




Evaluation of the Pilot Action of EU Aid Volunteers – Final Report

23 July 2014

 <p>European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection</p>	<p>The opinions expressed in this document represent the views of the authors, and are not necessarily shared by the European Commission.</p>
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Document Control

Document Title	Evaluation of the Pilot Action of EU Aid Volunteers – Final Report
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Checked by	Laura Robson, Petra van Nierop
Date	23 July 2014



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Glossary of Abbreviations

ACRA	Associazione di Cooperazione Rurale in Africa
ADICE	Association for the Development of Civic and European Initiatives
ANAP/K	Association Neerwaya pour l'appui à l'autopromotion des communautés du Koulpélogo
ANPAS	Associazione Nazionale Pubbliche Assistenze
ARC	Austrian Red Cross
ASB	Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland e.V.
AWO	Arbeiterwohlfahrt
BRC	British Red Cross
BulRC	Bulgarian RC
CIMA	Centro Internazionale in Monitoraggio Ambientale
CDRS	Comprehensive Disaster Response Services
CP	Civil Protection
CRC	Croatian Red Cross
DG ECHO	Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
DINEPA	Haiti National Water and Sanitation Directorate
DPC	Italian Civil Protection Department
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECCB	Center of Humanitarian and Development Aid
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
ERCC	Emergency Response Coordination Centre
EUAV	EU Aid Volunteers
EVHAC	European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps
EVRECA	European Volunteers for Response of Emergencies in the Caribbean
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreements
FCA	Finn Church Aid
FOCSIV	Federazione Organismi Cristiani Servizio Internazionale Volontariato
FRC	French Red Cross
GRC	German Red Cross
GVC	Gruppo di Volontariato Civile
HA	Humanitarian Aid
ICCO	Interchurch Organization For Development Cooperation
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMC	International Medical Corps

LRC	Latvia Red Cross
LRRD	Linking Relief to Rehabilitation and Development
LWD	Life With Dignity
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MS	Member States
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NLRC	Netherlands Red Cross
NOHA	University Network of Humanitarian Assistance
NPRD	Croatian National Protection and Rescue Directorate
OCD	Office of Civil Defence
OCHA	UN agency for Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSM-FR	Open Street Map France
OSVSWA	Orissa State Volunteers and Social Workers Association, India
PIPA	People in Peril
SCD	Service de Cooperation au Developpement
SCI	Save the Children International
SNCRR	Societatea Națională de Cruce Roșie din România
SCUK	Save the Children UK
SINAPRED	Sistema Nacional para la Prevención, Mitigación y Atención de Desastres
THW	German Federal Agency for Technical Relief
ToR	Terms of Reference
UCPH	University of Copenhagen
UAWC	Union of Agricultural Work Committees
URD	Urgence, Rehabilitation, Developpement
VinCaB	Volunteers in Capacity Building Projects
VSOI	Voluntary Service Overseas International

Executive summary

The evaluation of the Pilot Action of EU Aid Volunteers was conducted by ICFI from January to July 2014 and involved consultations with sending organisations, hosting organisations and volunteers who had participated in the EUAV Pilot Action. The evaluation team also interviewed relevant members of the European Commission (in both DG ECHO and DG EAC), the Secretariat-General of the European Commission and the EU agency EACEA in the scoping phase and also consulted with two subcontracted experts each with over ten years expertise in the Humanitarian Aid sector.

Context and background

The EU Aid Volunteers programme, established through Regulation 375/2014¹ provides the opportunity for European volunteers to come together to support and complement Humanitarian Aid in third countries by volunteering through European organisations and hosted in organisations based in third countries. The first step towards the development of the EUAV took place in 2008 when the legal basis for a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was established through Article 214 (5) TFEU. Following the adoption of the establishing Regulation on 3 April 2014,² DG ECHO must now draft Delegated and Implementing Acts to establish standards and procedures covering identification, selection, preparation, management and deployment of EU Aid Volunteers to support Humanitarian Aid operations in third countries in accordance with Article 9 of the Regulation.

The EUAV Pilot Action ran from 2011 to 2014 in three phases and had the purpose of guiding the development of the Regulation to establish the initiative and informing the development of standards and systems around specific dimensions (training, certification mechanism, deployment set-up, data-base) of the future scheme. The details of the latter would be further elaborated in Implementing and Delegated Acts. The EUAV Pilot Action provided the opportunity for partner organisations to shape the future programme. This also increased the ‘buy-in’ of these organisations into the scheme. Twelve pilot projects were funded under the action and through these 289 volunteers were deployed to 148 hosting organisations in different third countries.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was twofold:

- To evaluate the EUAV Pilot Action in order to provide an assessment of its relevance, coherence / complementarity, EU added value, efficiency, sustainability and effectiveness; and
- To gather lessons learnt on why some aspects of the pilot projects did not work so well, and on this basis, to provide inputs for Delegated Acts (more general principles) and Implementing Acts (processes to follow, e.g. recruitment process, deployment, etc.).

