



# Notes from the **EU DEAR** **Multi-stakeholder group meeting** Online | 24-25 March 2021





## Contents

MSG MEETING PARTICIPANTS	3
MSG MEETING KEY DISCUSSION TOPICS	3
DOCUMENT STRUCTURE	3
<b>SHORT READ   KEY TAKEAWAYS</b>	<b>4</b>
DAY 1	4
DAY 2	5
<b>LONGER READ   SESSION NOTES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DAY 1 - PLENARY</b>	<b>7</b>
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION: A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE DEAR PROGRAMME	7
MAIN FINDINGS OF THE CSO-LA THEMATIC PROGRAMME EVALUATION	8
MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE DEAR STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION	9
DEAR PROGRAMME 2021-2027	10
<b>DAY 1 - WORKING GROUPS</b>	<b>11</b>
GROUP 1: WHAT ARE THE MAIN IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE DEAR PROGRAMME?	11
GROUP 2: WHAT IS THE WIDER CIRCLE OF DEAR PROGRAMME STAKEHOLDERS (BEYOND THE MSG) AND HOW TO ENGAGE THEM?	13
GROUP 3: HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE MSG MANDATE AND MEMBERSHIP?	14
<b>DAY 2 - PLENARY</b>	<b>15</b>
INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS (IL AND TOC) AND MEL NEEDS OF THE DEAR PROGRAMME	15
REVIEWING THE MEL FRAMEWORK OF THE DEAR PROGRAMME. PORTUGAL CASE STUDY	16
REVIEWING THE MEL FRAMEWORK OF THE DEAR PROGRAMME. IRELAND CASE STUDY	18
<b>DAY 1 - WORKING GROUPS</b>	<b>19</b>
GROUP 1: HOW CAN WE IMPROVE THE DEAR PROGRAMME INTERVENTION LOGIC? ADDRESSING SHORTCOMINGS, MEASURING RESULTS, CLARIFYING ASSUMPTIONS	19
GROUP 2: WHAT THEORIES OF CHANGE AND MODELS OF EVALUATION ARE APPLICABLE TO DEAR?	20
GROUP 3: WHERE IS THE DE/GCE/AR DATA AND HOW TO COLLECT IT?	21
<b>CONCLUDING REMARKS BY AGATA SOBIECH</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ANNEX 1 - PARTICIPANTS LIST</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>ANNEX 2 - EVALUATION OF THE MEETING BY PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>26</b>



## MSG meeting participants:

The meeting brought together 42 representatives of:

- ❖ EU Member State Departments and Agencies
- ❖ Non-Governmental Organisations and their platforms
- ❖ Scholars and academic networks
- ❖ Regional and Local Authorities and their networks
- ❖ Global Education Network Europe (GENE)
- ❖ Council of Europe - North-South Centre
- ❖ European Commission, DG INTPA - Unit G3
- ❖ DEAR Support Team (DST)

(See complete list of participants in Annex 1)

## MSG meeting key discussion topics:

- ❖ The wider policy landscape relevant to the DEAR Programme
- ❖ Feedback to the Programme coming from: a) CSO-LA Evaluation; b) DEAR Stakeholders' consultation
- ❖ A renewed Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) framework for the DEAR Programme

## Document structure:

This document is divided in two parts.

The first part, '**Short Read**' **pages 4-6**, includes key takeaways from each MSG meeting session.

The second part, '**Longer Read**' **pages 7-24**, presents a more detailed overview of the presentations and the discussion.

Two annexes present the list of participants and their evaluation of the meeting.



## SHORT READ | KEY TAKEAWAYS

### DAY 1

#### PLENARY SESSION: DEAR PROGRAMME 2021-2027, CSO-LA EVALUATION, DEAR STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

- Stakeholders largely agree that there is a need to update the DEAR Programme framework to reflect recent policy changes.
- Some concerns emerged among stakeholders regarding the division between Local Authorities and CSO in the new funding framework (NDICI - CSO Programme/Global Challenges).
- There is some concern about the possible downsizing of DEAR funding in the future, and the implication it may have on the Programme architecture and its outreach to all groups (adults and youth, small and large organisations, education and awareness-raising actions).
- A name change of the Programme seems to be welcome by many stakeholders. Moving away from the 'Development Education' terminology towards Global Citizenship Education is mentioned as the main factor.
- Stakeholders recognised the value of different stakeholder groups being represented in the MSG, including Member States, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, and scholars (even though the latter are not fully reflected in the stakeholder survey).

#### DAY 1 - WORKING GROUP 1 – THE NEW POLICY FRAMEWORK

- DEAR focus on youth should be carefully designed not to overlap with other Programmes (e.g., Erasmus+) and not to replace other priorities. Complementarity and a cross-cutting approach are essential.
- DEAR's potential outreach to non-EU countries and target groups is welcomed by stakeholders.
- The need to better reflect DEAR results and impacts is acknowledged and close stakeholder cooperation is seen as part of the solution.
- Despite a possible policy shift to more global and ambitious goals (geopolitics, broad impact), smaller organisations and groups should remain an important focus of the DEAR Programme.



## DAY 1 - WORKING GROUP 2 – WIDER STAKEHOLDER CIRCLE

- DEAR Programme should seek inputs from a wide variety of stakeholders but keep a firm focus on its own objectives and results.
- Not all stakeholder inputs have the same weight and not all sectors are equally represented. There is the need to pay attention to the less represented voices, even if they come individually or in smaller groups.
- Co-operation with private (business) sector stakeholders needs to be properly framed and concrete results and expectations need to be formulated. The private sector is heterogeneous – e.g., social economy/social enterprises could be an interesting starting point, as their mission is already connected to social good. Also mind the difference between corporate social responsibility vs. business responsibility for human rights.
- Outreach to youth as a stakeholder group requires particular efforts in tailoring the communication channels and messaging.

## DAY 1 - WORKING GROUP 3 – MSG MANDATE

- MSG is a popular and much needed consultation format.
- Stakeholders differ substantially in their vision of the mandate – some opting for a more modest approach as a networking space, some more ambitious as a policy advice forum.
- MSG should be focused on inputs from organisations, not individuals, warranting a rotating membership, if possible.
- There is a general consensus that an ongoing cooperation platform, that may also include sub-working groups and a secretariat, could be beneficial to all parts.

## DAY 2

### PLENARY SESSION: DEAR MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (MEL)

- The DEAR Programme uses a variety of methods and approaches, any MEL system to be designed needs to duly consider this diversity and be flexible.
- DEAR MEL data collection methods need to be kept light, simple to use and applicable by and for all stakeholders.
- DEAR MEL system needs to be open and transparent, so all relevant stakeholders have access to data and results.



