

Joint Evaluation of Intra-ACP culture support programmes

ACP Cultures, ACP Films ACP Cultures +

Executive summary

This summary presents an overview of the results of the joint assessment of intra-ACP culture support programmes - ACP Cultures, ACP Films and ACP Cultures + - conducted in November 2015 and May 2016.

The ACP Cultures and ACP Films Programmes, funded by the 9th EDF, are now finalised, and therefore this analysis is the final assessment. ACP Cultures +, funded by the 10th EDF is ongoing, so this is a mid-term assessment.

Under the terms of reference of the mission, the objective of this study is to evaluate to what extent the EC aid provided since 2007 to the cultural sector in ACP countries was relevant, efficient and effective, and its impact durable, for the support, strengthening and structuring of the cultural industries in ACP countries.

The assessment of the Programmes was carried out based on a review of all documents relating to their management, the funded projects and other activities implemented in each of the three programmes. An individual assessment of the results was performed for all funded projects completed on the date of the assessment. Ongoing projects were analysed in terms of their content and the current progress status. ACP beneficiaries, professionals and authorities of the cultural sectors¹ were also consulted through a questionnaire. The response rate was low, but the information gathered served to strengthen and enrich the analyses carried out on the basis of documents consulted.

Context

The three programmes assessed are part of the cooperation strategy for the development of the EU and the ACP Group of States. Cooperation between the two parties is governed by the Cotonou Agreement that assigns the same level of priority to cultural development as it does for economic and social development. Culture is identified as one of five areas of cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries and one of the cornerstones on which to build sustainable development in partner countries. The political will of the ACP States in this sense was formally manifested in the statements of ACP Ministers of Culture in 2003 (Dakar) and 2006 (Santo Domingo), with the reaffirmation of the will of the States to develop cultural policies at a national level and increased cooperation in this area to strengthen the contribution of culture for the development of ACP countries. In 2012, the meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture in Brussels "No future without culture," stressed the importance of the recognition and respect of cultural diversity as a factor of cohesion and social inclusion

¹ The activity sectors covered by these Programmes are: Cinema and audio-visual; book publishing and literature; music; performing arts and live performances; visual and plastic arts; fashion and design; architecture; cultural Heritage; crafts; plus, for ACP Cultures +, cultural tourism.

The ACP Group of States has a General Secretariat based in Brussels, which serves as a relay in the relationship of the ACP with the EU - the ACP Secretariat (SACP).

Intra-ACP cooperation falls within the framework of regional cooperation and integration and covers all regional operations whose actions benefit many ACP States or all of these. It aims to respond to the common challenges facing the ACP countries through operations that transcend geographical location. An intra-ACP intervention is considered when the action at national and / or regional level is not possible or less efficient, in order to provide added value in relation to operations carried out with other cooperation instruments.

Description of the Programmes

The overall objective of the three programmes is to increase the contribution of cultural activity sectors in the fight against poverty and the socio-economic and sustainable development of the recipient countries, through targeted structuring of the sectors and a better circulation of works and dissemination of culture in ACP countries. They also aim to preserve the cultural diversity.

	Budget	Activities	Funding agreement signature
<i>Programmes 9th EDF</i>			
ACP Cultures	Total budget 6.33 M€ including: Management budget 0.4 M€ Information / com. 0.05M€	Grant Fund ² 2.3M€ ACP Cultural Observatory 0.87M€ Project ILO / UNCTAD / UNESCO 2.54M€	07/11/2006
ACP Films	Total budget 8.0 M€ including: Management budget 1.2 M€ Information / com. 0.01 M€	Grant fund ² 6.5 M€ Legal support for prod. 0.05M€	20/07/2006
<i>Programme 10th EDF</i>			
ACP Cultures+	Total budget 30.0 M€ including: Budget management + com. and other activities 3.78 M€ Reserve not used at this stage: 1 M€	Grant fund ² 23.5 M€ Cultural policies component	08/02/2011

The three programmes were implemented by the SACP, with the technical assistance in each of the three programmes of an ad hoc team for the ongoing management and monitoring of funded projects.

The chosen implementation method was partially decentralised and partially joint with DEVCO which followed up and approved significant decisions during their execution.

It was expected that for the multi-agency Project³ (only), the Contracting Authority would be the EC. 9th EDF Programmes had a total duration (operational phase) of 4 years.

