**TWG – OPTIONS for post – 2020 CBC programmes**

**QUESTIONNAIRES ANALYSIS**

**Introduction**

In order to discuss the four strategic options of the post-2020 CBC programmes, the CBIB+ Phase II project team designed a questionnaire, including a list of advantages and disadvantages/risks, to serve as research tool. The questionnaire was circulated among the members of a dedicated technical working group (TWG) to collect, analyse and present their views. There were 9 members of the working group but only six questionnaires handed back: one per beneficiary country, as three of them were represented in the group by two national officials. Briefly, this document features the analysis of the opinions expressed by the TWG members and contains conclusions, summaries and some additional and very valuable individual inputs on advantages and disadvantages for each of the aforementioned options.

The analysis consists of:

[Suggested options for post-2020 CBC programmes 2](#_Toc515887702)

[Advantages and disadvantages/risks of the options for post-2020 CBC programmes 3](#_Toc515887703)

[Analysis of opinions on advantages and disadvantages/risks per option 5](#_Toc515887704)

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# Suggested options for post-2020 CBC programmes

* Option 1A:

The current set-up of the IPA II CBC programmes is maintained (i.e. bilateral CBC programmes) and the financial allocation of the programme is increased to fund more sizeable projects.

* Option 1B:

The current set-up of the IPA II CBC programmes is maintained but with a revised geographical and programmatic coverage (i.e. trilateral, quadrilateral or even multilateral/transnational programmes), as well as an increased financial allocation that would allow funding more sizeable projects.

* Option 2:

The management of the programmes is centralised with one single managing or contracting authority at regional level, while the financial allocation of the programme is increased to fund more sizeable projects.

* Option 3:

The CBC programmes are integrated into national sector programmes or in multi-country programmes and their financial allocation is increased for more sizeable projects.

The table below displays an overview of the main advantages of the four strategic options according to DG NEAR with respect to six basic criteria:

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| **CRITERIA**  **OPTIONS** | **Political dialogue /better neighbourly relations** | **Development of cross-border areas** | **Administrative simplification/ efficiency** | **Use of EU funds improved** | **More visibility** | **More impact** |
| **OPTION 1A** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **OPTION 1B** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **OPTION 2** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **OPTION 3** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# Advantages and disadvantages/risks of the options for post-2020 CBC programmes

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| **OPTION 1A** |
| **ADVANTAGES** |
| 1. It builds on the experience and know-how gained by the EC and the beneficiaries under the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 CBC programmes: good neighbourly relations and local development are enhanced; |
| 1. It is fully aligned with the geographic and programmatic practice on CBC programmes in the EU, as is applicable in all Interreg periods including 2014-2020, and as such the most relevant option for pre-accession preparation; |
| 1. It builds on the continuity and stability of the current system; |
| 1. The capacities of the Beneficiary Countries, in the perspective of the management of structural funds, are enhanced; i.e. preparation for ERDF-funded programmes is maintained as a key objective, which guarantees continued support by DG REGIO. |
| 1. Other |
| **DISADVANTAGES/RISKS** |
| 1. The institutional set-up is not simplified (unless a streamlined system is agreed which consists of fewer stakeholders/structures involved); |
| 1. If a dual implementing mode (direct and indirect management, depending on the beneficiaries involved) remains in place, the capacities of the beneficiaries in the perspective of the management of structural funds will be unevenly developed; |
| 1. The costs for technical assistance remain high (even if relatively reduced if the CBC budget is expanded). |
| 1. Other |
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| **OPTION 1B** |
| **ADVANTAGES** |
| 1. It would imply streamlining the number of managing/coordination entities and a significant reduction of the institutional complexity; |
| 1. Flexibility by allowing bilateral programmes to coexist along with trilateral or multilateral ones; |
| 1. The focus on bigger and more strategic operations would be increased; |
| 1. The visibility of the programme at national and regional level would be enhanced; |
| 1. It would improve the performance framework (more coherence in defining largely applicable sets of indicators and objectives). |
| 1. Other |
| **DISADVANTAGES/RISKS** |
| 1. As some of the Beneficiary Countries would not lead any CBC programme, these would lose the experience gained so far in managing CBC funds as a way to support the preparation for the future use of ERDF-type funds; |
| 1. The programming phase could be hampered by the difficulty of beneficiaries in agreeing on the border areas, thematic priorities and objectives. |
| 1. Other |

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| **OPTION 2** |
| **ADVANTAGES** |
| 1. It greatly simplifies the institutional set-up (i.e. one joint technical secretariat, one joint monitoring committee and one contracting authority); |
| 1. Only one management mode is used (e.g. shared management mode by a Member State) thus better allowing the harmonisation of rules and procedures in the whole region; |
| 1. The management of CBC at DG NEAR level (including the DEUs) is greatly simplified (i.e. fewer resources involved); |
| 1. It increases the focus on bigger and more strategic operations; |
| 1. Coherence and complementarity with other strategic frameworks or initiatives is favoured; |
| 1. Visibility of the programme at national and regional level is increased; |
| 1. The performance framework (more coherence in defining largely applicable set of indicators and objectives) would be improved. |
| 1. Other |
| **DISADVANTAGES/RISKS** |
| 1. It may lose the CBC dimension to become a transnational programme: no more specific focus on borders and difficult neighbourly integration among border communities; |
| 1. Ownership of programmes can be affected (i.e. no more bilateral structures led by relevant ministries); |
| 1. It will involve discontinuity, upheaval of the system |
| 1. Agreeing the status and structure of the single “managing” authority may prove very complex (An authority in a neighbouring Member State? An authority in one of the beneficiaries? An international/regional organisation? etc.); |
| 1. The simplification is not paired by efficiency and effectiveness in case the new programme is managed by one of the neighbouring (i.e. relatively new) Member States as lead country; |
| 1. The Beneficiary Countries do not benefit from the management of CBC programmes as an exercise to acquire experience for the future management of structural funds. |
| 1. Other |