## DAY 2 - WORKING GROUP 1 – INTERVENTION LOGIC WORKING GROUP

- DEAR Programme stakeholders see the value of intervention logic approaches to DEAR Programme monitoring, evaluation and learning.
- DEAR Programme stakeholders offer many suggestions regarding the improvement of the current MEL system, some of which are conflicting, but all can form the basis of a revision of the system.
- MSG members can contribute to the new intervention logic development (e.g. through an ongoing working group).
- There is an ongoing tension between complementarity and competition between DEAR platforms and systems (of DEAR Programme vs national systems, and of MEL systems for those).

## DAY 2 - WORKING GROUP 2 – THEORY OF CHANGE WORKING GROUP

- There is no unity of opinion among DEAR stakeholders on TOC use in DEAR contexts (including in the DEAR Programme)
- There are very few vocal proponents of ToC approaches and formalising a ToC for the DEAR Programme.
- There is a lot of confusion among DEAR stakeholders about what the difference between IL and ToC is and what it would mean for the Programme.

## DAY 2 - WORKING GROUP 3 – DATA COLLECTION WORKING GROUP

- Most data collection comments echo those about MEL and Intervention Logic.
- A particular focus must be given to measuring change in the evaluation.
- Most MSG participants favour cross-stakeholder cooperation, seen as vital to data collection.
- The same issues of complementarity vs competition and IL vs ToC emerge in discussing data collection.
- MSG members are eager to contribute to data collection.
- MSG members themselves need guidance on data collection issues and are more eager to offer questions than answers.



## LONGER READ | SESSION NOTES

**DAY 1 | 24th March 2021**

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION: A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE DEAR PROGRAMME

**Agata Sobiech** (DG INTPA, Unit G3 - Youth, Education and Culture) opened the meeting and welcomed participants.

- The transition from DEVCO to INTPA is policy-driven, and reflects the intended move from a donor-driven approach to a partnership between the EU and other parts of the world.

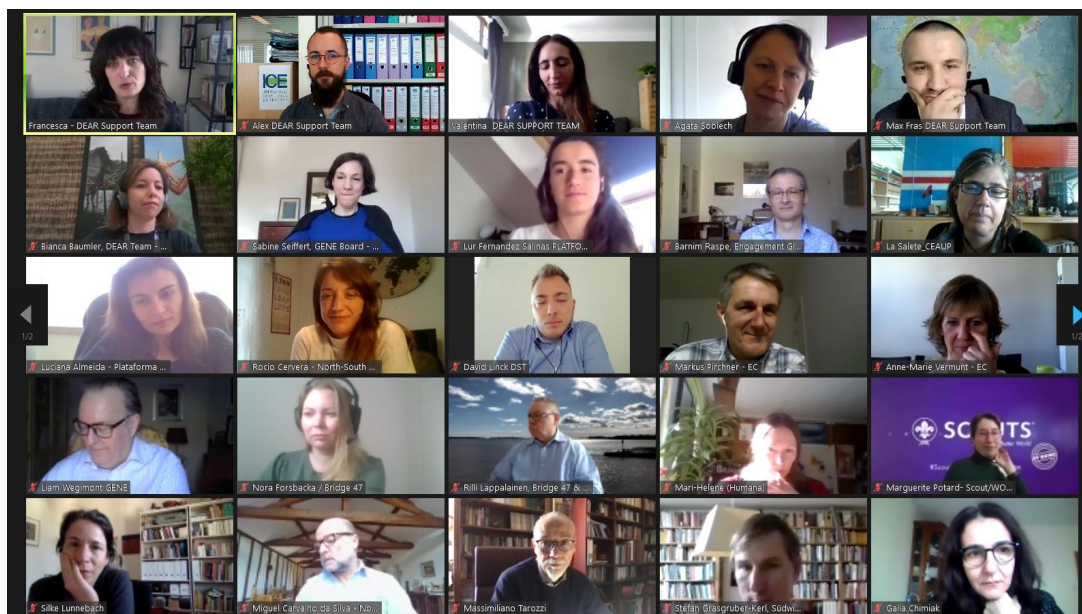


- Youth and education are two big priorities for the Commission, and DEAR fits very well with both of them.

- The coronavirus pandemic is a major challenge for DG INTPA and responding to all the global challenges is at the heart of its current work, including sustainable growth and jobs, building new alliances, governance, peace, security, human development and global education.

- Although the DEAR Programme is not intended to become a youth programme, youth are considered key actors that can help the Programme achieve good results and a greater impact.

- The MSG remains the most important dialogue forum between the Commission and DEAR stakeholders.



MSG  
Group  
photo  
(partial)

## MAIN FINDINGS OF THE CSO-LA THEMATIC PROGRAMME EVALUATION

**Markus Pirchner** (DG INTPA, Unit G3) provided an overview of the main findings from the evaluation of the EU CSO-LA Thematic Programme<sup>1</sup>. The pre-recorded video presentation is available online<sup>2</sup>. Each recommendation received a response from the Commission, stating its further steps on single matters.

- The evaluation recommendations cover the entire programme including DEAR, with three out of eleven recommendations targeting the DEAR Programme in particular.
- Recommendation 9 encourages the Commission to consider developing a DEAR Programme theory of change (ToC). In response, the Commission suggested developing an intervention logic with a conceptual link from input to outputs and outcomes, and then review if a ToC is still necessary.
- Recommendation 10 is to develop a results and monitoring framework for the DEAR Programme. The Commission considers this an important, but also challenging process. As a follow-up, the Commission will consider a number of options, including revising and strengthening the tool that was developed during the call for proposals 2018, or, as an alternative, build upon it to develop a full-fledged intervention logic.
- Recommendation 11 concerns the feedback from stakeholders, and the need to include their inputs more extensively in the programming documents. The Commission will start a process to re-discuss the mandate of the MSG in order to strengthen and clarify it. In this context, the participation of more and/or different stakeholders to the MSG could also be considered.