In addition to the evaluation, the team also proposed a monitoring and evaluation framework to help the Commission to monitor the progress of the future EUAV.

Method of approach

The data-collection, analysis and reporting were structured around five main phases: (1) inception; (2) main data-collection phase; (3) follow-up interviews; (4) development of a monitoring framework; and (5) analysis. Mixed methods of data collection were used:

¹ Regulation (COM (2012) 514 final)

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0375&from=EN>

- **Thorough review of project documentation** (including applications, budgets and project reports)
- Two online **surveys**: (i) of volunteers which received a 30% response rate with 71 respondents; and (ii) of hosting organisations, which had a 29% response rate with 16 organisations responding.
- **Interviews**: with eight volunteers from six different projects and six hosting organisations from five different projects and twenty sending organisations.
- ‘Virtual’ **focus group**: an online ‘Facebook’ discussion was conducted with five volunteers.
- **Consultations** with two subcontracted experts: two meetings were held to discuss interim and final findings. The experts also reviewed the Report.

Some challenges to data collection were encountered (e.g. quality and availability of documentation, availability of interviewees, technical issues with the online survey tool). These have not resulted in any major obstacles to the quality of the evaluation, although the views of the hosting organisations are proportionally less in number than those of volunteers and sending organisations due to lower number of respondents to survey and interviews (22 in total) and in project documentation.

Overall evaluation findings and recommendations

The effectiveness of the pilot action

The purpose of the EUAV Pilot Action was to fund projects that would ‘test’ different models or methods of implementing the distinct dimensions of EUAV initiative.³ The pilot action was effective in testing these. Indeed, almost all of the different aspects now included in the new Regulation were first ‘tested’ through the pilot actions. Overall, the pilot action was also robust to the extent that multiple models / approaches were trialled for each ‘dimension’ of the EUAV. The evaluation team considered that only three dimensions were not explicitly tested (database model of deployment, exchange of staff and volunteers, certification mechanisms) and that in these cases, comprehensive lessons have not been generated to inform the practical delivery of these aspects of the programme.

Lessons were generated in relation to all the remaining dimensions. Some of the most relevant relate to suitability and usefulness of different profiles of volunteer, key volunteer competences, the understanding and definition of ‘expert volunteer’, methods for volunteer selection, volunteer training and preparation, volunteer management in the field, capacity-building and security.

§ Strategic recommendation: Given that for some dimensions included in the Regulation models have not been comprehensively tested, DG ECHO should make sure to monitor the implementation in the early stages of the programme so as to shape them as necessary.

§ Operational recommendations

- DG ECHO should publish a good practice guide covering volunteer selection and matching, hosting organisation selection, project development, needs-assessment, consortium-management, post-deployment activities, team working, strengthening of team spirit, etc. to support future applicant organisations and support consistency and high quality of projects.

³ These dimensions were *inter alia*: training for volunteers esp. for unexperienced volunteers; a database of trained volunteers; a system for deploying volunteers; a certification system of hosting and sending organisations; standards for volunteer management; local capacity building; and the EUAV network. These ‘dimensions’ are now established in the different Articles of Regulation 375/2014.

- DG ECHO should ensure that mechanisms are created for continuous generation and dissemination of lessons learnt / good practices once the programme is running: e.g. regular feedback on the project's status, annual programme reporting, evaluations, partner meetings, use of feedback forms, etc.

Coherence and complementarity with other programmes

The EUAV concept is coherent with regulatory frameworks guiding DG ECHO's work, in particular Regulation 1257/1996 and the Decision establishing the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. It also coheres with the agenda to professionalise the Humanitarian Aid sector. Some EUAV projects were clearly development projects, but – if carefully managed – similar projects in the future could provide a useful opportunity for exploring, implementing and possibly standardising practices on LRRD.

Eleven out of the twelve lead sending organisations, as well as several partners were already either running or participating in other volunteering programmes at the time of their involvement in the EUAV initiative. In some EUAV pilot projects the objectives, approach to recruitment, training and/or deployment was very similar, if not identical, to the existing programmes of the sending organisation involved. These sending organisations report that participation in the EUAV allowed them to recruit 'new' profiles of volunteer and design different missions from their usual programme and thus enrich their portfolio of volunteering activities (e.g. it allowed them to deploy junior volunteers instead of expert volunteers, or deploy internationally instead of in Europe). This situation thus presents risk that EUAV is used as additional funding source to expand existing schemes, possibly at the expense of new organisations without an established programme.

