

# EX-POST EVALUATION OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY FUND – EVALUATION REPORT

20.12.2024.

EX-POST EVALUATION REPORTS OF THE HOME AFFAIRS FUNDS

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# Executive summary

The present evaluation report is based on the contract No.BM/12883-34/2024 between the Ministry of Interior and HÉTFA Research Institute Ltd., for the preparation of the ex-post evaluation report of the Internal Security Fund (ISF).

The analysis needed to answer the evaluation questions was carried out using three different methodological approaches:

- review and analysis of the final evaluations of the projects implemented, the implementation reports on the progress of the National Programme, the results and main findings of the related programmes, strategies and legislation.
- analysis of the data provided to us.
- interviews with programme implementers and the managing institutions.

A key consideration during the study was to ensure that the review was as comprehensive as possible within the tight timeframe.

**As regards the current state of implementation**, the final evaluations show that 90.8% of the projects have been completed in all elements, 8.6% have been partially completed and in only 1 case recommended the project supervisors to the decision-makers of the Responsible Authority to close the project as non-completed. Partially completed projects were due to delays in secondments of experts, cancellation of procurements and tasks (often due to unsuccessful procurement procedures).

Looking at the overall absorption of fund, the Borders and Visa priorities showed a 100.10% use of resources, while the Police area showed a slightly higher use of resources of 110.71%. However, within each specific and national objective, there is a great deal of disparity in absorption.

The analysis of the projects in the progress reports database shows that **the projects met the objectives of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 515/2014.**

**At the level of indicators**, the data show that **most projects have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the objectives set**, but with mixed results. The completion rates show that **projects achieved an average completion rate of around 77%**. This is essentially a positive result, indicating that the majority of projects have been successfully implemented. However, the 23% shortfall suggests that some indicators have not been achieved as expected.

The performance of different groups of indicators varies in terms of results. **The indicators measured during the maintenance period often show exceptionally high performance rates**, which may be

partly due to staff increases, partly due to changes in analytical methods or to a much larger than expected increase in the scope of the data analysed.

**Overall, the ISF's priorities for Borders and Visa in Hungary show clear results, especially in the area of border management,** where infrastructure and technological improvements have been outstanding. The lower level of results for the visa priorities suggests that this area has received less attention. In the area of efficiency and sustainability, the projects have been effective in ensuring the long-term viability of the equipment and systems procured. Trends over time clearly show that EU funding has had a significant impact on the implementation of these priorities in Hungary.

However, the project documents and interviews highlighted that the projects have made real progress in improving visa procedures and the work of consulates. Cooperation between Member States has increased, at least periodically; in addition, the efficiency of data exchange and data access at consulates, border crossing points and the central national visa authority has increased. At the external borders, vehicles were purchased and border crossing points upgraded; the EUROSUR system became operational, and a system of border management training was set up.

**The projects implemented under the ISF Police area have produced wide-ranging results in the field of preventing and fighting against crime,** particularly in the fight against trafficking in human beings, where the projects have led to a fundamental renewal of national practice. In addition, significant progress has been made in the area of asset recovery. Anti-drugs actions have also been successful, in particular in the confiscation of cannabis and amphetamines, where quantities have shown a significant increase by 2020.

The project documents and interviews show that the procured tools and established systems have contributed significantly to the ability of law enforcement agencies to prevent and tackle organised crime and to engage with Europol. In addition, a number of training courses on various topics have been carried out; awareness-raising (media) campaigns and several victim assistance projects have been implemented, providing extensive support to victims of trafficking in human beings.

**The experience of the interviews confirms that the projects' objectives responded to existing needs.** However, there were some cases where the EU Regulation references given in the relevance section and the numbering of projects did not match, most probably due to an administrative error. In addition, there are some financial priorities in the National Programme for which no project was linked to during the implementation period.

Among the ISF project implementers, there are a number of institutions that have implemented projects during the period with the use of other EU development funds (such as operational programmes) in addition to the Home Affairs Funds. Analysis of these shows that the funding frameworks complemented

each other well, as they typically focused on different areas of development while funding similar objectives, effectively demarcating funds and minimising duplication of resources.

The EU added value of the projects was manifested at the implementing organisations (e.g. organisational development, adaptation of new activities), as well as in the form of new cooperations and professional knowledge sharing. It was mentioned that **the project required a new way of working for the state organisations, which required organisational adaptation and development, and they have gained results of which they could build in the future.** In addition, the high average co-financing rate shows that EU funding played a significant role in the implementation of these projects.

The interviewees were generally positive about the sustainability of the results. **As the projects (especially those based on procurement) responded to very specific needs, it is reasonable to expect that the results will be sustainable.**

**It was a common experience among project implementers that project administration was a large burden for the organisations:** the management and documentation of procurement, the documentation of project amendments and closures were mentioned as areas of difficulty.

The main lessons learned from the implementation of the Fund are the following:

1. In the next programming period, the Responsible Authority will focus on supporting higher value, more complex projects, which is expected to reduce administrative burdens, increase the quality of the application structure and reduce certain cost elements by combining projects with the same activities.
2. Research projects could not be implemented independently under any of the specific objectives due to low amount of allocated fund and lack of availability of sectoral actors. To address this, in the future the Responsible Authority will target relevant national actors and make efforts to develop international partnerships.
3. It has been confirmed that the availability of technical equipment is a prerequisite for the implementation of cross-border operations against serious and organised crime. Thus, project implementers considered the availability of equipment to be of utmost importance and projects focused on making such purchases rather than on operational costs which were more difficult to account for due to the constraints of the programme structure.
4. In the experience of project implementers, IT improvements that were otherwise necessary and positively evaluated have in many cases generated increased operational costs and sometimes new costs. In the new programming period 2021-2027, the regulatory framework will provide the possibility to support operational costs more explicitly.

**Overall, the Fund has supported relevant developments that have contributed to the objectives of the relevant regulations and has also contributed to a number of sector-specific improvements. There were a large number of investments, as well as soft developments, which responded to well-defined needs. Real EU added value was identified in relation to the capacity buildings and professional cooperations; in addition, a number of projects gathered the interest of the EU or international community.**

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# Introduction

The present evaluation report is based on the contract No. BM/12883-34/2024 between the Ministry of Interior and HÉTFA Research Institute Ltd. Based on *Act of 2015 on Public Procurement*, the Ministry of Interior has launched an open public procurement procedure in the framework of "*Budget for the Technical Assistance of the Internal Affairs Funds 2021-2027*" for the "Ex-post evaluation reports of the Home Affairs Funds". The subject of the contract is the preparation of the ex-post evaluation report of the Internal Security Fund (ISF).

## METHODS USED IN THE EVALUATION

The analysis required to answer the evaluation questions<sup>1</sup> was carried out in accordance with the *TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION "SUBSEQUENT EVALUATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE INVESTMENT BASES" for the procurement procedure* using three different methodological approaches. These were the following:

- review and analysis of the final evaluations of the projects implemented, the implementation reports on the progress of the National Programme, the results and main findings of the related programmes, strategies and legislation,
- analysis of the data provided to us,
- interviews with programme implementers and staff of the managing institutions.

The details of each methodological element are briefly described below.

## DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The purpose of the analysis of the documents was twofold. On the one hand, they provided information to answer the evaluation questions; on the other hand, they provided a basis for comparing the results of the data analysis and the interviews; they also helped to get a more thorough picture of the context before the interviews and allowed more precise questions to be asked.

The reviewed documents fell into two broad categories:

- supporting, contextual and/or legal documents:
  - Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council,
  - Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council,

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<sup>1</sup> The list of evaluation questions can be found in the Annex.



- The seven-year policy strategy for the Internal Security Fund, which was established by the European Union for the EU programming period 2014-2020,
- Commission Decision on approval (and amendments) of the National Programme for Hungary for funding from the Internal Security Fund for the period 2014 to 2020,
- Hungary's National Integrated Border Management Strategy,
- documents relating to the implementation and closure of specific projects:
  - programme-level progress reports,
  - final project reports.

The analysis of the first category of documents provided information in particular on the following evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, complementarity.

The analysis of the second category of documents provided information in particular on the following evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, EU added value, sustainability.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the database provided, the ex-post evaluation of the ISF projects was carried out in Excel and STATA using descriptive statistical methods. The main questions of the quantitative analysis were formulated to fit the following evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, complementarity, EU added value, sustainability and simplification of administrative burden.

For the analysis of effectiveness, data on the achievement of the objectives of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 were examined. At this stage, statistical analyses were carried out using the indicators in Excel, which allowed us to assess the achievement of the project objectives. This included a comparison of the percentage of achieved results, the development of key indicators and the actual results in relation to the objectives. As regards sustainability, the data analysis was also based on the indicators, and more specifically on the performance of the sustainability indicators.

Efficiency was assessed by comparing the costs of the fund and their effectiveness; during which the costs associated with each project and the results attributed to them were analysed. This relied heavily on the indicators discussed in the previous paragraph as objectives and on the overall budget of the projects. The analysis looked at whether the costs per indicator differed significantly between projects: our initial hypothesis was that efficiency would be achieved if, on the basis of the data and information available to us, the differences were not significant. In addition, when examining effectiveness, we also looked at the proportion of irregular amounts in each scheme.

To analyse the EU added value, in addition to the results achieved by the projects, we also looked at how the total cost of each project compared to the amount of ISF funding.

We had only indirect information on the reduction of administrative burden: on the one hand, we could check from the project title whether a project was directly related to this purpose; on the other hand, we examined the amendments related to the projects, i.e. which actor initiated them, for what purpose and with what result – and then inferred the administrative burden over the grant period from the relative number of amendments (we assumed that a relatively lower number of amendments meant less burden for both the beneficiary and the decision-maker of the Responsible Authority).

To the assessment of coherence and complementarity the quantitative analysis contributed by reviewing the operational programmes of the 2014-2020 period to see whether there is overlap or linkage at project or beneficiary level.

It is important to note that although the analysis of data, and indicators in particular, can help to highlight trends and larger correlations, previous analyses have found that numerical data alone cannot accurately demonstrate the effectiveness of a particular development; as this requires a full examination of the surrounding system<sup>2</sup> (border management, police, structure of fighting against crime). For this reason, the role of project documents and interviews in the evaluation is particularly important.

## INTERVIEWS

In order to shed light on information that may not be available in the formalised data, indicators and official reports, expert interviews were conducted with the implementers and institutional actors listed in the Technical Specification.

As time and capacity constraints did not allow for interviews with all project implementers, it was necessary to take a sample from the project database. The following criteria were taken into account when selecting the projects to be further analysed through interviews:

- the selected projects cover as much of the specific and national objectives as possible.
- preferably the most important projects of the beneficiaries should be selected, taking into account the experts' suggestions.
- include the projects listed for mandatory analysis in the Technical Specification.
- while keeping the number of interviews manageable given the tight deadlines for the evaluation.

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<sup>2</sup>Judit Tóth – Attila Vedó (2022). European Union resources in the service of the development of border control. In Szabó Csaba (ed) (2022). Studies for the preparation of the national programme of the Border Management and Visa Policy Instrument. Ministry of Interior, Budapest, pp. 9-32.

Taking these conditions into account, the implementers (project manager and/or executive professional) of the projects listed in the table below were interviewed (as well as two members of the Monitoring Committee). The 12 projects listed in the table cover almost all national objectives, including both investment and non-investment projects.

During the semi-structured interviews, the questions focused on evaluation issues and covered the following broad themes:

- effectiveness.
- efficiency.
- relevance.
- coherence.
- complementarity.
- EU added value.
- sustainability.
- implementation experience, difficulties (administrative burden).

Table 1 Selected projects

Project	Call	Beneficiary	Consortium partner	Approved cost (Ft)	Specific Objective (SO)	National Objective (NO)
BBA-1.2.1-2015-00001 Regional training for consular officers	BBA-1.2.1 Training-Visa	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade		53 503 654	SO1	NO2
BBA-1.3.2/10-2019-00002 Support to consular cooperation through primary screening activities by visa advisors III.	BBA-1.3.2/10 Placement of visa and document advisers	National Directorate-General for Aliens Policing	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	1 061 240 148	SO1	NO3
BBA-1.3.2-2015-00001 Liaison Officers secondment	BBA-1.3.2 Deployment of visa and document advisers	National Police Headquarters	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	203 918 201	SO1	NO3
BBA-2.1.2/16-2020-00001 Development of the EUROSUR national data application and connection	BBA-2.1.2/16 EUROSUR	National Police Headquarters		100 483 210	SO2	NO1

BBA-2.2.3/2-16-2016-00001 Development of risk analysis and assessment (CIRAM)	BBA-2.2.3 Development of risk analysis and assessment	National Police Headquarters		17 592 864	SO2	NO2
BBA-2.4.2-2015-00001 Border Police Training System	BBA-2.4.2 Increasing the level of human resources – Training	School of Law Enforcement, Szeged		131 447 328	SO2	NO4
BBA-5.1.2/10-2019-00001 Budapest Police Criminal IT capacity development	BBA-5.1.2/10 Capacity building of units to fight serious and organised crime	Budapest Police Headquarters		273 133 236	SO5	NO1
BBA-5.1.6/10-2019-00001 Don't let it, don't do it! – campaign against human trafficking	Implementing crime prevention programmes and campaigns as part of the fight against serious and organised crime	International Organisation for Migration	Traumaközpont Közhasznú Nonprofit Ltd.	179 767 108	SO5	NO1
BBA-5.3.3/10-2019-00002 Professional trainings	BBA-5.3.3/10 Professional trainings and foreign language trainings in the fight against serious and	International Training Centre		38 059 269	SO5	NO3

	organised cross-border crime					
BBA-5.4.5/10-2019-00001 Complex victim support services for victims of human trafficking	BBA-5.4.5/10 Complex victim support services for victims of human trafficking	Ministry of Justice	Baptist Aid Foundation	92 488 029	SO5	NO4
BBA-6.1.1/10-2019-00002 Development of cyber security services platform and ISF-based GovProbe system	BBA-6.1.1 Increasing capacity for cyber security of critical infrastructures	Special Service for National Security		1 296 837 784	SO6	NO1
BBA-6.3.1-2015-00001 Establishment of a Central European CBRN-E Training Centre	BBA-6.3.1 Establishment of a Regional CBRN(E) Training Centre	Rapid Response and Special Police Service		572 479 539	SO6	NO3

## Intervention logic

The "The seven-year policy strategy for the Internal Security Fund, which was established by the European Union for the EU programming period 2014-2020" (hereafter referred to as the Strategy) provides an overview of the sectoral and socio-economic context in which the Internal Security Fund is planned, both in the area of border management and police cooperation.

### BORDERS AND VISA

Hungary, as a member of the European Union and the Schengen area without internal borders, is committed to the development of integrated border management. In addition, it aims to maintain border security by establishing and maintaining an integrated capability planning and development system. This can guarantee integrated security by ensuring that border control, and the in-depth control operated as a compensatory element for the abolition of border control at the Schengen internal borders, and the other elements of integrated border management (border control; detection and investigation of cross-border crime; four-tier access control model; cooperation between authorities involved in border management; coordination of activities between Member States and the institutions and between the EEC and other bodies of the Union) are implemented.

One of the most important aspects of border management, and in particular border control, is the situation of **legal and illegal migration**.

Hungary was primarily a transit country when the strategy was prepared, located at the intersection of eastern and south-eastern migration routes. Longer-term residents (free movement and third country nationals) mostly arrive and stay for work.

In relation to illegal migration, the strategy notes that the country is involved in three inward migration routes: one is the so-called classical Balkan route, which leads through Turkey, Greece and/or Bulgaria to Serbia and then through Hungary to other EU Member States. The other is also via Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania to Hungary. In Budapest, it branches in two directions, one to Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, the other to Slovenia, South Austria, Northern Italy. The third important illegal migration channel reaching Hungary enters from Russia, Ukraine, along the Ukrainian-Hungarian border and continues towards Austria and on the other branch towards Slovakia, Germany.

The increased migratory pressure on the Greek-Turkish border in the first half of the 2010s had a spill-over effect on Hungary, resulting in a steady increase in illegal migration along the Hungarian-Serbian and Hungarian-Romanian borders, which is forecast to further increase. In addition, illegal migration is

often facilitated by organised criminal groups, so the fight against them concerns both financial instruments of the ISF.