<sup>1</sup> See:

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/evaluation-civil-society-organisations-and-local-authorities-thematic-programme-2014-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/evaluation-civil-society-organisations-and-local-authorities-thematic-programme-2014-2019_en)

<sup>2</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-hP0j0fzks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-hP0j0fzks)



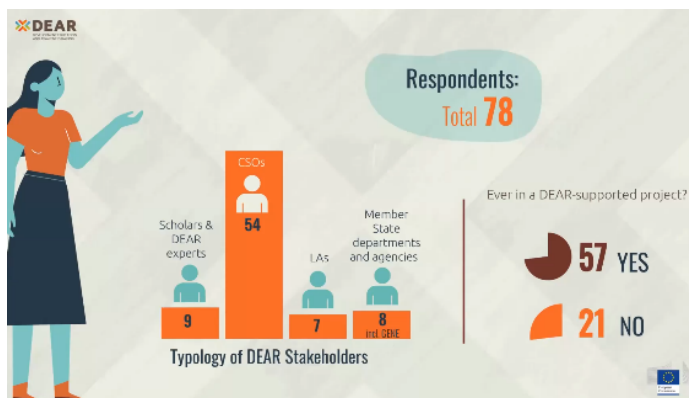
## MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE DEAR STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATION

**Francesca Vanoni** presented the main findings from the online stakeholders' consultation (Nov-Dec 2020). The pre-recorded video presentation is available online<sup>3</sup>.

- There were **78 respondents** to this consultation with an overwhelming majority of them representing CSOs, 2/3 of whom were involved in a DEAR-supported project.

- The **objectives the future DEAR Programme** should pursue were (in order of preference):

1. Support the achievement of SDG target 4.7 (22 respondents)
2. Foster public understanding and citizens actions on global challenges (16)
3. Support campaigning, advocacy, education, awareness-raising for systemic change (16)
4. Affect change in youth attitude and engagement (10)



- The **main issues** the future DEAR Programme should give attention to were (in order of preference):

1. The integrated nature of SDGs (13 respondents)
2. A global perspective on issues and policies (13)
3. SDG 4.7 (7)
4. Global Citizenship Education (7)
5. Climate Crisis (7)
6. Youth participation (6)

With the sole exception of the Climate Crisis, replies seem to be more focussed on an approach rather than specific issues, although the question referred to 'issues'.

- The majority of respondents indicated that the current EU DEAR Programme **could improve its complementarity with national DEAR-GE programmes**. A few suggestions were made on how to strengthen this complementarity.

- On coherence and impact measures of the EU DEAR Programme as a whole, numerous answers suggested **embracing the heterogeneity of the existing DEAR experiences**, and being sensitive to the country-specific contexts, rather than using a centralised intervention logic.

- There is a broad agreement about the relevance of **qualitative data** without limiting observation to numbers, but also the need to give evidence to concrete cases, lessons learnt, good practices, success stories (in order to collect and aggregate more meaningful information about DEAR programme results).

<sup>3</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=q96iT2v2k5U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q96iT2v2k5U)



- There is also a widespread call to **develop a DEAR-specific MEL framework**, without applying tools that come from development assistance.
- Some respondents strongly opposed a **centralised MEL system**, others suggested a uniformed monitoring system – showing that there are contradictory expectations among stakeholders.
- Another element brought forward by some is the request to **reduce the size of funded projects** and consortia and to **maintain sub-granting** options to reach smaller/grassroots organisations.
- With regards to the **MSG**, most people pointed that it should work as a networking space, a space facilitating the exchanges between stakeholders. However, some respondents call for a forum aimed at shaping the DEAR Programme priorities.
- Some respondents suggested that the work of the MSG should also reflect in other spaces, for example by making **part of the meeting open or shared to the public**.
- With regard to a **new name for the Programme**, most suggestions included moving away from “Development Education” towards a “Global citizenship” explicit terminology. GEAR (Global Education and Awareness Raising) was a popular proposed acronym.
- Direct contributions and **position papers have been received from stakeholders**, also outside of the survey. Those will also be taken into account in the programming process.

## DEAR PROGRAMME 2021-2027

**Agata Sobiech** (DG INTPA, Unit G3) introduced the outlook of the DEAR Programme 2021-2027.

- The current EU policy context impacts what the DEAR Programme focus is and will be, warranting some changes. No revolution is expected, but the Programme will evolve.
- The DEAR Programme is a key element in the general approach to youth in external actions in the June 2020 Council conclusions on Youth.
- The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), provides a new funding tool for 2021-2027; it has not been finalised yet, but will be the funding instrument for DEAR activities at the EU level.
- Under the NDICI, the funding will be split in two distinct thematic programmes: CSO thematic programme (to fund CSO activities) and Global Challenges Thematic Programme (to fund local authorities).





- The programming documents that are being prepared in parallel, but will be adopted after the main one, are the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) and the (multi-)Annual Action Plans (one for CSO Thematic Line and one for Global Challenges).
- The proposed main objective of the work of DG INTPA is a better-informed and more inclusive society with a developed sense of co-responsibility for sustainable development, including addressing global challenges, such as climate change and inequalities.
- The specific outcomes of the DEAR Programme would be:
  1. EU citizens are supportive of sustainable development and international cooperation and increasingly aware of global challenges such as climate change and inequalities.
  2. EU citizens, in particular youth, are empowered and actively engaged in promoting sustainable development, including addressing global challenges such as climate change and inequalities at local and global level.
  3. Global issues and global citizenship education are better integrated into formal and non-formal education in EU Member States.
- Based on the lessons learnt and the recent evaluation of the CSO-LA Programme, the new approach is grounded on the following main orientations:
  1. An even stronger focus on young people, implementing the Programme through a new mix of implementing methods.
  2. Increased support for relevant actors in those EU Member States in which development policies are less prominent and/or are less understood by citizens.
  3. Reinforced exchange of good practices and enhanced coordination and networks amongst key stakeholders.
  4. Strengthened capacities and competencies within CSOs and LAs in the area of global education, advocacy and awareness raising on sustainable development and global challenges.
  5. A more systematic promotion of cooperation between the relevant actors in the EU and in partner countries; a more robust system for measuring the results of the Programme.

## DAY 1 Working Groups

MSG attendees worked on three issues: a) the implications of the new policy framework; b) the wider DEAR stakeholder circle; c) the MSG mandate. Participants rotated between the three groups (three fifteen-minute slots) and each theme had a permanent facilitator (from within the group itself). Facilitators summarised key points from each discussion.

### Group 1: What are the main implications of the new policy framework for the DEAR Programme?

Facilitator: Rocio Cervera, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. [Day 1 – Group 1 Padlet](#)



## What are the changes in the DEAR policy environment?

- ❖ Youth focus: overall welcomed, with some concerns.

### Arguments in favour:

- Youth multipliers and youth organisations play an important role in educating peers. A partnership with them is strategic.
- Cost-effectiveness: there is evidence that working with young people, whose mind-sets are “in configuration”, may have a better impact in the long-term than trying to change adults’ attitudes and behaviours.
- Ownership and sustainability: ensuring they contribute to their own future.