The operational phase of ACP Cultures + is scheduled to finish in February 2019.

² Implemented by call for proposals (AAP)

³ Multi-agency Project ACP / ILO / UNCTAD / UNESCO, as part of ACP Cultures

Justification of the programmes assessed

In terms of relevance, the Programmes are fully coherent with the external action policies of the EU and development strategies of the EU and the ACP Group. In order to structure the cultural activity sectors, the programmes seek to develop the potential of these sectors in terms of socio-economic development and thus meet the main objective of the EU / ACP cooperation, which is the reduction of poverty and integral human development in the partner countries.

Programmes are designed to meet the main needs of ACP cultural activity sectors, although they are heterogeneous due to very different geographical, social demographic, economic and cultural reasons, they are severely limited in their potential for development by the scarcity of funding available at national and international levels and their low capacity to generate financial resources. Also, strengthening the artistic and technical capacities of ACP cultural professionals (designers, artists, producers, technicians, managers, entrepreneurs ...), market access, audience development and networking of ACP operators and artists had been identified as essential conditions for the structuring and development of the target sectors. Moreover, the lack of cultural policies and appropriate regulatory frameworks in most ACP countries weakens the development potential of cultural operators.

Relevance of the architecture of Programmes and intervention logic

The development of the 9th EDF Programmes relied on the experience and lessons learned from the first support programme for cinema and the audio-visual intra-ACP sector (8th EDF, implemented between 2000 and 2003) and EU support for ACP cultural events (FESPACO, Dakar Biennale, MASA, etc.)⁴. The Programmes have thus replaced "all ACP" culture support activities, mostly dispersed by a single device in the form of structured and structuring support programmes. ACP Cultures is the first intra-ACP programme itself with calls for proposals covering cultural activity sectors other than cinema. 9th EDF Programmes brought strong innovation in terms of partially decentralised management and wanted to "probe" in terms of sectors of intervention at the intra-ACP level, which can justify the relatively small amounts compared to the needs of sectors.

The development of ACP Cultures + capitalised on the experience of the two previous Programmes, improving both the management arrangements and the content of the activities implemented with a significant gain of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the 9th EDF. The rise and consolidation of resources into a single 10th EDF Programme are thus fully justified.

The three Programmes are sent to the 79 ACP countries and to all sectors of cultural activity.

A majority of the resources (74% of the 9th EDF and 61% of the 10th) were channelled into the cinema and audio-visual industry. All other sectors received 26% (9th EDF) and 39% (10th EDF) of the funding available.

In the case of ACP Cultures in particular, the objectives and range of targeted sectors seem disproportionate to the Programme resources, particularly in the absence of any prioritisation of sectors or activities to be financed. The budget for strengthening operators capabilities was only 2.3 M€, with individual amounts of subsidy of about 200-300 K€, which could only fund a maximum of between 8 and 10 projects, for 79 countries resulting in an excessive dilution of effort. A significant part of the budget (2.54 M€) went to the multi-agency project that was not designed to directly strengthen the ACP operators.

The decision to favour the cinema and audio-visual sector, especially in the 9th EDF, could be justified by the desire to perpetuate historic EU support for this sector. It presents strong synergies with other cultural sectors and has significant economic development potential, due to its overlapping with the production of its own images in the ACP and other audio-visual products (in advertising, in education and in much of the content carried by ICTs).

⁴ See Assessment Report on the SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR CULTURAL EVENTS OF THE ACP COUNTRIES IN MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, December 2005.

Efficiency of the management and implementation

The intervention of the Programme management units (PMU) of the 9th EDF, consisting of two experts each, was primarily intended to ensure compliance with EDF procedures for grants, to ensure communication and to implement the ACP cultural Observatory and legal support activities for film producers.

The efficiency of the device was penalised due to having a separate PMU dedicated to each Programme, the size of which was not sufficient enough to take advantage of economies of scale in the implementation of activities. Significant delays and inefficiencies were found because of difficulties with PMU teams (high turnover) and difficulties in coordination with the SACP, which does not have, since 2011, the teams needed in the cultural sector to ensure the full implementation and monitoring of the Programmes. During the implementation of the 9th EDF Programmes (that is to say, before 2011), an official from the Culture sector was stationed at the SACP and had the responsibility of monitoring the implementation.

