

THEMATIC PAPER

Enhancing institutional and administrative capacity

1. Introduction

This thematic paper focuses on **Institutional and Administrative Capacity (IAC)**, one of the themes under the **Medium Term Plan (MTP)** of the **European Public Administration Network (EUPAN)**. The MTP states that “*Modernisation of government and enhancing administrative capacity remain a precondition for the success of any action aimed at growth and cohesion, as envisaged in Europe 2020 strategy*”. Enhancing IAC is relevant to both the administrative reform process and Cohesion Policy implementation. It requires the public sector to be innovative and oriented toward the future. Therefore, within the informal cooperation of EUPAN countries, it is crucial to understand:

- **how to assess IAC and its contribution to policy development and delivery;**
- **how to enhance this capacity efficiently and effectively.**

The working method defined in the MTP includes:

1) IPSP (Innovative Public Services Group) meeting (16th-17th October 2014) with active group discussions, in order to highlight the various perspectives

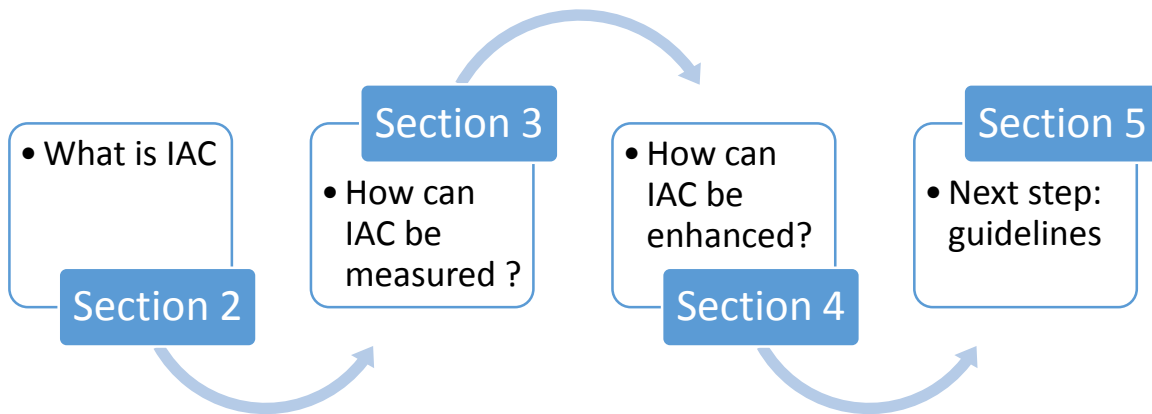
2) Elaboration of the thematic paper on IAC following the main conclusions of the IPSP activities

3) Delivery of the thematic paper at General Director Meeting (4th December 2014) as background document

4) Final version of the thematic paper and draft guidelines

This thematic paper crystallises the outcomes of the process summarised in the diagram above. It presents both a distillation of key messages emerged from a review of academic literature, policy studies and guidance documents by international organisations, and a summary of the substance of the working group discussions during the IPSG meeting held in Rome on 16th October 2014, as well as the feedbacks received thereafter from some IPSG members, notably from countries which were not represented at the October meeting.

The paper is structured as follows: after this introduction, Section 2 provides a shared definition of IAC, developed with the inputs of IPSG members. Section 3 discusses the levels, methods and tools for measuring and appraising the levels IAC and to identify IAC deficiencies. Section 4 focuses on the approaches and instruments that are typically utilised to improve IAC levels. Section 5 presents the next step of this activity, which is the drafting of the guidelines.



2. What is IAC?

'IAC' and 'Administrative Capacity Building' (ACB) have been developed as concepts under disciplines such as administrative sciences, policy implementation research, and organisational and management studies. These concepts became relevant to international development cooperation policies and, more recently, they are at the top of the agenda of both the EU and its Member States (MSs). On the one hand, fostering adequate levels of IAC is a recurrent priority in the Country Specific Recommendations (CSR): in 2014, 20 MSs have received specific recommendations on "Public Administration and Smart Regulation" (see next section). On the other hand, the Commission is increasing its efforts to support MSs in ACB by allocating resources (under Thematic Objective 11 within the EU programming period 2014-20) and developing specific instruments, as the "Modernising Public Administration Toolbox" (see section 4).