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| **OPTION 3** |
| **ADVANTAGES** |
| 1. It integrates the CBC programming into the national sector programming by obliging the beneficiaries to take explicit account of the needs or consequences in border areas, either domestically or in neighbouring countries; |
| 1. Sustainability of CBC programmes is enhanced; |
| 1. CBC would be perceived as a net contributor to national development; |
| 1. Coherence with existing coordination platforms or initiatives (e.g. WBIF; national facilities for project pipelines; Civil Society Facility, etc.) is increased, which addresses the issue of isolation of CBC from national and donor-funded programmes and from the regional initiatives. |
| 1. Other |
| **DISADVANTAGES/RISKS** |
| 1. Harmonisation of procedures can be affected, as well as the concept of CBC for the benefit of cross-border areas; |
| 1. It will involve discontinuity, upheaval of the system; |
| 1. The institutional set-up is not simplified; |
| 1. It could be difficult to ensure the CBC character of supported actions; |
| 1. CBC would have to compete for securing financial resources with strong national strategic sectors; |
| 1. The beneficiaries do not profit from the management of CBC programmes as an exercise to acquire experience for the future management of structural funds; |
| 1. The visibility of CBC/EU assistance in border regions may be impaired. |
| 1. Other |

# Analysis of opinions on advantages and disadvantages/risks per option

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| **Comparison of advantages and disadvantages/risks per option** |

**Following the analysis of the six questionnaires, the option 1a turns out to be the most favoured one, based on the number of advantages the respondents agreed upon and the very low number of disagreements expressed on the suggested advantages.**

The second most favoured option is 1b which had 18 agreements on the described advantages while its number of disagreements on the advantages is the lowest (9). Respondents strongly objected to the described advantages of the options 2 and 3 as it can be seen in the chart above. It can be thus concluded that they didn’t regard these two options as an improvement for future CBC programmes.

The analysis on the respondents’ opinion on the disadvantages and/or risks of every option confirms the results of the analysis on the advantages, that is, the greatest number of disadvantages and risks were counted for the options 2 and 3, followed by the option 1b, while the smallest number of disadvantages described is related to the option 1a. Most of the disagreements on disadvantages are for options 1a and 2, followed by options 1b and 3.

As it can be seen from the summary comparison of advantages and disadvantages per option, where the agreements with advantages and the disagreements with disadvantages were construed as positive for the option, whereas the disagreements with the advantages and the agreements with the disadvantages would have to be read as negative for the option, the most favoured one turned out to be 1a as the one having the majority of positive comments and the smallest number of negative ones.

Nevertheless, it has to be noted that **the summarized analysis is not too accurate** since some of the ‘agreements’ and ‘disagreements’ on the suggested advantages and disadvantages were granted as ‘limited’ or with some preconditions and similar. Therefore, the **analysis should pay special attention to individual comments**.

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| **Summary of comparison of advantages and disadvantages/risks per option** |

# Detailed summary per option

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| **OPTION 1A:**  ***The current set-up of The IPA II CBC programmes is maintained (i.e. bilateral CBC programmes) and the financial allocation of the programme is increased to fund more sizeable projects.*** |

**Option 1A - Advantage 1: It builds on the experience and know-how gained by the EC and the beneficiaries under the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 CBC programmes: good neighbourly relations and local development are enhanced;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage[[1]](#footnote-1): | 6 |
| Comments:   * Lessons learned within 2007 2013 and 2014 2020 perspective are crucial for further development of capacities and implementation of quality projects in the border regions. * Through the financial perspective 2007-2013 neighbourly relations have been developed between the countries within the CBC Programme. The same practice continued in 2014-2020. * We agree with the fact that the know-how and experience gained by all the actors should be preserved and further enhanced, and bilateral Programmes can continue to exist, but management and coordination modalities should be substantially improved (suggestions provided in the cells below). There is a huge need to increase the portfolio of Territorial Cooperation Programmes to fund more sizeable projects. This is a horizontal suggestion which can go fine with all the options introduced in this exercise. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 0 |
| No comments | |

**Option 1A - Advantage 2: It is fully aligned with the geographic and programmatic practice on CBC programmes in the EU, as is applicable in all Interreg periods including 2014-2020, and as such the most relevant option for pre-accession preparation;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 5 |
| Comments:   * Bilateral and trilateral CBC programmes, alongside with transnational ones, are suitable platform for cooperation and important tool for preparation for structural funds. * Even better alignment should be enabled | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| * Territorial Cooperation Programmes are currently fragmented and overlapping in many cases. There are CBC Programmes, transnational programmes, trilateral Programmes with different approaches of management and procedures. We can notice that many programmes cover the same geographic area and support more or less the same priorities. There is a huge need for simplification of procedures and bureaucracies as regards the implementation of Projects and Programmes. A great need is also to align and unify the procedures among Programmes managed by DG Regio and DG Near. In addition, we strongly suggest that in the post-2020 period the management of Programmes shall be transferred only to DG Regio. | |