In the case of the 10th EDF, the level of efficiency improved with the establishment of a single TA (technical assistant), which operates within the SACP, with a strong team ensuring all tasks related to Programme management, operator subsidies, the cultural policy component and communication. The team still had some rotation of experts and coordination difficulties with the SACP, which still didn't have, at the time of the assessment mission, a Head of Business in charge of cooperation in the cultural sector. DEVCO had to ensure, in these circumstances, a strong presence in the tracking and monitoring of the programme to enhance the quality of execution.

Efficiency of the Programmes

Each Programme has different selection of activities that are analysed as follows:

ACP Cultures

The multi-agency project, which aimed at strengthening the environment of the cultural sectors in five pilot countries, has proved totally ineffective, without results.

The Cultural Observatory activity, which had the aim of contributing to improving the governance of culture in ACP countries has not achieved significant results. However, this has enabled the establishment of bases for pursuing the objective of improving public policy in the sector in the context of ACP Cultures +.

In the component intended for grants per call for proposals, 6 projects were funded, covering 15 ACP countries, half of them in West Africa. 4 of them had satisfactory results and in accordance with the respective project documents and another one was partially satisfactory. The remaining project was inconclusive.

The projects have helped strengthen the skills of professionals and the capabilities of the operators involved, particularly in the areas of theatre, digital art and dance in West Africa.

ACP Films

Considering the available resources, the expected results were achieved to a satisfactory level in the areas of production, circulation and visibility of ACP works and strengthening the capacity of ACP professionals.

The call for proposals was effective in terms of project funding, with 22 funded projects, 19 of which achieved results in line with respective project documents. The expected results in the production area have been particularly positive, as 11 of the 12 works financed have been successfully concluded and disseminated through different channels, many in international and prestigious festivals. The results in the field of training are positive since 4 of the 6 projects achieved results,

knowing that production projects also helped to build the capacity of professionals involved in the projects (around 200 professionals).

However, the Programme's expected results in the field of distribution / promotion and dissemination were mostly not achieved, as only 3 out of 6 projects in this area had a partially positive result.

Regarding the activity of legal support, the mechanism offered was underutilised. That said, this component included a limited budget, which did not facilitate the achievement of very significant results.

ACP Cultures+

On projects financed by AAP, which is essentially the Programme, for both two calls for proposals, on average 10% of the total amount of funding applications received could be effectively financed.

The vast majority (24 out of 27) of completed projects achieved a significant portion of the expected results. However, in some cases, **the Programme lacks information on the capitalisation carried out or the potential of these results.** In terms of capacity building, most of the projects had positive results in terms of training of technicians, artists and managers.

Overall, the results are achieved at a high level in terms of support for production and professionalism.

It is noteworthy that during the 2nd call for proposals, for the first time, there are **more promoters from the ACP countries than European ones**, demonstrating **the strengthened capacity of the ACP operators**. There is a **strong increase in the number of beneficiaries from the Caribbean and East Africa**, as well as greater diversity in the geographical origin of the projects: **actions have occurred in over 80% of countries in the ACP region.**

The results achieved by the projects financed make it possible to say that the **quality** of films and audio-visual works of the ACP has **improved**. The good results shown by the films produced, with a strong distribution in international festivals and theatrical releases in different countries, show that the circulation of works has increased.

For other activity sectors, it is in the **arts, including music**, where the Programme has had good results in terms of production quality. **Dance and theatre show positive results in terms of better national and international movement**, with works created / produced as part of projects subject to a large number of representations, both in ACP countries and in Europe.

All the projects funded and brought to fruition have an impact on the skills and capacities of the cultural operators involved. Participation in a project that is demanding in terms of management and implementation, strengthens the capacities of technicians, and operators concerned and the managers of recipient establishments and partners.

In terms of support activity for the formulation and implementation of cultural policies in ACP countries, the activities do not seem at this stage to have had significant results.

Impact

The analysis of funded projects and the evolution of the different sectors show an improvement in the structuring of recipient operators for the sectors covered by grants. . Their managerial capabilities are strengthened and, consequently, their ability to share their productive capacities and their potential impact in each sector are improving.