However, although these concepts are now widely used, there is no common definition yet. **International organisations** have developed their own definitions (see table below):

Table 1: Definitions of IAC and ACB

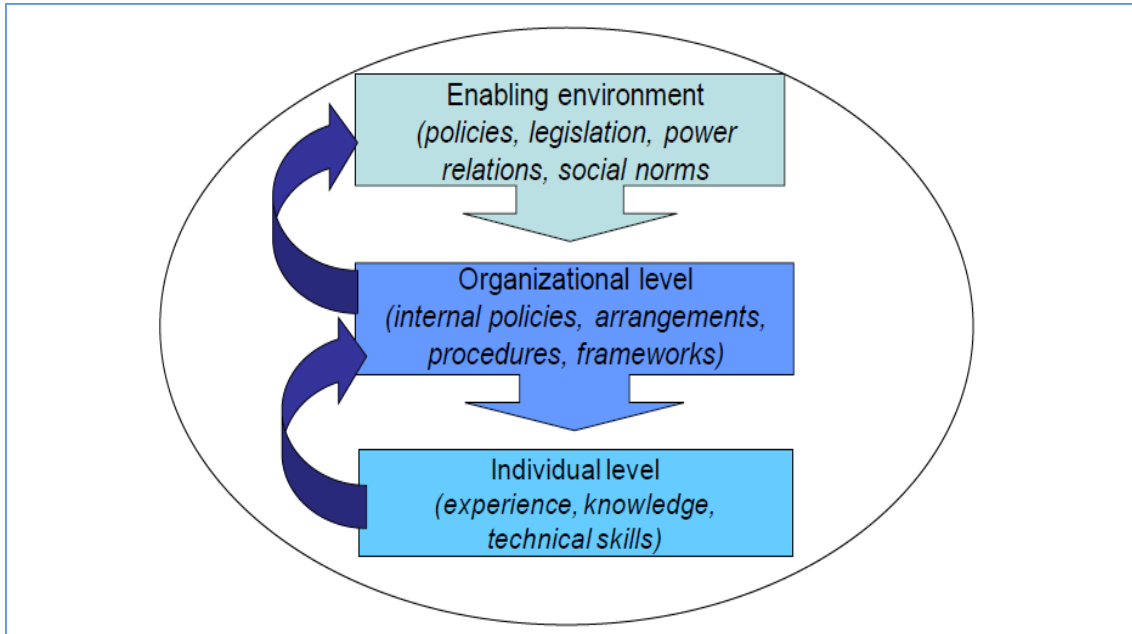
"The process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time' United Nations Development Programme" (UNDP -1998).
"The ability of individuals and organisations or organisation units to perform functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably" UNDP, (2008).
"The capacity to manage the complex processes and interactions that constitute a working political and economic system' World Bank" (WB 2004).
"The process by which individuals; groups; organisations; institutions; and societies increase their abilities to: (1) perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives; and (2) understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner.' Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development" (OECD 1998).
"(The ability) to acquire and use information relevant to successful policy implementation" OECD, (2012).

Although different, all these definitions focus on the fact that IAC:

- relates to the **effective implementation of policies and the achievement of policy results;**
- is relevant to:
 - o **individuals** (personal skills, knowledge, abilities);
 - o **organisations** (the government, its departments or agencies – especially in relation to their adaptation and resilience, and their influence over the environment);
 - o **society and the institutional system** (the enabling environment, e.g. national - regional – sector contexts).

The availability of **human skilled resources and organisational assets in an enabling environment** is therefore crucial (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Levels of capacity



Source: Development Capacity Practice Note, UNDP 2008

The experience of OECD countries and the academic literature usually link IAC to the presence of:

- **Multi-level coordination**
- **Ethics and integrity**
- **Openness and Inclusiveness**
- **Performance and result orientation**

- World Bank “Administrative capacity in the New Member States: the limits of innovation?” (2006).
- Simona Milo, London School of Economic (LSE) “Il processo di capacity building per la governance delle politiche di sviluppo” – The process of capacity building for the governance of development policies (2011).
- Phedon Nicolaidis, European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA), “Administrative capacity for the effective implementation of EU law” (2012).
- Hertie School of Governance “Report on Governance 2014”.
- ESPON Study “SMART – IST, Smart Institutions for Territorial Development” (2012).
- UNDP “Professionalism and Ethics in the Public Service: Issues and Practices in Selected Regions” (2000).

