Support to Quality Monitoring Systems and Methodologies

of Projects and Programmes of External Assistance

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Study on Office Quality Support Groups and their Effectiveness in Improving Project and Programme Design

STE Mission – Final Report

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations 5

1 Executive Summary and Overall Key Findings 6

1.1 Summary findings on the working of the oQSG process 7

1.2 Summary findings on the issues raised at oQSG 1 and 2 8

1.3 Summary findings from the ROM reports 9

1.4 Future Practice of ex-ante Assessment 9

1.5 Methodology for future oQSG studies 10

1.6 Key Constraints and Caveats 11

2 Introduction and methodology 12

3 Findings related to the oQSG process 14

3.1 Background to the oQSG process 14

3.2 Structure of the oQSG process 15

3.3 Finding – Completeness of the oQSG Exercise 16

3.3.1 Data Presentation – Documentation Available in oQSG1 and 2 (%) 16

3.3.2 Comment 16

3.4 Finding – oQSG1 and oQSG2 Decisions 17

3.4.1 Data Presentation – oQSG 1 & 2 Meeting Decisions (by option) 17

3.4.2 Comment 17

3.5 Finding – Identification of A and B Projects for oQSG Meetings 18

3.5.1 Data Presentation – Project Category Prior to the oQSG Meeting 18

3.5.2 Comment 18

3.6 Finding- Number of Iterations at oQSG1 and oQSG2 taken from Documents Analysed 19

3.6.1 Data Presentation – Number of Iterations 19

3.6.2 Comment 19

3.7 Finding – Response to Follow up of oQSG1 Recommendations on the oQSG2 Checklist 20

3.7.1 Data Presentation – No. of Cases where oQSG1 Recommendations were Applied 20

3.7.2 Comment 20

3.8 Findings on the Time Gap between the oQSG1 Meeting and oQSG2 21

3.8.1 Data Presentation – No. of Days between oQSG1 and 2 Meetings 21

3.8.1 Comment 21

3.9 Finding - Use of Background Data 22

3.9.1 Data presentation – Information Sources Used to aid Project Identification and Formulation 22

3.9.2 Comment 22

3.10 Finding – Use of Logframes 23
3.10.1 Data Presentation – No. of Projects with Logical Frameworks 23
3.10.2 Comment 23
3.11 Finding – Changes to Logframes 24
3.11.1 Data Presentation - Changes in Logframes 24
3.11.2 Comment 24
3.12 Additional Findings 25
4 Findings Related to Issues raised during oQSG1 and oQSG2 27
4.1 Background to the Exercise 27
4.2 Issues from the Checklists and the Minutes of oQSG1 28
4.2.1 Data Presentation – No. of Issue Occurrences in the oQSG1 Phase 28
4.2.2 Comment 29
4.2.3 Difference between the Issues Identified in the oQSG1 Checklists and the oQSG1 Meeting 30
4.3 Issues from the Checklists and the Minutes of oQSG2 30
4.3.1 Data presentation - No. of Issue Occurrences in the oQSG2 Checklists and Minutes 31
4.3.2 Comment 31
4.4 Difference between the issues identified in the oQSG2 checklists and meeting. 32
4.4.1 Comment 32
4.5 Difference between oQSG1 and oQSG2 Checklists and Meetings 32
4.5.1 Comment 33
5 FINDINGS RELATing TO INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS 34
5.1 Creating a Project Profile 34
5.1.1 Data Presentation 34
5.1.2 Comment 35
5.2 Synthesis of The Project Profiles 35
5.2.1 Data presentation – Issue Occurrence (%) 36
5.2.2 Comment 36
6 Findings Emerging from the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports 37
6.1 The ROM Process 37
6.2 ROM Findings Related to Positive Issues 37
6.2.1 Data Presentation – Occurrence of Positive ROM Issues 38
6.2.2 Comment 38
6.3 ROM Findings Related to Issues that Need to be Addressed 39
6.3.1 Data Presentation - Occurrence of Negative ROM Issues 39
6.3.2 Comment 39

6.4 Quality of oQSG from the Perspective BCS 6.1 of ROM 40
6.4.1 Data Presentation – Type of Response to BCS 6.1 41
6.4.2 Comment 41
6.5 Comparison of oQSG and ROM Findings 42
6.5.1 Data Presentation – Comparison of Issues Raised in oQSG1, oQSG2 and ROM 43
6.5.2 Comment 43
7 Conclusions, suggestions AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PILOT STUDY 44
7.1 The oQSG Process 44
7.2 Lessons learnt from this pilot study for future studies 46

Annexes

Annex 1: oQSG Pilot Study Inception Report 48
Annex 2: oQSG Pilot Study Step 2: Identification of Variables 55
Annex 3: Project Profiles 81
Annex 4: Terms of Reference 87

List of Abbreviations

ACP	Africa Caribbean & Pacific
AF	Action Fiche
BCS	Background Conclusion Sheet
CRIS	Common RELEX Information System
DAC	Development Aid Committee
FA	Financing Agreement
FPs	Financial Proposals
IF	Identification Fiche
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
MR	Monitoring Report
oQSG	Office of Quality Support Group
PG	Partner Government
PSS	Project Summary Sheet
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SPSP	Sector Policy Support Programme
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based (indicators)
ToR	Terms of Reference
TM	Task Manager
TAPs	Technical and Administrative Provisions

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND OVERALL KEY FINDINGS

According to the Terms of Reference of this Pilot Study, "the general objective (of this unit) is to support the Commission Services in developing and improving the quality of monitoring systems and methodologies of European external assistance."

"The purpose of the pilot study is to determine whether the oQSG (office of Quality Support Group) process resulted in positive changes in project design." The present study was asked to assess the oQSG process in the period 2007-2009.

In answer to the purpose, this pilot study's findings provide an indication that the oQSG process does result in positive changes in project design, because the oQSG process identifies many issues that logically need to be addressed if such design is to be improved. This is further substantiated by the fact that subsequent Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) reports indicate in the majority of the cases that potential design issues addressed by oQSG did not re-emerge in the ROM reports.

However, constraints on the methodology adopted make it difficult to confirm conclusively how far the oQSG process adds the value intended because:

- There was no control data available against which to compare projects that have been through oQSG with those that did not;
- The oQSG process changed during the study period, in particular in response to an Instruction Note in 2009, which resulted in variations in the way the oQSG process was applied within the sample of 41 projects used for the study;
- There are no pre-set targets for the process of oQSG, (in particular there are no measurable targets for quality improvement through the oQSG system).

The expected results from this pilot study are three-fold and summarised as follows:

a) Identify the factors in the oQSG process which contribute to the eventual level of success of projects and programmes, including the extent to which input from the quality assessments are incorporated into the projects and whether they can be attributed to achieving better results, (Subsection 1.1 - 1.3);
b) Draw lessons from the analysis which could influence the future practice of ex-ante assessment (Subsection 1.4);
c) Develop a methodology that can be applied to subsequent studies highlighting potential areas for future investigation using the oQSG data (Subsection 1.5).

The present study points out that its comments and findings are constrained to the period 2007-2009. However, the above-mentioned Instruction Note from the Commission in 2009, resulted in changes to the oQSG process from January 2010, meaning some of the findings have already been dealt with by this Instruction Note.

1.1 Summary findings on the working of the oQSG process

The pilot study confirms the oQSG process does work as a peer review mechanism through which ad hoc groupings of Commission staff are able to enhance the quality of new projects prepared and presented by Task Managers in its two distinct phases:

- oQSG 1 which assesses issues relating to the **identification** of a project presented in an Identification Fiche (IF) together with supporting documents and;
- oQSG 2 which assesses issues relating to the project's **formulation** presented in an Action Fiche together with supporting documents before it goes to internal committees where formulation is finalised and a financial decision taken (Decision Number).

This is supported by the finding 23 of the 41 projects in the sample (56%) passed through the oQSG1, oQSG2 and ROM assessment without any reference to the 24 different design-related issues identified and applied to assess the oQSG process. This is almost certainly aided by the change of peer group members between oQSG 1 and 2 in order the specific expertise required during the formulation phase are available for comment. Furthermore, the application of standardised checklists also appear to help guide the peer group members through the oQSG phases and prepare for the formal meeting (usually by video conference), when the TM presents the project to the peer group in the presence of the geographical Director concerned together with relevant Heads of Unit. These meetings at first sight appear to rubber stamp project proposals; however, further analysis suggests the groundwork was already done in advance of the meeting through both formal and informal discussion.

Following the oQSG meetings, minutes and completed templates, the IF and AF, etc. are registered in the oQSG database. However, the study concludes this database is not user-friendly because it encodes projects by date (rather than by the Decision Number), making it difficult to identify projects, some of which change their title by the time a Decision Number has been obtained. The database is also only available on the Commission's intranet (not in CRIS), meaning access is restricted to external consultants such as ROM contractors who are supposed to refer to it (BCS section 6.1).

In a small but significant 8% of cases, a number of design-related issues were found to have arisen at oQSG1 and/or oQSG 2 and also during ROM. This suggests the oQSG process may not be sufficiently robust to ensure it the design issues it comments on are rectified before proceeding to the internal committees after oQSG 2. The study provides a list of weaknesses detected in the oQSG process the Commission should take into account when considering its modernisation and improvement. These include:

- Much of the information gained from analysing the oQSG minutes is a repetition of what was already raised in the checklists
- The oQSG meetings were found to cover up to 35 projects in one video conference session lasting around 3 hours. In such cases the meetings appear to be no more than rapid approval exercises and it should be obligatory that the minutes record the fact the peer group has already had dialogue with the TM and assessed the project with the director in a preliminary meeting in which a decision was reached for the meeting itself;

- oQSG2 does not systematically follow up on oQSG1 findings despite there being a question on the checklist of oQSG 2 specifically asking about follow up;
- There is no formal follow-up on oQSG2 to confirm if its requirements have been fulfilled;
- There is limited quality supervision of the oQSG process itself;
- Use of lessons learnt does occur but not in a systematic manner;
- Rarely is a logframe presented in the initial stages of the formulated project presented by the TM and instead it appears to be added in the final step of the oQSG2 process;
- The quality of the observations provided in the checklists was found to vary considerably;
- The templates of the checklists do not mirror the Identification Fiche (IF) and Action Fiche (AF) documents;
- Across the IF, AF Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPS) and Financing Proposals (FPs) it was evident a lot of cutting and pasting is applied with only minor redrafting which suggests a standard format should be applied throughout the process;
- Naming and filing of documents in the oQSG database needs to be done by Decision Number to ensure EU staff can find documents quickly.
- The oQSG database once modernised should be made accessible to external consultants such as ROM monitors who need quick access to the project they are assessing.

1.2 Summary findings on the issues raised at oQSG 1 and 2

The oQSG 1 process focuses on the IF where **macro** questions relating to project relevance are applied, such as, “does it fit with EC and Partner Government (PG) policy?”, “what is the problem to be addressed?”, “what is the project’s logic and focus?”, “what risks and assumptions are being made?” and, “what are other donors doing?”. By and large, the question of policy alignment (EC and PG fit) was found to almost never be an issue. However, on the questions of problem analysis, logic and focus oQSG 1 frequently raised issues. In the case of donor co-ordination, the issues tended to appear more during oQSG2.

At the AF stage, oQSG2 focuses on **micro** level issues such as how the project will actually be designed, implemented and managed. Procedural matters were also found to be important as were all elements of the logframe, although there were no cases where it could be substantiated that the logframe had been used as the central tool for aiding project design through participatory processes.

Issues concerning sustainability, stakeholders’ capacity, stakeholders’ ownership and finance were found to arise during both stages.

Cross cutting issues did not arise very often, which may suggest insufficient attention was paid to them. Horizontal issues and fit with Paris and Millennium Development goals were almost never mentioned, which indicates they may not have been applicable or considered of high importance in the design phase.

In conclusion, the two-stage process of oQSG requires the formulation of different project documents. This is considered to be too “heavy”, encourages a lot of cutting and pasting of

information between documents for the two stages, and can give the impression the two stages "merge" into one. However, given the different macro-micro foci of the two stages there is no case to support the elimination of one stage on the basis of the findings in this study. Concerning the oQSG meetings themselves, it appears their main value is to drive the design process prior to their realisation, rather than the moment when the design is actually to be analysed in-depth. Furthermore, they keep project development to a timetable and usually ensure decisions are reached by the Director as to whether they are to be referred or progress towards a Decision Number.

1.3 Summary findings from the ROM reports

The ROM reports serve as a way of reviewing the quality of the oQSG process once the project is operational, which since 2010 is compulsory in the BCS (section 6.1 - "Role of QSG and ROM in Project Quality"). This pilot study found that for many projects the issues raised during the oQSG process had been addressed by the time the project was operational, indicating the oQSG process does contribute to improving the quality of project design.

However, in several instances ROM found serious issues had not been adequately dealt with in the oQSG process and were affecting implementation, such as on finance, stakeholder capacity, indicators, exit strategy and overall sustainability). This was also the case concerning the lack of a quality LFM despite its importance in EU guidance material such as the PCM guidelines, (2004).

Although, outside of the scope of the present pilot study, reference was made to a few MRs to determine whether question 6.1 in the BCS (2010) had resulted in a better linkage with the design process, but in the cases examined the ROM expert's response to the question was "n/a". This confirms ROM experts either did not have access to the oQSG database on the intranet or the information needed was not available to address this section of the BCS and discuss major issues with the Task Managers.

1.4 Future Practice of ex-ante Assessment

There is clear evidence of limited application of the LFA and its matrix during oQSG1 where the focus is on the Overall Objective, Project Purpose, Risks and Assumptions and the main result areas. This may be explained by the fact the logframe approach is not obligatory during the identification process. During oQSG 2 the LFA should show evidence of fine tuning of the above together with a clear indication of the expected results and their indicators, activities and inputs. However, there were few cases where the design of the project appeared to evolve from a theoretical design into a viable one that could be implemented on time according to the resources to be made available or indeed on the basis of lessons learnt drawn from internal and external sources such as from internal monitoring and audits, evaluations and ROM, documents produced by PGs and reports from other donors.

The study concludes the oQSG process does not need to be radically altered, nor should it become more prescriptive and detailed as this could be interpreted as the creation of a control mechanism, which could reduce the opportunities of open and meaningful dialogue between the TM and his/her peers in HQ. However, the oQSG process does need to change from being primarily one that identifies issues to be resolved to one that also ensures the

resolution of those issues is confirmed. This approach would require additions in the existing guidance and streamlining of the documentation supported by adequate training of EU staff where identified necessary. Training should link the project identification and formulation process with the oQSG process to reinforce the idea the peer review mechanism operates in two distinct parts. The provision of guidance could be developed from the existing oQSG training material and supported through by a help desk that responds to the needs of TMs, such as in identifying relevant sources of lessons learnt or on best practices.

In terms of documentation the pilot study identified a lack of standardisation of the IF and AF formats make it less efficient and effective in ensuring design progress can be tracked from the beginning to the end of the oQSG process. As a result it was not easy to identify how issues raised in oQSG1 were addressed and rectified before passing into oQSG 2 and from oQSG2 into the decision phase. This is not aided by the fact there is no final review or checklist that allows the oQSG peer group to officially confirm whether issues raised during oQSG1 or 2 were fully addressed and/or incorporated into the IF, AF (including the TAPs for the future FA). In contrast the checklists should be more focussed on the macro and micro elements pertaining to the different stages of the oQSG process address.

1.5 Methodology for future oQSG studies

The methodology adopted for this pilot study is based on the methodology used in a previous study on ROM data in 2009, which also had to convert a considerable amount of qualitative data into a form that could be quantitatively summarised.[1] An explanation of the first part of the methodology concerned with the selection of the sample for the pilot study was presented to Unit B1 in the inception report in April 2011 and is attached in Annex 1. The second part of the methodology concerning the analysis phase required the production of Project Summary Sheets (PSS) on each project from which selected data from the oQSG and ROM documents was extracted and encoded under 22 variables (issues relating to project design).

Overall the methodology produced credible and useful information on the oQSG process and its level of influence on project design improvement, which was substantiated through reference to the ROM report.

However, the scaling-up of the methodology in future studies is not possible due to the lack of adequate information in the oQSG database to establish a bigger sample. Furthermore, a larger study would need to rely on suitable computer software specifically designed to process the large amount of data generated. In addition, a wider study should be based on a clear research question that is set against a clear statement on what the oQSG is supposed to achieve (i.e. that data is processed in relation to targets allocated to the oQSG process).

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1 The Methodological Basis for the Study and Guidelines for Future Studies from a previous study Causes underlying the Effectiveness and Impact of EC Development Projects 2009 by Jordi del Bas and Rafael Eguiguren was referred to for a process by which to establish variables (also known as the, “Causality Study”).

Other difficulties associated with the methodology which need to be taken into account before it is up-scaled in the future include:

- It requires the assessment of a huge amount of data that can easily get out of hand and become unwieldy;
- It is not known where the interesting data will emerge so the tendency is always to assess more issues than necessary before scaling down and concentrating analysis on the key issues;
- The variability of the quality of the oQSG data available makes it difficult to come to concrete conclusions;
- The process of converting qualitative data into quantitative data is open to a high degree of subjectivity if the study is undertaken by one person, rather than a small group;
- The methodology opens the door to further analysis options that risk making the study too open ended unless it has clear targets and goals.

1.6 Key Constraints and Caveats

In terms of the main constraints on the study, the most important is the reliability of the information upon which the analysis is based. A considerable amount of oQSG and ROM data exists in the form of checklists, minutes and ROM reports, however little concrete comparable information can be extracted from it due to:

- The lack of a computerised system that facilitates easy identification of oQSG documents;
- The lack of consistency in the way oQSG documents are titled, dated and saved;
- The lack of information available (this does not necessarily mean something was not done;
- The differences in the thoroughness with which both the checklists and ROM reports are completed. For example, some of checklists provide very cursory information while in others it is much more rigorous);
- The changes in the oQSG methodology during the study period 2006-09 (for example, templates for the oQSG checklists were modified, including important modifications during 2009 which entered into effect in 2010. Likewise, the Background Conclusion Sheets for ROM have been through different versions and some questions such as 6.1 relating to the quality of the oQSG process were introduced in 2008 and have since been modified three times to 2010).

Due to these constraints, approximately 75% of total time dedicated to the pilot study had to be spent on data gathering, extraction, classification and collation before it could be analysed. Consequently, only around 25% of the study time was dedicated to analysis and reporting.

Finally, given the nature of the data and the elements of subjectivity that inevitably enter into all the documents some contradictions were bound to emerge within the findings. These do not invalidate the findings but it means the conclusions in this study had to draw a line through all the information to present as clear a picture as possible.

2 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The background to this study was presented to Unit B1 (formerly E5) in an Inception Report on 03/05/2011 (Phase 1). It sets out how the sample of 41 projects was selected for the analysis phase, explains how representative it is of DEVCO's project portfolio by region and how the oQSG information was established in an Excel spreadsheet. This report can be found in Annex 1.

A second report was presented to Unit B1 on 05/05/2011. It explains the proposed methodology for conducting the analysis and the variables to be used in Phase 2 of the ToR. Unit B1 was informed that a central part of the methodology would be the application of the Project Summary Sheet (PSS), in which selected information from all the main documents to be analysed would be accumulated. These documents were the

- oQSG1 Identification Fiche (IF) and
- oQSG1 Check List (CL) and
- oQSG1 Minutes and
- oQSG2 Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) **OR** Action Fiche (AF) **OR** Financing Proposal (FP) and
- oQSG2 Check List (CL) and
- oQSG2 Minutes
- ROM Background Conclusion Sheet (BSC) 1.2 and 6.1 and Monitoring Report (MR) Relevance and Design, Sustainability and Key Comments

This approach was agreed by Unit B1 in May 2011. A copy of the report is attached in Annex 2.

The method for completing the above-mentioned PSS was conducted in two stages. In the first, 19 projects were reviewed which had either an "a" or a "d" grade for BCS question 1.2: "As presently designed, is the intervention logic holding true?" This gave further insight as to which variables were producing valuable data for quantitative analysis. As a result the PSS was amended slightly to eliminate the collection of data which ultimately would serve no real purpose and communicated this to Unit B1 in an up-dated report at the beginning of June. The exercise continued with the remaining 21 projects which had been scored "b" or "c" for the same above-mentioned question. Once all the PSS were complete key information was converted into an Excel spreadsheet in order to commence the quantitative analysis.

The proposed methodology presented in Annex 2 sets out the different sections of the PSS, which are summarised as follows:

- First, the Profile section containing data on region, size, directorate, language etc. Preliminary spreadsheet review showed that the sample sizes for each criterion were too disparate for any meaningful analysis to be undertaken along any of these lines;
- Second, the timescales section in which key data relating to the elapsed time between oQSG 1 and oQSG 2 was recorded.
- The core data collected related to the process of the oQSG and here subsets of data were collected and fully analysed as follows:
    - the QSG procedure, its comprehensiveness and completeness, (Section 3);

  - the issues identified through the analysis of the oQSG documents which should be addressed and improved, (Section 4);
  - the profiles of the individual projects to track whether issues that emerge at one stage are properly dealt with by the subsequent stage (Section 5);
  - the findings relating to quality of design once the project is under implementation taken from the relevant ROM report and comparing them with those on the oQSG process, (Section 6).
- Section 7 is dedicated to conclusions, suggestions and lessons learnt.

Each finding is introduced, substantiated by data in a graphic form and then commented upon in the following sections of this report. Where appropriate, quotes have been added and key issues where subsequent debate would be useful are flagged.

The final section of this report provides conclusions and suggestions for the future development of the oQSG process and recommendations for future studies on the oQSG process.

3 FINDINGS RELATED TO THE OQSG PROCESS

3.1 Background to the oQSG process

The deconcentration of projects to the EU Delegations around the start of the new millennium meant the responsibility for project identification and formulation fell primarily under the remit of EU Delegation staff, supported by EU HQ in Brussels, which included the development of the oQSG process and the employment of contractual experts where necessary.

The formalisation of the oQSG process as the main ex-ante quality assurance mechanism took several years to establish. In July 2005 a note was circulated[2] which stated:

"In April 2005, after the AIDCO re-organisation, Unit F1 launched a survey to all EC Delegations in third countries to complete on a voluntary basis. The aim of the survey was to gather information on the existence and functioning of quality check systems in delegations. This information would then be the basis for the design and implementation in the medium term of a homogenous quality check system in the EC Delegation"

In summary the survey concluded, *"The signal given by the EC Delegations is clear: they claim to have a more proactive role in the QSGs, and overall after the devolution process. Guidance was requested to set up internal quality control systems which would be harmonised, simple and coherent with the HQ organization. Mainly, the delegations asked for an informal system and a common procedure that gives the opportunity to measure results and to foster the coordination between the Headquarters and the Delegations."*

The survey showed that:

- Various systems were in place in which some operated more formally than others;
- No standard type of checklist was used (even though in 2004 a checklist had been issued based on the PCM criteria);
- The main demand was for an informal system and common procedure, supported by training and documentation;
- There was a general request for greater support from HQ particularly in terms of thematic expertise so as to reduce the reliance on external experts.

From documents reviewed during the study it appears that new IF, AF and checklist templates were introduced in June 2006. In 2007[3] further modifications were made in order to clarify the role of each party involved. The requirement for a consolidated checklist was also established so that all views could be contained in one document to aid discussion before the meeting. The exercise placed heavy emphasis on the oQSG process rather than on its purpose. A further modification was undertaken in 2009 following the circulation of an Instruction Note and implemented from 2010.

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2 Note to the Attention of Mr Richelle, Director General AIDCO on Quality check system Survey towards the EC Delegations in third countries 05/07/2005

3 Functioning of the Office Quality Support Groups (oQSGs) Revision of the note of 19.10.06 (no 21520) May 24th 2007

The study concludes the oQSG process started between 2005 and 2007, was generalised between 2007 and 2009 and formalised from 2009/2010.

