

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME
"NON STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES"

Letter of Contract N°2012/305551

FINAL REPORT: Volume 1 – Main Text

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This final report is made up of 2 volumes.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific	ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
ALA	Association of Local Authorities	JC	Judgement Criteria
CfP	Call for Proposals	LA	Local Authority
CN	Concept Note	MDG	Millennium Development Goals
CRIS	Common External Relations Information System	MS	Member State of the European Union
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	NGDO	Non-governmental Development Organisation
DEAR	Development Education/Awareness Raising	NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
DEEEP	Development Education Exchange in Europe	NIP	National Indicative Programme
DEVCO	EuropeAid Cooperation Office	NMS	New Member State
	DG DEV Directorate General	NSA	Non-State Actor
	Development, European Commission	ODA	Official Development Assistance
EC	European Commission	OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
EUD	European Union Delegation	OECD DAC	OECD Development Assistance Committee
EQ	Evaluation question	OVS	Old Member States
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument	OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
EDF	European Development Fund	PADOR	Potential applicant data online registration
EIB	European Investment Bank	PRAG	Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for European Union External Actions
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights	PCM	Project Cycle Management
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument	ROM	Results-Oriented Monitoring
EU	European Union	ROM CMTP	Results-Oriented Monitoring - Centrally Managed Thematic Projects
FA	Full Application		
FP	Full Proposal		
G-Marker	Gender Equality Policy Marker		
HQ	Commission Headquarters		
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation		

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scope and context

This report presents the final evaluation, commissioned by DEVCO/B2 and implemented between December 2012 and April 2013, of the Thematic Programme "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" (NSA- LA) 2007-2013. The sum of €1,571,075,501.66 was allocated in Annual Action Programmes (AAPs) for the period 2007-2013¹.

The Programme is divided into **3 objectives**. **Objective 1** of the Programme is to promote an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries that will facilitate NSA and LA participation in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies. **Objective 2** is to promote awareness raising and development education in the EU and acceding countries about development issues. **Objective 3** is to facilitate the coordination and communication of NSA and LA networks in EU and acceding countries.

The EU has significantly strengthened its engagement with Non-State Actors (NSA) and Local authorities over the last years. The communication entitled "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change",² issued in October 2011, called for focusing EU development cooperation on support for human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance, and on support for inclusive and sustainable growth aimed at fostering human development. It recognized the key role NSAs and LAs play in development and acknowledges the importance of supporting *"the emergence of an organised civil society able to act as watchdog and partner in dialogue with national governments"*.

The communication entitled "The future approach to EU budget support to third countries"³ underlined the key role NSA and LA should play in participatory budget approaches, particularly in strengthening domestic accountability. The communication entitled "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations",⁴ issued in September 2012, further developed the provisions relating to CSOs in the Agenda for Change and built on the worldwide Structured Dialogue with CSOs and LAs in EU development cooperation concluded in 2011⁵. The communication highlighted the importance of promoting an environment in partner countries conducive to the involvement of CSOs in domestic policies, in programming of EU assistance and international processes, and the need to develop CSO capacities to perform this role more effectively. The communication also highlighted the role of networks and alliances acting at the regional and global levels to tackle transnational and global challenges as well as the role of CSOs active at European and global levels in the promotion of global citizens' awareness.

The communication entitled "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes: the future of EU policy of support to LA in the field of development cooperation"⁶ was issued in 2013, after the submission of the draft final report of this evaluation. These policy developments will be integrated in the successor of the NSA-LA Programme, the new thematic programme "Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities" currently

¹ For 2013 the evaluators have only been provided with the PowerPoint submitted to the DCI Committee on 21/03/2013. By the time the first draft report was submitted the AAP was still under discussion. It was published on Devco's website on 15/05/2013.

² COM (2011) 637: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0637:FIN:EN:PDF>, Council Conclusions 9316/12: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st09/st09369.en12.pdf>

³ COM (2011) 638: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0638:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁴ Communication on civil society: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news/2012-09-19_enhancing-democracy_en.htm

⁵ Structured Dialogue: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/structured-dialogue_en.htm

⁶ COM (2013) 280

under formulation for the period of the Multi-annual Financial Framework (2014-2020)⁷ as well as in other thematic and geographic EC instruments, including budget support operations. Furthermore, a dedicated Action Plan to implement the Communication's recommendations will be developed by the Commission for the period 2014-2020, following an invitation emanating from the Council Conclusions of 22 July 2013.

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in **two phases, an inception phase, and a desk, field and drafting phase**. The methodology proposed for this assignment did not envisage field visits in partner countries for Objective 1 of the Programme, but proposed a desk study based on the available documentation and studies in Headquarters and Delegations. Field visits were envisaged for Objectives 2 and 3. Surveys of beneficiaries were carried out for all Objectives. During the **inception phase** the evaluators analysed relevant programme documents and other background materials. This phase was fundamental to understand the types of qualitative and quantitative data concerning the projects funded by the Programme and the accessibility of this data to the evaluators. A set of nine Evaluation Questions (EQ) were defined. To answer each question, appropriate Judgment Criteria (JC) and related indicators were defined. A structured interview template was elaborated and tested. Based on these preliminary results, a full methodology, work plan and justification of the selected sample of proposed field visits for Objectives 2 and 3 were presented in the Inception Report.

The **desk and field phase** helped complete the data collection and contribute to answering the EQs. Online questionnaires were prepared for three categories of actors: EU Delegations, Non State Actors grant beneficiaries and Local Authority grant beneficiaries. A total of 1,073 responses were received.

Survey responses collected by language, and statistical significance							
Language	EN	FR	ES	PT	DE	Total	Significance
Objective 1 EUD	60	26	13	1	-	100	>100% of sample
Objective 1 LA	82	36	38	1	-	157	32% of sample
Objective 1 NSA	388	75	92	18	-	573	32% of sample
Objective 2	166	17	11	0	19	213	>100% of sample
Objective 3	20	7	3	0	0	30	50% of sample
Total	716	161	157	20	19	1073	

Field visits were scheduled for 25 NSA and LA actions supported under Objective 2 and 10 actions supported under Objective 3. Interviews were carried out in 12 Member States, of which 8 'Old' and 4 'New Member States'. These semi-structured interviews focused primarily on questions of sustainability and impact. Unfortunately, it was not possible to observe project activities or meet with the planned range of official stakeholders and final beneficiaries. With hindsight it was probably too ambitious to envisage systematic meetings with official stakeholders and final beneficiaries in the limited period of five weeks in which the combined desk, field and drafting stages of the evaluation took place.

The **drafting** was done concurrently with data collection because of time constraints related to the modified schedule agreed during the Inception Phase. Nevertheless, the evaluators were able to propose answers to at least two thirds of the Judgement Criteria for each Evaluation Question. The content of the final report was adjusted to prioritise those judgement criteria for which qualitative and

⁷ Proposal for the new Regulation:
http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/documents/prop_reg_instrument_dev_coop_en.pdf

quantitative data had been obtained. Some judgement criteria were omitted, or only briefly covered in the report, usually because it was not possible to identify and obtain sufficient qualitative and/or quantitative data to make an informed judgement.⁸

Main conclusions

The evaluators have agreed on 19 Conclusions, of which the following three are the most significant:

Main Conclusion 1: The programme has had a significant positive impact at the level of the “objectives and results”/ “performance indicators” in the multi-annual Strategies for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013

Regarding **Objective 1a**, most EUDs that implement the programme, and an even higher proportion of grant beneficiaries, consider that this programme has had a clear positive impact on the enabling environment for civil society and local authorities in the countries where the programme is implemented. The programme has also had measurable success in other “objectives and results areas” related to Objective 1a, particularly in building the capacity of NSAs and LAs from partner countries, the development of partnerships between NSAs and LAs and between these beneficiaries and other civil society actors such as media and academia. The program has clearly widened and deepened the dialogue among NSAs, LAs, national authorities and development partners. The only “objective and result” of **Objective 1a** which seems neglected in the implementation of the programme is “capacity of worker’s organisations and employers to engage in social dialogue and promote corporate social responsibility” – an insignificant proportion of funds were allocated to projects on these themes. This may reflect the relatively small proportion of such ‘social partner’ NSAs among the applicants in Calls for Proposals, compared with the more numerous civic associations.

Objective 1b has also contributed to the regional and continental structuring of the sector. A majority of grant beneficiaries who responded to the survey carried out for this evaluation reported a broadening and deepening of their cooperation within the NSA/LA sectors and with other stakeholders.

Objective 2 has had a significant positive impact. Co-financed actions address all the “objectives and results” of Objective 2. There has been an increase in ad hoc and structured dialogue between stakeholders in most of the MS, and a growing number of MS have reinforced their bilateral programmes following input from NSAs and LAs that received funding under this programme.

There is also a measurable increase in the breadth and quality of the networking within NSA and LA categories and between these and other stakeholders at the European level. The consolidation and expansion of development education and awareness raising in the NMS, is in part, as a result of this programme.

However, the indicators of success for co-funded actions under Objective 2 are often vague or not easily verifiable. The authors of this Final Evaluation concur with the Mid-Term Review finding that a nucleus of high quality projects has been funded. But it is hard to see how good projects can be identified, duplicated, multiplied or scaled up, since their success and value for money cannot easily be quantified and qualified.

In general, **Objective 3** projects have good or very good impact prospects. Most Objective 3 projects are implemented by large consortia, often with eight or more organisations in different MS.

This programme’s contribution to capacity strengthening of the European NSA and LA networks working on international development issues is likely to have an indirect positive effect on other Commission grant-making programmes and projects in which these beneficiaries participate.

⁸ See section 2 of this report for more details.

Main Conclusion 2: Projects funded under all Objectives have good prospects for sustainability, although financial sustainability seems more of a challenge than political and institutional sustainability

Grantees have strengthened their relationships with a range of stakeholders, and formed consortia and networks that can support the continued delivery of benefits even after the end of Commission co-financing. The financial sustainability of results, however, is somewhat weaker. This is in part a consequence of the high donor dependency of grantees. Many grant beneficiaries, particularly, but not only those from partner countries, identify the requirement to make a financial contribution to their own projects as a major factor limiting their participation in the programme.

Main Conclusion 3: The programme has adequately reflected the growing EU focus on governance and human rights

EUDs have focused their Calls for Proposals on service delivery for basic needs, and on capacity building for NSAs and, to a lesser extent, LAs. More than 40% of EUD officials and more than half of grant beneficiaries in all areas where the programme was implemented consider that this programme has made a significant or large contribution to the promotion of an enabling environment for civil society, participatory development and citizen's active engagement. The Agenda for Change was adopted only towards the end of the evaluation period. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that this increased focus on governance and human rights is reflected in the most recent Calls for Proposals.

Main recommendations

The evaluators make 15 recommendations, of which the following three are the most significant:

Main Recommendation 1: Programme managers could reinforce support to NSAs work related to good governance, accountability, and empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised groups

The NSA&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 further reinforce support to NSA work in these areas.

Main Recommendation 2: EUDs could make wider use of the in country support measures facility.

Programme managers could facilitate the diffusion of useful and innovative practices amongst EUDs. EUDs should consider using support measures to strengthen the PCM capacity (project management and financial management) for grant beneficiaries, and not confine themselves to training and information activities to improve the quantity and quality of proposals submitted in competitive Calls.

Main Recommendation 3: EUDs and Headquarters could improve internal monitoring of co-funded actions

EUDs could increase the frequency of their monitoring activities, with a focus on results. EU Task Managers should focus on results in addition to contractual issues.

2. CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

This report presents the final evaluation of the Non-state Actors and LA Programme (2007-2013). The evaluation was commissioned by DEVCO/B2 and was implemented between December 2012 and April 2013.

Objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Thematic Programme "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" (NSA- LA) entered into force on 1 January 2007. It has its legal basis in article 14 of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The initial indicative budget was €1,639,000,000 of which €1,571,075,501.66 has been allocated in Annual Action Programmes (AAPs) for the period 2007-2013.⁹ It is an "actor-oriented" programme implemented mainly through Calls for Proposals and aimed at capacity building through support for initiatives from Non-State Actors (NSA) and Local Authorities (LA) and their associations (ALA) themselves, and originating from the EU and partner countries.

The Programme has not been designed or managed on the basis of the Logical Framework Approach. The Commission considers that this programme operates under the principle of "right of initiative" and therefore cannot or should not be too prescriptive in terms of outputs. All applications however, must include a logical framework (objectives, activities, results, indicators) whose quality is part of the evaluation process. All projects larger than 500,000 Euros must carry out an external evaluation, which should be based on the logframe. Logframes are also used by the Commission's ROM monitoring missions regarding projects implemented in the scope of this programme.

Strategy Papers for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 identified three objectives, and stressed that "a programme which upholds actors' 'right of initiative' is not one whose expected results can easily be predicted." The Strategy Papers did identify mixed "objectives and results" for Objective 1a, 2 and 3, and "performance indicators" for Objective 1b.

The objectives of the programme are as follows:

- Objective 1: To promote an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries that will facilitate NSA and LA participation in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies *In-country interventions managed by EU Delegations (EUD) (Objective 1a) and Multi-country interventions managed by Commission headquarters, Delegations or Geographical Directorates (Objective 1b)*
- Objective 2 - Promoting development education and awareness-raising (DEAR) in the EU and acceding countries about development issues *managed by Commission headquarters*
- Objective 3 – Facilitating the coordination and communication of NSA and LA networks in EU and acceding countries *managed by Commission headquarters*

The major portion of programme funds are allocated as action grants in competitive Calls for Proposals. EUDs are able to allocate a small part of their country allocation (3% in 2007-2010 and 5% since 2011) to support measures for potential beneficiaries and grantees. The indicative allocation of resources by objective is as follows.

⁹ For 2013 the evaluators have only been provided with the PowerPoint submitted to the DCI Committee on 21/03/2013. By the time the first draft report was submitted the AAP was still under discussion. It was published on Devco's website on 15/05/2013.

Table 1: Indicative allocation of resources by objective

Programme component	2007-10	2011-13	Total
Objective 1 a	€741m (82.0%)	€525 (74.8%)	€1,324m
1b		€58m (8.2%)	
Objective 2	€126m (14.0%)	€102m (14.5%)	€228m
Objective 3	€18m (2.0%)	€17m (2.5)	€35m
Management & support,¹⁰ evaluation	€18m (2.0%)	**	€ 18m
Total	€903m (100%)	€702m (100%)	€1,605m

Source: NSA-LA MULTIANNUAL STRATEGIES FOR 2007-2010 AND 2011-2013
NOTE: THE TOTAL OF RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO THE ANNUAL ACTION PROGRAMME AMOUNTS TO A DIFFERENT NUMBER (SMALLER AMOUNT).
** No Indicative amount is given in the relevant table of Strategy Paper 2011-2013, but the same document does state that up to 2% of the operating funds can also be used for support measures where the beneficiary is the Commission and for monitoring and evaluation.

Methodology

During the inception phase, the methodology for the evaluation was reviewed and restructured in two phases, with the inception phase to be followed by a combined desk, field, final drafting and restitution phase.

Inception phase

This phase was essential to ensure a clear understanding and overview of the scope of the evaluation by analysing programme and background documents pertinent to the objective of the study. It was also fundamental to understand the different types of qualitative and quantitative data concerning the projects funded by the Programme and the accessibility of this data to the evaluators. Consequently, the assessors decided to focus on data available in the CRIS system. A set of **nine Evaluation Questions (EQs) were defined along with a set of appropriate Judgment Criteria (JC) per evaluation Question, as well as related indicators..**

Table 2: Evaluation Questions

EQ	Primary focus	Question
EQ 1	Consistency	To what extent is implementation consistent with programming?
EQ 2	Lessons learning	To what extent has the programme incorporated lessons learned?
EQ 3	Relevance	To what extent does the implementation of the programme correspond to the evolving policy priorities?
EQ 4	Impact	What is the measurable effect of the programme?
EQ 5	Impact, effectiveness	Has the programme reached an appropriate number and range of final beneficiaries?
EQ 6	Coherence	Is the programme well-integrated into the broader system of Commission, European and partner country ODA policy?
EQ 7	Sustainability	How sustainable are the results of the programme?
EQ 8	Value added/cross cutting issues	In addition to any progress on meeting its Objectives, has the programme made any other significant contributions to Commission development programming (at both the strategic and implementation levels)
EQ 9	M&E, visibility, accountability, efficiency	What is the quality of management of the programme?

¹⁰ No indicative amount is given in the relevant table of Strategy Paper 2011-2013, but the same document does states that up to 2% of the operating funds can also be used for support measures where the beneficiary is the Commission and for monitoring and evaluation.

The relationship between the proposed evaluation questions and the standard OECD-DAC and EU criteria is summarised in the following table.

Table 3: Relationship of proposed evaluation questions to standard evaluation criteria

Question	DAC Criteria					EC Criteria		Other
	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability	3Cs	Value added	Cross-cutting issues
1 Reconstruction	Yes							
2 Lessons learned	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	
3 Policy priorities	Yes					Yes	Yes	Yes
4 Measureable impact		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5 Final beneficiaries		Yes		Yes				Yes
6 Coherence	Yes					Yes		Yes
7 Sustainability			Yes		Yes			
8 Other specific contribution						Yes	Yes	Yes
9 Management		Yes	Yes	Yes				

Source: Evaluation team Inception report, 2013

A structured interview template was elaborated and tested by the team firstly in the team members' countries of residence (Slovakia, Italy, Hungary and Greece). Based on these preliminary results, a full methodological design, work plan and justification of the selected sample of proposed field visits were presented in the Inception Report.

Desk, field and drafting phase

Online questionnaires were prepared for three categories of actors: EU Delegations, Non State Actors grant beneficiaries and Local Authorities grant beneficiaries. A total of 1,073 responses were received. Field visits were scheduled for 25 actions supported under Objective 2 and 10 actions supported under Objective 3. These semi-structured interviews focused on questions of sustainability and impact. Because of the compressed time schedule, in practice, it was not possible to observe activities or meet with official stakeholders or final beneficiaries. Drafting was conducted concurrently with data collection. The evaluators faced several challenges in carrying out the evaluation, and the agreed methodology proved to be too ambitious for the limited time and range of data available. The content of the final report has been adjusted to prioritise those Judgement Criteria for which qualitative and quantitative data had been obtained. These methodological challenges and limits are discussed in more detail in Annex 5.

Two cross-cutting issues, gender and democracy were selected for analysis. Data sets for all the Evaluation Questions were examined relating to these cross-cutting issues.

3. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS: OBJECTIVE 1A AND 1B

Objective 1 - Promoting an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries that will facilitate NSA and LA participation in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies

EQ1: To what extent is implementation consistent with programming?

JC 1.1 For Objective 1, the disbursement of funds corresponds to allocated funds

The tables below demonstrate the annual allocations and actual contracting of funds. Contracting closely follows the allocations determined in the Annual Action Programmes and the multi-annual Strategies for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013. For Objective 1a, spending has been relatively steady, with an upward trend. The relative importance of LAs has increased consistently through the implementation period. There appear to be no obstacles to the full contracting of funds before the end of the implementation period.

Table 4: Allocation and contracting of funds and number of projects for Objective 1a

NSA/LA		Objective 1a- In country							
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Allocated 1a	NSA	€122 443 900	€120 730 000	€123 850 000	€134 650 000	€143 650 000	€148 250 000	€153 000 000	€946 573 900
	LA	€17 361 500	€14 270 000	€16 580 000	€18 350 000	€27 475 000	€25 025 000	€27 200 000	€146 261 500
Total allocated 1a		€139 805 400	€135 000 000	€140 430 000	€153 000 000	€171 125 000	€173 275 000	€180 200 000	€939 835 400
Contracted 1a	NSA	€125 096 382	€118 834 248	€123 782 634	€135 896 863	€144 527 793	0	0	€648 137 919
	LA	€10 879 261	€7 243 980	€9 569 460	€14 810 648	€26 980 242	0	0	€69 483 590
Contracted projects 1a	NSA	351	336	404	435	411	0	0	1937
	LA	38	37	68	84	92	0	0	319
Total contracted projects		389	373	472	519	503	0	0	2256
Total contracted 1a NSA & LA		€135 975 642	€126 078 228	€133 352 093	€150 707 511	€171 508 035	-	-	€717 621 509

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTP team. Reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase.

For Objective 1b, the Commission has achieved a reasonably stable rate of contracting. Since no further Calls for Proposals are foreseen, in 2013 the Commission will award grants to selected projects from the reserve list of the multi-country NSA Call for Proposals 2011-2012. There appear to be no obstacles to the full contracting of funds before the end of the implementation period.

Table 5: Allocation and contracting of funds and number of projects for Objective 1b

NSA/LA		Objective 1b- Multi-country							
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Allocated 1b	NSA	€27 209 000	€31 916 298	€30 886 769	€17 950 000	€15 904 500	€16 828 000	€20 000 000	€160 694 566
	LA	€7 838 500	€12 866 000	€10 170 000	€11 391 000	€3 797 500	€2673000	€0	€48 736000
Total allocated 1b		€35 047 500	€44 782 298	€41 056 769	€29 341 000	€19 702 000	€19501000	€20 000 000	€209430566
Contracted 1b	NSA	€22 669 758	€33 385 946	€30 900 189	€16 692 281	€15 731 195	0	0	€119 379 369
	LA	€12 751 244	€19 836 929	€16 743 596	€11 073 200	€4 240 840	0	0	€64 645 809

NSA / LA	Objective 1b- Multi-country								
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL	
Total contracted 1b NSA & LA	€35 421 003	€53 222 875	€47 643 785	€27 765 481	€19 972 035	0	0	€184 025 178	
Contracted projects 1b	NSA	16	19	19	17	8	0	0	71
	LA	10	18	16	11	4	0	0	55
Total contracted projects	26	37	35	28	12	0	0	126	
Total allocated OBJ 1	€174 852 900	€179 782 298	€181 486 769	€182 341 000	€190 827 000	€192 776 000	€200 200 000	€1 316 420 966	
Total contracted OBJ 1	€171 396 645	€179 301 103	€180 995 878	€178 472 992	€191 480 070	€0	€0	€901 646 687	
Total contracted projects	415	410	507	547	515	0	0	2394	

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTP team. Reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase.