**Option 1A - Advantage 3: It builds on the continuity and stability of the current system;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 5 |
| Comments:   * Continuity of EU support and stabile implementation structure are precondition for further development of capacities of various actors (Municipalities, CSOs, development agencies) | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 1 |
| * It should be noted that the current system is not substantially stable and consolidated. Especially in Programmes coordinated under “indirect management” there are many problems and deficiencies. Contracting Authorities, being bodies of the public administration, cause delays and show hesitation in many situations. CAs under indirect management, are already tasked to follow many other issues inside their administration and the management of the CBC Programmes is not really among the top priorities. The process is being managed according to the principle “learning by doing” which is not safe. On the other hand, the “veto” of the Contracting Authorities (either in indirect or direct management) is not acceptable and does not bring the process in the right direction. In addition, the management of the TA through a joint Service Contract has been one of the main failures of the current programming period. | |

**Option 1A - Advantage 4: The capacities of the Beneficiary Countries, in the perspective of the management of structural funds, are enhanced; i.e. preparation for ERDF-funded programmes is maintained as a key objective, which guarantees continued support by DG REGIO.**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 6 |
| Comments:   * This is definitely the true. Different implementation modalities in bilateral, trilateral, transnational programmes proven to be a good learning platform for the Beneficiary Countries. Practice also showed increase of capacities and raising interest of potential beneficiaries (there is not enough funds to support quality project proposals). * IPA Programmes are good preparation for all levels for the future usage of Structural Funds * This is true for each of the options introduced in this Paper. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 0 |
| No comments | |

**Option 1A - Advantage 5: Other**

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| Respondents who provided more advantages: | 1 |
| Comments:   * The increase of funding enables more meaningful and impactful projects in the eligible area * The management structures continue in the same format, more time and space for up-grading * The beneficiaries have relevant information on the programmes, more time and space for deepening of their knowledge | |

**Option 1A - Disadvantage 1: The institutional set-up is not simplified (unless a streamlined system is agreed which consists of fewer stakeholders/structures involved);**

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| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| Comments:   * Agree to a certain extend. * With better alignment with the systems implemented in structural funds, this disadvantage could be avoided * This would be a big disadvantage which will persist to exist if the system is not changed. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| * Disagree. Simplifications are established for IPA 2014-2020. We do not see possibilities for further simplification from our point of view. | |

**Option 1A - Disadvantage 2: If a dual implementing mode (direct and indirect management, depending on the beneficiaries involved) remains in place, the capacities of the beneficiaries in the perspective of the management of structural funds will be unevenly developed;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 4 |
| Comments:   * Not even all EU Member States have the same capacity for implementation of EU funded programs and that will remain in WB as well. Even development is not realistic. * Totally agree. Keeping the same status quo is already a step back. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 2 |
| * Disagree. The issue depends on other developments on national level. It cannot be result by set up of one or two CBC programmes. * Structures in all the countries are involved into programs which are in the indirect and direct mode of implementation, so we are all familiar with both management modalities. From the other hand, management of structural funds implies different rules and different structure. | |

**Option 1A - Disadvantage 3: The costs for technical assistance remain high (even if relatively reduced if the CBC budget is expanded).**

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| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| * Disagree. So far has not been too high. * The overall TASC budget is not too high and it fulfilled the needs of the Programme structures. Within the budget the fees for the expert are too high and not in accordance with the market price. The same value could be found with a lower price. * TA is needed not just for the support of potential beneficiaries and grant implementers, but for the Operating structures and National Authorities aiming on proper impl. of the programmes and capacity development. * Cooperation programmes are labour intensive and frequent and direct interaction between structures and people is one of the best features of the programmes. The TA concept should follow the same path as in programmes between EU Member States. * Rather than the costs, TA needs a re-conceptualization of the way how it shall be managed and what shall be funded with it. The prior approval of expenditures is a wrong solution that shall be changed under the new programming period (this has delayed all the processes, postpone many activities, decrease the absorption capacities, etc). If the CBC budget will be increased, than the TA allocations can be reduced to 5% of the Programme budget. | |

**Option 1A - Disadvantage 4: Other**

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| Respondents who provided more disadvantages: | 1 |
| * The structures under direct management have difficulties showing improved performance because of the overstressed role of the Delegations in the implementation of the programmes (selection of actions, monitoring and evaluation…) * The consultative role of the JMCs remains with low impact in the preparation of the calls and selection of actions | |

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| **OPTION 1B:**  ***The current set-up of the IPA II CBC programmes is maintained but with a revised geographical and programmatic coverage (i.e. trilateral, quadrilateral or even multilateral/transnational programmes), as well as an increased financial allocation that would allow funding more sizeable projects.*** |

**Option 1B - Advantage 1: It would imply streamlining the number of managing/coordination entities and a significant reduction of the institutional complexity;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| Comments:   * Agree with certain extend. * We agree with this element. We support the idea of the trilateral Programmes (not very high in number, though) and a potential “Western Balkans” Transnational Programme. Nevertheless, in both cases (Trilateral & Transnational) the management modalities shall be revised according to the suggestions provided above (Option 1a). The Contracting Authorities shall be dedicated bodies and they shall have limited power in the process. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * Single CA introduced within 2014-2020 period has already reduced institutional complexity. We do not see possibilities for further simplification. * This would reduce ownership, since involved structures * On the contrary, trilateral, quadrilateral or even multilateral / transnational programmes have more difficulties in implementation regarding reaching consensus for every issue such as border areas, thematic priorities and objectives. Also TA spending is more substantial due to the complexity. * We do not find the idea of Quadrilateral Programmes as a feasible idea. Better to focus in a bigger Transnational Programme. | |