EUAV volunteers complemented the work of local staff either by helping staff to build new skills, filling technical gaps and/or providing additional manpower. However, there is a risk of overlap: one eighth to one fifth of volunteers surveyed and one fifth of hosting organisations thought that their work had sometimes replaced or duplicated the work of local staff. Such situations were avoided when sending organisations designed volunteer interventions in partnership with the hosting organisation(s) and – where possible – the volunteer(s). Organisations participating in the pilot action have suggested that the ECHO field offices could have promoted complementarity by increasing visibility of the EUAV and supporting synergies with ongoing humanitarian work in-country.

§ Strategic recommendations:

- DG ECHO could consider using EUAV strategically to develop good practices in LRRD and/or to implement LRDD (where this is not possible through other programmes).
- Linkages between EUAV & (i) ECHO Field, (ii) EU CP mechanism, and (iii) wider ECHO operations should be strengthened so as to enhance the possibilities for coherence and complementarity with ongoing operations.
- Future EUAV Calls for Proposals should clarify the specific areas (objectives, target volunteers, sector of working, etc.) in which sending organisations must demonstrate complementarity between EUAV and their existing programmes.

EU added value

The key added value of the EUAV Pilot Action was its trans-national dimension, both for the organisations and the volunteers involved. The possibility to work with DG ECHO project and to build partnerships with organisations from other EU Member States was reported by sending organisations interviewed as one of the key reasons for having participated. 76% (54 out of a total of 71) of volunteers surveyed considered that participation in the EU AV Pilot Action increased, to some extent or to a large extent, their feeling of belonging to a European

Humanitarian Aid force, and to the EU more generally. Only 18% replied ‘not at all’ to this statement. These findings were confirmed by volunteers participating in the Facebook focus group and some of the volunteers interviewed. This sentiment was generated when volunteers from different EU countries were deployed together at the same time and were trained together. However, evidence shows that under some projects, volunteers’ ‘loyalty’ was first and foremost to their sending and/or hosting organisation.

The EUAV Pilot Action has had a notable added value for the twelve (out of 39) participating sending organisations from EU13. For these organisations, the EUAV Pilot Action provided an opportunity to learn more about HA provision abroad, especially if this was spread over more than one call, raised their profile at Member State level and increased their credibility within the international HA sector.

By contrast, accessibility to the EUAV for potential volunteers from EU13 is still very limited. This is due in a great part to the absence of a historical investment in the EU13 region, but also language and financial barriers and in some cases due to inadequate targeting of candidate volunteers at recruitment stage. This is a key area for improvement in the future initiative.

§ Strategic recommendation: DG ECHO should:

- Consider setting aside a proportion of the money in each Call for Proposals for (i) projects involving EU13 sending organisations; (ii) EU13 volunteer recruitment only.
- Continue to require the partnership of organisations from three or more different Member States per project

§ Operational recommendations: DG ECHO could also consider:

- Holding training days or other opportunities for exchanges for newcomer organisations;
- Encouraging / requiring EUAV sending organisations to place greater investment / innovative campaigning into encouraging potential candidate volunteers esp. from EU13

Relevance

All of the pilot projects were implemented in communities at risk of (or currently experiencing) a humanitarian crisis / natural disaster. However, as the pilot projects did not select target communities on the basis of a Global Needs Assessment (e.g. in alignment with methods used by DG ECHO in its annual Strategy),⁴ it is not possible to assert whether they addressed the needs of the most in need of the interventions or otherwise the most relevant. Overall, the EUAV initiative is not the most relevant way to address the immediate humanitarian needs of local communities in the short-term, because volunteers do not always have either the most relevant technical or professional expertise to enable them to deliver aid in the most effective and efficient way.

Equally, the EUAV Pilot Action did not necessarily target local organisations that were the most in need, given that hosting organisations were mainly selected on the basis of existing relationships rather than a wider assessment. However, given the time and practical constraints this is a logical approach. Furthermore, selected hosting organisations report that sending organisations were overall effective in assessing and addressing their needs.

§ Operational recommendations: DG ECHO should require projects, as part of the application, to:

- Link their needs assessment to DG ECHO’s wider strategy and Global Needs Assessment.
- Specify how their activities are relevant to DG ECHO’s needs assessments included in the

⁴<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/en/who/accountability/strategy>

HIPs of the countries of deployment.

- Be transparent and clear about their rationale for targeting particular countries / communities of intervention and specific hosting organisations.
- Specify the key impacts they seek to achieve (e.g. by asking for an intervention logic).

Cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness

The total EU funding available for the EUAV Pilot Action was 4.5 million euro⁵ with the planned value of the 12 pilot projects together amounting to 6.5 million euro (including co-financing). The average project value was EUR 0.54 million per project, ranging from EUR 0.245 million (2013 DPCI) to EUR 0.777 million (2012 France Volontaires).

Projects were implemented without any major financial difficulties, although in a number of cases the initially planned budget allocations for certain types of expenditure or activities had to be revised in particular, to increase the human resources for organisational and coordination activities, working with partners from different EU Member States and deploying volunteers in multiple third countries. One project (ICCO 2012) reported underspend (84% of the project value was spent upon completion) and the budget of another project (2012 France Volontaires) was reduced by DG ECHO. Considering the fact that most of the organisations were deploying volunteers of different nationalities (and different administrative regulations) together for the first time and in view of the pilot nature of the programme, some level of re-budgeting is understandable, but some of the overruns and unexpected costs could have been prevented through better and more careful planning beforehand, or by setting aside a contingency as part of the budget.

The greatest proportion of project budgets went on staff, followed by volunteer expenses, training, logistics, then equipment, security, communications and monitoring and evaluation. The budget allocated to communication and visibility activities was surprisingly low – in four projects it represented less than 1% of the total planned budget and this may account for what appears to be a low impact on increasing the visibility of the programme in hosting countries. Very little also went to the local offices (average 2.38% range 0% - 7.67% in 2011 and 2012) and hosting organisations had mixed views on the fairness of the budget distributed to them with some considering more could have been spent.

The average cost per volunteer placement based on all 12 pilot projects was EUR 4,414 per month, with variations reflecting often the type of placement (requiring a highly experienced volunteer or not) and the type of project (short-term specific missions or not). Reliable benchmarking with other voluntary schemes has not been possible within the scope of this evaluation, but considering that this average costs comprise all project-related expenditure, ranging from design and development, administration, travel and subsistence to recruitment, selection, training, monitoring and evaluation, etc., this cost seems to be reasonable and is likely to further decrease in the new EUAV initiative.

§ Strategic recommendation: DG ECHO should – in the future initiative (through the Implementing Acts) - issue minimum standards in relation to volunteers' allowance, the insurance coverage, allocations to hosting organisations, communication and visibility activities, etc.

§ Operational recommendations: It could also require projects, as part of the application, to:

- Specify and justify the average monthly cost of deployment; and
- Review, in each country of deployment, the risk of unexpected costs (e.g. because of

⁵ 0.85 million euro in 2011, 2.45 in 2012 and 1.2 in 2013

political situation).

Impact

This evaluation has provided indications of the direct impact that the programme may have on those participating in it. Based on the outcomes and results of the pilot action, it seems likely that the EUAV could have a strong impact on participating volunteers in (i) increasing their willingness to work in the HA / CP sector in the future; and (ii) improving their skills. Many of those who volunteered through the EUAV Pilot Action went on to find jobs in the sector, but this was largely within the sending organisations that recruited them and the direct pathway from EUAV volunteering to employment is less direct / guaranteed than e.g. traineeship / internship schemes. Hosting organisations overall felt that the EUAV Pilot Action had a positive impact on their capacity, with success in building capacity depending on the hosting organisation's sense of ownership of the project and investment in it.

On a more global scale, the capacity of the EUAV to (i) provide additional capacity to the EU in delivering aid and (ii) improve the visibility of the EU humanitarian principles is likely to be limited. During the period 2014 to 2020, DG ECHO intends to train 4,800 candidate volunteers, offer 2,000 humanitarian apprenticeships, and offer 3,950 deployments through the initiative⁶ averaging at around 658 deployments per year. By contrast, the UN Volunteers initiative, which also aims to increase the capacity of the agency to provide humanitarian response, deploys up to 8,000 volunteers per year. The EUAV in numbers alone is therefore unlikely to have a tangible impact on the EU provision of Humanitarian Aid.

Whilst pilot projects have tested new standards and approaches to volunteers' management and preparation, with some adapting their existing protocols and procedures, it is not possible to assess neither whether they will keep using these in the future, nor whether these standards will have a wider impact beyond the EUAV.

§ Strategic recommendation: DG ECHO should develop and publish a strong logic model for the programme for use in the design of Calls for Proposals and disseminate this to potential applicants. In line with this it should develop an effective framework of indicators for monitoring impacts.

§ Operational recommendations:

1) To increase impact on the ground, DG ECHO should require EUAV applicant organisations as part of project design, to:

- Link their needs assessment to DG ECHO's wider strategy and Global Needs Assessment.
- Specify the key impacts that they seek to achieve (in an intervention logic).

2) To increase visibility, DG ECHO should consider hosting events at which volunteers can meet and exchange experiences.