This study, in conformity with the ToR, does not include any projects that have gone through the latest revision of the oQSG process in 2010. Nor did it review the latest changes to the oQSG process until the analysis was complete in order not to influence the findings.

3.2 Structure of the oQSG process

The oQSG process has two parts or phases that fit with the PCM phases of "Identification" and "Formulation". Conceptually the first, concentrates on assessing design quality relating to "**macro"** issues relating to a project's overall relevance and focus where the more macro elements of design are assessed – does it fit with EC and Partner Government (PG) policy?, what is the "problem" to be addressed?, what is the project's logic and focus?, what risks and assumptions are being made?, what are other donors doing?. This first part (oQSG1) facilitates the move into the second, where design quality is assessed in relation to the "**micro"** issues relating directly to the project's formulation - how will the project be implemented and managed?

In the first part of the oQSG process EU Task Managers at HQ or EUD levels are required to submit their project Identification Fiche (IF) together with supporting documents to an ad hoc peer review group within DEVCO known as oQSG1 in order to gather comments and recommendations on improving identification and adopting the right financing modality. During this part of the process the Task Manager is responsible for ensuring all necessary dialogue has been conducted with the PG, local stakeholders and other donors on issues relating to project focus, scope and finance (except in the case of centrally managed thematic projects where dialogue with the PG may be undesirable, such as on Human Rights issues). In addition, the TM may also engage technical support to aid production of the IF through consultancy contracts under the Framework Contract. A specific checklist aids the peer review and internal discussion on the project prior to the oQSG 1 meeting in which the director and relevant heads of unit meet to formalise their decision on the project with the Task Manager (normally by video conference). This official decision will determine whether the project can continue to the formulation phase (with or without minor modifications), or refused and needs to be re-submitted at a later date.

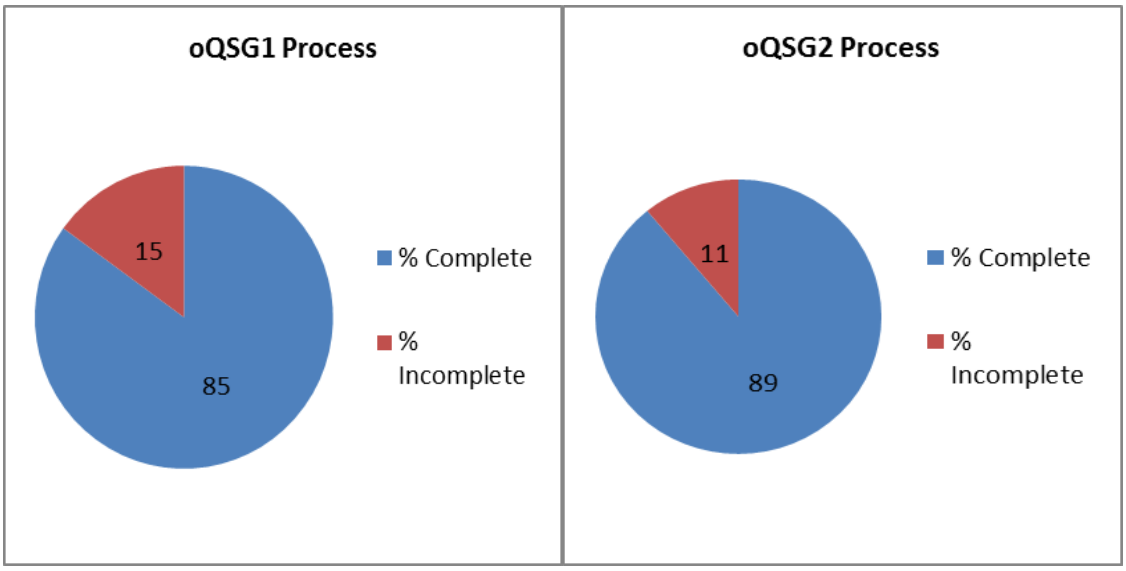
In the second part of the oQSG process projects are formulated in an Action Fiche (AF) by the Task Manager and submitted for review to usually a different ad hoc peer review group in which sector/thematic specialists take part. These reviews are conducted with the aid of a second checklist, which again supports the peer review process prior to a second oQSG meeting, known as oQSG2. At oQSG2 meeting the director will formalise his/her agreement as to whether the project proceeds or not to the decision process (a series of committees at inter-service, European Parliament[4] and Member States levels), which, if approved, culminates in the issuing of a Decision Number. At this stage the TM can prepare the FA for signature.

4 The EP does not participate in the decision process when a project is to be financed by the FED

3.3 Finding – Completeness of the oQSG Exercise

The Inception Report confirmed complete information was available for the majority of the 41 projects in the sample (oQSG1 was 85% complete and oQSG2 89% complete). This means that during the oQSG1 and oQSG2 process there was an IF or AF, completed checklists, (sometimes separated and sometimes consolidated) and minutes of the oQSG meetings on the basis of which to conduct the analysis.

3.3.1 Data Presentation – Documentation Available in oQSG1 and 2 (%)



3.3.2 Comment

Complete data means the data was completed technically to at least minimum requirements and is therefore not a comment on the quality of the data. The lack of completeness may be due to a lack of enforcement of the system or a lack of data in the oQSG database in the intranet. All other findings of this study would suggest that the inability to access data from the oQSG database easily is the likely explanation because projects are filed according to the date of the oQSG meeting, rather than according to any project reference or decision number.

The lack of a clear reference system by project/decision number highlights the problem of accessing information in the oQSG database[5]

[5] Since the submission of the final draft report in early August 2011, the expert understands SQ2M has employed a junior expert to register as many projects as possible by their Decision Number in the oQSG database

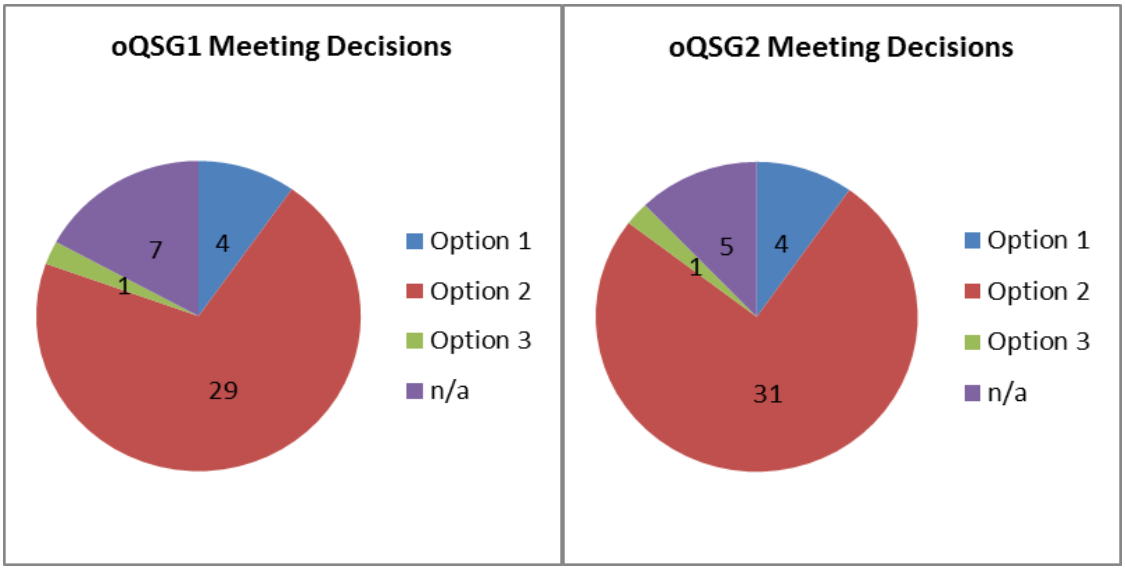
3.4 Finding – oQSG1 and oQSG2 Decisions

At the end of each oQSG stage when the IF/AF has been prepared, checklists drawn up and the formal meeting held, the projects are categorised according to the following options:

- Option 1: Document approved without modification needed to the text.
- Option 2: Document approved subject to taking account the comments mentioned in the checklists.
- Option 3: Document refused.

The data showed that Option 2 was by far the most common decision (29 out of 41 for oQSG1 and 31 out of 41 for oQSG2).

3.4.1 Data Presentation – oQSG 1 & 2 Meeting Decisions (by option)



3.4.2 Comment

Although pre 2007 the minutes were not required to note the option selected at the meeting by the chairman, from the text it is usually straightforward to identify which option was given. The preponderance of option 2 indicates few or no major design issues were raised from the checklists to suggest the project was not on track. However the fact that one oQSG meetings covered over 35 projects and that often 20 plus are covered means that use of "Option 2" also seems to be a pragmatic way of letting a project progress to the next stage without devoting more time to the issue.

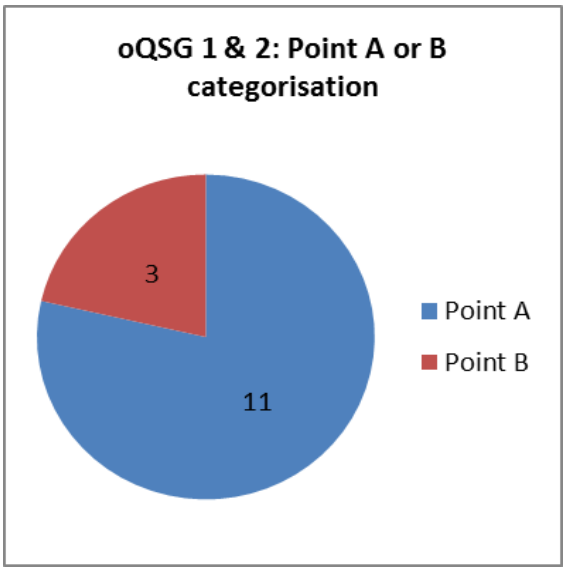
For example, in oQSG 1 only one case was found in the sample to have had Option 3 applied and of those that were classified as "Option 1", one project was classified Option 1 in both oQSG1 and 2, although surprisingly it was later rated "C" in the ROM report for design indicating design deficiencies were not picked up during the oQSG process.

Many projects pass through oQSG1 and 2 with an Option 2, but there is no system in place to confirm the issues raised during the process were fully dealt with.

3.5 Finding – Identification of A and B Projects for oQSG Meetings

Since early 2007 14 projects in the sample relating to the ACP region were found to have been categorised "A" or "B" projects prior to the oQSG meetings. According to the note of 24 May 2007,[6] "A" rated projects were not subject to debate during the oQSG meetings because the different units involved reached an agreement on the identification/formulation and produced a consolidated checklist. In contrast, where no agreement was reached projects were labelled "B" projects to be discussed at the oQSG meeting. Of the 14 projects analysed, 11 were rated A and 3 rated B for both oQSG1 and 2.

3.5.1 Data Presentation – Project Category Prior to the oQSG Meeting



3.5.2 Comment

The underlying logic is that when differences of opinion on project identification/formulation are dealt with through negotiation and consolidation of the checklist prior to the oQSG meeting, the oQSG meeting itself is in a position to apply a favourable option rating. However no documentation is available to identify how the consolidated checklists are arrived at. The study identified the consolidated checklists can range from a few comments to a three page list of issues which indicates their thoroughness varies. As a result there is a risk some projects may have been passed as Option 2 at the oQSG meeting when in fact more information would have revealed design faults resulting in an Option 3 decision.

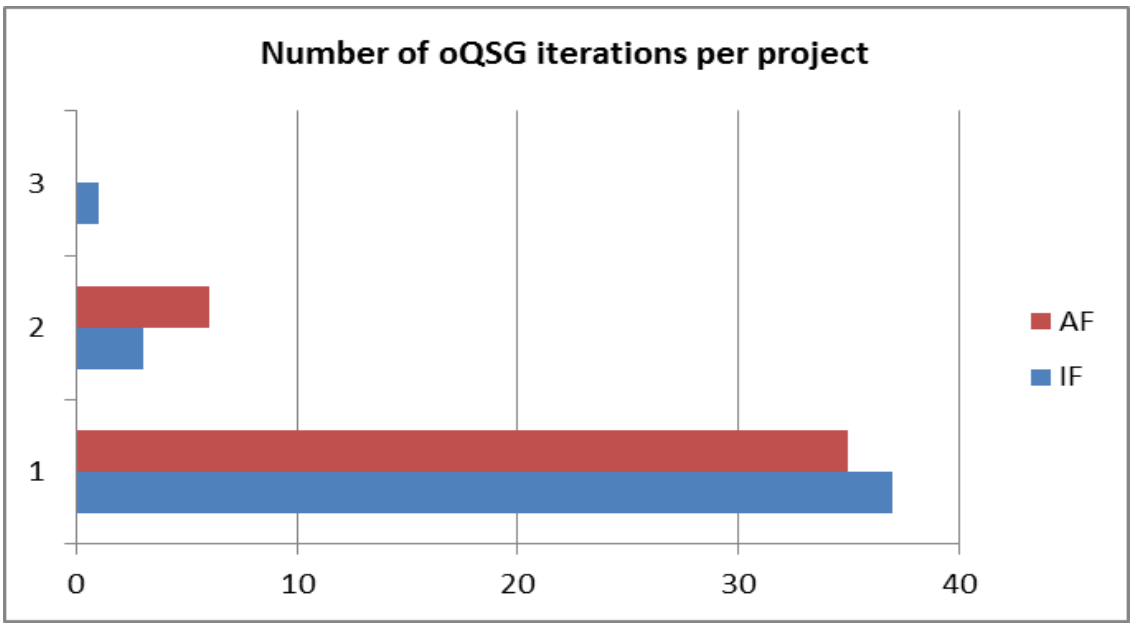
6 Functioning of the Office Quality Support Groups (oQSGs) Revision of the note of 19.10.06 (no 21520) May 24th 2007

The oQSG meetings should ensure there is adequate information available on how consensus within the peer group was reached on a project's identification/formulation to ensure these meetings remain a quality support exercise that adds value to the oQSG process as a whole.

3.6 Finding- Number of Iterations at oQSG1 and oQSG2 taken from Documents Analysed

A rigorous oQSG process might be expected to be very critical of some IF or AF and even reject some proposed projects. Of the 41 projects reviewed only one IF was found to have undergone 3 iterations and in only 9 cases did the IF or AF experience more than 1 iteration.

3.6.1 Data Presentation – Number of Iterations



3.6.2 Comment

In practice the oQSG process seems to contain contradictory or countervailing forces. It is intended through peer review to improve the quality of design of projects, but in practice the process is open to allowing projects to continue on the basis that design issues in oQSG 1 can be resolved in oQSG 2, or even during the decision process after oQSG 2. For example, "*In view of timing the HoU proposes to give the Delegation the chance of addressing the issues in the FP, without resubmission of the IF*".

This situation implies that once a project concept has received approval in house, the requirement to identify and prepare the project is paramount because once it has been identified there is a high chance it will make its way through the oQSG process with or without design flaws. It also means that in effect the two stages of the QSG process are de facto being merged into one because the oQSG1 does not result in a resolution of all design issues

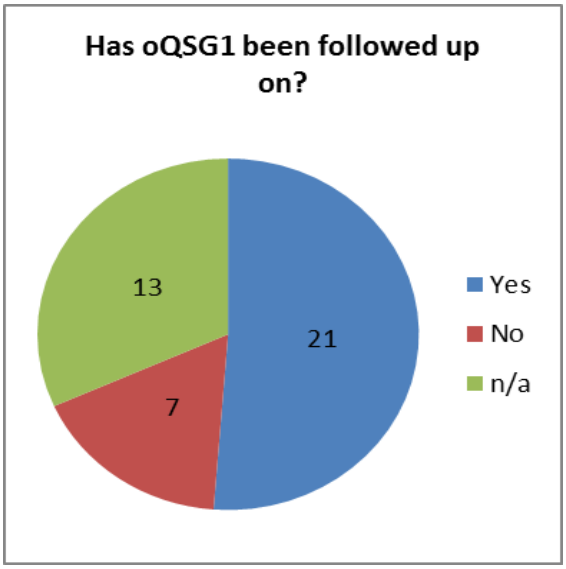
relevant to identification before it moves to oQSG 2. This observation is further substantiated by the fact the checklist format for IF and AF is almost identical (see also 3.7.2 below) and there is no mechanism in place to ensure recommendations from the peer group are applied and recorded in oQSG1 or oQSG2.

Furthermore, it is not always possible to determine how many iterations a project has gone through at either oQSG1 or oQSG2 due to the way in which documents are saved in the oQSG database and the lack of a formal registration of iterations by type. This is not aided by the fact each time an iteration is addressed a newer version of the IF or AF is produced. As a result there is no reliable data available to assess whether a higher number of iterations produces a better designed project.

3.7 Finding – Response to Follow up of oQSG1 Recommendations on the oQSG2 Checklist

In the checklist template for oQSG2 since 27/06/06 a new question appears: "Have the QSG recommendations at the end of the identification been taken into account in the formulation phase?"[7] Analysis confirms the majority (21/41) replied "yes" to this question.

3.7.1 Data Presentation – No. of Cases where oQSG1 Recommendations were Applied



3.7.2 Comment

The checklists for oQSG2 ask for comments on the above-mentioned question and the application of a grade: A, B or C. In several cases an A grade was applied without comments, but analysis of other parts of the checklist indicated there had not been a full follow up of the recommendations on the grounds some issues would be resolved at a later date. Thus a "yes"

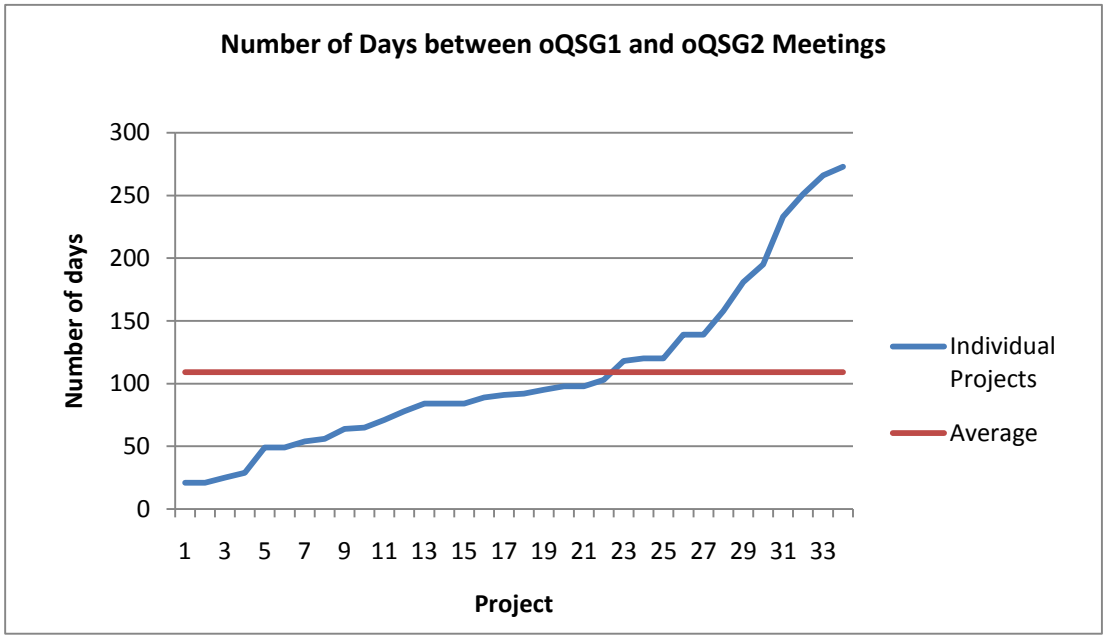
[7] Question 12 in the AF checklist of 27/06/2006 and question 13 in the version of 12/10/2007

in these cases can be interpreted appears to be interpreted as an "in hand" rather than a unconditional "yes". This supports the finding made in the previous section that issues of design picked up in oQSG1 and which are allowed to be followed up in oQSG2 can still be circumvented by a unsubstantiated "yes" response, which means design faults for whatever reason may be allowed to pass through the oQSG process without an adequate response.

3.8 Findings on the Time Gap between the oQSG1 Meeting and oQSG2

Analysis of the time gap between oQSG meeting 1 and 2 was 109 days on average, but actual time spans varied considerably ranging from as little as 21 calendar days to a maximum of 273 days in the sample.

3.8.1 Data Presentation – No. of Days between oQSG1 and 2 Meetings



NB: Only 33 projects of the 41 sample had formal meetings in both oQSG1 & oQSG2.

3.8.1 Comment

The Commission assigns two years for most projects to be designed from their inception to the signing of the FA. Data from the study indicates the gap between the oQSG meetings may consume up to 9 months of the design phase. However, the study was not able to identify a correlation between the number of iterations and a longer gap between oQSG1&2 meetings. There was also no correlation found on the number of days between the meetings and the size, sector or location of the project. The project that took the longest in the sample (273 days) went straight through both oQSG meetings with no iterations, whereas another that took 266 days had 3 IF iterations and 2 AF iterations. Meanwhile, two projects which experienced only a 21 day time lag both had two AF iterations.

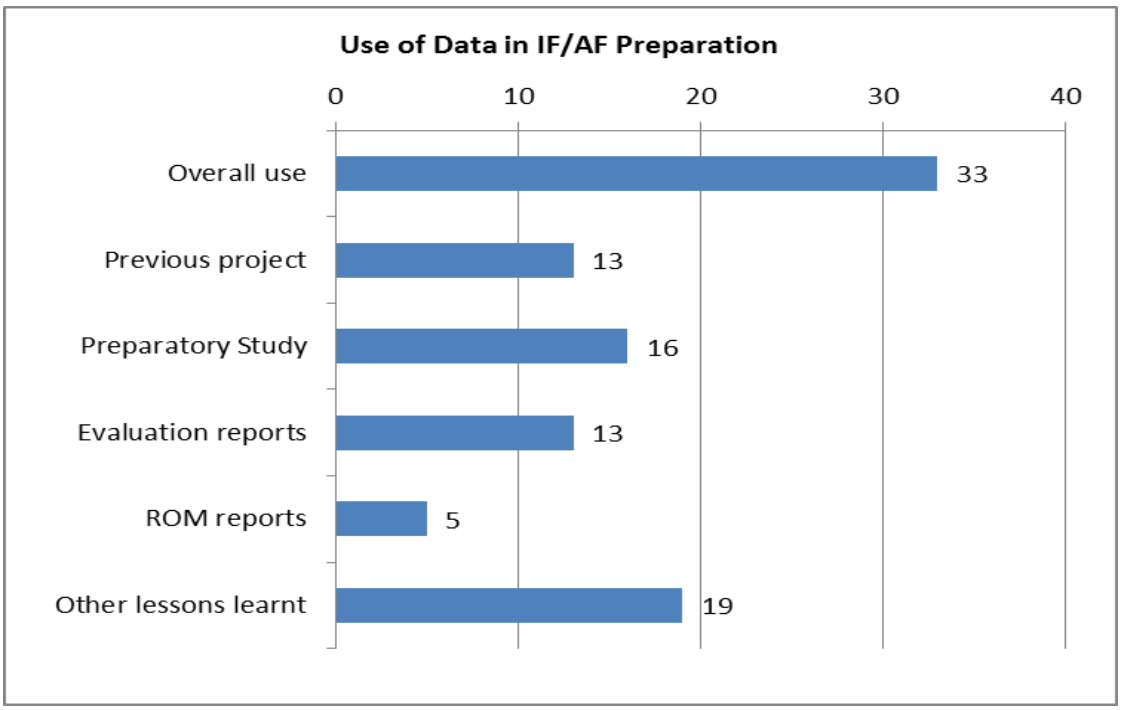
Reasons which may explain for the long time lag most likely relate to the need for feasibility or formulation studies (16 projects in the sample), dialogue and discussion with HQ, Partner Governments and other donors, the timing of the meetings, etc.