Within Objective 1a, both Strategy Papers announced a similar indicative allocation of resources between regions, although the geographical categories used are slightly different.

Table 6: Regional Allocation

Indicative Regional Allocation		
Region	2007-2010	2011-2013
ACP	49%	51.5%
Asia	23%	19.5%
Latin America	21%	20.5%
Other	Eastern Europe, Middle East and Central Asia 3.5% MEDA 3.5%	ENPI + Russian Fed. 6% Middle East 1.75% Central Asia 0.75%

Source: Multi-annual strategy papers

JC 1.4 The allocation and disbursement of funds is appropriate to the effective demand

Programme managers adjust the country envelopes in response to opportunities and challenges in the various countries where the programme is implemented. HQ organises regular reallocations between countries: a Delegation can ask for more funds or give back part of its allocation. The overall total of funds allocated and contracted for Objective 1a increases gradually each year, reflecting the growing absorption capacity of NSAs and LAs in partner countries, as well as the engagement and ability of EUDs to manage in-country (single country) Calls for Proposals and the resulting projects. The following table analyses the contracting of funds and projects by region, for the two categories of grant beneficiaries: NSAs and LAs.

Table 7: Contracting of funds and number of projects allocated to NSAs by region under Objective 1a

Contracted	OBJECTIVE 1							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
	NSA							
ACP	€60 654 060	€52 207 832	€50 230 507	€56 333 932	€74 589 898	0	0	€294 016 229
N° projects	154	143	159	183	185	0	0	824
ASIA	€27 232 768	€32 708 731	€33 664 909	€34 355 337	€27 473 217	0	0	€155 434 962
N° projects	53	67	85	77	70	0	0	352
CENTRAL ASIA	€ 206 7860	€1 936 601	€2 063 227	€1 890 408	€1 100 000	0	0	€9058096
N° projects	16	12	12	9	6	0	0	55

Contracted	OBJECTIVE 1							
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
	NSA							
LA	€25 280 033	€23 070 421	€28 423 884	€29 412 156	€27 374 990	0	0	€133 561 483
N° projects	92	74	98	99	89	0	0	452
ENPI	€7 356 199	€6 713 416	€7 201 556	€11 653 910	€11 983 322	0	0	€44 908 402
N° projects	30	34	43	61	57	0	0	225.00
MID EAST	€2 505 462	€2 197 247	€2 198 552	€2 251 119	€2 006 367	0	0	€11 158 747
N° projects	6	6	7	6	4	0	0	29
Total amount	€125 096 382	€118 834 248	€123 782 634	€135 896 863	€144 527 792	0	0	€648 137 919
Total projects	351	336	404	435	411	-	-	1937

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTP team in March and April 2013. Reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase.

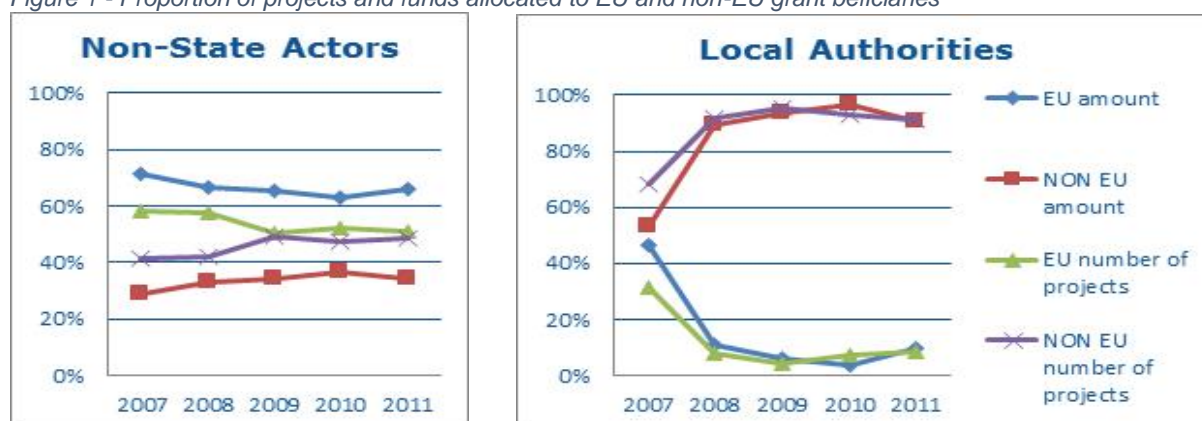
At the beginning of 2013, at least 70% of funds indicatively allocated to Objective 1a and 1b were contracted. For 2012 and 2013 the contracting of projects is not finalised and therefore there are no totals available yet. Programme managers also have the possibility to pool allocations across two consecutive years. Contracting from the 2013 budget may take place until the end of 2014 and project implementation can last for a maximum of 5 years after contracting. The bulk of remaining funds are likely to be contracted before the end of 2013.

The growing role of actors from partner countries as lead applicants

The Commission is steadily moving towards a direct engagement with NSAs and LAs in partner countries. For Objective 1a (in-country or single country projects) NSAs and LAs from partner countries have increased their share of projects from 44.22% in 2007 to 56.46% in 2011.¹¹ Even more strikingly, since 2008, LA from partner countries have secured more than 90% of projects and funds allocated to LAs.¹²

NSAs from partner countries are also gradually increasing their share of funds and projects under Objective 1b (multi-country interventions). In 2011 this share represented 37.5% of projects and 29.84% of funds contracted with these NSAs. An even more impressive result has been achieved by LAs and ALAs from partner countries. In 2011 they received 50% of contracts representing 64.47% of funds contracted under Objective 1b.¹³

Figure 1 - Proportion of projects and funds allocated to EU and non-EU grant beneficiaries



Source: data provided by DEVCO B2

¹¹ Since many of these projects are small or very small, their share of Objective 1a's financial resources has grown more slowly from 28.71% to 34.09%. This nevertheless represents an annual growth rate of 4.68%.

¹² NSALA 2012 Annual Action Plan, PowerPoint presentation to DCI Committee 21st March 2013, p7

¹³ NSALA 2012 Annual Action Plan, PowerPoint presentation to DCI Committee 21st March 2013, p9.

There is considerable variation in the share of projects and funds allocated to European and partner country grant beneficiaries.¹⁴ This is summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Relative importance of partner country beneficiaries

Share of the total number of projects contracted to partner country beneficiaries	Number of countries	Percentage of countries where the programme is implemented
<20%	8	9.8%
21-40%	6	7.3%
41-60%	15	18.3%
61-80%	27	32.9%
81-100%	17	20.7%
100%	9	11.0%
	82	100%

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTP team in April 2013

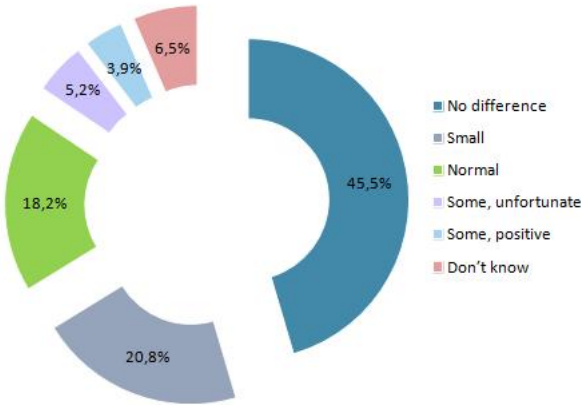
Perceptions of implementation

EUDs consider implementation to be consistent with programming, as Figure 2 illustrates. EUDs have increasingly used their deconcentrated management authority to adjust implementation at the country level; a large majority of EUDs made significant changes between their first and latest Calls for Proposals under this programme. Overall, EUDs express strong satisfaction with the portfolio of projects that the programme has supported, in relation to the objectives at country level, as Figure 3 illustrates¹⁵. A significant number of task managers suggested that this portfolio was more relevant and had higher impact prospects than the in-country projects they receive to manage as a result of Global Calls for Proposals launched by headquarters.

Figure 2: EUDs consider implementation to be consistent with programming

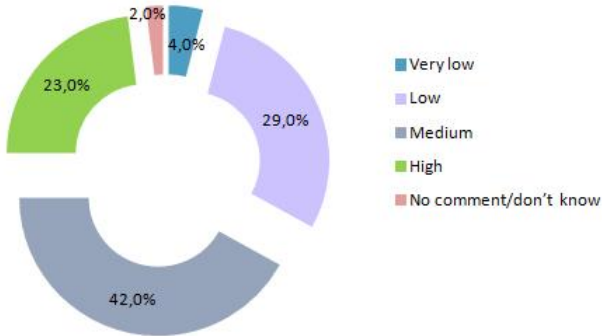
Figure 3: EUDs views on project portfolio;

EUD's Perception of difference between programming and implementation



Source: Survey of EUDs

EUD Satisfaction with the portfolio of projects in relation to the objectives at country level



Source: Survey of EUDs

¹⁴ It is interesting to note that NSAs and LAs from the NMS are not significantly engaged in this component of the programme.

¹⁵ When asked about the design of their next Call for Proposals, 60% of EUDs indicated that their major priority is further refining the specific objectives and/or priority sectors, while 16% said they wanted to improve treatment of cross cutting issues. A similar number said they want to adjust the target group of NSA/LA actors in some way. Online Survey questionnaires (Objective 1 Q9)

Success rates in Calls for Proposals

The overall success rate of applications to the programme clearly varies enormously from country to country. Overall, 11.6% of received Concept Notes (CNs), that pass the eligibility check, are ultimately preselected for contracting.¹⁶

There are significant variations between countries in the ability of applicants to comply with the eligibility criteria and other basic rules of the Calls for Proposals. Overall, 18.9% of CNs were eliminated for administrative reasons. In 25% of Calls for Proposals reviewed, this elimination rate was higher than 30%. Relevant factors for these high failure rates could include a lack of information about the programme, low levels of PCM skills and low levels of literacy in the Commission's working languages. At the same time, in about one fifth of Calls for Proposals the Project Selection Committee eliminated less than 5% of CNs for administrative reasons, which is very encouraging.

There were also wide variations in the quality of the eligible proposals submitted. The template for Guidelines for Applicants envisages that the Call managers will invite or retain Full Applications (FAs) with a total budget of at least 200% of the available budget. This implies that approximately 50% of assessed Full Applications would be preselected for contracting.¹⁷ However, in 23% of Calls examined, less than 40% of the FP evaluated were preselected for contracting. The most likely explanation for this low success rate of assessed FPs is that there is a lack of quality proposals in the countries and calls concerned. The lack of quality proposals may also explain why in some countries EUDs preselect for financing a high proportion of FAs evaluated. This is particularly common in smaller countries and those with restrictive environments for NSA activity.¹⁸

Where success rates are very low, competition drives up the average quality of successful proposals, but with the risk of discouraging applicants. Conversely, where success rates are very high, calls for proposals may not ensure sufficient competition and the average quality of co-financed projects may be lower than desired.

EQ 2: To what extent has the programme incorporated lessons learned?

JC 2.1 EUDs have appropriate consultation mechanisms

EUDs and grantees are largely satisfied with the current level of consultation. EUDs, NSA and LA respondents agree that consultation is strongest regarding priority sectors (of EU country support) and the themes for future Calls for Proposals, the capacity needs of NSAs/LAs, and the weakest regarding feedback on previous Calls for Proposals. EUDs are in general more satisfied with the current consultation arrangements than the grantee communities.¹⁹ Overall, current practice reflects the recommendation for improved consultation contained in the Audit Report 2009²⁰. Due to deconcentrated management, EUDs' consultation with potential beneficiaries is more likely to result in change than where consultation is related, for example, to future global Calls for Proposals. EUD and grant beneficiaries' perceptions of current consultations are presented in the following chart.

¹⁶ This represents 9.2% of CNs received.

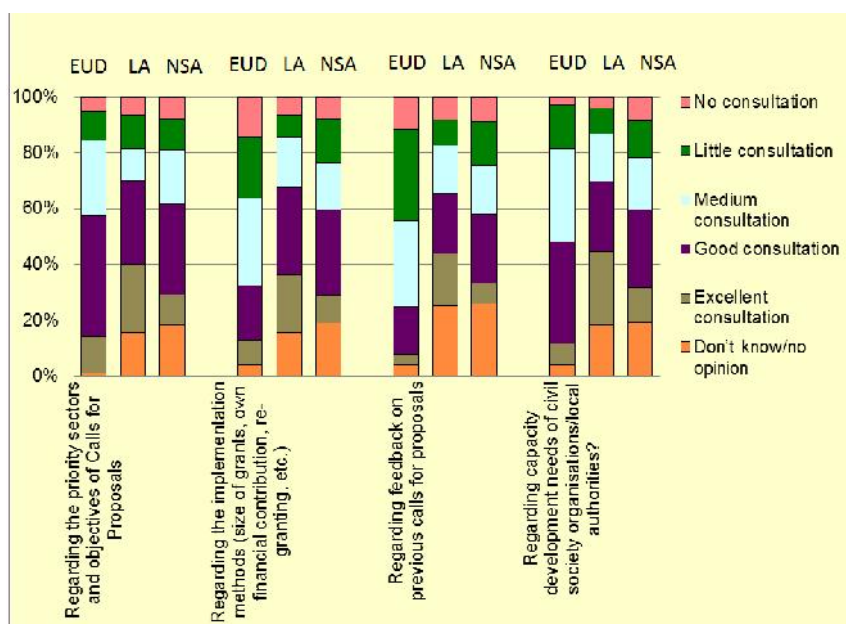
¹⁷ Overall, 41.8% of assessed FP were preselected for contracting.

¹⁸ In about 10% of Calls, 100% of the FP assessed were preselected for contracting; in each case the number of FP in question was between one and ten. In a large number of Calls, more than 70% of FP assessed were preselected for contracting. Again, these were smaller Calls, preselecting between three and eleven FP for contracting.

¹⁹ For example, regarding feedback on previous Calls for Proposals, less than 20% of current grantees but almost 30% of EUDs consider current dialogue as good or very good. Source: Surveys 1.Beneficiaries.Q9, 1.EUD.Q8

²⁰ Special Report No 4/2009 — The Commission's management of non-state actors' involvement in EC Development.

Figure 4: Perceptions of consultations



Source: Online surveys 1.EUD.Q8, 1.NSA.Q9, 1.LA.Q9

JC 2.2 EUDs have modified objectives and implementation modalities to better respond to local needs and priorities, without compromising programme objectives or creating excessive administrative burdens

Objective 1a of the programme is characterised by a considerable variation in Call priorities, definitions of sectors, treatment of cross-cutting issues, definitions of target actors and implementation modalities.

Most Calls targeted the entire territory of the partner country concerned.²¹ About 11% of Calls prioritised sub-national territories with a high incidence of poverty. The remaining Calls mostly justified their prioritisation of sub-national territories by reference to national development plans and/or donor coordination.

There is considerable variety in the size of minimum and maximum EU contributions allowed in Calls for Proposals under Objective 1, as the following table shows.

Table 9: Minimum and maximum grant size in Calls for Proposals under Objective 1

Minimum & maximum grant size		
Grant size	Minimum	Maximum
Below €50,000	15%	2%
€50- €100,000	48%	10%
€100- €250,000	22%	24%
€250- €500,000	15%	34%
above €500,000	0%	30%

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTF team in March and April 2013

²¹ 84% of Lots in 361 Calls for Proposals for which data could be obtained.

Some of the countries with low minimum and maximum grant thresholds have small populations and small country allocations under this programme. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of EUDs setting low minimum thresholds are in countries, which have large populations and a community of NSAs capable of implementing larger grants.

The evaluators presume that setting a low minimum (and even more so, a low maximum) grant size may be an attempt to engage directly with smaller NSAs and LAs that have less experience of collaboration with donor agencies. The smaller the minimum and maximum grant sizes, the greater the proportion of contracts signed with beneficiaries from partner countries. Re-granting was explicitly permitted in about one third of Calls for Proposals lots.²²

Between 2007 and 2011, in-country Calls for Proposals show a gradually lower minimum grant size. However, this trend seems to have stopped and may be reversing. Almost half of EUDs expect the average grant size resulting from their next call for proposals to stay the same, while about one quarter expect it to increase. Less than 10% of EUDs expect that their average grant size under this portfolio will decrease²³.

Less than 6% of Calls for Proposals lots allowed contributions in kind; in half of these cases in-kind contributions were permitted only in 'exceptional and justified' cases²⁴. Interestingly there is no relation between an EUD's acceptance of in-kind contributions and the provision of a low minimum grant thresholds, even though both measures are normally associated with an attempt to solicit proposals from small NSAs and LAs without a strong experience of donor funding.

The great majority of calls specify that EU NSAs and LAs must act in partnership. Less than 1% of Calls exclude European NSAs and LAs from acting as partners. Some 3% of Calls encourage or strongly encourage consortia that include at least one European NSA or LA. In about 15% of cases, national NSAs are eligible to participate after a shorter period of legal registration than their EU counterparts (typically 2 years and 4+ years respectively). In several countries that are experiencing or recently emerged from authoritarian rule, NSAs that are not legally constituted are encouraged to still participate in one way or another.

The Calls for Proposals analysed for this evaluation vary considerably with regard to the elaboration of the local context and national priorities, the extent to which they reflect the policy focus of the Commission expressed in the Agenda for Change of October 2010 and the complementarity of the NSA-LA programme with the other programmes.²⁵

The programme's approach to multi-country projects has evolved considerably during the implementation of this programme. In 2007-2010, Objective 1b had a relatively broad focus on global, multi-country or regional initiatives, which could be ensured more efficiently through this thematic programme rather than through geographic programmes. This approach was in continuity with the Commission's previous approach to multi-country actions of INGOs, though with a new insistence on competitive Calls for Proposals.

²² In about 10% of these cases, there were additional conditions for re-granting: typically a reduction in size of individual grants to €1,000 or €5,000, and/or a ceiling on re-granting of 20-30% of the total action cost. In three cases re-granting was compulsory, either for grants above a certain threshold, or for applicants from the EU. In three cases, re-granting was 'preferred' or 'encouraged'.

²³ Survey 1.EUD.Q10

²⁴ This reflects the Guidelines for Applicants template of former versions of PRAG. For example, the PRAG applicable to contracts signed between 2010 and March 2011 specifies in section 2.1.4. that "given the difficult evaluation of the contributions in kind if accepted as co-financing, the Contracting Authority should limit to accept the contributions in kind as co-financing to exceptional cases, subject to possible evaluation of such contributions."

²⁵ For example, in the Call for Proposals released in 2012 in Chad, a differentiated methodology has been identified, promoting actions that will create information structures; social projects; capacity building; and service types of exchanges between the LAs and NSAs, whereas in the other Calls from the same period examined, such a methodological differentiation has not been made.

JC 2.3 The modified strategic approach for Objective 1b has been implemented and shows initial indicators of success

The Multiannual Strategy for 2011-2013 reduced the programme's orientation towards multi-country and multi-region projects to deliver social services. Instead, there is an increased focus on initiatives to support and strengthen existing NSA and LA networks at regional, interregional or international levels. For example, in the 2013 AAP the Commission announced a direct grant to the ITUC for the global Trade Union Development Cooperation Network. The new focus of Objective 1b reflects a convergence with Objective 3 of the programme, which focuses on NSA and LA networks at the European level.²⁶ There is also an increased focus on initiatives that tackle problems common to more than one region (desertification, migration, water management, participatory development, etc.) and a commitment to support South-South cooperation. This was reiterated in the AAPs for 2011 and 2012 and in the Guidelines for the most recent global 1b Call for Proposals.²⁷

A single Call for Proposals for multi-country actions has been held since the adoption of the new strategy, with a deadline in February 2012.²⁸ The Call was divided into several lots for networks in the various regions/continents, and a separate lot for global networks. This should lead to an equitable distribution of resources based on competitive selection, as well as the gradual identification of specific challenges and key stakeholders at the regional/continental level. The design of the most recent Call should encourage a further increase in the share of Objective 1b projects and funds contracted to applicants from partner countries. Since only one Call has been held since the adoption of the new strategy, at this point it is too early to say whether the modified strategic approach shows initial indications of success.

JC 2.4 Objective 1 reflects the recommendations of the Structured Dialogue

The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy Paper

The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy Paper drew its legitimacy from the 2005 European Consensus on Development and contains only small changes compared to the previous Strategy Paper 2007-2010. The Strategy Paper mentions the Structured Dialogue²⁹ process along with the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy (adopted in 2007) and the European Charter on Development Cooperation in support of local governance (2008). Since the Strategy Paper was prepared before the end of the Structured Dialogue process, it obviously could not incorporate significant changes or explicit methods drawn from the recommendation of the Structured Dialogue. Nevertheless it states: "new programme implementation methods that comply with the Financial Regulation need to be explored when adopting the annual work plans".³⁰ It also highlights key priorities for changes: the need to differentiate the approaches adopted for LAs and NSAs in hand with a renewed encouragement for stakeholders to work in partnership, and the need for more decentralisation and local planning.

²⁶ In the successor programme these two strands are effectively merged in the new Component 2.

²⁷ Call 131-140

²⁸ Call for proposals EuropeAid/131140/C/ACT/Multi, "Strengthening the Capacities of Non-State Actors - Actions in partner countries (Multi-country)", with an allocation of €41,809,000. In the AAP for 2013 the Commission announced that it would not organise a second Call for Proposals for Objective 1b, but would co-finance projects from the reserve list of Call 131140.

²⁹ The Structured Dialogue process, a consultation initiative launched by the European Commission in March 2010 aimed to increase the effectiveness of all stakeholders involved in EU development cooperation by finding a common understanding on the main issues linked to NSA and LA involvement. Through the Conclusions issued in May 2011, the Structured Dialogue process made a series of general recommendations for the civil society sector and specific recommendations to the institutions involved in the management of NSA-LA programme. The Agenda for Change concerns the whole external aid, its scope is much larger than the NSA-LA programme. The Conclusions of the SD were integrated in the Communication on CSO.