3) Also to increase visibility and the 'feeling of a European Corps', continue to invest in the social media networks and to ensure that the network remains 'live' and generates innovation, exchanges of good practices and greater standardisation of approach.

⁶ ECHO Factsheet on EU Aid Volunteers.

1 Introduction

This Final Report presents the overall findings and analysis of the evaluation of the Pilot Action of the EU Aid Volunteers and the conclusions and recommendations arising from these. This introductory section outlines the context, purpose and scope of the evaluation, as well as the method of approach.

1.1 Background of the evaluation

The development of the EU Aid Volunteer programme started in 2008 when the legal basis for a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was established through Article 214 (5) TFEU. The EU Aid Regulation establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was adopted on 3 April 2014.⁷ DG ECHO is now drafting Delegated and Implementing Acts to establish standards and procedures covering identification, selection, preparation, management and deployment of EU Aid Volunteers to support Humanitarian Aid operations in third countries in accordance with Article 9 of the Regulation.

Launched in 2011, the EU Aid Volunteer Pilot Action had the main purpose of guiding the development of the Regulation to establish the initiative⁸ and informing the development of standards and systems around specific dimensions (training, certification mechanism, deployment set-up, data-base) of the future scheme. The details of the latter would be further elaborated in Implementing and Delegated Acts. The pilot actions provided the opportunity for partner organisations to shape the future programme. This also increased the ‘buy-in’ of these organisations into the scheme.

In parallel with this present evaluation, DG ECHO has contracted three assignments to support it in its preparatory actions to establish the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative. These concern three ‘Lots’ as follows:

- Lot 1: Training of humanitarian volunteers and capacity building in the humanitarian sector.
- Lot 2: Volunteer management standards and certification
- Lot 3: Employee volunteering

This evaluation’s findings will support the fleshing-out of the Regulation’s implementing and delegated acts, including on training, certification, standards and capacity building – which contactors under Lot 1, 2 and 3 of the Preparation action assignment are also working on.

1.2 Purpose and objectives of this evaluation

As per the terms of reference to this evaluation, the objectives of the assignment were to assess how the objectives of the pilot projects were met and to analyse the extent to which the different outputs have been reached, as well as to highlight lessons learnt on why some aspects of the pilot projects did not work so well, and on this basis, to provide inputs for Delegated Acts (more general principles) and Implementing Acts (processes to follow, e.g. recruitment process, deployment, etc.). A second objective was to develop a framework of appropriate qualitative and

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0375&from=EN>

⁸ Regulation (COM (2012) 514 final)

quantitative indicators to measure the progress towards the achievement of the operational objectives (see section 4).

1.3 Scope of the evaluation

This evaluation concerns the actions of the European Commission’s Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) to launch three Calls for Proposals (in 2011, 2012 and 2013) to fund pilot projects to ‘test’ the EU Aid Volunteers and the twelve pilot projects subsequently selected and implemented over the period 2011 to 2014 through the grants issued by the Commission. It also concerns all actions by the Commission to gather lessons from these pilot projects and other activities by the Commission around the EUAV (e.g. communication activities).

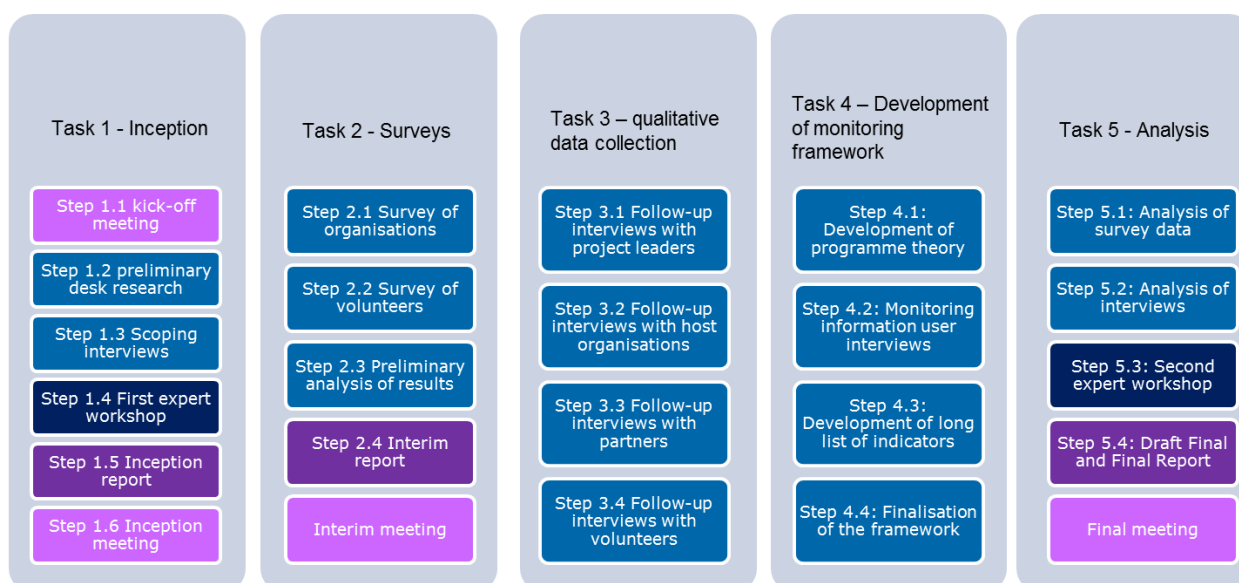
The study team drafted the intervention logic for the EU AV initiative, included in section 4 of this report, and on this basis developed quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The work undertaken as part of Lot 2 of the preparatory activities, which focuses on the type of monitoring system and possible tools, was also reviewed.