3.9 Finding - Use of Background Data

The Commission is able to draw on its internal expertise when preparing relevant background data and identifying lessons learnt for new projects. In 33 of the 41 projects analysed, the TM clearly used additional information sources when identifying and formulating the project, although it was unable to determine how and where the information was used in the identification and formulation documents.

A total of 13 projects were either second phase projects, or adopted a very similar design to a previous project. In these cases data and experience from previous projects were used. 16 projects commissioned identification or formulation studies. 13 referred to evaluation studies and 5 to ROM reports. Lessons learnt were also extracted from a mix of others donors and less formal sources of information such as from NGOs.

3.9.1 Data presentation – Information Sources Used to aid Project Identification and Formulation



3.9.2 Comment

There is no standard way of reporting on the sources used, although a list of sources was usually found appended to the IF or AF. Despite the frequency of the claims to have used background data there are many examples in the checklists calling for the IF and AF to show how "lessons learnt" had been incorporated. For example, "*Are there any lessons regarding involvement of local population in these works to be drawn from this action?*"

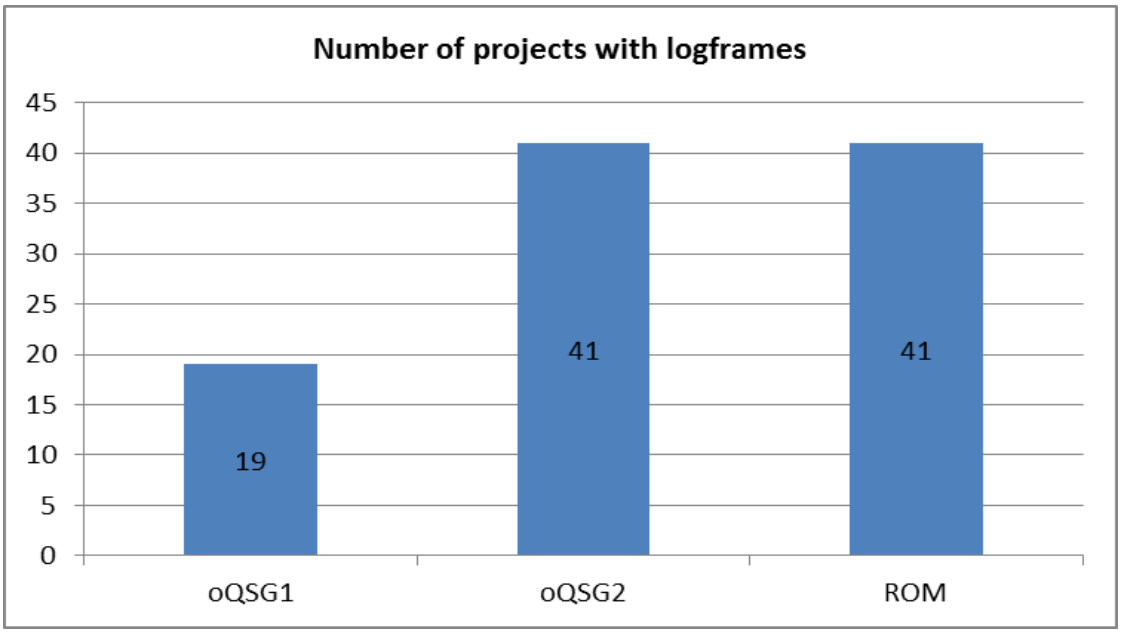
The difficulty in establishing the type of studies undertaken by external consultants is compounded by the fact they seem to work on various stages of project design from the IF to the TAPs of the FA. This reinforces the idea external consultants may be substituting internal expertise on the consolidation of "lessons learnt" in project design in general, which may weaken the TM's position to defend the project during the oQSG process.

A separate important issue is the lack of access for external consultants to lessons learnt because there is no centralised database for evaluation reports, studies or specific reports from other donors, the ROM database requires access to CRIS, and the oQSG database is only available for EU staff via the intranet.

3.10 Finding – Use of Logframes

EU project aid is based on the principles of PCM in which the LFA remains the basis for project identification, formulation and implementation although, EU guidelines do not make it obligatory to present a LFM in oQSG1; only a problem analysis. The study discovered that at oQSG1 stage less than half the projects (19) applied the logframe.

3.10.1 Data Presentation – No. of Projects with Logical Frameworks



3.10.2 Comment

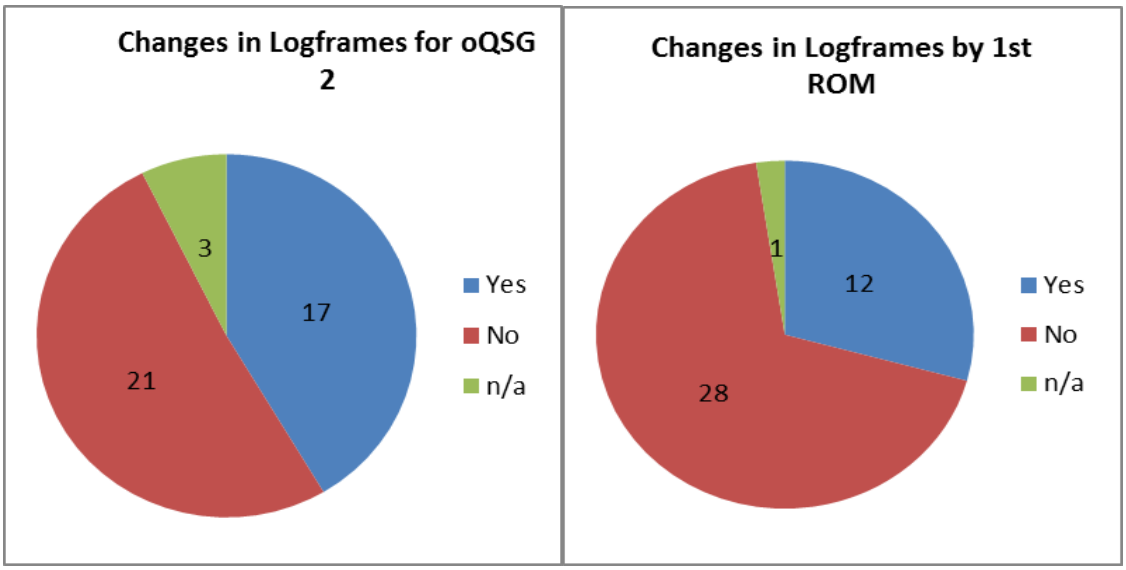
Where logframes did exist as part of the IF it appears they were drawn up by an external consultant. Although the study acknowledges the logframe can only be fully developed at the AF stage the fact a problem analysis is required during the identification phase suggests the logframe could serve a useful purpose in helping to structure such analysis through the setting of objectives, aligning key indicators and assessing the risks together with some general ideas on the results. This may explain why in 19 cases the TM chose (voluntarily) to apply the LFM in the identification phase.

The fact that logframes are derived more often as a final step at the end of oQSG2, rather than a primary step in the planning of a project, illustrates that they are still not fully understood or optimised as a useful tool to support and improve design and may even be seen as an administrative burden.

3.11 Finding – Changes to Logframes

17 of the 19 logframes that existed in oQSG1 had been altered by the end of oQSG2, but in 2 cases the document remained exactly the same. It is worth noting here that changes in logframes continue beyond oQSG2. ROM reports confirm that 12 logframes in the project sample had been changed from the one in the FA when the project was monitored. ROM monitors assess the logframes attached to the FA, but the pilot study could not identify if the LFM was the same as the one approved at the oQSG2 stage.

3.11.1 Data Presentation - Changes in Logframes



3.11.2 Comment

The nature of the changes to the LFM in oQSG2 was mostly to add further detail, especially to add indicators. In some cases the indicators were still missing or of a very poor quality. Less often the changes related to the addition of risks and assumptions in response to comments such as, "*There are no risk management arrangements*". Occasionally changes occurred in the wording of the overall objective or project purpose. These changes confirm some scrutiny of the LFM occurs although the understanding and selection of indicators appears to require more training and guidance. This is confirmed with reference to the ROM reports where observations centre heavily on the lack of SMART or appropriate qualitative indicators.

3.12 Additional Findings

During the process of reading through all the documents it became apparent that in most instances a lot of work is put into their preparation. A considerable amount of discussion generally takes place following their circulation and comments and recommendations from HQ were found in all cases.

The oQSG endeavours to improve the quality of project design. However, from the analysis wide variations in the quality of the documents put forward was observed. For example, the following quality issues were recorded on several occasions:

- Many checklists were not complete or substantiated with observations.
- Arguments for and against projects were found in the checklist process supported by both assertive and terse statements or by a defensive tone.
- The checklist was used more as a means to justify the project proposal than as a review document. For example, where discussion took place during the oQSG meetings the minutes suggest it can be used as an opportunity to promote the project rather than to address design weaknesses.
- Attention to the Logframe is sometimes very cursory (for example, one project clearly used a cut and paste and left the name of the previous country in the document).
- Issues raised in oQSG1 are not always fully dealt with in oQSG 2. For example, in one instance a n/a response was provided in the oQSG2 checklist question concerning whether follow up of oQSG1 had been completed.

The limited quality consistency within the oQSG process suggests there is a need for further staff training and support and greater consistency in the way documentation is saved in the oQSG database:

- Few documents have their dates in the document so identifying the final version can be time consuming, or simply not possible.
- Minutes are stored by date, not by project.
- Dates are stored in European format (e.g. 28/10/08) and in American format (e.g. 10/28/08).
- It is hard to identify which checklists have been consolidated and which have not.
- Annexes to the IF and AF are often stored separately with no clear link to the main project document (just a reference to Annex A).
- Logframes can float freely so it is neither clear to which stage they belong, nor which version they are in.
- At the AF stage documentation gets mixed up with AF, FPs and TAPs being almost indistinguishable.

AF and IF checklists were found to be very similar in the study period, although this changed from 2010 following the reforms of the oQSG process addressed in the Instruction Note dated 2009.

Similarly, although it is accepted the focus of the IF and AF stages should remain different, the use of a common format for the project description would enable more transparent analysis of its evolution. In this situation whatever was not relevant or missing at IF stage could be seen to be added or clarified when the AF is submitted.

The documentation used in the oQSG process has many variants of essentially the same information for each project. It is clear from the amount of cutting and pasting that is done that the data is more or less the same in each document produced from IF to FA, with the addition of different elements in each. For example, the part dealing with the project context and description could be kept the same throughout; thus there is potential to streamline the different documents.

A point that is not raised explicitly but is likely to play a significant role in the design process is the perception of the oQSG system from the perspective of the different parties. Whilst not a quality control process in name, or in intention, evidence from the analysis suggests it may be seen this way by Delegation staff (especially if they have limited experience and training in the process) because comments in some of the checklists reveal exasperation on both sides. It would be of interest to investigate this aspect further through a series of interviews.

4 FINDINGS RELATED TO ISSUES RAISED DURING OQSG1 AND OQSG2

4.1 Background to the Exercise

This section is the core of the study. The findings from the analysis of the issues raised on project design at oQSG1 and oQSG2 are presented here to help determine the contribution of the oQSG process to aid effectiveness.

In the first instance the checklists and the oQSG meeting minutes were read and the issues that emerged noted against the list of variables that had been identified during Phase 2 of this pilot study (see Annex 2). These issues are listed below:

- Logic - the overall logic of the intervention
- Scope, focus, ambition – the breadth of the intervention
- Fit with EC policy
- Fit with PG policy
- Fit with Paris and MDG
- Problem analysis
- Stakeholder ownership – at all levels of beneficiary
- Stakeholder capacity
- Sustainability
- Management – the proposed day to day operational management
- Implementation – how the project would be implemented, with which parties to work within the PG or whether to work with or through other donors
- Finance – both total finance and the allocation of budget to different actions
- Risks and assumptions – including risk management proposals
- Cross-cutting Issues – mainly gender and environmental but more recently human rights
- Horizontal Issues – related to oQSG, use of ROM, technical cooperation and visibility,
- Donor co-ordination
- Procedural – relating to EC procedural matters
- Logical Framework
- Monitoring systems
- Administrative (CRIS)
- Indicators
- Exit Strategy
- Timing – both overall time frame and timing issues within projects

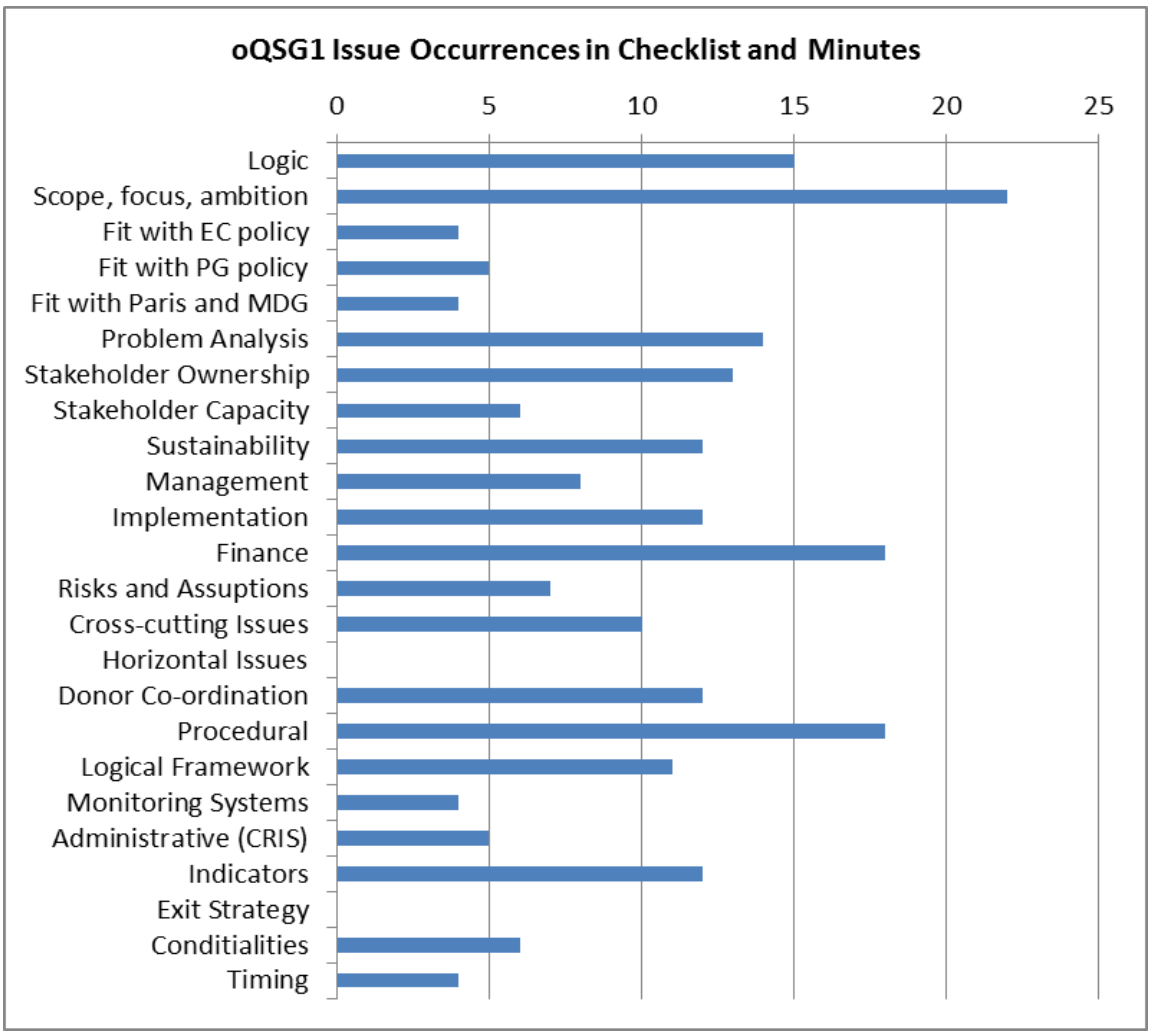
The checklists and minutes were compared to eliminate duplication of issues and the occurrence of the different issues was tallied. In many cases where the project was categorised as an option “A” (see section 3.5) there were no specific comments in the minutes thus the consolidation process was relatively straightforward. The issues raised in the checklists and minutes were also analysed to see if different issues emerged in the two documents. The findings are presented in the following sections.

4.2 Issues from the Checklists and the Minutes of oQSG1

The oQSG1 meeting occurs at the end of the Identification phase following analysis of the IF and supporting documents by the peer group. The focus of analysis is on the macro aspects relating to the projects. The most common issue cited in the 41 project sample related to the general scope of the project (22 occurrences). Common criticisms were that the design was overly ambitious and lacking in focus. The next most common issue related to finance (18 occurrences) in particular whether the overall finance was sufficient, or whether budget allocations to different elements of the project were appropriate.

Procedural issues and overall logic of projects were also a concern (22 and 15 occurrences respectively) and there were also a number of cases expressing concern on the lack of comprehensive problem analysis (14) and attention to sustainability (12).

4.2.1 Data Presentation – No. of Issue Occurrences in the oQSG1 Phase



4.2.2 Comment

The IF stage focuses on the macro aspects of relating to project design and the oQSG peer groups concentrate most of their issues on these aspects. This is confirmed to be the case in the analysis and proves the oQSG1 process does address the quality of design. However, the design issues that occurred most frequently relate to over-ambitious logic (objectives) and scope because the TM proposed an intervention that tried to cover the whole problem identified, resulting in a very broad and unrealistic project. This seems to be compounded by a lack of adequate problem analysis, which was found to occur highly in second phase projects in the sample indicating there had not been adequate examination of the problems identified in the previous phase and lessons learnt. For example, "*The overall impression is that a previous programme has been brought to an end (because of the D+3 rule) and so a new programme has been prepared. The programme builds very much on the previous programme, which overall was not too successful, or where the problem has not been sufficiently analysed but rather taken for granted*".

The frequency with which the issue of finance (including the financial modality proposed) occurs indicates it is often not clearly explained or justified in the IF, which would also help explain why there were the high number of issues relating to unrealistic or over ambitious logic and scope. The oQSG process therefore seems to work well in identifying these issues both in terms of the lack of coherence between the budget available and the logic/scope of the project and in terms of the lack of clarity and coherence of the budget breakdown for the main components of the project.

Concerning the high number of issues relating to "procedures", it was not always easy during the analysis to decide if an issue was related to "implementation" or "procedure" as both cover the way in which a project is to be planned and undertaken. In general, at IF stage the comments relating to both implementation and procedural issues were of a more general nature. The former, for instance, was often related to whether to work with or through other organisations (e.g. UN bodies other donors) and how that can be done. The latter is more related to EC procedures and contractual matters. Without focussing too closely on "implementation " or " "procedural" definitions, concern was often expressed as to how a project would be carried out, who the partners might be, which form of EC procedure was necessary, etc.

Designing sustainability into a project at the initial stage has long been an important feature of EC project design. The fact that sustainability was frequently picked up as an issue at oQSG1 in the analysis is positive but also indicates that sustainability is not sufficiently considered at this stage by those designing the project. Indeed, it could be one area where both the TM and the peer group may allow some outstanding issues on sustainability pass into the formulation phase (see section 3.4.2)

The frequent reference to issues on the logframe and indicators implies that logframes and even indicators appear to be expected at this stage even if they are not obligatory in the guidelines, (includes the latest guidelines from 2010). This might partially be explained by the questions asked on the IF checklist version 2007, "Are the proposed objectives clear and logical, and do they address clearly identified needs?"

Donor co-ordination issues were also frequently raised, usually in the context of identifying lessons learnt from previous projects or from studies they had done on different aspects of government policy relating to the proposed project.

Finally, some issues were cited in only a few cases or not at all, (e.g. “horizontal issues” and “fit with Paris and Millennium Development Goals)”. The analysis was unable to determine whether they were properly dealt with to justify why no comments were made.

4.2.3 Difference between the Issues Identified in the oQSG1 Checklists and the oQSG1 Meeting

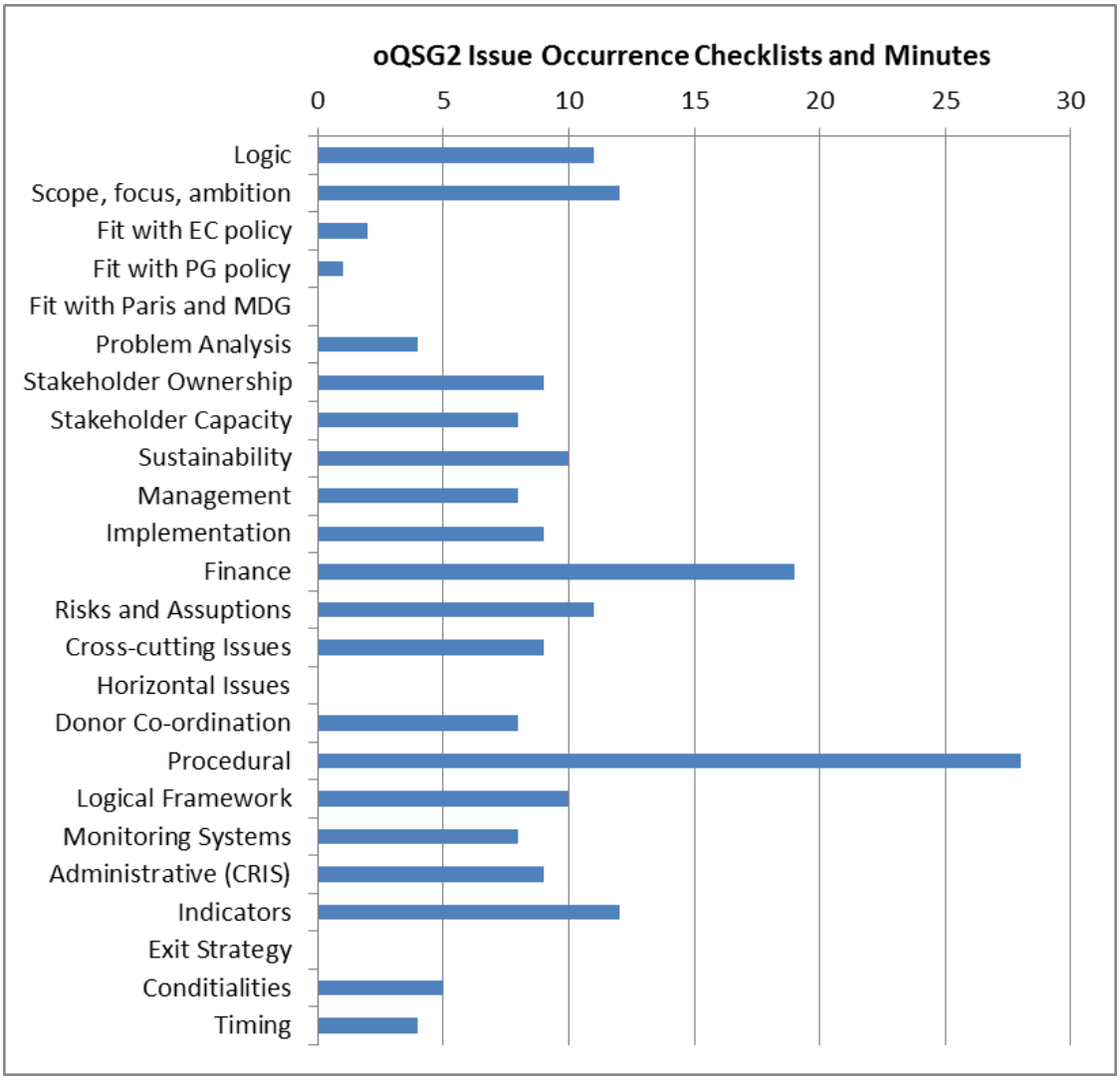
As explained in 4.1. the checklists and minutes were consolidated as many of the issues raised during the meeting were reiterations of comments on the checklists. Nevertheless, analysis was undertaken to see if any new issues were raised consistently at the oQSG meetings, but in the case of oQSG1 meetings no further issues were raised.