In the years preceding the preparation of the strategy, the Schengen area has undergone a number of **changes in the EU**: the EU has lifted visa requirements for nationals of several third countries, concluded several visa facilitation agreements, made the use of multiple entry visas more widely available, and emphasised research specifically aimed at improving the efficiency of border control and enhancing border security, as well as specialised developments such as the generalisation of biometric ID verification.

The strategy notes that transit traffic in Hungary has been at a high level since 2008 and, despite improvements, there are occasional periods of congestion and delays at the border crossing points.

The strategy argues that **the tools and applications** procured to support border control tasks are often the result of isolated developments, and the procurement was not preceded by R&D, the diversified investments were not always made in line with a comprehensive development strategy, and there were ad hoc needs, or needs that did not explore the use of long-term technologies.

In addition, several steps of the integrated border management model, such as in-depth controls, have received only partial or intermittent EU support, so that in many cases the lack of resources has not only led to a lack of improvements but also to a loss of capacity.

**The improvements set out in the National Programme** aim to improve the security of the external borders, facilitate legal border crossings and establish an efficient and customer-friendly visa procedure. As a result, legal entry to Hungary will be facilitated through accelerated, customer-friendly Schengen visa issuance, easier and partially automated border crossing, while maintaining security and implementing more effective external border controls in line with the Schengen acquis. The country will also improve consular coverage and the quality of consular posts; simplify visa issuing; ensure effective detection of visa fraud through ITC improvements and the liaison officer network; and improve the security of the visa process.

As set out in the National Programme, Hungary is taking steps to facilitate and speed up legal border crossings, with new and improved border crossing points and the introduction of the Intelligent Border Control Package.

In order to tackle irregular migration, Hungary will strengthen cooperation at national and international level and improve risk analysis systems of the competent authorities, and it will also strengthen all elements of the integrated border management system. EUROSUR will operate in accordance with the relevant Regulation and the updated national context. In order to enhance efficiency, Hungary will provide suitably qualified staff for visa administration and border management.



## POLICE

The other financial instrument of the Internal Security Fund is related to police cooperation, with the main objective of preventing and combating serious, organised and cross-border crime (including terrorism) more effectively. This is based on Article 87 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which provides that all competent authorities in all Member States shall participate in the EU police cooperation.

The strategy cites a 2013 Europol report which found that there have been around 3,600 **organised crime** groups operating in Europe at the time. For Hungary, the Balkan criminal hub near the country's southern borders is the most significant, and its operations can be the most dangerous. As this section of the border is also the external border of the Schengen area, fight against crime in these areas has an interlinked importance with border security and could have a direct impact on the security of the Union.

As Hungary is not one of the main terrorist targets in the EU, the framework and objectives of the fight against **terrorism** and radicalisation in Hungary are primarily defined by EU strategies, the most important of which is the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The strategy, which was drawn up in 2005, is based on four pillars: prevention, protection, pursuit and response; the seven-year policy strategy underlines that it was appropriate to adopt this operational principle in Hungary, and the necessary framework for this was put in place in the first half of the 2010s.

In addition, the development of cooperation between domestic law enforcement agencies, the judiciary and national security services, the development of law enforcement **education and training**, and closer external relations are also mentioned in the situation analysis of the strategy.

According to the strategy, one of the objectives of the seven-year cycle of police cooperation should be to develop domestic participation in EU strategic cooperation, in the design and implementation of the EU Policy Cycle against organised crime, for which it is needed to rethink the mechanism of domestic threat assessment. This involves addressing structural difficulties in the day-to-day work of the relevant bodies and improving the knowledge on EU administration and functioning and the language skills of staff to enable more effective international cooperation.

**As set out in the National Programme**, Hungary aims to better respond to the development of cross-border crime and the increased resilience of organised criminals by improving national prevention and intervention capacities, information exchange protocols and threat and risk assessment skills. This includes the development of training, information exchange and victim support.

## State of implementation

Based on the analysis of the 174 projects that had a **final report**, 90.8% of the projects were completed in all elements, 8.6% were partially completed and only 1 project was recommended by the project supervisors to the decision-makers of the Responsible Authority to be closed as non-completed.

For partially completed projects, delays in secondments of experts, cancellations of procurements, and partial completion of tasks (often due to unsuccessful procurement procedures) were the reasons for the partial non-completion of projects. *Table 2* shows that SO5 had the highest number and proportion of partially completed projects.

The objective of the not completed project (BBA-2.3.2-2015-00001) was to carry out a comprehensive study on the functioning of the border control system. However, instead of the 10 people initially planned, only 3 people volunteered to carry out the project and although the sub-studies were carried out, the comprehensive study was not completed.

*Table 2. Completion by specific objective (pieces)*

	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO5	SO6	SO7	Total
All elements completed	14	32	5	94	10	3	158
Partially completed	1	3	0	10	1	0	15
Not completed	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	15	36	5	104	11	3	174

*Data source: database compiled from final project reports*

Of the almost 200 projects in **the project database**<sup>3</sup>, the largest proportion are those that are already in "verifiable" status – 136 projects in total (69% of all projects). This means that these projects have been closed and are currently undergoing or have passed technical or administrative checks. This high percentage indicates that a large proportion of projects have been at least partially implemented and that their closure has met expectations.

The number of projects "under maintenance" is 54, which represents 27% of the total number of projects (note that the maintenance period was not mandatory for all projects, only for investment projects). The focus of these projects is on ensuring long-term sustainability of the achieved results. This is a positive sign, as the concerned projects continue to actively contribute to the strategic objectives of the programme and ensure that the impacts achieved do not remain short-term. This, of course, does not

<sup>3</sup> The value of 174 in Table 2 is lower than what we see in the project database because for some projects no final evaluation was available.

mean that projects without a maintenance period do not have a long-term impact, but in the absence of indicators, this cannot be quantified through data analysis.

At the same time, there are 15 other projects in the database which, although mostly "verifiable" according to their status, have been cancelled or otherwise deleted. The reason for cancellation varies for these projects, but the two most common reasons are the failure of (public) procurement procedures and the delay of the project (often due to the procurement procedures). In some cases, the COVID-19 epidemic caused difficulties that made it impossible to complete the project effectively; or the reason for cancellation was institutional reorganisation in the public administration.

One project is currently in the status of "closure in progress", which is a transitional period between the completion of implementation and the maintenance of results<sup>4</sup>.

## ABSORPTION

### BORDERS AND VISA

For the financial performance of the Fund, the two major areas of intervention (borders and police) are presented separately, highlighting the link between EU and national funding under the specific objectives (SO) and national objectives (NO), and the planned framework (national programme, NP).

Objective SO1, i.e. the Common Visa Policy, was composed of three national objectives for which a total EU budget of €6,303,903 and a national budget of €2,101,301 was available under the National Programme. The actual EU funding committed amounted to €5,576,174.46, while the national co-financing amounted to €1,858,724.83. This leaves a total of €727,728.54 of EU and €242,576.17 of national funds available in this category, for a total unused budget of €970,304.71. NO3 proved to be the largest of the three national objectives (with EU funding of €4,989,463.95) and its spending was relatively close to the planned allocation, leaving only a minimal amount of residual funds.

Looking at the proportions, it can be seen that NO1 and NO2 show a rather low uptake rate of the three national objectives, with only 37% and 60.5% respectively. Objective NO3, on the other hand, used almost all of its available resources (98.14%). Overall, the resource use for SO1 was thus 88.46%, which is moderately high, but still leaves a significant residual.

For the SO2 objective (Borders), the overall picture is more complex. Out of a total of €41,038,160.57 EU and €10,060,631.30 national budgets, €43,281,461.39 EU and €11,981,150.24 national resources were

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<sup>4</sup> Addendum: According to consultations with the expert of the Responsible Authority, the system has not been updated until the delivery of the database; in reality, the project BBA-1.1.4/10-2019-00001 has also been completed, at the time of writing the report its status is "Verifiable".

used, representing an overspend of €2,243,300.82 EU and €1 921 518.94 national resources, resulting in a negative margin of €4,163,819.76. Within the SO2 objective, the NO5 and NO1 categories in particular show significant overspending: for NO5, for example, a negative free amount of more than €4 million is visible when including the domestic source. However, for NO4, a significant positive margin of €882,821.35 remains.

Looking at the ratios, SO2 shows a particularly high level of over-execution for objectives NO1 and NO5: NO1 shows a much higher than planned over-execution of 175.93%, while NO5 shows a particularly high rate of 4,396.84%, indicating that the funding needs have increased dramatically during the programme compared to the initially very low budget. In contrast, NO3 did not use any funds at all (0%), while NO4 used barely half of its allocation (49.49%). NO6 used almost exactly its allocation (98.56% EU funding, but with higher domestic co-financing: 111.22%). SO2 slightly overspent its allocation overall, with 105.47% on the EU side and a more significant 119.09% on the domestic co-financing side, for an overall overspend of 108.15%.

In the SO3 (Operating Support) category, only EU funds were available and €8,872,800 of the planned €10,279,632.88 were used, leaving a positive margin of €1,406,843.68. In the area of technical assistance (TA), €1,647,104.30 out of a budget of €1,717,585.90 was used, leaving a small margin of €70,481.60. The absorption rate for SO3 is 86.31%, leaving a significant margin in this category. The absorption rate for TA is 95.90% with a minimal residual amount.

Overall, of the planned EU budget of €59,339,282.35, €59,377,529.35 was actually used, with a minimal overspend of €38,247.00. On the other hand, compared to the planned use of €12,161,932.30 of national co-financing, an amount of €13,839,875.08 was used, which represents a significant overspend of €1,677,942.77. Thus, the programme element ended with an overall overspend of €1,716,189.77, mainly due to a significant overspend in SO2.

In terms of rates, the programme element was practically perfectly absorbed in terms of EU funds (100.06%), while the national co-financing shows an over-execution (113.80%). The overall absorption rate is therefore 102.40%, which shows a small overspend.

Table 3. Absorption in Borders and Visa (EUR)

SO	NO	EU Funds (A)	National Funds (B)	EU Funds in NP (C)	National Funds in NP (D)	Total Funds in NP
SO1 – Common Visa Policy	NO1	238,277.75	79,425.92	644,034.00	214,678.00	858,712.00
	NO2	348,432.76	116,144.26	575,918.00	191,972.67	767,890.67
	NO3	4,989,463.95	1,663,154.65	5,083,951.00	1,694,650.33	6,778,601.33
SO1 total		5,576,174.46	1,858,724.83	6,303,903.00	2,101,301.00	8,405,204.00

<b>SO2 – Borders</b>	<b>NO1</b>	1,546,785.83	515,595.28	879,223.00	293,074.33	1,172,297.33
	<b>NO2</b>	956,749.01	318,916.34	1,225,591.00	408,530.33	1,634,121.33
	<b>NO3</b>	0.00	0.00	142,249.00	47,416.33	189,665.33
	<b>NO4</b>	648,846.99	216,282.33	1,310,963.00	436,987.67	1,747,950.67
	<b>NO5</b>	3,261,840.09	1,087,280.03	74,186.00	24,728.67	98,914.67
	<b>NO6</b>	36,867,239.48	9,843,076.26	37,405,948.57	8,849,893.97	46,255,842.54
<b>SO2 total</b>		43,281,461.39	11,981,150.24	41,038,160.57	10,060,631.30	51,098,791.87
<b>SO3 – Operating support</b>	<b>NO2</b>	8,872,789.20	0.00	10,279,632.88	0.00	10,279,632.88
<b>SO3 total</b>		8,872,789.20	0.00	10,279,632.88	0.00	10,279,632.88
<b>TA</b>		1,647,104.30		1,717,585.90	0.00	1,717,585.90
<b>Total</b>		59,377 529.35	13,839,875.08	59,339,282.35	12,161,932.30	71,501,214.65

Table 4. Residual funds in Borders and Visa (EUR)

SO	NO	Residual EU funds (C)-(A)	Residual national funds (D)-(B)	Total residual funds
<b>SO1 – Common Visa Policy</b>	<b>NO1</b>	405,756.25	135,252.08	541,008.33
	<b>NO2</b>	227,485.24	75,828.41	303,313.65
	<b>NO3</b>	94,487.05	31,495.68	125,982.73
<b>SO1 total</b>			242,576.17	970,304.71
<b>SO2 – Borders</b>	<b>NO1</b>	-667,562.83	-222,520.94	-890,083.77
	<b>NO2</b>	268,841.99,	89,613.99,	358,455.98
	<b>NO3</b>	142,249.00	47,416.33	189,665.33
	<b>NO4</b>	662,116.01	220,705.34	882,821.35
	<b>NO5</b>	-3,187,654.09	-1,062,551.37	-4,250,205.45
	<b>NO6</b>	538,709.09	-993,182.29	-454,473.20
<b>SO2 total</b>			-1,920,518.94	-4,163,819.76
<b>SO3 – Operating support</b>	<b>NO2</b>	1,406,843.68	0.00	1,406,843.68
<b>SO3 total</b>			0.00	1,406,843.68
<b>TA</b>				70,481.60
<b>Total</b>			-1,677,942.77	-1,716,189.77

Table 5. Absorption rates in Borders and Visa (%)

SO	NO	Absorption rate compared to NP (%)		
		EU funds	National funds	Total
SO1 – Common Visa Policy	NO1	37.00	37.00	37.00
	NO2	60.50	60.50	60.50
	NO3	98.14	98.14	98.14
SO1 total			88.46	88.46
SO2 – Borders	NO1	175.93	175.93	175.93
	NO2	78.06	78.06	78.06
	NO3	0.00	0.00	0.00
	NO4	49.49	49.49	49.49
	NO5	4,396.84	4,396.84	4,396.84
	NO6	98.56	111.22	100.98
SO2 total		105.47	119.09	108.15
SO3 – Operating support	NO2	86.31	-	86.31
SO3 total		86.31	-	86.31
TA		95.90	-	95.90
Total		100.06	113.80	102.40

## POLICE

For SO5 (Fight against crime and crime prevention), a total of €19,446,601.00 EU and €6,482,200.33 national funding was available under the national programme. The total EU funding actually used was slightly lower, at €18,923,904.69 and the national co-financing was €6,270,928.81, leaving a slight positive balance on both the EU (€522,969.31) and national (€211,271.52) sides. However, there are significant differences between the national objectives for this SO, with NO1 and NO2 showing significant overspending, while NO3, NO4 and NO5 were under-spending, leaving a significant margin. A particularly large positive residual is observed for NO3 (€2,750,719.46).

In terms of uptake, SO5 shows a mixed picture. National objectives NO1 and NO2 achieved higher than planned uptake rates (both around 117%), while NO3, NO4 and NO5 projects achieved significantly lower uptake rates (41%, 52% and 61% respectively), indicating significant unused resources. Overall, however, the SO5 objective's resource uptake rate was close to the planned allocation (97.17%).

For Objective SO6 (Crisis management and crisis prevention), a total of €3,400,401.00 of EU and €1,133,467.00 of national resources were planned, but the actual uptake was significantly higher, with

€6,463,305.80 of EU and €2,154,435.29 of national funds. This resulted in an overall overspending of €3,062,904.80 in EU and €1,020,968.29 in national funds, ending with a negative balance of €4,083,873.09. The national objectives NO1 and NO3 show an outstanding over-execution, in particular for NO1 (total negative variance of €3,342,608.89). The NO2 objective, on the other hand, remained balanced with a low volume and a minimal positive residual.

In terms of absorption rates, there are very large differences between the national objectives. The NO1 objective exceeded its initial objectives by more than double (232% uptake); NO2, on the other hand, showed a low uptake, with a utilisation rate of only 26.25%, while NO3 also exceeded its initial objectives (almost 140%). SO6 thus exceeded its target value by a significant margin, almost doubling the total amount (190.07%).

In the technical assistance (TA) category, a relatively low volume of only €688,643.00 of EU funds was available, out of which €664,892.06 was used, ending with a positive balance of €24,000. The absorption rate was therefore close to full (96.55%).

Overall, the absorption of these two specific objectives was €26,052,102.55 compared with the planned EU allocation of €23,535,645.00, i.e. an overspend of €2,516,457.55. On the national side, there was also an overspend of €8,425,364.10 instead of the planned €7,615,667.33, which represents a negative balance of €809,696.76. The two resources together therefore ended with an overrun of €3,326,154.31. Looking at the ratios, the overall rate of utilisation was 110.68%, largely due to a significant overspend in SO6.