Furthermore, the concept of ‘**smartness**’ entailing digitalisation and innovation is a constant and shared element of the debate on IAC and includes open data and e-government tools. Based on the above review and on the discussions with IPSG members, institutional and administrative capacity can be defined as:

“The set of characteristics that public administrations and other public or private bodies involved in the delivery of public policies and services have to possess in order to be able to define ‘good’ policies, and to implement them effectively, thus achieving societal ambitions”.

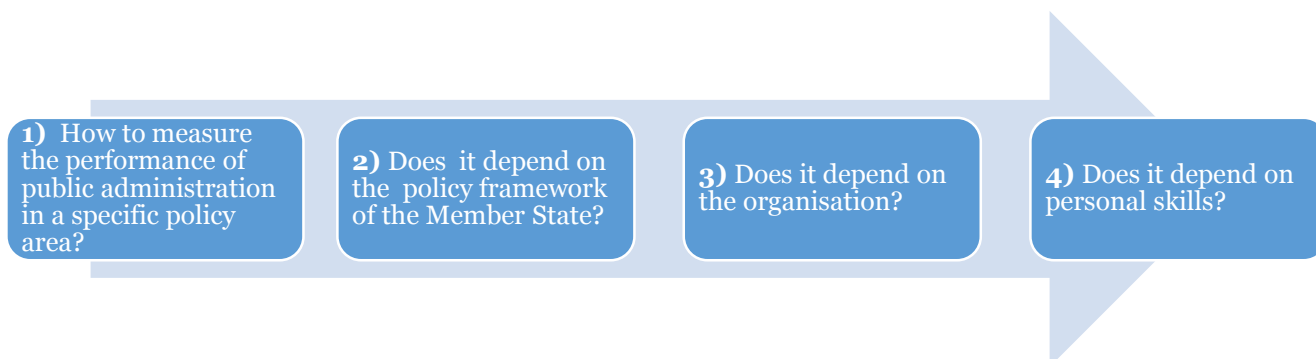
These characteristics can be summarised as follows¹:

- Subsidiarity and collaborative attitude in **multi-level coordination** and governance. European, national, regional and local-level governments operate in multilevel systems in order to solve collective problems. The approach shall be non-hierarchically but exploiting synergies and complementarities.
- **Ethics and integrity** – operating in such a way to promote anti-corruption practices and shared societal values such as equality and environmental friendliness.
- **Openness, inclusiveness** – being **open to dialogue** with civil society and active in engaging with citizens and stakeholders in decision-making and policy/services delivery, whilst at the same time remaining independent from political and other types of pressures which are in contrast with the general interest. Transparency and accountability are therefore a necessary condition to allow stakeholders and policy recipients to: have a voice about policy and policy delivery choices; follow developments and ascertain results; and seek rectification where required, ensuring that there is clarity on who is responsible for each action (or inaction) and on the procedures available to seek information and redress.
- **Performance and Results-orientation** – this approach is based on planning as well as on clear identification of the necessary intermediate/final targets to be achieved timeliness, efficiently and effectively. It entails on the one hand, resilience, flexibility and ability to anticipate (and even drive) change. On the other hand, reflexivity and learning-orientation shall be fostered in order to evolve constantly by capitalising on successes and failures and the reasons for those.
- **Smartness** – the ability to identify the ‘right’ answers for society’s needs by applying innovation and ICT solutions, that are relevant, useful, and in tune with citizens’ needs and priorities.

¹ The characteristics have been listed and summarized taking into account inputs from the IPSG discussion in the working groups.

3. How can IAC be assessed?

The steps for assessing the IAC level are shown below.