It appears the oQSG meetings help to formalise the oQSG1 process because they represent a critical moment when the chairperson (normally the director) has to take a decision on whether the project carries on or not into the oQSG2 process. Due to a number of limitations, such as time constraints, the main issues surrounding project design have to be discussed and finalised prior to the meeting itself. This may explain why the meetings tend to broadly reaffirm the findings and recommendations in the checklists and not a moment to develop further in-depth quality assurance (see also 3.5).

4.3 Issues from the Checklists and the Minutes of oQSG2

By oQSG2 stage the project should be fully formulated in the AF. The analysis of the checklists and minutes showed that by far the most common issues raised related to procedural matters (28). This was followed by finance (19). Logframe related issues such as the logframe matrix itself (10), indicators (12) and risks and assumptions (11) were also all of concern as was the overall logic of the project (11) and its scope, focus and ambition (12).

4.3.1 Data presentation - No. of Issue Occurrences in the oQSG2 Checklists and Minutes



4.3.2 Comment

At the oQSG2 stage the analysis shows the main issues raised related to procedural matters, the type of contracting procedures to be used and MoU's to be signed. This would be expected at this stage in order to ensure the design is workable. Comments tended to be of a more specific nature than at oQSG 1 stage. Issues about finance also arose regularly and were generally related to the allocation levels of the budget to the different components and their activities. Issues relating to the overall scope and logic (developed in the logframe matrix) as well as concerns relating to risks and assumptions were also apparent and suggest they were either not adequately dealt with in oQSG1 or allowed to pass to oQSG2 because they were ranked an "Option 2" at the oQSG1 meeting.

The fact there are still questions being raised at oQSG2 on the overall logic, scope, ambition and focus (around 25% of projects in the sample) is a concern that needs to be

thoroughly addressed in oQSG1. For example, "*More generally, an analysis of the strategy in each island could help to reduce the aspect of a "shopping list" of the program".*

4.4 Difference between the issues identified in the oQSG2 checklists and meeting.

In the oQSG2 meetings the only issue that was raised independently of the checklists related to a question about whether CRIS had been fully updated.

4.4.1 Comment

The oQSG2 meetings help to formalise the formulation process, because like at oQSG1 meetings, the director must take a decision. Again, like the oQSG1 meetings, design issues in the checklist appear to be assessed and discussed by the peer group in advance of the meeting itself. Other issues outside of the checklists were not evident in the minutes of oQSG2 meetings, except on one occasion. This indicates that by the meeting itself a decision on the majority of projects has probably been taken. At the oQSG2 meeting itself, it seems detailed matters of procedure are the main focus of discussion with the TM. However, the checklist for oQSG2 does not differ greatly from the one for oQSG1 meaning some questions should no longer be relevant and discussed at the meeting. For example, raising questions such as, "Fit with PG policy" or "Fit with EC policy" at the meeting should have been addressed at oQSG1.

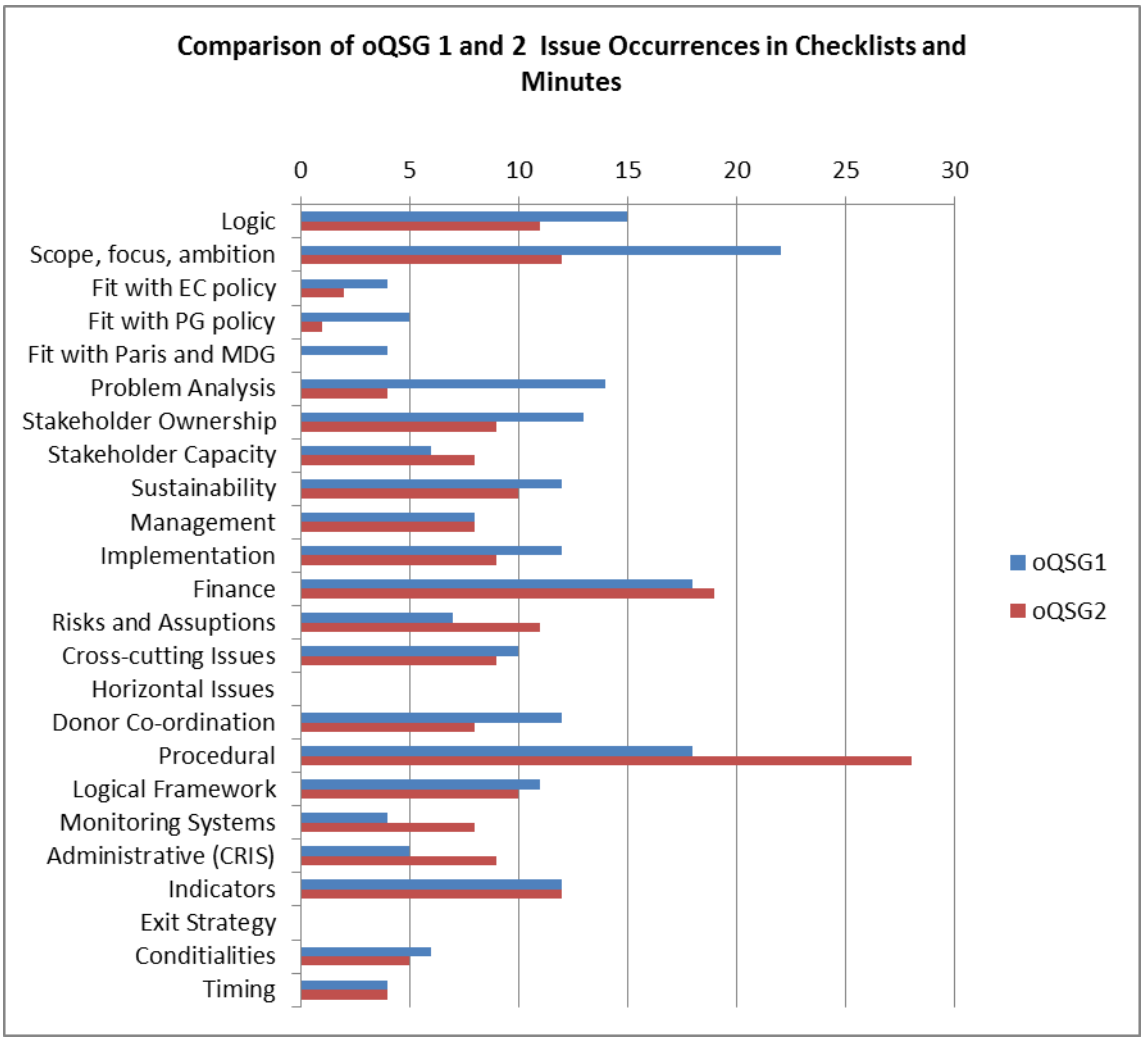
4.5 Difference between oQSG1 and oQSG2 Checklists and Meetings

By comparing the issues raised in oQSG 1 and oQSG 2 the analysis attempted to determine whether they are fulfilling separate functions. In general terms, the analysis found more issues are raised in oQSG 1 than oQSG2. The notable differences are that for oQSG1 the ratio of issues on scope, focus and ambition is far more prevalent than in oQSG2 (22:12) as is overall logic (15:11). Other significant differences occur with problem analysis (14:4) and stakeholder ownership (13:9)

Conversely issues that have a higher occurrence at oQSG2 than oQSG 1 are procedural issues (18:28), risk analysis (7:11) and administration of CRIS (5:9)

Some issues occur with roughly the same frequency at both stages such as sustainability (12:10) and logical framework (11:10)

Data Presentation - Ratio of Issues Occurring in oQSG1 and oQSG2



4.5.1 Comment

These findings show that, with a few exceptions, the focus of the two oQSG exercises does differ although not as much as would be expected as macro issues do reappear at oQSG2 and this helps confirm the earlier findings in 3.6 and 3.7 that the process can overlap, even if the issues that re-emerge have a clearer, though not exclusive, focus at each stage. For example, issues relating to Fit with EC/PG/Paris and MDG or Problem Analysis, still arise at oQSG2 when they should have been resolved in oQSG1.

The analysis confirms that at least 25% of the sample had issues of logic, scope and sustainability brought up by the peer groups at both the IF and AF stages, implying some TMs may lack adequate training and guidance on important issues relating to project identification and formulation.

The frequency of procedural and implementation issues, especially the latter at oQSG2 stage indicates the IF and AF may be too theoretical and not well translated into practical projects that can be easily implemented on the ground. Again this may be an area needing more guidance and training.

5 FINDINGS RELATING TO INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

5.1 Creating a Project Profile

Following the process of summarising data relating to each of the 41 projects in individual Project Summary Sheets (PSS) and then transferring the quantifiable information onto an Excel spreadsheet the analysis was able to track the path of each project through both stages of the oQSG process and cross-check design issues in the ROM report. This path enabled the development of 41 project profiles (see Annex 3). Four profiles are presented below for illustrative purposes and to explain how they were assessed.

Each project has its name, its country, its BCS 2.1 grade. Then for each issue raised at oQSG1 or oQSG2 or ROM an "x" is placed in the relevant box. Then the issue is traced through the 3 stages and classified by a coloured box:

- Green - when an issue is never raised
- Orange - when an issue is raised only during oQSG1 or 2
- Light blue – when an issue is only raised during ROM
- Purple – when an issue was raised during oQSG 1 and/or 2 and again during ROM

5.1.1 Data Presentation

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
MEDSTAT III Statistical Cooperation in the	Med Region	A	oQSG1	x	x	x	x			x	x	x									x	x					
Mediterranean Region, phase III			oQSG2																								
			ROM							x		x		x			x	x			x						
Appui communautaire dans le domaine	Madagascar	B	oQSG1	x	x					x			x	x	x	x			x	x				x		x	x
de la bonne gouvernance et de			oQSG2	x	x										x	x				x			x	x		x	x
la consolidation de l'Etat de droit - Phase II			ROM													x	x					x					
PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT	Ethiopia	C	oQSG1			x				x			x	x	x	x			x		x		x				
PFM ETHIOPIA			oQSG2	x		x							x		x		x			x			x	x			
			ROM	x	x					x		x				x					x			x			x
Renforcement et réhabilitation du	Mauritania	D	oQSG1		x				x	x					x				x	x	x		x				
secteur de la Justice			oQSG2		x								x		x	x				x				x		x	
			ROM	x	x				x	x	x	x	x		x									x	x		

The 4 sample projects presented above are illustrative and consist of 1 project from each grading of BCS 1.2 i.e. a, b, c and d. From this sample the conclusion can be drawn that the "d" graded project had the most design issues. However, the "b" graded project illustrated shows fewer design flaws than the "a" graded project. Reference to Annex 3 reveals this situation is

much more prevalent than would be logically expected. The most remarkable finding is that some “d” graded projects were found to have fewer purple boxes than some “a” projects.

5.1.2 Comment

A green or orange box means that either an issue relevant to the project’s design was never raised, or it was dealt with effectively in the oQSG process. As a result no negative impact on project performance can be traced back to a design issue.

If an issue emerges only at ROM stage (light blue box), then it is possible the issue had been overlooked during both steps of the oQSG process. However, it could also be that circumstances in the field changed considerably in the time gap between the design and implementation of the project and which could not have been foreseen in the risk assessment. It was not possible in the timeframe of this study to analyse the design issues picked up by ROM.

The purple boxes suggest greatest concern as they indicate the oQSG system was unable to rectify important design issues raised and which led implementation problems. T This confirms the oQSG process is not able to ensure design issues raised are resolved. This is particularly true if the problem was noted at oQSG1, passed to oQSG2 but was not properly resolved because it was picked through ROM.

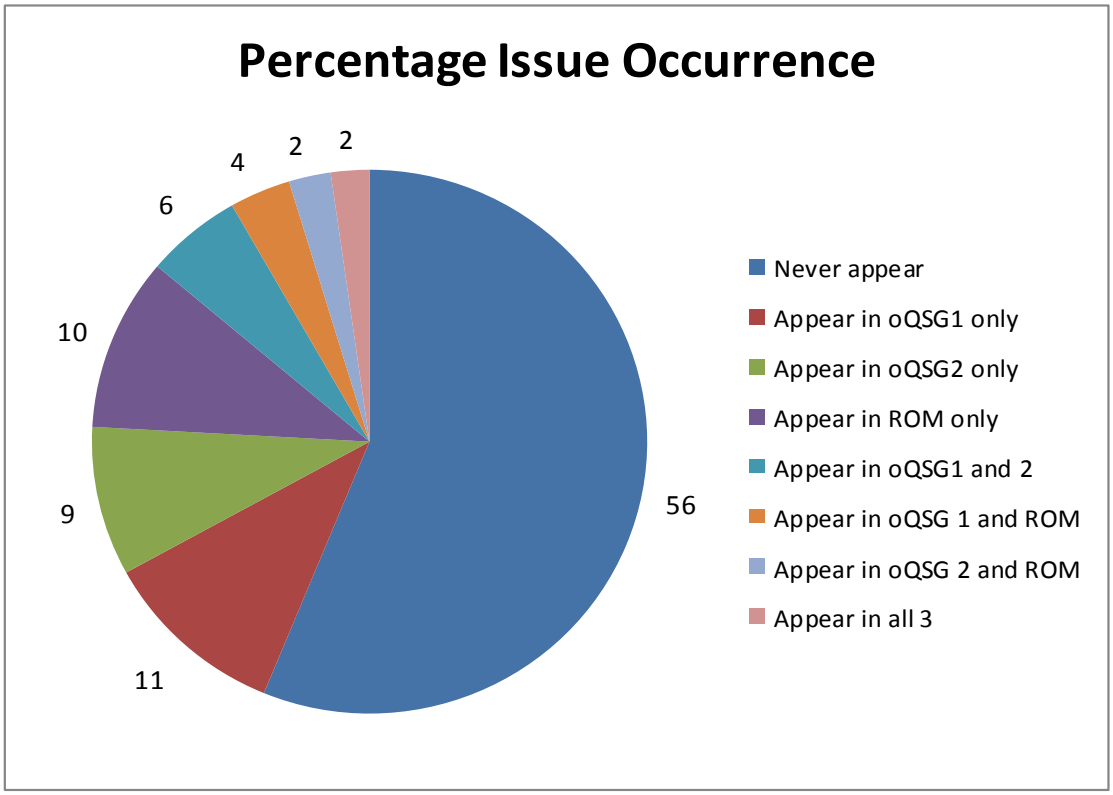
The fact some projects graded “d” in Annex 3 had fewer purple boxes than some “a” or “b” projects means further analysis into this issue may be desirable to clarify why this happens.

5.2 Synthesis of The Project Profiles

The 41 project profiles help highlight design issues case by case, but to understand the extent to which issues are identified and resolved further analysis was conducted to consolidate the 41 project profiles. This was done by adding up all the different issues at all three stages, converting the data into percentages and then seeing what picture emerged.

In 56% of cases there was no issue with an individual project at any stage of oQSG. In 30% of cases an issue emerged at one stage (11% at oQSG1, 9% at oQSG2 and 10% at ROM). In 6% of cases the issue arose at both oQSG1 and 2 and in **8% of cases an issue arose in either one or both oQSG and again in ROM** (oQSG1 and ROM 4%, oQSG2 and ROM 2% and oQSG1 and 2 and ROM 2%)

5.2.1 Data presentation – Issue Occurrence (%)



5.2.2 Comment

The fact that 56% of issues never appear indicates the oQSG process provides a satisfactory level of quality assurance during the process of project design. However the fact 8% of issues were not resolved in the period analysed in this study (2005-2009) and affected implementation indicates the efficiency of oQSG process fluctuates possibly because suitable experience is not always available for the peer group. As a result a small but important number of weakly designed projects passed through the oQSG process.

6 FINDINGS EMERGING FROM THE RESULTS ORIENTED MONITORING (ROM) REPORTS

6.1 The ROM Process

Inclusion of the ROM exercise in the analysis was necessary in order to confirm whether design issues in oQSG had, or had not been dealt with by the time project implementation was underway.[8]

Taking into consideration this pilot study required analysis of projects primarily approved prior to 2009, the BCS question 1.2: "As presently designed, is the intervention logic holding true?" was considered the key variable to trace if design issues from the oQSG process reoccurred or not. Furthermore, this very much relates to the logframe which should be the summary of the project's design. The comments written under this section along with those found in the Monitoring Report itself (under Relevance and Design and Potential Sustainability) were read, categorised according to the same variables used to analyse the oQSG process and analysed in quantitative form by means of an excel spread sheet.

Point 6.1 of the BCS could not be the subject of analysis due to its recent addition to the BCS but it was nevertheless analysed in the few cases where it was applicable to see if any additional findings could be identified to substantiate the report's conclusions (see last item of this section).

From the sample, the 9 projects graded with an "a" for BCS 1.2 and 10 with a "d" were separately analysed to see if the "a" projects had inherently better prepared designs than the "d" projects. Where projects had more than one MR the results were analysed to see if their design improved or not from one MR to the next.

A final point to note is that the ROM methodology encourages monitors to look at certain aspects which are generally the same as those in the oQSG process, but with different degrees of importance. For example ROM relates a lot of its findings to the LFM, whereas the oQSG process does not. Thus all analysis has been treated as indicative rather than absolute.

6.2 ROM Findings Related to Positive Issues

The analysis included a look at issues that were judged to be positive as this may give clues as to the areas where the oQSG process could put more emphasis in future. The most commonly cited positive issues were: "Fit with EC policy" (23) and "Fit with PG policy" (30) followed by "Stakeholder Ownership and Sustainability" (16) and then "logic" (11) and "logframe" (10). None of the sample cited issues relating to horizontal issues and administrative issues. Donor co-ordination, procedural matters, conditionalities and timing were all only cited once as can be seen in the following chart.

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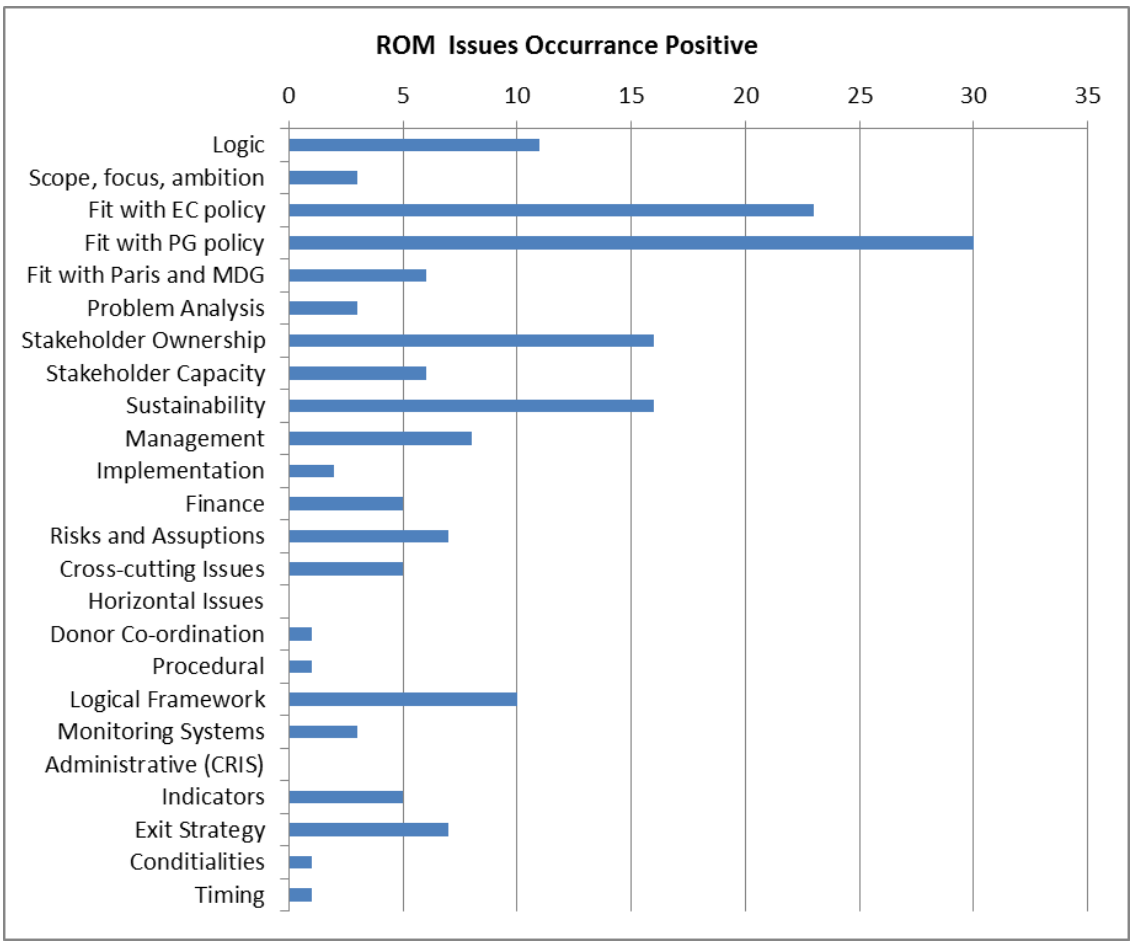
8 The ROM BCS since 2009 was amplified to include cross-cutting questions (gender, environment and human rights and horizontal issue questions (in which an explicit link to the oQSG process was included in section 6.1)

6.2.1 Data Presentation – Occurrence of Positive ROM Issues



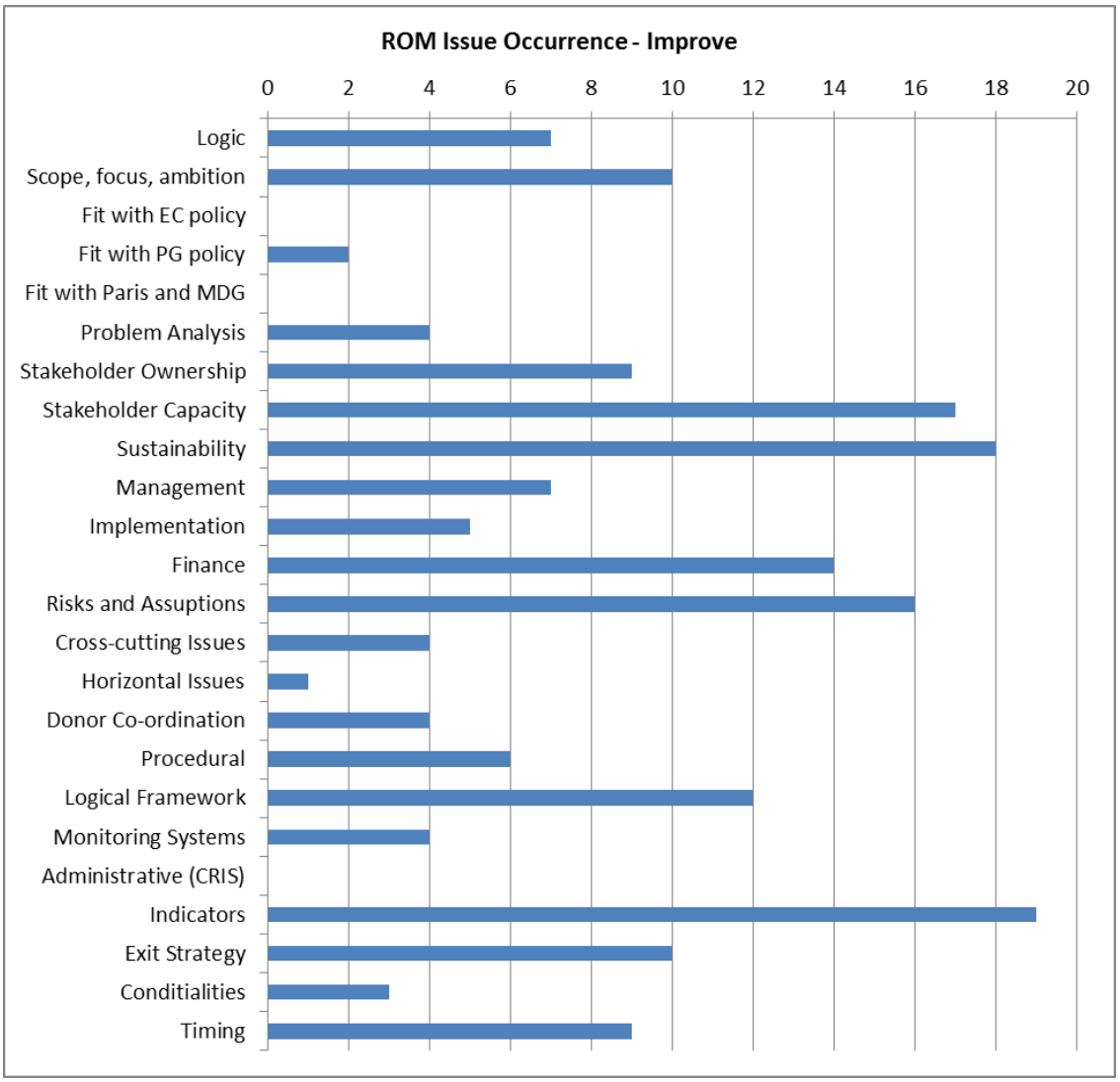
6.2.2 Comment

It would be illogical if projects didn't fit EC and PG policy. The more interesting findings are that projects with good designs are those where the partner government or other stakeholders have real sense of ownership, which implies projects should be designed in conjunction with partners. Also important is that design also takes into account the way the closure of the project is planned in order sustainability issues have already been incorporated into the project design. Many issues tend not to be commented on if they are good. For example, the lack of comments about donor-co-ordination, procedural matters and timing suggest they are working as intended, or were not considered an issue that would affect design.