Table 6. Absorption in Police (EUR)

SO	NO	EU Funds (A)	National Funds (B)	Eligible contrib ution of the benefici ary	EU Funds in NP (C)	National Funds in NP (D)	Total Funds in NP
<b>SO5 – Crime prevention and prosecution</b>	<b>NO1</b>	10 131 075,53	3 340 131,76	36 957,24	8 632 308,00	2 877 436,00	11 509 744,00
	<b>NO2</b>	6 222 416,70	2 074 197,20	0,00	5 310 859,00	1 770 286,33	7 081 145,33
	<b>NO3</b>	1 430 312,44	476 736,10	0,00	3 493 326,00	1 164 442,00	4 657 768,00
	<b>NO4</b>	490 406,78	163 299,33	0,00	937 511,00	312 503,67	1 250 014,67
	<b>NO5</b>	649 693,24	216 564,42	0,00	1 072 597,00	357 532,33	1 430 129,33
<b>SO5 total</b>		18 923 904,69	6 270 928,81	36 957,24	19 446 601,00	6 482 200,33	25 928 801,33
<b>SO6 – Threats and crisis</b>	<b>NO1</b>	4 407 454,66	1 469 151,56	0,00	1 900 498,00	633 499,33	2 533 997,33
	<b>NO2</b>	9 202,56	3 067,52	0,00	35 060,00	11 686,67	46 746,67
	<b>NO3</b>	2 046 648,59	682 216,20	0,00	1 464 843,00	488 281,00	1 953 124,00
<b>SO6 total</b>		6 463 305,80	2 154 435,29	0,00	3 400 401,00	1 133 467,00	4 533 868,00

<b>TA</b>	664 892,06	0,00		688 643,00	0,00	688 643,00
<b>Total</b>	26 052 102,55	8 425 364,10	36 957,24	23 535 645,00	7 615 667,33	31 151 312,33

Table 7. Residual funds in Police (EUR)

SO	NO	Residual EU funds (C)- (A)	Residual national funds (D)- (B)	Total residual funds
<b>SO5 – Crime prevention and prosecution</b>	<b>NO1</b>	-1,498,767.53	-462,695.76	-1,961,463.29
	<b>NO2</b>	-911,557.70	-303,910.87	-1,215,468.57
	<b>NO3</b>	2,063,013.56	687,705.90	2,750,719.46
	<b>NO4</b>	447,104.22	149,204.33	596,308.55
	<b>NO5</b>	422,903.76	140,967.92	563,871.68
<b>SO5 total</b>			211,271.52	733,967.83
<b>SO6 – Threats and crisis</b>	<b>NO1</b>	-2,506,956.66	-835,652.23	-3,342,608.89
	<b>NO2</b>	25,857.44	8,619.14	34,476.59
	<b>NO3</b>	-581,805.59	-193,935.20	-775,740.79
<b>SO6 total</b>			-1,020 968.29,	-4,083,873.09
<b>TA</b>			0.00	23,750.94
<b>Total</b>			-809,696.76	-3,326,154.31

Table 8. Absorption rates in Police (%)

SO	NO	Absorption rate compared to NP (%)		
		EU funds	National funds	Total
<b>SO5 – Crime prevention and prosecution</b>	<b>NO1</b>	117.36	116.08	117.36
	<b>NO2</b>	117.16	117.17	117.16
	<b>NO3</b>	40.94	40.94	40.94
	<b>NO4</b>	52.31	52.26	52.30
	<b>NO5</b>	60.57	60.57	60.57
<b>SO5 total</b>			96.74	97.17
<b>SO6 – Threats and crisis</b>	<b>NO1</b>	231.91	231.91	231.91
	<b>NO2</b>	26.25	26.25	26.25
	<b>NO3</b>	139.72	139.72	139.72
<b>SO6 total</b>			190.07	190.07
<b>TA</b>			-	96.55



<b>Total</b>		110.63	110.68
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The financing needs arising from the overspending were covered by the national budget for all specific objectives.

## Evaluation findings by questions and sub-questions

### EFFECTIVENESS

#### FUNDED PROJECTS

The analysis of the projects in the progress reports database shows that **all projects meet the objectives of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 513/2014**. Based on the titles and characteristics of the projects in the database, it can be seen that they fit into the two key priorities of the Regulation, ISF-P (police and law enforcement cooperation, crime prevention and preventing and managing crisis situations) and ISF-BV (external border management and visa issues).

The data shows that projects often focus on improving IT systems to support the fight against cross-border crime, strengthening consular services and managing external borders more efficiently. IT developments also directly contribute to increasing the effectiveness of fighting against crime and improving interoperability, which are among the core objectives of ISF-P. Likewise, the projects for the secondment of consular officers, which are mainly aimed at efficient and customer-friendly visa administration, but also at strengthening the management of the external borders, are also targeting one of the priorities of ISF-BV.

The project characteristics and types of organisations show that projects are largely implemented by central governmental organisations, which ensures that they are aligned with national homeland security and border management priorities. Projects of a capital nature, such as hardware procurement and systems development, serve the infrastructure and capacity building objectives of the Regulation.

The data do not show any significant deviations or projects that are completely alien to the objectives of the Regulation.

#### PROJECT INDICATORS

Based on project-level indicators the assessment of the achievement of the objectives of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 can provide a clear picture of the extent to which projects have achieved real results in relation to the priorities set out in the Regulation. The following aspects can be examined in the analysis:

**At the indicator level, the data show that most of the projects have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the objectives, but with mixed results.** The analysis of the achievement rates shows in some cases that there is a significant gap between the achieved indicators and the pre-defined targets. The completion rates show that the projects achieved an average success rate of around 77% (452 out of 590 indicators were completed). This is a largely positive result, indicating that the majority of projects were successfully implemented. However, the 23% shortfall suggests that some projects did not fully achieve their objectives, which indicates problems during the implementation.

The performance of different groups of indicators varies in terms of results. **The indicators measured during the maintenance period often show exceptionally high performance rates**, but many of these are likely to be the result of data management issues or problems at the time of pre-defining target values, such as the extremely high (over 12,900%) variance in SO5. This may be due to inaccurate target setting or to unexpected factors during project implementation that significantly (in this case positively) affected the results. A more detailed examination of the individual indicators showed that high deviations are observed in the project "Improving the intelligence and analytical capacity of the Counter Terrorism Centre", where the reported value is much higher than the target for the number of data analysed (43,637 instead of 7,071) and the increase in the number of electronic sources checked (84,916 instead of 10,143). Background interviews with experts suggest that the technical reasons for the differences may be partly due to an increase in staff numbers, partly due to changes in analysis methods and partly due to a significantly larger than expected increase in the scope of data analysed.

The table below shows how many indicators were included in each project in each SO and how well they were met. We have examined how many of the indicators in each category (Total indicators) were able to achieve the target (Completed indicators). We have also analysed the average percentage difference between the target and the actual value for each indicator type, which is shown in the third column. The performance of the indicators for the implementation period also shows a heterogeneous picture. **The results show highly successful projects** that exceeded the targets, but also projects that fell significantly short of expectations. For example, in SO1 the average deviation for the indicators for the implementation period is -11.34%, while in SO2 the average deviation is even higher (-13.49%), suggesting that these projects did not fully meet their targets.

Table 9 Project indicator achievements, summary table

Indicator type	Total indicators (pieces)	Completed indicator (pieces)	Average deviation of indicators' value compared to target (%)
<b>SO1 - Common visa policy</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-11,34</b>
Implementation period indicator	21	12	-11,34
<b>SO2 - Limits</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>-2,90</b>
Implementation period indicator	65	52	-13,49
Indicator for the implementation period, met during the maintenance period	2	2	341,33
<b>SO3 - Operating grant</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5,71</b>
Implementation period indicator	7	7	5,71
<b>SO5 - Crime prevention and prosecution</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>1 509,87</b>
Maintenance period indicator	53	31	12 915,48
Implementation period indicator	393	306	2,71
Indicator for the implementation period, met during the maintenance period	8	3	-13,04
<b>SO6 - Threats and crisis</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,75</b>
Maintenance period indicator	1	0	-2,50
Implementation period indicator	36	36	4,70
<b>Total</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>1 161,28</b>

Data source: project indicator report database, status as of 17.09.2024

Overall, based on the project-level indicators, it can be stated that the objectives of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 have been largely achieved, especially in the areas of cross-

border crime prevention, police cooperation and the development of external border management. However, the differences in the implementation rates suggest that further improvements and more precise planning would be needed in certain areas in order to fully achieve the objectives.

Regarding the issue of sustainability, for the project level indicators, we can see that projects with a maintenance period are almost exclusively found in SO5. The indicators with a lower performance in the maintenance period are typically related to the number of international operations, criminal procedures and cooperations; thus, the current underperformance may be due not only to the management of the projects but also to changes in the external environment. Furthermore, it should be noted that some indicators have a further 2-3 years to be met, thereupon the backlog will certainly decrease, and there is also a chance of over-performance.

## THE SECTORAL ENVIRONMENT BASED ON THE EX-POST EVALUATION INDICATORS

Data on the ISF's operational environment (i.e. the situation in the Member States, in our case Hungary) show that fight against crime, crime prevention and border management activities have been dynamically changing in recent years. The number of searches in the Schengen Information System (SIS II) increased steadily between 2014 and 2018, before declining after 2018, in particular due to the restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for 2022 and 2023 showed a slight increase, but did not reach the 2018 level. Similar varied trends were observed for crime types. Drug-related crime has also steadily decreased, but the trend in drug seizures has been more varied. Cannabis seizures peaked in 2018 and then gradually declined, while heroin and cocaine seizures showed a significant up and down trend. LSD seizures showed a steady increase after 2018, peaking in 2022.

In terms of border management activities, the relevant database shows that the number of illegal border crossings peaked in 2015, followed by a significant decrease from 2016 onwards, and then a further increase in 2021 and 2022, but not reaching the 2015 level. The incidence of passport fraud remained relatively stable throughout the period. The Prüm framework data exchanges (DNA, vehicle registration and fingerprint matches) also showed significant changes in the context of administrative cooperation. The number of DNA matches showed a sharp increase in 2019 and 2022, while vehicle registration matches increased steadily until 2021. Fingerprint matches, on the other hand, showed a decrease by 2023.

The use of information sharing systems, such as SIENA and EIS, also showed a significant increase. In SIENA, the number of messages shared has increased year on year, peaking in 2023. The number of exchanges in the EIS peaked in 2022, but there was a significant decrease in 2023. This suggests that information sharing in the context of cooperation has increased, but at the end of the period there was a decrease in activity in some systems.

In summary, the areas covered by the ISF's activities have undergone significant changes in recent years. Activities in the areas of crime prevention, fight against crime, border management and information sharing have changed dynamically in response to external factors such as migration flows, the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the security situation.

## HOW DID THE FUND CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: SUPPORT A COMMON VISA POLICY TO FACILITATE LEGITIMATE TRAVEL; PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY OF SERVICE TO VISA APPLICANTS; ENSURE EQUAL TREATMENT OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS AND TACKLE ILLEGAL MIGRATION?

### ISF-BV indicators

The annual performance and evolution over time of the ISF-BV indicators is key to determine the results achieved by projects in the field of common visa policy and border management.

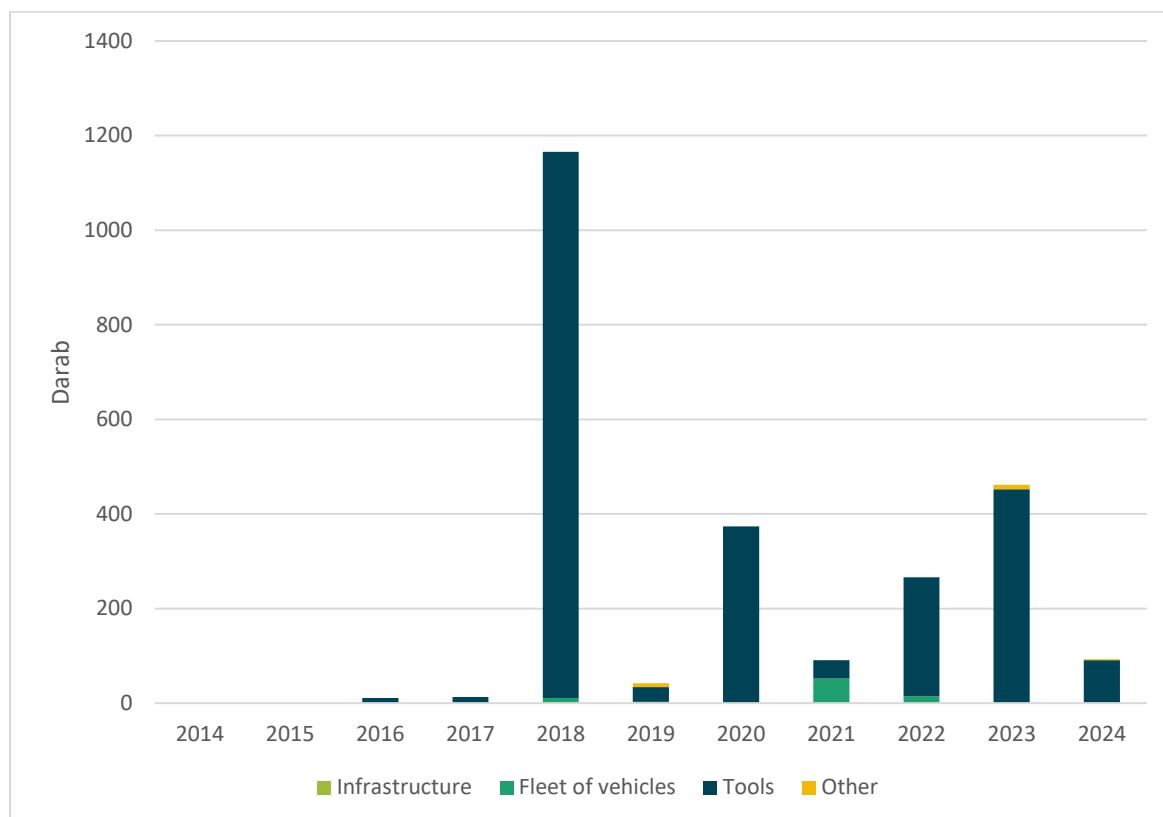
A first review of the data shows that several indicators, such as "*Number of visa applicants having to apply for visas at a location other than the one nearest to their place of residence*" or "*Number of consular cooperation activities developed*", typically show low or zero values. The lack of data, in particular comments such as "No reliable data available," leads to a lack of sufficient data for certain indicators to assess the effectiveness of the Fund's operational environment.

Based on the ISF-BV data, a detailed analysis of the performance of the indicators has been carried out, taking trends over time into account. The data can be grouped along three priorities: "Borders", "Efficiency, added value, and sustainability" and "Support a common visa policy".

**Indicators related to the border management priority in the ISF-BV in Hungary have shown significant progress.** In particular, infrastructure development projects have achieved outstanding results between 2016 and 2020: for example, the number of border control infrastructure and equipment showed a significant increase in 2018, when the figures rose several times higher than before. This period coincides with developments in the framework of EUROSUR, such as the start of the establishment of a

National Coordination Centre and technological improvements. Border control training and related staff competency development<sup>5</sup> could also improve border protection.

Figure 1 Development of border control infrastructure and equipment (pieces)



Source: ISF-BV\_HU database

The projects aimed at efficiency, added value and sustainability mainly focused on ensuring the long-term usability of the assets. **The data show that the maintenance costs and operating costs of the assets purchased for the projects have gradually increased after 2018, with the aim of improving the sustainability of the infrastructure.**

**Indicators for the visa priority in Hungary were relatively low, but there were improvements in some areas.** For example, common visa policy training and related staff competency development increased from 2016 onwards and peaked in 2020. However, the indicators as a whole have not improved significantly, which suggests that this priority has received less attention compared to other areas.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of indicators include "Number of staff trained in aspects related to the common visa policy with the help of the Fund" or "Number of staff trained in borders management related aspects with the help of the Fund".

## 1. What progress was made towards promoting the development and implementation of the common visa policy to facilitate legitimate travel, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim to promote, implement and enforce policies to ensure that persons, whatever their nationality, are free from controls when crossing internal borders and to ensure the control of persons and the effective monitoring of border crossings at external borders. Article 9 requires national programmes to support and expand existing national capacities in the area of visa policy and external border management and to support and expand measures related to the management of external borders in the area of free movement, taking into account in particular new technologies, developments and/or standards related to the management of migration flows.