The circulation and visibility of ACP works, particularly in the cinema and audio-visual sector have improved internationally. **The impact can only be consolidated if the flow of quality ACP works continues, which requires continuity in the access to finance for production support.**

The established partnerships have resulted in lasting collaborations and exchanges between operators in different countries, even if partnerships seem more sustainable when it comes to operators from countries that are relatively close geographically and culturally (same area, for example). **These collaborations strengthen the impact of potential projects, taking advantage of synergies in production, technical skills, circulation, and market access.**

The visibility of the Programme is strong because the intra-ACP / EU cooperation has been highlighted through communication directly carried out by the PMU or Technical Assistant via communication plans of actions for each funded project.

In contrast, intra-ACP Programmes are **low in terms of improving the governance of culture**, including improving the regulatory environment for cultural sectors.

Conclusions

On the relevance

Intra-ACP Programmes of support for culture are fully relevant to the cooperation strategies for the development and support of culture of the EU and the ACP Group of States. They fulfil a major need of the operators and sectors of ACP cultural activity in terms of access to funding sources. The amount (significant) and duration (relatively long) of the funded projects allow the implementation of actions with a potential of a structuring result for the sectors covered. **The intra-ACP Programmes are one of the few sources of funds available to ACP operators enabling them to carry out major projects.** In addition, the intra-ACP dimension of the Programmes allows **the strengthening of ties** and exchanges between operators from different countries to pool the means and resources available, to expand audiences to ACP countries, while providing an important opening to the operators concerned, and strengthen cultural diversity.

On the efficiency

The 9th EDF Programmes were not fully satisfactory from a standpoint of efficiency, because they were managed by separate PMUs, without taking advantage of potential economies of scale. The ACP Cultures+ Programme has learned from previous Programmes, both in terms of management and content.

The most efficient form of intervention is the provision of direct subsidies to cultural operators for the implementation of development projects. This avoids intermediary intervention and allows direct monitoring by managers of the Programmes. Other activities of the 9th EDF Programmes were not efficient compared to the resources invested.

Regarding the support for cultural policies in the 10th EDF, the current modalities of intervention do not seem up to the issues, but the **creation of a document collection and compilation and dissemination of good practice in actions funded must be continued and strengthened.**

On the performance

A significant part of the expected results of the 9th EDF Programmes has been achieved, particularly through the successful completion of most projects finished that have achieved the desired results. The same can be said for the projects completed in ACP Cultures +. In particular, the amounts spent on both Programmes in the cinematographic and audio-visual sectors are significant and have helped to support more than 50 projects in total.

On the impact

For the cinema and audio-visual sector, the results achieved allow us to say that the intra-ACP Programmes have a positive impact in developing the sector, the production capacity, technical skills and quality of the works. The circulation and visibility of ACP works has increased internationally.

The ACP Cultures Programme was too limited in the number of projects together to get significant results. It must be placed in a perspective of continuity with ACP Cultures +.

The sectors that have actually received grants show an improvement in the development of the recipient operators. Their managerial capabilities are strengthened and, consequently, their ability to share their productive capacities and potential impact in each sector are improving.

The established partnerships have resulted in lasting collaborations and exchanges between operators from different countries. These collaborations strengthen the impact of potential projects, taking advantage of synergies in production, technical skills, circulation, and market access. The intra-ACP Programmes are low in terms of improving the governance of culture, including improving the regulatory environment for cultural sectors.

Recommendations

In light of the good results achieved in the Programmes, especially in their main component which are the direct grants to cultural operators through a call for proposals, there is a strong capitalisation of experience between the 9th and 10th EDF and calls for a continuation of the established mechanism. **The experience, knowledge and expertise gained by ACP operators and structures must be capitalised on in a future Programme that could mostly be spent on direct subsidies to operators, while ensuring continuity with the current Programme, to avoid too long a break in the flow of funds to ACP cultural sectors.**

For the second phase of the 10th EDF Programme under way, the technical assistance should ensure full capitalisation **for the contribution to the knowledge of the ACP cultural sector**, to identify gaps in this area and ways to help fill them in for the countries / institutions concerned. It should also systematically **collect information** from projects, and data to measure the impact of the projects funded and disseminate the results of the Programme, demonstrating its added value. The TA should in this way have an impact in terms of the advocacy of policy makers of the countries, international organisations and the EU.

Regarding the good results obtained by the intra-ACP Programmes in terms of visibility and communication, at both the level of the operators and the institutions, for the EU and the SACP, it should be noted that the information contained in the **website of ACP Cultures +** is an important part of the intellectual resources accumulated during the 3 intra-ACP programmes. Their **sustainability** is essential in order to ensure continuity and knowledge capitalisation.