6.3 ROM Findings Related to Issues that Need to be Addressed

The issue most often mentioned as needing to be improved were indicators (19) then sustainability (18), followed by stakeholder capacity (17) risks and assumptions (16) and finance (14). Fit with EC policy and with Paris and MDC and administrative issues were not reported as problematic.

6.3.1 Data Presentation - Occurrence of Negative ROM Issues



6.3.2 Comment

The need to improve the logframe and especially its indicators appears regularly in the ROM reports. For example, "*A logframe (LF) exists but remains of very poor quality and in its current state is not useful as a management or monitoring tool.*" Monitors are required to assess a project's performance against it's logframe. If the monitor cannot do this then the project may have had a fundamental design flaw. Nevertheless there are well designed, well executed

and successful projects without good indicators. On their own, poor indicators do not mean a poor project. However issues related to risks and assumptions are serious and the ROM exercise is more likely to pick them up when they are having a negative impact on the project. Often the issue is not the passive identification of risks, but the absence of a risk management strategy.

Addressing stakeholder capacity appears frequently as an element within a project, but s mentioned as an issue which puts the success of a project at risk. Finance issues are also mentioned and there was evidence to suggest it is not properly arranged during the oQSG process (see 4.3.1).


Problems with sustainability and the related exit strategy cannot always be resolved in the design phase especially when the project in question is the first of several proposed phases. Nevertheless as the issue occurs regularly in ROM there is a strong case it should be better addressed during oQSG with more reference and application of lessons learnt.


Concerns are still being raised when a project is being implemented that its overall logic, scope, focus and ambition are serious indicating these issues were not adequately addressed during the oQSG phases.

6.4 Quality of oQSG from the Perspective BCS 6.1 of ROM

As mentioned above in 6.1, prior to mid-2008 there was no systematic way in which ROM could collect specific data on the role of the oQSG in project design. The three question variant of horizontal issue 6.1 was supplanted by a 2 question variant in mid-2009. The latest version since 2010 has 4 questions and there were 25 MR in the project sample produced after this date. It is on this data additional analysis was conducted.

The current questions in BCS 6.1 are as follows:

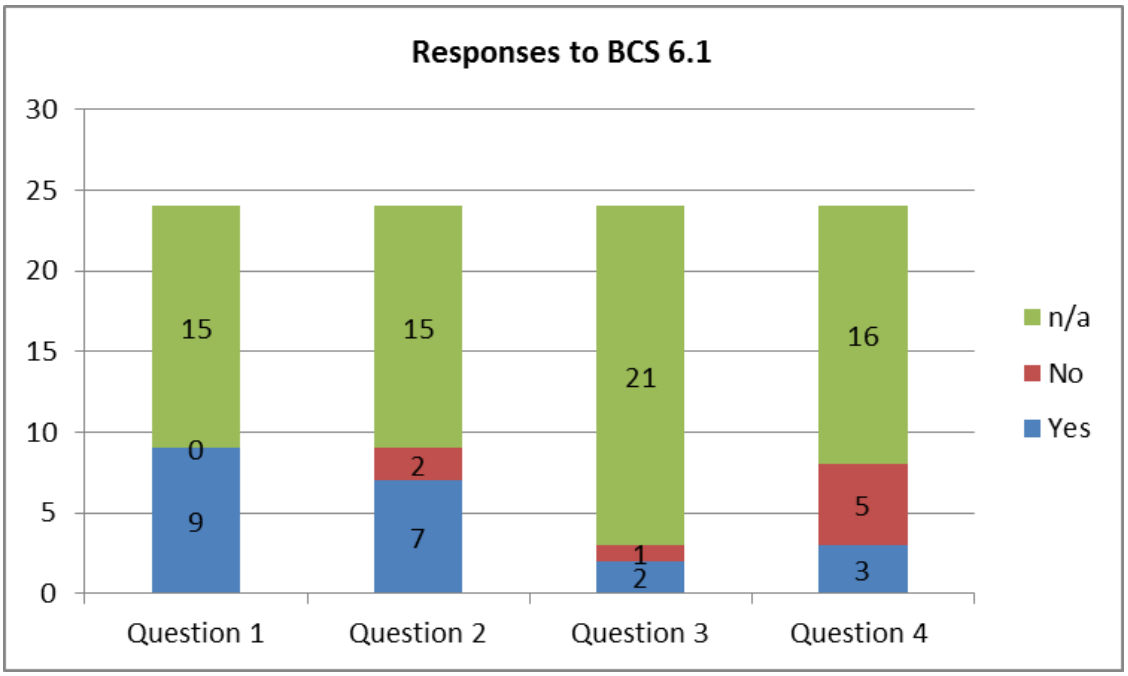
- *6.1.1 Whether the comments, particularly regarding stakeholders and needs analysis, institutional capacity assessment of the implementing partner and risks and assumptions made in the checklist and minutes against the quality and content of the Action Fiche were appropriate / relevant?*
- *6.1.2 Whether the comments were taken into consideration and included in the Project documents, e.g. TAPs, financing agreements, LFM, Inception reports, etc. and if so, did they improve project implementation?*
- *6.1.3 If the comments were not taken into consideration, was there any consequence during the implementation of the project? If so, please describe in the free text box*
- *6.1.4 Has any monitoring (including internal monitoring systems or ROM) or evaluation resulted in improvements in the project?*

In addition, there is also an opportunity for open questions such as, "Please comment on any of the questions / aspects above, qualitative data is very valuable".

Analysis of the data reveals in the majority of cases "n/a" was the response. The preponderance of n/a responses can be attributed to various reasons. In many cases it is due to the non-availability of oQSG documentation, (probably due to the lack of access to the database). In others it may be the lack of familiarity with the oQSG process. In particular the high level of n/a to the 3rd question reflects the inherent complexity in the hypothetical nature ("what if?") of the question.

However, on questions 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, 9 and 7 monitoring reports replied respectively "yes" suggesting data may have been available and it did address the issues mentioned in the questions.

6.4.1 Data Presentation – Type of Response to BCS 6.1



6.4.2 Comment

Where the answer is "yes" it did not necessarily mean the role of the oQSG was positive; only its role had been noted. In general the monitor's comments in the free text area were very superficial, but a couple of reports did point out the oQSG process had commented on design problems and that these had not been fully addressed indicating they remain problems. For example, "*The checklist for formulation phase emphasizes that no solution to the institutional capacity problem was found, that it is not clear how the NAO will assist the implementation of the proposal, that activities are not enough detailed and a risk of sprinkling exists. Finally it mentions the impossibility to assess and develop indicators as activities are not sufficiently specific. All these comments are still holding true and these weaknesses in the project design have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the program*"

Another example is provided from a ROM report produced in Africa, "*Le QSG propose de revoir le cadre logique (ce qui n'a pas été fait). Il ajoute qu'il existe un risque sur la maintenance des infrastructures rénovées par le ministère compétent. Il n'y a pas encore des garanties ce concernant. Sur le montage institutionnel, le QSG propose un lien entre le Comité Tripartite d'Orientation et de Suivi (qui s'occupera de piloter le projet) et le Comité Technique Spécialisé (CTS), instance de coordination du soutien au secteur de la justice. Cela n'a pas été fait (car le CTS ne fonctionne pas). Il s'agit de commentaires pertinents qui n'ont pas été entièrement pris en compte. Grace a la suspension, cela n'a pas entrainé des effets négatives".*

In general monitors need to be better informed about the oQSG process and enjoy easy access to the documentation and the data from the oQSG process. However, for this to happen it is necessary such information is stored by its Decision number and is made accessible to non-Commission staff.

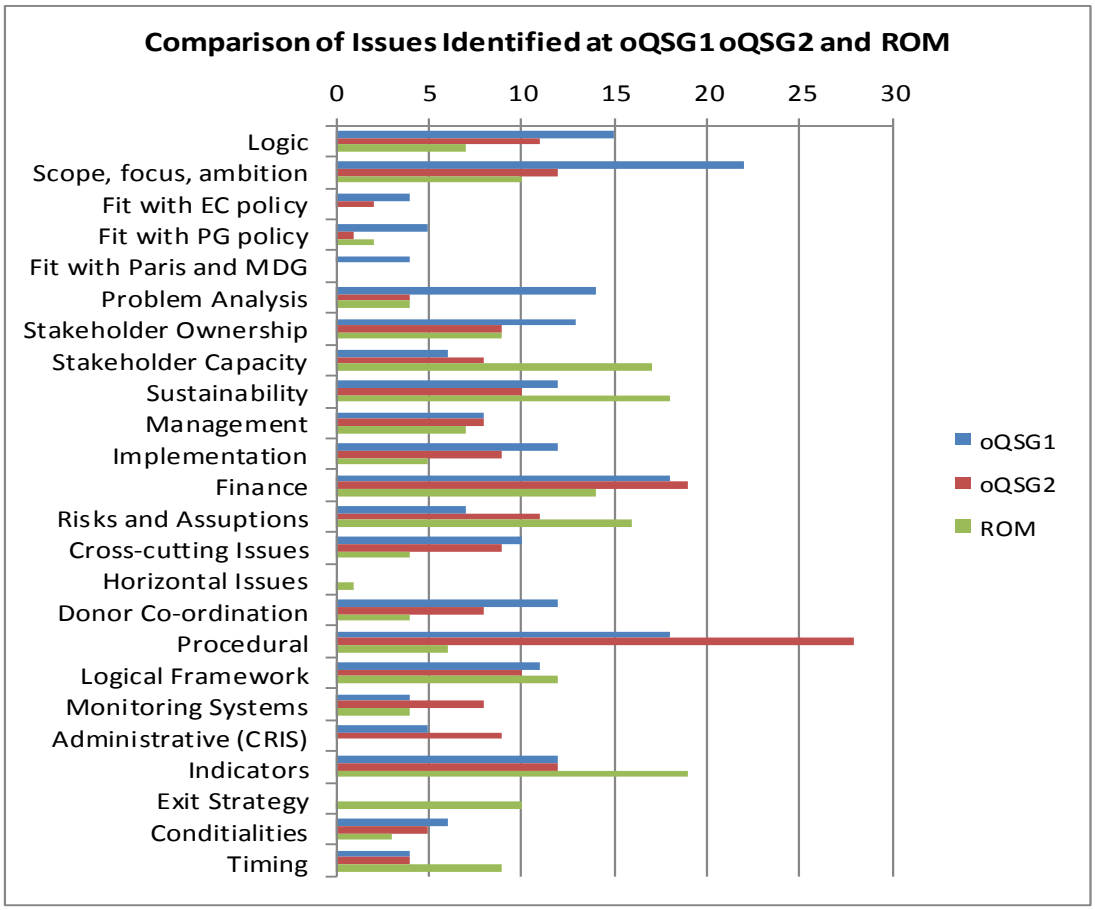
6.5 Comparison of oQSG and ROM Findings

The analysis compared the findings of both stages of the oQSG process with those of ROM and found a very diverse picture emerges. The findings should be treated with caution but nevertheless point to where the oQSG system may need strengthening.

Where the issue occurrence is lower in ROM than at either stage of oQSG, this study concludes the oQSG process to varying degrees resolved the issue during the design phase and the oQSG did, therefore, add value - namely in relation to logic, scope, focus and ambition, problem analysis, stakeholder ownership, management, implementation, donor co-ordination, and procedural issues).

Where the issue is stronger in ROM than during the oQSG phases, this study asserts the issue was not properly resolved by the oQSG process, - namely in relation to stakeholder capacity, sustainability, risks and assumptions, indicators, exit strategy and timing. Meanwhile, the issues of Finance and the Logical framework matrix (when presented in oQSG1) remain a problem at both stages of oQSG which is vividly demonstrated in the following presentation.

6.5.1 Data Presentation – Comparison of Issues Raised in oQSG1, oQSG2 and ROM



6.5.2 Comment

These findings show that ROM is a useful tool to review the quality of a project's design once it is operational. A positive finding is that many issue categories raised during the oQSG process were addressed as they were picked up in fewer cases in ROM. However, the fact ROM still finds key issues have not been successfully addressed by oQSG suggests there is room for improvement in the oQSG process. In particular there appears to be a need to ensure all macro issues must be better dealt with during oQSG1.

7 CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE PILOT STUDY

7.1 The oQSG Process

The purpose of the pilot study was to determine whether the oQSG process results in positive changes in project design. The overall conclusion of the analysis is the oQSG process was influential in improving project design in the majority of projects sampled. However, due to the limitations of the oQSG database, the study was only able to identify a total of 41 cases where there was adequate information available from oQSG1, oQSG2 and ROM to conduct the analysis over the period 2007-09. As a result the conclusions of the study may only provide an indication of the true value of the oQSG process. This is compounded by the fact the methodology applied to conduct the analysis had to confront the following drawbacks:

- No baseline data to work from in order to compare design changes with projects that did not go through the oQSG process;
- Changes in the oQSG process during the 2006-09 period (checklists), meaning the 41 project sample was not subject to the same oQSG process;
- The oQSG process does not set any targets to help facilitate the measurement of its effectiveness (such as the number of recommendations applied);
- The oQSG process was subject to an internal review in 2009 resulting in changes to the oQSG process from January 2010,[9] meaning some of the conclusions in this study have already been dealt with by the Commission.

The following conclusions and suggestions for the future are made taking into consideration the changes in the oQSG process since 2010. However, given the recent and on-going restructuring of DEVCO (including the change of Unit E5 into B1) no suggestions are made in relation to responsibilities and roles of different units.

Conclusion 1: At the structural level there were no findings to contradict the merit of the current two step process of the oQSG. However, there is inadequate emphasis in oQSG1 to clarify its "macro" focus and oQSG2 does not emphasise its "micro" focus to ensure each stage of the process concentrates comprehensively on identification (IF) and formulation (AF) respectively. This concurs with the latest 2010 guidelines for the IF which state, " *the IFs should be seen as working documents where an initial problem analysis and possible response options are presented, including a description of "possible" activities linked to intended results and "possible" options for implementation for implementation(without the necessity to include all details)*".

9 Instruction Note for the Attention of Aidco's Deputy Director-General, Aidco's Directors and Heads of Delegations Subject: New Functioning of the Office of Quality Support Groups (oQSGs) Revision of my note of 24.05.07 (no 8988) 30/10/2009 – Koos Richelle

Suggestion 1: The oQSG1 process should be strengthened by ensuring it focuses on the macro issues that must be fully addressed and resolved with the TM before a project can proceed to oQSG2. The oQSG1 should have some form of formal recording mechanism to confirm the issues and recommendations of the peer group have been resolved and this should be reconfirmed at the oQSG meeting to substantiate its decision. This could pave the way to dropping the need for "Option 2" decisions at oQSG1 meetings other than in exceptional circumstances, which the study believes allows some projects (8% in the study) to pass their design defects all the way through to implementation (such as stakeholder capacity, risk, indicators and exit strategy all of which relate to sustainability). This suggestion was not considered in the 2009 instructions.

Conclusion 2: In terms of documentation and meetings the analysis concludes key documents are not streamlined and as a result encourage a lot of cutting and pasting between the different documents produced.

Suggestion 2: to streamline key documents the Commission should assess the benefits of:

1) Adopting a standard format for the project document to be used throughout the whole oQSG process until a Decision Number is allocated in the interests of ensuring the evolution of the project is more transparent and can be more easily assessed by internal audits and external assessment such as ROM and evaluation.. This suggestion is not considered in the 2009 instructions.

2) Making the checklist format fully coherent with the IF/AF formats to reinforce the macro and micro focus of oQSG1 and 2 respectively. This is partially being done through the latest 2010 checklists, but without the macro and micro focus.

3) Supporting the call for consolidated checklists as that ensures a greater level of discussion between all parties in line with the new instructions in 2009.

4) Introducing a documented follow-up checklist on peer review recommendations and comments before the oQSG1 meeting and again before the oQSG 2 meeting in order to help justify the decision taken and ensure it is recorded in the minutes. This could be aided by using a standard template to show where the TAPs have been modified during oQSG 2. This follow up of oQSG 2 is included in the new instructions, but it is not clear how it will operate in practice.

5) Allocating a minimum time for discussion on each project at the oQSG meetings. This would remove heavy oQSG meetings, where an adequate discussion on each project is not possible.

Conclusion 3: the pilot study encountered deficiencies in the way oQSG data is collected and managed in the oQSG database. As reported at the start of this section, this was a major reason limiting the sample size for the analysis phase of the study.

Suggestion 3: to improve data collection and registration, the Commission should consider the following:

1) The oQSG database is transferred from the intranet as soon as possible to the new PCM Platform under construction in DEVCO

2) All storing of information in the oQSG database should be done using the project decision number. This is not in the new instructions, but an excel spreadsheet is being compiled with the aid of SQ2M to facilitate the transfer of the database to the PCM Platform in 2012. A suggestion here would be to discuss the difficulties of this pilot study with the designers of the new platform so they ensure the new system will permit more efficient data gathering for future analysis.

3) Quality control, especially in the way data is introduced into the oQSG database should be improved with a mechanism that indicates when it has been wrongly stored or classified

Conclusion 4: the pilot study concludes the process of designing projects is regularly done without applying the PCM methodology correctly. In particular, it found a large number of cases where the intervention logic and scope were questioned by the oQSG process indicating TMs may not always have an adequate grasp of PCM. In particular the use of the LFM appears not to be a central part of project identification and formulation. Although not obligatory in the IF, there is good reason to suggest project identification would benefit from the application of the logframe concept at least to help justify "possible activities" in relation to "intended results" and ensure adequate risk assessment and recourse to lessons learnt have been applied. This would also help reduce the large number of poor logframes, weak indicators, often inaccurate risk identification and usually insufficient attention to cross-cutting and horizontal issues, because it would involve starting the LFM approach earlier in the design phase when there is time to modify it and use it effectively.

Suggestion 4: increase the level of training and develop guidance (with examples) to ensure the TM, as well as those who are involved in the oQSG process, are in a position to produce quality IF and AF documents. This is being addressed by a pilot oQSG training course, managed by Unit B1 in DEVCO and supported by SQ2M, which finished its testing phase in July 2011. To aid this further the creation of some form of oQSG support/help desk could also be considered. Concerning the LFA/LFM training should emphasise flexibility is both desirable and permitted when redesigning logframes to ensure design faults or external factors (such as political and policy changes) are addressed and can be assessed in the oQSG process and during implementation of the project.

7.2 Lessons learnt from this pilot study for future studies

As a pilot study this study was experimental in nature. It took place using data that was difficult to access and time consuming to compile before quantitative analysis could begin. The main research question was broad and difficult to analyse when the oQSG system has neither a baseline nor any clear targets of its own. Furthermore, the pilot study analysed issues relating to projects that relate to the old oQSG process which is no longer in place.

The actual methodology developed in this study cannot be scaled up in future studies until the limitations presented below have been addressed. Nevertheless, the pilot study has led to some important lessons learnt on the oQSG process by referring to the ROM reports. The main lesson learnt is the current system of data registration is not geared to facilitating study and analysis of project design and aid effectiveness. For this reason, future studies using the current methodology should not be launched until the following issues have been rectified:

1) Improvements in the oQSG database:

   - There is a better information system containing all documentation;
   - Documents are named and saved according to a standard system (Decision number). It is understood this has been acted upon in August 2011 with the aid of a short-term expert from SQ2M;
   - Software is available to text search documents;

2) A consistent oQSG procedure with standard templates has been operational for at least 3 years:

3) The most crucial elements in project design have been identified, agreed and established for the identification and formulation phases (see below for ways to identify this);

4) A clear target or set of targets are established to facilitate measurement of the performance of the oQSG process.

5) The use of the ROM reports needs to be strengthened by ensuring:

   - Section 6.1 is better formulated so that questions do not contain multiple sub questions where the answer to one part may be yes but another no;
   - Monitors are better trained on the function and purpose of the oQSG process so they can respond better to 6.1;
   - The oQSG data need to be easily available to ROM experts in order they can conduct the background analysis for BCS 6.1 questions;
   - Delegation Task Managers should be trained and able to discuss the process of oQSG with the ROM experts.

6) Future studies are developed further by:

   - A survey of those in the Delegations who produce the IF and AF to establish how useful they find the oQSG process and how it could become more helpful to them;
   - A survey of project implementers on their views of the project design, how to make project design more operational and the role of oQSG in achieving this;
   - A discussion with the Donor group at a future meeting specifically on improving project design and quality support mechanisms;
   - A broader review of ROM reports which gave a “D” for Relevance and Quality of Design to identify the most serious design flaws;
   - A ROM review of quality of design in ex-post monitoring reports to identify the most crucial issues affecting project design.