The document analysis shows that in Hungary projects financed by the Fund have undertaken activities that support the implementation of the common visa policy. The project elements implemented were the following:

- IT development (VIS development),
- secondment of consular officers,
- training for staff working in diplomatic missions,
- uniform operation and control of visa procedures,
- secondment of experts (document and visa advisers) to diplomatic missions and consular posts,
- purchase of document testing laboratories.

Taken together, they are all **capable of helping to ensure that visa procedures are carried out in line with the common visa policy**, with improved quality and efficiency.

## 2. What progress was made towards ensuring better consular coverage and harmonised practices on visa issuance between Member States, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim to promote the development and implementation of a common visa policy and a uniform visa policy, including various forms of consular cooperation, in order to ensure better consular coverage and harmonisation of visa issuing practices. Accordingly, under Article 9, national programmes shall be responsible for supporting the management of migration flows by Member States' consular and other services in third countries, including the establishment of consular cooperation mechanisms, with a view to facilitating legal travel

to the Union and preventing illegal immigration into the Union, while respecting Union law or the law of the Member State concerned.

According to the results of the final reports, **the projects financed by the Fund have helped the consulates in several ways.**

The four project under BBA-1.2.1 calls for proposal provided the opportunity to organise training courses on issues such as document security, migration and Schengen visa issuance, which helped to improve the preparedness of consular staff. The harmonised visa issuing practices were further improved by auditing the visa processing practices of diplomatic missions and consular posts in Istanbul, Ankara, Tel Aviv, Almaty, Mumbai, Cairo, Algiers, Shanghai, Beijing, and others, as part of BBA-1.2.1/10-2019-00001 and as a whole of BBA-1.2.1/5-2018-00002.

The interview experience of the project BBA-1.2.1-2015-00001, Regional Training for Consular Officers, shows that although it was called training, the main activity could be described more as an internal communication programme, where consuls posted in third countries were given a thematic knowledge update on new legislative changes in the field of visas. The aim was to provide citizens served by consuls with a more up-to-date, professional and faster service. The conclusion of the interview was that the project was considered successful and had achieved its objectives: it is not possible to precisely quantify, but **qualitatively, it matters that the consuls are up to date with the legislative changes and case procedures** when serving clients. The consuls are also aware of day-to-day issues, general trends, all to the benefit of the visa applicant, resulting in the satisfaction of participants, and a higher number of cases taken care at the consulates. The results of the regional training have also been shared in forums and outreach events.

The work of the temporarily (during the summer peak or for other reasons) overloaded consulates was further supported by temporary secondments (three BBA-1.1.4 projects), thus helping to ensure a smooth and uniform approach to the processing of Schengen visa applications and, through this, to facilitate legitimate travel and timely access to visas for bona fide applicants.

### **3. What progress was made towards ensuring the application of the Union's acquis on visas and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?**

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim to ensure the correct and uniform application of the EU acquis in the area of border management and visa policy, including the effective functioning of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism. According to Article 9, the national programmes are to ensure the correct and uniform application of the EU acquis in the area of



border management and visa policy, responding to weaknesses identified at EU level from the results presented in the framework of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism.

The final reports of the projects have shown that the Fund has helped to implement the following Union's acquis:

- By improving the domestic side of the Visa Information System (VIS), the project BBA-1.1.2/5-2018-00001 has contributed to a more efficient flow of data, resulting in increased transparency of visa applications.
- The secondments organised under the BBA-1.1.4 projects have helped to ensure that Schengen visa applications are processed in a professional and timely manner.
- As a result of the BBA-1.2.1 training, the theoretical and practical knowledge of consular staff on secondment and in training on Schengen visa issuance, EU and national legislation has been further improved.

In addition, the results of the data analysis showed that the Fund contributed to ensuring the application of the EU visa acquis by supporting the development of IT systems supporting visa policy, in particular the modernisation of VIS, and the training of consular officers.

#### **4. What progress was made towards Member States' contribution to strengthening the cooperation between Member States operating in third countries as regards the flows of third-country national into the territory of Member States, including prevention and tackling of illegal immigration, as well as the cooperation with third countries, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?**

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the purpose of the interventions is to reinforce Member States' measures contributing to the enhancement of cooperation between Member States in third countries in relation to the flow of third-country nationals into the territory of the Member States, including the prevention and management of illegal immigration, and to strengthen cooperation with third countries in this regard, in full accordance with the objectives and principles of the Union's external action and humanitarian policy.

**Cooperation between Member States has been facilitated** by the temporary secondment of consular officers for 30 to 40 days in the framework of projects financed by the Fund (three BBA-1.1.4 projects), in order to ensure continuity in the processing of Schengen visa applications, thus helping to ensure timely and professional decisions. The deployments took place mainly at consulates where Hungarian diplomatic missions had representation contracts with other Member States, but as the deployments were based on consular/mission needs (during peak summer periods or at for other reasons temporarily

overloaded consulates), in **several cases the locations changed during the programme period**; and then the consulates were closed due to the COVID pandemic.

In addition, the five BBA-1.3.2 projects financed the secondment of document experts to the consulates to check the authenticity of security documents submitted for visa applications and – as these projects were financed in a shared manner, partially by national funding – also for classic consular cases. This allowed the detection of document fraud, identity theft and identity swaps right at the diplomatic mission, thus reducing the number of illegal entrants to Hungary and the cooperating Member States.

For example, the project BBA-1.3.2/10-2019-00002, titled Supporting Consular Cooperation through Visa Counsellor Primary Screening III, aimed to send specialists to stations where there were problems with visa applications. The interview related to the project BBA-1.3.2-2015-00001, Liaison Officer Deployment, which supported consular work, drew attention to the fact that the police have a long history of deploying document liaison officers with EU funding and have the necessary specialised expertise in this area. **The protection of the Schengen external borders is of high importance for the police** and are therefore trying to stop already in the issuing countries the use of false documents in visa procedures, which is why experts have been sent to third countries to help the consular work, so that forgers do not even enter Hungary with false documents. The effectiveness of the project is demonstrated not only by the indicators but also by the semi-annual reports to which all bodies and institutions that could be affected in some ways are invited. The feedback suggests that **there is a need to expand the range of target countries**; one of the constraints is finding colleagues with the right expertise and language skills.

Furthermore, the development of IT systems for cross-border cooperation, such as EUROSUR, has increased Member States' situational awareness and response capacity. These measures have facilitated coordination with third countries and joint action at EU level to tackle illegal immigration.

##### **5. What progress was made towards supporting the common visa policy by setting up and running IT systems, their communication infrastructure and equipment, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?**

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim at establishing and operating IT systems, their communication infrastructures and tools supporting the common visa policy, border traffic control and surveillance at the external borders, in full respect of the legislation on the protection of personal data; and developing EUROSUR in accordance with EU law and guidelines. Under Article 9, the national programmes shall be responsible for strengthening integrated border management by

testing and introducing new tools, interoperable systems and working methods aimed at enhancing the exchange of information within Member States or improving inter-agency cooperation.

Examining the final evaluations, it can be concluded that the hardware tools for the Visa Information System (VIS) and VISMail national side services have been developed with the help of the Fund's funding under BBA-1.1.2/5-2018-00001. As a result of the 4 servers and software upgrades purchased, a new, more reliable hardware and software environment for VIS can be operated, which will **increase the efficiency of visa data exchange and data access provided by N.VIS at consulates, border crossing points and the central national visa authority.**

6. How did the operating support provided for in Article 10 of the Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 contribute to the achievement of the specific objective on common visa policy?

As no operating grants have been used under the Fund to achieve specific objectives in the field of visa policy in this funding period, this question cannot be answered.

HOW DID THE FUND CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: SUPPORTING INTEGRATED BORDER MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING PROMOTING FURTHER HARMONISATION OF BORDER MANAGEMENT-RELATED MEASURES IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMMON UNION STANDARDS AND THROUGH THE SHARING OF INFORMATION BETWEEN MEMBER STATES AND BETWEEN MEMBER STATES AND THE EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF OPERATIONAL COOPERATION AT THE EXTERNAL BORDERS OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION? ENSURING, ON ONE HAND, A UNIFORM AND HIGH LEVEL OF CONTROL AND PROTECTION OF THE EXTERNAL BORDERS, INCLUDING BY THE TACKLING OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SMOOTH CROSSING OF THE EXTERNAL BORDERS IN CONFORMITY WITH THE SCHENGEN ACQUIS, WHILE GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION FOR THOSE NEEDING IT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE OBLIGATIONS CONTRACTED BY THE MEMBER STATES IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE PRINCIPLE OF NON-REFOULEMENT?

1. What progress was made towards promoting the development, implementation and enforcement of policies with a view to ensure the absence of any controls on persons when crossing the internal borders, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

The projects supported by the Fund were mainly targeted at external borders; there were no projects focusing on internal borders (such an objective is not included in Regulation (EU) No 515/2014). However, **projects aimed at reinforcing external borders and improving IT systems** can be considered **as able to ensure the conditions for the absence of internal border controls, if they meet their objectives**. From this point of view, improving interoperability and strengthening the flow of information have also contributed to the free movement among internal borders.

## 2. What progress was made towards carrying out checks on persons and monitoring efficiently the crossing of external borders, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim to strengthen cooperation between external border controls and border surveillance systems and between Member States' border surveillance, customs, migration, asylum and law enforcement services at external borders, including maritime borders. According to Article 9, national programmes are to develop projects aimed at ensuring uniform and high-quality external border controls in accordance with common EU standards and at enhancing interoperability between Member States' border management systems.

The effective control of the external borders was supported by two BBA-2.6.1 projects: the construction of the road border crossing point between Kübekháza in Hungary and Rábé in Serbia and the improvement of the permeability of the Röszke motorway border crossing point and the Tompa road border crossing point. Due to various difficulties encountered during the preparatory works, the development of border crossing points at Röszke and Tompa only reached the end of the design phase during the project period.

Effective checks on crossings have been facilitated by IT developments that have helped to ensure the reliable operation of large-scale EU IT systems (SIS II, EES) and the renewal of their peripherals (document and fingerprint readers, facial recognition towers).

**The protection of the external borders was supported by vehicle acquisitions:** in this context, the four BBA-2.6.5 projects supported various vehicle acquisitions and upgrades: 66 heavy off-road vehicles, 4 Schengen buses<sup>6</sup>, 14 vehicles for undercover operations against human smugglers.

## 3. What progress was made towards establishing gradually an integrated management system for external borders, based on solidarity and responsibility, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

Based on Article 9 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, this aspect is reflected in the national programmes as the strengthening of integrated border management by testing and introducing new tools, interoperable systems and working methods aimed at enhancing the exchange of information within the Member State or improving inter-agency cooperation.

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<sup>6</sup> The Schengen buses will enable the Police to fully carry out their border control tasks even at border crossing points without an infrastructure.

In this programming period, the existence of the Fund and the existence of the resources available for mobilisation has been the manifestation of the solidarity mechanism at European level (as was the case with the External Borders Fund in the previous period of 2007-2014).

Several elements of integrated border management have been strengthened as a result of projects implemented during the programming period:

- Border surveillance between the crossing points has been strengthened by the purchase of off-road vehicles and the upgrading of mobile and installed thermal imaging systems, which also allow the use of state-of-the-art technologies in border surveillance.
- The efficient management of border traffic has been facilitated by the development of road border crossing points, the upgrading of national systems for pan-European IT systems (EES, SIS II) and the modernisation of related peripherals.
- Risk analysis capacities have been strengthened through the establishment and implementation of national systems for EUROSUR and the Common Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM).
- Cooperation with third countries includes a liaison officer on the Western Balkan migration route (BBA-2.5.1/22-2022-00001).

However, not all elements of the integrated border management model were supported by the Fund: implementation of the fourth of the 4-tier model of border control, in-depth checks, was not supported.

#### 4. What progress was made towards ensuring the application of the Union's acquis on border management, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

On the basis of Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim to ensure the effective and uniform application of the Union's acquis in the area of border management and visa policy, including the effective functioning of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism. This is reflected in the national programmes under Article 9 as ensuring the correct and uniform application of the Union's acquis in the area of border management and visa policy, responding to the weaknesses identified at EU level from the results presented in the framework of the Schengen evaluation and monitoring mechanism.

Based on the final reports of the project, the application of the Union's acquis was facilitated by the four **training courses developed and delivered** under the BBA-2.4.2 project (including document literacy, vehicle identification methods, etc.), and by the **workshops, conferences**, study visits to learn about border management practices in other countries. Similarly, the international exchange of experience was facilitated by the liaison officer posted to Northern Macedonia under BBA-2.5.1/22-2022-00001.

The Fund has supported the **practical application of** the Union's acquis on border management by financing projects aimed at introducing procedures and systems that meet border management standards.

## 5. What progress was made towards contributing to reinforcing situational awareness at the external borders and the reaction capabilities of Member States, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the aim of the interventions is to improve the situational awareness at the external borders and to strengthen the capacity of Member States to respond (the article on national programmes does not contain a clear related objective).

The project BBA-2.1.2/16-2020-00001 has created the hardware and software background for the development of the EUROSUR system. The context is that in the second half of the 2000s there was an EU directive to move towards more efficient data collection and information flows in all Member States. The migration crisis of the 2010s has put more emphasis on this; Hungary has had an EU data processing centre (the so-called National Coordination Centre – NCC) since 2010, which has been further developed in the project. **The domestic system is operational**, but as the system for receiving data from FRONTEX has not yet been set up, the connection could not be fully tested. Nevertheless, the Hungarian national site is operational and able to perform analyses.

The next phase of the implementation of the Common Risk Analysis Model (CIRAM 2.0) in Hungary was carried out under the BBA-2.2.3/2-16-2016-00001 project: workshops, international study visits, compilation of a manual helped to exchange experiences and to improve the understanding of the systems.

The project BBA-2.4.2-2015-00001, Border Police Training System, was based on a previous (External Borders Fund) project, in which the building of the Border Police Training Base itself was built – and this was filled with content by the referred ISF project, which also filled the gap in border police training. It is also significant in that nowhere else in Hungary is there a training institution that teaches only and exclusively border police officers or further training courses on border police-related subjects. **In the 2010s there have been major changes** in the field of irregular migration, which **has increased the need for up-to-date training**. The interview shows that the project has been successful not only in meeting the indicators undertaken, but also in achieving the broader objective of increasing the knowledge of the enforcement staff.

**6. What progress was made towards setting up and running IT systems, their communication infrastructure and equipment that support border checks and border surveillance at the external borders, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?**

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 515/2014, the interventions aim at establishing and operating IT systems, their communication infrastructures and tools supporting the common visa policy, border traffic control and surveillance at the external borders, in full respect of the legislation on the protection of personal data (the article on national programmes does not contain a clear related objective).

The Fund has helped to **develop several comprehensive systems** during the programming period. In addition to the development of the EUROSUR system implemented in project BBA-2.1.2/16-2020-00001, the three BBA-2.6.21 projects and projects BBA-2.6.3/15-2020-00001 and BBA-2.6.22/4-2016-00001 have implemented the acquisition of hardware and software (licences) for the development of the Schengen Information System (SIS II).

Hardware and software related to the European Entry and Exit System (EES) (wireless fingerprint scanner, document scanner, image capture tower and hardware for their integration into the network) were also purchased under the BBA-2.6.3 projects.

**7. What progress was made towards supporting services to Member States in duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action at the external borders, and how did the Emergency Assistance contribute to achieving this progress? What type of emergency actions was implemented? How did the emergency actions implemented under the Fund contribute to addressing the urgent needs of the Member State? What were the main results of the emergency actions?**

Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 does not contain any objectives that can be matched to these issues, so the projects that have been implemented can be defined as contributing to this objective in a broader sense.

The project BBA-2.1.2/16-2020-00001 has provided the hardware and software background for the development of the EUROSUR system. This has helped to improve the efficiency and accuracy of the data provision to the European Union for the Schengen external borders situation mapping. The new system allows for the automatic analysis of a larger amount of data, which will enable more advanced management.



**The rapid response was also supported by** vehicle procurements, in particular in the BBA-2.6.5-2015-00003 project, which aimed to provide the Rapid Response and Special Police Service with vehicles to enable longer-term undetected surveillance and tracking of suspected human smugglers. To this end, 14 high-performance vehicles were purchased.

