making the ePrior modules available to public administrations in Europe, and further supporting standardisation activities in the area of electronic procurement. The reuse of e-Prior across EU public administrations will contribute to the harmonisation of e-Procurement solutions and prevent e-barriers due to different solutions being adopted by public administrations.

- (Action 1.8) Support for the trusted exchange of documents in areas such as the involvement of national parliaments in legislative work at EU level (consequence of the Lisbon Treaty) or the application of EU legislation in the area of competition. The action reuses modules from the ePrior project and serves as a reusable component for many EU projects that need secure information exchange functionality.
- (Action 1.10) Services to support the functioning of the internal market. The Internal Market Information (IMI) System is no longer funded by ISA. Its development will continue to be funded by the relevant operational budget lines.
- (Action 1.14) SOLVIT centres in national administrations cooperate to provide rapid and pragmatic solutions to problems submitted by citizens and businesses. The SOLVIT toolkit supporting the SOLVIT network¹⁴ will be continue to be updated to improve articulation with other related systems such as CHAP, EU pilot and Your Europe.
- (Action 1.11) Development of generic notification services, to be used in several sectors where EU legislation requires notifications. This action will build upon the results of Action 1.8 on the trusted information exchange platform and ECAS for the authentication service.
- (Action 1.12) Implementation of tools supporting European citizens' initiatives. The first tools covered by this action comprise the Open Source Software for the online collection of statements of support for European citizens' initiatives and the implementation of tools for the automatic validation of signatures and the certificates of statements of support by Member State authorities. Available since the end of 2011, the software provides organisers of citizens' initiatives with a tool to ensure compliance with the Regulation on citizens' initiatives. Building on these results, other tools for the exchange of data on EU citizens between Member State electoral authorities will follow.
- (Action 1.13) Legislation editing software (LEOS). To support the EU legislation process, with its special characteristics involving interaction between EU and Member State institutions and multilingualism, new tools need to be developed. Following preliminary studies of the existing situation and planned/ongoing projects in Member States and EU administrations, a proof of concept will be implemented.¹⁵

¹³ <http://www.peppol.eu/>.

¹⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/>.

¹⁵ The funding of Action 1.15 (Open Government Data) stopped in 2012, as its objective had been achieved with the development and deployment of a prototype. The results of the

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- (Action 1.16) Common Information Sharing Environment. The objective of this action is to establish a platform for enhancing awareness of what is happening at sea to contribute to efficiency in maritime operations and eventually safer, more secure and cleaner seas. This will be achieved by enabling data exchange between public administrations across seven policy areas within the EU maritime domain (maritime safety and security, marine environment and pollution preparedness and response, fisheries control, border control, law enforcement, customs, and defence). The reuse of eTrustex (Action 1.8) and CIPA (1.6) will be considered and the methodology established under Action 1.1 (Semantic interoperability) will be followed for relevant aspects of the project.
 - (Action 1.20) Application of EU law: provision of cross-sector communication and problem-solving tools. The objective is to implement services that will support the exchange of information between Member States and the Commission on the implementation of EU legislation (notification of national measures of execution — NMEs — for the transposition of directives) and infringement procedures.

2. KEY ENABLERS FOR INTEROPERABILITY

The following actions, funded by the ISA programme, identify, promote and support the definition and implementation of key interoperability enablers:

- (Action 1.4 and Action 1.18) Tools enabling access to EU applications supporting EU policies using the identity solutions piloted during the STORK¹⁶ and STORK 2 pilots. These solutions include natural person authentication and federated role-based access and authorisation and may also include the authentication of legal entities if deemed relevant.
- (Action 1.5) Actions for the sustainability of the results of the STORK project under the CIP ICT-PSP programme.
- (Action 1.9) Tools to support the verification of electronic signatures. This work is part of the follow-up to the implementation of the Services Directive. It will also directly contribute to the use of electronic signatures in the internal market and to the interoperability of electronic signatures in line with the Electronic Signatures Directive.
- (Action 1.2) Access to base registers, building on existing solutions for cross-sector interoperability at national level and single-sector cross-border interoperability at EU level to identify best practices and requirements for cross-sector and cross-border interoperability of base registers.

action were taken over by the Publications Office and DG for Communication Networks, Content and Technology.