### Concerns raised:

- Ensure DEAR’s differentiated approach: make sure that DEAR’s youth focus does not come as a duplication, but as a complementarity to other EC Programmes such as Erasmus.
  - Limiting our target to young people might reduce the advocacy impact of the DEAR Programme - e.g., involving policy-makers remains important.
  - The youth focus should not be exclusive: there are other influential constituencies to address, plus the intergenerational factor to consider.
- ❖ More cooperation with partner countries: widely welcomed.
    - Cooperating with partner countries on transnational issues impacts both sides, Europe, and the partner countries.
    - Increases understanding and commitment to address global challenges and develops a sense of belonging to a global community.
  - ❖ The mix of implementing methods that also include mechanisms to reach out to smaller organisations (financial support to third parties): appreciated.
    - Particularly as a good mechanism to “localise” the 2030 Agenda.

## Lessons learnt: evaluation & stakeholder consultation

- ❖ The concern about the lack of recognition of the progress achieved by the DEAR Programme resonates with the difficulty in communicating/visualising its long-term impact, i.e., behavioural and attitude change.
  - Is this a result of not having a Theory of Change or of not having a clearer communication and visibility strategy? Or both?
  - How can we transition from a more scattered to a more strategic approach?
  - Will having a unified MEL framework help to communicate clearly and more visibly about DEAR’s results?
- ❖ The relevance of evidence and data (quantitative and qualitative)
  - Here we need strategic partnerships with research centres, scholars, and academia.



- How to integrate tools that capture unintended consequences (positive or negative) in the future MEL framework?

### New geopolitical ambition of the European Commission

- ❖ While acknowledging the concern of implementing a DEAR Programme in a more hostile, competitive, multi-polar world, we shall also retain that there are windows for new opportunities to be played by DEAR such as “Green Deal” “Team Europe” (see relevant context: e.g. [IPSOS Global Trends Survey data](#)<sup>4</sup>).

### How is the role of CSOs/LAs changing?

- ❖ Concerns emerged about the dissociation between CSOs-LAs: this is a strategic partnership that not only contributes to a multi-stakeholder approach and to “localise” the 2030 Agenda, but also to ensuring a system of checks and balances: LAs are duty bearers rendered accountable by CSOs.

## Group 2: What is the wider circle of DEAR Programme stakeholders (beyond the MSG) and how to engage them?

Facilitator: Lur Fernandez Salinas, PLATFORMA. [Day 1 - Group 2 padlet](#)

### The wider circle of DEAR Stakeholders based on the discussions includes:

- Media
  - Cultural sector
  - Human Rights defenders
  - Human Rights activists
  - Youth
  - Private sector
  - Venture capitalists (interested in SDGs, not just greenwashing)
  - Members of European Parliament and country decision-makers
  - Education training institutes (both stakeholder and a channel to ensure engagement)
- ❖ A mapping exercise could be useful to see what groups and forums already exist and which are not yet involved in DEAR consultations.

---

<sup>4</sup> See: [www.ipsosglobaltrends.com/2020/02/foreword-2/](http://www.ipsosglobaltrends.com/2020/02/foreword-2/)



## How to ensure feedback from stakeholders? How to engage them?

The list of stakeholders presented above also implies a reflection on the way to engage them and to consider the limits of engagement when it comes to controversial stakeholders, like certain parts of the business sector. Stakeholders could be engaged in the following ways:

- Through the MSG meeting – several participants suggested the need for the MSG to meet more regularly, two/three times per year, and invite more young people to participate.
- Dedicated Calls could be devoted to groups which have not been involved so far.
- Some participants cited the European Youth Forum as a space to engage them. There was even a proposition to link the MSG and the European Youth Forum by organising a wider conference once a year with European Youth Forum<sup>5</sup>
- As far as the means of engagement are concerned, some participants suggested that there is a need to go beyond campaigning when engaging with the media.
- Concerning the private sector: how to hold business accountable when engaging them? Through which communication channels? A remark was made on the need to be very concrete when even talking about the private sector because there is a difference between corporate social responsibility and the business responsibility for human rights and the climate (the latter being based on specific norms and principles). It is important to use correct terms when engaging with different stakeholders, because they may have a very different normative base.
- Need to close the digital gap as a step to engage stakeholders and build bridges with other groups. Especially related to youth, bear in mind the influencing power of social media. On the digital aspects, make the link with the Digital Education Action Plan, and work on the purpose of humanising digital connections and learn from digital actors.
- More engagement could be fostered through existing platforms, especially pan-European ones like national coordination bodies and local and regional associations.

### Other questions raised:

- How to pass complex messages in a simple but not simplistic way?
- The Youth Sounding Board is a new DG INTPA initiative to collect advice from Youth on INTPA policies, in particular youth empowerment. Launch foreseen in mid-2021.

## Group 3: How to strengthen the MSG mandate and membership?

Facilitator: Mari-Helene Kaber, Concord. [Day 1 – Group 3 padlet](#)

**Issues discussed:** Representation within MSG; Multiple levels of representation, sometimes overlapping, e.g., Climate Alliance, FAMSI, Concord, PLATFORMA

- The MSG brings together multiple stakeholders, CSOs, LAs, Member states, academics. The Commission sees it as a key body to reach out, inform, and get opinions from all relevant stakeholders. Importance of seeing the MSG as a body, not only useful for the

<sup>5</sup> Note: the Youth Forum has been invited to join the MSG but could not take part in this meeting.



Commission, but also for the participants. Need to bear in mind that stakeholders do not only bring opinions, but also inputs from their membership and constituencies.

- Some MSG members suggest a more modest mandate for the MSG: it is useful in terms of information sharing between stakeholders, but not in terms of its influence on the DEAR Programme as a whole. If the mandate is clearer, participants can align more. However, the members cannot pretend to have a representative status.
- The collaboration between CSOs, LAs, and scholars in DEAR projects could be an added value to the evaluation of the DEAR Programme as it contributes to reflecting on practices and co-creates knowledge.
- Some partners could be more active by working for the MSG in between meetings, alimenting the discussion in preparation of the meetings. We could have a standing group working on key issues such as mandate, membership, terminology (DEAR vs GEAR, etc.)
- The ongoing work of MSG members should be supported – suggestions included the creation of a secretariat.
- The MSG is supposed to bring experience and evidence, regardless of the ‘hat’ each participant is wearing. There is an ethical responsibility to contribute to the MSG for networks and European umbrella organisations that have to reflect the voices of all of their members, not only the hubs or ‘HQs’ themselves.
- European networks are able to harvest the opinions of practitioners and provide them to the Commission through the MSG.
- Regarding the mandate, it is also important to clearly define the stakeholders’ mandates and demand legitimacy and representativeness with ToRs.
- Written updates from INTPA on relevant developments would be useful.