Annex 1: oQSG Pilot Study Inception Report

Activity 1: Methodology for the Sampling Exercise

<table>
<tr><th>Mon./ Yr.</th><th>Action</th><th>SQ2M Exp.</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>1. Building the Universe of Cases Where the oQSG Process can be Traced to ROM</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>April 2010</td><td>1.1 Creation of the oQSG Database
SQ2M identified oQSG meetings from 2007 to mid-2010 on an Excel sheet in which all relevant information was recorded: directorate, country name, name of the project, date of the oQSG 1 meeting, date of the oQSG 2 meeting and total budget allocated to the project.
Output: oQSG database containing 2,942 projects linked to at least one oQSG meeting date.</td><td>LP</td></tr>
<tr><td>From Nov. 2010 to Jan. 2011</td><td>1.2 Identification of the oQSG information with a Decision number in CRIS
Until 2010, oQSG information can rarely be traced to a Decision (or contract) number in CRIS, making it difficult to find the related project in CRIS.
To tackle this problem it was necessary to enter the CRIS database country by country in order to search for the projects established in the oQSG database and link them to the Decision number in CRIS. This was not an easy task because the project names and budget registered in the oQSG database were not the same as those entered in CRIS. As a result of this process sometimes the oQSG database contained duplicated information on the same project (or which had been registered without the project title available).
Output: A total of 1,260 projects out of 2,942 projects (42.8%) could be linked to a Decision Number in CRIS in the time allocated for this exercise. As a result the oQSG database was amplified to contain the following information: Decision number, Contract number (if relevant), status, total cost and EC financial contribution.</td><td>LP</td></tr>
<tr><td>From Nov. 2010 to Jan. 2011</td><td>1.3 Linking the oQSG Database with ROM
The next step was to identify how many of the 1,260 projects in the oQSG database could be linked to on-going ROM in the period specified in the ToR (i.e. 2007-2009). To this it was necessary to first identify the status of each project within this period:
1.3.1 Project Status in OQSG Database
<table>
<tr><th>Status</th><th>Number of projects</th></tr>
<tr><td>Cancelled</td><td>178</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provisional</td><td>34</td></tr>
<tr><td>Committed</td><td>73</td></tr>
<tr><td>Decided</td><td>22</td></tr>
<tr><td>On-going</td><td>938</td></tr>
<tr><td>Closed</td><td>15</td></tr>
</table>
Research was then conducted in CRIS on the above-mentioned on-going and closed projects to find out how many had been monitored by ROM. The oQSG was then amplified again with two columns containing the following information: MR number and type of project. The following table presents the different type of projects found:
1.3.2 Number of oQSG Projects Linked to ROM
<table>
<tr><th>Type of project</th><th>Number of projects</th><th>Number of MRs</th></tr>
<tr><td>National Project</td><td>269</td><td>385</td></tr>
<tr><td>Regional Programme</td><td>4</td><td>12</td></tr>
<tr><td>SPSP</td><td>14</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>287</td><td>411</td></tr>
</table></td><td>LP</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>Mon./ Yr.</th><th>Action</th><th>SQ2M Exp.</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Output: 411 ROM Monitoring Reports covering 287 projects were identified in CRIS (relating to both On-going and Ex-post ROM).</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>March 2011</td><td>
1.4 Compilation of information related to grades
The objective of the oQSG study is to determine the effectiveness of the oQSG process in improving project design. The next step was, therefore, to identify a suitable variable with which the objective could be measured (graded). It was decided the best variable corresponded to question 1.2 in the Background Conclusion Sheets of the MR (absent before 2007):
“1.2 As presently designed, is the intervention logic holding true?”
In line with the methodology developed by the Causality Study on Effectiveness and Impact of the EC Project Portfolio Monitored by ROM from 2005-2007 (Particip, May 2009), it was agreed with Unit E5 the best dataset with which to conduct the present study would be MRs with DAC grades A and D for question 1.2. Additional columns were added to the Excel table accordingly. From these columns the following table shows the breakdown of the four DAC criteria applied to question 1.2 in relation to the data in Table 1.3.2:
1.4.1 No. of Projects and MRs by DAC Grade in Question 1.2. of BCS*
<table>
<tr><th>DAC Grade in BCS Q. 1.2.</th><th>No. of Projects</th><th>No. of MRs</th><th>Grade/BCS (%)</th></tr>
<tr><td>A</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>4%</td></tr>
<tr><td>B</td><td rowspan="2">208</td><td>183</td><td>45%</td></tr>
<tr><td>C</td><td>140</td><td>34%</td></tr>
<tr><td>D</td><td>14</td><td>14</td><td>3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Not Applicable</td><td>- 50</td><td>- 58</td><td>14%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>287</td><td>411</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total Applic.</td><td>237</td><td>353</td><td></td></tr>
</table>
Output: 353 MRs covering 237 projects have applied a DAC grade to BCS question 1.2. (58 MRs for 50 projects had no BCS attached in CRIS, including the 14 SPSPs). The following dataset is identified:

16 MRs relate to 15 projects with an “A” grade for BCS Q1.2.
14 MRs relate to 14 projects with a “D” grade for BCS Q1.2.

Conclusion: The above methodology successfully identified a dataset of 29 projects linked to 30 MRs with “A” and “D” grades (two for a project in Cameroon) that can be considered for the analysis phase. This “A+D Dataset” represents over 12 % of the 237 projects deemed eligible in Table 1.4.1.
*Where there were multiple MRs with C and then B grades, figures have been combined so as to not double count the project under both grades. It should be noted the difficulty in extracting this information from CRIS is a major shortcoming.
</td><td>MG</td></tr>
</table>

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	2. Validating the Dataset	
March 2011	**2.1 Coverage of the A+D Dataset** To test whether the dataset was representative of EuropeAid by geographical region and by sector, the study validated the sample by producing the following two tables on the 352 MRs in which a DAC grade had been allocated to BCS question 1.2: **2.1.1 No. of MRs/Percentage of Grades for Question 2.1 By Geographical Directorate in DEVCO**	MG

		Grades for 1.2				
		A	B	C	D	**A+D**
Directorate	**A**	12.5% (2)	7.7% (14)	6.5% (9)	0.0% (0)	**6.7% (2)**
	B	0.0% (0)	20.8% (38)	20.1% (28)	7.1% (1)	**3.3% (1)**
	C	75.0% (12)	62.8% (115)	61.2% (85)	78.6% (11)	**76.7% (23)**
	D	12.5% (2)	8.7% (16)	12.2% (17)	14.3% (2)	**13.3% (4)**
	Total	**100% (16)**	**100% (183)**	**100% (139)**	**100% (14)**	**100% (30)**

2.1.2 No. of MRs Covering ODA Sectors

		Grades for 1.2				
		A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A+D**
ODA sector	**1. Social Infrastructure and Services**	43.8% (7)	51.9% (95)	46.8% (65)	64.3% (9)	**53.3% (16)**
	2. Economic Infrastructure and Services	18.8% (3)	8.2% (15)	12.9% (18)	0.0% (0)	**10.0% (3)**
	3. Production sectors	6.3% (1)	19.7% (36)	23.0% (32)	21.4% (3)	**13.3% (4)**
	4. Multi-sector - Crosscutting	25.0% (4)	12.6% (23)	12.9% (18)	7.1% (1)	**16.7% (5)**
	5. Commodity Aid + General Programme Assistance	6.3% (1)	3.3% (6)	2.2% (3)	0.0% (0)	**3.3% (1)**
	7. Emergency Assistance	0.0% (0)	4.4% (8)	2.2% (3)	7.1% (1)	**3.3% (1)**
	Total	**100% (16)**	**100% (183)**	**100% (139)**	**100% (14)**	**100% (30)**

MG

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.

2.1.3. oQSG Information Available for SPSPs (by Directorate)

Documentation Available on 14 SPSPs	Dir. A	Dir. B	Dir. C	Dir. D
Complete Information oQSG1 and oQSG2	2		4	
Complete Information oQSG1, partial on oQSG2			2	
Complete information on oQSG2, partial on oQSG1			1	
Complete information on oQSG2, none on oQSG1			1	1
Partial information on oQSG1 and partial on oQSG2			1	
Partial information on oQSG2, none on oQSG1	1	1		
	3	1	9	1

Output: The above tables indicate the A+D dataset covers all the main geographical Directorates of DEVCO as well as all the main sectors of Overseas Development Assistance of the EU. However, as mentioned above at the end of section 1.4, although there is adequate oQSG information on 9 of 14 SPSPs in the oQSG database (complete and/or partial for oQSG1&2), none of the SPSPs can be linked to a ROM report and cannot, therefore, be included in the study.

April 2011

2.2 Identifying the Level of Documentation Available for the A+D Dataset

The final step before proceeding to the analysis phase was to identify from the oQSG database how many projects have complete or partial information available from oQSG1 and oQSG2. The documentation considered complete for a project is as follows:

- oQSG1 Identification Fiche (IF) and
- oQSG1 Check List (CL) and
- oQSG1 Minutes and
- oQSG2 Technical and Administrative Provisions (TAPs) **OR** Action Fiche (AF) **OR** Financing Proposal (FP) and
- oQSG2 Check List (CL) and
- oQSG2 Minutes

The information was collected and placed into folders by project. The following tables were produced showing the documentation available for the A+D Dataset:

2.2.1 oQSG Information Available for the A+D Dataset by DEVCO Directorates

Documentation Available	Total	%	Dir. A	Dir. B	Dir. C	Dir. D
Complete Information on oQSG1 and oQSG2	**10**	**34%**	1		9	
Complete Information on oQSG1, partial on oQSG2	**3**	**10%**			2	1
Complete Information on oQSG2, partial on oQSG1	**6**	**21%**			5	1
Complete information on oQSG1, none on oQSG2	**1**	**3%**				1
Complete information on oQSG2, none on oQSG1	**6**	**21%**	1	1	3	1
Partial information on oQSG2, none on oQSG1	**2**	**7%**			1	1
No information on either oQSG1 or oQSG2	**1**	**3%**			1	
Total	29	100%	2	1	21	5

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.

2.2.2 No. of Projects with Complete, Partially Complete or Incomplete Information on oQSG1&2

Documentation Available	Total	DAC Grade A for Q1.2	DAC Grad D for Q 1.
Complete Information oQSG1 and oQSG2	10	4	
Complete Information on oQSG1, partial on oQSG2	3	2	
Complete Information on oQSG2, partial on oQSG1	6	3	
Complete information on oQSG1, none on oQSG2	1		
Complete information on oQSG2, none on oQSG1	6	3	
Partial information on oQSG2, none on oQSG1	2	2	
No information on either oQSG1 or oQSG2	1	1	
Total	29	15	

Output: A total of **28 projects** have at least partial documentation available on oQSG1 and/or oQSG2, but one project has none. This information is broken down as follows:

a) 10 projects (equivalent to 34% of project dataset) have complete information on oQSG1/oQSG2 available;

b) 9 projects (31%), have complete information for one of the oQSG stages together with partial information on the other stage (i.e. at least one out of the three documents – IF, CL, or minutes – is available in the oQSG database);

c) 7 projects (24%) have complete information on one oQSG stage but none for the other;

d) 2 projects have incomplete information on one oQSG stage and none for the other and;

e) 1 project has no information on either oQSG stage (Ethiopia: Support to the Safety Nets Programme, Decision Nr. 017838) and therefore cannot be included in the final sample.

In terms of the split between "A" and "D":

a) "A" grade: 9 projects have complete/partially complete oQSG1 and oQSG2 documentation, whereas 5 projects have only complete/partially complete documentation for at least one oQSG stage. One has no information for either stage.

b) "D" grade: 10 Projects have complete/partially complete oQSG1 and oQSG2 documentation, whereas 4 projects only have complete documentation for at least one oQSG stage.

Conclusion: The A+D Dataset provide a sample of **19 projects** with sufficient information to justify proceeding to the Analysis Phase of the pilot study (Activity 2). However, this represents a smaller sample than the 40 projects (plus 4 SPSP) requested by Unit E5 at the briefing. It was therefore agreed with Unit E5 to increase the sample number by identifying projects with MRs registering "B" and "C" grades for question 1.2. in the BCS, i.e. the "B+C Dataset". In this way if the analysis of the initial 19 projects proved positive, the Senior STE would have access to another 22 projects to fulfil the analysis phase with the sample number agreed with Unit E5.

<table>
<tr><th>Mon./ Yr.</th><th>Action</th><th>SQ2M Exp.</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>3. Widening the Dataset</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Apr. 2011</td><td>
3.1 Identifying the Level of Documentation Available for the B+C Dataset
In order to identify the sample of 40 projects as agreed with Unit E5, the STE went back into the database concerning the 208 projects with 323 MRs projects identified in Table 1.4.1 registering B or C DAC grades and proceeded to determine how many of them contained complete information on oQSG1&2 (in order the Senior STE had all information at her disposal. This was done by the junior expert during the final week of the inception period and produced the following table:

2.3.1 Projects with Complete oQSG1&2 Information Available for the B+C Dataset (by Directorate)
<table>
<tr><th>Directorate</th><th>ROM B</th><th>ROM C</th><th>ROM B and C</th></tr>
<tr><td>Dir. A</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dir. B</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>3Dir. C</td><td>6</td><td>8</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Dir. D</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><td>Total</td><td>8</td><td>11</td><td>3</td></tr>
</table>
Output: Out of the total of 208 projects in the oQSG-ROM database ironically only 22 projects rated with the DAC grade “B” or “C” were found to have complete information on oQSG1&2 (as per definition list in section 2.2) of which 8 projects were awarded grade “B” in Q.1.2. of the BCS and 11 projects were given a grade C and 3 had both B and C through multiple MRs. In terms of their geographical spread, 15 projects are associated with Directorate C and 7 projects to Directorate D. For 3 projects there exist two monitoring reports, the first all register grade C for Q.1.2 and the second report a grade B.

Conclusion: The B+C Dataset provide a sample of 22 projects that have complete information to support, if required, the balance required for the senior STE to complete an in-depth analysis of at least 40 projects as requested by Unit E5 (approximately 10% of the MRs identified in Table 1.3.2)
</td><td>MG</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>4. Conclusions and Recommendations for the Analysis Phase (Activity 2)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Apr. 2011</td><td>
The above methodology has successfully identified an adequate sample of 41 projects which can now be assessed in the Analysis Phase (Activity 2) of the present pilot study. They are broken down as follows: 9 projects with DAC grade A for BCS Q.1.2; 10 with grade D; 8 with grade B; 11 with grade C and; 3 projects with B&C over two ROM missions.
As reported in section 1.4., there are 14 Sector Policy Support Programmes (SPSPs) for which data is available to a varying degree of completeness on oQSG1 and oQSG2 (see Table 3.1. below). Most of the available oQSG documentation is on ACP projects (Directorate C). However, none of the SPSPs in the oQSG database have undergone a pilot SPSP ROM mission. It was therefore not possible to include the SPSPs in the current study given the Terms of Reference requires analysis of at least one ROM report per project.
It is important to stress that the methodology adopted for this pilot study was made possible following many months developing the oQSG database. This methodology could potentially be up-scaled in future studies, however, to do this successfully the current oQSG database will need to be improved by ensuring all documentation relating to EU-funded projects is registered. This is especially important for all projects funded from 2010 when the new ROM BCS was introduced and from which date the majority of pilot SPSP ROM missions have taken place. Section 6.1 in the new ROM BCS addresses the “Role of Quality Support Group (QSG) and ROM in project quality” This section should provide more focussed information to assess the effectiveness of oQSG in
</td><td>MH/ SQ2M</td></tr>
</table>

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	identifying and formulating projects which can deliver aid more effectively. It is also recommended ROM contractors enjoy open access to the improved oQSG database. This will in turn help facilitate the linkage between all ROM and OQSG documents in one centralised database within the Commission as foreseen under the PCM Platform in 2012. Unit E5 may also wish to consider using SQ2M to aid the improvement of the oQSG Database in the coming months with a junior STE. Although the oQSG database was created by SQ2M outside this project it should be noted that it took 20 days of the Junior Expert's time to extract from the oQSG meeting folders the necessary documents, allocate them to the correct project and eliminate much of the document duplication. As the oQSG meeting documentation for all projects dealt with at the same meeting is contained within one meeting folder filed by date within a larger folder for the year often this meant opening each document to clarify to which project it related i.e. the data is not saved by project. Similarly when looking for project ROM data on CRIS different elements of the ROM database had to be opened to find different documents e.g. the Financial Agreement is found in the Decision Menu and the Monitoring Reports and BCS elsewhere. Conclusions and recommendations on data management will be presented in a later report when its consequence is more fully understood. In terms of the next steps, SQ2M proposes the senior and junior short-tem experts adopt the following methodology during the Analysis Phase: 1) Conduct analysis of the above-mentioned 19 projects, starting with an assessment of 6 projects to first identify any issues concerning the documentation and data available as well as identify potential variables which could demonstrate impact, trends and lessons learned. A short summary of the identification of variables methodology will be submitted to E5 for approval before continuing with the analysis. 2) Conduct in-depth analysis of the 19 projects according to the variables selected; 3) Confirm from the analysis by final testing whether the oQSG process has had a positive effect on design and that this can be linked to aid effectiveness. This will then be reported and the short-term expert will propose to E5 the preferred option to proceed in order to cover 41 projects.	

Annex 2: oQSG Pilot Study Step 2: Identification of Variables

oQSG Study – Analysis Phase Report (Final Draft v05/05/11)

Activity 2: Methodology for Conducting the Analysis Phase

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	5. Initial Selection of 6 Projects for Analysis	
Apr. 2011	**5.1 Criteria for Selecting the 6 Projects** The conclusion and next steps in the preceding Inception Report of the present pilot study proposed that Activity 2 start with an assessment of 6 projects taken from the 19 projects belonging to the "A+D Dataset" ,in order to first identify any issues concerning the documentation and data available as well as aid the identification of the potential variables which could demonstrate impact, trends and lessons for future analysis and enhancing aid effectiveness The selection of the 6 projects was conducted on the following basis: 1) To get a geographic representation the 1 project from Dir. A and 2 from Dir. D were included along with 3 from Dir. C – there are none from Dir. B in the full sample of 19. 2) To look at both successful and problematic projects (3 projects graded with an A for BCS 1.2 and 3 with a D). 3) To establish the consequence of incomplete oQSG data (3 of the projects have full oQSG documentation, and 3 partial oQSG information). 4) To reflect a language ratio in the MRs (2 of the 6 in French). 5) To cover different types of project (each one is different: 1 is regional, 1 is funded through the Sugar Protocol, and 2 are joint-funded and 2 are standard projects). The 6 projects selected are highlighted in the Excel Sheet attached as Annex 1 below.	MH/ MG
	6. Selection of the Potential Variables	
Apr. 2011	**6.1 Definition of a Variable** Essentially a variable is described as an element, feature, or factor that is liable to vary or change[10]. In the context of this study that means the pieces of information that can be collected across all, or at least most projects which help provide a consistent set of relevant information to answer the research question *"how has the oQSG system contributed to the quality of design of projects and programmes?*" From project to project the information itself may vary, but not the category of the information, and it is within these variations that the answer to the research question lies.[11]	MH

[10] Meriam-Webster online dictionary

[11] The Methodological Basis for the Study and Guidelines for Future Studies from a previous study Causes underlying the Effectiveness and Impact of EC Development Projects 2009 by Jordi del Bas and Rafael Eguiguren was referred to for a process by which to establish variables (also known as the, "Causality Study").

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
Apr. 2011	**6.2 Process to Select Key Variables** **6.2.1 Selection Rationale** Bearing in mind the 2009 Causality Study (Particip, May 2009) the lessons learned indicate that when many variables are used the exercise begins to take considerably longer than planned and the exercise becomes more difficult to manage it was decided to keep the number of variables to a reasonably limited number. Furthermore if there are too many variables to cover all possible nuances of the information then the " strength" of many findings is likely to be weak i.e. only applicable in very few instances. Furthermore, these findings are unlikely to help improve the oQSG system, rather those findings that occur in many cases and which can lead to changes to improve the oQSG system are the ones considered of most value in the present study. A scan of all the documents for each of the 6 selected projects shows a varied and large amount of data and information available for each one[12]. Subsequent reading of the documentation showed it required approximately 4 hours to properly read and extract the information required from the following key documents: IF, oQSG 1 consolidated checklist, oQSG 1minutes, AF and or FP and or TAPs, oQSG 2 consolidated checklist oQSG 2 minutes ROM BSC 1.2 and MR Relevance and Design, Sustainability and Key Comments This time limitation further justifies the need to work with a smaller, but also carefully selected, set of variables for the analysis phase. **6.2.2. The Project Summary Sheet** In order to capture the key information relevant to the different variables and not to have to constantly refer to the original, often long documents, a **Project Summary Sheet** (PSS) was established for each project. (A copy of the template is given in Annex 2 and a completed version for the MEDSTAT project is given in Annex 3.) It contains both quantitative and yes/no data as well as qualitative text to substantiate the quantitative information, (the initial idea of creating a spreadsheet for all the information proved unwieldy.) The PSS was also designed to enable relevant text to be cut and pasted from the original documents in order to save time re-identifying such text in the large number of above-mentioned documents on the database during the analysis stage. In the following explanation of the contents of the PSS the data that will be summarized through the use of an excel spread sheet has a reference such a B 1 or C5, the text data does not have a reference.	MH

[12] See section on Data Difficulties for issues relating to the correct identification of the key documents

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	In the first section of the PSS – **A Profile** - key project identification information was identified:[13] A1 Country: A2 Project: A3 CRIS no: A4 Directorate: A5 Size: A6 BCS 1.2: A7 Language For example, it may be of interest to see if some variables correlate to size of project or directorate. The rest of the PPS focuses on addressing the research question in the ToR: "How has the oQSG system contributed to the quality of design of projects and programmes?" meeting the first expected result: *Identify the factors in the oQSG process which contribute to the eventual level of success of projects and programmes, including the extent to which input from the quality assessments are incorporated into the projects and whether they can be attributed to achieving better results.* To achieve this **three categories of variables** were identified: The first set of variables relate to timings - **B Timescales** -, both planned and actual of the different stages and included: B1 Identification Mission B2 Identification Report B3 Submission of the Identification Fiche B4 oQSG1 Meeting Date B5 Submission of the FP/AF/TAPS B6 oQSG2 Meeting Date B7 Submission to the Management Committee B8 Date of signature of the FA B9 Date of ROM report	

[13] The references A1 B3 etc. relate to data that will be incorporated on the spread sheet for aggregation and quantitative analysis purposes. Explanatory text collected on the PSS does not have a reference code.

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	This data is intended to allow the analysis to gain a view on how long the entire oQSG process takes in practice, as opposed to in theory, and to see if there is a particular delay in the signing of the FA. These variables may or may not have an impact on project performance. For example a delay in the signing of the FA may mean that the project is being implemented under a new government and does not have the same level of ownership as initially identified – the Monitoring Report should bear this out. The second set of variables relate to the process of the oQSG - **C oQSG Process** - during which the inputs from the quality assessments should be incorporated into the projects. The purpose of these variables is to establish if the oQSG process shows evidence that QSG inputs produce improvements in the design of projects. This set of variables is divided into two subsets of variables. The first subset relates to the QSG procedure, its comprehensiveness and completeness: For oQSG 1 C1 oQSG 1completeness of process – is all documentation available? C2 The number of iterations of the IF C3 Did the IF stage draw on other studies or reviews, evaluations, monitoring reports? C4 Does a logframe exist containing OO, PP, Results, OVIs, Risks and Assumptions exist? Pasted text extracts from the comments on the checklist C5 Key Categories of Issues oQSG1 Checklist *see below for Categories of Comment* C6 oQSG1 decision , Option 1,2 or 3 Pasted text extracts from the discussion and recommendations in the oQSG minutes C7 Key Categories of Issues from the oQSG1 minutes *see below for Categories of Comment* For oQSG2 C8 oQSG 2 completeness of process – is all documentation available? C9 The number of iterations of the AF C10 Does a logframe containing OO, PP, Results, OVIs, Risks and Assumptions exist? C11 Did the OO, PP or Results required change as the project goes through the oQSG process? C12 Were issues raised in oQSG1 raised again in oQSG2 see especially question 12 and 13.of the checklist? Pasted text extracts from the comments on the checklist C13 Key Categories of Issues oQSG1 Checklist see below for Categories of Comment C14 oQSG2 Decision Option 1,2 or 3 Pasted text extracts from the discussion and recommendations in the oQSG minutes C15 Key Categories of Issues from the oQSG2 minutes *see below for Categories of Comment*	

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	The second subset of variables is issue related and a list of "categories of comment" were identified so that the text could be summarised into a form whereby data could ultimately be aggregated to identify which are the most frequently cited issues. The categories of comment, which need to be improved or are cited as being good, relate to: • Logic • Scope, focus, ambition • Fit with EC policy • Fit with PG policy • Fit with Paris and MDG • Problem analysis • Stakeholder ownership • Stakeholder capacity • Sustainability • Management • Implementation • Finance • Risks and assumptions • Horizontal Issues • Cross-cutting Issues • Procedural • Logical framework • Monitoring system • Administrative (CRIS) These categories selected from 3 perspectives: (i) the reading of the documents themselves to identify categories of comment, (ii) the synthesis of the elements covered in the checklists and; (iii) to a more limited extent, the requirements of the EC to deliver Aid more effectively as presented in the Backbone Strategy[14] These issue categories are applied consistently to several stages of the analysis in the form of: C5 Categories of issues from the oQSG1 checklist C7 Categories of issues from oQSG1 minutes C13 Categories of issues from the oQSG 2 checklist C15 Categories of issues from oQSG2 minutes D6 Categories of issues from the ROM reports This second subset of variables aims to identify whether the concerns raised during the oQSG1 in the IF stage are no longer mentioned during oQSG2 or whether they remain unaddressed issues. It may also show, for example, whether some issues often arise at oQSG2 stage, but not at oQSG 1. Comments on both the checklists and the minute meetings are collected at this stage. This may not be necessary as the issues may be the same in both documents, but it is interesting to see if the	

[14] The Backbone Strategy on "Reforming Technical Co-operation and Project Implementation Units" July 2008 came into effect after most of the projects had gone through the oQSG process.