Step 1: How to measure the performance of public administration in a specific policy area? At **international** level, there are several ‘measurements’ including composite indicators (CI) addressing public administration performance in different policy fields. These are used to build benchmarks and comparisons among different countries² which are originated “*from a series of observed facts that can reveal relative positions (e.g. of a country) in a given area*”³. CIs target specific areas of public intervention, e.g. health, business, justice, etc. and are a useful tool for both policy analysis and public communication. A valuable and well-known example is the World Bank’s Doing Business CI, which is composed of 11 different indicators⁴. Countries are ranked from 1 to 189. A high ranking indicates that the regulatory environment and wider context are more conducive to the launch and operation of a firm.

Measurement of performance takes place also at **national** level. In EUPAN countries, almost all the important sectors of public intervention have specific indicators which take into account both the quality and quantity of the delivered services. Interesting examples can be found in Belgium in relation to: the judiciary system (where the used indicators are considered in terms of delays, number of appeals), health (i.e. waiting times, medical mistakes), public procurement (i.e. reduction of burden, rapidity).

Performance measurement occurs also at **sub-national** level. For instance, provinces and municipalities in the Netherlands have the possibility to assess their administrative competencies (‘bestuurskracht’). An external and independent bureau typically performs the assessment on the basis of the seven principles of the Dutch code for good governance (openness and integrity, participation, appropriate contacts with citizens, effectiveness and efficiency, legitimacy, learning and improving, and accountability).

Finally, the evaluation of IAC can be performed by **external private actors, by dedicated public agencies** or **internally (self-evaluation)**. An interesting experience of external evaluation by a

² Regarding the comparison of the performance of different administrations, an interesting study has been carried out by the Netherlands Institute for Social Studies which compares public performance in nine public services in 28 developed countries.

³ See P. 13, Handbook on Constructing Composite Indicators - Methodology and User Guide (OECD 2008).

⁴ Data collection is based on a survey of local experts (lawyers and economists) from over 100 countries. More information on the methodology is available on <http://www.doingbusiness.org/methodology>.

dedicated public actor can be found in Sweden, where a public agency (Statskontoret) evaluates other public bodies upon request by the Government. The agency develops specific models and methodologies for each assessment, which take into consideration different aspects of the public intervention cycle (overall performance, organizational arrangements, individual competencies).

Step 2: Does it depend on the policy framework of the Member State? The second step involves verifying that the **domestic system** provides the pre-conditions for the public administration to work effectively. Well-known examples in Europe are the **CSR** and more recently the **ex-ante conditionalities** of Cohesion Policy. These systems focus on the overall level of policy development achieved by Member States considering EU common priorities and shared strategies in several policy areas. In particular, the CSR are a key step within the interaction that takes place among the Commission, Member States and the EU Council in order to implement the Europe 2020 Strategy. The process is based on a parametric assessment of the situation, undertaken by the Commission but also involving Member States in the definition of reform plans. It ends with adoption of the CSR by the Council with a set of proposals for policy change (see the figure below). An example of CSR assessment is shown below (2014 European Semester Communication).

Figure 2: Overview of EU country-specific recommendations for 2014-2015

	Public finances				Financial sector		Structural reforms					Employment and social policies					
	Sound public finances	Pension and healthcare systems	Fiscal framework	Taxation	Banking and access to finance	Housing market	Network industries	Competition in service sector	Public administration and smart regulation	R&D and innovation	Resource efficiency	Labour market participation	Active labour market policy	Wage setting mechanisms	Labour market segmentation	Education and training	Poverty and social inclusion
AT																	
BE																	
BG																	
CZ																	
DE																	
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Source: European Commission, Communication European Semester: Country-specific Recommendations Building Growth

In the context of the enlargement policy, an example of assessing the institutional system is the Commission’s screening of the candidate's adoption, implementation and enforcement of all current EU rules (the "**acquis**"). The Commission examines in details, together with the candidate country, each policy field (chapter), to determine how well the country is prepared. Among others, “chapter 22” is directly related to IAC. The chapter deals with Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund implementation. In this respect, the Commission assesses the institutional framework and administrative capacities in relation to public procurement, programming, implementation, financial control, monitoring and evaluation.