#### **8. How did the operating support provided for in Article 10 of the Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 contribute to the achievement of the specific objective on border management?**

The operating support was used to achieve two objectives related to SO2: on the one hand, the purchase of handheld thermal imaging cameras and the replacement of the sensor block of the stable thermal imaging camera system installed near the Ukrainian and Serbian borders, in the three BBA-3.2.1 projects. A total of 21 systems were upgraded in two phases. On the other hand, the two BBA-3.2.2 projects replaced the network elements of the Schengen Information System to further ensure their reliable operation.

**HOW DID THE FUND CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES: PREVENTION OF CROSS-BORDER, SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME, INCLUDING TERRORISM? REINFORCEMENT OF THE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES AND OTHER NATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING WITH EUROPOL OR OTHER RELEVANT UNION BODIES, AND WITH RELEVANT THIRD COUNTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS?**

#### **ISF-P indicators**

According to the ISF-P indicators<sup>7</sup>, Hungary has made significant progress in the field of fight against crime and crime prevention in recent years. According to the output indicators, the number of projects and financial support peaked between 2017 and 2020. The most active area in terms of indicator values was the fight against trafficking in human beings, especially in 2018 and 2020; while in other areas, no

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<sup>7</sup> The source of the data discussed in this chapter is the ISF-P\_HU database.

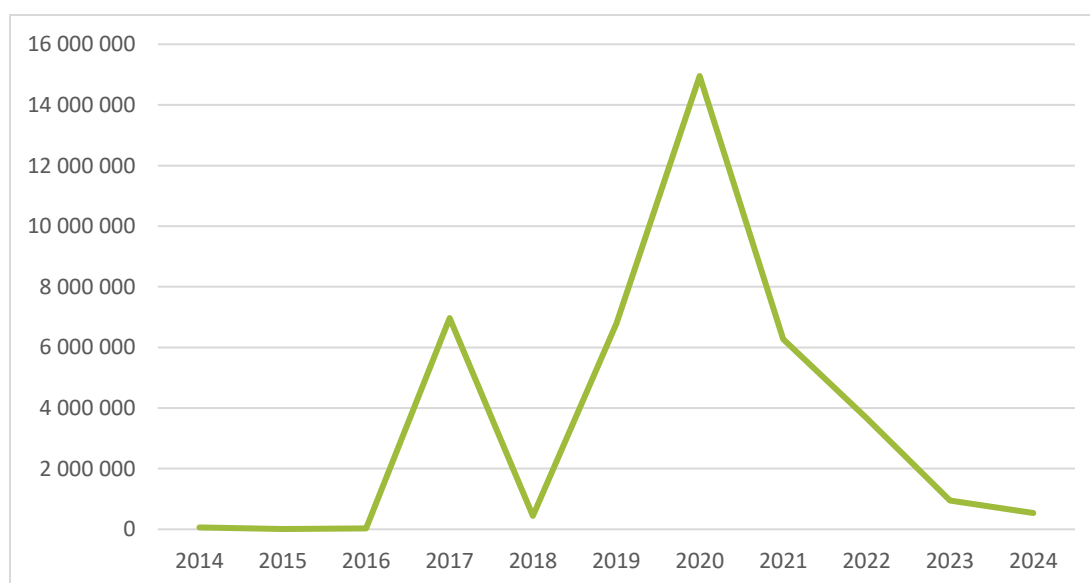
direct output results were generated based on the database. Furthermore, two projects were implemented supporting information exchange.

However, the indicators linked to the programme allow us to make further claims about the results. The number of training courses supported by the Fund has gradually increased, in particular in the area of the fight against organised crime, corruption and drug trafficking, reaching a peak in 2021 (13,123 participants). However, in the following years, the number of participants in training courses started to decrease. The value and volume of criminal assets seized has shown a steady increase, in particular in the seizure of cash and other assets, reaching their highest levels in 2020 and 2021.

The development and upgrading of tools for critical infrastructure protection was particularly active in 2023, when 247 new tools were introduced; and 173 so far in 2024. However, the number of workshops and conferences related to analysis and decision making remained low throughout the period; but the main focus for SO6 indicators was on prevention.

**The data show mixed trends in the results of action against organised crime, which may be due to changes in the environment, legislation and measurement, as well as to the specificities of the field over time.** Seizures of counterfeit goods started to increase from 2019, reaching the value of €414,000 in 2024. Seizures of smuggled goods reached an exceptionally high value in 2021 (€2.34 million), while in the previous years and in 2022 this value reached zero. It started to increase in 2023 (€58.5 thousand), which increased significantly to more than €582 thousand in 2024. Cash seizures started as early as 2015 and have shown significant fluctuations over the years. The peak was reached in 2020, with a value of €14.95 million, but it was also exceptionally high for a few more years, as shown in the table below.

Figure 2 Value of cash confiscated per year (EUR)



Source: ISF-P\_HU database<sup>8</sup>

The seizure of other assets was significant between 2019 and 2021, before which it was relatively low.

The number of people arrested increased from 2018, peaking in 2021 (231), but has since been on a downward trend, falling to 103 in 2023, but the figures so far for 2024 predict a significant increase.

**Drug seizures have also** been effective: cannabis has dominated and surged to nearly 1,700 kg in 2017 and then hovered around an average of nearly 400 kg per year until 2024. Seizures of amphetamine and methamphetamine were high in 2015 and 2024 (113 and 97.9 kg respectively), while seizures of ecstasy tablets peaked in 2022 (26,514 pieces). Seizures of new psychoactive substances showed a moderate upward trend, with a significant spike in 2022, while LSD seizures remained at negligible levels, with a minimum amount seized in 2023 alone.

**Training on** actions against trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children **increased until 2018, but there is a decrease thereafter**, which may indicate a lack of resources, reallocation or a shift to other priorities.

ISF-P has made significant progress in the area of sustainability and efficiency. The sustainability of EU-funded assets is demonstrated by the fact that, **as of 2018, all assets purchased have remained in use two years after purchase**. The absorption rate of EU funds peaked in 2017, when it reached 25%, but fluctuations in subsequent years may indicate intermittent problems in the use of funds. With regard to the acquisition of equipment, the data clearly show that the main focus was on the acquisition of equipment for SO6, while for SO5 it was on training.

All of these results suggest that the Fund's most significant contribution has been in the areas of asset recovery, fight against trafficking in human beings, and cybercrime, but the larger number and scale of available indicators suggest that SO5 has been given higher priority and has achieved more balanced and higher results over time.

1. What progress was made towards the achievement of the expected results of strengthening Member States' capacity to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism and to reinforce their mutual cooperation in this field, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, the interventions aim to promote and develop measures to strengthen Member States' capacity to prevent and combat serious and organised cross-border crime, in particular through public-private partnerships, exchange of information and best

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<sup>8</sup> Code and name of the indicator used: so5r3v2 2. seizures of cash (by value)

practices, access to data, interoperable technologies, comparable statistics, applied criminology, public communication and awareness raising.

The BBA-5.1.2, BBA-5.1.3, BBA-5.1.4 and BBA-5.1.5 projects have provided equipment to **help law enforcement agencies to prevent and tackle organised crime**. These included, among others:

- equipping laboratories for the analysis of substances and purchasing hand-held tools for the identification of drugs.
- purchase of surveillance equipment (camera systems, audio recording systems).
- upgrading the law enforcement vehicle fleet with specialised, modified operational vehicles.
- purchase of data analysis systems.
- IT tools, both handheld and network.

Among these, in the BBA-5.1.2/10-2019-00001 project titled Budapest Metropolitan Police Criminal IT Capacity Development, an analytical system and related tools has been procured, which try to provide assistance to the investigative work in the changing methods of criminal investigation in recent years. It was pointed out during the interview that this **system is still in continuous use and has achieved significant results** and is therefore considered a very successful project. The system is being used exclusively for the tasks defined by the ISF during the maintenance period, but there is a demand within the organisation to extend its scope of use.

In addition to the purchase of capacity building equipment, several **awareness-raising and crime prevention campaigns** were organised:

- a campaign on the risks of trafficking in human beings among the general public (BBA-5.1.6/10-2019-00001),
- a campaign targeting young people aged 12-24 on the dangers of using the internet (BBA-5.1.6/2-2017-00003),
- a complex crime prevention programme to prevent radicalisation in prisons (BBA-5.1.6-16-2016-00001).

Among the projects funded by the Fund, BBA-5.1.1/6-2018-00001 supported cooperation and exchange of best practices with Austrian partner organisations in the form of an eight-session joint law enforcement operational action against trafficking in human beings.

## 2. What progress was made towards developing administrative and operational coordination and cooperation among Member States' public authorities, Europol or other relevant Union bodies and, where appropriate, with third Countries and

## international organisations, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, the purpose of the interventions is to promote and develop administrative and operational coordination, cooperation, mutual understanding and exchange of information between law enforcement authorities of the Member States, other national authorities, Europol or other relevant EU bodies and, where appropriate, third countries and international organisations.

The 24 BBA-5.2.1 projects financed by the Fund **have helped to improve coordination and cooperation** through visits, study tours and the deployment of short-term experts and liaison officers in various areas. The main target of the missions organised was the relevant Europol organisation, but liaison officers were also seconded to Turkey and the United Kingdom.

A further result of the previously mentioned BBA-5.1.2/10-2019-00001 project, Budapest Metropolitan Police Criminal IT Capacity Development, was that the Budapest Police **has developed close cooperation with Europol, and can also be technically integrated into the activities of Europol through the system**: the scoreboards produced by the attained IT analyst system can be sent to the European partner authorities, which use the same system.

Conferences, study tours and research activities organised by the project BBA-5.4.2-16-2016-00001 have been used to exchange Swiss–Hungarian experiences on practical issues related to the identification, protection and support of victims of human trafficking. As a result, a victim referral mechanism specialised for the two countries was developed.

Cooperation between Member States' authorities and Europol has been strengthened with the support of the Fund, in particular through the exchange of information and occasional joint operations (e.g. under BBA-5.1.1/6-2018-00001 mentioned above), which have facilitated administrative and operational coordination.

### 3. What progress was made towards developing training schemes, such as those regarding technical and professional skills and knowledge of obligations on human rights and fundamental freedoms, in implementation of EU training policies, including through specific Union law enforcement exchange programmes, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, the interventions aim to promote and develop training systems, including technical and professional competences and knowledge of obligations

relating to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in the implementation of European training policies, including through EU law enforcement exchange programmes, in order to develop a genuine European judicial and law enforcement culture.

With the support of the Fund, training courses and the development of training materials and examination systems (e.g. accredited monolingual police examination system in English – BBA-5.3.3/2-16-2016-00001) were carried out in the BBA-5.3.2-16-2016-00002 project and the 22 other BBA-5.3.3 projects. The staff of the different bodies **have been trained in a wide range of different types of training**, which, without being exhaustive, covered the following areas:

- the intelligence, data analysis and evidence gathering methods of cybercrime units,
- methods of combating the terrorism financing,
- environmental crime,
- drug crime analysis and evaluation, actions against trafficking in human beings,
- specific communication training for staff responsible for the implementation of operations,
- the use of covert intelligence gathering tools by law enforcement agencies,
- theoretical and practical aspects of corruption prevention,
- high-speed driving training.

Some training courses (e.g. interrogation and investigation tactics) also included an extension of knowledge of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In a number of cases, the training also included the provision of a training environment (a computer classroom) and the purchase of basic equipment for the training.

Among the training projects, the implementers of the BBA-5.3.3/10-2019-00002, Professional Training project were interviewed, and it was mentioned that the main objective was to institutionalise training in criminal analysis and evaluation within the EU framework, and the project aimed to develop the professional basis for data collection and evaluation-analysis for criminal justice purposes. It also aimed to provide networking opportunities for professionals working in the field, who in many cases are not exclusively law enforcement personnel but also civilians. A previous project had identified that there was no uniform curriculum to train the criminal analysts – so another project was set up to compile a curriculum on which to base the training. The professional objectives set for the project had been achieved, according to the interview, and the success of this project **had also raised awareness** in management **of the potential of ISF projects**.

4. What progress was made towards putting in place measures, safeguard mechanisms and best practices for the identification and support of witnesses and victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, the interventions aim to promote and develop measures, protection, mechanisms and best practices to identify, protect and support witnesses and victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, at an early stage, with a particular focus on the protection and support of minors, in particular unaccompanied or otherwise dependent witnesses and victims.

The implementers have conducted a media campaign among the general public on the dangers of trafficking in human beings in the framework of project BBA-5.1.6/10-2019-00001; and project BBA-5.4.4-16-2016-00001 has organised similar awareness raising and prevention campaigns **online and offline** on the phenomenon of exploitation and prevention of victimisation. The two BBA-5.3.4 projects organised professional workshops, produced publications and training to identify victims of trafficking in human beings. The previously mentioned BBA-5.4.2-16-2016-00001 project involved Swiss-Hungarian exchanges of experience on the identification and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings.

The project BBA-5.1.6/10-2019-00001, Don't let it, don't do it!, was implemented by the IOM (International Organization for Migration), which has a strong experience in the field of prevention of trafficking in human beings. It was another nationwide campaign aimed at directly reaching vulnerable groups, especially minors. Classic direct outreach technics were used, in the form of school visits and other personal outreach programmes – as well as by the involvement of psychology professionals (Trauma Centre Nonprofit Ltd. participated in the project as a consortium partner). The feedback from the implementers on the effectiveness of the project was very positive: there was a significant increase in the number of calls to the victim helpline number, and the number of interventions, cases and placements in crisis care and shelters. It must be stressed that **the purely psychological approach to trafficking is of pioneering importance and is not typical in the international literature**; this is why the publication produced at the beginning of the project is of particular importance and could have a longer-term impact on the field and the professional community.

The two BBA-5.4.5 projects used the funds received from ISF to, on the one hand, facilitate the return of **identified foreign victims of trafficking in human beings** to their home country and provide them **victim support**, and, on the other hand, to assist the return and integration of Hungarian victims identified abroad to Hungary.

The project BBA-5.4.5/10-2019-00001, Complex Victim Support Services for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings, has been very successful in helping victims of human trafficking to return home and reintegrate, according to the implementers. The project was jointly implemented by the Ministry of Justice and the Baptist Aid Foundation, and the professional work was carried out in close cooperation. According to them, they were able to provide a number of opportunities to the victims of trafficking with whom they came into contact: training courses, driving licences, medical and dental care, opportunities to participate in cultural programmes, housing. The professional work also resulted in two

studies that are still used today, for example, in police training – their aim was to give a comprehensive picture of victim management in Hungary, what human trafficking is, what the legal provisions are, where the gaps are, what services victims can access.

## HOW DID THE FUND CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVE THE CAPACITY OF MEMBER STATES TO MANAGE EFFECTIVELY SECURITY-RELATED RISKS AND CRISES, AND PROTECTING PEOPLE AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AGAINST TERRORIST ATTACKS AND OTHER SECURITY-RELATED INCIDENTS?

1. What progress was made towards reinforcing Member States' administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity, including through public-private partnerships and improved coordination, cooperation, exchange and dissemination of know-how and experience within the Union and with relevant third Countries, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, the interventions aim to implement measures to strengthen the administrative and operational capacity of Member States to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity, including through public-private partnerships and enhanced coordination, cooperation, exchange and dissemination of know-how and experience within the EU and with relevant third countries.

