

**“FICHE CONTRADICTOIRE”**  
**Final evaluation of the programme “Non State Actors and Local Authorities 2007-2013”**

RECOMMENDATIONS	RESPONSES OF EU SERVICES	FOLLOW-UP
<b>General Recommendations to the Commission (at a wider level than the programme)</b>		
<p><b>R1</b> The Commission could reduce the time required for evaluation of proposals.  The Commission could take steps, where possible, to reduce the length of the evaluation and contracting phase of project selection  Evaluators note that the DEAR Call of 2013 is intended to be a pilot for a full electronic system.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted</b>  DEVCO’s Practical Guide (PRAG) 2013, applicable as of 01/01/2013, foresees already a concrete timeline for the notification of the evaluation results to applicants (within 6 month following the submission deadline for full proposals) and for the signature of the contract (within 3 months from the notification of the award).  Further versions of the PRAG maintain this timeline.  As for the piloting of the electronic system (PROSPECT), this was indeed tried out and the time gains concern mainly the encoding of all applications by the EUDs and HQ services and the postal delivery of concept notes and full proposals by the applicants. Hence the electronic submission does impact positively the overall evaluation and awarding process.</p>	
<p><b>R2</b> The Commission could consider an internal review of its standards for external evaluation reports of co-financed actions.  The Commission could consider reforming the PRAG to introduce a compulsory template for independent evaluation reports on co-funded actions, including standard evaluation criteria and a qualitative and quantitative identification of final beneficiaries.  Evaluators note that DEVCO’s monitoring and evaluation system is currently under revision.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted</b>  The evaluation policy is under review. In June 2014, a template of ToR was made available to EUD and HQ staff for project and programme evaluations. It is accompanied by specific guidance, providing explanations on each section of the ToR. However, instead of imposing a compulsory template that could not encompass all the diversity of programmes and projects, DEVCO's evaluation services recommend adapting the ToR to each specific case.</p>	

<p><b>R3</b> The Commission is advised to improve the accuracy of its data entry. The Commission is advised to improve the accuracy of data entry of key statistical data for co-financed projects, particularly the DAC sector and the Gender Marker. Publishing these statistics regularly would provide a deadline, an incentive and feedback for the staff responsible for their accurate recording. The Commission should also improve the accuracy of data entry related to Calls for Proposals</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted</b> The data collected on the DAC Code and Gender Marker respond to the EU's commitment to provide statistics to the OECD DAC Committee. As such, the system is designed to track commitments and payments, not specific actions at contract level. Therefore, even if quality control is applied and manuals are regularly updated, the system does not necessarily collect the most relevant and complete statistics for each programme. A new project and programme information system (PPCM) fully in line with Project Cycle Management (PCM) is currently under development to meet those needs. Concerning Calls for Proposals, the roll-out of the on-line system PROSPECT should contribute to better data quality and reducing the encoding workload thanks to the electronic submission.</p>	
<p><b>General Recommendations regarding the NSA&amp;LA Programme</b></p>		
<p><b>R4</b> The Commission is advised to reinforce support to NSA work related to good governance, accountability, and empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised groups. The NSA&amp;LA Programme has supported a broad range of NSA actions, of which approximately 40% have a governance focus. Considering the programme's proven contribution to improving the environment for civil society engagement on development and governance issues, and in the context of the Commission's reinforced commitment to the promotion of good governance and accountability, the successor programme could reinforce support to NSA work in these areas.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> The multi-annual strategy of the successor programme "Civil society and local authorities (CSO-LA)" for 2014-2020, adopted on 15/07/2014, <i>will pursue the objective of improving governance and accountability through inclusive policy-making by empowering citizens and populations, through the voicing and structuring of their collective demands, to contribute to tackle injustice and inequality</i>". Objective 1 (actions at country level), includes as strategic objective to enhance <i>CSOs contributions to governance and development processes as actors in governance and accountability</i>. Objective 1 also includes access to quality social services for disadvantaged groups as well as their economic empowerment.</p>	

<p><b>R5</b> Calls for Proposals targeting LAs could be more predictable. A greater predictability of Calls for Proposals would be of particular benefit to LA potential beneficiaries who are inherently less flexible than their NSA counterparts.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> The Commission is aware that LAs as public authorities may need to plan in advance (through their own budgeting process) their possible co-funding of EU-supported projects. It has been working for several years towards increasing the predictability of NSA-LA calls for proposals by launching them more regularly, pooling several years, informing potential applicants in advance through information sessions and by publishing annually the programme of forthcoming calls to be launched in the year. This increased predictability will be maintained under the new CSO-LA programme for calls targeting both CSOs and LAs.</p>	
<p><b>R6</b> The programme could support beneficiaries in mainstreaming gender concerns.  This could include supporting dedicated capacity development actions with a gender focus.  Programme managers could adjust Guidelines for Applicants to stress the importance of gender mainstreaming, and adjust project selection criteria to prefer proposals with a gender-sensitive analysis, and gender-disaggregated identification of final beneficiaries.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted</b> EU has an established policy of promoting gender mainstreaming across all programmes in HQ services and EUDs and offers guidance and support including for the capacity building of beneficiaries. The CSO-LA includes a gender perspective as one of the programme's guiding principles and one of the cross-cutting issues of the European Consensus. The LA component will support specifically the participation of women in the public sphere. As each EUD has its own Gender Action Plan with specific actions covering various programmes, mainstreaming and coverage of gender issues under the CSO-LA is not homogeneous across EUDs. Programme managers have the possibility to adjust the contents of the Guidelines (not only for CSO-LA). Best practices of "engendered Guidelines" have been disseminated among EUDs. Standard evaluation grids include gender under cross-cutting issues. Modifying a call's evaluation grid is considered an exception. It is possible but needs prior approval at Director level.</p>	