³⁰ The diversification of funding modalities for civil society alongside the competitive project funding mechanism is not just a recommendation of the Structured Dialogue; it also reflects for example the 2009 Report of the Court of Auditors. The Multiannual Strategy Paper 2011-2013 does not specify any diversification of funding methods, but the AAP 2012 includes four direct grant awards and one joint management agreement (with UN Women) for in-country actions. This represents a gradual move towards diversification of funding methods.

The Strategy Paper reiterates the need for Objective 1a (in-country interventions) to take into account the local environment in which the various actors exercise their right of initiative. Concretely, suggest conducting civil society mappings to guide the preparation of the concept notes, which should also address the complementarity of the NSA-LA programme with other EU instruments and thematic programmes (such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Instrument for Stability (IfS)).

Annual Action Programmes

In the Annual Action Programmes for 2011 and 2012, the thematic focus of Objective 1 contains a stronger conditional link to the principles of human rights, good governance and gender equality, with binding criteria replacing the softer formulations of earlier AAPs. Similarly, all actions to be supported under the in-country and multi-country interventions should include an element of capacity building of local actors, so as to guarantee principles of empowerment, ownership, participation, non-discrimination of vulnerable groups and accountability.

The 2011 AAP differentiated somewhat between specific objectives of the NSA and LA components of Objective 1. Both components were intended to (i) benefit populations out of reach of mainstream services and resources and excluded from policy making processes; and (ii) strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations/LAs in partner countries, with a view to facilitating their participation in defining and implementing poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies. In addition, the NSA component was intended to facilitate interaction between State and non-State actors in different contexts, while the LA component was intended to support an increased role for LAs in development processes at local level, in matters related to their institutional mandate.

In summary, the programme planning for the years 2011 and 2012 has formally acknowledged the Structured Dialogue process and reflects the general priorities and specific Commission engagements that emerged from the Structured Dialogue. In particular, the strategy for engaging NSAs and LAs has been more clearly differentiated. The 2011 AAP split Objectives 1 and 2 into separate Action Fiches, as well as splitting NSAs and LAs into separate Action Fiches with distinct, specific objectives.

The extent to which this will have any real impact depends on strategic decisions and methodological choices at EUD level. Evaluators were not able to fully verify this aspect of programme management due to the relatively short time period concerned, and the limited amount of data available.

However, Guidelines for Applicants for three sampled Calls for Proposals from 2011 and 2012 show that a more differentiated treatment of NSAs and LAs has been put in practice by the EUDs, with a shift towards rights based approaches and towards a more pronounced support to decentralisation and capacity building.³¹

There was a more frequent and explicit reference to the capacity of Non-State Actors to develop and implement inclusive local development strategies and programs in Calls for Proposals launched in 2012 compared to earlier Calls under this programme.

³¹ The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy Paper was prepared before the conclusion of the Structured Dialogue process; nevertheless it did highlight "the need for more decentralisation and local planning". As for the management of actions for Objective 1A (in-country interventions), the Strategy reiterates the need for decentralisation and the need to take into account the local environment in which the various actors exercise their right of initiative. The three sampled Guidelines for Applicants from 2011-2012 all incorporate this same formulation, which was not systematically present in earlier Calls for Proposals.

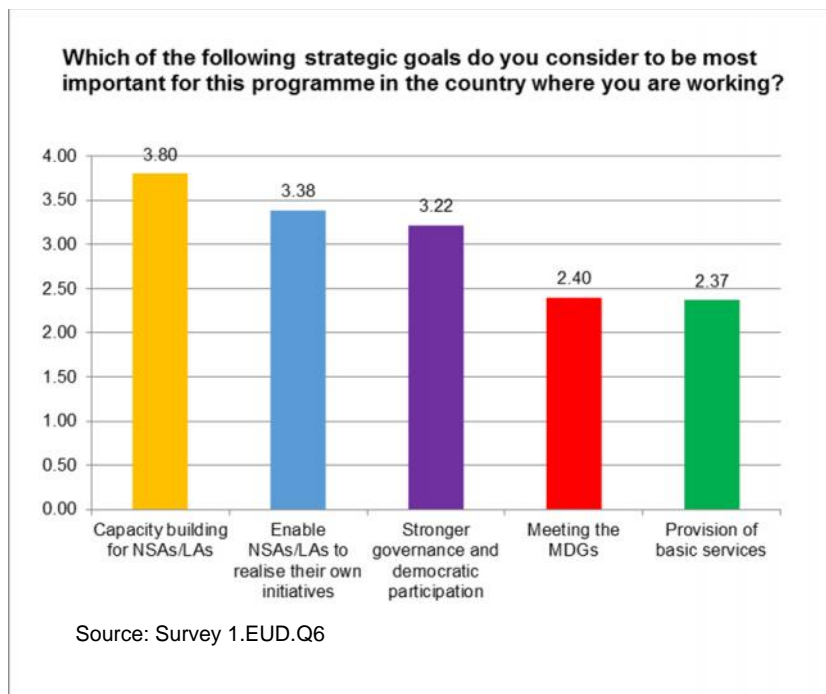
EQ3: To what extent does the implementation of the programme correspond to the evolving policy priorities?

JC 3.1 The concentration of EU development cooperation in support of human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance is reflected in the portfolio of projects supported under Objective 1a of the programme.

The portfolio is primarily focused on inclusive and sustainable growth for human development. However, governance is reasonably well represented.

The October 2011 EU Communication on "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change"³² calls for a concentration of EU development cooperation in support of human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance, as well as on inclusive and sustainable growth for human development. The current priorities of EUD officials managing Objective 1a are reflected in the following chart.

Figure 5: Priorities of the programme as defined by EUD respondents to the survey



EUDs identify the main priorities of the programme as capacity building of local NSAs and LAs, enabling NSAs/LAs to realise their own initiatives. Governance and democratic participation appears as the third highest priority, followed by meeting the MDGs and the provision of basic services. The Commission's recently reinforced orientation towards governance and rights is expressed in the Agenda for Change Communication. It is too early to measure the extent to which this is reflected in the programme, as few Calls for Proposals have been launched since

and none of these has yet produced a portfolio of contracted projects.

However, good governance was present as a cross-cutting issue in 67% of projects in the ACP region that were monitored through the ROM system in 2012.³³ ROM reports considered that the design of 71% of Objective 1 projects in ACP countries monitored in 2012 could lead to an active contribution to the promotion of human rights.

About half of the grantee respondents in our survey consider their project is linked to governance and rights issues in one way or another. Grantees' identification of their projects' main focuses is presented in the following chart:

³² COM (2011) 637: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0637:FIN:EN:PDF>, Council Conclusions 9316/12: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st09/st09369.en12.pdf>

³³ Source: data provided by the ROM team responsible for the ACP, December 2012. Good governance (BCS 7.3) scores YES 67%, NO 11%, N/A 22%. Total number of projects for which data was available: 104.

Table 10: Project focus as defined by grant beneficiaries

What are your project focuses (select up to three)?		
Answer Options	NSA Response in %	LA Response in %
Good governance and democratic participation	13.5%	16.4%
Provision of basic services	10.7%	10.6%
Provision of infrastructure (building work, equipment)	4.7%	11.5%
Capacity development for civil society/local authorities	26.8%	29.8%
Capacity development for citizens	17.7%	15.1%
Networking	9.8%	6.4%
Lobbying and policy development	10.0%	6.7%
Other	6.8%	3.5%
Total answers	459	113

Source: Survey 1.NSA.Q8, 1.LA. Q8.

OECD-DAC codes

The OECD-DAC codes that the Commission allocates to co-financed projects suggests that between 2007 and 2012, governance-related projects represent only a significant minority of co-financed initiatives under this programme. The proportion of governance-related projects has remained constant, just under 40%. The thematic focus of co-financed projects is as follows.

Table 11: OECD - DAC codes of Objective 1 projects 2007-2012

Region	GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY	EDUCATION	MULTISECTOR/CROSS-CUTTING	HEALTH	OTHER SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	WATER AND SANITATION	AGRICULTURE	POPULATION POLICIES/ PROGRAMMES AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	INDUSTRY	OTHER*	NOT INDICATED IN CRIS	%
ACP	36.8%	12.6%	5.9%	9.0%	5.0%	4.4%	3.9%	2.6%	0.5%	4.4%	14.8%	44%
ASIA	40.7%	9.2%	6.6%	10.0%	6.8%	5.2%	2.6%	5.0%	0.0%	3.9%	10.0%	20%
ENPI	30.6%	5.2%	10.9%	3.9%	8.7%	2.2%	3.5%	1.3%	1.3%	3.1%	29.3%	12%
Latin America	41.9%	4.3%	12.9%	2.9%	2.2%	3.1%	3.6%	2.2%	1.2%	3.1%	22.7%	23%
Other*	35.3%	17.6%	11.8%	0.0%	5.9%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	1%
TOTAL	38.0%	9.2%	8.3%	7.1%	5.2%	4.0%	3.5%	2.8%	0.6%	3.8%	17.5%	100%

* Other includes multi-region projects and projects for which no country or region could be identified in the statistical data available to the evaluators

Source: Calculated from project listings provided by ROM CMTF team, December 2012 Includes in-country and multi-country, NSA and LA. Based on sample of 1,860 projects for which DAC codes could be identified.

Projects identified as coming within the DAC category of Government and civil society cover a wide range of areas as illustrated by the following table.³⁴

³⁴These statistics must be interpreted with caution. The DAC sector code is missing in the CRIS record of over 20% of projects under Objective 1a, and in about half of the remaining cases the most general DAC codes have been used. Even this allocation seems erroneous in at least 10% of cases surveyed. To take another example, the OECD Gender Equality Policy Marker (G-Marker) seems erroneous in 12% of the projects sampled. In 3% of cases a project was given a G-Marker of zero, despite a project title that suggests that gender equality and women's empowerment is the primary focus of the project, while in 7% of cases a project was given a G-Marker of 1 or 2 despite the absence of any specific reference to gender equality or women's equality in the project proposal.

Table 12: Government and Civil Society projects by year, period 2007-2012, Objective 1

Sector - DAC Code	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total	Percentage
Decentralisation and support to subnational government	0	10	22	38	5	75	12.8%
Democratic participation and civil society	108	83	78	84	24	377	64.3%
Elections	0	0	1	3	1	5	0.9%
Government administration	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.2%
Government and Civil Society	7	4	10	16	7	44	7.5%
Human rights	5	5	8	12	5	35	6.0%
Land mine clearance	4	0	2	0	0	6	1.0%
Legal and judicial development	2	0	2	1	0	5	0.9%
Legislatures and political parties	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.2%
Media and free flow of information	1	2	2	1	1	7	1.2%
Public finance management	2	0	1	1	0	4	0.7%
Public sector policy and administrative management	0	1	2	0	1	4	0.7%
Women's equality organisations and institutions	5	4	5	6	1	21	3.6%
Total	135	110	133	162	45	585	100%

This table includes only 585 projects for which a DAC governance sector code 151 could be detected. These represent 83% of the 707 projects which have a 150 DAC code

Source: Calculated from project listings provided by ROM CMTP team, December 2012.

JC 3.2 Project selection supports the emergence of a civil society 'watchdog' role

There is not yet much evidence that the programme is contributing to the emergence of a civil society 'watchdog' role.

In the Agenda for Change, the Commission has committed itself to support "the emergence of an organised civil society able to act as watchdog and partner in dialogue with national governments".³⁵

It is too soon to measure the extent to which this orientation is reflected in the portfolio of co-financed projects. Nevertheless, some EUDs have organised thematic training and other capacity development activities in this area using the provision for 5% support measures within their Objective 1a allocation. This has been possible and indeed has brought positive results even in countries where there is no strong tradition of state-civil society dialogue. In Laos for example, the EUD supported civil society organisations in a consultation and dialogue process to accompany the 9th Europe Asia Meeting in Vientiane, 5-6th November 2012. This allowed partner country NSAs to engage with each other, their international counterparts and development partners to an unprecedented degree.³⁶ Several other EUDs have also offered support to existing or emerging national civil society platforms; others have carried out mapping studies to better understand the sector.

³⁵ COM (2011) 637: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0637:FIN:EN:PDF>, Council Conclusions 9316/12: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/12/st09/st09369.en12.pdf>

³⁶ Contract 289814

JC 3.3 Project selection contributes to participatory budget approaches

There is not yet much evidence that the programme contributes to participatory budget approaches.

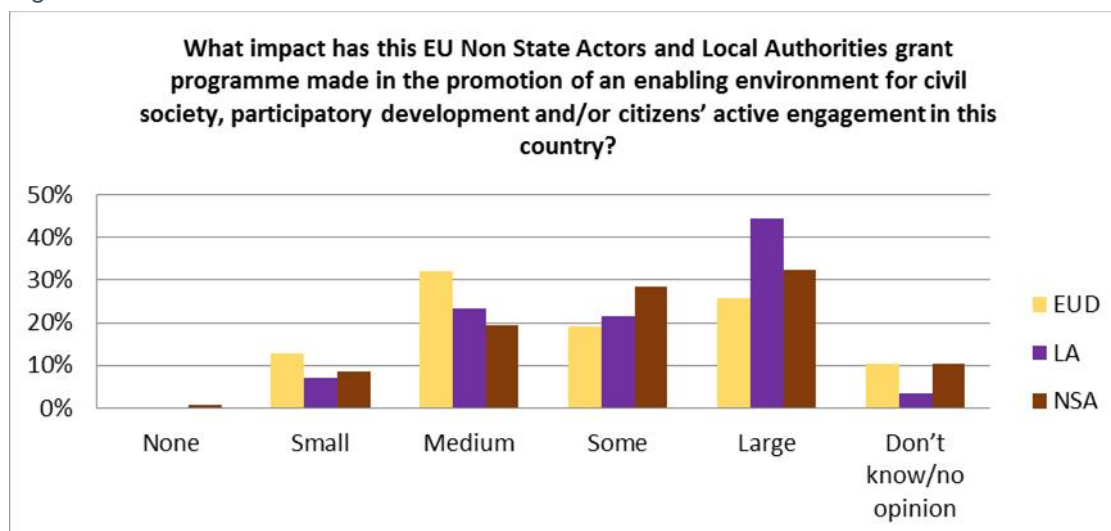
The element of the Agenda for Change which seems least reflected in the programme is the EU commitment to ensuring that NSAs and LAs play a key role in participatory budget approaches, particularly in strengthening domestic accountability.³⁷ The sample of project proposals analysed for this evaluation did not include any NSA or LA projects focused on reinforcing NSAs financial literacy and engagement in budgeting issues, strengthening capacities of national public budget and/or elaborating good practice on state budget monitoring.

EQ4: What is the measurable effect of the programme?

JC 4.2 The programme had a significant impact regarding Objective 1a/1b

This evaluation did not visit any of the countries covered by Objective 1a/1b. However, data from the ROM monitoring missions suggests that the co-financed actions have very good potential impact.³⁸ In any case, the impact of this programme goes beyond the mere aggregation of impacts of co-financed actions. In particular, EUDs and grantees strongly believe that the programme has made a significant contribution to the improvement of the enabling environment for NSA/LA engagement on governance and sustainable development issues since 2007, as the following chart shows. This is strongly in line with the Concluding Paper of the Structured Dialogue issued in May 2011, which recommended that the European Commission, Member States and European Parliament pay increased attention to the enabling environment for civil society, particularly in difficult countries.

Figure 6



Source: Survey of EUDs and beneficiaries

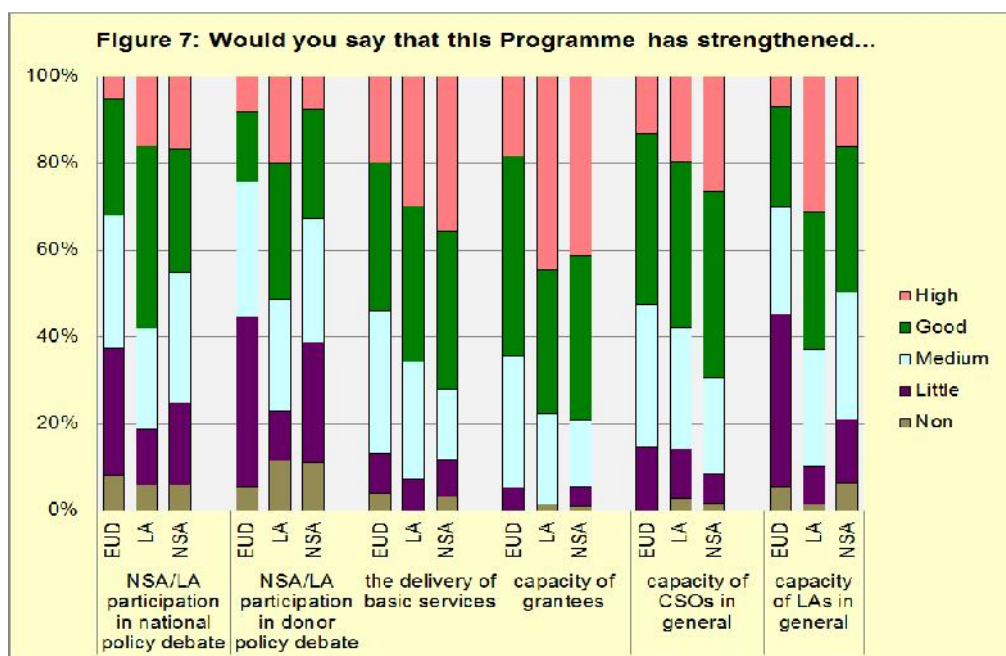
³⁷"The future approach to EU budget support to third countries"COM(2011)638:<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0638:FIN:EN:PDF>

³⁸7.3% of visited organisations scored A and 76.3% scored B. Only 0.7% of organisations visited scored D. Based on 478 monitoring mission reports dated between 1/7/2009 and 5/10/2012. More detailed data for the ACP region is consistent with this; in a specific judgement on impact prospects at objective level, 2.9% of visited organisations scored A and 71.2% scored B, with only 1.9% of organisations scoring D (BCS 4.1 Impact prospects at objective level. Data for 104 monitoring visits by the Lot 2 ROM team during 2012).

In the ACP countries, the European Commission has a comparative advantage amongst bilateral donors in the promotion of the enabling environment for civil society action. This is because the Cotonou Agreement establishes common values and a common commitment to recognising and supporting civil society as a pillar of development.

EUDs and grantees believe that the programme has had a measureable impact in a range of specific areas. The programme has contributed to a deepening of relationships between different stakeholders. In particular, the programme helped NSAs engage with state institutions at the national and sub-national scale, and with elected representatives.³⁹ The programme has also helped LAs to engage more systematically with civil society.

The programme's support for networking and multi-stakeholder dialogues, both directly (through use of the currently 5% reserve for support measures) and indirectly (through funding projects that address these themes) is a further area where the programme has a significant impact that goes beyond the aggregation of individual project results.

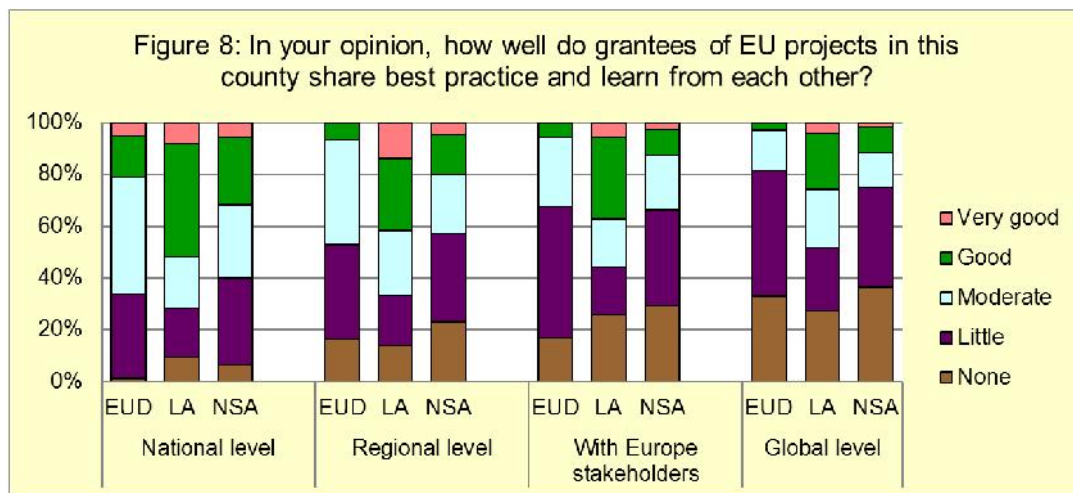


Source: Survey of EUDs and beneficiaries

About three quarters of grantees say they have frequent or very frequent opportunities to discuss quality and best practice issues within the implementation consortium.⁴⁰ The following chart presents grantees' perceptions of the dissemination of best practice at various levels. Only a minority of EUDs and grantees currently believe that there is an effective exchange of best practice at the wider level. Grantees are more optimistic about the exchange of best practice than EUD officials.

³⁹ See surveys 1.NSA.Q20, Q22

⁴⁰ See survey 1.NSA.Q19



Source: Survey of EUDs and beneficiaries

EQ5: Has the programme reached an appropriate number and range of final beneficiaries?

JC 5.1 Objective1: The programme has reached a significant number and range of relevant final beneficiaries

The only measurements of final beneficiaries available to the evaluators are the external evaluation reports commissioned by grant beneficiaries.⁴¹ Of those examined by the evaluators, over 60% of project evaluation reports judge that the corresponding project was successful in achieving the intended impact on the targeted final beneficiaries. 20% of these evaluation reports considered it likely that the project in question had reached a greater number of final beneficiaries than had been identified in the project proposal.⁴² Unfortunately, independent external evaluation and audit reports are not encoded in CRIS. This represents a loss of information for the Programme. Internal monitoring reports are also not centrally archived or systematically shared.

EQ6: Is the programme well-integrated into the broader system of Commission, European and partner country ODA policy?

JC 6.1 The programme has maintained a high level of internal coherence throughout the implementation period

EUDs have fully understood the potential of deconcentrated management, and have made considerable and varied modifications at the strategic and methodological levels in order to meet local needs. To some extent, this creates a tension between local priorities as understood by EUDs and global priorities as they are articulated at Headquarters. Our survey suggests that EUDs consider this programme as particularly suited to promote sustainable development and to increase the capacity of

⁴¹ ROM reports do not systematically quantify and qualify final beneficiaries; that is not the role of ROM. Most ROM missions are in any case carried out in the first year of project implementation, before final beneficiaries could be reliably quantified and qualified in any case. Evaluators were unable to identify any other documents that quantified and qualified final beneficiaries of supported actions.