1.4 Method of approach

1.4.1 General

The evaluation of the Pilot Action of EU Aid Volunteers was conducted by ICF International between 10 January and 31 July 2014. The method of approach for this evaluation was designed by the evaluators in the Inception Phase of this assignment and agreed upon with the Commission. It consisted of five main phases: (1) inception; (2) main data-collection phase; (3) follow-up interviews; (4) development of a monitoring framework; and (5) analysis (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Structure of the evaluation



1.4.2 Main research issues

The nature of the evaluation was twofold, on the one hand it was a learning process, aimed at informing the development of the Implementing and Delegated Acts to support the implementation of the EU Aid Volunteers Regulation, and on the other

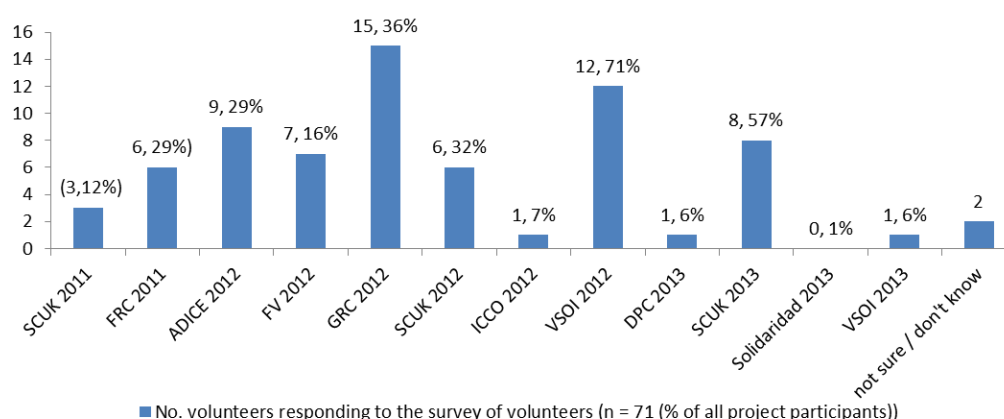
hand an exercise in accountability – evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the pilot action. In relation to the lessons to be drawn from the pilot action, DG ECHO was particularly interested in the method and application of needs assessments. DG ECHO was also concerned with learning about how security standards and duty of care could be improved in the future EUAV initiative based on the pilot.

1.4.3 Data collection and analytical methods applied

A mixed methods approach to data collection was followed for this evaluation: documentary review, online surveys, interviews, a ‘virtual’ (online) forum and expert panel. These are described in further detail below and in annex 1.

- **A review of project documentation** (project applications, narrative reports, evaluation reports) was conducted (see section A1.2 of Annex 1). Information from the documents were mapped against indicators to inform the evaluation questions using two tools: N-Vivo (a qualitative data analysis software) and excel.
- **Scoping interviews** with DGs ECHO and EAC, the EU’s Secretariat and the EU agency EACEA.
- **Two surveys** (one of hosting organisations and one of volunteers) were launched between 03 March and 23 April 2014 using DG ECHO’s EU survey tool: <http://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/> in English (volunteer survey) and in English, French and Spanish (hosting organisation survey). Survey data was extracted (in Excel) for analysis. Each survey had final response rates of around one third (29% or 16 out of 56 responses for the hosting survey and 30% or 71 out of 237 for the volunteer survey). Volunteers from all the pilot projects except for Solidaridad responded to the survey (see figure 2.1). Responding hosting organisations represented from six projects (ADICE 2012, SCUUK 2013, VSO 2012, ICCO 2012, VSO 2013, FV 2012). Seven of these were field offices of the European sending organisation and the remaining nine were local NGOs.

