

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

ASSESSMENT OF FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Context

Purpose of this document: This document must be established for all interim and ex-post evaluations in the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) to provide an objective overall assessment of the evaluation and the validity of its results, as well as a general description of how the evaluation results will be used by DG EAC.

The document shall be published together with the Evaluation Report on Europa:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm

Definitions: Evaluation in the Commission is defined as a “judgement of interventions according to their results, impacts and the needs they aim to satisfy”. It is an information tool that supports the preparation and implementation of public interventions, and reports on the corresponding results to the public and stakeholders. Information about the evaluation framework of the European Commission can be obtained at:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/sound_fin_mgt/evaluation_en.htm

Organisation of the evaluation process: In DG EAC evaluations must be independent and shall be led and carried out by external resources. The operational management of the EAC policy areas is responsible for the identification of evaluation subjects, the organisation of evaluations, and the follow-up of evaluation results. A central Evaluation Sector, detached from the operational activities evaluated, has as a major role in ensuring quality, objectivity and an element of independence to the process, by having a close involvement in all steps of the evaluation. An evaluation Steering Group is appointed to prepare the evaluation, supervise the execution, and support the evaluator on the basis of the members' specific knowledge and expertise of the evaluation subject.

Basic data about the specific evaluation

Evaluation: INTERIM EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL CONTACT POINTS (CCPs)

Purpose of the evaluation: To obtain inputs to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of the CCPs within the new Culture Programme (2007-2013)

Evaluator: ECOTEC Research and Consulting Ltd

Budget of the evaluation: 64.748 €

Time period of execution: 12.09.2007 – 19.08.2008

Assessment

Carried out by: The Evaluation Sector of DG EAC (Unit R2)

Date: 01.09.2008

1. Evaluation subject

Cultural Contact Points (CCPs) have been established in most of the current MS and in the other countries taking part in the Culture 2000 Programme. They are responsible for promoting the Programme, facilitating the participation of as many cultural professionals as possible, ensuring an exchange of information with national cultural institutions, maintaining contact between the participants in the various Community programmes and a link with the other sources of information on the various Community programmes. The EC provides annual operating grants for them. The total available budget for 2008 was estimated to be approximately 1.640.000 €

2. Scope of evaluation

The evaluation covers the activities of all CCPs established in most of the current Member States and other countries participating in the Culture programme within the framework of the previous Culture 2000 programme (2000-2006).

3. Methodology applied for the evaluation

The evaluation used standard tools such as documentary review (including a survey to programme beneficiaries carried out in the context of the Culture 2000 evaluation), in-depth interviews, a survey, an evaluation workshop and seven case studies. Some limitations in relation to the nature and quality of the data collected are to be noted, mainly due to the lack of standard monitoring systems of CCP activity and the impossibility to approach new potential programme beneficiaries within the context of this evaluation.

4. Results of the evaluation

The Culture Contact Points have obtained a high degree of success in the attainment of their objectives. Large private CCPs have been the most successful in relation to the dissemination and the promotion of the Programme, whereas small private CCPs have been the best in networking.

The quality of the CCPs' activities has been positively valued. In general, activities related to publicity and technical assistance have been of a better quality than those related to networking.

One reason for the poorer performance in some areas seems to be the broad scope of activities required from the CCPs, which leads them to concentrate on those having the most immediate impact on the programme and its target group. Another reason is that the CCPs have some uncertainty about the scope and nature of the activities they are supposed to carry out, and about the outputs expected from them.

Some room for improvement has been found for the Commission with regards to communication with and support to the CCPs, particularly in terms of training, feedback given on the contents of the CCPs' work, and improving the monitoring systems.

Regarding financial and human resources, there is a large variety in the sizes of the CCPs, and the link between size and performance is not always clear. However, it is concluded that, in the case of many countries, the staff levels are too low to successfully carry out the tasks allocated.

5. Follow-up of the evaluation results

An Action Plan addressing the evaluation results is currently being established, and its implementation will be monitored by timely progress reports.

6. Conclusions of the assessment of the Evaluation Report

The evaluators faced a number of challenges with regards to limited and biased information. However, they trust that comprehensive triangulation and direct checking of outputs have minimized this weakness. Altogether, the steering group is satisfied about the accuracy and completeness of the data collected, the soundness and relevance of the conclusions, and the usefulness of the recommendations.