⁴²A qualitative assessment of final beneficiaries is provided by 73% of external evaluation reports, and a qualitative assessment by 86%.

local NSAs and LAs to deliver development services. EUD staff were relatively less likely to cite the programme's global priorities of good governance and public accountability than the headquarters-based officials interviewed. Indeed, good governance and public accountability are sometimes absent from the specific objectives in country Calls for Proposals, and are consequently weakly represented in the NSA and LA project portfolios of many EUDs. On the other hand, EUDs highly appreciate this programme precisely because it enables them to meet local needs and fill local programming gaps that they are best placed to identify.

Several European NSA and LA networks and platforms criticise the subsidiarity of thematic programmes to bilateral assistance. CONCORD for example calls on DEVCO to "ensure access to thematic programmes for CSOs in all partner countries covered by the DCI, including those without bilateral support."⁴³ Some European LAs and ALAs also argue that in some of the countries where this programme is implemented, the structure of the public administration is such that LAs lack the necessary autonomy to engage in direct cooperation; there would be greater opportunities for decentralised cooperation in several of the other countries covered by the DCI but in countries where this programme is not implemented.⁴⁴

The role of European NSAs and LAs

EUDs have taken a range of different approaches to the eligibility criteria and strategic role of European NSAs and LAs. Most EUDs have encouraged these actors to focus on support to local partners rather than on direct management and implementation. At the same time, in countries with particularly weak civil societies and local government structures, EUDs tend to pragmatically support projects led by European grant beneficiaries while retaining the medium-term goal of capacity development of partner country NSAs and LAs.⁴⁵ European LAs and ALAs from MS without strong bilateral support for decentralised cooperation, and LA and NSA from the NMS face particular challenges, in that they are in direct competition with counterparts in the OMS who have received years, sometimes decades, of support from donors who attached a high importance to European NSAs. Frustration is understandable, but the AAPs clearly reflect the priority to increase direct cooperation with grant beneficiaries from the partner countries listed under Objective 1.

EQ7: How sustainable are the results of the programme?

JC 7.1 The outcomes of actions co-financed by the programme are sustainable

ROM monitoring reports suggest that overall sustainability of co-financed actions is quite good.⁴⁶ However, for NSA projects, ROM results suggest that the financial sustainability of project outcomes is often a greater challenge than other elements of sustainability of project outcomes such as engagement of target groups and local ownership of results.⁴⁷

⁴³ CONCORD's comments on the draft successor programme, Brussels, 9 November 2012.

⁴⁴ In country allocations are granted to Delegations that request them on the basis of a concept note (country strategy) reflecting the needs and the country context.

⁴⁵ In other words, in such countries, Guidelines for Applicants provide wider possibilities for participation of European applicants, and such applicants tend to score relatively highly in competitive selection procedures.

⁴⁶ With 2.4% of projects scoring A and 66.9% scoring B. Almost one third of projects presented weaknesses in potential sustainability, with 29.2% scoring C and 1.5% scoring D Based on 478 monitoring mission reports dated between 1/7/2009 and 5/10/2012.

⁴⁷ ROM monitoring reports for the ACP countries in 2012 suggest that, on the specific criteria of financial stability, 4.8% of organisations score A, and 50.0% score B, with 3.9% scoring D Source: data provided by the ROM team responsible for the ACP, December 2012. Financial Stability (BCS 5.1) scores. Total number of projects for which data was available: 104.

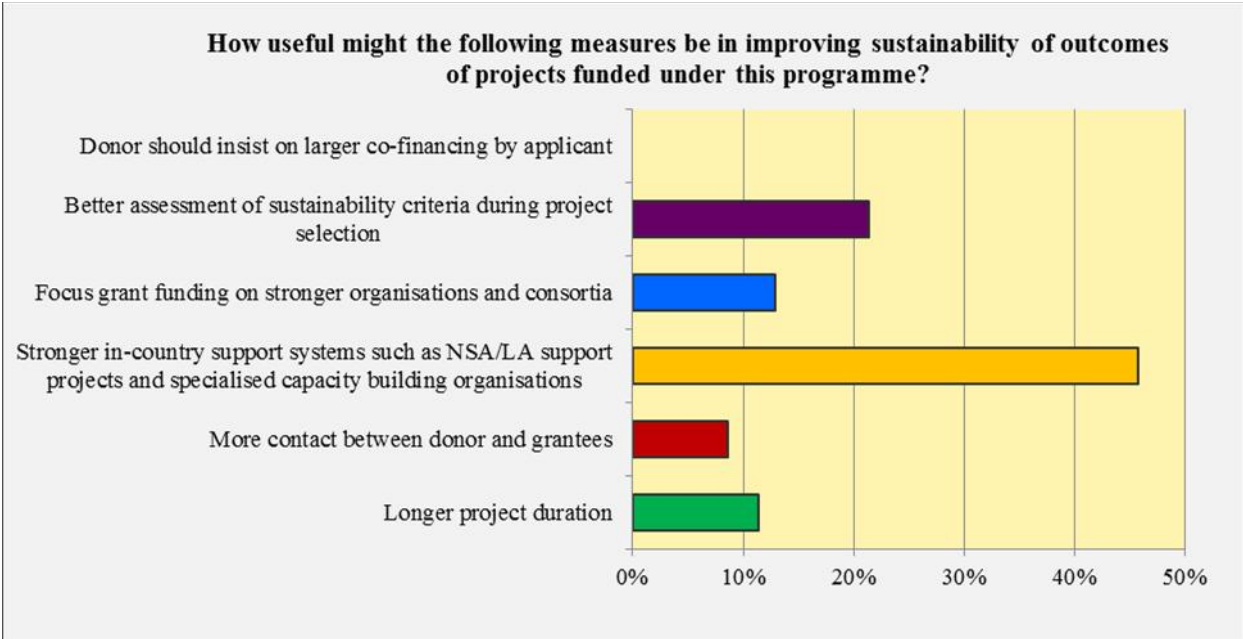
The programme has made a clear contribution to the institutional sustainability of the outcomes of co-financed actions. Grantee respondents generally believe that their projects have improved their engagement with other NSAs and LAs and to varying degrees with other stakeholders. Grantees are also confident that the relationships within their implementation consortia will last after the end of the current project.⁴⁸

The programme has also made a contribution to the financial stability of the grant beneficiaries. This was not an objective of the programme, but could be considered an unintended benefit. The survey conducted for this evaluation indicates that half of EUDs and grantees (both NSAs and LAs) believe that the programme has increased grantees' ability to secure further donor funds, although considerably fewer believe the programme has increased grantees ability to raise funds from national governments and the general public.

About half of EUD Task Managers consider the current project implementation period allowed in their Calls for Proposals (including the possibility for extensions) as adequate to reach the planned objectives, though almost the same number believe that an increase of up to 50% in the project implementation period would be desirable.⁴⁹ EUD Task Managers believe that capacity strengthening of beneficiaries and a better assessment of sustainability at the project selection stage are equally important in increasing the sustainability of co-financed actions.

The following chart presents grant beneficiary respondents' recommendations for measures that could further strengthen the sustainability of outcomes of co-financed actions.⁵⁰

Figure 9: Grant beneficiaries proposals for measures to increase sustainability of outcomes of co-financed actions response to on-line survey)



Source: Survey Objective 1 beneficiaries, question 17

⁴⁸1.NSA.Q21

⁴⁹1.EUD Q15

⁵⁰1.NSA.Q17

EQ8: In addition to any progress on meeting its Objectives, has the programme made any other significant contributions to Commission development programming (at both the strategic and implementation levels)?

JC 8.1 This programme has made an appropriate contribution to the Commission's encouragement of decentralised cooperation

The programme has made a flexible and responsive contribution to the Commission's encouragement of decentralised cooperation.

Decentralised cooperation (in the sense of development cooperation between Local Authorities from Europe and Local Authorities from partner countries) is of growing interest to the Commission, and although the NSA&LA programme is a largely responsive programme that prioritises the right of initiative of LA and ALA, the strengthening of decentralised cooperation was not included in its objectives or in the two multi-annual strategies.

A recent study has shown that Commission support to decentralised cooperation is rather varied, with a greater prevalence of bilateral support to LAs in the ACP countries, but a greater support of LAs through regional programmes funded under geographical instruments (notably URB-AL and CIUDAD in Latin America and ARIAL in the ACP region.⁵¹ Almost one third of the Commission's bilateral programmes prioritise capacity development for LAs, although this does not imply that dedicated funding is directly channelled to LAs in those countries. Furthermore, LAs are not eligible to apply for action grants in the framework of some other programmes, including most Calls for Proposals under EIDHR. Overall, decentralised cooperation represents only 0.3% of the Commission's development portfolio, whereas some MS have much larger programmes. The majority of the decentralised cooperation projects are implemented by European LAs, particularly from France, Italy and Spain. However, LAs and particularly ALAs from northern Europe are also strongly engaged.

The LA component of the NSA&LA programme is currently implemented in around 40 countries (small variations yearly). The themes of decentralisation and support to LAs are also present in several other countries where the NSA component is implemented (for instance by requiring NSAs submitting proposals to work together with LAs and/or to promote their capacity or accountability). There is considerable diversity in the ways EUDs have defined eligibility criteria, priorities, minimum and maximum grant size. Some EUDs have also deployed specific capacity-building measures under this programme. The participation of LAs in the programme has increased. The NSA&LA programme allows the Commission to support smaller projects than in bilateral programming, and with a greater component of capacity building of civil society. This can be highly complementary to geographical programmes which have prioritised decentralised cooperation.

JC 8.4 The Programme allows the Commission to engage pragmatically in 'difficult' situations.

At least 37% of projects in the Least-Developed Countries have a governance focus.⁵² This is only slightly lower than the proportion of governance projects for Objective 1a as a whole. At least 32% of projects in countries defined as difficult in the Multiannual Strategies of the programme have a

⁵¹ Etude sur la capitalisation des expériences européennes de coopération décentralisée (2012)

⁵² The highest proportion of governance-related projects is in Benin, Angola, Timor-Leste, Congo (DRC) and Sudan, with rates of 68-100%. The lowest percentage is in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, Vanuatu and Mozambique, with rates of 0-10%. Analysis in this section is based on 1,573 projects for 2007-2012 for which Commission officials have indicated a DAC sector code.

governance focus.⁵³ This includes countries experiencing armed conflict, political revolutions and/or with significant restrictions on NSA activities. In several of these countries, the operation of the programme is in itself an achievement, and a demonstration of the Commission's engagement in favour of the right of initiative, the autonomous role of civil society, and the importance of decentralisation and local democracy.

Guidelines for Applicants focus on governance issues that are appropriate to local conditions, in most countries, and the selected topics are clearly related to the gradual improvement in the enabling environment for civil society engagement in governance and sustainable development.

JC 8.6 Cross-cutting issues are appropriately integrated into the programme

The evaluators conclude that cross cutting issues are *not* appropriately integrated.

Evaluators did not find evidence of a clear strategy for mainstreaming cross-cutting issues in this programme at Headquarters or in EUDs. Over 95% of Call lots list all cross-cutting issues or include a general statement about cross-cutting issues of particular relevance to poverty reduction. Less than 5% of Calls for Proposals prioritise any specific cross-cutting issues. In these cases, gender is the issue most commonly prioritised, sometimes the only one. There are also three or four examples of Calls lots that prioritise each of the following cross-cutting issues: rights of children and old people, environment, HIV/AIDS and/or indigenous people. These cross-cutting issues are typically prioritised in combination. Democracy is the least likely to be mentioned rather than any of the other cross-cutting issues. Commission assessments are consistent in suggesting that about half of the co-financed projects take gender issues into account to some extent. For example, practical and strategic gender interests are assessed as adequately considered in 54% of those projects in the ACP region that were monitored through the ROM system.⁵⁴ Similarly, EUDs estimate that the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment, or a reduction in discrimination and inequalities based on sex is the principal objective of 7% of projects and a significant objective of a further 42%.⁵⁵ These proportions are constant from year to year. This suggests that the programme is making a significant contribution to gender mainstreaming. Nevertheless, this contribution is clearly not adequate in relation to the targets outlined in the EU Gender Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 (GAP). One of the targets of that plan is that by 2013 at least 75% of all new proposals have these themes as their principal or significant objective.⁵⁶

⁵³ All the projects in DPR Korea have a governance focus, as well as 95% of projects in Sri Lanka. In Colombia, 22% of projects have a governance focus, as do 20% of projects in China and 13% of projects in Cuba. Only 4% of projects in the occupied Palestinian territories and none of the projects in Papua New Guinea have a governance focus.

⁵⁴ Source: data provided by the ROM team responsible for the ACP, December 2012. Gender (BCS 7.1) scores YES 54%, NO 36%, N/A 10%. This data refers to project design, not implementation or results. Total number of projects for which data was available: 104.

⁵⁵ Source: Gender Equality Policy Marker ('G-Marker'), usually entered in CRIS by the Task Manager, for a representative sample of 180 projects. However, see the Conclusions section regarding concerns as to the reliability of this data.

⁵⁶ Action 4.4 of the G.A.P. is "Assess gender mainstreaming in EC/EU development cooperation supported interventions". The indicator for this action is "Indicator 4.4: By 2013 at least 75% of all new proposals score G-2 (gender as a principle objective), or G-1 (gender as a significant objective)."

EQ9: What is the quality of management of the programme?

JC 9.1 The programme has adequate monitoring procedures in place

Monitoring procedures are comparable with other Commission programmes

Data was obtained for 481 Objective 1 projects monitored by the ROM teams.⁵⁷ The selection of projects is based on representative criteria, with EUDs also able to prioritise specific projects that are of interest or concern to them. Less than 1% of projects were rated as very good (A) in 2 or more of the main evaluation criteria.⁵⁸ The greater majority of monitored projects were rated as good, meaning that improvements are required, but that the applicants should be able to achieve these. Around one quarter of projects were rated as problematic (C) in at least one area. However, only 7.4% of projects were considered as weak overall (no A or B scores).

Table 13: Aggregated ROM results, period 2009-2012, objective 1

ROM scores of Objective 1 projects				
ROM Component	A	B	C	D
1. Quality of design	7.1%	75.3%	17.5%	0.2%
2. Efficiency	5.6%	58.0%	33.5%	2.9%
3. Effectiveness	4.6%	59.9%	33.3%	2.3%
4. Impact Prospects	6.9%	74.4%	18.1%	0.6%
5. Potential sustainability	2.3%	66.9%	29.3%	1.5%

Source: Evaluation Team, February 2013

Over 90% of EUD Task Managers insist that they transmit all or the majority of ROM monitoring findings to the grantees.⁵⁹ This is confirmed by grant beneficiaries who responded to the survey: 20% of grantees said they had received 'moderate' feedback on ROM visits and 70% said they had received 'significant' or 'comprehensive' feedback.⁶⁰ The Mid-term Review of this programme recommended that Commission Task Managers consistently share the major part of ROM results.⁶¹ The survey for this evaluation suggests that this is already the case. During the implementation of this programme, the Commission amended the feedback procedures in the ROM methodology so as to require Task Managers to indicate whether the findings of ROM reports are communicated to the grant beneficiaries. This is likely to encourage an even greater and more consistent sharing of ROM findings in the future.

The Special Report from the Court of Auditors (2009) pointed to a "lack of on-site support from the EUDs"⁶² and that "ROM missions don't compensate for an absence of monitoring at operational level"⁶³. Programme managers at HQ believe that country-level monitoring and evaluation reports are rather widespread. However, evaluators have only seen one country-level monitoring and evaluation report produced for an EUD outside the ROM system.

⁵⁷ Between July 2010 and October 2012

⁵⁸ 26 projects score A in 2 or 3 of the components and 4 projects score A in 4 of the components.

⁵⁹ 1.EUD Q.21

⁶⁰ 1.NSA.Q.25

⁶¹ MTR page 65 chapter 3.7.3

⁶² Audit Report (2009) Recommendation n° 57

⁶³ Audit Report (2009) Recommendation n° 59

Half of the EUDs implementing the programme report that no external evaluation reports have been prepared for projects funded by the programme.⁶⁴ The evaluators were only able to consult 48 external evaluation reports for Objective 1a. The average quality of these can be judged from the fact that the evaluators were unable to identify the project in 16% of cases; project titles were missing in 20% of reports, and in about 20% of reports the grant beneficiaries (lead applicant and partners) were not clearly indicated. On a positive note, just over half of these evaluation reports made some gender-based analysis of the project concerned. No other type of document connected with this programme paid such attention to cross-cutting issues.

The frequency of meetings between grantees and their EUD Task Manager is summarised in the following table.

Table 14: Estimated annual frequency of EUD-grantee meetings

	grantees in the capital city			grantees outside the capital city		
	less than one meeting	one or two meetings	three or more meetings	less than one meeting	one or two meetings	three or more meetings
EUD estimate	1%	25%	73%	22%	60%	18%
NSA estimate	14%	40%	46%	23%	57%	20%
LA estimate	16%	12%	72%	13%	50%	38%

Source: Survey of EUDs and beneficiaries 1.EUD.Q20, 1.NSA.Q24, 1.LA.Q23. Number of valid responses EUD 79, NSA 242, LA 56.

JC 9.2 Calls for Proposals were organised in a timely manner.

Calls for proposals were not consistently timely.

More than 60% of projects analysed for this evaluation started implementing more than 18 months after the Call for Proposals in which they were selected.⁶⁵ The delay between Call for Proposals and start date is presented in the following table.

Table 15: Delay between Calls for proposals and start of implementation

Time from Call for Proposals to implementation start date				
< 12 months	13- 18 months	19- 24 months	>24 months	Total
17.2%	20.9%	55.3%	6.7%	100%

Source: Data for 1428 co-financed actions for which Call for Proposal and start date could be identified in CRIS in March 2013.

With delays of this length, the problem to be addressed, the environment for intervention and the relations between grant beneficiaries, stakeholders and final applicants may have changed considerably by the time implementation begins.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ These external evaluation reports are commissioned and approved by the grantees), and there is no standard format, which makes difficult any comparison of projects. The requirement to carry out an external evaluation in certain circumstances is included in Guidelines of specific calls but it is not part of the general conditions of the grant contracts; their cost is an eligible expense. The only constraints on grant beneficiaries when commissioning these studies are the general contracting rules. However, most evaluations are contracted without a competitive tender, which is permitted when their budget is below a certain threshold, currently 20 000 EUR.

⁶⁵ 1428 co-financed actions for which Call for Proposal and start date could be identified in CRIS in March 2013.

⁶⁶The Commission is moving towards the electronic submission of proposals, which could cut several weeks from the gap between the close of Call and the assessment of Concept Notes and a slightly shorter period between the close of Call and the assessment of Full Applications.

Some delays are clearly beyond the control of the Commission. In some countries, NSAs must obtain approval from state authorities before implementation. In Egypt, for example, this can take up to 12 months. Where authorisation is not given, the EUD must then return to its reserve list and start the contracting process again. In all countries, a number of provisionally selected applicants have difficulty or are unable to demonstrate the accuracy of the information given in their applications, while with others the Commission must negotiate modifications to the project so as to eliminate ineligible and excessive spending.

JC 9.3 Objective 1: The PCM of the Programme includes appropriate measures of success.

Strategy Papers for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 identify mixed “objectives and results” for Objective 1a, and “performance indicators” for Objective 1b. These are not associated with specific indicators of success. The Strategy Papers stressed that “a programme which upholds actors’ ‘right of initiative’ is not one for which expected results can easily be predicted.” The evaluators note that in the preparatory document for the multiannual strategy of the successor CSO-LA thematic programme, objectives and results are more clearly defined, based on the Commission’s experience with this first NSA and LA-oriented thematic programme.

Like many of the Commission’s other grant programmes, Calls for Proposals in this programme are only partly based in the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach, and this limits their internal coherence. For example, although the Logical Framework tool is a compulsory annex to project proposals, in most cases it does not form part of the contract. In such cases, it is not clear how beneficiaries monitor their achievement of objectives and results. Most projects surveyed for this evaluation do not have Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound Objectively Verifiable Indicators (SMART OVIs). This may limit monitoring to quantitative OVIs and project outputs and prevent adequate management of results.

JC 9.4 The Programme supports grantees in developing the appropriate project management skills.

The Programme does not adequately support grantees in developing the appropriate project management skills. Support measures could be used more extensively and systematically, and with a greater focus on improving the quality of management of co-financed actions.

The Audit Report 2009 (Finding n° 62) says: “The Commission is moving towards results-based management with more emphasis on measuring the impact and results and evaluating the added value of its development cooperation. This puts greater pressure on NSAs to develop systems to monitor not only outputs but also outcomes and impacts, and requires that more practical guidance is provided by Commission Services to ensure that logframes and performance indicators are appropriate and remain relevant”.

The programme contains a suitable mechanism for this capacity strengthening, the so-called “**support measures**.” EUDs may spend up to 5% (3% until 2010) of the respective annual operational country allocation for support measures of direct benefit to the organisations/partners targeted by the country programme.⁶⁷ Typical activities are information sessions on Calls for Proposals, support for PADOR registration, local mapping studies, training seminars and workshops related to the programme and/or other activities focusing the strengthening of NSAs and LAs. The allocation for support measures is not intended to cover activities or expenditure aimed at helping EUDs to manage the programme, such as technical assistance for the evaluation of proposals, projects’ audits or follow-up of the programme.

⁶⁷ In the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan, support measures were limited to 3% of the annual operational country allocation, and studies were not an eligible activity. The range of permitted activities was widened in 2011-2013.