**Option 1B - Advantage 2: Flexibility by allowing bilateral programmes to coexist along with trilateral or multilateral ones;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 6 |
| Comments:   * Agree. However, even now we have this coexistence. Bilateral IPA CBP BiH-MNE coexists with Trilateral programme Cro-BiH-MNE, and in addition these three countries participate in three multilateral transnational programmes: MED, ADRION and DANUBE. Adding trilateral or multilateral programmes on top on existing bil. programmes would lead to dissipation of money. * Agree with certain extend * If the flexibility exists, the decision on the concept of the programmes should be given to the participating countries. * Agree. The future set-up can include: - Many Bilateral Programmes, - Few Trilateral, One transnational | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 1B - Advantage 3: The focus on bigger and more strategic operations would be increased;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * Disagree. Focus on bigger strategic operations would be increased only by increasing financial allocations that would allow funding more sizeable projects. Keeping bilateral programmes to coexist with new trilateral or multilateral ones, as mentioned above, could actually reduce chances to have increased financial allocations. Even without bilateral programmes, the newly established trilateral ones would need significantly bigger allocations in order for strategic operations to be realised. Reaching agreement among more than two countries on selection of strategic operations would we very difficult. * This depends on the Programme document, available budget and modalities for the implementation. If we have the same budget for IPA countries, we can decide to finance fewer projects with concreate impact. On the other hand, limiting programme impl. just on bigger projects would have downsize effect, having in mind large programme territories, diverse needs and large number of potential beneficiaries. If we want to enhance neighbourly relations, we need to diversify and support also smaller projects which bring positive change on local level, from both side of the border. Mix with bigger projects, large grants with possibility for re- granting and small (people to people projects) would have best effect on the border regions. * Number of participating countries does not have impact on size or quality of operation * This doesn’t have to do with the number of participating countries, but with the approach that the Programmes will follow, the Guidelines of each CfPs, the rules set, the financial allocations, etc. | |

**Option 1B - Advantage 4: The visibility of the programme at national and regional level would be enhanced;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Agree with certain extend. Visibility would be increased on regional level. * Agree to a certain extent | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Disagree. In the recommendations of the 2007-2013 evaluation of the CBC programmes it was emphasized that CBC is highly visible!!! * Number of participating countries does not have impact visibility | |

**Option 1B - Advantage 5: It would improve the performance framework (more coherence in defining largely applicable sets of indicators and objectives).**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Agree to a certain extent | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Disagree. This does not depend on geographical coverage. Bigger programmes might experience even bigger problems in defining performance framework. * This could be reached using common monitoring platform. * Not relevant for the performance framework | |

**Option 1B - Advantage 6: Other**

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| Respondents who provided more advantages: | 1 |
| Comments:   * The increase of funding enables more meaningful and impactful projects in the eligible area * The management structures continue in the same format, more time and space for up-grading. * The increased number of countries participating in the programmes enables closer cooperation of the existing national bilateral structures * The beneficiaries have relevant information on the programmes, more time and space for deepening of their knowledge | |

**Option 1B - Disadvantage 1: As some of the Beneficiary Countries would not lead any CBC programme, these would lose the experience gained so far in managing CBC funds as a way to support the preparation for the future use of ERDF-type funds;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| * Agree. This is an important argument. * Agree. But the idea of “leading a Programme” should not exist. Rules shall be made as such in order to give equal powers to all countries and actors involved. The setting up of regional dedicated structures to coordinate programmes (outside the public administration of the countries) is the solution to this wrong perception of “leading the Programme”. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| * If the countries are not managing any CBC programme at this moment, they are not gaining any managing experience anyway. | |

**Option 1B - Disadvantage 2: The programming phase could be hampered by the difficulty of beneficiaries in agreeing on the border areas, thematic priorities and objectives.**

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| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 3 |
| * Agree. As well as on strategic projects. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 3 |
| * Considering implementation od 2014-2020 programmes and building on these experiences, it would not be difficult to programme and prioritize support for the upcoming perspective. * Experience has shown that even three or more countries have agreed among them during the Programming phase. This should not be considered as a risk. | |

**Option 1B - Disadvantage 3: Other**

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| --- | --- |
| Respondents who provided more disadvantages: | 1 |
| * Large geographical programme areas – less possibilities for local impact * Programme priorities targeting larger geographical areas do not allow for targeted actions * Due to the increased size of the programme the management structures will be too big and too centralized. The ownership of the programme and actions in the field is very difficult to maintain. * Beneficiaries will have to adjust to the new geography of the programme, develop new partnerships. Smaller and more local oriented beneficiaries will have fewer opportunities. | |

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| **OPTION 2:**  ***The management of the programmes is centralised with one single managing or contracting authority at regional level, while the financial allocation of the programme is increased to fund more sizeable projects.*** |

**Option 2 - Advantage 1: It greatly simplifies the institutional set-up (i.e. one joint technical secretariat, one joint monitoring committee and one contracting authority);**