## DAY 2 | 25th March 2021

---

### INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS (IL AND TOC) AND MEL NEEDS OF THE DEAR PROGRAMME

**Max Fras** (DEAR Support Team) highlighted a few key points and concepts about the needs of the DEAR Programme. The pre-recorded video presentation is available online<sup>6</sup>.

- Monitoring, evaluation and learning are an essential part of the DEAR Programme and project cycle.

- This year (2021) marks the start of a new MFF, the new DEAR Programme also based on the CSO-LA evaluation and the stakeholders’ survey results. This MSG is an opportunity to share ideas and exchange perspectives.

- On policy and institutional background, the key points are the European Consensus on Development, the NDICI, and the 2020 EU Council conclusions on youth in EU external action.

---

<sup>6</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOba6d4L9xU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOba6d4L9xU)



- Increased INTPA focus on youth warrants new approaches to MEL.
- DG INTPA uses the logical framework format as the basic format for development of an intervention logic. This format describes a results chain as a hierarchical relationship inputs > activities > outputs > outcomes > impact.
- Since the 2018 CFP, DG INTPA provides indicators to the project lead partner during the contracting phase or with the signed contract. There are 19 indicators in five categories. Depending on the nature/type of project, the applicant selects 10 or more indicators from a list (of which a minimum of two from the “outcome” category). Projects then use the indicators exactly as they are provided so that figures can be aggregated.
- DEAR Programme uses a range of monitoring tools throughout the project cycle (activities, communication, reporting tools, including interim and annual, project fiches, ROM, event attendance, and ad-hoc support e.g., social media).
- DEAR Programme also uses a range of evaluation tools, at programme or project level, for example and respectively the CSO-LA evaluation or the project reporting and audits.
- Internal and external learning tools: project websites / social media activities / publications; learning and development hubs; exchange hubs; Capacity4Dev website, including DEAR section; DST activities and websites; GENE and Angel reports and publications; other publications (e.g., GENE, EU MS governments etc.)
- Future dilemmas: the DEAR Programme is looking for a more coherent, holistic approach to MEL. There is a need for a comprehensive reporting framework, based on a shared understanding of change DEAR aims to create, and there is an ongoing discussion about the results chain consolidation into a more coherent whole intervention logic or theory of change.
- On intervention logic (IL) vs theory of change (ToC): there is an important difference - IL asks how a programme works to fulfil the need, but not why.
- IL can be created after a programme is completed (reconstruction) and is working forward from resources through activities to the end result. It focuses on the intervention/programme itself and how it operates rather than external factors. Less resources are needed; it compiles elements already available in a logical and coherent whole.
- ToC asks why as well as how the change is to be achieved. ToC should be conceived from the start of an intervention and implemented throughout the cycle. It works to understand the context in which a programme operates; recognises that factors outside of the programme will often have an influence on the end result. It requires resources to connect the context, the policy and activities.



## REVIEWING THE MEL FRAMEWORK OF THE DEAR PROGRAMME. PORTUGAL CASE STUDY

**La Salete Coelho** (Coordinator of the support process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Portuguese DE National Strategy) shared some lessons learnt, and some ongoing challenges with regards to DEAR MEL in Portugal.

- Two Development Education National Strategies in Portugal: ENED 2016-2016 and ENED 2018-2022.
- There is a political will behind these strategies, they reflect public policies.
- Advocacy is therefore increased towards a more political basis.
- Importance of collaboration between Ministry of Foreign affairs and Ministry of Education to adopt resolutions together.
- There is no specific budget or financial commitment to MEL.
- Very different actors were involved (from public institutions to CSOs) and coming from different backgrounds (environment, gender, education, etc.) with a participatory process in order to allow appropriation and engagement.
- The eternal conceptual challenge (see image) persists.

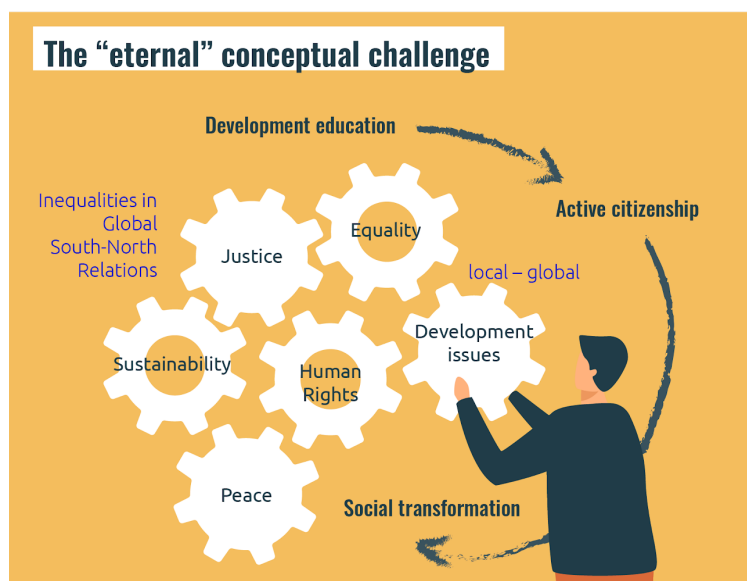
- There is a difficulty in developing collaborative initiatives (beyond planned and joint commitments), given the diversity of organisations when you put them together.

- There are different responsibilities with all the actors, with three levels of engagement: 1. monitoring commission (ministries, national agencies) leading the process 2. action plan signatory entities, sign in collaboration with the first layer to show their engagement 3. other actors (universities, NGOs, associations, private sector sometimes) invited for specific moments.

- A monitoring and evaluation process integrated in the action plan has been established.

- A lesson learnt led to the establishment of a team (a secretariat, which La Salete Coelho is part of) in order to support the whole process and it is in contact with the different entities to supervise everything.