Most EUDs did not use the measures.⁶⁸ Others have only made modest use of this mechanism. EUDs that made use of the support measures mostly did so in ways intended to improve the quantitative and qualitative participation in Calls for Proposals, rather than in PCM skills of grant beneficiaries.⁶⁹ The amounts contracted are significantly lower than the 3% or 5% available. However, the number of countries and level of spending is rapidly increasing.⁷⁰

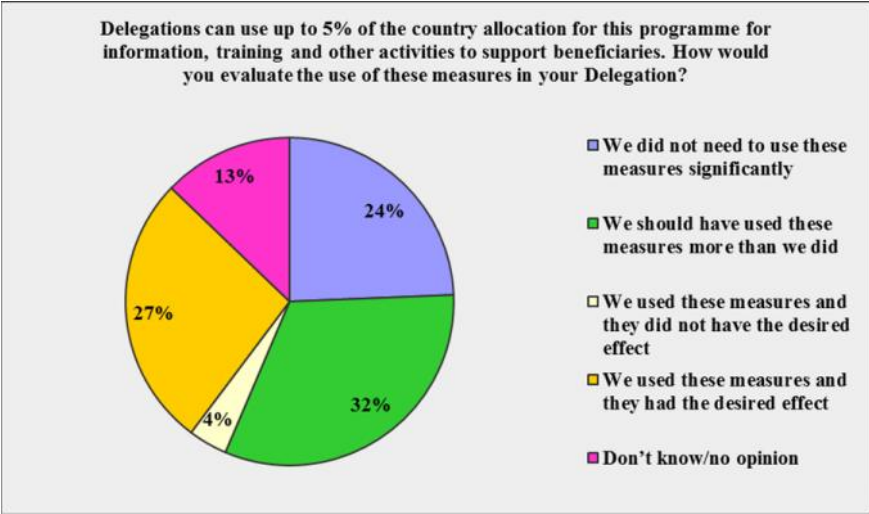
Table 16: Spending on support measures (Objective 1a)

Type of support	2007-2009	2010-2013
Information and publicity	114.401,30	564.050,19
Training for potential applicants	52.163,00	281.837,97
Training and mentoring of grantees	124.463,54	751.445,68
Support to networks	7.500,00	29.930,00
Studies	10.000,00	135.567,00

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2, 19/02/2013. This table does not include programme management costs allocated in error to this budget line.

Almost half of the EUDs consider these measures as useful or potentially useful for them, as the following graphic shows. In many cases, training was provided to potential applicants (i.e., before the submission of Concept Notes).

Figure 10



Source: Survey of EUDs

A few EUDs provided training only to those pre-selected at the Concept Note stage, or only to successful grantees. While it was generally possible to offer equal support to all beneficiaries in these categories, such measures inevitably focus on those organisations that already have the highest capacity to work with donors. Several EUDs organised information and training activities jointly for this programme and other programmes with an NSA or LA focus, most typically the EIDHR.

⁶⁸ The proportion of EUDs using this facility in the various OECD-DAC categories of countries varied as follows: LDC 45.8%, LIC 33.33% LMIC 57.5%, UMIC 25.9%.

⁶⁹ A text analysis of the titles of the activities supported indicates that of 202 activities specifically addressed to NSAs, 4 in Thailand and 2 in Laos covered PCM training and proposal writing, while of 84 actions specifically addressed to LAs none has a title suggesting that PCM training was to be provided.

⁷⁰ In 2007-2009 49 service contracts were signed, compared to 175 in 2010-2013.

Most EUDs made occasional payments of less than 10,000 Euros on this budget line, for expenses such as venue hire, refreshments or small amounts of Technical Assistance (TA). Only in Congo (Brazzaville) has the EUD regularly contracted TA for a comprehensive package of capacity-building tasks using a significant part of its support measure allocation.

A small number of EUDs incorrectly allocated some activities or expenditure related to the programme management to this budget line.

JC 9.5 Objective 1: information management within the Programme is adequate to the need.

Data collection related to the programme is incomplete. Statistical data, notably on the sections of intervention, are often inaccurate. The difficulties do not seem specific to this programme. They relate chiefly to the partial and inconsistent classification of co-financed actions in CRIS. There are difficulties in managing the information flow within the programme, particularly regarding Objective 1. This hinders the monitoring and evaluation of the programme above the project level. For example, in the context of deconcentrated management, EUDs 'need' HQ approval to implement the programme in their country. Formally, EUDs should inform HQ of any change in the priorities at country level (and consequently update their country concept notes). In practice, however, EUDs may fail to fully declare such changes and launch Calls for Proposals on the basis of an unchanged Concept Note. The lack of reliable and timely information is compounded by difficulties common to Commission grant-making. Information not directly related to contract management is not consistently or not at all recorded in CRIS. For example, independent evaluation reports on co-funded actions are almost never uploaded to CRIS. This would seem to create major challenges for internal monitoring.

4. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS: OBJECTIVE 2

Objective 2 - Promoting development education and awareness-raising (DEAR) in the EU and acceding countries about development issues managed by Commission headquarters.

EQ1: To what extent is implementation consistent with programming?

JC 1.2 For Objective 2, the disbursement of funds corresponds to allocated funds

The following table summarises allocation and contracting of funds. Allocated funds have been fully disbursed, and there would seem to be no obstacles to the full contracting of funds before the end of the programme.

Table 17: Allocation and contracting of funds under Objective 2

NSA/LA		Objective 2							TOTAL
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Allocated	NSA	€25 000 000	€27 041 823	€26 000 000	€25 000 000	€27 121 500	€27 785 000	€28 000 000	€185 948 323
	LA	€4 000 000	€4 000 000	€4 500 000	€4 984 000	€5 212 000	€4 558 000	€7 000 000	€34 254 000
Total allocated NSA & LA		€29 000 000	€31 041 823	€30 500 000	€29 984 000	€32 333 500	€32 343 000	€35 000 000	€220 202 323
Contracted	NSA	€24 790 766	€26 995 880	€25 979 350	€24 964 316	€27 781 916	-	-	€130 512 228
	LA	€3 433 849	€3 935 690	€4 498 758	€5 819 017	€5 212 000	-	-	€22 899 314

NSA/LA		Objective 2							TOTAL
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
Contracted projects OBJ 2	NSA	37	40	40	32	38	0	0	187
	LA	8	8	7	10	7	0	0	40
Total contracted projects		45	48	47	42	45	0	0	227
Total contracted NSA & LA		€28 224 615	€30 931 570	€30 478 108	€30 783 332	€32 993 916	-	-	€153 411 542

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTP team. Reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase

JC 1.4 Objective 2: the allocation and disbursement of funds is appropriate to the effective demand

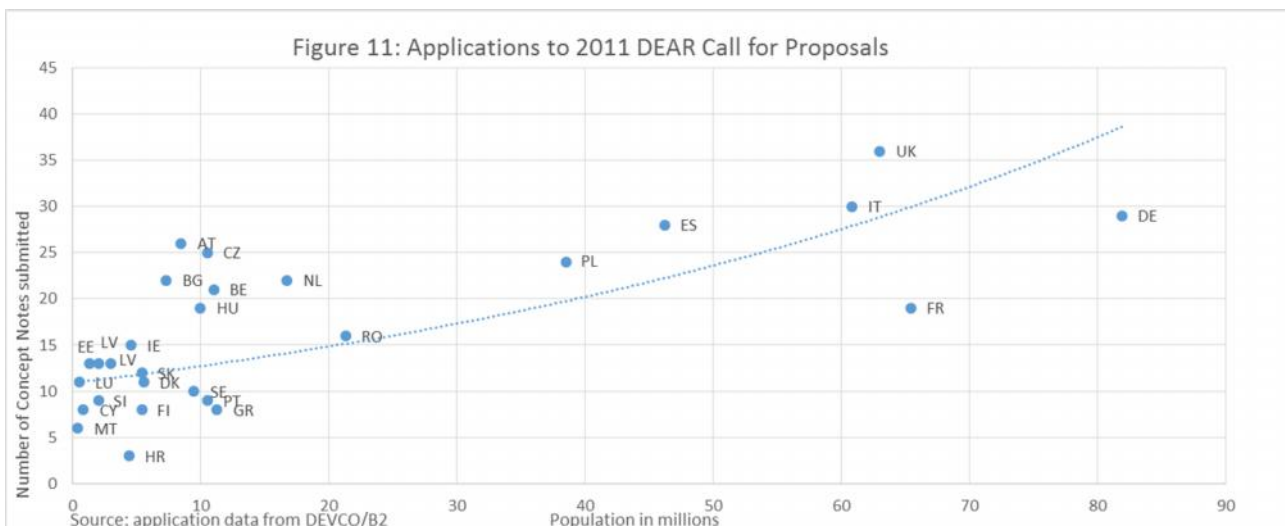
Calls for Proposals for Objective 2 are highly competitive. About 16% of CNs are ultimately preselected for contracting. This suggests that the Commission is able to identify a satisfactory number of proposals of acceptable quality from the overall pool of proposals.

Table 18

	CNs submitted ⁽¹⁾	admin rejected	CN assessed	2nd Admin rejected	FPs assessed	FP preselected for contracting	preselected reserve list	Eligibility rejected
OBJ 2	2653	46	2596	43	890	370	53	7
Percentages		1.7%	97.9%		34.3%	41.6 %		

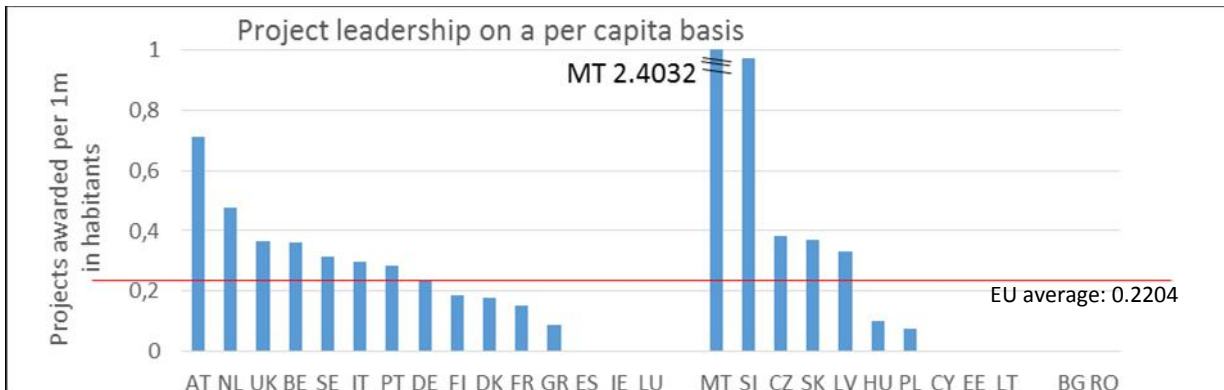
Source: CRIS, reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase

The Programme is highly popular among NSAs in all 27 MS. Interest of LAs in the programme is rather unevenly spread amongst the MS, partly due to differences in competencies of sub-national authorities in the various MS. Almost all projects are implemented in several MS. The following table analyses applications to the 2011 Call for Proposals by lead applicants from each of the 27 MS and Croatia. Those countries above the trend line apply more than average on a population basis. This includes eight of the 12 NMS. Countries with a disproportionately low rate of applications include the Scandinavian MS, which have significant bilateral DEAR programmes, Greece, Portugal, France and Germany.



The share of projects awarded to lead applicants from the NMS has remained constant at about 15%. However, this average is pulled down by a lower-than average engagement of actors from Poland, the largest NMS.

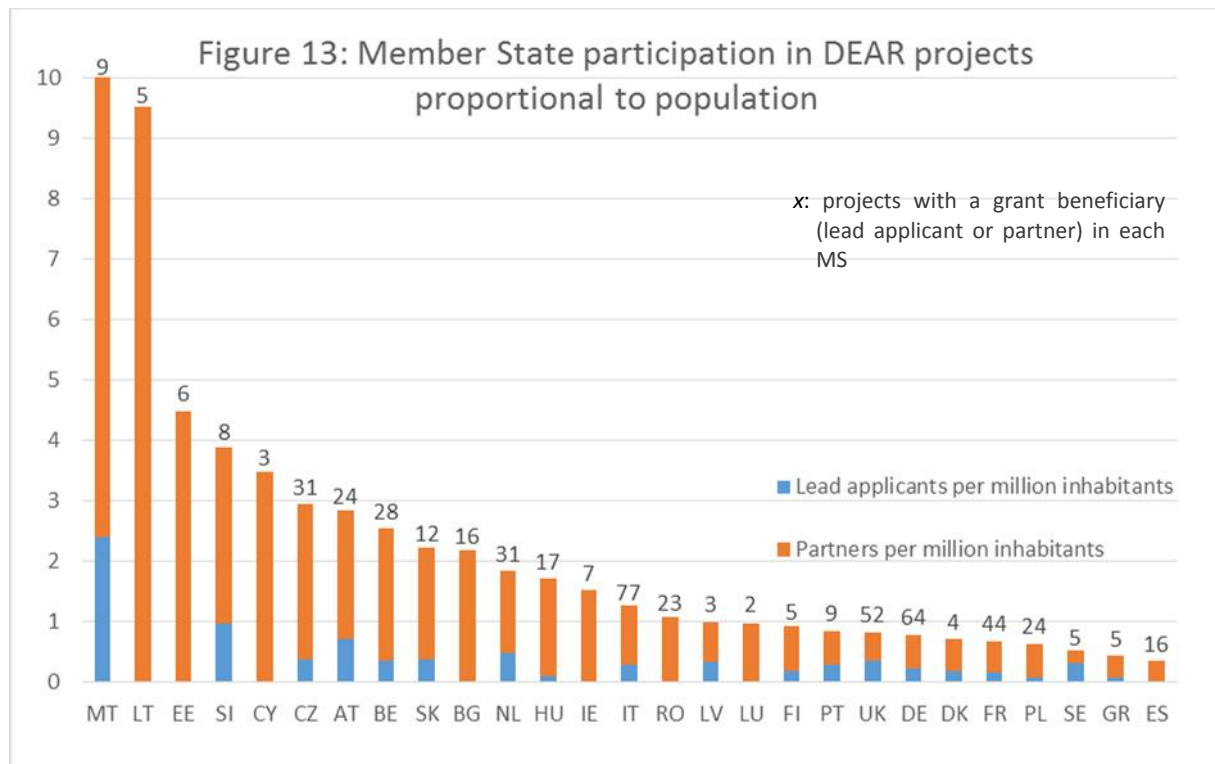
Figure 12 Projects awarded to lead applicants in each MS per 1m inhabitants



Source: CRIS, reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase

Many NSAs in the NMS, as well as specialised networks such as the Trialog IV project, have pointed to a low level of DEAR activities in many NMS. In this context, it is worth noting that, proportional to their population, NSAs from the NMS are among the most active participants in project consortia funded under objective 2. This is illustrated in the following chart.

Figure 13



Source: CRIS including all grants awarded up to mid-March 2013

NMS respondents to our on-line survey tend to underestimate the NMS' participation in the programme. Although basic information about all grants is published annually, many beneficiaries do not have a clear perception of the programme's overall funding trends. Over half of NMS beneficiaries believe that the ring-fencing of funds for their country would be a big help in increasing participation. About 40% also believe that support to networks and platforms would be a big help.⁷¹ Indeed, partner organisations from the NMS are proportionally more likely than their OMS counterparts to rely on information from other NSA/LA and less likely to obtain their information from EU websites.⁷²

EQ2: To what extent has the programme incorporated lessons learned?

JC 2.1 Regarding Objective 2, the Commission has appropriate consultation mechanisms with potential beneficiaries

A consensus for most areas of support to development education and awareness raising exists between the Commission and the NSA communities who participate in the programme. This is the result of sustained communication between individual Task Managers and grantees and between the Commission and the representative structures which the programme also supports.⁷³ It is also the result of the unit's commitment to research and innovation. The extensive Study on the Experience and Actions of the Main European Actors Active in the field of Development Education and Awareness Raising (known as the DEAR Study) was highly participative in its methodology. Commission support under Objective 2 enables European citizens to engage in a wide range of policy debates. Current grantees do not perceive the Commission as restricting or attempting to influence the content of these projects.

In contrast, many NSA express concern about partisan tendencies and an overall reduction of MS financing for awareness raising and campaigning issues. This increases the value added and overall importance of EU financing, as a key contribution to the diffusion of core European values regarding regional and global development.

JC 2.4 Objective 2 of the Programme reflects the recommendations of the Structured Dialogue

The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy Paper drew its legitimacy from the 2005 European Consensus on Development and builds on the Strategy paper 2007-2010. The Strategy Paper mentions the Structured Dialogue process along with the EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy (adopted in 2007) and the European Charter on Development Cooperation in support of local governance (2008). Since the Strategy Paper was prepared before the end of the Structured Dialogue process, it could not incorporate significant changes or explicit methods drawn from the recommendations of the Structured Dialogue. However, Objective 2 is consistent with key priorities such as renewed encouragement of stakeholders to work in partnership, and maintaining the right of initiative for NSAs and LAs.

JC 2.5 Objective 2 of the Programme reflects the 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy and its implementation, and the recommendations of the MTR

The multi annual strategy is in line with the priorities established for 2007-2010 and takes into account the lessons learned from the implementation of the programme. It stipulates that priority will be given to: "the Millennium Development Goals, especially in parts of the world lagging behind, above all sub-Saharan Africa; and areas of public interest or common development-related goals such as migration

⁷¹ Survey 2.Beneficiaries.Q12)

⁷² Survey 2.Beneficiaries.Q9, Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q9

⁷³ For example, CONCORD and its linked DEEEP projects (funded under this programme) maintain an active Development Education and Awareness Raising Working Group, which facilitates dialogue and information exchange between NSAs working in these areas.

and its impact and consequences for the countries of origin and arrival...⁷⁴. The projects assessed and/or visited for this evaluation certainly cover a wide range of areas of public interest. Many projects prioritised sub-Saharan Africa, and interviews confirmed a broad consensus among grant beneficiaries in support of the EU's focus on MDGs and the least developed countries, many of which are in Africa. To give just one example, one project implemented by the NSA DemNet targeted Hungarian decision makers and journalists, with activities including study tours to Kenya. This contributed to the preparation and submission to the Hungarian parliament of the draft Government Decision on Development Strategy. One lesson learned from this action is the need for political decision makers to understand development issues. Interviews for this evaluation in Hungary, Greece and Cyprus revealed wide stakeholder concern that the recent financial crisis in Europe has had a negative impact on public attitudes to development issues.

The MTR recommended that the programme "should emphasise the need for Applicants to demonstrate in the Grant Application Form that Member States projects and programmes have been taken into account"⁷⁵. This has been done – starting with the 2011 Call for Proposals, the programme has insisted that Objective 2 projects in the area of formal education demonstrate support by appropriate national/sub-national authorities. The MTR also mentions that projects should have major dissemination and have multiplier elements. From the field phase of the evaluation it is possible to identify multiplier elements such as training of trainers or peer-to-peer exchanges in the projects. In terms of synergies with Member States it would appear that in OMS, where the DEAR programme has been active for decades synergies are stronger, however in NMS NSAs often lack the capacity to follow-up policy issues in depth⁷⁶ and in NMS there is little or no government funding for DEAR (such as in Hungary).

JC 2.6 The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy reflects the revised Commission approach to DEAR following the DEAR study

The programme has been adjusted gradually, in response to a range of policy initiatives and studies. The DEAR Study was a one year long, wide ranging consultation process with the main beneficiaries of the programme, and was a supporting initiative to the Structured Dialogue Process. The consultation started in early 2010 and ended with a final stakeholder conference in Brussels where a set of recommendations for a new strategy in development education has been worked out.

The recommendations formulated in the DEAR study have been translated into practical measures in the Annual Action Programmes for 2011 and 2012, and the Call for Proposal published in 2011. These documents applied the overall objective of Commission supported DEAR interventions recommended in the study.

As a result of the re-conceptualisation of development education recommended in the DEAR study, the mentioned Annual Action Programmes articulate a clear distinction between two approaches to development education: 1. Global learning and 2. Campaigning/Advocacy. The Call for Proposals of 2011 reflects this distinction, and further distinguishes between global learning projects inside and outside the formal education system.

The above mentioned Annual Action Programmes put emphasis on the European approach, which has been acknowledged as a major added value of the European Commission in the field of DEAR. Instead of a concept in which development education was considered to be a support for European development assistance to developing countries, the education for active citizenship has received more explicit legitimacy, as recommended in the DEAR study⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ Thematic Programme Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in development. 2011 -2013 Strategy Paper EC.

⁷⁵ NSA/LA Mid-Term Review. 2nd December 2009. European Commission

⁷⁶ Interview with TRIALOG.

⁷⁷ Final Report of the 'Study on the Experience and Actions of the main European Actors Active In The Field of Development Education And Awareness Raising', 24 November 2010. p.20

Development education practitioners and policymakers have increasingly recognised the importance of global issues⁷⁸. However, the 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy did not formulate a strategic vision with regard to DEAR as recommended by the Mid-term Review of this programme (and repeated in the DEAR study, though this was finalised only after the MIP.⁷⁹ Within the Commission, the Staff Working document issued in December 2012 places DEAR as an expression of Europe's fundamental values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights as expressed in Article 2 of the Lisbon treaty. Although the Staff Working Document is not binding, it is shared with the European Council and the European Parliament. It also proposes the elaboration of a renewed DEAR strategy in the framework of the Civil Society and Local Authorities Thematic programme in 2014-2020.

Renewed impetus for the development of a strategy is the adoption by the European Parliament of a *Written Declaration on Development Education and Active Global Citizenship*⁸⁰ (July 2012). The Declaration calls upon the Commission and the Council to develop a long-term, cross-sector European strategy for development education, awareness-raising and active global citizenship; it also calls upon the MS to develop or strengthen national development education strategies.

In this new framework, the Commission will give its support to actions aiming to (a) develop European citizens' awareness and critical understanding of the interdependent world and of their role, responsibility and lifestyles in relation to a globalised society; and (b) support their active engagement in local and global attempts to eradicate poverty, and promote justice, human rights, and sustainable ways of living.⁸¹

In the new framework, the Commission has furthermore recognized that the added value of Commission interventions lies in its European dimension. Therefore Calls for Proposals now require all supported actions to be both multi-country and multi-actor.

The DEAR study recommended that Guidelines for Calls for Proposals should be modified to encourage a greater participation of organisations from developing countries in projects under Objective 2, as a way of integrating partner country and European perspectives into DEAR. Current beneficiaries of the programme are generally supportive of such measures.⁸²

EQ4: What is the measurable effect of the programme?