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| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| Comments:   * However, at the level of each participating country responsible national bodies and control bodies must be in place. Also due to the size of JMC, it might be difficult for managing. Furthermore, number of JTS staff would be higher and JTS located in one country meaning that coverage of the programme area might be unequal, unless JTS field offices/info points would be established in each participating country which we do not consider as simplification. * It is true that this simplifies the procedures and the institutional set-up. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Simplification of the institutional set up would not imply less work for national structures. The responsibility for proper implementation of programme and monitoring the project implementation remains the same, from national perspective. * Management of Programmes cannot be centralized, only option could be an introduction of one transnational programme for WB. In that case, the nature of the programme is not cross-border but it focuses on the transnational aspects of cooperation between whole countries. We cannot see the feasibility of managing local cross-border programme by the country that does not participate in that programme (e.g. entity in Serbia managing programme between Albania and FYROM). * Nevertheless, we do not agree that there shall be a single JMC. We have further elaborated this option in the Option 4 below. | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 2: Only one management mode is used (e.g. shared management mode by a Member State) thus better allowing the harmonisation of rules and procedures in the whole region;**

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| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 5 |
| Comments:   * Agree with certain extend. * Yes, if there is one, transnational programme and not one programme comprised of 10 or more CBC programmes * Agree up to a certain extent | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 1 |
| * If a member state is involved as MA it is not IPA-IPA programme at all. | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 3: The management of CBC at DG NEAR level (including the DEUs) is greatly simplified (i.e. fewer resources involved);**

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| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| Comments:   * Agree with certain extend. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| * Irrelevant for us. * It would be even more complex. | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 4: It increases the focus on bigger and more strategic operations;**

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| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * Disagree. Not necessarily. Focus on bigger strategic operations would be increased only by increasing financial allocations that would allow funding more sizeable projects, irrespective of management mode. Reaching agreement on strategic operations among many stakeholders might be difficult. * This depends on the Programme document, available budget and modalities for the implementation. If we have the same budget for IPA countries, we can decide to finance fewer projects with concreate impact. On the other hand, limiting programme impl. just on bigger projects would have downsize effect, having in mind large programme territories, diverse needs and large number of potential beneficiaries. If we want to enhance neighbourly relations, we need to diversify and support also smaller projects which bring positive change on local level, from both side of the border. Mix with bigger projects, large grants with possibility for re- granting and small (people to people projects) would have best effect on the border regions. * Not relevant. | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 5: Coherence and complementarity with other strategic frameworks or initiatives is favoured;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| Comments:   * Agree with certain extend. Coherence is only efficient if it is regulated from the very beginning. If it is an option and brought at later stage, it is usually artificial, complicated and inefficient. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Disagree. Coherence and complementarity with other strategic frameworks or initiatives does not depend on size of the programme nor management mode but on mechanisms ensured trough NAs and appropriate composition of JMC. The required coherence and complementarity is also reachable in smaller programmes. * Not relevant | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 6: Visibility of the programme at national and regional level is increased;**

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| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 1 |
| Comments:   * Visibility would be increased on regional level. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 6 |
| * Disagree. Visibility of the programme does not depend on size of the programme nor management mode. * Bilateral programmes are more visible on national level and more connected with current momentum of * Not relevant. * Not so sure about this. Having a big machinery like the single MA, would impose some difficulties related to visibility. | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 7: The performance framework (more coherence in defining largely applicable set of indicators and objectives) would be improved.**

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| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * Exactly the opposite, reaching agreement in the process of defining objectives and largely applicable set of indicators might be very difficult among so many stakeholders. * This could be reached using common monitoring platform. * Not relevant. | |

**Option 2 - Advantage 8: Other**

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| Respondents who provided more advantages: | 1 |
| * The increase of funding enables more meaningful and impactful projects in the eligible area. | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 1: It may lose the CBC dimension to become a transnational programme: no more specific focus on borders and difficult neighbourly integration among border communities;**

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| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| * Agree. CBC dimension would be definitely lost. * Yes. CBC dimension would be decreased, due to large programme territory and limited number of operations to be funded. * Agree, but if the strategy is to do transnational cooperation that encompasses whole territories of the WB countries. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| * Do not agree totally with this risk. As you can see in our Option 4, we support the idea of a single Managing Authority which will be composed of many units with intra-regional and international staff, where each Unit will deal with one Programme (bilateral, trilateral and Transnational). | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 2: Ownership of programmes can be affected (i.e. no more bilateral structures led by relevant ministries);**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| * Do not Agree. Ministries shall not be in charge for managing a Programme. Dedicated structures shall be set up for this purpose, independent form national administrations. Ministries (i.e. NIPAC) shall be in charge for coordinating the participation of the specific country to the Programme but contracting of projects shall not be a responsibility of the national structures which will have this task as an additional one. | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 3: It will involve discontinuity, upheaval of the system**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| * Agree. Structures developed so far would not be used anymore and human resources developed so far would not be used. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| * As mentioned under Option 1a, the current system is not substantially stable and consolidated. | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 4: Agreeing the status and structure of the single “managing” authority may prove very complex (An authority in a neighbouring Member State? An authority in one of the beneficiaries? An international/regional organisation? etc.);**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 5 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 1 |
| * The three options are possible and entirely feasible. We have elaborated this element in our proposal under Option 4 below. | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 5: The simplification is not paired by efficiency and effectiveness in case the new programme is managed by one of the neighbouring (i.e. relatively new) Member States as lead country;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 3 |
| * Agree. In addition, if a member state is involved as MA it is not IPA-IPA programme any more. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 3 |
| * This depends on many factors and can be judged case by case. * Transnational programmes are designed to tackle specific challenges that are unique for the territory covered by the programme. Inclusion of the EU Member State’s territory that is not sharing same challenges as other WB territories only because it is EU Member State should be avoided. | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 6: The Beneficiary Countries do not benefit from the management of CBC programmes as an exercise to acquire experience for the future management of structural funds.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| * Agree to a certain extent. * Agree up to a certain extent. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 2 - Disadvantage 7: Other**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who provided more disadvantages: | 2 |
| * Coverage of the programme area by the JTS would not be equal due to the fact that the area would be huge and JTS located in one country. * The management structures are changed. New teams and structures need to adjust and fine tune their functioning. * Due to the increased size of the programme the management structures will be too big and too centralized. The ownership of the programme and actions in the field is very difficult to maintain. * Beneficiaries will have to adjust to the new structures that will most probably be distant in both geographical terms and stage of management. | |

|  |
| --- |
| **OPTION 3:**  ***The CBC programmes are integrated into national sector programmes or in multi-country programmes and their financial allocation is increased for more sizeable projects.*** |