What has been foreseen regarding MEL (see image below):





Objective 4 To consolidate implementation of the ENED	Actions	Output Indicators	Targets					Engaged stakeholders
			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
<b>Measure 4.2.</b> ENED monitoring system	<b>Action 1</b> - Drafting and publication of <u>monitoring reports on ENED's implementation</u>	Number of reports drafted and published	1	1	1	1	1	MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 2</b> - Creating and updating of a <u>platform for information gathering and sharing about ENED's implementation</u>	Online platform created and functioning	Platform created and functioning from 2019 onwards					MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 3</b> - Holding of <u>collaborative working sessions</u> , including training sessions, for the APSE, members and partners, regarding ENED implementation and reporting	Number of actions held	-	1	1	-	1	MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 4</b> - Holding of <u>GENE peer review</u>	Report drafted and disseminated	Report drafted and disseminated in 2022					MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 5</b> - Promoting the inclusion of ENED in the OECD-DAC report on the Portuguese development assistance policy	ENED mentioned in the report	Report mentioning ENED elaborated in 2020					MC
<b>Measure 4.3.</b> Culture of evaluation in the ENED	<b>Action 1</b> - Holding of actions to <u>promote a culture of evaluation among Development Education actors</u>	Number of actions held	-	-	1	-	1	MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 2</b> - Carrying out a <u>mid-term internal evaluation</u>	Report drafted and disseminated Action Plan readjusted, if necessary	Report elaborated in 2020 and readjustment, if necessary, also in 2020					MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 3</b> - Carrying out a <u>final external evaluation</u>	Report drafted and disseminated	Report drafted and disseminated in 2022					MC and other APSE
	<b>Action 4</b> - Creation of a <u>reflection group on Development Education monitoring and evaluation</u>	Reflection group established and functioning Number of meetings held	Group established and functioning from 2019 onwards					MC and other APSE

- Other lessons learnt: 1. the importance of having a concrete action plan with measurable targets and results outputs 2. the importance of the monitoring process to connect the actors, contribute to the capacity building and keep the levels of commitment 3. the possibility to have an evolutionary perspective in relation to the previous years' reports.

- The monitoring and evaluation process also contributes to the identification of the main questions to be addressed in mid-term and final evaluations (e.g., more focus on impact and qualitative data).

- There are ongoing challenges:

1. the need for a strong but friendly system to collect the data. Even in a small country it is quite a difficult task, and you need to keep it user-friendly in order to not lose data and people in the process.
2. The ongoing investment required on reporting.
3. The difficulty of gathering data about some of the established indicators.
4. Different levels of intervention distinguished between projects and single activities, and how to combine them? The lack of impact indicators and outcomes after the end of the implementation of the strategies.
5. The need to invest more in processes that reflect the quality instead of quantity and the current monitoring report is more focused on quantity.

## REVIEWING THE MEL FRAMEWORK OF THE DEAR PROGRAMME. IRELAND CASE STUDY

**Áine Doody** (Head of Development Education / Global Citizenship, Irish Aid) presented the Irish Aid development education strategy, the performance management framework, and an overview of some lessons learnt.

- In 2017 Ireland developed a development education strategy. Among the key challenges was **how to better communicate the changes DEAR activities contribute to** and measure the quality/effectiveness of active citizenship at high level.



- The **performance management framework** was put in place to accompany the strategy.
- The goal of the current strategy is to empower people to analyse and challenge the root causes and consequences of global issues (e.g., poverty, injustice, climate change, etc.), while the outcome is an increased accessibility, quality and effectiveness of development education.
- Three indicators were developed at the outcome level: 1. the number of learners who report improved global citizenship literacy/competence 2. the percentage of learners who can give examples of how their participation in the actions has influenced their behaviour 3. the coverage disaggregated by county and/or institution.
- It was possible to extract really good data after five years, and now all stakeholders have a good idea about the spread of their work.
- There is a range of outputs indicators used to measure policy changes, capacity and collaboration, numbers of new resources produced, etc.;

Examples of qualitative indicators at output levels:

1. Level of partnership/ collaboration in the sector (self-assessment process with a reporting template)
2. Level of integration at institutional level (6 levels).

- Some critical voices remain sceptical of the results chain approach<sup>7</sup> (see quote in the box).

- There were also several lessons learnt:

1. The MEL framework must be realistic, robust, but proportional.
2. Try to keep it simple and user-friendly.
3. Consider, and adapt to, the capacities of the partner organisations, as well as the internal capacities.
4. Make sure the process is useful to you (donor), but also to the partners, consult them on how to measure their work.
5. Reflect on how to improve the quality of data and how to communicate it more effectively.

## **BUT..... THERE ARE MANY NEGATIVES....**

“the results chain view of learning as linear; the assumption that DE can be measured separately from other life events or actors; the failures to take into account the varying capacity of DE practitioners..... We suggest that the use of RBA encourages less radical and transformative DE “results” and misses attitudinal and values changes, as well as the vibrancy, innovation and enthusiasm of the DE sector in Ireland. The richness of DE learning and its effects on participants is lost, ..... To paraphrase Chambers (1997), DE ‘results’ become reduced, controlled and simplified!”

<sup>7</sup> See:

[www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-31/wrong-tool-job-application-result-based-approaches-development-education-learning](http://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-31/wrong-tool-job-application-result-based-approaches-development-education-learning)



## DAY 2 Working Groups

MSG attendees worked in groups on three issues: a) An intervention logic for the DEAR Programme; b) Theory of Change and DEAR models of evaluation c) Where are the data and who collects them). Participants chose their favourite group, facilitators summarised key points from each discussion in the plenary session that followed.

### Group 1: How can we improve the DEAR Programme intervention logic? Addressing shortcomings, measuring results, clarifying assumptions

Facilitator: Nora Forsbacka, Bridge47 project

#### Day 2 – Group 1 padlet

- The discussion started with a comment on the need for the DEAR Programme to use a variety of tools. Qualitative data are as important as quantitative ones, and both need to be used. Unfortunately, when Calls for Proposal provide funds for campaigns, big events, etc., collecting qualitative data is quite difficult. Qualitative data are more suitable for smaller numbers of beneficiaries – education activities, mainly.
- Data collected at the end of a project may show that results have not, or insufficiently been reached while long-term data may bring real added value.
- The importance of the European scope in development education was also mentioned. National projects are important, but European ones bring a real added value to improve and enhance GCE practices thanks to peer-to-peer learning.
- Difference between formal education and non-formal education: very good and precise evaluation tools exist for formal education, but not for non-formal education. Participants agreed that it would be better to think about long-term evaluation to assess the impact of non-formal education on youth.
- Participants also agreed that the main issue is how to collect good data, considering how hard it is to prove attitude/behavioural changes (the hardest results to prove).
- A point was raised about the contribution that Information and Communication Technologies can give to MEL activities.
- The need for grantees to show positive results to the donor was also raised. The Commission operates a Standardised Data Reporting System, integrated in the very beginning of a project (only for quantitative data). The need to add qualitative data was deemed important, however, participants raised the issue of reporting as a resource-intensive activity. So, grantees must often choose between quantitative and qualitative data.
- Assuming that the main issue is standardisation of the data collection, it was proposed to create a working group, composed of some participants of the MSG and the Commission.
- One participant proposed the possible introduction of an external consultant, dedicated to M&E for each project, who would liaise between the consortium and the Commission. The M&E expert could continue their mandate for 1 or more years beyond the end of the project in order to guarantee reporting of the longer-term impact of each action.