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	oQSG meetings add further comments to the checklists. By keeping the issues consistent through all stages of the analysis it is intended to track more easily at what stage in the oQSG process issues arise and at what stage they are effectively dealt with. The number of variables may appear to contradict the principle that the number should be limited but by the end of the data collection stage it may become apparent that some are never applicable. The third set of variables relate to the quality of design once the project is under implementation from the perspective of the ROM exercise – **D ROM Report**- namely: D1 Does a logframe containing OO, PP, Results, OVIs, Risks and Assumptions exist? D2 Has the logframe been amended since the signing of the FA? D3 The grade of BCS1.2 Pasted text extracts of relevant comments D4The grades for Relevance and Design in the Monitoring Report Pasted text extracts of relevant comments D5 The grade for Sustainability in the Monitoring Report Pasted text extracts of relevant comments D6 The Yes/No/N/A response from Section 6.1 of the BCS Pasted text extracts of relevant comments Pasted text extracts from Key Observations D6 Categories of issues from the ROM reports Although the BCS 1.2 grade was selected as the criteria for selecting which projects should be included in the study as it focussed most closely on the design of the projects once they are operational, it became apparent while reading through the reports that many comments that relate directly to the interests of the present study are also found in the MR under the "Relevance and Design" and "Sustainability" sections of the MR. In addition if a point related to design is particularly noteworthy then it is often included in the section "Key Observations". By including this information in the analysis, it is intended the study will be better able to identify the issues emerging from the design process in relation to the implementation of each project and therefore its effectiveness. The PSS will also note if the new section 6.1 of the BCS, "Horizontal Issues - Role of Quality Support Group (QSG) and ROM in Project Quality" has been completed. This section asks the following questions: Whether the comments, particularly regarding stakeholders and needs analysis, institutional capacity assessment of the implementing partner and risks and assumptions made in the checklist and minutes against the quality and content of the Action Fiche were appropriate / relevant? Whether the comments were taken into consideration and included in the Project documents, e.g. TAPs, financing agreements, LFM, Inception reports, etc. and if so, did they improve project implementation?	

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	If the comments were not taken into consideration, was there any consequence during the implementation of the project? If so, please describe in the free text box. Has any monitoring (including internal monitoring systems or ROM) or evaluation resulted in improvements in the project? It is anticipated that those MR containing this data will be collected and incorporated in the analysis. This information can be used to further substantiate or differ from the findings in the rest of the MR. If the information differs from that found in the MR it may well suggest that the concepts behind 6.1 are not familiar to monitors which would be an important finding in itself. If the answers were mostly n/a this would suggest that access to oQSG information is not fully available to monitors. It may be that a review of the data collected in the Horizontal and Cross-Cutting Issues of the BCS are worthy of a separate review in their own right.	
	7. Observations and Limitations to the Exercise and Next steps	
May 2011	**7.1. Observations and Limitations** Given the vast amount of data available the identification of the variables kept strictly to the key documents made available in Activity 1, except where further clarification was necessary. The review of the documents did not make any judgements on the quality or appropriateness of the documents themselves. These will be incorporated into the final report. At this stage the task focused entirely on seeing if the process itself can identify shortcomings during the oQSG process and/or whether these were resolved or not during the external ROM monitoring process. It is important to mention there were some limitations experienced during the identification of the variables. These include: 1) The Lack of dates on documents in the OQSG database made it very difficult to know which are the final versions of the IF, AF, checklists etc. Some documents, for example, say version 27/06/2006 in the footer but that is the version of the template of the document not the document itself 2) When background information on feasibility studies etc. is not listed this doesn't mean there wasn't any, rather no clear reference was made to it in the IF, nor are any other reports available in other information folders. 3) Specific difficulties encountered with the documentation of individual projects: • Malawi: The checklist for formulation phase DEV/E/3 format of 07/03/07 is not the same format as that used by AIDCO making consolidation more complex. The former appears to be "roughly" incorporated into the consolidated checklist. The C1 only checklist also of 27/06/06 is more comprehensive than the consolidated version and has lower scorings. The consolidated version was used; • MEDSTAT lll: it is not known which is the final oQSG checklist and log-frame? The version named "from CRIS" was used; • Congo RD Assainissement urbaine: many of the oQSG meeting documents relate only to the Congo Brazzaville Port Project; • Cambodia: the data under oQSG1 is in fact the first version of oQSG2 and oQSG 2 contains the resubmission of the AF	MH

Mon./ Yr.	Action	SQ2M Exp.
	7.3 Next Steps in the Analysis Phase The variables proposed above together with the Project Summary Sheets need to be approved by Unit E5 before a spread sheet is finalised to start the analysis and commence ticking all the yes/no boxes in order to perform basic quantitative analysis, establish timing matters and identify the frequency of occurrence of the issue categories. If necessary, the exercise will then be modified across the 6 projects already reviewed and extended to cover the 19 projects in the sample for the first part of the study. A relatively straightforward analysis of each project folder produces significant amounts of text for the PSS which then needs to be turned into a manageable amount of information on a spreadsheet. It is proposed to base most of the analysis on the frequency of occurrence of information, I.e. summarise in quantitative form the data on the excel sheet. When trends or common factors are identified the analysis will then return to the text to see if the reasons for the frequency of occurrence are consistent or diverse. The intention is to obtain as clear a picture as possible of the impact of the oQSG system on the effectiveness of aid delivery and not to describe and take into consideration every slight variation and nuance. From the pilot study all that is learnt and noted during the analysis will be summarised in the final report to guide future replication of such exercises. Following approval by Unit E5 of the variables presented in the present report together with the PSS method the next step will be to conduct the analysis of the 19 projects belonging to the A+D dataset and present the findings to Unit E5.	

Annex 1: Table of Selected Projects for the Identification of Variables

			Budget analysis	oQSG Data									
Dir	Country	Operation Title	EC contribution	oQSG 1 IF	oQSG 1 check list	oQSG 1 minutes	oQSG 2 TAPs	oQSG 2 check list	oQSG 2 minutes	MR number	1.2 As presently designed, is the intervent	Complete or Partial data	Language
A	Mediterranean Region	MEDSTAT III (Statistical Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region, phase three)	4,000,000	yes	yes	yes	AF	yes	yes	MR-128907.01	A	C	E
C	Nigeria	SUPPORT TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST ECONOMIC&FINANCIAL CRIME	24,700,000	yes/FP/TAP	oQSG2	yes	see oQSG1	see oQSG1	yes	MR-001719.03	A		E
C	Angola	PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION	19,398,700	FP	Note	yes	FP	yes	yes	MR-128421.01	D		E
C	Cape Verde	Programme d'approvisionnement en eau potable et d'assainissement des villes de Praia, Mindelo et Calheta	19,240,000	yes			yes/FP	yes	yes	MR-119763.01	D		F
C	Mauritania	Renforcement et réhabilitation du secteur de la Justice	4,750,000	yes	yes	yes	yes/FP	yes	yes	MR-126960.01	D		F
C	Congo (Democratic	Projet d'Assainissement Urbain à Kinshasa (PAUK)	22,000,000	IF			FP	yes	yes	MR-120683.02	A		F
C	Senegal	Appui au Programme de Relance des Activités Economiques et Sociales en Casamance (PRAESC) : Réhabilitation des	7,000,000	yes	yes	yes	yes/FP			MR-128524.01	A	p	F
C	Congo (Brazzaville)	Appui à la navigabilité dans le port de Brazzaville	5,000,000	yes	yes	yes	FP	yes	yes	MR-116682.02	A		F
C	Rwanda	Rwanda Road Infrastructure Support Programme	47,000,000	yes	yes	yes	FP	yes	yes	MR-109102.01	A		E
C	Cameroun	Programme de microprojets pour le développement des zones du Lac Tchad et de Bakassi	3,935,364	yes	yes	yes	FP	yes	yes	MR-129300.01	D		F
C	Jamaica	REHABILITATION NEGRIL & OCHO RIOS WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS	3,030,000	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	MR-131540.02	D		E
C	Zambia	Accompanying measures 2007-2010 for Sugar Protocol countries - Zambia	6,000,000	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	MR-130447.01	D	C	E
C	Malawi	Income Generation Public Works Programme - Phase II	9,487,500	IF			yes/FP	yes	yes	MR-128340.01	A	p	E
C	Congo (Brazzaville)	Mesures d'accompagnement en faveur des Pays signataires du protocole sucre- Allocation 2008	1,800,000	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	MR-130083.01	A		F
C	Liberia	EC SUPPORT TO EDUCATION IN LIBERIA	11,682,054	yes	yes	yes	FP	oQSG1	yes	MR-123244.01	A		E
C	Congo (Democratic	APPUI A L'ORDONNATEUR NATIONAL EN RDC	6,000,000	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	MR-120681.02	D		F
C	Congo (Democratic	PROGRAMME APPUI A LA GOUVERNANCE EN REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUEDU CONGO	33,000,000	yes	yes	yes	yes/FP	yes	yes	MR-129146.01	D		F
D	China	Governance for Equitable Development (GED) - Strengthening Rule of Law and Civil Society Participation in China	6,800,000	yes	yes	yes	FP			MR-113201.01	D	P	E
D	Cambodia	GCCA - Global Climate Change Alliance: Allocation from Swedish contribution to Cambodia	2,205,816	AF	oQSG2	yes	AF	yes	yes	MR-136161.01	D	C	F
19										19	19		

Annex 2

Project Summary Sheet Template

A - Profile

A1	Country:	
A2	Project:	
A3	CRIS no:	
A4	Directorate:	
A5	Size:	
A6	BCS 1.2:	
A7	Language:	

B - Timetable

	Action	Proposed timetable:	Actual timetable:
B1	Identification Mission		
B2	Identification Report		
B3	Submission of the Identification Fiche		
B4	oQSG1 Meeting Date		
B5	Submission of the FP/AF/TAPS		
B6	oQSG2 Meeting Date		
B7	Submission to the Management Com.		
B8	Date of signature of the FA		

C oQSG 1&2 Process

oQSG 1

	oQSG 1: Process	Yes/No comment
C1	oQSG 1 process complete:	

	oQSG 1:	No.
C2	Number of iterations of IF	

C3	oQSG 1: Background data to IF	Yes/No plus name
C 3.1	Yes/No	
C 3.2	Previous study	
C 3.3	Feasibility Study	
C 3.4	Evaluation Report reports	
C 3.5	ROM reports	
C 3.6	Other	

C4	oQSG 1: Does a log-frame exist?	Yes/No
C 4.1		
C 4.2	Containing OO	
C 4.3	PP	
C 4.4	Results	
C 4.5	OVIs	
C 4.6	Risks and Assumptions	

C5 Key comments on Checklist: *Text from consolidated checklist*

C5	oQSG1: Key categories of issues	Improve	Good
C 5.1	Logic		
C 5.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
C 5.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 5.4	Fit with PG policy		
C 5.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 5.6	Problem analysis		
C 5.7	Stakeholder ownership		
C 5.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 5.9	Sustainability		
C 5.10	Management		
C 5.11	Implementation		
C 5.12	Finance		
C 5.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 5.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 5.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 5.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 5.17	Procedural		

C 5.18	Logical Framework		
C 5.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 5.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

C6	oQSG1 Decision - Option 1, 2 or 3:	

C7 oQSG1 Meeting Discussion: *Paste text*

C7 oQSG1 Meeting Key Comments: *Paste text*

C7	oQSG 1: Key categories of issues	Improve	Good
C 7.1	Logic		
C 7.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
C 7.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 7.4	Fit with PG policy		
C 7.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 7.6	Problem analysis		
C 7.7	Stakeholder ownership		
C 7.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 7.9	Sustainability		
C 7.10	Management		
C 7.11	Implementation		
C 7.12	Finance		
C 7.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 7.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 7.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 7.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 7.17	Procedural		
C 7.18	Logical Framework		
C 7.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 7.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

oQSG 2

	oQSG 2: Process	Yes/No comment
C8	oQSG 2 process complete:	

	oQSG 2:	No.
C9	Number of iterations of AF	

C10	oQSG 2: Does a log-frame exist?	Yes/No
C 10.1	Does a log-frame exist?	
C 10.2	Containing OO	
C 10.3	PP	
C 10.4	Results	
C 10.5	OVIs	
C 10.6	Risks and Assumptions	

C11	Have there been changes to any of the log-frame? Yes/No Comment	Yes – during the Inception Phase

C12	Checklist oQSG2 Section C Verification of Identification Follow-up	Yes/No/Comment
C 12.1	Point 13	
C 12.2	Point 14	

C 12 Key comments on Checklist: *Text from consolidated checklist*

C13	oQSG 2: Key categories of issues	Improve	Good
C 13.1	Logic		
C 13.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
C 13.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 13.4	Fit with PG policy		
C 13.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 13.6	Problem analysis		
C 13.7	Stakeholder ownership		
C 13.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 13.9	Sustainability		

C 13.10	Management		
C 13.11	Implementation		
C 13.12	Finance		
C 13.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 13.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 13.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 13.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 13.17	Procedural		
C 13.18	Logical Framework		
C 13.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 13.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

C14	oQSG2 Meeting Decision - Option 1, 2 or 3:	

C15 oQSG2 Minutes Discussion: *Paste Text*

C 15 oQSG Minutes Requirements: *Paste text*

C15	**oQSG 2: Key categories of issues**	**Improve**	**Good**
C 15.1	Logic		
C 15.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
C 15.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 15.4	Fit with PG policy		
C 13.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 15.6	Problem analysis		
C 15.7	Stakeholder ownership		
C 15.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 15.9	Sustainability		
C 15.10	Management		
C 15.11	Implementation		
C 15.12	Finance		
C 15.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 15.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 15.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 15.16	Donor co-ordination		

C 15.17	Procedural		
C 15.18	Logical Framework		
C 15.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 15.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

D - ROM

D1	**ROM: Does a log-frame exist?**	**Yes/No**
D 1.1	Containing OO	
D 1.2	PP	
D 1.3	Results	
D 1.4	OVIs	
D 1.5	Risks and Assumptions	

D2	ROM: Has the log-frame been amended since the signing of the FA? (Yes/No)	

D3	Grade of BCS1.2 (A, B, C or D):	

D3 Relevant Comment: *Paste Text*

D4	Grade of Relevance and Design (A, B, C or D)	

D4 Relevant Comment : *Paste Text*

D5	Grade of Sustainability (A, B, C, or D)	

D5 Relevant Comment: *Paste Text*

D5 Key Observations: *Paste Text*

D6	Section 6.1 of the BCS Yes/No/N/A	

D6 Relevant Comments: *paste text*

D7	**oQSG 2: Key categories of issues**	**Improve**	**Good**
D 7.1	Logic		
D 7.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
D 7.3	Fit with EC policy		
D 7.4	Fit with PG policy		
D 7.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
D 7.6	Problem analysis		
D 7.7	Stakeholder ownership		
D 7.8	Stakeholder capacity		
D 7.9	Sustainability		
D 7.10	Management		
D 7.11	Implementation		
D 7.12	Finance		
D 7.13	Risks and assumptions		
D 7.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
D 7.15	Horizontal Issues		
D 7.16	Donor co-ordination		
D 7.17	Procedural		
D 7.18	Logical Framework		
D 7.19	Monitoring criteria		
D 7.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

Annex 3

Project Summary Sheet – MEDSTAT III

A - Profile

A1	Country:	Med Region
A2	Project:	MEDSTAT III (Statistical Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region, phase lll)
A3	CRIS no:	2009/020-474
A4	Directorate:	A
A5	Size:	4M€
A6	BCS 1.2:	A
A7	Language:	English

B - Timetable

	Action	Proposed timetable:	Actual timetable:
B1	Identification Mission		
B2	Identification Report		
B3	Submission of the Identification Fiche	14/11/2008	
B4	oQSG1 Meeting Date		12/11/2008
B5	Submission of the FP/AF/TAPS	09/01/2009	
B6	oQSG2 Meeting Date		29/01/2009
B7	Submission to the Management Com.	01/07/2009	
B8	Date of signature of the FA	08/12/2010	

C oQSG 1&2 Process

oQSG 1

	oQSG 1: Process	Yes/No comment
C1	oQSG 1 process complete:	Yes though not clear if CL is consolidated – the version from CRIS was used

	oQSG 1:	No.
C2	Number of iterations of IF	N/A

C3	oQSG 1: Background data to IF	Yes/No plus name
C 3.1	Yes/No	Yes
C 3.2	Previous study	
C 3.3	Feasibility Study	
C 3.4	Evaluation Report reports	On-going evaluation of MEDSTAT ll
C 3.5	ROM reports	ROM MEDSTAT ll
C 3.5	Other	Evaluation of Commission support for statistics in third countries – MEDSTAT reflection group

C4	oQSG 1: Does a log-frame exist?	Yes/No
C 4.1	Does a log-frame exist?	No
C 4.2	Containing OO	
C 4.3	PP	
C 4.4	Results	
C 4.5	OVIs	
C 4.6	Risks and Assumptions	

C 5 Key comments on Checklist: *Text extracts from consolidated checklist (highlights show issues identified for inclusion in C5 below}*

The approval of the IF is recommended, the project formulation phase nevertheless needs to look thoroughly at the following aspects:

1) Project design needs to integrate features to increase "local ownership". This should, inter alia, be demonstrated by conclusion of additional institutionalised agreements to share data (MoU) and possibly an own financial participation by beneficiary states to continue project activities. This may be done through strengthening local involvement in management and implementation as well as by achieving fuller appreciation of project results (see pt 3. below)

2) Sustainability issue needs to be properly addressed and an exit strategy formulated. IF the network is to be maintained over time, the formulation needs to study ways of financing (contributions by partners).

3) Project activities should more explicitly focus on the encouragement of decision–makers to use statistics and objective information as a basis. Otherwise, the general objectives – very large and ambitious – have no basis of being met.

4) A Logical framework needs to be drawn up and the project intervention logic be more developed – this will also lead to the possibility of appreciating the required financial resources.

C5	oQSG1: Key categories of issues	Improve	Good
C 5.1	Logic	x	
C 5.2	Scope, focus, ambition	x	
C 5.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 5.4	Fit with PG policy		
C 5.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 5.6	Problem analysis		
C 5.7	Stakeholder ownership	x	
C 5.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 5.9	Sustainability	x	
C 5.10	Management		
C 5.11	Implementation		
C 5.12	Finance		
C 5.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 5.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 5.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 5.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 5.17	Procedural		
C 5.18	Logical Framework	x	
C 5.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 5.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

C6	Decision - Option 1, 2 or 3:	Option 2

Discussion: *Paste extracts of text* N/A

Key Comments: *Paste extracts of text from oQSG1 Minutes (highlights show issues identified for inclusion in C7 below}*

A3 wants to consolidate the results achieved in the earlier programmes. Israel and Morocco have recently signed MoUs on data exchange with Eurostat. Despite progress, some statistical issues still do not match international standards. MEDSTAT III is supposed to complement more country-tailored instruments such as Twinning, TAIEX, and other bilateral projects). Having a regional project is very important. Statistical capacities vary widely among Mediterranean countries. We need to maintain the network and momentum created in MEDSTAT II. If the project was to stop this would create negative reactions.

- E2: Increased local ownership would lead to greater sustainability. Project activities should more explicitly focus on the encouragement of decision–makers to use statistics and objective information as a basis. Otherwise, the general objectives – very large and ambitious – have no basis of being met. The substantial effort of partners should be underlined in the IF.
- A3: In terms of ownerships this is one of our best projects. The contribution of national statistical institutes is significant. We will use MEDSTAT III to keep the core actions and increase the regional exchange of data. Any support from other donors increases the independency of statistical bodies.
- Chair: We should not exclude moving into bilateral components. We could use more statistics in the progress reports of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements. This would create more visibility and underline the role of statistical institutions.

C7	**oQSG 1: Key categories of issues**	**Improve**	**Good**
C 7.1	Logic		
C 7.2	Scope, focus, ambition	x	
C 7.3	Fit with EC policy	x	
C 7.4	Fit with PG policy	x	
C 7.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 7.6	Problem analysis		
C 7.7	Stakeholder ownership	x	
C 7.8	Stakeholder capacity	x	
C 7.9	Sustainability	x	
C 7.10	Management		
C 7.11	Implementation		
C 7.12	Finance		
C 7.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 7.14	Cross-cutting Issues		

C 7.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 7.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 7.17	Procedural		
C 7.18	Logical Framework		
C 7.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 7.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

oQSG 2

	oQSG 2: Process	**Yes/No comment**
C8	oQSG 2 process complete:	Yes though not certain if CL is consolidated – used checklist from CRIS

	oQSG 2:	**No.**
C9	Number of iterations of AF	1

C10	**oQSG 1: Does a log-frame exist?**	**Yes/No**
C 10.1	Does a logframe exist?	Yes
C 10.2	Containing OO	Yes
C 10.3	PP	Yes
C 10.4	Results	Yes
C 10.5	OVIs	Yes
C 10.6	Risks and Assumptions	Yes

C11	Have there been changes to any of the log-frame? Yes/No Comment	Yes – during the Inception Phase

C12	**Checklist oQSG2 Section C Verification of Identification Follow-up**	**Yes/No/Comment**
C 12.1	Point 13	Form says Not Applicable!
C 12.2	Point 14	Form says Not Applicable!

Key comments on Checklist: *Text extracts from consolidated checklist*

The AF contains most information required to complete this checklist and sufficiently covers the necessary details for the formulation phase of the project.

C13	oQSG 2: Key categories of issues	Improve	Good
C 13.1	Logic		
C 13.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
C 13.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 13.4	Fit with PG policy		
C 13.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 13.6	Problem analysis		
C 13.7	Stakeholder ownership		
C 13.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 13.9	Sustainability		
C 13.10	Management		
C 13.11	Implementation		
C 13.12	Finance		
C 13.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 13.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 13.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 13.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 13.17	Procedural		
C 13.18	Logical Framework		
C 13.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 13.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

C14	oQSG Meeting Decision - Option 1, 2 or 3:	Option 1:

C14 Discussion: *Paste Text* N/A

C 14 Requirements: *Paste text* N/A

C15	oQSG 2: Key categories of issues	Improve	Good
C 15.1	Logic		
C 15.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
C 15.3	Fit with EC policy		
C 15.4	Fit with PG policy		

C 13.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
C 15.6	Problem analysis		
C 15.7	Stakeholder ownership		
C 15.8	Stakeholder capacity		
C 15.9	Sustainability		
C 15.10	Management		
C 15.11	Implementation		
C 15.12	Finance		
C 15.13	Risks and assumptions		
C 15.14	Cross-cutting Issues		
C 15.15	Horizontal Issues		
C 15.16	Donor co-ordination		
C 15.17	Procedural		
C 15.18	Logical Framework		
C 15.19	Monitoring criteria		
C 15.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

D - ROM

D1	**ROM: Does a log-frame exist?**	**Yes/No**
D 1.1	Does a log-frame exist?	Yes
D 1.1	Containing OO	Yes
D 1.2	PP	Yes
D 1.3	Results	Yes
D 1.4	OVIs	Yes
D 1.5	Risks and Assumptions	Yes

D2	ROM: Has the log-frame been amended since the signing of the FA? (Yes/No)	Yes – during the Inception Phase

D3	Grade of BCS1.2 (A, B, C or D):	A

D3 Relevant Comment: *Paste Text (highlights show issues identified for inclusion in C7 below}*

There is a log frame which was updated in the inception report. It has some weakness and it do not fully follow the EC standard format, as activities do not relate directly to results which makes it more difficult to judge if a given set of activities can produce the expected result. I.e. for each result there is not a number of corresponding activities, but activities are cross cutting and follow the organization of work, e.g. TA, training, etc. The Overall Objectives (OO) are "To promote evidence-based decision-making and to foster democratic development by improving the availability and use of statistical data in the nine ENPI South countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Syria, and Tunisia)". It is not evident that improved statistics will contribute to foster democratic development as stated as an element of the OO. A better formulation might be that the project will contribute to improved governance. The 2 Project Purposes (PPs): "to provide users with more and better data in the priority thematic sectors"; and "to increase the use of these data" are more type impacts than project purposes, and could have been used as indicators for the OO. The PP could instead more appropriately have been formulated as: "Improved capacities of National Statistical Systems (NSSs) within the priority areas in the context of a strengthened and sustainable regional cooperation". That formulation would also increase the importance given to strengthened regional cooperation which appears surprisingly low in the logframe as one result area - to be considered in the medium term (as expressed in the TOR for the consultant). It is probable that the project will give an important contribution to the project purposes, i.e. better data in priority areas and increased use of data, at least at the national level in MPCs…. Adaption of the PP to a more achievable and specific formulation would make it more probably that the PP could be achieved. OVIs have been developed and they are to some extent suitable although some indicators for results are input indicators and not output indicators (e.g. result 4) and not all indicators are really specific and measurable . The problem is however primarily that no targets have been fixed for the indicators.