JC 4.3 Objective 2: the co-financed actions had significant impact

The evaluators conclude that co-financed actions under Objective 2 had some excellent impact and a very large number of medium impacts

The ROM monitoring visits of Objective 2 projects suggest that co-financed actions had a good potential impact. Some 2.8% of visited organisations scored A and 66.7% scored B. No organisations visited by ROM scored D.⁸³

As shown in table 19 more than half of the grantees of the survey believe that this programme has strengthened the participation of organisations like theirs in European-level policy formation and dialogue, and improved understanding of European-level policies in their own country. The impact of the programme seems particularly strong in the NMS, where more than two thirds of respondents

⁷⁸ See for example the Communication on "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change", issued in October 2011, and also, in the Communication on "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations" issued in September 2012.

⁷⁹ Final Report of the 'Study on the Experience and Actions of the main European Actors Active In The Field of Development Education And Awareness Raising', 24 November 2010, p. 4

⁸⁰ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+WDECL+P7-DCL-2012-0007+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

⁸¹ Final Report of the 'Study on the Experience and Actions of the main European Actors Active In The Field of Development Education And Awareness Raising', 24 November 2010

⁸² Survey 2.Beneficiaries.Q.27

⁸³ ROM data available for 108 organisations implementing 43 projects.

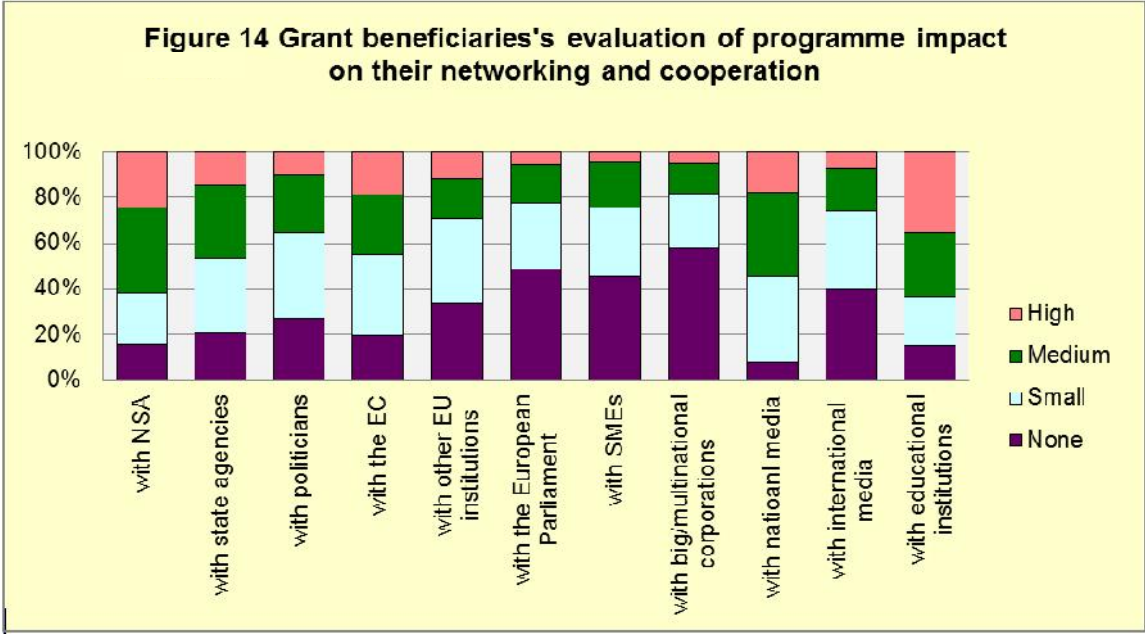
consider the programme as successful in these areas. Almost half of respondents from the New MS believe that the programme has also strengthened the voice of the NMS in the formation of European development policies.⁸⁴

Table 19: Grant beneficiaries’ perception of selected outcomes of Objective 2

Would you say that this NSA-LA Programme has?						
	Not success -ful	Little success	Medium success	Some success	High success	Don’t know/no opinion
Strengthened the participation of organisations like yours in European-level policies	6.3%	12.6%	14.7%	35.0%	23.1%	8.4%
Strengthened the voice of the New Member States in the formation of European policies	12.1%	13.5%	15.6%	30.5%	12.8%	15.6%
Improved understanding of European-level policies in your country	7.0%	8.5%	26.1%	30.3%	20.4%	7.7%

Source: Survey of Objective 2 Beneficiaries

The programme has had a measureable impact in relation to its strategic goals. The following chart presents grant beneficiaries’ assessment of changes in their relationships with a wide range of different stakeholders.



Source: Survey Objective 2 - beneficiaries

Factors limiting impact of co-financed actions

Weak indicators of impact

Many Objective 2 projects surveyed for this evaluation seem to lack clear quantitative and qualitative OVIs of impact. Many practitioners insist that impact measurement in development education and awareness is elusive. The need to identify and elaborate suitable impact indicators has been expressed by the Commission and by practitioners alike. For example, the DEAR study recommended that the EC shall, in collaboration with research centres and international networks, “develop quality

⁸⁴ Survey 2.Beneficiaries.Q26

indicators [...] defining process and impact indicators”.⁸⁵ The Lisbon Global Education Congress (2012) also called for a study expressing “the impact of global education, providing qualitative and quantitative instruments for impact assessment and quality support” as well as for the establishment of “local, national, regional and international global education monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to provide reference points on quality standards and bases for impact assessment”.⁸⁶

Despite the blockage at the theoretical level, programme managers have taken a useful step forward at the methodological level. Objective 2 Calls for Proposals are now split into separate lots for work in the formal education sector, in the informal education sector and in awareness raising and lobbying. At a minimum, this will facilitate the comparison of similar proposals in the project selection procedure. It should also contribute to the gradual emergence of proposals and identification of best practice as regards impact criteria and suitable objectively verifiable indicators.

A second factor that reduces the overall level of impact is the unfocused nature of many projects. The DEAR Study pointed out that although most DEAR projects focus on classic development themes such as poverty, the MDGs and development policies, few projects actually promote specific structural change in economic and social relations leading to the reduction of poverty. In the majority of projects surveyed for this evaluation, it is not clear that poverty would be reduced even if the project achieved all its stated results. Rather, many surveyed projects seem to envisage success through an implicit assumption that ‘aware’ citizens will take action of some kind that will indirectly lead to poverty reduction.

Variations in qualities of partnerships

Most projects under Objective 2 are implemented by ad hoc coalitions. In at least one third of projects surveyed for this evaluation, at least one partner organisation seemed weakly or not at all engaged in implementation. In many of these cases, evaluators had the impression that organisations lent their name to improve the geographical and sector coverage of project proposals by other organisations.

The programme has increasingly encouraged consortium approaches involving more than one MS. There is a high degree of cooperation and satisfaction with consortium arrangements amongst those NSAs and LAs that responded to the on-line surveys. However, some interviewed grant beneficiaries expressed frustration that the interaction between applicants and partners mostly concerns administrative and reporting procedures. In some projects, activities or tasks seem to be divided between the partner organisations, and the lead applicants’ main coordination role is to aggregate separate narrative and financial reports into overall reports.

A significant number of grantee organisations interviewed state that they respond to a wide range of Calls for Proposals on different subjects. Some LAs also participate in the programme to compensate for the sharp reduction in the allocation of public funds to them from the national budget. Many LAs apply for funding in partnership with NSAs, which is encouraged by the NSA&LA programme in order to ensure synergies and complementarity of efforts. In some cases these arrangements work fine as the LA benefits from the management experience and knowledge of an NSA and the latter ensures support by a public authority. However, in other cases there is a lack of ownership by the contracting LA, which may reduce the impact and sustainability of funded actions.

The 2013 revision of the Commission’s Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for External Actions tries, inter alia, to improve the definition, monitoring and evaluation of roles and responsibilities of consortium members.

Capacity development is over-focused on training activities

The provision of ad hoc training events accounts for the great majority of capacity development activities within funded projects. The impact of this capacity-building is consequentially less than could have been achieved with a more complex and systematic approach with a greater use of non-training

⁸⁵ Idem, p. 33.

⁸⁶ Final Report of the Global Education Congress, held in Lisbon, 27-28 September 2012, p. 40.

activities such as technical or financial support, re-granting, mentoring or coaching. In a majority of projects surveyed, capacity-building (i.e. training) activities were measured mostly at the output level. Relatively few projects contain any impact indicators for training events (e.g. changes in organisational or individual behaviour). In a very large proportion of cases in the NMS and several OMS, training was also provided to the staff of the grantee and partner organisations.

The above mentioned DEAR study recommended intensified Commission support to capacity building for beneficiaries in the field of DEAR. The Commission has responded positively to the DEAR study recommendation, for example announcing in 2010 that initial meetings with all new grant recipients would be organized to support networking and common understanding, as well as the organization of annual meetings with grant beneficiaries aimed at the capitalization of results and exchange of experience.

The Commission has also strengthened the web based civil society help desk (CISOCH) created in 2010. DEAR resources, including good practices and sector highlights are accessible through CISOCH. However, the website does not provide some types of the information that the DEAR study recommended, such as an overview of all DEAR projects financed and an overview of major outputs produced through EC supported DEAR projects. It is also currently difficult for practitioners to access information on new initiatives and ideas that are being developed in MS.

JC 4.4 Objective 2: the programme as a whole had a significant impact

Given the lack of indicators in the projects to accurately measure DEAR impact, this evaluation has focused on exchanges of best practice, the changing attitudes of European citizens regarding development issues and European governments policies in relation to development to assess impact. Grantees of the programme do not believe that there is sufficient consultation on the theme of Development Education within government itself, or between civil society and government, as the following table shows. There is no significant difference in responses between grant beneficiaries from OMS and NMS.

Table 20: Beneficiaries’ assessment of current levels of consultation on Development Education

	None	Not enough	Enough	Too many	Don't know/no opinion
Within civil society	4%	44%	44%	2%	7%
Within government	12%	59%	19%	1%	10%
Between civil society and government	5%	70%	17%	1%	6%

Source: Survey Objective 2 beneficiaries

European attitudes to development cooperation

Through its expansion from OMS to NMS and its promotion of multi-country and European level actions the programme has been a driving force in the promotion of core values regarding international development cooperation. The importance of international development cooperation and the central focus on poverty reduction is generally accepted in all MS.⁸⁷ With regard to the current economic crisis, Eurobarometer #392 (October 2012) suggests that the crisis has not had a significant impact on Europeans’ adherence to the key values that underpin international development cooperation or to specific elements of national and European development policy. The Eurobarometer report suggests that the core values of DEAR are widely and deeply present in European societies.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ See EuroBarometer #392 (October 2012)

⁸⁸ Final Report of the ‘Study on the Experience and Actions of the main European Actors Active In The Field of Development Education And Awareness Raising’, 24 November 2010, p. 33.

The diffusion of this European consensus even in the poorest and most peripheral parts of the European Union, and in NMS that were until recently net recipients of ODA can be considered a success of Objective 2 of the programme. The European DEAR sector has been enriched by the particular concerns and experience of the New MS, which are highly active in activities financed under Objective 2. In particular, civil society networks focused on governance and democracy issues in transitional post-Communist countries, have merged with the larger and older networks in OMS focused on sustainable development and poverty reduction in the global south.⁸⁹

Impact on policy formation

The formation of DEAR Strategies and DEAR school curricula in MS represents an impact of the programme as a whole, since this promotes sustainability and improves the environment for future DEAR work at a higher level that could be achieved by individual projects. Even if the degree of influence of programme beneficiaries on national policies varies between the MS, and is not easy to quantify, a series of positive developments can be identified. Specific development education strategies have been drafted in Austria (2010), Finland (2011–2016), Germany (2010-13), Ireland (plan of 2007-11 extended to 2015 following a review), the Czech Republic (2011), Slovakia (2012-16), Portugal (2009), Spain (2007) and the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland separately). The national DE strategies of the above countries have been defined either via the initiative of a multi-stakeholder process led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or via the Ministry of Education producing specific Development Education or Global Education Learning guidelines. In addition, there are a number of countries in which the introduction of a national strategy and/or curricula is still being considered. In Luxembourg, a development education strategy is being discussed between all the actors, in Estonia a working paper serves as reference document for Global Education and in Greece coordination and consultation is underway for a national strategy document. Although it has to be noted that the mere existence of the strategy does not necessarily mean that resources can be allocated to implement the framework.

Strategic support measures

The DEAR study suggested that, at the programme level and above, the EC could contribute to the overall impact of DEAR within the European Union by supporting and facilitating a range of support processes.

In the 2011 Call for Proposals under Objective 2, the Commission embraced recommendation from the DEAR study on *European and global partnerships for DEAR*; this Call required proposals to include activities in at least two EU MS, while advocacy and campaigning actions are expected to have pan-European coverage. The study recommended that the Commission support mechanisms of co-ordination of DEAR policies and approaches between stakeholders and facilitate dialogue among DEAR policy makers and practitioners. The Commission has reiterated its support – either through Calls for Proposals or through direct awards in circumstances it considers exceptional and well justified to professional structures and networks already put in place, such as DEEEP, CONCORD DARE working group, TRIALOG and the Joint Management agreement with the North-South Centre.⁹⁰ However, no change in policy or practice has been declared.

⁸⁹One tangible expression of this is CONCORD's IPAN Working Group which follows the IPA and ENPI. The WG has struggled to stabilise, and to engage actors from the OMS, but this reflects the challenge involved. See External Evaluation of Trialog IV, April 2012.

⁹⁰ Commission Staff Working Document on Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) in Europe, Brussels, 20 December 2012, p.15

The DEAR study also recommended that the Commission support *learning and quality improvement in the area of DEAR*. A Staff working document at the end of 2012 reported the launching of “an initiative to systematically encourage networking among EU-funded projects and the identification of best practices and lessons learned”.⁹¹To this end, a “DEAR Support Team” will be engaged through a service contract.

A seminar for new grant beneficiaries was organised in October 2011 and a similar event is planned for 2013 for grant beneficiaries of the 2011-2012 Call for Proposals. A capitalisation seminar was also organised in 2012.

In addition to these direct programme initiatives, it remains to be seen what indirect support to learning and quality improvement the Commission will support through the projects financed through the 2013 Call for Proposals.

EQ5: Has the programme reached an appropriate number and range of final beneficiaries?

JC 5.1 The programme has reached a significant number and range of relevant final beneficiaries

All project proposals contain a qualitative and quantitative description of intended final beneficiaries. Unfortunately, the evaluators were unable to identify evidence that could permit an assessment of the number and range of relevant final beneficiaries actually reached. Overall however, the evaluators consider that the programme has reached a wide range of target groups. Although many projects are focused on NSA communities and engage with institutional stakeholders weakly, or not at all, therefore the number and range of final beneficiaries seems high in the project documentation.

During the field visits for this evaluation the evaluators were unable to confirm that the estimate of beneficiaries in Full Applications corresponds to the actual number of beneficiaries meaningfully reached by co-funded actions. However the Commission recently counted beneficiaries mentioned in successful project proposals.⁹² These do represent significant numbers of European decision-makers, journalists, educational establishments and educators, pupils, young people, companies, consumers, LAs and NSAs.

A large proportion of NSA projects devote considerable resources to activities engaging other NSAs, and relatively lower resources to activities engaging final beneficiaries. In more than half of the project proposals examined for this evaluation, the consumers and decision makers identified as final beneficiaries are engaged only by invitation to participate in a single event or potential exposure to an exhibition or a written document.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the programme engages with a wide range of target groups, and that a majority of projects engage to some extent with media, educators, elected decision-makers and government agencies - stakeholders outside the NGO community. Surveyed LA projects seem to engage with a wider range of stakeholders and final beneficiaries than NSA projects. However, the absolute number of LA projects surveyed is too small to make definitive judgements in this regard.

⁹¹ Idem, p. 18

⁹² Commission Staff Working Document SWD (2012) 457 final, on Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) in Europe, pp 23-24

EQ6: Is the programme well-integrated into the broader system of Commission, European and partner country ODA policy?

JC 6.3 Complementarity of the programme with other donors' interventions (focusing on EU MS)

Objective 2 is reasonably and increasingly complementary with initiatives of the Member States

Member States co-finance approximately 20% of DEAR projects. Such support enables the NSA or LA applicant to leverage a higher proportion of EU co-financing compared to their own financial contribution. The 12 'new' MS are six times more likely than the OMS to co-finance projects in which their NSAs or LAs participate as lead applicant or as partner. However, MS co-financing is threatened by the current financial crisis, and many countries which consistently co-financed projects under Objective 2 of this programme have reduced or suspended their co-financing schemes.

The Commission (more precisely, programme managers) give MS co-financing greater political significance than grant beneficiaries do. Most grant beneficiaries interviewed believe that financial support from their MS primarily reflects a common desire to maximise the share of EC funds secured by national actors.

Since 2011, the programme has also insisted that Objective 2 projects in the area of formal education demonstrate support by appropriate national/sub-national authorities, starting from the project selection stage. This measure is likely to increase complementarity with MS priorities and initiatives, impact and sustainability. The right of initiative is still respected insofar as applicants may propose any eligible activities, provided that they can demonstrate a commitment of the appropriate authorities to cooperate with the project implementation.

The programme will continue to fund projects in the areas of non-formal education and awareness-raising and lobbying, where explicit or implicit complementarity with the MS is not required.

EQ7: How sustainable are the results of the programme?

JC 7.1 For Objective 2, the outcomes of actions co-financed by the programme are highly sustainable

A large proportion of co-financed actions are processes dependent on member state and/or Commission financing, and often on this programme. Financial sustainability would seem to be a challenge. On the other hand, there is clear evidence of political and institutional sustainability of actions co-financed under Objective 2

ROM monitoring reports available for Objective 2 projects suggest that the sustainability of co-financed actions is quite good.⁹³ Some grantees interviewed for this evaluation understand sustainability as the capacity to elaborate new proposals in future CfP, and an enabling environment as the provision of regular and generous funds with predictable selection criteria. A significant proportion of funded activities are continuations of previous projects. In this way the programme has an unintended benefit of providing a relative financial sustainability for the core community of NSAs that are funded by the programme. Many respondents argue that the EU and the MS should accept the indefinite need for development education and awareness raising, and provide the necessary core or long-term funding to the key actors. This would of course imply a departure from the project based approach.

⁹³No projects scored A for sustainability, but almost 70% scored B ROM data available for 108 organisations implementing 43 projects. The cumulative results are slightly worse than in the 2011 ROM Synthesis Report produced by the ROM CMTF team, which was based on 18 projects for which data was available at that time. That study identified 78% of projects scoring A or B.

In a significant number of MS, relations between NSAs and LAs and other public institutions are not stable, and depend on political affinities with public officials linked to ruling parties; each change in administration therefore dissolves a significant part of NSA-state cooperation. Relatively few projects have achieved a non-partisan institutional cooperation. This is surely a pre-condition for the state administration to take responsibility for funding the outcomes of the project in a sustainable fashion.

A significant proportion of grantees and partner organisations in the NMS are highly donor dependent, and do not solicit or receive significant amounts of European private funds. Other donors, particularly North American and UN system donors have largely withdrawn from the NMS during the life of this programme, leading to an increase in interest in European Union initiatives and Commission programmes. Many donor-dependent grantees leverage other donor contributions. These were earlier from North American and UN system donors, but are increasingly from government agencies in the MS.

Whereas NGOs have gained significant experience in making the most of the opportunities provided by the system of Call for Proposals, LAs have had less experience, (the first LA budget line was opened only in 2007 within the NSA&LA programme), and therefore need to work more to adapt their management procedures and planning mechanisms to this co-financing mechanism. Since LAs are public authorities, they have less flexibility than NSAs in planning their budget, including in the allocation of co-financing contributions.

A greater regularity and predictability of Calls for Proposals would therefore be of particular benefit to LA potential beneficiaries.

Incompatibilities between EU contract procedures for external actions and public procedures for contracting in some MS, and the lack of LA personnel who are available to write and manage these relatively small and short projects have encouraged many LAs to experiment with cooperation with NSA. Some LAs receive information about the programme from NSAs, whilst the opposite is not the case. However, many NSA grantees say that they would not repeat their collaboration with LAs, because of the differences in working culture and procedures; NSAs interviewed tend to perceive LAs as slow-moving and collaboration with them as time-consuming.

Only a limited number of NSAs in the NMS and some of the OMS are large and experienced enough to engage with the programme, because of the relatively high administrative requirements of EU contract procedures for external actions.

EQ8: In addition to any progress on meeting its Objectives, has the programme made any other significant contributions to Commission development programming (at both the strategic and implementation levels)

JC 8.5 Regarding Objective 2 the programme facilitates an exchange of best practice at the European level

One way in which this programme contributes to increasing impact and sustainability of NSA and LA projects is by encouraging and facilitating the exchange of best practice, leading to a gradual increase in the quality of projects. In the survey, more than 90% of grantees say they have frequent or very frequent opportunities to discuss quality and best practice issues within the implementation consortium, which is invariably an international consortium.⁹⁴

Different tools have been used by beneficiaries' organizations to share best practices. For Objective 2 the most common tools are represented by seminars, meetings and workshops and by the use of the web site and/or website platform/portal. Eight per cent of beneficiary organizations have used

⁹⁴ On-line surveys, Objective 2.Beneficiaries Q16

publications as a way to share best practices with other partner organizations. More than 60% of beneficiaries believe that exchange of best practice at the national level is good or very good, but less than 40% say the same about the European level. Interestingly, NMS grantees are more satisfied with the current exchange of best practice at the national level, but less satisfied with the European level. There is potential to improve the capitalisation on co-financed activities and the exchange of best practice. More than half of grantees say they were never invited to share their experience at an EU-supported event during the project implementation period, and almost 80% say they were never invited to share experience after the end of an EU-co-financed project.⁹⁵ There is a significantly greater capitalisation and sharing of best practice within the NMS.