**Option 3 - Advantage 1: It integrates the CBC programming into the national sector programming by obliging the beneficiaries to take explicit account of the needs or consequences in border areas, either domestically or in neighbouring countries;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * It is not seen feasible to expect from a country to take into account needs or consequences in neighbouring country(ies) within the national sector programming. * It would be difficult to shift potential beneficiaries to new approach. Centralization and top–down approach does not go in line with specificities of local level in the border regions. * CBC is specific Objective even in ESI Funds, it should remain the same in WB given membership perspective | |

**Option 3 - Advantage 2: Sustainability of CBC programmes is enhanced;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * Disagree. Integration into national sector programmes would negatively affect benefit of cross-border areas and congruently the concept of CBC might not be enhanced but disrupted. * It would not bring increased sustainability by integration into sector or multi country programmes, since it depends on projects and monitoring activities. * Not relevant | |

**Option 3 - Advantage 3: CBC would be perceived as a net contributor to national development;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 4 |
| * Disagree. CBC would not be visible any more. Moreover, we strongly believe that current CBC programmes contribute to national development in both participating countries. * CBC is rather small portion of budget comparing to national IPA programmes and it would not bring any substantial change if it is integrated in national sector programmes not to multi country. * Not relevant, CBC is already net contributor to national development | |

**Option 3 - Advantage 4: Coherence with existing coordination platforms or initiatives (e.g. WBIF; national facilities for project pipelines; Civil Society Facility, etc.) is increased, which addresses the issue of isolation of CBC from national and donor-funded programmes and from the regional initiatives.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * Agree. However, as the basic CBC concept would be lost we do not support this option. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this advantage: | 3 |
| * It would be complicated to integrate CBC in this platforms since they are created focusing on specific areas (infrastructure, CSO development, democracy and human rights..) and specific stakeholders. From the other hand, CBC involves variety of stakeholders and beneficiaries form the local level. * Not relevant, CBC is already coherent with existing coordination platforms or initiatives | |

**Option 3 - Advantage 5: Other**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who provided more advantages: | 1 |
| * The increase of funding enables more meaningful and impactful projects in the eligible area * The management structures continue in the same format, more time and space for up-grading * The beneficiaries have relevant information on the programmes, more time and space for deepening of their knowledge * The programmes will have more publicity nationally | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 1: Harmonisation of procedures can be affected, as well as the concept of CBC for the benefit of cross-border areas;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| * CBC and other platforms have different background and it would take a long time and take a lot of effort for harmonization. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 2: It will involve discontinuity, upheaval of the system;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 4 |
| * Agree to a certain extent. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 2 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 3: The institutional set-up is not simplified;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| * It is not clear which setup would be required under this option. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 4: It could be difficult to ensure the CBC character of supported actions;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 5: CBC would have to compete for securing financial resources with strong national strategic sectors;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 6: The beneficiaries do not profit from the management of CBC programmes as an exercise to acquire experience for the future management of structural funds;**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 7: The visibility of CBC/EU assistance in border regions may be impaired.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantage: | 6 |
| No comments. | |
| Respondents who disagreed with this disadvantage: | 0 |
| No comments. | |

**Option 3 - Disadvantage 8: Other**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents who agreed with this disadvantages: | 1 |
| * The structures under direct management have difficulties showing improved performance because of the overstressed role of the Delegations in the implementation of the programmes (selection of actions, monitoring and evaluation…) * The consultative role of the JMCs remains with low impact in the preparation of the calls and selection of actions. * Changes and amendments of the programme documents will be more difficult because of the need for internal consultations within each of the participating country IPA structures. | |

|  |
| --- |
| **OPTION 4:**  ***Suggestion of one of the TWG members*** |

One of the TWG members suggested a modification of the Option 2 as an additional one in the following terms:

*‘A further elaboration of Option 2:* The establishment of a centralized and dedicated Managing Authority located in an EU member state close to the Region (or even in one of the countries of the region) which will be considered as an “extended hand” of the European Commission (DG Regio). This body will be composed of many units with intra-regional and international staff, where each Unit will deal with one Programme (bilateral, trilateral and transnational). This body will have to report only to the EC and not to any of the National Administrations of the Western Balkans. In this manner the interference of specific countries in the management of the Programmes is avoided. Info Point offices shall be set-up in the participating countries to cover the role of the JTS. On the other hand, each Programme shall have its own JMC, but the tasks of the Contracting Authority and Certifying Authority are covered by the Single Managing Authority.’