The five BBA-6.1.1 projects **implemented cybersecurity enhancements**, have used current national and international examples, as well as freely and commercially available technologies and information channels, to better protect critical infrastructures. The aim was to establish and build capabilities at the National Cyber Security Centre to conduct information gathering procedures using a wide variety of sources to identify potential cyber threats that could compromise the security of critical systems (cyber threat intelligence, CTI),

This was confirmed by an interview with the implementers of the project BBA-6.1.1/10-2019-00002, Development of cyber security services platform and ISF-based GovProbe system. One of the tasks of the National Cyber Security Centre is to examine the cyber security of critical infrastructures. This involved more than 200 critical infrastructures for which assistance was provided through several projects. The National Cyber Security Centre developed a customised system that could be tailored



mimic to the systems of these infrastructures. The other main project element was a centralised infrastructure on which these services could be virtualised – they were able to successfully demonstrate to the Responsible Authority that the system would not work without a proper backend infrastructure. Since the implementation of the project, a specialised public authority system has also been set up, which is the service platform of the Information Security Authority (which controls IT security in Hungary), which is also hosted on this infrastructure. **The service is cloud-based and yet has achieved the goal of eliminating the need to buy infrastructure if the Beneficiary wants to further develop this analytical system, they need only to expand on the cloud service.**

The project BBA-6.1.2-2015-00001 **involved the procurement of specialised** chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) **protective clothing, respiratory protection, detecting equipment** and the equipping of an operational vehicle for the counter-terrorism agency. The two BBA-6.3.1 projects **helped to improve** CBRN training **capacity** by establishing and developing the Central European CBRN-E Training Centre as a training environment. In addition, two BBA-6.3.2 projects also implemented CBRN-E trainings supported by the exchange of experiences in the international sector-specific forums organised in project BBA-6.2.1/2-16-2016-00001.

## 2. What progress was made towards establishing secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors at Union and national level, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

Based on Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014, the interventions aim at secure links and effective coordination between sector-specific early warning systems and crisis cooperation actors at EU and national level, including through crisis centres, in order to enable a comprehensive and accurate overview of crisis situations to be carried out quickly, coordinate response actions and share open, insider and classified information.

In the BBA-6.2.1/2-16-2016-00001 project, experiences on CBRN training have been exchanged during the programming period through **the organisation of international sector-specific forums**. The Central European CBRN-E Training Centre, established with the support of the BBA-6.3.1 project, also provides an opportunity for regional experts in the field to meet and share knowledge. This is based on the EU's need to establish training centres that has an international, EU-wide coverage and are used by more than one Member State, or where participants come from more than one Member State. In addition, there has been an increasing trend of attacks with civilian equipment and materials (e.g. clubs, cutting tools, vehicle ramming attacks, attacks with commercially available chemical and toxic materials)

in several countries, which has led to the need to create a training centre where a common level of knowledge can be achieved by the founding countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bavaria, Slovakia, Slovenia and Slovakia; two associated countries – France and the Netherlands –; five international organisations). One of the aims of the joint training centre is that, when a cross-border task arises, it is easier to work together, if the participating actors are aware that everyone has a similar level of training, similar equipment, yet they can act together. The success of the project is indicated by the fact that they are operating with increasing numbers of participants and will exceed the training indicators (400 participants) committed for the maintenance period.

### 3. What progress was made towards improving the administrative and operational capacity of the Member States and the Union to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?

According to Article 3 of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 interventions shall aim to implement measures to strengthen the administrative and operational capacity of Member States and the Union to develop comprehensive, evidence-based threat and risk assessments, in line with the priorities and initiatives identified at EU level, in particular those supported by the European Parliament and the Council, in order to enable the Union to develop integrated approaches to crisis situations based on common and shared assessments and to promote mutual understanding between Member States and partner countries of the different definitions of threat levels.

A step forward in the field of development of risk analysis capacity has been taken in the form of two projects. The project BBA-5.5.1/2-16-2016-00001 developed a model and an analyst system for assessing and managing corruption in law enforcement. The procurement of data mining and analytical software was preceded by a two-day workshop to define risk analysis specifications based on available technologies and institutional practices. The objective of the project BBA-5.5.1-2016-00002 was to strengthen capabilities to better detect terrorist and violent extremist content on the Internet and to adopt the EU risk analysis methodology in the field of aviation security **by developing risk analysis and assessment capacities** (software and hardware, international exchange of experience). Based on expert input, the projects have contributed to the professional effectiveness of the programme, especially for the post-2020 calls for applications: the improved risk analysis capacity has helped to better plan projects of preventive and reactive interventions, trainings and exchanges of experience; and potentially also provided an indication of victim needs.

## EFFICIENCY

### 1. Were the results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost?

- a. To what extent were the expected results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost in terms of deployed financial and human resources? What measures were put in place to prevent, detect, report and follow up on cases of fraud and other irregularities, and how did they perform?

Efficiency is measured by comparing the costs of the fund with its results. This is done by comparing the costs of each project with the results assigned to it. We hypothesise that efficiency can exist when the available data indicate that the costs per unit of indicator do not differ significantly.

As such, the analysis aimed to determine the extent to which the unit costs per indicator in each category deviated from the average cost-effectiveness. The efficiency was assessed using the cost per unit indicator, calculated as the ratio of costs to results achieved. This means that a lower cost/unit ratio indicates a higher efficiency, while a higher value reflects a lower efficiency. The hypothesis of the analysis is that efficiency is achieved if costs within a given category do not deviate significantly from the average.

A 99% confidence interval was used for the statistical analysis. A confidence interval is a statistical tool that shows the range (from X to Y) within which a given parameter, such as a mean or a ratio, falls at a given confidence level. In efficiency analysis, the confidence interval is used to test whether the costs for the same indicator differ significantly between projects. If the confidence intervals of the costs for the same indicator do not overlap with the average cost-effectiveness, the differences are considered significant. Conversely, if the confidence intervals associated with the costs for each project overlap with the average value, then the differences are not significant. The aim of the analysis is to determine the direction in which the costs for the same indicator deviate from the average cost-effectiveness.

Each observation was classified into three categories: a negative direction of significant deviation (the cost/unit ratio is significantly below the average, so the result reflects better efficiency), a non-significant deviation (the value is around the average and efficiency is not different from what would be expected) and a positive direction of significant deviation (the cost/unit ratio is significantly above the average, so the result reflects lower efficiency). In each case, the comparison is made within the own indicator to avoid bias caused by differences in financing and achievement between different types of interventions.

During data preparation, we calculated the results obtained from the difference between the reported and baseline values. The calculation was performed for indicators that covered at least 3 projects and for which there were reported achievements. The cost-effectiveness of achieving a unit indicator was determined by dividing the cost by the results achieved. We excluded from the analysis categories that

contained fewer than three observations. We then calculated the average value and the standard deviation of the cost/unit indicator for each category and compared each value with its deviation from the average value. The classification of the deviations was based on the 99% confidence interval, which allowed for an accurate identification of outliers.

The results of the analysis show that out of the 369 values analysed, 260 showed a negative significant difference, representing 70.5% of the total observation, indicating **that these projects used resources more efficiently than the category average, achieving the indicator results at a lower cost**. There were 86 cases of positive significant deviations, corresponding to 23.3% of cases, suggesting that these projects were less efficient than the average, as they achieved the same or lower results at higher costs. The number of non-significant discrepancies was only 23 (6.2%), indicating that the vast majority of values were significant discrepancies under strict statistical criteria.

Table 10 Cost of achieving indicator values, relative to the category average

Indicator	Higher efficiency	Average efficiency	Lower efficiency	Total
Number of national requests (to perform operations)	7		1	8
Number of vehicles purchased	14	1	4	19
Number of technical equipment purchased	18	1	10	29
Number of assets purchased or upgraded	5		3	8
Number of border control device purchased or upgraded	4		1	5
Number of electronic information materials produced	5	1	2	8
Number of studies/reports produced	32	4	3	39
Number of IT tools developed/purchased	26	3	5	34
Other specific posts in third countries	3		6	9

Number of legal aids and law enforcement cooperations	5	1	1	7
Number of people reached by the campaign	3		2	5
Number of professionals successfully completing the training programme	10	2	4	16
Number of other border control systems established or upgraded	6	2	3	11
Number of training plans, curricula, teaching aids developed and revised	15	2	7	24
Number of bodies and organisations that have developed and revised training plans, curricula and teaching aids	7	1	6	14
Number of liaison officers deployed	6		3	9
Conference, workshop, meeting	6	1	2	9
Number of applications of laboratory technical equipment	5		1	6
Number of dissemination and communication plans created	3		3	6
Duration of the training programme	11		3	14
Number of operations	5		3	8
Number of international operations	8	1	2	11
Number of copies of printed information material	5		1	6
Number of exchanges of experts	23	1	3	27
Number of experts participating in expert exchanges	27	2	3	32

Reduction in time of examinations (in laboratory procedures)	1		4	5
Total	<b>260</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>369</b>

Data source: own calculation based on Progress Report database and Project Indicator Report (both as at 17.09.2024)

The grouping of indicators provides an opportunity to make the cost-effectiveness of each type of activity more transparent and comparable. The analysis of the indicators by name allows us to distinguish four main groups of activities which show different cost-effectiveness patterns.

The first group includes indicators related to procurement and technical development. This includes indicators such as the number of vehicles purchased, the number of technical tools purchased, the number of IT tools upgraded or purchased, and the purchase and upgrading of border control equipment. For the indicators in this group, the majority of projects can be classified as belonging to the category of 'higher efficiency', which indicates that these procurements were generally cost-effective: for example, for IT tools upgraded or purchased, 26 out of 34 projects fall into the higher efficiency category. A similar distribution can be observed for technical equipment purchased, where 18 out of 29 projects showed higher efficiency. However, the indicators "Number of technical tools purchased" and "Number of tools purchased or upgraded" also show a significant share of "lower efficiency"; this difference may be related to differences in the technical specifications of the tools or to specificities of the procurement procedures.

The second group includes indicators related to knowledge sharing and training, such as the number of professionals who successfully complete a training programme, the number of training plans and training aids developed, and the number of experience exchanges and professionals participating in exchanges. The analysis shows that this group also falls into the "higher efficiency" category; for example, for the indicator "Number of exchanges of experts", 23 out of 27 projects fall into the higher efficiency category. A similar pattern can be observed for the number of professionals involved in exchanges, where 84% of projects fall into the higher efficiency category. In contrast, for the indicator 'Number of organisations adapting training aids', 6 out of 14 projects fall into the 'lower efficiency' category, suggesting that the costs of adapting aids vary from project to project. This variation is likely to be explained by the different needs of each organisation, the time required for adaptation processes or differences in local specifications.

The third group includes indicators related to the development of IT systems and digital materials. This includes the number of electronic information materials produced and the number of IT tools developed

or purchased.<sup>9</sup> For IT tools, 76% of the projects (26 out of 34) fall into the "higher efficiency" category, indicating that the acquisition of IT tools was cost-effective in most projects. The indicator "Number of electronic information materials produced" also shows a predominance of high efficiency. However, some projects in the "lower efficiency" category also appear in this group, especially for IT tools (5 out of 34 projects), which may indicate that the costs of some IT development projects were significantly higher than the average. This may be due to the different technological level of the tools or to the use of specific solutions for the development of IT systems.

The fourth group includes indicators related to border control and international operations. This includes the number of border control equipment used, the number of international operations, the number of liaison officers deployed and the number of specialised posts in third countries. In this group, the share of projects in the "higher efficiency" category remains dominant, in particular for international operations and liaison officers. However, for indicators such as "Specialised posts in third countries" (where 6 out of 9 are of lower efficiency), there are significant differences in the level of efficiency. This group of activities is the only one where the "lower efficiency" category represents a particularly high proportion. This may be due to the different cost structure of activities in third countries, the specific requirements linked to international assignments or the different geopolitical environment. For the indicator "Number of Liaison Officers seconded", 3 out of 9 projects fall into the lower efficiency category, indicating similar trends. These results point to the possibility of developing specific strategies to optimise costs in international operations and border control activities.

In summary, for the indicators related to procurement, knowledge sharing and digital development, the vast majority of projects fall into the "higher efficiency" category, indicating that cost-effectiveness in this area is generally favourable. However, for indicators related to border management and international operations, projects in the "lower efficiency" category are more frequent, especially for activities in third countries. These findings can provide important guidance for improving the efficiency of future projects. **It should be noted, however, that the analysis does not cover whether the deviation is grounded from the professional aspect, especially for projects with lower cost-effectiveness.** In layman's terms, for example, a big difference as regards the utility and monetary values of assets with similar functions and designations may be justified. The analysis can be continued by looking individually at projects that are out of the sample to refine the lessons learned. In addition, a further review of cost-effectiveness at EU level could be carried out by benchmarking the costs of similar interventions in other Member States.

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<sup>9</sup> Some indicators have been classified into several groups due to overlap in content.

## RELEVANCE

### 1. Did the objectives of the interventions funded by the Fund correspond to the actual needs?

- a. Did the objectives set by the Member State in their National Programmes respond to the identified needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Union actions) address the actual needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Emergency assistance) address the actual needs? Which measures did the Member State put in place to address changing needs?

**The experience of the interviews confirms that the projects' objectives responded to existing needs.** Interviewees provided details of the national, EU and, where relevant, global context that triggered the underlying need and led to the project (be it a sectoral need, an EU requirement, a sudden change in the external environment). Of course, in many cases these were interlinked, and there were repeated arguments that a gap or shortfall in a particular area of expertise was an obstacle to meeting EU expectations; and that the projects implemented had made it possible to address this gap or shortfall. In addition, there were several reflections on the changing landscape (whether changes in migration trends or the impact of the COVID pandemic) which may have influenced project implementation and the achievement of results.

**In the case of the final reports of projects, there are cases where the EU Regulation reference points given in the relevance section and the project numbering do not match.** This is most often the case for projects under specific objective SO6 (Crisis management and prevention), where all projects are usually referred to Article 3(3) (a), (b) and (c) of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 as relevance, whereas crisis management is more likely to be referred to Article 3(3) (e), (f) and (g). This is most probably due to an administrative error.

The financial priorities of the National Programme reflect both the needs of the various law enforcement agencies and EU expectations. Nevertheless, there are several financial priorities in the National Programme for which no projects were linked to their implementation during the planning period<sup>10</sup>. These financial priorities are included in the table below. The not covered 12 financial priorities represent almost one-fifth of the 61 financial priorities in the National Programme.

*Table 11 Financial priorities not covered by projects*

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<sup>10</sup> Both the code number of projects and the relevance listed in the final project reports were taken into account for this analysis.



Financial priority	
1.1.1	The extension, reconstruction and refurbishment of premises of visa issuance (preferably: Baku, Delhi, Istanbul, Beijing Ankara, Baghdad, Nairobi) and the procurement of security equipment for consular representations in third countries (preferably in Havana, Jakarta, Mexico City), however the exact locations co-financed by ISF will be determined later considering the added value of co-financing. Purchase of technical equipment (for example document checking devices).
1.1.3	Information on the visa procedure (updating websites, leaflets etc.)
1.2.2	Workshops for elaborating one revised training programme for consular officials on visa will be carried out.
1.2.3	Forums and trainings involving the authorities of the third countries to improve the cooperation on Schengen visa related issues, including acting against visa fraud.
1.2.4	The country information, migration and document information training provided for ILOs, visa and document advisors will be revised and carried out (training programme and training).
2.1.1	Modernisation of the ITC equipment (especially hardware and data connection) of the EUROSUR National Coordination Centre.
2.1.3	Developments of thermal surveillance systems (stable and mobile) at the external border that are linked to EUROSUR.
2.2.1	Development of the capacities of communication systems supporting the border control mainly through the procurement of ITC devices and equipment (e.g. UDR radios)
2.2.5	Conferences, workshops, meetings, consultations with third countries and MSs regarding border control and fight against irregular migration
2.3.1	Preparing feasibility study for establishing new or developing existing ABC gates taking into consideration the outcomes of FastPass project.
2.4.1	Implementation of recommendations of the future Schengen evaluation reports (e.g. training, equipment, infrastructural investments)
2.5.2	Conferences, workshops and practical exercises to improve border control and co-operation related to border control

## COHERENCE AND COMPLEMENTARITY

### **1. Were the objectives set in the national programme coherent with the ones set in other programmes funded by EU resources and applying to similar areas of work?**

**Was the coherence ensured also during the implementation of the Fund?**

- a. Was an assessment of other interventions with similar objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period? Were the actions implemented through the Fund coherent with and non-contradictory to other interventions with similar objectives?

### **2. Were the objectives set in the national programme and the corresponding implemented actions complementary to those set in the framework of other policies — in particular those pursued by the Member State?**

- a. Was an assessment of other interventions with complementary objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period to ensure their complementarity for the implementing period? Were mechanisms aimed to prevent overlapping of financial instruments put in place?

To assess coherence and complementarity, we looked at the Hungarian operational programmes of the 2014-2020 EU period and examined whether there is overlap or linkage at the level of projects or beneficiaries.