JC 8.6 Objective 2: Cross-cutting issues are appropriately integrated into the programme

Cross-cutting issues are not sufficiently integrated in Objective 2 of the programme

In the large majority of cases, cross-cutting issues have been only minimally or not at all been taken into consideration in the design and selection of proposals for funding under Objectives 2. Some projects carry out activities which relate to one or more cross-cutting issues. However, for example, less than 3% of a sample of successful project proposals under Objective 2 contain a gender analysis. This sample did not contain any projects that considered gender-disaggregated statistics as relevant to their indicators of success. Less than 1.5% of successful proposals analysed for this evaluation make any specific reference to democratic rights.⁹⁶ Only 1.4% of successful proposals make a specific reference to the rights of the child.

EQ9: What is the quality of management of the programme?

JC 9.3 Objective 2: The PCM of the Programme includes appropriate measures of success.

Strategy Papers for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 identify mixed “objectives and results” for Objective 2. These are not associated with specific indicators of success. The Strategy Papers stressed that “a programme which upholds actors’ ‘right of initiative’ is not one for which expected results can easily be predicted.” The evaluators note that in the preparatory document for the multiannual strategy of the successor CSO-LA thematic programme, objectives and results are more clearly defined, based on the Commission’s experience with this first NSA and LA-oriented thematic programme.

Like many of the Commission’s other grant programmes, Calls for Proposals in this programme are only partly based in the Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach, and this limits their internal coherence. For example, although the Logical Framework tool is a compulsory annex to project proposals, in most cases it does not form part of the contract. In such cases, it is not clear how beneficiaries monitor their achievement of objectives and results. Most projects surveyed for this evaluation do not have Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound Objectively Verifiable Indicators (SMART OVIs). This may limit monitoring to quantitative OVIs and project outputs and prevent adequate management of results.

Similarly as for Objective 1, programme managers consulted for this evaluation acknowledge that they focus on contract management more than on project results, for a variety of reasons ranging from a large volume of work and relatively complex administrative procedures to a loss of knowledge and experience due to the high staff turnover. In consequence, the analysis of issues related to the quality of projects, impact and sustainability may be neglected, and largely dependent on external exercises such as short-term missions of lead applicant personnel and task managers, or entrusted to ROM and other forms of Technical Assistance.

⁹⁵ On-line surveys, Objective 2 Beneficiaries Q15

⁹⁶ Survey of 74 randomly selected successful project proposals under Objective 2 and 3

JC 9.4 Objective 2: The Programme supports grantees in developing the appropriate project management skills.

The Programme provides extensive and varied support to grantees.

Several projects supported under Objective 2 provided support to grant beneficiaries in a wide range of technical and thematic areas. The Trialog IV project focused on support to NSAs in the NMS and Accession Countries. The survey and interview for this evaluation also suggests that the numerous projects that support networking activities of NSAs contribute to widespread peer-to-peer learning and informal coaching relationships, which can be considered an indirect positive result of the programme.

5. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS: OBJECTIVE 3

Objective 3 – Facilitating the coordination and communication of NSA and LA networks in EU and acceding countries. This Objective is managed by Commission headquarters

EQ1: To what extent is implementation consistent with programming?

JC 1.3 For Objective 3, the disbursement of funds corresponds to allocated funds

The selection of actions financed under this objective is consistently in line with the two Strategy Papers covering the period 2007-2013.⁹⁷ Objective 3 represents only 2% of the overall funds of the programme and a slightly lower proportion of co-financed projects. Its high relevance rests on the strategic and multiplier role of the co-financed projects. Objective 3 supports actions aiming at ensuring a more efficient cooperation, stimulating synergies and facilitating a structured dialogue in the field of development between civil society networks and ALAs in the EU and acceding countries. Calls for Proposals in 2007 and 2008 included a focus on strengthening NSA/LA platforms in the NMS; this focus was dropped from 2010 onwards. The 2010 Call encouraged cooperation with non-EU countries. LAs were eligible to propose projects in 2007 and 2008, but from 2010 onwards have only been able to participate as partners.

The following table summarises the allocation and contracting of funds under Objective 3.

Table 21: Allocation and contracting of funds under Objective 3

NSA/LA		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Allocated	NSA	€4 472 323	€3 850 760	€4 899 204	€4 226 000	€4 374 500	€1 200 000	€4 450 000	€27 472 787
	LA	€ 600 000	€ 600 000	€ 750 000	€ 712 000	€0	€0	€1 125 000	€3 787 000
Total allocated NSA & LA		€5 072 323	€4 450 760	€5 649 204	€4 938 000	€4 374 500	€1 200 000	€5 575 000	€31 259 787
Contracted	NSA	€1368532.9	€38363150	€48932570	€42641977	€39695705	€0	€0	€213318731
	LA	€580282.0	€4726470	€7441750	€5781000	€0	€0	€0	€2375 204.0
Contracted projects OBJ 3	NSA	10	8	11	11	10	6	4	60
	LA	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	7
Total contracted projects		12	11	13	12	10	6	4	67
Total contracted NSA & LA		€1948814.9	€13089620	€56374320	€48422977	€39695705	€0	€0	€23 707 077.1

Source: Calculated from data provided by DEVCO/B2 and the ROM CMTP team. Reflects situation on 31st March 2013, the end of the evaluation desk phase

⁹⁷ Thematic Programme "Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" Strategy Paper 2007-2010 and 2010-2013.

The implementation of Objective 3 increasingly reflects the outcome of discussions during the Structured Dialogue Process. The Commission has explored options for targeted support to networks of LAs, leading for example to the award of a direct grant to the PLATFORMA network. The programme has shifted from an initial focus on increasing multi-actor partnerships towards a focus on strengthening existing networks, particularly in developing their representativeness. The programme continues to encourage cooperation between the various NSA and LA networks.

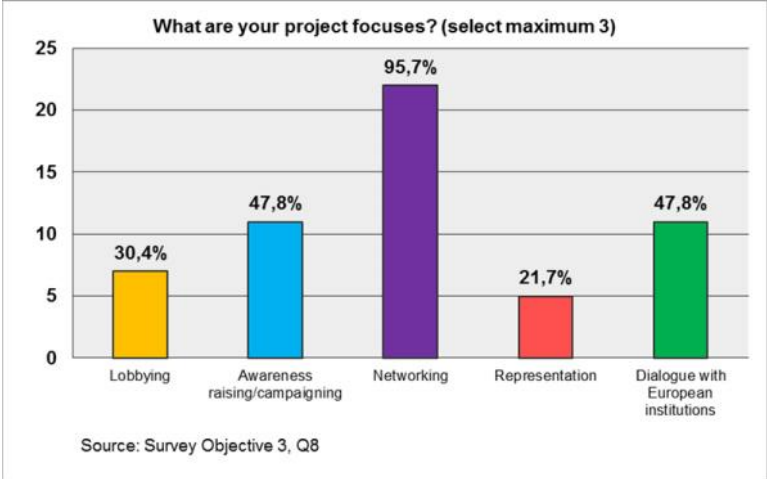
Competitive funding has a gradually declining tendency, but still represents more than half of the budget for Objective 3.

NSAs from the NMS have been highly successful in applying for funds in Calls for Proposals under Objective 3. These 12 countries represent only 20% of the EU population but in Calls for Proposals lead agencies in these countries received 35% of the contracts representing 30% of contracted funds. This is particularly striking in a context where Belgium, the country that hosts the majority of European institutions also hosts 27% of Objective 3 projects, representing 30% of contracted funds. The overwhelming majority of projects were awarded to NGDOs and their platforms and networks. All lead applicants and partners who responded to the survey declare having considerable experience of participation in Commission funding programmes, each having made on average more than four applications as lead applicant and three applications as partner.⁹⁸

The Commission classifies 48% of projects funded under Objective 3 under the OECD-DAC code "Democratic Participation and Civil Society" (15150). A further 26% of projects are classified as spending in donor country for heightened awareness/interest in development co-operation. The remaining 26% of projects are classified under a wide range of DAC codes.

The organisations implementing Objective 3 projects classify their projects rather differently. This is illustrated in figure 18. Almost all organisations defined their project by a focus on "networking," with almost half of them combining this with "awareness raising/campaigning" and almost one third combining networking with "dialogue with the European Institutions".

Figure 15: Focus of funded projects Objective 3



More than one quarter of Objective 3 funds are allocated without competition, chiefly through direct award of action grants.

JC 1.4 Objective 3: the allocation and disbursement of funds is appropriate to the effective demand

The success rate of applications to calls for proposals is slightly higher than for the other objectives, but is still appropriate to the effective demand. The following table analyses the success rates of applications for selected Calls for Proposals under Objective 3.

⁹⁸ Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q11

Table 22 Success rates of applications for funding under Objective 3

	CNs submitted ⁽¹⁾	Admin rejected	CN assessed	2nd Admin rejected	FAs assessed	Preselected for contracting	Preselected reserve list	Eligibility rejected
OBJ 3	396	16	380	4	198	63	23	0
Percentages		4.0%	96.0%		52.1%	31.8%		
OBJ 1b/2/3*	446	40	406	5	64	43	3	0
Percentages		9.0%	91.0%		15.8%	67.2%		

* CIP 129200. The evaluators were unable to disaggregate statistics for this call between the mentioned objectives. Source: Listings obtained from CRIS.

EQ 2: To what extent has the programme incorporated lessons learned?

JC 2.1 Objective 3: The Commission has appropriate consultation mechanisms with potential beneficiaries

The Commission considers the Policy Forum for Development as the formal structure for dialogue with these actors supported by programme funds. The European membership of the Policy Forum for Development has remained stable over the years with some expansion (two new members). Organisations supported under Objective 3 generally characterise relations with the Commission as correct, but do not believe that NSAs and LAs currently have the necessary influence to modify substantive elements of policy and practice. Annual Action Programmes for this programme are not subject to a formal consultation with beneficiaries, but they are presented in the Policy Forum for Development, which includes several NSA and LA representatives. Regarding the new CSO-LA programme, the Commission shared an internal preparatory document in the June 2013 Policy Forum for Development. Several organisations supported under Objective 3 told evaluators that they would have welcomed a more substantial consultation process.

JC 2.4 Objective 3: The Programme reflects the recommendations of the Structured Dialogue

The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy was already in the later part of the design phase when the Structured Dialogue took place. Consequently, the Recommendations of the Structured Dialogue are neither binding nor embedded in the 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy. At the time of evaluation, the grant portfolio contracted according to the 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy was too small for reliable analysis. Nevertheless, some reflection of the recommendations of the Structured Dialogue can be detected in the implementation of Objective 3. For example, there has been a gradual increase in the budget of non-competitive awards, as well as the range of civil society constituencies which these non-competitive projects address. The programme's response to the Structured Dialogue can also be observed in the projects awarded to trade unions and LAs and their networks (these projects were often implemented by special purpose NGOs.)

JC 2.5 Objective 3: The 2011-2013 Multiannual Strategy and its implementation adequately reflect the recommendations of the MTR

The Mid-term Review suggested that the guidelines for applicants for calls under Objective 3 were unclear (specifically Section 1.1 ("Background") and Section 1.2 ("Objectives and priorities of this call for proposals")). However, the results of the survey and the field visits for this evaluation suggest that the actions selected in these calls were highly relevant. Grant beneficiaries interviewed for this evaluation also expressed satisfaction with the call mechanism.

EQ3: To what extent does the implementation of the programme correspond to the evolving policy priorities?

JC 3.4 Objective 3: the programme has supported or facilitated the production of specific mapping studies of the current status of Platforms and networks within Member States.

No formal studies were launched for Platforms and networks in the EU Member States, because following the Structured Dialogue the Commission considered these actors as well-known and well identified.

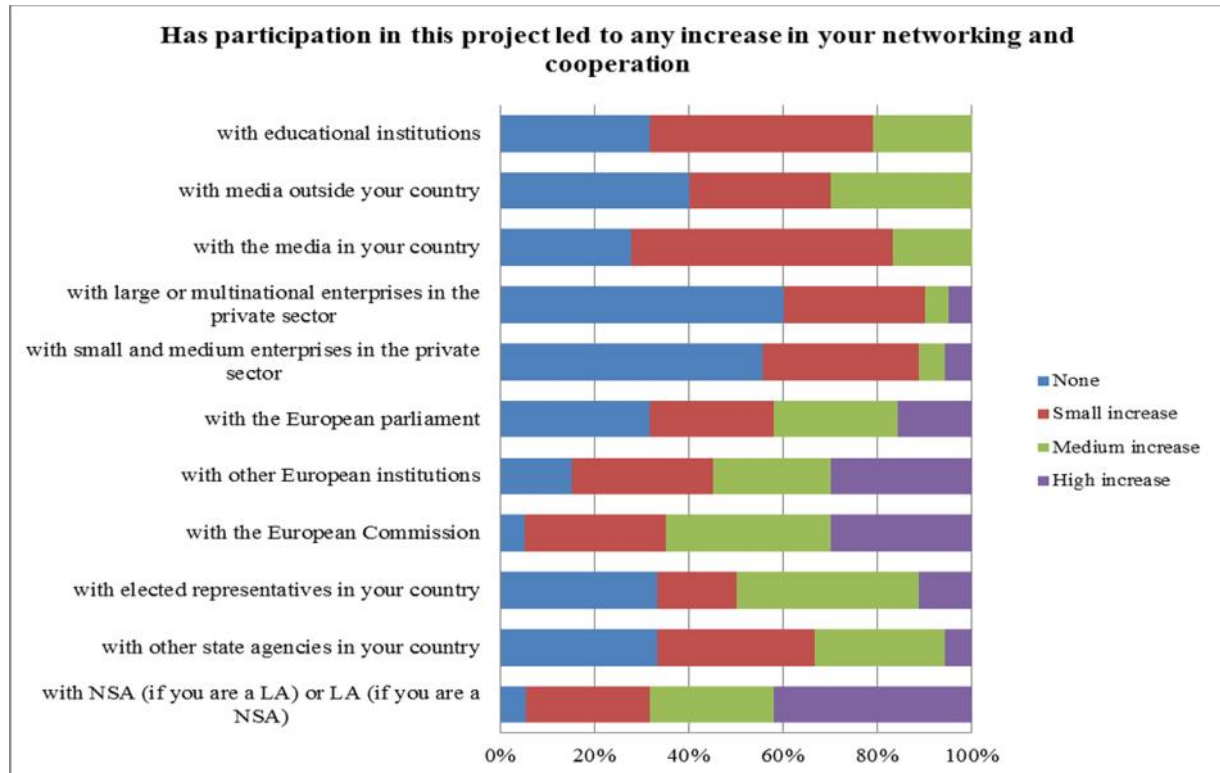
EQ 4 What is the measurable effect of the programme?

JC 4.5 Objective 3: the co-financed actions had significant impact

Both ROM and the survey for this evaluation suggest that co-financed actions had significant impact.

ROM monitoring visits suggest that the impact prospects for co-financed actions are very good.⁹⁹ This is confirmed by our survey of Objective 3 grant beneficiaries and their partner organisations. Significant numbers of these beneficiaries report improvements in their networking and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders in their own countries and at the European level, as the following chart shows.

Figure 16: Benefit of the project on the beneficiary networking capacity



Source: Survey of EUDs and beneficiaries

⁹⁹ No visited organisations scored D and over 81% of organisations scored A or B.

Several presidency projects were able to engage with their Ministry responsible for ODA and promote at the national level key elements of the multi-stakeholder consensus on international development that exists at the European level. Interviewed organisers of Presidency projects told evaluators that these projects had been a unique opportunity for NGDO Platforms to engage with a wide range of national stakeholders. Individual organisations can discover ways to promote their agenda in a European as well as a national forum, and increasingly recognise the utility of national-level networking on European issues as well as participation in European-level networks.

Cooperation during the Presidency often encourages Ministries responsible for ODA to recognise the strategic importance of their country's NGDO community, which can result in sustainable forms of cooperation and dialogue.

All Presidency projects achieved significant results in the above areas. These projects are by definition taking place during a short period of unusually high national interest in European issues, during which elected representatives, civil servants and civil society representatives have multiple opportunities and incentives for interaction. Of course, some presidency projects were less successful. Interviews for this evaluation suggest that some NGDO Platforms are inexperienced, donor-dependent and lacking in active membership participation. Since these characteristics are easily identifiable, the Commission could perhaps have done more to ensure that appropriate and timely Presidency projects were prepared in the countries concerned. There is a trend towards peer learning and knowledge sharing between past, current and next Presidency project beneficiaries, though this obviously is of limited use to beneficiaries who should follow after a previous weak project.

JC 4.6 Objective 3: The programme had a significant impact

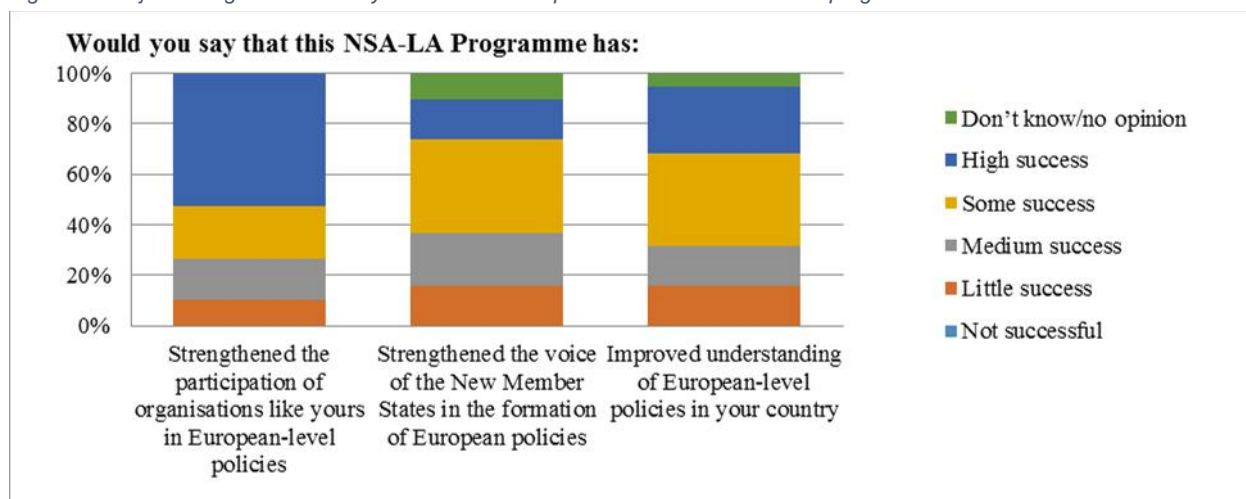
The programme has been successful, and in some aspects very successful, in promoting Objective 3, i.e. in ensuring a more efficient cooperation, stimulating synergies and facilitating a structured dialogue in the field of development between civil society networks and ALA in the EU and acceding countries.

All main applicants who responded to the survey believe that the programme has had some success in strengthening the participation of NSAs and LAs in public policies at the national level; 80% rate this success as 'medium' and the remaining 20% as good. Partner organisations are slightly less positive in their appreciation of the programme impact. Both groups were more positive about the programme's impact in strengthening the participation of NSAs and LAs in public policy at the European level. 40% of lead agencies considered that the programme had had 'high success' (though 20% of lead agencies and partners believed there was only 'little success'.) All respondents believed the programme has been successful in improving the networking of the NSA sector; 40% of lead agencies and 60% of partners gave a rating of 'high success' in this area.¹⁰⁰ Over 40% of lead agencies and 60% of partners believe that the programme has strengthened the voice of the NMS in the formation of European policies, a view shared by about 60% of respondents from NMS organisations. There is a significant difference in the judgement of lead agencies and partners regarding the programme's contribution to improved understanding of European level policies in their own countries; lead agencies believed the programme has been highly successful (20% consider that it has had 'some' and 60% consider that it has had 'high' success) while partners are less enthusiastic (40% consider that it has had 'some' success and no respondents consider that it has had 'high' success).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q23

¹⁰¹ Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q25. Most of the respondent partner organisations are from the NMS.

Figure 17: Objective 3 grant beneficiary assessment of impact of the NSA-LA thematic programme



Source: Online survey questionnaires objective 3, Q23

Commission support to CONCORD ensures a stable and deep dialogue with NSAs; particularly the largest European NGOs specialized in international development cooperation, as well as those NSAs in all the MS and to some extent in the Accession Countries that are oriented towards development policy and development-education. CONCORD is a major multiplier and relay of information and awareness raising about European Union and European Commission policies. Europe's largest NGOs get their information about the European Commission direct from the source, but most medium and smaller sized European NSAs that responded to our survey stated that they get the biggest part of their information about European policies and programmes from CONCORD and other networks and platforms. These organisations have also played a major role in supporting the integration into international development cooperation of civil society in the 12 NMS.

In addition to the impact of individual projects, Objective 3 could be considered to have a programme-level impact to the extent that it supports networking and dialogue that are a pre-condition for long-term improvement in development policy and practice. Findings on this issue were presented in the previous section (JC 4.5). The Programme has certainly strengthened the networking of grantees and partner organisations with similar organisations, and between NSAs and LAs. To a lesser extent, grantees and partners also believe that the programme has helped them increase their networking and cooperation with the European Commission. However, the programme does not seem to have significantly improved NSA/LA networking and cooperation with the private sector or the media. An improvement in that area of cooperation would have reinforced impact at the programme level.

EQ5: Has the programme reached an appropriate number and range of final beneficiaries?

JC 5.1 Objective 3: The programme has reached a significant number and range of relevant final beneficiaries

Co-funded actions under Objective 3 reach a wide range of relevant final beneficiaries.

All project proposals contain a qualitative and quantitative description of intended final beneficiaries. Unfortunately, the evaluators were unable to identify evidence that could permit an assessment of the number and range of relevant final beneficiaries actually reached. The CONCORD confederation receives an annual operating grant of €700,000, representing just under 60% of CONCORD's income.¹⁰² CONCORD declares some 1,600 affiliated organisations, and is present in all MS.

¹⁰² CONCORD's overall dependence on Commission funds is higher, since several projects closely linked to CONCORD are also funded under Objective 2. These projects are selected in the competitive mechanism, though some of them are now in their fifth phase of consecutive funding.

There are also two grants of maximum €250,000 every year to the NGDO platform in each country that holds an EU Presidency; these platforms are considered to have a de facto monopoly in the area covered by the grant. These platforms provide co-financing of 10% (NMS) or 25% (OMS). These 'Presidency projects' represent two thirds of the direct awards made under Objective 3. Fourteen Presidency projects have been financed so far, including six in NMS.