Figure 1.2 Pilot projects in which volunteers responding to the survey had participated



- **Follow-up interviews** were conducted with eight volunteers from six pilot projects (FRC 2011, ADICE 2012, GRC 2012, DPC 2013, SCUUK 2013, VSO 2012 (x2)) coming from Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom. They had been deployed in Serbia, Paraguay, Peru, Grenada, Bangladesh, Myanmar and South Sudan respectively. Six interviews were conducted with hosting organisations from Barbados (DPC 2013),

Cameroon (FV 2012), Ethiopia (FRC 2011), Bangladesh and South Sudan (VSOI 2012) and Uganda (ADICE 2012).

- Twenty **in-depth interviews** were also conducted with sending organisations. The selection of sending organisations was based on specific criteria, including geographic spread over Member States and third countries (in terms of deployment), previous experience for DG ECHO and number of grants received, as well as types of sending organisations (e.g. volunteering organisations, humanitarian organisations, training providers, etc.). Most interviews were conducted by telephone (except for one with SCUK which was face-to-face and one response from a hosting organisation that was written) and all were based on a semi-structured interview guide that was tailored for each project. A full list of the interviewees is provided in Annex 1.3
- The *EU Aid Volunteers (pilot phase)* Facebook group (which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/431943073582027/>) was used to initiate a **focus-group discussion with EU Aid Volunteers** (Wednesday 23 April from 18:00 to 19:00 CET). Two ‘starter’ questions were posted: (i) what do you think is the most unique thing about the EUAV?; and (ii) what qualities / skills / perspectives do you think EU Aid volunteers contribute to humanitarian projects, which other types of volunteers or workers do not have?

The discussion was moderated by two members of the core team, who were able to react to the volunteers’ responses, identify interesting points, ask follow-up questions, push others to comment on statements, etc.

- Two **meetings with two humanitarian experts** took place to inform the development of the interim report (13 March) and the draft final report (19 May). During this meeting, the experts proposed alternative interpretations for some questions, highlighted some gaps in the analysis and suggested possible ways to refine the final responses to the evaluation questions. The experts also reviewed and provided inputs into the logic model (see section 4).

1.4.4 Division of responsibility and tasks

The evaluation was delivered by a small team led by a project manager with quality assurance and methodological and analytical direction and oversight from a director. The project manager was responsible for designing the methodological tools and drafting reports, as well as overall planning and management of the evaluation. A dedicated team of three researchers supported the data collection and analysis exercises and in drafting reports. Two subcontractors with multiple years’ experience in the evaluation of humanitarian projects, programmes and policies also provide quality assurance inputs.

1.5 Challenges encountered and solutions found

Table 1.1 provides an overview of the challenges encountered in this evaluation, as well as the measures set up to mitigate them.

Table 1.1 Challenges and mitigation measures for data collection and analysis

Challenge	Mitigation measure	Comments
Evaluation ‘fatigue’: participants in the EUAV pilot action (especially sending	Sending organisations were only contacted once to collect data (for an in-depth interview). The	Sending organisations were happy to participate in the evaluation. None refused nor

Challenge	Mitigation measure	Comments
organisations) have been consulted on several occasions now by external contractors (for different assignments).	evaluation team made sure that it read all project documentation in detail and had a thorough understanding of strengths / weaknesses / challenges encountered in the project in order to tailor the interview and avoid duplication of data collection.	expressed reticence to participate. For the 2013 projects this represented a first opportunity to gather information on lessons learnt, outcomes and effectiveness.
Setting up interviews with hosting organisations based in countries with poor Internet or telephone connections.	The questionnaire was sent by email to the interviewees who were the most difficult to reach, and they were asked to provide responses by email directly.	This was the case for two interviews (France Volontaires local office in Cameroon due to poor Internet and phone connection; Paraguayan Red Cross due to low availability of the respondent).
Setting up interviews with volunteers who are travelling / working in remote areas.	The volunteers initially identified for interviews, if not reachable, were replaced by volunteers who were available for telephone interviews.	This was the case for some interviews (e.g. FV 2012; DPC 2013; VSOI 2013; ICCO).
Identifying findings from pilot actions that are still ongoing / have only just finished. Non-availability of some project documentation (see annex 1, section A1.2).	The data collected is analysed with caution, taking into account that the emerging trends may change as the project goes along.	Triangulation of data was used to assess the relevance of the findings identified.
Getting project-level evaluation data when external evaluations have not been conducted.	Triangulation of data: the data analysed from available documentation was cross-checked with data from the surveys and interviews.	The findings extracted from the documentation review were further triangulated with data collected through the online surveys and follow-up interviews.
Staff turnover, leading to loss of institutional/organisational memory.	We always tried to reach the most relevant person to speak with, when possible; we also asked the interviewees to reach out to the former project manager if necessary.	For some pilot projects, the most relevant person to speak with had left the organisation, and other organisation members did not know much about the pilot project (e.g. VSOI 2012, GRC 2012).
Representation of the views of hosting organisations considering they are proportionally less well represented than those of volunteers and sending organisations due to lower number of respondents to	Data from the survey and interviews was triangulated with information from case studies conducted as part of the contractors' work on another assignment for DG ECHO (Lot 1 of the Preparatory Actions to set up the EUAV on training).	DG ECHO did not maintain a central database of hosting organisations, meaning the evaluation team was dependent on sending organisations providing contacts. For the survey this meant that the list of hosting organisations was not