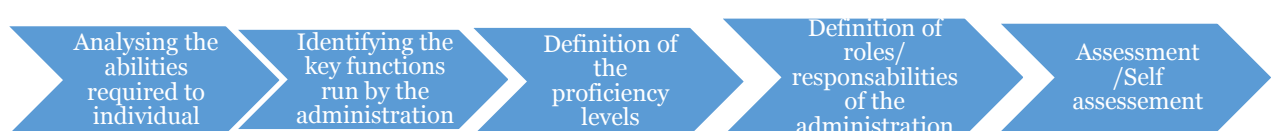
Step 3: Does it depend on the organisation? This third step is the assessment of administrative capacity from an **organisational perspective**. The evaluations and studies reviewed adopt qualitative and quantitative methodologies and often focus on the intangible assets of the organizations (e.g. credibility toward stakeholders, access to partnerships and networks, ethical shared values, vision and/or a mandate).

A widely used self-assessment tool within the EU and EUPAN is the **Common Assessment Framework** developed by EIPA (generally referred to as 'CAF'). This tool is currently being used by almost 3,000 institutions across 48 countries (the vast majority in the EU MSs), and has been implemented very successfully in the education sector in the South of Italy for example. Key strengths of the method include the promotion of increased communication within the institutions involved, of reflexivity and self-awareness, and of a systematic and periodic approach to self-appraisal, all of which result in the identification of weaknesses and corrective measures by consensus, thus increasing the uptake of recommendations and the ability of actors to gauge their efficacy as they are being implemented.

With the same purpose, the **"Health Organisations Index"** (OHI) is adopted in Estonia. OHI is implemented through a survey (140 questions) addressing 9 dimensions of organizational health (i.e. leadership competencies, coordination and control, direction, culture, external orientation).

In the framework of **Cohesion policy**, several studies and evaluations are carried out not solely focusing on the specificity of ESIF Funds management. For example, in Bulgaria and Romania, two independent evaluations have been implemented focusing on human resources and knowledge management, strategic planning and programming, implementation, evaluation and monitoring, and financial management and control⁵.

Step 4: Does it depend on the personal skills? The last step involves appraising IAC at the individual level, assessing individuals' performance and/or skill. Several countries adopted systems of assessing **individual performance** linking the outcomes of the evaluation also to remuneration and career (e.g. Hungary, Portugal, and Estonia). In this case, often the assessment is based on a systematic dialogue and confrontation between manager and staff in order to set the individual goals, which are coherent with the organization's strategy. The **competence frameworks** are tool to assess the individual skill. These systems are normally web-based self-assessment tools (e.g. the EU ICT framework competence), which take in analysis **professional competence** as being of use in a broader professional context and **operational competence** as being of specific use, plus **management competence**. The main steps in the definition of a framework of competences are:



⁵ The ex post evaluation in Romania regards the ESF Operational Program Administrative Capacity Development, which supports intervention to enhance IAC in the social, health and educational sectors. In Bulgaria the interim evaluation takes in analysis the ESF Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity" which focus on effective functioning of the administration and the judiciary.

From the IPSG prospective ...

It is possible to identify some common lessons from the experience of the EUPAN IPSG Member Countries in relation to IAC measurement. They are relevant irrespective of the different institutional frameworks and administrative traditions of EUPAN Member Countries. These lessons are:

- The measurement of IAC should adopt a **systemic approach** which links all the aforementioned three levels (system, organization, individual). Even when the focus of the analysis is on a specific level only (e.g. the 'organization'), the appraisal has to zoom in and zoom out, identifying interlinking elements from the other two levels, so as to understand synergies or contradictions. In a number of countries (e.g. Sweden, Estonia, Latvia), the assessment of IAC is already done following such a systemic approach, linking the individual performance to the organization's final objectives.
- The measurement of levels of IAC needs to be **purposeful**. Too frequently the measurement is put in place simply because there is an obligation to monitor public policies (including administrative reforms or IAC strengthening plans), thus without a clear understanding of whether what is measured is meaningful in relation to the policy needs that are being tackled, and in what way the indicators measured relate to and address such needs. In other words, IAC does not have to be measured *per se*, but in relation to the degree to which it contributes to improve public policy delivery.
- **IAC enhancing activities** (see next section) have to be evaluated and monitored too. However, the focus of these activities should not be the realised outputs (for instance, the number of people trained or training hours provided), but rather the skills learnt, how they are applied and with which gain (for example, improved customer satisfaction or increased efficiency in fulfilling those procedures for which the training was provided). The link between the outcomes of the capacity building measure put in place (e.g. staff that is more knowledgeable on public procurement procedures) and the improvement in policy delivery (e.g. reduced court cases and faster project completion times) has to be clearly spelt-out, monitored and pursued. Measurement and appraisal have to be explicit about the *causal link* between IAC building (at whichever level and on whichever dimension it is being appraised) and how it affects the effectiveness of a given policy. This relationship needs to be made explicit from the outset. In practice, by contrast, the linkages between IAC building and policy result are often neglected and this can result in the paradox of reported improvements in levels of administrative capacity (when these are measured not solely in terms of outputs) which are not translated into improved effectiveness and efficiency of the policy delivery processes (and thus in improved policy effectiveness). Related, it is essential that administrations be honest and brave about the IAC initiatives that have not worked (e.g. the tools to measure the administrative burden in some countries), so as to be able to learn from past mistakes in order to improve future actions. Networks such as EUPAN allow amplifying the scope of such lessons-drawing, by enabling administrations to learn from others' mistakes.

4. How can IAC be enhanced?

Having measured IAC, the following step is the formulation and implementation of a capacity-building response. The most commonly tools to enhance IAC are related to **staffing, training, networking and procedures**⁶. Naturally, the effectiveness and feasibility of these approaches strongly depend on the nature and needs of the organisation, i.e. the starting point, as well as on the financial and human resources available.

Staffing is typical when administrations are relatively new to the specific tasks at hand; when they face increased or more specialised workloads; or when they deal with frequent turnover and loss of human resources, for instance due to crowding-out from the private sector. Recruitment then aims at plugging general capacity gaps. Less stable means of staffing may cause problems for long-term capacity building. One of the most common channels for recruiting is through **public competitions**. A very well-known example is the EU ‘*Concour*’ which is a recruitment competition and examination to select staff to all institutions of the European Union. All the permanent staff for the EU institutions is recruited through open competitions, which attract a considerable number of applicants from all over Europe. This system is also adopted in many European Continental countries (i.e. Italy, Belgium, Portugal, France). Public Administrations in Nordic countries (i.e. Sweden, Norway, Netherland), instead, select their staff by adopting models closer to the **private business recruitment** (call for vacancy, individual interview, etc.). However, irrespective of the recruitment model, the basis for selection (as for career) has to be based on merit and the match between the required skills and competences and those offered by candidates.

Training is a widespread form of IAC enhancing. Its scope can vary from very **wide-ranging training plans** that aim to fill in a plurality of knowledge and skills gaps, to very focused and specialised initiatives aimed at distinct aspects of the policy management and delivery cycle (e.g. project management, public procurement, accounting, monitoring etc.). However, the training shall not only aim to provide technical knowledge but also to improve personal attitudes and organizational behaviour. For example in Norway, a specific attention is paid to the development and increase of **leadership** in the public officials as a crucial element of IAC. Another interesting case is in Cyprus where a project⁷ addressing specifically leadership and management capacities is based on the Balanced Score Card and CAF. The training targets national and local level and, for 9 months, the officers are also supported by a coach to secure this on-the-job transfer of the in-class learning.

Procedural arrangements may be explicitly designed to enhance the quality of policy formulation and implementation, especially to boost innovation. Therefore, the use of **ICT systems and exploitation of 2.0 web technologies** is crucial. In the Netherland, in the framework of the programme for modernisation of central/national public administration, inter-ministerial networks

⁶ ESPON study “*SMART-IST / (Smart Institutions for Territorial Development)*”.