An analysis of the coherence and complementarity between OPs and ISF projects shows that 13 institutions have received support from (at least) two funding frameworks. For 4 of these institutions, there was an identifiable overlap between the objectives of the applications, which mainly funded similar activities or objectives: for example, human resources development, IT systems development or training. The overlapping organisations received a mixture of additional funding from the Public Administration and Civil Service Development OP, Economic Development and Innovation OP and Environmental and Energy Efficiency OP.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for example, has received funding for consular activities, document security and human resources development in several projects, where a specific overlap was identified in relation to "temporary secondment of consular staff". Similar overlaps were found in the National Protective Service, where both frameworks supported anti-corruption operations and training, for example, in the area of law enforcement corruption risk analysis. It is important to note that for both

organisations, it was mainly the project titles and main objectives rather than the actual technical content that allowed us to draw conclusions – an in-depth, technical comparison of projects was not possible due to the time constraints of the evaluation.

In contrast, in several institutions, such as the National University of Public Service and the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Police Headquarters, the projects funded by the two frameworks (OP and ISF) served different purposes. In these cases, development funds were typically directed towards infrastructure development, training or research and development activities, while the ISF projects focused on crime prevention, border management or international cooperation.

Among the institutions, the Ministry of the Interior deserves special mention, which has implemented a wide range of improvements from the development framework (Human Resources Development OP and Public Administration and Civil Service Development OP), including the reintegration of prisoners and support for educational integration. In contrast, the ISF funds were mainly directed towards the development of EU IT systems and the expansion of the SIS II infrastructure.

In the case of the Counter Terrorism Centre, the different focus can also be observed: while the Environmental and Energy Efficiency OP fund supported energy modernisation, the ISF mainly financed training and technological improvements related to counter-terrorism activities.

**Overall, the two frameworks complemented each other well, as they typically focused on different areas of development while funding similar objectives.** This coherence ensured that the institutions achieved comprehensive and long-term sustainable results, while minimising duplication of resources.

The overlaps are summarised in the table below:

Table 12 Overlaps between development funds and ISF project implementers

Institution	Main activities of projects supported under OPs	Main activities of ISF projects	Overlap in objectives
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Development of foreign economic activities and foreign affairs operations, support for consular administration	Temporary posting of consular staff, training, quality assurance	Yes
National University of Public Service	Development of competency and education, promoting good governance, VOLARE research (related to air traffic safety)	Research on law enforcement information flow	No

Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Police Headquarters	Preparation of energy developments	Design and construction of a border crossing point	No
Ministry of Interior	Reintegration of prisoners, educational integration, development of VIZEK (Framework system for water use information, monitoring and integrated management)	SIS II developments, capacity building of EU IT systems	No
Hungarian Institute for Forensic Sciences	Planning energy improvements	Development of laboratory examination capacity	No
Police Education and Training Centre	Energy efficiency improvement of buildings, installation of solar systems	Training of service dogs, training of dog handlers	No
Counter Terrorism Centre	Energy modernisation, pilot projects	Developing CBRN capabilities, building the professional network of counter-terrorism officers	No
Constitution Protection Office	Electronification of national security controls	Developing operational capacities	No
National Tax and Customs Administration	Administrative simplification, energy saving investments	Acquisition of forensic analysis tools, Europol cooperation	No
Ministry of Justice	Developing an integrated legislative system, regulating public data	Improving victim assistance and interoperability of systems	No
National Protective Service	Reducing the rate of corruption	Support for anti-corruption operations and training	Yes

Special Service for National Security	Improving IT security, reducing corruption risks	Governmental IT security trap system	Yes
Directorate-General for Audit of European Funds	Maintaining the quality of inspections	Technical assistance to the Audit Authority	No

Data source: progress report database, status as of 17.09.2024 and own data collection from MSTR system

The interviews can provide additional input for the coherence assessment. **Half of the projects studied have some kind of precedent or related projects** on which they have built professionally and whose experiences and lessons have been incorporated into the application and implementation. This indicates that these projects are not one-off improvements but are part of the longer-term vision of the organisation.

## EU ADDED VALUE

### 1. Was any added value brought about by the EU support?

- What are the main types of added value resulting from the support of the Fund (volume, scope, role, process)? Would the Member State have carried out the actions required to implement the EU policies in the areas supported by the Fund without its financial support? What would be the most likely consequences of an interruption of the support provided by the Fund? To which extent have actions supported by the Fund resulted in a benefit at the Union level? What was the added value of the operating support?

**For each of the projects interviewed, EU funding was essential, without it the projects could not have been set up.** Although the interviewees reported more and stricter administrative burdens, there was a consensus that this had also advantages: much more precise, much more detailed implementation was needed in the day-to-day work, in the procurement processes. One interviewee summed it up by saying *"So I think EU project is a good thing in public administration, and maybe it would be good if it was embedded in everybody's mind; but it's not fast, for sure, to implement it."* It was repeatedly **mentioned that the project required a new way of working for public bodies, requiring them to adapt and evolve organisationally, and that they could build on the results in the future.**

In the case of the ISF projects (due to the specific sectoral focus and the associated regulatory constraints), there are very few non-budgetary organisations among the implementers; for the few **NGOs**, however, **there has been a great added value in project support**, as they have been able to implement services and activities that were previously beyond their means.

Another aspect that came up was **cooperation between organisations**. In several cases, it was mentioned that the project had helped to build relationships that both facilitated a higher quality of project outputs and enabled future joint work. In addition, professional knowledge sharing was mentioned as an added value that might not have been achieved without the project.

In addition, as mentioned in the Relevance chapter, there were several cases where the need or partial non-compliance to some recommendations and regulations were the reasons to plan a project and meet the EU expectations. In these cases, the successful implementation of the projects contributed to the effective functioning of EU policies in the field.

In addition to the results achieved by the projects, the EU added value analysis also looked at the ratio between the total cost of the project and the amount of funding. This analysis provides an opportunity to understand the contribution of grants to the implementation of projects and the extent to which these projects relied on EU funds.

The data show that the ratio between the total cost and the amount of funding for the thematic objectives examined (SO1-SO6) is generally close to the total amount of funding, i.e. an average funding ratio of 0.968 – meaning that 96.8% of the total cost was covered by EU and national co-financing, **indicating a high level of funding**. The highest funding rate was found for the "Operating support" (SO3) objective, where the total cost and the amount of the grant were exactly the same (1.000); thus, projects in this category were entirely co-financed.

For the other objectives, the funding rate is also high, but slightly below the overall funding. For Objective SO1, 94.1% of the cost of implementing the projects was covered by EU funding, with the remainder financed by other sources. Similarly high funding rates are observed for Objectives SO2 (0.981), SO5 (0.964) and SO6 (0.986). These figures show that EU support played a major role in the implementation of projects for all objectives, but in some cases required a minor complement from other sources.

Table 13 Funding rates for each priority

Priorities	Total cost of projects (HUF)	Amount of aid (HUF)	Average aid rate
SO1	3,008,277,631	2,824,277,429	0.941
SO2	28,433,409,344	28,073,064,283	0.981
SO3	3,493,922,494	3,493,922,494	1.000
SO5	9,909,697,235	9,693,691,301	0.964
SO6	3,257,037,191	3,236,788,567	0.986

Total	<b>48,102,343,895</b>	<b>47,321,744,074</b>	<b>0.968</b>
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Data source: progress report database, status as of 17.09.2024

The analysis shows that the EU support provided significant added value to the projects examined, covering the majority of the costs. The small variations in the funding rates suggest that national or local funding (funding from the budget of the applicant) was also involved in some projects, which further reinforces the multiplier effect of EU funding.

## SUSTAINABILITY

### 1. Are the positive effects of the projects supported by the Fund likely to last when its support will be over?

- a. What were the main measures adopted by the Member State to ensure the sustainability of the results of the projects implemented with support of the Fund (both at programming and implementation stage)? Were mechanisms put in place to ensure a sustainability check at programming and implementation stage? To what extent are the outcomes/benefits of the actions sustained by the Fund expected to continue thereafter? What measures were adopted to ensure the continuity of the activities carried out thanks to the operating support?

The project-level indicators can provide information on sustainability, as they include indicators measured during the maintenance period. As shown in the Effectiveness section, projects with a maintenance period are almost exclusively found in SO5.

Some of the indicators measured during the maintenance period show exceptionally high values – these may be due to a design error or some contextual change, but they certainly show that some activities (e.g. capacity building) continued after the projects were closed. At the same time, there are indicators where, apparently, some difficulty has been encountered in sustaining activities – these relate mainly to the number of international operations, criminal procedures and cooperations. However, this may also be due to changes in the criminal operational situation in relation to investigations, which may render cooperation temporarily unnecessary.

The interviewees were generally positive about the sustainability of the results: none of the projects raised any problems with this. Where there are indicators to be achieved during the maintenance period, maintenance reports are regularly produced. In other cases, the equipment and capacities acquired continue to be used in the same way, being integrated into day-to-day operations; the working groups set up continue to operate; in some cases, follow-up and further development have already been

planned. **As the projects (particularly those building on procurement) responded to very specific needs, it is reasonable to expect that the results will be sustainable as the organisations actively use them** (indeed, in some cases there was a need to use the new infrastructure beyond the scope of the Fund).

## SIMPLIFICATION AND REDUCTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

### 1. Were the Fund management procedures simplified and the administrative burden reduced for its beneficiaries?

- a. Did the innovative procedures introduced by the Fund (simplified cost option, multiannual programming, national eligibility rules, more comprehensive national programmes allowing for flexibility) bring about simplification for the beneficiaries of the Fund?

In terms of the number of **changes to projects**, we see that there are 1,009 changes to all projects in the project database. The data show that 77.6% of the total of 1,009 amendments were initiated by the beneficiaries, while the Responsible Authority initiated 22.4% of the amendments. This distribution suggests that the beneficiaries were the main ones who experienced a need for change during the implementation of the projects.

Among the types of amendments, the most common were technical changes, with 410 cases, accounting for 40.6% of the total. This was followed by mixed types of changes, with 374 cases (37%), which covered several areas at the same time, such as professional and financial aspects. Financial modifications, on the other hand, accounted for a lower proportion, representing only 13% (132 cases), suggesting that the financial framework of projects was less in need of adjustment. Other types of modification accounted for 9% (93 cases) and probably involved minor or specific changes.

The mixed type dominated the amendments initiated by the Responsible Authority, accounting for 50% of such amendments. This may indicate that the Responsible Authority focused on implementing comprehensive, complex changes. In contrast, the technical type of changes was predominant among the beneficiary-initiated changes (46%), i.e. beneficiaries mainly experienced challenges in the implementation of the content of the projects that required modifications.

Overall, the administrative burden was mainly increased by technical changes initiated by the beneficiaries, while the Responsible Authority activity focused more on complex, cross-cutting changes. This distribution reflects the dynamics of project implementation, with beneficiaries focusing on concrete implementation and Responsible Authority focusing on more comprehensive management and control.



Table 14 Contract amendments by beneficiary

Initiator of amendments	Other	Finance	Professional	Mixed	Total
Responsible Authority	39	24	50	113	226
Beneficiary	54	108	360	261	783
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>1,009</b>

Source of data: report on GA amendments, status as of 17.09.2024

In addition to contract amendments, **irregularity procedures** can be an indication of how difficult it is to carry out the administration of a project without errors and in compliance with all the rules.

At least one irregularity procedure was opened in 39.7% of the projects and 71% of the procedures opened were found to be irregular; in a third of cases an error was found, which could have occurred in the same project. For SO6, no irregularity procedure was opened at all, but for SO1, more than half of the projects were opened and in all cases an irregularity was found.

Table 15 Irregularity procedures by specific objective (%)

	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO5	SO6	Total
Irregularity procedure opened	53.33	44.44	20.00	42.31	0.00	39.66
Procedure closed with a finding of irregularity	100.00	43.75	0.00	77.27		71.01
Procedure closed with finding of error	12.50	37.50	100.00	34.09		33.33

Data source: database compiled from final project evaluations

If we categorise the irregularity procedures, we can see that the most frequent **irregularities** (almost 85% of all cases) **concern the management of procurements**, but only 32% of cases involve financial corrections. The highest proportion of deficiencies in the retention of documentation was found for specific objective 5.

Table 16 Categories of irregularity procedures by specific objective (%)

	SO1	SO2	SO3	SO5	SO6	Total
Financial correction	50	36.36	0	28.21		32.20
Document retention	0	9.09	0	30.77		22.03
Irregularity in connection with procurement	100	90.91	100	79.49		84.75

Data source: database compiled from final project evaluations

*Note: As several types of irregularity may be detected in the course of an irregularity procedure, the amount for each column may exceed 100%.*

Administrative burdens were mentioned by almost all interviewees, essentially as a difficulty; in comparison, no simplification mechanisms were reported. A common experience was **that the administration of projects imposed a heavy and time-varying burden on organisations**. There were also cases of reduced capacity for project management in some instances (this was mainly the case for public organisations, due to staff turnover, shrinking project management staff, reorganisation); this can easily lead to overloading of staff. It has been repeatedly mentioned that if an organisation is serious about participating in EU projects, it needs to employ professionals for project management.

## Conclusions and lessons learned

The evaluation report carried out an assessment of projects supported by the Internal Security Fund. The evaluation involved an analysis of the data and project documents provided to us and interviews with relevant actors and implementers. The main conclusions are the following:

- As set out in the National Programme, Hungary has taken steps to facilitate and speed up legal border crossing; strengthen cooperation at national and international level to tackle irregular migration and improve risk analysis systems of competent authorities; and strengthen all elements of the integrated border management system. Hungary has provided adequately qualified staff for visa administration and border management to enhance efficiency. In addition, Hungary has aimed to better respond to the development of cross-border crime and the increased resilience of organised criminals by improving national prevention and intervention capacities, information exchange protocols and threat and risk assessment skills.
- Based on the final evaluation of the 174 projects examined, 90.8% of the projects were completed in all elements, 8.6% were partially completed and in only 1 case was recommended by the project supervisors to the decision-makers of the Responsible Authority to close the project as non-completed. In general, delays in the secondment of experts, cancellation of procurements and tasks (often due to unsuccessful procurement procedures) were the reasons for the partial non-completion of projects.
- The analysis of the projects in the progress reports database shows that the projects met the objectives of Regulation (EU) No 513/2014 and Regulation (EU) No 515/2014.
- At the indicator level, the data show that most of the projects have made a significant contribution to the achievement of the objectives set, but with mixed results. The completion rates show that projects achieved an average completion rate of around 77%. This is an essentially positive result, indicating that most of the projects were successfully implemented. However, the 23% shortfall suggests that some indicators were not achieved as expected.
- The performance of different groups of indicators varies in terms of results. The indicators measured during the maintenance period often show exceptionally high performance rates, but many of these are probably due to data management or difficulties occurred at the stage of planning the projects.
- Overall, the ISF-BV priorities in Hungary show clear results, especially in the area of border management, where infrastructure and technological improvements have been outstanding. The lower level of results for the visa priorities suggests that this area has received less attention. In the area of efficiency and sustainability, the projects have been effective in ensuring the long-

term viability of the equipment and systems procured. Trends over time clearly show that EU funding has had a significant impact on the implementation of these priorities in Hungary.

- However, the project documents and interviews highlighted that the projects have made real progress in improving visa procedures and the work of consulates. Cooperation between Member States has increased, at least periodically; in addition, the efficiency of data exchange and data access at consulates, border crossing points and the central national visa authority has increased. At the external borders, vehicles were purchased and border crossing points upgraded; the EUROSUR system became operational, and a system of border training was set up.
- The ISF-P indicators show that Hungary has made significant progress in the field of fight against crime and crime prevention in recent years. Based on the output indicators, the number of projects and financial support peaked between 2017 and 2020. The highest activity was in the area of combating trafficking in human beings based on indicator values, especially in 2018 and 2020. In addition, the value and volume of seized criminal assets showed a steady increase, in particular in the seizure of cash and other assets, reaching their highest values in 2020 and 2021. Anti-drugs actions have also been effective, particularly in the seizure of cannabis and amphetamines, where volumes have shown a significant increase by 2020.
- The project documents and interviews show that the tools and systems procured have contributed significantly to the ability of law enforcement agencies to prevent and tackle organised crime and to engage with Europol. In addition, a large number of trainings have been carried out; awareness (media) campaigns have been successfully implemented, and several victim assistance projects have been implemented, providing extensive support to victims of trafficking in human beings.
- The experience of the interviews confirms that the projects' objectives responded to existing needs. However, in the case of the final reports of projects, there were instances where the EU Regulation references given in the relevance section did not correspond to the content of the projects, which could be interpreted as an administrative error. In addition, there are some financial priorities in the National Programme for which no project was linked to their implementation during the programming period.
- Among the ISF project implementers, there are a number of institutions that have implemented projects from operational programmes in addition to the Home Affairs Funds during the financial period of 2014-2020. Analysis of these shows that the two funding frameworks complemented each other well, as they typically focused on different areas of development while funding similar objectives, minimising duplication of resources.