- Document shared in the group chat - [Wirkungsorientierung in der entwicklungspolitischen Inlandsarbeit](#) (Impact Assessment in Development Education – in German)

## Group 2: What theories of change and models of evaluation are applicable to DEAR?

Facilitator: Liam Wegimont, GENE

### Day 2 – Group 2 padlet

- In terms of monitoring and evaluation, it is very important to consider the Unintended Consequences that may have great positive or negative impacts. Devote attention to identifying and studying them.
- Each consortium partner must report against a certain number of indicators, however, there is a conflict between the need to report good results (showing that partners are fulfilling their obligations) and reflecting the challenges that global education brings about. Especially in the last period, due to high competition for funding, there is a pressure to show that what we do works, that we are accountable and effective.
- There are two ways of looking at evaluation: evaluation as working to improve, or evaluation as proving that it works. M&E/MEL is important to prove a programme's impact in order to increase or maintain the funding competition, so funds can increase. It is, however, a missed opportunity if MEL is used just to prove that something has been done, rather than examine what works, in order to learn & improve.
- Among the challenges of DEAR MEL is the double need to be accountable and report back to donors on one hand and working on indicators that reflect the reality and diversity of DEAR in the different local realities on the other.
- Regarding a single DEAR Programme MEL framework, one participant used a metaphor: a centralised system may be like a cheap blanket - it does the job (i.e. it covers the entire Programme and provides a single 'entry point'), but does not reflect different situations; a more tailored solution, without a single overarching logic, looks more like a quilt, able to reflect the different experiences in different contexts, and this might be a better approach of evaluation, even though it will take a bit longer to develop and it might have a few holes.
- There is a need for good PIE balance: Planning - Implementation - Evaluation. How many resources for each? MEL should always be considered in the PIE cycle because it is a permanent process.
- Risk of wrong timing for the evaluation: the evaluation will come at the end of the project, but the impact we want to measure will not come immediately. Perhaps these discrepancies in timing should be considered by the Programme to counter this flaw in project cycle management.
- When surveying target groups, there should also be test groups to see if it was our intervention that had an effect or something external.



- If MEL systems are built on 'trust' rather than 'verification' (as many private foundations and donors do), they may result in lighter and less labour-intensive reporting requirements focussed on learnings.

### Group 3: Where is the DE/GCE/AR data and how to collect it?

Facilitator: Prof. Massimiliano Tarozzi, ANGEL

#### [Day 2 – Group 3 padlet](#)

The group work identified four main clusters:

1. What are we interested in when looking at the issue of data? We have to think of the process the other way around, starting from the question and then decide what kind of data we need and which strategy to use.
2. How to measure and assess change?
3. What types of data? with the traditional debate and tension between qualitative and quantitative.
4. How to collect data and who should be in charge of it?

Contributions to the debate:

- When talking about development education, the challenge and the ultimate end is measuring change: what change; what made the change happen; what promoted it? It is especially difficult to measure educational change, because it is by definition a long-term change.
- We can also differentiate between what aspects of change we are observing/affecting: learnings, policy framework, public opinion views, people's behaviours?
- It is also important to collect data at different levels, for example at local level in terms of improving governance among different stakeholders, or in policy documents.
- Other changes we should collect evidence of are reflected in individual stories. Normally with GCE we are able to have an impact not only on global issues but also on the lives of individual people around us.
- Data can also be collected at political level. GCE should also measure change in political documents/priorities.
- Questions about how to complement quantitative data with qualitative data emerged. This is a key issue which also emerged in the multi-stakeholders' survey. There is a contrasting expectation, because on one side we all need to rely on credible data, quantitative indicators and standardised data, while on the other hand there is a need for complementing these figures with more subjective and interpretive data (e.g., success stories).
- There are some quantitative data that can be read as qualitative. The divide between qualitative/quantitative is about the gaze/approach we employ on data. As an



example, data about places where the actions took place is quantitative, but also reflect something qualitative, about where people are reached the most.

- In Portugal, growing attention is given to qualitative data, i.e., data that could make sense of the quantitative indicators (e.g., by “humanizing” what is behind the numbers).
- In France, the Ministry of foreign affairs gives grants to associations and NGOs working in the GE field and encourages them to work together, share tools, experiences, participate in each other’s workshops. They officially recognise qualitative data to give a better understanding of what is being done in the field and what can be shared in terms of good practices. Quantitative and qualitative data are therefore considered valid and reliable data by the French Ministry in order to demonstrate and assess the change.
- A key point to make the bridge between quantitative and qualitative is to use the quantitative to identify the mechanisms explaining the changes.
- Who should be in charge of data collection and analysis? Should those in charge of data collection be practitioners or experts?
- There is a possible alliance between them in terms of collection and analyses. In Portugal, there are communities dedicated to synergies with practitioners, activists, researchers or “hybrids” of these categories, and they believe in the connection between practitioners and experts. The process of data collection and analyses is then richer because of this collaboration.
- The same system applies in Italy. This kind of mix-up between the categories of stakeholders decide the way of evaluating, and what constitutes good practice relevant to the topic. Using this system nobody is left apart and everyone shares the framework.
- The most important letter of the acronym MEL is the L for Learning: the focus should be made on what we learn from the monitoring and evaluation feedback. This is the thing we should build alliances on, knowing that the academics should be the rigorous players, the critical part of the alliance.

## Concluding remarks by Agata Sobiech

- In the follow-up to this MSG, DG INTPA will analyse the inputs received, evaluate the contents and produce a meeting report.
- The next MSG meeting is provisionally scheduled for autumn 2021, in order to assure continuity and assess progress made after the March 2021 meeting.
- As suggested by MSG participants, ongoing working groups could be created, with participation on voluntary/interest basis to work on some of the issues identified at the March 2021 MSG meeting, especially on DEAR Programme monitoring and evaluation. Once the MSG report is finalised, DG INTPA will be contacting participants with further details.