¹⁶ <https://www.eid-stork.eu/>.

- (Action 1.3) Catalogue of services, aiming to achieve a degree of harmonisation around national and European service catalogues in order to facilitate the interconnection of catalogues throughout Europe and consequently the construction of cross-border public services.

Actions 1.7 (Development of the e-Prior electronic procurement platform) and 2.11 (Promoting consistent EU e-procurement monitoring and performance) are also relevant in this context.

Action 1.17, together with Action 2.13, covers another key enabler for interoperability: facilitating the use of spatial information. The Inspire reference platform aims to do this by assessing existing platforms and tools spanning multiple policy areas in the domain of spatial data, supporting the development of missing components and creating a generic volunteer geographic information platform.

3. SEMANTIC INTEROPERABILITY

Action 1.1 (Promoting semantic interoperability among the European Union Member States) promotes interoperability by a) increasing awareness of the importance of semantic interoperability and appropriate metadata management policies, b) collecting, organising, maintaining and providing access to a federated repository of highly reusable semantic interoperability assets, and c) promoting common specifications, best practices, experiences and lessons learnt in the area of semantic interoperability.

Cluster on Interoperability Architecture

For the cluster on Interoperability Architecture, the EIS approach is:

- a) to develop a joint vision on interoperability architecture complemented by a picture of interoperability solutions available for reuse at national and EU level and areas where solutions are missing; this global picture is essential to achieve the systematic reuse of interoperability solutions at EU level.
- b) to provide guidance on architecture domains where Member States share a common interest;
- c) to promote and support the development, deployment, operation and maintenance of reusable generic tools and common services.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINT VISION

(Action 2.1) The European Interoperability Architecture will describe a common architectural view based on an established architectural framework to cover cross-border and cross-sector interoperability needs at European level. This architectural view will provide a structure for mapping existing operational interoperability solutions (covering different types of interoperability assets including infrastructure services, information systems, applications, software components, semantic assets, organisational assets and legal interoperability assets) and solution building blocks and for identifying missing parts. It will be developed in close coordination with Actions 2.14 (Assessment of trans-European systems supporting EU policies) and 2.4.2.4 (European Federated Interoperability Repository — EFIR).

Action 2.14 (Assessment of trans-European systems supporting EU policies) will complement the top-down approach of Action 2.1 (EIA) with bottom-up input consisting of a description and assessment of existing interoperability solutions together with rationalisation opportunities.

2. ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

(Action 2.2) This action aims to establish a framework setting out the relationship between interoperability and standards/specifications and providing guidance on a common assessment method for standards and specifications.

(Action 2.12) On the basis of the European Interoperability Framework, the aim is to establish an interoperability framework for European cross-border eHealth projects. The project has been re-oriented and will no longer be funded by the ISA programme.

(Action 2.13) The European Union Location Framework (EULF) aims to develop a framework for the sharing and exchange of spatial data, based on the European Interoperability Framework and the INSPIRE Directive,¹⁷ EULF will consist of legal acts, methodologies,

¹⁷ Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2007 establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE).

specifications and guidelines covering legal, organisational and semantic interoperability aspects.

Action 2.15 (Interoperability agreements on electronic documents and electronic files) addresses the need for interoperability agreements for electronic documents and electronic files, starting with an inventory of what exists at national and EU level and defining the exact scope of the action.