- The EU added value of the projects was manifested at the implementing organisations (e.g. organisational development and re-organisation, adaptation of new activities), as well as from new collaborations and professional knowledge sharing. In addition, the high average co-financing rate shows that EU funding has played a major role in the implementation of these projects.
- The interviewees were generally positive about the sustainability of the results: none of the projects raised any problems with this. As the projects (particularly those based on procurement) responded to very specific needs, it is reasonable to expect that the results will be sustainable.
- It was a common experience that project administration was a heavy burden on organisations, with reduced capacity for project management in some cases; this can easily lead to overloading of staff.

Based on the data, interviews and expert consultations, the following main lessons can be drawn from the implementation of the Fund:

1. The high administrative burden was partly due to the project structure (high proportion of small projects) and partly due to insufficient project management experience of the implementing teams. In the next programming period, the Responsible Authority will focus on supporting higher value, more complex projects, emphasis will be laid on supporting project management capacity, and the preparation of direct call projects will be carried out in cooperation with the Responsible Authority.
2. The relatively fragmented project structure was also partly due to the fact that there were a number of eligible activities in the previous period which appeared under several priorities (e.g. training or exchange of experience); this made the structure of calls for proposals sometimes difficult to understand for applicants. In order to address this, the Responsible Authority is giving priority to larger, more complex projects, as mentioned above, and is also placing greater emphasis on information for potential applicants.
3. The successful implementation of certain improvements has encountered difficulties due to the structure of the programme or national legislation. One such element was research projects, which could not be implemented independently under any of the specific objectives. This is partly due to the low amount of funds, partly to lack of availability of sectoral actors, and partly to the lack of capacity of foreign research partnerships. In order to address this, the Responsible Authority will in the future target relevant national stakeholders and make efforts to develop international partnerships to fill the potential lack of domestic research capacity.
4. It has been confirmed that the availability of technical equipment is a prerequisite for the implementation of cross-border operations against serious and organised crime. Thus, project implementers considered the availability of equipment to be of utmost importance and projects

focused on making such purchases rather than on operational costs which were more difficult to account for due to the constraints of the programme structure.

5. National public procurement regulations have made the infrastructure development of consulates in third countries difficult to plan and in many cases impossible to implement.
6. The experience of project implementers is that IT improvements, which were otherwise necessary and positively assessed, have in many cases generated increased operational costs and sometimes new costs. In the new period, operational support will be more prominent (a higher percentage of funds can be allocated to this type of support), and in the case of border management calls, a sustainability analysis will be required of applicants to better estimate costs.

Overall, the Fund has supported relevant developments which have contributed to the objectives of the relevant regulations and has also included a number of sectoral improvements. There were also a large number of investments, as well as soft developments, which responded to well-defined needs. Real EU added value was identified in relation to the capacity building and professional cooperation; in addition, a number of projects gathered the interest of the EU and international community.

# Annexes

## INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Preview the documents related to the project:

- final documents.
- indicators.
- consortium members.
- possible related studies.

### 1) Documenting their approach/approach – introduction

- a) How long have you been with the organisation?
- b) What roles have you played? What background do you have?
- c) Which parts of the project did you participate in exactly?

### 2) What is the background of the project, in what context was the project born?

- a) What problem did the project aim to solve?
- b) What is its domestic relevance? Is it related to any other project, activity or programme?
- c) Which EU-level initiative is it linked to?
- d) What came before, was there a history to the project?

### 3) How was the project implemented?

- a) How did the project start, what was its preparation like? Were there any problems in the preparation? Did you have problems finding the right experts? Were there any problems with procurement?
- b) Was there any cooperation (national or international) in the project? How did it go? Good examples? Difficulties?
- c) Were there any problems in the implementation? Delays? Unexpected events?
- d) How did the EU funding help the project? Was there a downside in any way?

- e) What was the administration of the project like? How difficult was it to administrate it? Did the project have simplified cost accounting or other simplifying procedures? (If yes) How much of a real simplification were they? (If not) Were administrative simplifications necessary?
  - f) Was there any irregularity in the project? (If yes) What was the reason?
  - g) To what extent was the planned budget sustainable? Were some things more expensive than expected?
  - h) Was the project linked to any other project, whether nationally or EU funded?
- 4) What were the main results of the project?
- a) Have you achieved the objectives you set?
  - b) If not, what were the reasons?
  - c) Will there be problems maintaining the results?
  - d) Could the project be continued? Extended?



## LIST OF COMPLETED INTERVIEWS

#	Name	Project	Interview date
1	Mária Bajusz	BBA-1.2.1-2015-00001 Regional training for consular officers	11.11.2024
2	Anikó Orsolya Bán	BBA-1.3.2/10-2019-00002 Support to consular cooperation through primary screening activities by visa advisors III.	18.11.2024
3	Márton Berkes	BBA-5.1.6/10-2019-00001 Don't let it, don't do it! - campaign against human trafficking	12.11.2024
4	Kornél Borbás Lt. Col.	BBA-6.3.1-2015-00001 Establishment of a Central European CBRN-E Training Centre	08.11.2024
5	Ágnes De Coll	BBA-5.4.5/10-2019-00001 Complex victim support services for victims of human trafficking	28.11.2024
6	Gergő Demény Lt. Col.	BBA-1.3.2-2015-00001 Liaison officer deployment BBA-2.1.2/16-2020-00001 Development of EUROSUR national data reporting application and connection BBA-2.2.3/2-16-2016-00001 Development of risk analysis and assessment (CIRAM) BBA-2.4.2-2015-00001 Border police training system	18.11.2024
7	Dr. Tamás Várkonyi Lt. Col.	BBA-2.4.2-2015-00001 Border Police Training System	28.11.2024
8	Béla Komár	BBA-1.3.2-2015-00001 Liaison Officers secondment	15.11.2024
9	Gábor Komé	BBA-6.1.1/10-2019-00002 Development of cyber security services platform and ISF-based GovProbe system	27.11.2024
10	György Lengyel	BBA-5.1.2/10-2019-00001 Budapest Metropolitan Police Criminal IT capacity development	21.11.2024
11	Krisztina Merkel	Monitoring Committee	26.11.2024

12	Tamás Szabó	Ministry of the Interior, Responsible Authority	21.10.2024
13	Nikolett Ujfalussy	BBA-5.3.3/10-2019-00002 Professional trainings	08.11.2024
14	Dr. Attila Vedó	Ministry of the Interior, Responsible Authority	14.10.2024
15	Dávid Zámbó	Monitoring Committee, BBA-5.4.5/10-2019-00001 Complex victim support services for victims of trafficking	27.11.2024

## EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation criteria	Evaluation question <sup>11</sup>	Evaluation sub-question	Award criteria	Descriptor or indicator	Methodological approach	Sources
<b>Effectiveness</b>	How did the Fund contribute to the achievement of the following specific objectives: Support a common visa policy to facilitate legitimate travel; Provide a high quality of service to visa applicants; Ensure equal treatment of third-country nationals and Tackle illegal migration?	What progress was made towards promoting the development and implementation of the common visa policy to facilitate legitimate travel, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The outcome indicators have achieved the objectives set The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out which help to achieve the objective	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		What progress was made towards ensuring better consular coverage and harmonised practices on visa issuance between Member States, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the stated objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-BV indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews
		What progress was made towards ensuring the application of the Union's acquis on visas and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports

<sup>11</sup> Source: COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2017/207 OF 3 October 2016 laying down general provisions on the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and on a common monitoring and evaluation framework under Regulation (EU) No 514/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down general provisions on the instrument for financial support for police cooperation, preventing and combating crime, and crisis management

			have been carried out that help to achieve the target			
		What progress was made towards Member States' contribution to strengthening the cooperation between Member States operating in third countries as regards the flows of third-country national into the territory of Member States, including prevention and tackling of illegal immigration, as well as the cooperation with third countries, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the stated objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-BV indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews
		What progress was made towards supporting the common visa policy by setting up and running IT systems, their communication infrastructure and equipment, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		How did the operating support provided for in Article 10 of the Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 contribute to the achievement of the specific objective on common visa policy?	The outcome indicators have achieved the objectives set The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out which help to achieve the objective	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports

	How did the Fund contribute to the following specific objectives: Supporting integrated border management, including promoting further harmonisation of border management-related measures in accordance with common Union standards and through the sharing of information between Member States and between Member States and the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union? Ensuring, on one hand, a uniform and high level of control and protection of the external borders, including by the tackling of illegal immigration and, on the other hand, the smooth crossing of the external borders in conformity with the Schengen acquis, while	What progress was made towards promoting the development, implementation and enforcement of policies with a view to ensure the absence of any controls on persons when crossing the internal borders, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		What progress was made towards carrying out checks on persons and monitoring efficiently the crossing of external borders, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		What progress was made towards establishing gradually an integrated management system for external borders, based on solidarity and responsibility, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		What progress was made towards ensuring the application of the Union's acquis on border management, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The outcome indicators have achieved the objectives set The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out which help to achieve the objective	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports

	guaranteeing access to international protection for those needing it, in accordance with the obligations contracted by the Member States in the field of human rights, including the principle of non-refoulement?	What progress was made towards contributing to reinforcing situational awareness at the external borders and the reaction capabilities of Member States, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the defined objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-BV indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews
		What progress was made towards setting up and running IT systems, their communication infrastructure and equipment that support border checks and border surveillance at the external borders, and how did the Fund contribute to achieving this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		What progress was made towards supporting services to Member States in duly substantiated emergency situations requiring urgent action at the external borders, and how did the Emergency Assistance contribute to achieving this progress? What type of emergency actions was implemented? How did the emergency actions implemented under the Fund contribute to addressing the	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports

		urgent needs of the Member State? What were the main results of the emergency actions?				
		How did the operating support provided for in Article 10 of the Regulation (EU) No 515/2014 contribute to the achievement of the specific objective on border management?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-BV indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
	How did the Fund contribute to the following specific objectives: Prevention of cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism? Reinforcement of the coordination and cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other national authorities of Member States, including with Europol or other relevant Union bodies, and with relevant third countries and international organisations?	What progress was made towards the achievement of the expected results of strengthening Member States' capacity to combat cross-border, serious and organised crime, including terrorism and to reinforce their mutual cooperation in this field, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the defined objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-P indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews
		What progress was made towards developing administrative and operational coordination and cooperation among Member States' public authorities, Europol or other relevant Union bodies and, where appropriate, with third Countries and international organisations, and how did the	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the defined objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that	ISF-P indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews

		Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	contribute to the achievement of the objective			
		What progress was made towards developing training schemes, such as those regarding technical and professional skills and knowledge of obligations on human rights and fundamental freedoms, in implementation of EU training policies, including through specific Union law enforcement exchange programmes, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the stated objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-P indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews
		What progress was made towards putting in place measures, safeguard mechanisms and best practices for the identification and support of witnesses and victims of crime, including victims of terrorism, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the stated objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-P indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews



	How did the Fund contribute to improve the capacity of Member States to manage effectively security-related risks and crises, and protecting people and critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks and other security-related incidents?	What progress was made towards reinforcing Member States' administrative and operational capability to protect critical infrastructure in all sectors of economic activity, including through public-private partnerships and improved coordination, cooperation, exchange and dissemination of know-how and experience within the Union and with relevant third Countries, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the defined objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective	ISF-P indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews
		What progress was made towards establishing secure links and effective coordination between existing sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation actors at Union and national level, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	The indicators of achievement have reached the set targets The evaluations in the project documentation show that activities have been carried out that help to achieve the target	ISF-P indicators descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports
		What progress was made towards improving the administrative and operational capacity of the Member States and the Union to develop comprehensive threat and risk assessments, and how did the Fund contribute to the achievement of this progress?	The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the Fund has contributed to the achievement of the defined objective. The evaluations found in the project documentation show that activities	ISF-P indicators Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR data Progress reports Final project reports Interviews

			have been carried out that contribute to the achievement of the objective			
<b>Efficiency</b>	Were the results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost?	To what extent were the expected results of the Fund achieved at reasonable cost in terms of deployed financial and human resources? What measures were put in place to prevent, detect, report and follow up on cases of fraud and other irregularities, and how did they perform?	Significant difference in costs per unit of indicator	Costs and outcome indicators for some projects	Data analysis	BAMIR data
<b>Relevance</b>	Did the objectives of the interventions funded by the Fund correspond to the actual needs?	Did the objectives set by the Member State in their National Programmes respond to the identified needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Union actions) address the actual needs? Did the objectives set in the Annual Work Programme (Emergency assistance) address the actual needs? Which measures did the Member State put in place to address changing needs?	What are the national objectives that the National Programme considered relevant, but no projects have been implemented that would have served these objectives The normative perception of the interviewees confirms that the interventions financed by the Fund were adapted to real needs.	Coverage of national priorities indicated in the National Programme by programmes Normative judgements by interviewees	Document analysis Interview data collection	Supporting documents Interviews

<b>Coherence</b>	Were the objectives set in the national programme coherent with the ones set in other programmes funded by EU resources and applying to similar areas of work? Was the coherence ensured also during the implementation of the Fund?	Was an assessment of other interventions with similar objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period? Were the actions implemented through the Fund coherent with and non-contradictory to other interventions with similar objectives?	Is there overlap or linkage at project or beneficiary level	Operational programmes for the 2014-2020 EU period	Data analysis	BAMIR and EMIR data
<b>Complementarity</b>	Were the objectives set in the national programme and the corresponding implemented actions complementary to those set in the framework of other policies — in particular those pursued by the Member State?	Was an assessment of other interventions with complementary objectives carried out and taken into account during the programming stage? Were coordination mechanisms between the Fund and other interventions with similar objectives established for the implementing period to ensure their complementarity for the implementing period? Were mechanisms aimed to prevent overlapping of financial instruments put in place?	Is there overlap or linkage at project or beneficiary level	Operational programmes for the 2014-2020 EU period	Data analysis	BAMIR and EMIR data

<b>EU added value</b>	Was any added value brought about by the EU support?	What are the main types of added value resulting from the support of the Fund (volume, scope, role, process)? Would the Member State have carried out the actions required to implement the EU policies in the areas supported by the Fund without its financial support? What would be the most likely consequences of an interruption of the support provided by the Fund? To which extent have actions supported by the Fund resulted in a benefit at the Union level? What was the added value of the operating support?	Ratio between total project cost and amount of aid The normative perception of interviewees confirms that there was added value in EU support	Project budgets Normative judgements by interviewees	Data analysis Interview data collection	BAMIR data Interviews
<b>Sustainability</b>	Are the positive effects of the projects supported by the Fund likely to last when its support will be over?	What were the main measures adopted by the Member State to ensure the sustainability of the results of the projects implemented with support of the Fund (both at programming and implementation stage)? Were mechanisms put in place to ensure a sustainability check at programming and implementation stage? To what extent are the outcomes/benefits of the actions sustained by the Fund expected to continue thereafter? What measures were adopted to ensure the	Development of project indicators over the maintenance period Normative perception of sustainability by interviewees	Project indicators Normative judgements by interviewees	Data analysis Interview data collection	BAMIR data Interviews

		continuity of the activities carried out thanks to the operating support?				
<b>Simplification and reduction of administrative burden</b>	Were the management procedures of the Fund simplified and the administrative burden reduced for its beneficiaries?	Did the innovative procedures introduced by the Fund (simplified cost option, multiannual programming, national eligibility rules, more comprehensive national programmes allowing for flexibility, operating support and Special Transit Scheme for Lithuania) lead to simplification for the beneficiaries of the Fund?	Number of contract amendments, irregularities Normative perception of the interviewees on the administrative burden	Normative judgements by interviewees Descriptions in the project documentation	Mixed methodology: analysis of final project evaluations, data analysis, interview data collection	BAMIR indicators project final reports interviews