## Annex 1 - Participants List

Name	Surname	Position and Affiliation	Country	Stakeholder type
Galia	Chimiak	Associate Professor - Polish Academy of Sciences	Polska	Academia
Massimiliano	Tarozzi	Professor University of Bologna, ANGEL coordinator	Italy	Academia
La Salete	Coelho	Researcher, Educator and Project manager/University of Porto	Portugal	Academia
Sabine	Seiffert	Project Leader at Engagement Global/ GENE Board	Germany	Agency acting on behalf of BMZ
Barnim	Raspe	Engagement Global gGmbH	Germany	Agency of Member State
Stefan	Grasgruber-Kerl	Co-Chair CONCORD GCE Working Group / Südwind Head of Campaigning	EU/Austria	CSO/network
Calin	Rus	Director, Intercultural Institute of Timisoara	Romania	CSO/network
Albin	Keuc	Director - Sloga	Slovenia	CSO/network
Adriana	Aralica	Advocacy Officer - Sloga	Slovenia	CSO/network
Kelly	Hawrylyshyn	Sr Advisor Partnerships and Programmes, Fairtrade International	Germany	CSO/network
Luciana	Almeida	Capacity Development Coordinator at Portuguese NGDO Platform	Portugal	CSO/network
Paola	Berbeglia	Concord Europe Board member	Italy	CSO/network
Marija	Mitic	Project and Policy Coordinator, Lifelong Learning Platform	Belgium	CSO/network
Rilli	Lappalainen	Chair - Bridge47	Finland	CSO/network
Nora	Forsbacka	Project Manager / Bridge 47, Finnish Development NGOs Fingo	Finland	CSO/network
Valentina	Milanese	Head of Communication, EFIL	Belgium	CSO/network
Marguerite	Potard	Director Partnerships - World Organization of the Scout Movement	Belgium	CSO/network
Mari-Helene	Kaber	Co-chair of CONCORD GCE group	Estonia	CSO/network
Miguel	Carvalho Da Silva	Global Education Programme Manager - CoE North-South Centre	Portugal	International Organisation
Rocio	Cervera	Deputy Executive Director - North South Centre of the Council of Europe	Spain	International Organisation



Sara	Garrido	DEAR Officer at Diputació de Barcelona	Spain	Local Authority or network
Sofia	Caiolo	Head of PM Unit	Italy	Local Authority or network
Crystèle	Ranchin	Project Officer Andalucia Solidaria	Spain	Local Authority or network
Lur	Fernandez Salinas	Officer - DEAR - PLATFORMA - CEMR	Belgium	Local Authority or network
Marlen	Eizaguirre Marañoñ	Basque Agency for Development and Cooperation- desk officer	Spain	Local Authority or network
Silke	Lunnebach	Project Coordinator - Climate Alliance	Germany	Local Authority or network
Achour	Mehdi	Chargé de mission - Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères	France	Member State
Martin	Naprstek	Czech Development Agency	Czech Republic	Member State
Krista	Orama	Programme Officer - Finland MFA	Finland	Member State
Liam	Wegimont	Executive Director, GENE	European	Multilateral/International
Alecos	Kelemenis	ROM Expert, ROM Global Core Team Member	Greece	Consultant
Coppens	Mara	Head of unit - world citizenship - MFA	Belgium	Member State
<b>DG INTPA and DEAR SUPPORT TEAM</b>				
Agata	Sobiech	DG INTPA		EC staff
Anne-Marie	Vermunt	DG INTPA		EC staff
Markus	Pirchner	DG INTPA		EC staff
Maja	Biernacka	DG INTPA		EC staff
Francesca	Vanoni	DEAR Support Team		Consultant
Bianca	Baumler	DEAR Support Team		Consultant
Max	Fras	DEAR Support Team		Consultant
David	Linck	DEAR Support Team back office		Consultant
Alexandre	Foubert	DEAR Support Team back office		Consultant
Valentina	Bezzi	DEAR Support Team back office		Consultant



## Annex 2 - Evaluation of the meeting by Participants

A final evaluation of the MSG meeting was conducted using dedicated google form. It consisted of five questions related to the following aspects of the MSG:

- Preparation process
- Preparatory materials
- MSG facilitation and the choice of topics
- MSG programme relevance
- Other comments and suggestions

Participants provided an overwhelmingly positive evaluation of the meeting.

The **preparation** process was rated very good by most (58%) and good by nearly all other attendees (33%).

The quality of **preparatory materials** was rated very good by nearly two-thirds of participants (62%) and good by the remaining one-third (37%).

**Facilitation and topics** were rated very good by a third of participants (37%) and good by just over half (54%).

**Programme relevance** was rated very good by over half of the group (58%) and good by a third (37%). Additional comments and suggestions related to the following issues:

Most **comments** were positive and congratulatory, and thanked the team and speakers for their inputs.

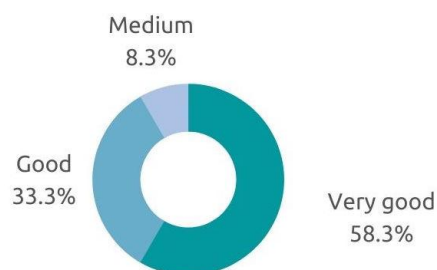
A number of comments related to the need for a stricter time-keeping and limiting speaker time to allow for more inputs from participants.

Some suggested that MSG participants should be allowed to work in-between meetings (though standing working groups) to facilitate ongoing communication and assure continuity.

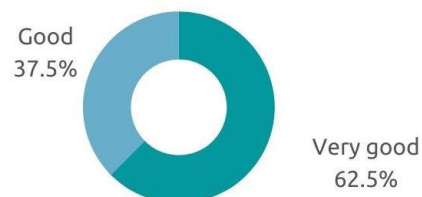
Some comments pertained to the need for more active facilitation of working group discussions during the MSG.

Some participants suggested a need for more external inputs on MEL and indicators (through more guest speakers).

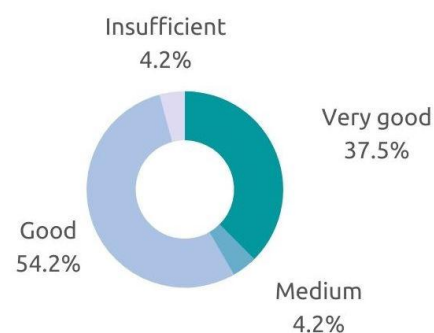
### Preparation



### Materials



### Facilitation & Topics



### Relevance