3. REUSABLE SERVICE COMPONENTS AND GENERIC APPLICATIONS

A number of generic tools and/or common services have already been produced under the IDABC programme. These tools and/or services are used by the European Institutions and their partners for implementing EU legislation. The maintenance, evolution and, where relevant, operation of these services is now covered by the ISA programme:

- (Action 2.3) Awaiting the effective interoperability of electronic identity and electronic signature schemes, provision of a public key infrastructure (PKI) enabling Commission services, for systems supporting the implementation of EU legislation, to obtain user and server certificates for authentication and electronic signatures.
- (Action 2.4) Provision of a private secured network (sTESTA) interconnecting national administrative networks and the internal networks of the European Institutions.
- (Action 2.5) Provision of a tool (CIRCABC) to support the activities of the many committees and expert groups assisting the Commission. An open source version of the underlying tool is available to other organisations with the same needs.
- (Action 2.6) Provision of a multilingual system supporting the creation of surveys and the collection of information to support policy initiatives of the Commission. An open source version of the underlying tools is available to other organisations with the same needs.

A number of projects that may lead to additional common tools or services are being continued:

- (Action 2.8) Implementation of a common data-driven machine translation service to be offered by the Commission to facilitate efficient and effective electronic cross-border interaction between European public administrations.
- (Action 2.9) Provision of document repository services in support of EU policy implementation, which will continue with the integration of HERMES and CIRCABC and the definition of requirements for the integration of ECN (European Competition Network).
- (Action 2.11) Promoting consistent EU e-procurement monitoring, as part of a comprehensive plan of coordinated actions to foster the convergence of independently designed e-procurement solutions towards models ensuring cross-border and SME

accessibility. Within this plan, this action covers the monitoring of e-procurement use and performance across the EU.

Cluster on ICT Implications Assessment

For the cluster on ICT Implications Assessment, the EIS approach is:

- a) to develop guidelines and methodologies at EU (and Member State) level;
- b) to test the usefulness of these guidelines by applying them to concrete cases involving policymakers as well as legislative and ICT experts;
- c) to ensure continuous improvement of the guidelines and methodologies with the lessons learnt from experience;
- d) to generalise the practice of assessing ICT implications, moving towards a more systematic approach whenever changes occur in legislation.

1. ASSESSMENT OF THE ICT IMPLICATIONS OF EU LEGISLATION

(Action 3.1) Once the possibility to expand impact assessments to include an assessment of the implications of legislation for ICT is confirmed, guidelines will be developed for use by the Impact Assessment Board concerning the IT aspects of impact assessments and assistance will be offered to DGs to analyse the potential implications of legislation for ICT in their impact assessments. During the preparation of legal acts and the inter-institutional decision-making procedure, such implications may evolve. Following the piloting of this assessment of the ICT implications of EU legislation, based on a few real-life cases, the method will be refined and introduced throughout the Commission, with support and training.

Interoperability Awareness

To raise interoperability awareness, the EIS approach is:

- a) to develop an overall communication approach;
- b) to organise communication campaigns, targeting decision-makers and more operational and technical levels, depending on the particular subjects addressed by the campaigns;
- c) to develop a self-assessment tool/model for public administrations to assess their interoperability maturity.

1. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITES

(Action 4.1.1) Revision of the communication strategy for the ISA programme and definition and implementation of communication campaigns supporting a number of ISA programme actions.

2. INTEROPERABILITY MATURITY SELF-ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

(Action 4.1.2) Following the development of a self-assessment tool/model for public administrations to assess their interoperability maturity, the tool/model will be tested in a number of real-life cases and the findings will be collected and processed.

Best Practice Sharing

To organise best practice sharing, the EIS approach is:

- a) to work towards the convergence of existing EU collaborative platforms and to ensure the sustainability of the platforms used;
- b) to maintain and develop, where relevant, the existing communities at EU level around the sharing of best practices and the reuse of common solutions;
- c) to support the creation of potential new communities resulting from other interoperability activities.