A direct grant was made to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) for the period 2012-2015, on behalf of the PLATFORMA network (PLATFORMA's other members are partners in this project). This project intends to support dialogue with and capacity development of LAs in partner countries. Furthermore, in 2013 another direct grant to the CEMR has been approved in the framework of the NSA&LA AAP, in order to continue in the period 2013-2016 the dialogue and exchange at EU level by European LAs working in international development cooperation. Observation and interviews confirm that PLATFORMA has the capacity to mobilise several hundred LAs and ALAs in most parts of the EU.¹⁰³ The project consortium is extremely well-integrated into the relevant continental and global networks.

JC 5.2 Objective 3: The number and range of relevant final beneficiaries is appropriate to the Programme Objectives

Many projects supported under Objective 3 intervene at a pan-European or multi-country level. Support is extended across a range of strategically important networks, including CONCORD and PLATFORMA, as well as to the NGDO Platforms in each country that is hosting an EU Presidency.

EQ 7 : How sustainable are the results of the programme?

JC 7.1 Objective 3: The outcomes of actions co-financed by the programme are highly sustainable

Although only one Call for Proposals has been held under the 2011-2013 Strategic Framework, there are clear signs that the programme is achieving its intended adjustment away from an initial focus on increasing multi-actor partnerships towards a focus on strengthening existing networks. Sustainability issues are therefore also changing in relative importance.

ROM sustainability scores for Objective 3 projects are good.¹⁰⁴ ROM sustainability scores for Objective 3 are consistently lower than for Objective 2. Visits to Objective 3 projects confirm these conclusions. Positive factors supporting sustainability include the engagement of international NGOs or NGO networks with a long-term thematic or geographic commitment, and which are often able to secure funding from other sources than the European Commission.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, applicants often underestimate the project duration needed to achieve their expected results.

The following table summarises ROM sustainability scores for Objective 3 projects. The ownership of the project by target groups is generally weak, whilst the project's contribution to the institution and the management capacity of the consortium members is relatively good.

¹⁰³ Evaluators attended as observers the PLATFORMA Forum "A changing European context, supporting sustainable development through local and regional governments" held in Brussels, 4-5 March 2013.

¹⁰⁴For Objective 3, ROM data is available for 22 organisations implementing 8 projects. Just under 60% of visited organisations are /were scoring B. However, it is notable that none of the monitored organisations scored A, while several organisations scored D. Two projects with overlapping partnerships, representing 13% of visited organisations, scored D. In comparison, there were no Ds recorded in ROM visits to Objective 2 projects. The cumulative results are slightly better than in the 2011 ROM Synthesis Report produced by the ROM CMTF team, which was based on four projects for which data was available at that time. That study identified 50% of projects as scoring A or B for sustainability.

¹⁰⁵ This factor was noted in the European Court of Auditors special report n° 4, 2009.

Table 23: Aggregated data of sustainability score raised by ROM reports for Objective 3

ROM component		Ave-rage
5.1	Financial economic viability	<i>B</i>
5.2	Ownership of the project by target group	<i>C</i>
5.3	Level of project support provided and the degree of interaction between project and policy level	<i>B</i>
5.4	Project contribution to institution and management capacity	<i>B</i>
Overall conclusions		<i>B</i>

Source: ROM CMTF and Evaluation Team, March 2013

A majority of the lead agencies expect to have a strong future relationship with associates and beneficiaries of the project; this view is shared by only a minority of partner organisations. Interestingly, a large majority of partners expect to have a strong future relationship with the lead applicant of their project; this view is shared by only 40% of lead agencies, with 40% expecting to have only weak relationships with their current partners.¹⁰⁶

EQ 8 In addition to any progress on meeting its Objectives, has the programme made any other significant contributions to Commission development programming (at both the strategic and implementation levels)

JC 8.5 Objective 3: The programme facilitates an exchange of best practice at the European level

Another area where there is a programme-level impact (and a clear value-added for this Commission programme) is in the exchange of best practice at the European level. The lead agencies of Objective 3 projects are very satisfied with the level of sharing of best practice at all levels, their partner organisations are also 'very satisfied' with the sharing of best practice at the European level, and 'satisfied' with the exchange at national and global levels. This exchange of best practice seems to be best achieved at the individual project level. Although the Commission organised seminars for grantees of new projects and ending projects in 2011 and 2012 respectively, a majority of OMS lead agencies and partners who responded to the survey for this evaluation say they have never been invited to share their experience with their Commission-funded project at an event promoted by the European Union. On a positive note, more than two thirds of the surveyed NMS organisations involved in Objective 3 projects have been invited to participate in such events during the life of their project and 40% since the end of the project.

The Commission's support for networks and platforms of NSAs and LAs plays an important role in widening access to all components of the programme. The Commission's websites are a sufficient source of information mainly for lead applicants. For Objective 3, about three quarters of successful lead applicants from the OMS obtained their information about the Call for Proposals by consulting an EU website, and the remainder from a specialised platform or network. However, for lead applicants in the NMS, these two sources of information were equally important.

Partners' sources of information were evenly distributed between the EU, specialised platforms and networks and other NSA/LA. Partners from the NMS were proportionally more likely to rely on information from other NSA/LA (43%) and less likely to obtain their information from EU websites (21%).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q22

¹⁰⁷ Survey 2.Beneficiaries.Q9, Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q9

A majority of grantees and partners in OMS, and 40% of their counterparts in the NMS, believe that increased support to networks and platforms would be a more effective way to facilitate wider participation of organisations from their countries rather than any ring-fencing of funds for each country.¹⁰⁸

Many of the actions supported under Objective 3 also contributed to an exchange of perspectives and closer cooperation between NSAs and LAs from OMS and NMS. The programme has also supported trade union engagement on relevant themes. Interviews for this evaluation suggested that the programme has contributed to an exchange of views and a gradually deepening cooperation between trade unions and NGOs.¹⁰⁹

JC 8.6: Objective 3: Cross-cutting issues are appropriately integrated

In the large majority of cases, cross-cutting issues have been only minimally or not at all taken into consideration in the design and selection of proposals for funding under Objective 3. ROM analysis of crosscutting issues in eight projects funded under Objective 3 underlines the weak consideration of gender issues. In some cases the project proposals haven't been planned on the basis of a gender-differentiated beneficiaries' analysis. Some projects carry out activities, which relate to one or more cross-cutting issues. However, none of the projects examined for this evaluation considered gender-disaggregated statistics as relevant to their indicators of success.¹¹⁰

ROM reports for actions supported under Objective 3 indicate that half of the projects monitored make some reference to environmental concerns, while the other half make no such reference.

EQ9: What is the quality of management of the programme?

JC 9.1 Objective 3: The programme has adequate monitoring procedures in place

For Objective 3, ROM data is available for 22 organisations implementing 8 projects. In addition, Task Managers at Headquarters have maintained both monitoring and discussions of substantive issues with beneficiaries of Objective 3. Commission officials and representatives of the major networks supported under Objective 3 (including CONCORD and PLATFORMA) affirmed that they had a regular and intensive discussion on a wide range of issues.

JC 9.2 Objective 3: The Commission manages Calls for Proposals in a timely manner

Calls for Proposals were launched in December 2007, December 2008 (pooling 2008 and 2009 allocations) March 2010 and July 2011. In 2012 no budget was allocated for competitive awards. In 2013 (the last year of the programme) the Commission used the allocation to contract projects from the reserve list of the 2011 Call. The management of Calls for Proposals has therefore been relatively timely.

JC 9.3 Objective 3: The PCM of the Programme includes appropriate measures of success.

Strategy Papers for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 identify mixed "objectives and results" for Objective 3. These are not associated with specific indicators of success. The Strategy Papers stressed that "a programme which upholds actors' 'right of initiative' is not one for which expected results can easily be predicted." The evaluators note that in the preparatory document for the multiannual strategy of the successor CSO-LA thematic programme, objectives and results are more clearly defined, based on the Commission's experience with this first NSA and LA-oriented thematic programme.

¹⁰⁸Survey 2.Beneficiaries.Q12, Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q12

¹⁰⁹ Project contract: 264128 ISCOS: "Towards an International Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN)"

¹¹⁰ Survey of 74 randomly selected successful project proposals under Objective 2 and 3.

JC 9.4 Objective 3: The Programme supports grantees in developing the appropriate project management skills.

The Programme provides extensive and varied support to grantees.

Several projects supported under Objective 3 provided support to grant beneficiaries in a wide range of technical and thematic areas. The 'Trenino' website and helpdesk project focused on support to NSAs in the NMS and Accession Countries, though potential applicants and grant beneficiaries from all parts of the EU made use of the resources on offer.¹¹¹ The survey and interview for this evaluation also suggest that the numerous projects that support networking activities of NSAs contribute to widespread peer-to-peer learning and informal coaching relationships, which can be considered an indirect positive result of the programme

¹¹¹ Project title "Helpdesk platform and support to New Member State Non State Actors/Local Authorities in the Development sector"

6. CONCLUSIONS

Main conclusions

The following three conclusions are considered to be the most significant:

C11 The programme has had a significant positive **impact** at the level of the “objectives and results”/ “performance indicators” in the multi-annual Strategies for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013.

C12 Projects funded under all Objectives have good prospects for sustainability, although financial sustainability seems more of a challenge than political and institutional sustainability

C14 The programme has adequately reflected the growing EU focus on governance.

Relevance

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ1, EQ2, EQ3 and EQ6

C1 The success of Objective 1 of this programme is closely linked to its deconcentrated management by EUDs.

EUDs are more confident with the results of programmes implemented on the basis of deconcentrated management, particularly when compared to global calls for proposals in which EUDs receive and must manage local projects selected centrally on the basis of priorities determined centrally. EUDs have made considerable effort to respond to local conditions, resulting in a considerable variety in the Calls for Proposals organised under Objective 1a. There is sufficient flexibility to deal with difficult countries, including those where national governments place considerable restrictions on civil society.

C2 Objective 1 of the programme has been highly successful in enabling the Commission to engage directly with NSAs and LAs from partner countries.

The participation of NSAs and LAs from partner countries has steadily increased, and these have gradually increased their share of contracted projects and contracted funds. This has been achieved primarily through EUDs design of Calls for Proposals that correspond to local priorities. Since EUDs have made relatively low use of the capacity development (‘support measure’) facility of this programme, there is still considerable potential to improve the Commission’s engagement with NSAs and LAs from partner countries using the existing programme design.

C3 The programme has achieved a high level of consultation with prospective applicants and grant beneficiaries.

More than half of the Objective 1 survey respondents consider consultation between EUDs and NSA&LAs as good or very good; EUDs are more satisfied than grant beneficiaries. Through Objectives 2 and 3 the Commission has established a high level of consultation with grant beneficiaries and key stakeholders, and some innovation in strategic and methodological thinking.

C4 The division between OMS and NMS is no longer a significant distinguishing factor in the way European NSAs and LAs relate to the programme.

NMS actors play only a marginal role in Objective 1 of the programme. Increasing their participation was not among the intended results of the programme. In fact, under Objective 1, programme managers have (successfully) focused on increasing the Commission’s direct engagement with NSA and LA from the partner countries. It is, however, noteworthy that lead applicants from the NMS administer only 1.5% of the Objective 1a projects implemented by European NSAs, and these projects are on average half the size of those administered by NSAs from the OMS. There is a modest

participation of NMS organisations as partners, particularly in projects in the ENPI region, and in other countries which are priorities for the bilateral ODA of the NMS. In interviews, Commission officials and NSA representatives from the OMS did not consider this to be a problem for the programme, while, their colleagues and counterparts from the NMS perceived this situation as significant and regrettable. In sharp contrast, the NMS have fully participated in Objectives 2 and 3 of the programme. The programme made particular efforts to ensure equitable NMS participation, reserving 20% of funds in some calls for projects proposed by NMS, systematically extending a higher level of Commission co-financing (90% compared to 75% for OMS), and awarding additional points in project selection in some Calls for Proposals where applicants or partners from the NMS were included. In addition, the Commission financed a number of projects that provided a wide range of capacity-development support to potential applicants and grant beneficiaries from the NMS.

Romania and Bulgaria, which joined the Union later than the other NMS, are still somewhat under-represented in Objectives 2 and 3; in particular, they have fewer NSA and LA able to act as lead agencies in projects under this programme, unlike all other MS with similar population (except Spain). Low participation is more closely connected to a MS's peripheral location. Small and very small MS tend to have fewer or no lead agencies implementing projects, but at the same time participate in significantly more projects as partners. The lowest relative participation rates are to be found in the MS with the largest population, as well as in the Scandinavian countries, which have extensive bilateral development education programmes.

Effectiveness

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ 1, EQ2, EQ4, EQ5 and EQ9.

C5 The majority of Calls for Proposals under the programme are sufficiently competitive.

Globally 12% of applicants who submit an eligible Concept Note are eventually preselected for contracting. This ratio would seem adequate to encourage participation of NSAs and LAs with good proposals, while also ensuring competition. However, in some countries the number of eligible Concept Notes is so low that most of these eventually obtain Commission funding. Calls for Proposals are slow and complex; this problem is not specific to this programme.

C6 For Objective 1a, EUDs have mostly made little or no use of their reserve for support measures.

Greater use of support measures could have integrated strategic forms of capacity development into the programme at country level, and improved communication and consultation with NSAs and LAs. Some EUDs used support measures to finance activities that were weakly or not at all connected to this programme. From a formal point of view, this is not permitted.

C7 LAs have been slower to engage with the programme than NSAs, and seem to face greater challenges.

This is in part a consequence of their shorter experience of cooperation with the Commission, and partly a consequence of their regulatory and administrative procedures which are inherently less flexible than those of the NSAs that work with the Commission.

C8 Regarding Objective 2, there is little consensus on results and their measurement, which is reflected in the weakness or absence of objectively verifiable indicators in most co-financed projects surveyed.

Efficiency

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ3, EQ5, EQ7 and EQ9.

C9 Data collection related to the programme is poor, and this limits the scope and effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation.

The Commission's common information system (CRIS) has been gradually revised and the Commission is finalising the development of a new tool to cover the PCM gap. The pooling of information from EUDs and Headquarters is clearly a complex process from the administrative and technical point of view. Nevertheless, there are some areas where officials do not seem to use the full potential of the information system at their disposal. There are difficulties in managing the information flow within the programme, particularly regarding Objective 1. This hinders the monitoring and evaluation of the programme above the project level.

C10 Monitoring of co-financed projects under Objective 1 relies too heavily on ROM.

Monitoring of co-financed projects relies too heavily on ROM, which is an external, consultant-based system. ROM inevitably focuses on a small proportion of projects, particularly the larger ones. ROM missions are usually scheduled for 6-9 months into the life of a project, which is appropriate for monitoring of relevance and management issues, but would seem too early to provide adequate information about impact and sustainability. Some projects state that they have never been visited by Commission staff; most NSA and LA project managers say they would welcome an increased frequency of contact with their allocated Commission task manager.

Impact prospects

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ2 and EQ5

C11 The Programme has a significant positive **impact** at the level of the "objectives and results"/ "performance indicators" in the multi-annual Strategies for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013.

Regarding Objective 1a and 1b, most EUDs that implement the programme, and an even higher proportion of NSA and LA grant beneficiaries, consider that this programme has had a clear positive impact on the enabling environment for civil society in the countries where the programme is implemented. It is remarkable that so many managers and grant beneficiaries should consider a programme as having a measurable impact at the objectives level, and all regions of the developing world. The programme also has measurable success in other "objectives and results", particularly in the building of capacity of NSAs and LAs from partner countries, the development of partnerships between NSAs and between stakeholders of different types, and in the widening and deepening of dialogue between NSAs, national authorities and development partners. The only "objective and result" of Objective 1a which seems neglected by the programme is "capacity of worker's organisations and employers to engage in social dialogue and promote corporate social responsibility" – a insignificant proportion of funds were allocated to projects on these themes.

Objective 1b has also contributed to the regional and continental structuring of the sector. A majority of grant beneficiaries who responded to the survey carried out for this evaluation reported a broadening and deepening of their cooperation within the NSA/LA sectors and with other stakeholders.

Objective 2 has had a significant positive impact. Co-financed actions address all the "objectives and results" of Objective 2. There has been an increase in ad hoc and structured dialogue between stakeholders in most of the MS, and a growing number of MS have reinforced their bilateral programmes following input from NSAs and LAs that received funding under this programme. There is

also a measurable increase in the breadth and quality of networking within NSA and LA categories and between these and other stakeholders at the European level. The consolidation and expansion of development education and awareness raising in the NMS is in part a result of this programme. As mentioned earlier, the indicators of impact for co-funded actions under Objective 2 are generally vague or absent. One consequence of this soft framework is that the average impact of co-financed projects is difficult to measure. Good projects are unlikely to be identified, duplicated, multiplied or scaled up, since their success and value for money cannot easily be quantified and qualified. The authors of this Final Evaluation concur with the Mid-Term Review finding that a nucleus of high quality projects has been funded.

In general, Objective 3 projects have good or very good impact prospects. The principal weakness of some Objective 3 projects is linked to their complexity. Most Objective 3 projects are implemented by large consortia, often with eight or more organisations in different MS. As in many grant programmes, a number of applicants seem to have exaggerated their level of prior cooperation and preparation of their common project, leading to long delays in project start-up, and a shift of resources from project activities towards the running costs of the grantees. A number of projects surveyed were proposed and approved without reference to any baseline data, diagnostic or support study. This makes it difficult to measure impact and is likely to have a negative impact on the results obtained.

The superficial or weak quality of some partnerships lessened the impact of some projects and the overall programme: many Objective 3 projects were funded on the basis of proposals that mention results in areas such as lobbying, campaigning, representation and dialogue with European institutions. However, the majority of partner organisations who responded to the survey believe that their projects relate essentially to networking and (to a much lesser extent) awareness-raising.¹¹² There would seem to be a dichotomy between successful applications that stress engagement with stakeholders and populations outside the NSA community, and the perception of partner organisations in successful projects, who describe these same projects as exclusively or mainly focused on engagement within NSA communities. The pattern of responses to the survey also suggests that the large majority of lead agencies simply did not forward the survey to their partners, again suggesting weaknesses in the partnership structure.

This programme's contribution to capacity strengthening of the European NSA and LA sectors working on international development issues is likely to have an indirect positive effect on other Commission grant-making programmes and projects in which these beneficiaries participate.

Sustainability

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ7.

C12 Projects funded under all Objectives have good prospects for sustainability, although financial sustainability seems more of a challenge than political and institutional sustainability
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Grantees have strengthened their relationships with a range of stakeholders, and formed consortia and networks that can support the continued delivery of benefits even after the end of Commission co-financing. Financial sustainability of results is somewhat weaker. This is in part the consequence of high donor dependency of grantees. Many grant beneficiaries, particularly but not only those from partner countries, identify the requirement to make a financial contribution to their own projects as a major factor limiting their participation in the programme.

¹¹² Survey 3.Beneficiaries.Q8

C13 The promotion of the exchange of best practice at the European level is likely to contribute to sustainability of outcomes of projects funded under Objectives 2 and 3.

Through Objectives 2 and 3, the programme has contributed to a considerable exchange of best practice within Europe. The programme is contributing to a constant innovation and qualitative improvement in projects in development education, awareness raising, networking and advocacy. For some projects co-financed under Objective 3, sustainability is a challenge.

Coherence

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ3, EQ4, EQ6 and EQ8.

C14 The Programme has adequately reflected the growing EU focus on governance.

EUDs have focused their Calls for Proposals on service delivery for basic needs, and on capacity building for NSAs and, to a lesser extent, LAs. Governance-related projects are just under 40% with no upward trend. Nevertheless, more than 40% of EUD officials and more than half of grant beneficiaries consider that this programme has made a significant or large contribution to the promotion of an enabling environment for civil society, participatory development and citizen's active engagement. The Agenda for Change was adopted only towards the end of the period under evaluation. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that this increased focus on governance and human rights is reflected in the most recent Calls for Proposals.

C15 Cross-cutting issues are not appropriately integrated in the implementation of the programme.

The management of the programme in Headquarters and EUDs does not seem to reflect a clear strategy for gender mainstreaming or inclusion of other cross-cutting issues. This has received only marginal attention at all levels, from Calls for Proposals to proposal design to project implementation. On a positive note, 16% of EUD respondents to the survey for this evaluation said that they wished to improve the treatment of cross-cutting issues in their future calls for proposals under this thematic programme.

Commission value-added

This conclusion is based mainly on EQ3, EQ4, EQ5, EQ6 and EQ8.

C16 The Programme provides clear Commission value-added through a focus on the enabling environment for civil society (Objective 1) and through the promotion of a European perspective and European-level cooperation (Objectives 2 and 3).

Objective 1 plays a very valuable role in realising the Commission's focus on the enabling environment in its true sense as understood in the Agenda for Change: the legislative, regulatory and political framework within which civil society and autonomous local government can play a full role in national development and governance. Such a focus would seem to be an added-value of the Commission. Particularly in the ACP countries, the Commission's engagement alongside national governments also creates opportunities to improve the enabling environment for NSAs and LAs which other donors often do not have.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Main recommendations

The following three recommendations are the most significant.

R4 The Commission is advised to reinforce support to NSA work related to good governance, accountability, and empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

R7 EUDs could make wider use of the in country support measures.

R8 EUDs and Headquarters could improve internal monitoring.

General Recommendations to the Commission

The following improvements would need to be implemented at a wider level than this programme.

R1 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. [C6].

R2 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 [C6, C7, C10].

R3 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

General Recommendations regarding the NSA&LA programme

R4 The Commission is advised to reinforce support to NSA work related to good governance, accountability, and empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

The NSA&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.

R5 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. [C8]

R6 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 [C18].

Recommendations regarding Objective 1

R7 EUDs could make wider use of the in country support measures.

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. Programme managers could better inform EUDs about eligible costs that could be financed using support measures [C7, C9]

R8 EUDs and Headquarters could improve internal monitoring.

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. [C7, C12, C13].

Recommendations regarding Objective 2

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 [C5].

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 [C10].

Recommendations regarding Objective 3

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 for Objective 2, 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 [C5].