

ISA Work Programme

First revision 2011

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 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 the 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 both to the national dimension and to a lack of interoperability at European level, making it impossible for citizens and enterprises to interact electronically with a national administration other than their own with the same ease as locals. This could impede the functioning of the internal market and the associated freedom of movement with negative effects on the openness and competitiveness of markets and mobility across borders as well as having an impact on the delivery of some 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 and consequently 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 and requires interaction across borders and sectors by means of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which is today an integral part of most legislative acts and a key instrument of interaction between administrations.

Member States and the Commission need to step up their efforts to achieve interoperability between national and Community ICT solutions, promote commonly agreed solutions and avoid path dependency with a view to ensuring efficient and effective interaction between European public administrations in support of the delivery of electronic public services and the implementation of Community 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 being announced, one of them 'A Digital Agenda for Europe'. The overall aim of the Digital Agenda is to deliver sustainable

economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultra fast internet and interoperable applications.¹

- b) The European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015 established by the European Commission in response to the Malmö Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment², which was approved by the European Commission on 15 December 2010³.

The proposed work programme takes these initiatives into account.

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 2009⁴. 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 such administrations, including bodies performing public functions on their behalf, enabling the delivery of electronic public services supporting the implementation of Community policies and activities.

The ISA programme will support and promote:

- a) Creation and improvement of common frameworks in support of interoperability across borders and sectors;
- b) Assessment of ICT implications of proposed or adopted Community legislation as well as planning for the introduction of ICT systems in support of the implementation of such legislation;
- c) Operation and improvement of existing common services as well as the establishment, industrialisation, operation and improvement of new common services;
- d) 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 as well as accompanying measures supporting the implementation. In this connection, due consideration will be given to the European Interoperability Framework and the European Interoperability Strategy.

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.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm

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

3. THE EUROPEAN INTEROPERABILITY STRATEGY

In close cooperation with Member States' 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 IDABC⁵ 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 sectors⁶.

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 in the areas of interoperability awareness-raising and best practice sharing.

Together with the European Interoperability Framework (EIF), the EIS was adopted by the Commission on 16 December 2010 as part of its communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Towards interoperability for European public services"⁷

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.

The design of the actions is based on proposals made by Commission services and/or Member States. Actions relevant to particular policy areas are designed in close coordination with the Commission service(s) responsible for the policy area.

Actions launched under the ISA programme are continuously coordinated and aligned with the work ongoing under the ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)⁸ and/or with the Commission's internal ICT strategy⁹ as well as with actions undertaken in the context of the European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015.

⁵ Programme on interoperable delivery of pan-European eGovernment services to administrations, businesses and citizens, OJ L 144, 30.4.2004, p. 62 (Decision located in OJ L 181, 18.5.2004, p. 25).

⁶ For further information on the EIS, see http://ec.europa.eu/isa/strategy/doc/annex_i_eis_en.pdf

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0744:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/about/index_en.htm

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/ecomm/index_en.htm

Cluster on Trusted Information Exchange

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

- a) to focus on politically relevant, concrete sector projects at EU and Member State levels;
- b) to continue supporting at EU level the efforts made to achieve interoperability of key enablers such as electronic identity and electronic signature, in close collaboration with the CIP ICT-PSP programme;
- c) to continue work on semantic interoperability via the SEMIC¹⁰ approach and collaborative platform;
- d) to work towards the opening up of base registers, taking into account best practice, risks and opportunities, as well as the various needs and expectations of the main stakeholders.

1. SUPPORT TO SECTORAL PROJECTS

Direct support for sector projects is possible under the ISA programme, provided that this leads to results that will be reused outside the original sector context. The following projects are to be launched:

- (Action 1.7¹¹) Tools to support electronic procurement. The ePrior electronic procurement platform started under the IDABC programme will be further developed, with a view to enabling the European Commission to use the PEPPOL¹² infrastructure, making the ePrior modules available to public administrations in Europe, and further supporting standardisation activities in the area of electronic procurement.
- (Action 1.8) Support for the trusted exchange of documents in areas such as the involvement of national parliaments in the legislative work at EU level (consequence of the Lisbon treaty) or the application of EU legislation in the area of competition. The reuse of modules from the ePrior project is envisaged.
- (Action 1.9) Tools to support the verification of electronic signatures. The work will be done in the context of 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 interoperability of electronic signatures within the context of the electronic signatures directive.