# Possible innovations

The TWG members were asked to agree or disagree with possible innovations applicable to options 1a, 1b & 2 (and some of them also to option 3) as listed below:

1. Calls could include both small scale grants and larger grants.
2. Some calls could be dedicated to fund one or several strategic projects.
3. Some calls could include only small-scale grants.
4. The thematic priorities proposed at regional CBC level will have a very restricted focus.
5. CBC programmes will have one thematic priority, with one specific objective and a maximum of two results.
6. CBC programmes will have a maximum of three thematic priorities with a detailed list of indicators, but not all of them will be used in the calls. One of them will serve the purpose of reserve.
7. Reduction of the EU maximum co-financing at programme level for operations, for instance, from 85% to 80% in order to increase the local ownership of the CBC programmes.
8. The amount devoted to technical assistance per programme does not need to be defined by a fixed percentage of the EU allocation. A detailed justification will be required.
9. Appropriate analytical reports will be made available to the operating structures (OSs) and joint monitoring committees (JMCs) in advance in order to inform any of their decisions.
10. The OSs and JMCs should recover the role they used to have under the 2007-2013 CBC programmes for the selection of operations, irrespective of the management mode of the programme.
11. All post-2020 programmes should be handled under indirect management.
12. Programme managers should strive to increase the participation of under-represented types of applicants in calls for proposals.
13. The provision of capacity building for the applicants invited to submit full applications on topics such as ‘logical framework matrix focusing on indicators” and ‘budget estimation’ should become regular practice.
14. All procedures without exception should be harmonised, standardised and simplified at regional level.
15. The quality standard of applications has to be raised while application assessment must become more rigorous.
16. Western Balkans CBC stakeholders should recognise the need to look at examples of good practices somewhere else.
17. The contractual implementation of the technical assistance priority should be carried out by grant contracts instead of the current service contracts
18. Other

**Most of the respondents agreed to support almost all proposed innovations, with the striking exception of the one under the no. 5 'CBC programmes will have one thematic priority, with one specific objective and a maximum of two results' (all disagreed).** A similarly critical reaction can be also noted for three other innovations, to wit: the innovation no. 7 regarding the 'reduction of the EU maximum co-financing at programme level for operations, for instance, from 85% to 80% in order to increase the local ownership of the CBC programmes', the innovation no. 4 'The thematic priorities proposed at regional CBC level will have a very restricted focus' and the innovation no. 8 'The amount devoted to technical assistance per programme does not need to be defined by a fixed percentage of the EU allocation'.

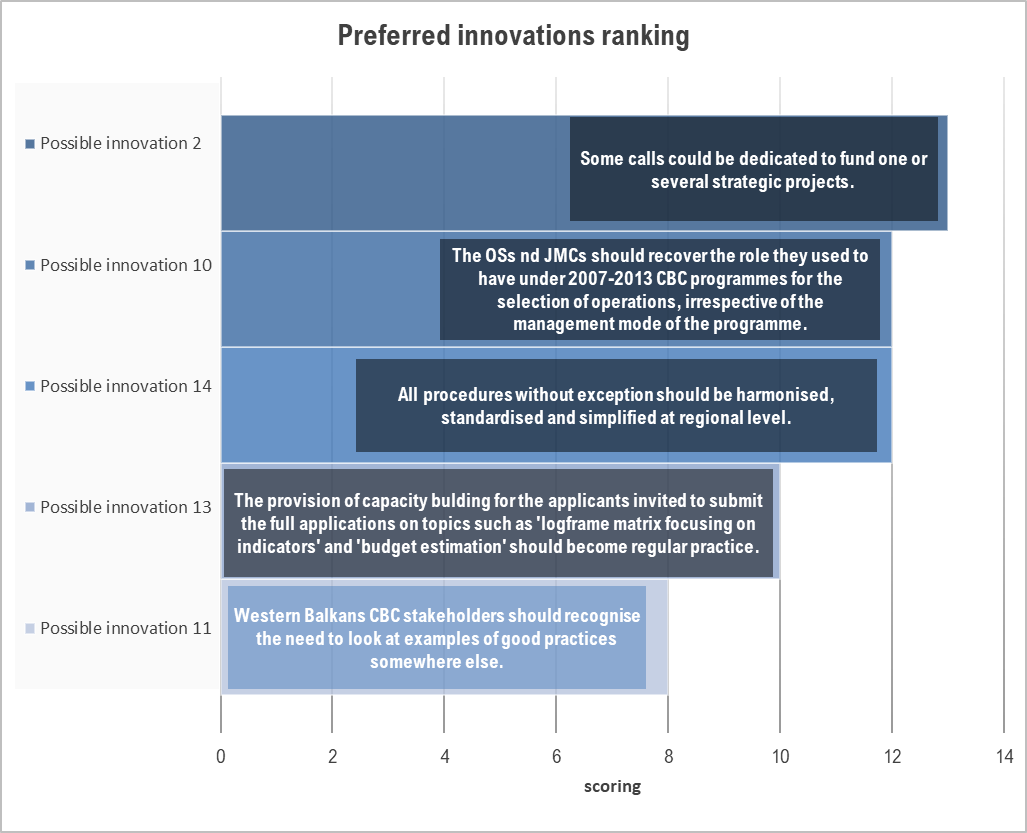
# Innovations ranking

The TWG members were asked to rank a maximum of five innovations into two categories: (i) the preferred ones and (ii) the most unnecessary. Preferred innovations received scores from 5 to 1 starting from the most preferred, and unnecessary was scored from -5 to -1 starting from the most unnecessary. The double ranking results and a scoring legend are presented below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scoring legend:** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. preferred innovations (maximum of five, ordered by preference) | | | | | | | |
|  | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 | No. 5 |  |  |
| points | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. unnecessary innovations (maximum of five, ordered by unacceptance) | | | | | | | |
|  | No. 1 | No. 2 | No. 3 | No. 4 | No. 5 |  |  |
| points | -5 | -4 | -3 | -2 | -1 |  |  |