Risks and assumptions are relevant and seem still to be valid. Deepening of the analysis of risks and assumptions related to the regional aspects might be appropriate, especially if the regional dimension is given more importance in a possible review of the log frame….. Here maybe just to mention that sustainability of the results at the national level is less of a concern, or rather it is closely related to the national funding of, and development of the NSIs and in practice outside the scope of this project. On the other hand the phase out/handing over strategy is extremely vague, related to the regional dimension…

D4	Grade of Relevance and Design (A, B, C or D)	B

D4 Relevant Comment: *Paste Text (highlights show issues identified for inclusion in C7 below}*

The project continues the work of the MEDSTAT I and II projects although with a much smaller budget, as funds for statistical capacity development increasingly has been allocated on a bilateral basis. The project is supportive to partner government policies as well as with EU development and cooperation strategies. It supports the efforts envisaged in the Barcelona Process and the successor program, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM). The project also supports the Paris Declaration principles although the present management structure and practice would need to be further developed to secure full ownership and mutual accountability between the partners……

Relevant European and partner country institutions, including The European Union Statistical Office,EUROSTAT, have been involved in the design process. The directors of the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) from the partner countries have followed the former projects, and the design of this project has been approved by the directors and discussed in the context of the National Statistical Systems. Regional organizations have also been widely consulted in the inception phase.

Coordination, management and financing arrangement are clear. ….The abolishment of the Management Group (MG) which was originally planned as Steering Committee has created a vacuum for partner country ownership at project management level which should be rectified. …..The MG with a MPC Statistics Director as Chair could be an important element in a sustainability and handing over strategy for the regional elements of the project. The project input is limited and the timescale and range of activities seem realistic with regard to stakeholder capacities, especially taken into account the professionalism of the consultant consortium implementing the project.

The project design has been adapted, through the detailed planning of activities in the inception phase. Further an extension of the project with one and a half year to end 2013 has recently been agreed to give time to find a sustainable continuation of the regional activities.

Environment is dealt with by a parallel program, gender sensitive statistics is part of the methodology utilized and gender is therefore at overall level properly addressed. Gender balance in project activities has not been considered. Human rights are not an area covered under the program. Governance as a subject area is not covered by the project, but the project in itself supports improved governance through better statistics and better informed decision making. Donor coordination has been important part of the inception phase and will 'continue as an important element throughout the project's lifetime.

D5	Grade of Sustainability (A, B, C, or D)	B

D5 Relevant Comment: *Paste Text (highlights show issues identified for inclusion in C7 below}*

Based on the interviews carried through, results at national level appear sustainable; national governments will continue to provide services and statistics as achieved with the support of the MEDSTAT projects once the project finishes….. The project is in itself a phase out policy and the extension is an important improvement in the prospects for achieving a smooth phase out. There is not at this point a credible phase out strategy as such. Partners, the EC and project management are very conscious about this.

The project is in general terms well embedded in local structures,…. All stakeholders interviewed have expressed a very high degree of support for the project, and a wish to continue with the regional and sub-regional cooperation…..

While the MEDSTAT III project, seen isolated, looks like a donor-recipient relationship, it is in fact a clear win-win endeavour with clear benefits both for the EU, its member countries, the European private sector which uses statistics to decide on investments and markets, as well as for the MPCs and businesses in the MPCs….

The project is well embedded in national institutions and to some degree in Eurostat which here plays a regional role even related to the Mediterranean. The cooperation as such is however based primarily on a project organization which will disappear when the project finishes….. The good relations established between all parties, including with the NSIs from EU member states makes this (future) cooperation feasible in theory. In practice there would seem to be a need for further work to make it realistic and to kick-start the process by already at this stage start establishing the organizational and institutional structures which will take over after MEDSTAT III as well as establish credible funding mechanisms.

D5 Key Observations: *Paste Text (highlights show issues identified for inclusion in C7 below}*

MEDSTAT III is a very important and in general well managed project with good prospect for an important impact through relatively limited funding. The main weakness is the lack of a clear exit strategy which will assure that the regional cooperation on improvement of statistics in the Mediterranean countries continue.

D6	Section 6.1 of the BCS Yes/No/N/A	N/A

D6 Relevant Comments: *paste text* N/A

D7	**oQSG 2: Key categories of issues**	**Improve**	**Good**
D 7.1	Logic		
D 7.2	Scope, focus, ambition		
D 7.3	Fit with EC policy		x
D 7.4	Fit with PG policy		x
D 7.5	Fit with Paris and MDG		
D 7.6	Problem analysis		
D 7.7	Stakeholder ownership	x	
D 7.8	Stakeholder capacity		
D 7.9	Sustainability	x	x
D 7.10	Management		x
D 7.11	Implementation	x	
D 7.12	Finance		x
D 7.13	Risks and assumptions		x
D 7.14	Cross-cutting Issues	x	
D 7.15	Horizontal Issues	x	
D 7.16	Donor co-ordination		
D 7.17	Procedural		
D 7.18	Logical Framework	x	
D 7.19	Monitoring criteria		
D 7.20	Administrative (CRIS)		

Annex 3: Project Profiles

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
MEDSTAT III Statistical Cooperation in the	Med Region	A	oQSG1	x	x	x	x			x	x	x									x	x					
Mediterranean Region, phase III			oQSG2																								
			ROM							x		x		x			x	x			x						
Income Generation Public Works	Malawi	A	oQSG1								x				x					x							
Programme - Phase II			oQSG2																								
			ROM								x	x			x												
Appui au Programme de Relance des	Sénégal	A	oQSG1												x					x			x				
Activités Economiques et Sociales			oQSG2																								
en Casamance (PRAESC)			ROM							x		x			x												
Mesures d'accompagnement en	Congo B	A	oQSG1																								
signataires du protocol sucre			oQSG2																								
Allocation 2008			ROM								x	x				x					x				x		
Appui à la navigabilité dans	Congo B	A	oQSG1						x		x	x	x		x					x	x			x			
le port de Brazzaville			oQSG2						x		x	x		x			x						x				
			ROM														x							x			

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
EC SUPPORT TO EDUCATION IN LIBERIA	Liberia	A	oQSG1	x	x			x	x			x														x	
			oQSG2																	x							
			ROM		x		x				x	x			x												x
Projet d'Assainissement Urbain	Congo DR	A	oQSG1																								
à Kinshasa (PAUK)			oQSG2									x			x												
			ROM								x	x															
Rwanda Road Infrastructure	Rwanda	A	oQSG1		x				x						x		x		x	x				x			
Support Programme			oQSG2								x				x	x	x			x	x			x			
			ROM								x	x			x					x							
Support to Law Enforcement against	Nigeria	A	oQSG1																								
Economic and Financial Crime 3-3			oQSG2	x	x				x	x		x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x					
			ROM																								
Support to Caribbean Knowledge	Caribbean	B	oQSG1	x	x							x			x									x			
and Learning Network	Region		oQSG2	x	x							x	x		x				x	x	x	x		x			
			ROM																					x			x
Cellule d'Appui à l'Ordonnateur	Comores	B	oQSG1						x						x					x	x						
National Phase II			oQSG2																	x							
			ROM													x											

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
Support to Ghana Police Service	Ghana	B	oQSG1													x				x			x			x	x
			oQSG2																	x							
			ROM																	x	x			x			
Appui communautaire dans le domaine	Madagascar	B	oQSG1	x	x					x			x	x	x	x			x	x				x		x	x
de la bonne gouvernance et de			oQSG2	x	x										x	x				x			x	x		x	x
la consolidation de l'Etat de droit - Phase II			ROM													x	x					x					
Institutional Capacity Building of the	PNG	B	oQSG1											x	x		x				x						x
NAO System PNG			oQSG2																	x			x				
			ROM		x									x	x	x	x								x		x
Institutional Support to Sierra	Sierra Leone	B	oQSG1	x	x						x	x			x				x	x	x			x			
Leone Road Authority			oQSG2																x								
			ROM								x	x				x			x					x		x	
Capacity Building and Support	Vanuatu	B	oQSG1																	x							x
to the NAO Office			oQSG2																	x							
			ROM							x												x		x			
EU-Mongolia Animal Health and Livestock	Mongolia	B	oQSG1		x				x	x		x		x			x		x	x						x	
Marketing Project			oQSG2	x	x		x			x			x		x	x					x					x	
			ROM																								

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
Vulnerable Group Development	Bangladesh	B	oQSG1	x	x	x	x		x	x	x						x		x	x	x			x			
for Ultra Poor			oQSG2								x	x			x		x			x	x						
			ROM								x													x			
Urban infrastructures for socially	Netherlands	C	oQSG1														x			x				x			
deprived areas (UISDP)	Antilles		oQSG2		x					x				x	x	x	x			x		x		x			x
			ROM		x							x			x	x			x		x			x			x
Project d'appui institutionnel et	Burundi	C	oQSG1		x				x		x																
logistique au processus d'integration			oQSG2							x	x	x					x			x				x			
regionale du Burundi			ROM												x				x					x	x		x
EC SUPPORT TO THE OFFICE OF THE	Eritrea	C	oQSG1		x							x															
AUDITORGENERAL IN ERITREA			oQSG2								x									x							
			ROM								x		x		x	x								x	x		
PARTICIPATORY FOREST MANAGEMENT	Ethiopia	C	oQSG1			x				x			x	x	x	x			x		x		x				
PFM ETHIOPIA			oQSG2	x		x							x		x		x			x			x	x			
			ROM	x	x					x		x				x					x			x			x
CAPACITY BUILDING IN ECONOMIC	Lesotho	C	oQSG1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x							x	x							
PLANNING,PHASE 2			oQSG2	x	x					x				x	x									x		x	x
			ROM							x	x	x				x			x								x

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
PROGRAMME D'APPUI A LA REFORME	Mali	C	oQSG1	x	x														x	x				x			
DE LA FILIERE COTON			oQSG2										x							x							x
			ROM	x					x			x				x											
TECHNICAL COOPERATION	Namibia	C	oQSG1		x				x																		
FACILITY 10TH EDF			oQSG2		x																		x				
			ROM							x	x					x								x		x	
RURAL ADVANCEMENT MICROPROJECT	Solomon I	C	oQSG1						x					x	x		x			x							
PROGRAMME (RAMP)			oQSG2													x			x	x			x				
			ROM																		x						x
Khanabad Irrigation Scheme Rehabilitation	Afghanistan	C	oQSG1						x				x	x		x	x										
			oQSG2													x	x										
			ROM										x			x				x				x			x
Europe-China Business Management	China	C	oQSG1			x	x					x		x	x						x						
Training Project			oQSG2	x						x		x		x	x	x	x				x		x				
			ROM																		x			x			
EU-China Project on the Protection of	China	C	oQSG1	x						x				x	x				x					x			
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR II)			oQSG2											x	x				x	x				x			
			ROM																					x	x		

Project	Country	BCS 1.2.	Stage	Logic	Scope, focus,ambition	Fit with EC policy	Fit with PG policy	Fit with Paris and MDG	Problem Analysis	Stakeholder Ownership	Stakeholder Capacity	Sustainability	Management	Implementation	Finance	Risks and Assumptions	Cross-cutting issues	Horizontal Issues	Donor Co-ordination	Procedural	Logical Framework	Monitoring Systems	Administrative Issues	Indicators	Exit Strategy	Conditialities	Timing
Europe -China School of Law (ECSL)	China	C	oQSG1	x	x					x					x									x			
			oQSG2		x					x		x		x	x				x	x		x		x			
			ROM									x			x	x					x	x		x	x		
Trade related technical assistance	Pakistan	C	oQSG1	x	x				x	x		x	x		x	x			x		x						
			oQSG2	x					x	x	x	x				x			x		x	x	x				
			ROM	x	x											x					x			x			
Programme de microprojets	Cameroun	D	oQSG1	x	x					x		x	x	x	x		x					x					
pour le développement des			oQSG2							x		x	x							x			x				
			ROM	x	x				x	x	x	x									x						
Programme d'approvisionnement en	Cape Verde	D	oQSG1																								
eau potable et d'assainissment des			oQSG2											x						x		x					
villes de Praia,Mindelo et Calheta 2			ROM						x	x		x			x										x	x	
REHABILITATION NEGRIL & OCHO RIOS	Jamaica	D	oQSG1					x															x	x			
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS 2-2			oQSG2																	x	x						
			ROM		x						x	x	x		x						x			x			
Renforcement et réhabilitation du	Mauritania	D	oQSG1		x				x	x					x				x	x	x		x				
secteur de la Justice			oQSG2		x								x		x	x				x				x		x	
			ROM	x	x				x	x	x	x	x		x									x	x		

Annex 4: Terms of Reference

SQ2M

Support to Quality Monitoring Systems and Methodologies (SQ2M) of Projects and Programmes of External Assistance financed by the European Community

Terms of Reference for a Senior Short Term Experts and a Junior Short Term Expert

STUDY ON OFFICE QUALITY SUPPORT GROUPS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN IMPROVING PROJECT AND PROGRAMME DESIGN

1. Background

Development aid projects and programmes (including through general and sector budget support), are submitted to a process of ex-ante assessment during both the identification stage and the formulation stage. Since 2004, this has taken the form of office quality support groups (oQSG). This peer group review mechanism provides support to European Commission delegations and headquarters staff with responsibility for the identification and formulation of the projects. The system built up momentum during its first years and gained almost comprehensive coverage from 2007. As a result, a substantial quantity of data has accumulated on projects and their assessment. In the period to 2009 there were 4,208 reviews; 1,760 at the identification stage (oQSG 1) and 2,448 at the formulation stage (oQSG 2).

In each stage there are two key documents. In oQSG 1 the project details are summarised on an "identification fiche", the quality assessment is recorded in a "checklist", and various background documents are annexed. In oQSG 2, the more developed project is outlined in an "action fiche" and again there is a "checklist" and supporting documents. For some reviews before mid 2007, the information in the action fiche was included in "technical and administrative provisions". For sector and general budget support programmes key supporting documents are the assessments of the macroeconomic conditions, the capacity of public finance systems and the sectoral policy or development strategy. The outcomes of oQSG meetings held at each stage were recorded in minutes until 2010, after which date they were added to the checklists.

The effectiveness of the projects themselves may be judged using the reports from the Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) system which provides a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data on the performance of the development projects and programmes. ROM serves not only as a tool for day-to-day project management by informing stakeholders about the performance of a specific project. In addition, studies based on the ROM database contribute lessons learned which feed into the project cycle.

The ROM data is collected by independent experts through regular onsite assessments of projects and programmes in virtually all EC partner countries. Projects and programmes are given simple scores against internationally agreed criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability) substantiated by concise explanatory texts. In 2009 an estimated 25% of the overall EC development aid portfolio was monitored through ROM.

The accumulation of documents which focus on the quality of projects through the oQSG system provides a mass of data which has never been analysed but has the potential to reveal lessons for the quality of project design.

The purpose of the present study is to begin the examination of this data to deliver a first, pilot study of oQSG data. The pilot study will need to take account of the effectiveness of the projects and here ROM data can be used for standalone projects while disbursement decisions for budget support programmes can be the sources for the other aid modalities. The use of survey data might be an alternative; however this first study will be primarily desk research.

2. Objective

The general objective is to support the Commission Services in developing and improving the quality of monitoring systems and methodologies of European external assistance.

The purpose of the pilot study is to determine whether the oQSG process resulted in positive changes in project design.

3. Expected Results

The pilot study will address the research question: how has the oQSG system contributed to the quality of design of projects and programmes? On this basis it will aim at achieving the following three results:

a) Identify the factors in the oQSG process which contribute to the eventual level of success of projects and programmes, including the extent to which input from the quality assessments are incorporated into the projects and whether they can be attributed to achieving better results.

b) Draw lessons from the analysis which could influence the future practice of ex-ante assessment.

c) Develop a methodology that can be applied to subsequent studies highlighting potential areas for future investigation using the oQSG data.

The results of the study shall be reported in the form of a detailed written report provided in both electronic and printed versions, technical annexes in relevant electronic format (e.g. Excel workbooks) and oral presentations (with PowerPoint) to

E5, key EC staff and management, contractors and whoever E5 identifies as potential user of the information.

4. Activities

4.1 Sampling

The pilot study will focus on the QSG reviews carried out in 2007, 2008, and 2009. The rationale for this selection is that prior to 2007 the system was not yet comprehensive in its coverage and there were some differences in the checklists in use. The system was reviewed again and new fiches and checklist introduced from the start of 2010. Consequently the period in question provides a degree of homogeneity in the assembly of data. During the first three years, there were 2,983 reviews, 1,229 at the identification stage and 1,754 at the formulation stage.

A further limit on the population under study can be introduced by considering how to measure the success of projects and programmes. Projects which have undergone a "results oriented monitoring" (ROM) will have been assessed on their design and effectiveness. Projects which have not been through a ROM exercise may be eliminated from the population (unless mid term of final evaluations are available and accessible). Sectoral and general budget support programmes have not normally been the subject of ROM. Quality of these programmes may be judged from the reports prepared for the disbursement decision. Another limitation is the time lag between the oQSG procedure and the start of the implementation of any intervention in the field (estimated at least in 6-12 months) and then the timing of the ROM mission (at least 6 months after the start of the project but on average 12-15 months). It means that only the interventions that went through the oQSG process of 2007 and 2008 have had a good chance to be ROMed and only few of the 2009 oQSG.

The first step of the study will be then to build the universe of the cases where the oQSG process can be traced to ROM reports (or to a disbursement report for GBS/SBS). The unit of study shall be the project/programme. Each project will have been reviewed in oQSG 2, most will have been reviewed in oQSG 1 and will have been the subject of a ROM report or a disbursement report. Once the universe defined and quantified, it will be possible to decide on the need for the selection of a sample.

The universe should be structured to take account of:

- Aid modality/implementation mode – project, sector policy support programme, or general budget support;
- Geographic region or theme (the Aidco Directorate structure may be used as a proxy);
- Year;

Scale of the financial commitment.

4.2 ROM Study Methodology

A 2009 study which examined the qualitative data accumulated by ROM reports provides a starting point for the methodology of the present study. The methodology enabled a qualitative analysis of the data while being able to quantifiably substantiate the findings. Broadly the steps in this methodology were as follows:

1. examining a sample of reports to identify a number of variables which were formulated as questions;
2. examining all the data to respond to the variables, and recording the results in a qualitative table;
3. selection of the most abundant variables;
4. in depth analysis of the high frequency variables to identify explanatory causes;
5. grouping variables to take account of interrelatedness;
6. drawing conclusions.

The present study is expected to adapt this methodology to make it appropriate to the type of data available and the objectives of the study.

The ROM study methodology made use of ratings, which were available also in oQSG until 2010. Ratings could be used for the present study but not for samples after 2010; consequently the methodology should not depend on ratings.

4.3 Analysis of the Dataset Selected

Following approval by E5 of the dataset to be analysed the study will focus on conducting the following activities:

- identify factors which influence the effectiveness of projects (the mentioned study on ROM results could be the main source);
- track the take-up of advice given during the oQSG through to project cycle (from final project design as approved and contracted to results from monitoring / disbursement reports)
- identify trends in the data;
- identify variations between categories of reviews;
- identify any other trend E5 may wish to include during the analysis phase

In addition the study should:

- draw conclusions based on the lessons from past practice;
- provide a methodology for subsequent studies and identify potential avenues for further analysis of the dataset.

5. Work Methodology

5.1 Inception

Preparation of dataset in suitable form;

Elaboration of methodology to encompass qualitative analysis and quantification to provide verifiable results;

Identification of structured sample based on proportions within the population as a whole and the availability of and completeness of data for the selected projects;

Draft sample base and methodology sent to Unit E5 for comments. Meeting held on the drafts. Comments included and documents/structured sample base finalised.

5.2 Analysis Phase

Content analysis of pilot sample to identify potential variables which could demonstrate impacts, trends, or other potential lessons; (verifying feasibility of the methodology in the process);

In depth analysis of the whole sample, covering all content and quantification of the variables previously identified;

Further development of the analysis in line with the elaboration of the methodology in the inception phase;

Identifying conclusions and testing for sensitivity and significance;

5.3 Drafting Phase

Delivery of drafts of the study report, including main findings, methodological note and proposals for further use of the data set;

Incorporation of feedback from Commission staff;

Presentation to Unit E5 of preliminary findings.

5.4 Reporting Phase

Drafting of final report;

Presentations of findings to selected audiences.

6. Resources

6.1 Experts

The study will require a senior expert for a total of 40 days and a junior expert for 25 days.

The senior expert shall meet the following profile:

- excellent analytical skills, in both qualitative and quantitative research;
- excellent drafting and presentation skills in English;
- good ability in methodology and research design;
- good knowledge of current issues and practices in development aid;
- knowledge of quality management systems and EuropeAid's project cycle management approach;
- fluent English and good ability in French

The junior expert shall meet the following profile:

- good analytical skills;
- knowledge of statistical techniques;
- familiarity with organising large datasets;
- excellent English and good French.

- The experts will maintain close contact with Unit E5, through its nominated contact, Joseph Gallacher.

6.2 Sources

The primary sources for the study are i) the documents presented to oQSG meetings, in particular the identification fiches, the action fiches, the checklists and the minutes ii) the final project design as approved and contracted, iii) the ROM monitoring reports and disbursement reports (and some evaluation reports if needed). In addition, Annual Reports for the years in question provide a breakdown of the number of oQSG reviews conducted in various categories. These reports were compiled using Excel workbooks which could provide a basic indexing of the projects. Other sources will provide background to the oQSG and ROM systems, including internal guidance notes and brochures.

It is also possible that meeting with QSG participants should be arranged. Officials in E5 will be available to assist in explaining the systems; however, this study is seen mostly as a desk research project and no wider interviewing is foreseen.

7. Timetable

An indicative timeframe for the work is set out below. The leading expert may vary the balance of this programme in defining the methodology during the inception phase; however, such changes should not introduce delays to the delivery of results.

Stage	Senior Expert	Junior Expert	Days in Brussels	Timing
Inception / Universe construction	4	20	24	Feb /mid March

Analysis	20	3		Mar / April
Drafting	10	2	1	End April
Final report debriefing and presentations	6		2	May/June
Totals	**40**	**25**	**27**	

8. Objectivity and confidentiality

Any information acquired under this contract is to be treated as confidential.
No such information which is of a commercial nature may be communicated or used for commercial or personal gain purposes.