



Brussels, 23 September 2022
(OR. en)

12658/22

LIMITE

COSI 231
ENFOPOL 467
CYBER 302
JAI 1217

NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations
Subject: EU Innovation Hub for internal security: state of play and way forward

Since the establishment of the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security (‘the Hub’) in 2019, COSI has been actively involved in its development. In June 2021 COSI endorsed the governance model of the Hub as well as the set-up of its Steering Group¹. In many ways the Hub is already in operation and providing results: the Steering Group has already officially convened, the Hub Team assembles regularly, and a variety of pilot projects² are running. Through its projects, the Hub is also already creating added value in the field of innovation by concentrating on specific issues that are proving challenging for the internal security community, but where new approaches could be found not only to develop new and more effective technologies but also to identify more trustworthy ways to use new technologies, especially from the point of view of safeguarding fundamental rights. The AP4AI³ project is a very good example of such innovative approaches.

At the same time, there are certain critical success factors that still need to be addressed in order for the Hub to achieve its full potential.

¹ 8517/3/21 REV 3

² 9622/22

³ Accountability Principles for AI in the Internal Security Domain.

Dedicated resources for the Hub

In May 2020 COSI spelled out that in the inception phase, the projects supported by the Hub would be financed by the innovation labs that led their implementation, as well as partners where relevant. Other innovation labs that participate in joint projects may contribute to their financing.

Furthermore, the Commission was invited to identify and propose means to ensure the subsequent financing of the gradual expansion of the Hub's tasks, including the development of common technological solutions⁴.

In the current situation all Hub activities are indeed covered by the participating Agencies' existing resources and budgets on a voluntary basis, and while this is undoubtedly creating important synergies, it goes without saying that the continued approach is also weighing on other innovation-related activities that could be financed from these limited financial resources.

There is currently no dedicated budget line for the Hub, and the Agencies are not eligible to benefit for example from Horizon Europe funding.

An indicative estimation of the resources spent currently on Hub-related activities was prepared by the Hub team for the Steering Group to inform the discussion on the resources of the Hub. Current staffing costs that the JHA Agencies and in particular Europol and eu-LISA are carrying are around EUR 669 000. Costs of current projects under the umbrella of the Hub are around EUR 4 150 000 consisting of projects such as AP4AI, Technology Foresight on Biometrics for the future of travel, and the Darknet monitoring tool. To this should be added the cost of the annual event which is around EUR 96 000. This brings the total resources spent to support current Hub activities, projects and staffing to around EUR 4 915 000.

COSI continues to encourage the Commission, in close cooperation with the Steering Group, to look into mechanisms that could be used, directly or indirectly, to support the Hub's activities in a sustainable way. This would ensure the continuation of the Hub's activities, but also increase Hub ownership over the establishment and development of its projects - in addition to the Agency-financed initiatives brought under the umbrella of the Hub that are currently the only type of project.

⁴ 7829/20

In the absence of a dedicated budget for the Hub, JHA agencies are encouraged to include Hub-related activities in their annual programming document, to earmark budget dedicated to support innovative Hub activities and to report on these financial and resources commitments to the COSI.

Staffing situation

EU Agencies, the Commission and Member States have been encouraged by COSI to second staff dedicated to work in the Hub Team. This is a prerequisite, for example, for a participating Agency to be represented in the Steering Group of the Hub⁵. It is clear that this level of involvement is challenging to realise, both for the Member States and for most Agencies. Currently eu-LISA has seconded one staff member to work as a liaison officer in the Hub Team, and France has seconded a national expert to Europol Innovation Lab to support some of the Hub activities.

In the current situation, where the resources of the Hub are dependent on voluntary posting of staff, ***COSI continues to encourage*** all relevant actors – including Member States – to dedicate resources, where possible, for this specific purpose.

Involvement of the Member States

As agreed by COSI⁶, national entities are encouraged to address the innovation labs of EU Agencies or existing dedicated networks in their fields of expertise, to articulate and anticipate their needs on innovation. National projects or proposals should, where possible, be first discussed between EU Member States in the framework of the innovation labs of their EU agencies in order for them to be considered for the Innovation Hub level. The objective is to avoid duplication, to create synergies and to strengthen the legitimacy and sustainability of the chosen projects.

The needs of the Member States are the *raison d'être* of the Hub and their involvement is absolutely crucial for the Hub's success. Many of the challenges facing the authorities that deal with internal security are shared across the Union, or even globally. Solutions should not be sought only on a national basis, but synergies should be created by identifying and tailoring solutions that can benefit many. The Member States and their practitioners can greatly enhance the pool of resources and expertise of the Innovation Hub on specific projects, as well as reap the concrete benefits of the outcomes.

⁵ 8517/3/21 REV 3

⁶ 7829/20

COSI continues to encourage work towards increased involvement on the part of Member State authorities and practitioners, through the secondment of staff or through further involvement in new or existing Hub projects to foster active Member State participation in Hub activities. For example, the Hub is actively looking for national law enforcement and judicial authority representatives to support the AP4AI project by participating in validation pilots to ensure that the AP4AI fits the needs of internal security practitioners.

In order to have a clear picture of the current situation, the input of the Member States in completing the ongoing mapping of relevant national innovation projects is key.

Capability-expectation gap

However, the critical success factors outlined above lead to a final consideration regarding the emerging gap between capabilities and expectations, between the political ambition and the reality.

The fact that the Hub continues to function mainly on a voluntary basis and dependent on the support that the Agencies and the Member States can offer in line with their own budgetary limits is making it increasingly difficult for the Hub to continue its development as the platform for innovation in internal security.

The Hub has been acknowledged at the highest political levels in the EU and by the Member States, and accordingly calls continue for the Hub to become actively involved in yet other new projects. The high level of political ambition and operational needs, combined with the lack of sustainable financial means and commitment, could lead to a situation where the Hub simply cannot deliver on its mission and tasks, leading to disenchantment and loss of trust. This would jeopardise the future opportunities of the Hub, an ambitious and genuinely *joint* EU-level multi-sector innovation platform on internal security.

Delegations are requested to express their views and to confirm their agreement on the issues outlined.