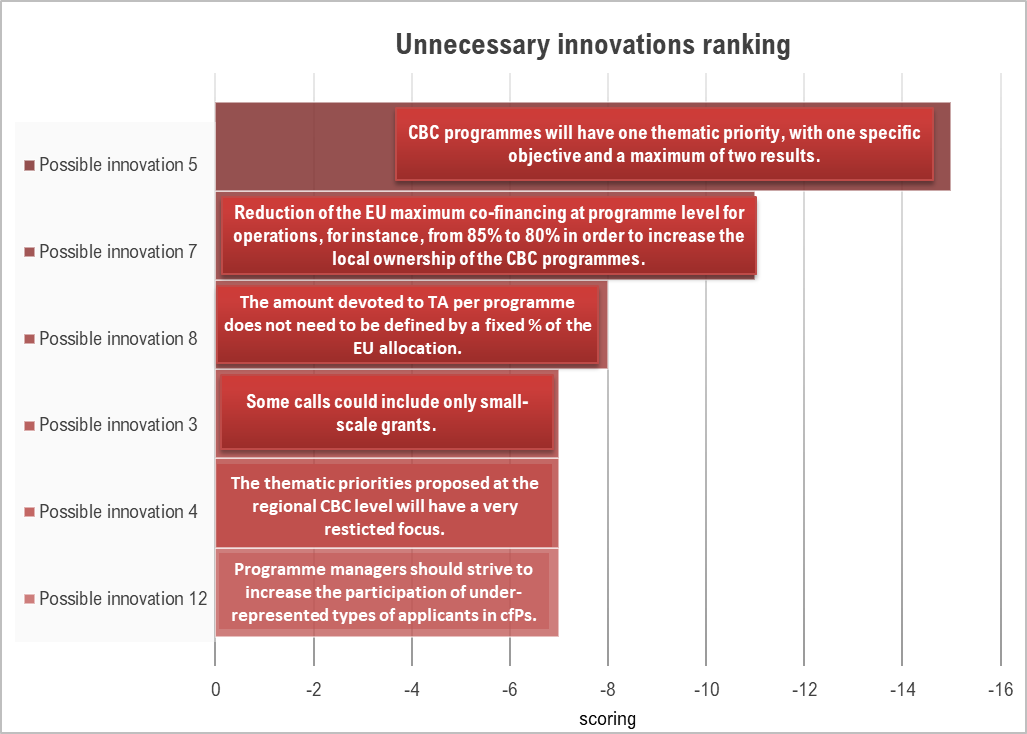
The analysis shows that the most preferred innovations are

* ‘Some calls to be dedicated to fund one or several strategic projects’, followed by
* ‘The OSs and JMCs should recover the role they used to have under the 2007-2013 CBC programmes for the selection of operations, irrespective of the management mode of the programme’ and
* ‘All procedures without exception should be harmonised, standardised and simplified at regional level’.



The ranking of unnecessary innovations is as follows:

* ‘CBC programmes will have one thematic priority, with one specific objective and a maximum of two results’, followed by
* ‘Reduction of the EU maximum co-financing at programme level for operations, for instance, from 85% to 80% in order to increase the local ownership of the CBC programmes’ and
* ‘The amount devoted to technical assistance per programme does not need to be defined by a fixed percentage of the EU allocation’.



# Conclusion

Following the scrutiny of opinions expressed by the members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on the characteristics of post-2020 CBC programmes, the option that received the highest support is the option 1a, that is, the current set-up of the IPA II CBC programmes should be maintained (bilateral CBC programmes) and the financial allocation of the programme is increased to fund more sizeable projects.

The second most favoured option is 1b, while for the options 2 and 3 the respondents had many objections. Therefore, the latter two options are not regarded as an improvement for the future CBC programmes. However, decision makers should pay special attention to individual comments under ‘advantages’ and ‘disadvantages’ of the options since they provide important nuances on the TWG members’ opinions.

When it comes to innovations, most of the respondents agreed upon the majority of proposed innovations with the great exception of the one proposing that the CBC programmes should have one thematic priority, with one specific objective and a maximum of two results; they all disagreed upon this innovation. A similar negative reaction was shown regarding the one putting forward a reduction of the EU maximum co-financing at programme level for operations from 85% to 80% in order to increase the local ownership of the CBC programmes, and the innovation suggesting that the thematic priorities proposed at regional CBC level should have a very restricted focus.

The TWG members ranked five possible innovations in order of importance. The three which received the largest backing were:

* ‘some calls should be dedicated to fund one or several strategic projects’;
* ‘the OSs and JMCs should recover the role they used to have under the 2007-2013 CBC programmes for the selection of operations, irrespective of the management mode of the programme’, and
* ‘all procedures without exception should be harmonised, standardised and simplified at regional level’.

On the other hand, the TWG members saw the least benefit in the following three innovations:

* ‘CBC programmes would have one thematic priority, with one specific objective and a maximum of two results’;
* ‘reduction of the EU maximum co-financing at programme level for operations from 85% to 80% in order to increase the local ownership of the CBC programmes’; and
* ‘the amount devoted to technical assistance per programme should not be defined by a fixed percentage of the EU allocation’.

1. Please note that not all respondents who agreed or disagreed with the advantages and disadvantages provided written arguments for it. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)