1. BEST PRACTICE SHARING

Five actions are funded:

- (Action 4.2.1) Provision of a common collaborative platform supporting the ISA and other relevant communities (replacing the OSOR¹⁸ and SEMIC platforms and at a later stage possibly also the ePractice¹⁹ community). The platform will be improved to answer the specific needs of the NIFO and EFIR actions (4.2.3 and 4.2.4).
- (Action 4.2.2) Providing overall support for communities relevant to the ISA programme, including the OSOR, SEMIC and eProcurement communities, and monitoring their activity, with specific support for selected communities such as the eSignature/eID and the ECI communities.
- (Action 4.2.3) Maintenance and further development of the National Interoperability Framework Observatory (NIFO). NIFO plays a crucial role in following up the alignment of national interoperability frameworks with the European Interoperability Framework — as suggested in the Digital Agenda for Europe. It also provides assistance to Member States in achieving this alignment by providing an analytical model and gap analysis tools.
- (Action 4.2.4) Implementation of a European Federated Interoperability Repository. The repository is to extend the federation of interoperability assets to include legal and organisational assets. The aim is to provide a reliable tool for Member States to assess the state of interoperable assets for cross-border interaction in the EU. The action is coordinated with Actions 2.1 (Interoperability Architecture), 2.14 (Assessment of trans-European systems supporting EU policies), 4.2.1 (Common Collaborative Platform), 1.1 (Semantic Methodologies) and 4.2.3 (NIFO).

¹⁸ <http://www.osor.eu/>.

¹⁹ <http://www.epractice.eu/>.

- (Action 4.2.5). The sharing and reuse of solutions among Member States is the second pillar of the ISA programme, the European Interoperability Strategy being the first pillar. The objective of the action is to develop a common strategy to further facilitate the reuse of common solutions at European level and to implement a number of ‘quick wins’ already identified. The lessons learnt from these quick wins will also serve as input for the definition of the overall strategy.
- (Action 4.2.6 — Interoperable testbed) This will assess the feasibility of putting in place a framework contract to cover the testing requirements for specific systems enabling national administrations and potential vendors to test solutions against a neutral, reliable and responsive reference test environment.

Programme Management

Besides the actions launched under the EIS activity clusters or as accompanying measures, the following actions are designed to ensure proper management of the ISA programme:

1. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

(Action 5.1) Support for measurement and evaluation of the ISA programme, including definition of the relevant processes, implementation of an adequate set of tools and execution of and reporting on a measurement programme.

The monitoring and evaluation action will gather, analyse and distribute to all stakeholders relevant metrics for each period (quarter, half-year, and year). The metrics will be grouped into three categories: process-related metrics (e.g. cost, risk, time), ISA generic metrics (to be the same for each type of action as defined in Article 3 of the ISA Decision, including policy impact metrics), and action-specific metrics reflecting the specificity of each action. These metrics will allow constant monitoring of each action as well as the work programme as a whole. A first version of the tool has been available since January 2012. The continuous monitoring action will be funded by the ISA administrative budget.

2. EUROPEAN INTEROPERABILITY STRATEGY — GOVERNANCE

(Action 5.2) Support for the governance of the European Interoperability Strategy.

Communication and promotion

To increase the visibility of the ISA programme and the possibilities and solutions it offers, actions receiving funding will refer specifically to the ISA programme in accordance with the guidelines provided by the programme and will always display the ISA logo preceded by 'supported by ISA'.

Budget

For each action, budget details are included in Part 1 of the Annex. Part 2 of the Annex gives a tabular overview.

In order to optimise the use of the ISA budget, appropriations allocated to a work programme entry for a given year may be brought forward to the preceding year in full or in part, if the overall expenditure under the ISA programme in the preceding year so permits. This is without prejudice to the provisions of Article 10(4) of the ISA Decision (flexibility clause).

As the work programme, in accordance with Article 9(2) of the ISA Decision, has to be revised at least once a year, all budget requests for future years are estimates based on present knowledge of the scope and timing of the actions. Such budget estimates may need to be revised if new information becomes available or if priorities change, and are not to be regarded as final decisions on the fundability of future phases of the individual actions or on the future ISA budget to be made available for each action.