

THE INSTRUMENT FOR STRUCTURAL POLICIES FOR PRE-ACCESSION (ISPA)

The Beginning

ISPA¹ was agreed on at the Council of Luxembourg, together with SAPARD², to familiarise the applicant countries with Union policies and procedures through their participation in Community programmes.

ISPA Budget

ISPA budget of 7 billion EURO will be available for the period 2000-2006 to the ten Central and Eastern European candidate countries (at a rate of approximately 1.040 million EURO/ year). Upon Accession, the remaining funds will be split between remaining candidate countries.

Budget Division

The division between the participant countries is made according to size, population and per capita GDP. The Commission has provided an indicative range for allocation of ISPA funds³.

ISPA Management

The ISPA budget, managed by DG Regio, will aim at an equal balance between measures on transport infrastructure and measures in the field of environment. ISPA projects must have their roots in the Accession Partnerships between EU and the candidate countries and the National ISPA Strategies.

Rate of Assistance

ISPA rate of assistance is up to 75% of the public expenditure (up to 85% in exceptional cases). Funding for preliminary studies and technical assistance can be up to 100%. ISPA funding may not be combined with other pre-accession instruments (such as PHARE or SAPARD).

Funding Margins

The total cost of a project shall in principle be not less than 5 million EURO⁴. There is no upper limit for projects.

Funding Criteria

ISPA Transport projects must ensure: sustainable mobility, high-quality infrastructure, inclusion of all modes of transport, optimal use of existing infrastructure, interoperability.

Eligible Projects

TINA⁵ (Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment) recommendations are the basis for the future transport network in Central and Eastern Europe. ISPA will finance relevant projects within this network.

1 The Council Regulation (EC) 1267/99 from 21 June 1999 establishes an Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre Accession - ISPA.

2 The Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development.

3 The Commission's range, as published in OJ L72/21.03.2000, p.21 is: **BG** 8.0 – 12.0%, **CZ** 5.5 – 8.0%, **EE** 2.0 – 3.5%, **HU** 7.0 – 10.0%, **LV** 3.5 – 5.5%, **LT** 4.0 – 6.0%, **PL** 30.0 – 37.0%, **RO** 20.0 – 26.0%, **SK** 3.5 – 5.5%, **SI** 1.0 – 2.0%.

4 EC 1267/99, art. 2.

5 It comprises **ten multi-modal pan-European corridors** endorsed at the Pan-European Transport Conference at Helsinki in June 1997 plus **some additional network components** selected on the basis of Decision No. 1692/96. ISPA will finance relevant projects within this network.

6 According to a study of BirdLife International "An assessment of the potential impact of the TINA Network on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the accession countries".

7 According to the ISPA Factsheet for measure no. 2000/RO/16/P/PT/002, at http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbpro/download/Bugiu_en.pdf one objective is "to remove and prevent bottlenecks. It is foreseen that under the present road conditions, bottlenecks will appear around 2005, while widening to four lanes will delay the apparition of bottlenecks until around 2020-2025".

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE ISPA TRANSPORT

More Transparency

Thorough information on the proposed plans can highlight the strong and the weak points of each project. ISPA project plans should be open to all stakeholders, including local communities, NGOs and mass media.

Annual Revisions

There should be a yearly revision of the ISPA apart from the end-term review in 2006 – so that valuable experience can already be put into practice.

Internalising costs

To achieve a truly operational system that will function efficiently, taking into account social, economical and environmental costs, ISPA financing should also encourage repayable loans.

More Care for Nature

The suggested TINA corridors are likely to affect 85 Important Bird Areas⁶ ISPA should encourage studies related to the implementation infrastructure projects, while taking into account the whole range of environmental and social effects they are likely to have.

Strategic Environmental Assessment

A general requirement for a SEA on the ISPA transport strategy should be included in the regulations. Since many of the candidate countries have not yet fully implemented the EIA and SEA directives, many of the financed projects do not provide the most environment friendly alternative.

Better Resource Allocation

National resources committed to ISPA investments are mostly diverted from smaller projects, essential for the local economies. The ISPA limit of 5 million EURO should be cancelled, so that more efficient projects can be supported.

Larger Perspective

ISPA has shown favour for end-of-pipe solutions⁷ that have a limited impact in time. Future projects should encourage the use of economic tools as alternatives for dealing with high traffic levels.

Better Intermodality

There are very few projects that promote inter-modal transport, most of the time these being only the last priority of the countries. Know-how transfer on inter-modal solutions should therefore be encouraged.

*This leaflet has been produced by the European Federation for Transport and Environment.
T&E is Europe's primary non-governmental organisation campaigning on a European level
for an environmentally responsible approach to transport.*

T&E is the umbrella organisation of 38 NGOs active in this field in 20 countries across the European continent.

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