⁷ The “Project for strengthening the management and leadership capacity of local self-government organisations” is implemented in the framework of 2007-13 Human Capital National Operational Program, ESF co-financed and it is implemented by implemented by the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (PAPD).

are used to develop new solutions through digital networks (internal and external) and social media for generating and discussing new ideas. In Turkey⁸, the “e-Transformation Turkey” Project established an Organisation Database providing information on the organisational structure and internet addresses of all ministries and other public agencies. In addition, the database has a coordination purpose. All ministries and public institutions record their duties and services in this database in order to cut red-tape, gauge whether there are overlaps in the functions performed and to standardize approaches to public service delivery.

Open or internal competitions are also implemented to foster innovation. In Poland, in the framework of the modernization of the Public sector policy, an open competition among PAs on ideas to improve IAC resulted in the actual implementation of new management solutions in more than 30 offices. For instance, this has brought to the introduction of: new competency models, establishment of development centres, knowledge and/or process and/or goal management, Eco-Management Audit Schemes, benchmarking, anti-corruption activities, raising ethical awareness, and optimization of organizational structure.

Organizational change can also be a tool to enhance innovation regarding IAC. In Cyprus, the project “Re-organisation and Improvement of the Administrative Capacity of the Public Service” aims at re-organizing specific departments, re-engineering and simplifying their processes, as well as introducing benchmarking methodologies, using specific performance indicators. The project also involves the development of a series of methodological tools that will be implemented horizontally in the public service, so as to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of other Public Service Organizations.

The European Commission Toolbox for modernizing public administration (see next box) can be a useful source of inspiration. For instance, the thematic chapter “Improving service delivery” is rich of cases regarding innovative procedural arrangements aimed at enhancing IAC .

Figure 3: Modernising Public Administrations Toolbox

The Commission inter-service Group on Institutional Capacity and Administrative Reform group chaired by DG EMPL is elaborating a Toolbox as a practical guide for modernising administration and public sector, providing suggestions for implementing country-specific recommendations and OPs under thematic objectives (especially TO11). The Toolbox aims to support local, regional and national administration presenting initiatives on modernising public administration through concrete case studies regarding laws, reports, agendas, programmes, communications etc. The lessons come from international experience: EU-funded studies, country-level initiatives, OECD reports, competitions (European Public Sector Award (EPSA) & Crystal Scales of Justice), EUPAN, European & Common Assessment Framework (CAF) Public Sector Quality Conferences. The Toolbox has seven thematic chapters: better policy-making, embedding ethical & anti-corruption practices, professional and well-performing institutions, improving service delivery, enhancing the business environment, strengthening the quality of judicial systems, managing public funds effectively (including public procurement and ESIF). (Source: *Presentation of “Modernising Public Administration – Toolbox”* Florian HAUSER, DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion)

Networking is a tool often used in the EU to raise IAC levels. Some networks mainly focus on practice-sharing among administrators; others are more open and a wider set of players participate. Furthermore, networks can be general and 'policy-wide' while others can be more targeted, focusing on specific areas of policy intervention. At **European level**, **EUPAN** itself is a good example, with its mission to improve the performance, competitiveness and quality of European public administration through new tools and methods developed on the basis of exchanges of views, experiences and good practices among Member States. Across the EU, territorial and sector cooperation programmes under Cohesion Policy have developed hundreds of networks among public administrations in order to exchange good practices and experiences. Lastly, the entire EU can be seen as an immense capacity-building effort with the different regional and central administrations agreeing on similar models and methods; a concept that has become known as 'Europeanisation'.

There are also many **networks at national level**. In Italy, the network of regional and evaluation units has been designed as a community of professionals in order to exchange operational experiences, disseminate know-how and share methodologies in the field of Public Policy evaluation. In Romania, the National Agency of Civil Servants (Agenția Națională a Funcționarilor Publici) has created and managed networks of actors responsible for human resources or ethics counsellors to promote exchange of experiences and good practices. In the Netherlands, in order to improve and modernise organisational and HR strategies and to develop new policy approaches, the programme "Network for smarter working in the public sector" was developed. This network consists of 4,000 'innovative' civil servants employed within the central, provincial or local government, the water board or by the police force. The idea is that if one of these civil servants encounters a dilemma at work, often linked to the political, administrative or organisational culture in the office, he/she posts the problem on the digital platform of the network for smarter working in the public sector (an expert group on LinkedIn). The network then invites professionals to set up a 'DoTank', a team that will focus on specific issues. The team, working according to a bottom-up philosophy, will identify solution strategies and present them to a manager, who will commit to implement the proposed approach for solving the identified problem.