¹⁰ <http://www.semic.eu/>

¹¹ The action number refers to the corresponding action number in the Annex

¹² <http://www.peppol.eu/>

- Services to support the functioning of the internal market. (Action 1.10) The Internal Market Information (IMI) System¹³, started under the IDABC programme, will be further developed as a generic toolkit for administrative cooperation, enabling more internal market sectors to use it. (Action 1.14) The SOLVIT toolkit, developed under the IDA II and IDABC programmes and supporting the SOLVIT network¹⁴ need to be updated to reflect changes in web technologies and to enable the use it in a broader context.
- (Action 1.11) Feasibility study for the development of generic notification services, to be used in several sectors where EU legislation prescribes such notifications. This action will be closely working together with action 1.8 on the trusted exchange of documents and it is envisaged to re-use some of the work done under that action.
- (Action 1.12) Open Source Software for online collection of statements of support for European citizens' initiatives. The objective of this action is to provide organisers of citizens' initiatives with a tool that ensures compliance with the Regulation of the citizens' initiatives. In a first phase, already existing tools will be analysed.
- (Action 1.13) Legislation editing software (LEOS). To support the EU legislation process, with its special characteristics of interaction between EU and Member State institutions and multilinguism, new tools need to be developed. In a first phase, a study will be made of the existing situation and planned/ongoing projects in Member States and EU administrations.
- (Action 1.15) Open Government Data. The objective of this action is to ensure that the Commission can play in the various EU actions that are ongoing or planned in this area.

2. KEY ENABLERS FOR INTEROPERABILITY

Key interoperability enablers such as electronic signature, electronic identification and electronic procurement are presently being piloted under the CIP ICT-PSP programme. To complement the work done under this programme, the following actions are to be launched:

- (Action 1.4) Tools enabling access to Commission applications using the identity solutions piloted during the STORK¹⁵ pilot.
- (Actions 1.5 and 1.6) Actions on the sustainability of the results of the STORK and PEPPOL projects.

Actions 1.7 (development of the e-Prior electronic procurement platform), 1.9 (tools for the creation/verification of electronic signatures) and 2.11 (electronic procurement integration) are also relevant in this context.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/smn/smn53/docs/imi_en.pdf

¹⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/>

¹⁵ <https://www.eid-stork.eu/>

3. SEMANTIC INTEROPERABILITY

(Action 1.1) SEMIC is the result of a successful IDABC action, providing methods and tools to improve semantic interoperability – including a platform to collaboratively develop and share semantic assets. This action is ongoing. The future evolution of the SEMIC platform is covered by action 4.2.1 (ISA Collaboration Platform).

4. OPENING UP OF BASE REGISTERS

(Action 1.2) A study identifying base registers in the Member States, best practice examples for opening up such registers, risks and opportunities. Besides analysing the present situation, the study will investigate whether a common framework or guideline related to the opening up of base registers could be produced in the future.

(Action 1.3) A feasibility study on the establishment of a federated catalogue of services offered by public administrations in the EU.

Cluster on Interoperability Architecture

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

- a) to develop a joint vision on interoperability architecture by defining in the first place its scope as well as the needs for common infrastructure services and common interface standards;
- b) to provide guidance on architecture domains where Member States share a common interest;
- c) to organise the systematic reuse of architectural building blocks by the Commission services when developing Member State-oriented services. In this area, existing infrastructure service components as well as generic applications could be reused and rationalised. Additionally, a catalogue of architectural building blocks available for reuse by the Member States and the Commission services could be compiled with EU and Member State contributions.

1. DEVELOPMENT OF A JOINT VISION

(Action 2.1) A study exploring the need for European interoperability architecture facilitating the establishment of cross-border and cross-sector European public services. The study will look at best practice examples and investigate the scope of such architecture and the need to support the architecture via common infrastructure services and common interface standards. The goal of the study is to work toward a joint vision on the issue and to define the objectives and scope of further actions in this area.

2. ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

(Action 2.2) Based on work done under the IDABC programme, 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, establish an interoperability framework for European cross-border eHealth projects. This action should validate the relevance of the European Interoperability Framework for sector specific European cross-border collaboration.

3. REUSABLE SERVICE COMPONENTS AND GENERIC APPLICATIONS

A number of generic tools and/or common services have already been established under the IDABC programme. These tools and/or services are used by the European Institutions and their partners for purposes of implementing EU legislation. The maintenance, evolution and, when relevant, operation of these services are continued under 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 EC services, for their 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 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 made available to other organisations having the same need.
- (Action 2.6) Provision of a multilingual system supporting the creation of surveys and the collection of information to support policy initiatives of the European Commission. An open source version of the underlying tools is made available to other organisations having the same need.

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

- (Action 2.7) Establishment of a common framework allowing the syndication of information made available to businesses and citizens via national portals. This syndicated information will then constitute direct input into the ‘Your Europe’¹⁶ portal.
- (Action 2.8) Inception of a common data-driven Machine Translation service to be offered by the European Commission to facilitate the efficient and effective electronic cross-border interaction between European public administrations.
- (Action 2.9) Feasibility study on the provision of document repository services in support of EU policy implementation. Such services should expand the services currently provided via CIRCABC.
- (Action 2.10) Feasibility study on the provision of multi-sector crisis and business continuity services.
- (Action 2.11) Inception, execution and operation of information services supporting EU-wide cross-border accessibility to and interoperability of eProcurement operations.

¹⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/>

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 via their application 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 ICT IMPLICATIONS OF EU LEGISLATION

(Action 3.1) The piloting, on a few real-life cases, of the ‘method for the assessment of ICT implications of EU legislation’ developed under the IDABC programme and, afterwards, the provision of a refined method, assessment support and training to Commission services with a view to integrating the assessment of ICT implications into the legislative process.

Interoperability Awareness

To raise Interoperability Awareness, the EIS approach is:

- a) to develop an overall communication approach;
- b) to organise communication campaigns, in the first instance targeting decision-makers then gradually incorporating the more operational and technical levels;
- c) to develop an interoperability maturity level self-assessment tool/model for public administrations.

1. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

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

2. AN INTEROPERABILITY MATURITY LEVEL SELF-ASSESSMENT MODEL FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

(Action 4.1.2) Development of an tool/model for the self-assessment of the interoperability maturity of public administrations.

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, 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

Three actions are to be launched:

- (Action 4.2.1) Provision of a common collaborative platform supporting the ISA and other relevant communities. This common collaborative platform will replace the platforms operated under the IDABC programme to support the OSOR¹⁷ and SEMIC communities (and at a later stage possibly also the ePractice¹⁸ community).
- (Action 4.2.2) Providing support for communities relevant to the ISA programme, including the OSOR, SEMIC, eProcurement and eSignature/eID communities initiated under IDABC. This action also entails continuation of the eGovernment Observatory, the Open Source Observatory and the eGovernment fact-sheets.
- (Action 4.2.3) Maintenance and further development of the National Interoperability Framework Observatory (NIFO). The NIFO will also play a crucial role for the follow-up of the alignment of national interoperability frameworks with the European Interoperability Framework – alignment suggested in the Digital Agenda for Europe.

¹⁷ <http://www.osor.eu/>

¹⁸ <http://www.epractice.eu/>

Programme Management

Besides the actions launched within 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, semester, and year). The metrics will be grouped in three categories: process-related metrics (e.g. cost, risk, time), ISA generic metrics (that will 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 of the whole work programme.

2. EUROPEAN INTEROPERABILITY STRATEGY – GOVERNANCE

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

Budget

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

For the purpose of optimising the use of the ISA credits, credits allocated to a work programme entry for a given year may be advanced to the preceding year in full or in parts, if the overall credit consumption of the ISA programme in the preceding year so permits. This advancement 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 per year, all budget requests for future years are estimates based on the present knowledge about 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 taken as final decisions on the future ISA budget that will be made available to each action.