## Recommendations regarding Objective 1 (in-country actions)

<p><b>R7</b> EUDs could make wider use of the in-country support measures.</p> <p>Programme managers could facilitate a diffusion of useful and innovative practices between EUDs. EUDs should consider using support measures to provide capacity development and information services for grant beneficiaries, and to facilitate dialogue with local NSAs and LAs. Capacity development should not be limited to training and information activities to improve the quantity and quality of proposals submitted in competitive Calls.</p> <p>Programme managers could better inform EUDs about eligible costs that could be financed using support measures.</p>	<p><b>Partially accepted</b> EUDs have been properly informed each year on the possibility to use up to 5 % of their country allocations as “support measures”.</p> <p>Capitalisation and dissemination of good practices has proved challenging with over 120 EUDs, but dissemination on eligible types of action and best practices could be made more systematic.</p> <p>The choice of some EUDs to support local applicants with their 5% is an adequate strategy of support to local actors, especially when capacity development as such is covered under dedicated programmes.</p> <p>To further support EUDs, a centralised Facility was launched at the end of 2013 to provide technical assistance for dialogue (consultations, identification of priorities), assessment of proposals and trainings for local CSO and LA including training of trainers.</p>	
<p><b>R8</b> EUDs and Headquarters could improve internal monitoring.</p> <p>Programme and project managers in Headquarters and EUDs could improve their monitoring systems, with a greater focus on results and sustainability prospects, in addition to contractual issues.</p>	<p><b>Accepted</b> This recommendation goes beyond the scope of the Programme, since M&amp;E systems in DEVCO have a wider scope than the programme level. As mentioned before, a new PCM-based information system is under development to improve data collection, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.</p> <p>Reporting on results in particular is being restructured according to the Staff Working Document <i>Paving the way for an EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework</i> adopted by DEVCO in December 2013.</p>	

## Recommendations regarding Objective 2 (DEAR)

**R9** For Objective 2 the Commission could terminate the special arrangements for the 10 NMS that joined the EU in 2004 but maintain these for Bulgaria Romania and Croatia for a further transitional period.  
It is advised to maintain special arrangements for a further transitional period for Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia, as beneficiaries in these countries are not yet proportionally integrated into the programme. Although the reasons for this were not examined during this evaluation, it seems likely that this is related to the shorter period of specific capacity building and preferential conditions extended to these countries compared to the 10 NMS which joined the EU in 2004.

**Partially Accepted**  
DEAR is now covered under Obj 3 of the new CSO/LA programme. No special arrangements are foreseen anymore for the 10 NMS. The new approach is based on the development of pan-European projects and not on a national approach. The Commission will however consider the best options for ensuring that the most recent three new Member States: Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia are duly covered

**R10** The Commission could support improvements in quality indicators of impact for Objective 2.  
The programme should support the identification, elaboration and testing of indicators by which attitude change related to the objectives of the development education programme and of co-funded projects can be measured. This could be done by a combination of direct engagement of the programme and indirectly, through co-financing actions that are working on these issues.

**Accepted**  
Already in the ongoing Call for Proposal, the Commission will put much more weight on valid and "SMART" OVI (objectively verifiable indicators) for each co-financed project.  
With regard to the identification of indicators measuring attitude change, the Commission will undertake a study to analyse different systems of measuring impact and thereupon proposing how attitude change could be measured in the context of the DEAR programme.

**In progress:**

### Recommendations regarding Objective 3 (Support to networks)

**R11** For Objective 3 the Commission could terminate the special arrangements for the 10 NMS that joined the EU in 2004 but maintain these for Bulgaria Romania and Croatia for a further transitional period, as beneficiaries in these countries are not yet proportionally integrated into the programme. Although the reasons for this were not examined during this evaluation, it seems likely that this is related to the shorter period of specific capacity building and preferential conditions extended to these countries compared to the 10 NMS which joined the EU in 2004.

#### **Not applicable**

Under the new CSO-LA Programme, the old Objective 3 as such does not exist anymore, as it has merged with former objective 1b. Therefore this recommendation is no longer relevant.

#### **Not applicable**