Training, staffing, networking and procedural arrangements can foster public administration leveraging the IAC main characteristics illustrated in section 2. Far from attempting to provide a comprehensive review of all the different ways through which these four components might enhance IAC - which would be well beyond the scope of the present endeavour - the following table provides illustrative examples. For each characteristic in relation to training, staffing, networking and procedural arrangements, examples of the 'tools' that can be implemented are provided.

Table 2: IAC characteristics and main enhancing tools

	Staffing	Training	Procedural Arrangements	Networking
Multi-level coordination	Criterion for apical position: different levels of government and international experiences	Capacity in legal drafting	Regulatory impact assessment, ex post evaluation, review, compliance, enforcement, appeals settlement and dispute mechanism	Trans-governmental networks
Ethics and Integrity	HR policies: open competition and merit based	Training on ethics and dilemma based discussions	Ombudsmen Whistleblowing procedures Publicly accessible organigrams and periodic organisational audits Risk assessments on delicate issues (e.g. procurement) Code of conduct	European - International peer reviewing among similar organizations
Openness and Inclusiveness	HR policies that comply with non-discrimination principles	Skills for Identify, motivate and mobilize stakeholders	Stakeholders mapping exercise as internal routine	National and local Stakeholder networks
Results-orientation	Criterion for selection: knowledge and skills in management and implementation of projects and programmes Criterion for selection of apical staff: experience in knowledge management processes Criterion for apical position: multi-sectorial and international experiences	Capacity to analyse and synthesize data and information Skills to access, gather and disaggregate data and information Capacity to prepare a budget and to estimate capacity development costs Enhancing leadership capacity	Individual performance measurement Assessment procedures (such as CAF) Internal capitalization process Coaching Codified procedures for the discussion, validation and integration of recommendations of external evaluation	Sectorial - professional European and national networks
Smartness	Criterion for selection: multi-sectorial experience	Capability in strategic thinking and translate information into a vision and/or a mandate	Exploitation of new technologies and ICT	Sectorial - professional European and national networks

[From the IPSPG prospective](#)

The IPSPG member reckoned the following key elements for the **enhancement of IAC**:

- IAC enhancing measures are more likely to be successful when they are devised and implemented through an **inclusive approach**. In other words, IAC building initiative should address weaknesses that are acknowledged and perceived by the intended target groups and that, crucially, capitalise on the inputs and initiatives of such target recipients (rather than being imposed top-down).
- Furthermore, it is important that **stakeholders are involved** in the processes of enhancing IAC, and that ACB efforts are devised and introduced through a partnership and in dialogue among all levels of government. This increases the degree of ownership and the level of commitment to the initiatives proposed, which give them increased chances of success.

- IAC enhancing has to take place not in isolation, but as part of an **overall strategy** of medium-long period of modernization of the public service. This should comprise mobilisation of resources and institutional design, and include enforcement mechanisms (which are deemed to be particularly successful when linked to reward mechanisms). Continuity is the key: moving the goalposts or changing policies does not allow the time that is necessary for positive effects to take hold. At the same time, the pre-conditions, ensuring the effectiveness of the interventions, need to be clear. This requires checking the institutional conditions available before a measure is introduced, including whether the legislation is in force or has to be introduced, or whether key stakeholders may impose vetoes (and, thus, plan how they can be overcome or circumvented).

5. Next steps

This thematic paper represents an interim step of the path designed by the MTP. The ultimate goal is to investigate IAC, by combining an analytical and an interactive approach, in order to provide operational guidance for the Member States. Therefore, this paper shall be considered as a draft aiming at stimulating reflections among DGs.

The final thematic paper is the basis for operational Guidelines in terms of approaches and methods for IAC assessment and tools for IAC enhancement. The Guidelines aim at developing a methodology for practitioners, transposing cases and making them operational into the day-by-day work of the administration, also taking into account the potential link with the activity managed by the European Commission on Modernising Public Administration 'Toolbox'.