Challenge	Mitigation measure	Comments
survey and interviews.		comprehensive.
EU Survey Tool issues access, password and ‘maintenance’ issues in the system, which prevented the study team from accessing the system for some hours/days.	Emails were sent to the Commission’s technical unit managing the system, but it took some time before they reacted.	Overall this did not limit the number of responses received.

1.6 Structure of the Final Report

The remainder of this Final Report consists of the following sections:

- 2. Overview of the pilot action
- 3. Key findings specific to the evaluation questions
- 4. Overall conclusions and recommendations
- 5. Development of a monitoring and evaluation framework

2 Overview of the pilot action

2.1 Organisational structure of the pilot projects

The EU aid pilot action consisted of **twelve pilot projects in total carried out by nine lead sending organisations**: two specialists in international volunteering (VSOI, FV), three international humanitarian NGOs / CSOs (SCUK, ICCO, Solidaridad), two Red Cross societies (FRC, GRC), one Civil Protection agencies (DPC) and one European CSO (ADICE).

In all cases **the sending organisations partnered with at least two other organisations specialising in Humanitarian Aid, civil protection, volunteering and/or specialist training** and often joined also with one or more ‘associates’⁹ or sub-contractors, who contributed to the recruitment, training and/or deployment of volunteers. For some of the pilots (e.g. FV 2012, VSOI 2013, DPC 2013), organisations or institutions based in third countries - which would later host volunteers – partnered with the lead organisations at proposal stage and were involved in the design of the volunteer’s deployment. A full list of all of the organisations participating in the pilot projects is provided in Annex 2.

Table 2.1 Organisational structure of the pilot projects

Lead sending organisation	Partner organisations	Associates / sub-contractors	Actual no. EU volunteers deployed (planned) ¹⁰	Hosting organisations
SCUK 2011	2 (training)	2 (sending orgs)	25 (30)	19 in total (field offices of sending orgs)
FRC 2011	4 (sending orgs)	1 (sending org)	21 (21)	18 in total (red cross societies)
VSOI 2012	2 (sending orgs)	2 (hosting orgs involved in project design)	31 (40)	11 in total, mix of field offices of sending orgs and local NGOs
GRC 2012	5 (sending orgs)	5 (sending orgs)	42 (42)	4 in total (red cross societies)
ADICE 2012	2 (sending orgs)	1 (evaluator)	29 (30)	11 in total, mix of field offices of Solidaridad and local NGOs
FV 2012	2 (hosting orgs) + 2 (sending orgs)	4 (sending orgs)	18 (18) 26 (26)	5 in total (3 field offices of FV and the hosting orgs that partnered with FV)
ICCO 2012	2 (sending orgs)	2 (training)	15 (15)	13 in total (local NGOs / church associations)
DPC 2013	8 (sending orgs)	3 (hosting orgs involved in project design)	16 (18)	3 in total (2 ministries for disaster management and one meteorological agency)
SCUK 2012	2 (training)	1 (training) + 3 (sending orgs)	19 (20)	16 in total (field offices of sending orgs)
Solidaridad 2013	2 (sending orgs)	None	16 (18)	21 in total, mix of field offices of Solidaridad, local NGOs and

⁹ According to the Calls for Proposals to the EUAV, “associates” play a real role in the action (they are for example involved in the activities developed in third countries or provide some of their experts as volunteers in projects submitted under lot 3), but they have no contractual relationship with the Commission and do not have to meet the eligibility criteria.

¹⁰ Based on numbers provided in project documentation.

Lead sending organisation	Partner organisations	Associates / sub-contractors	Actual no. EU volunteers deployed (planned) ¹⁰	Hosting organisations
				ministries / agencies of govt (e.g. Ministero della Salute in Burkina Faso)
SCUK 2013	2 (training)	4 (sending orgs)	14 (14)	8 in total (field offices of sending orgs)
VSOI 2013	2 (sending orgs)	None	17 (17)	19 in total, mix of field offices of sending orgs and local NGOs

2.2 Main characteristics and objectives of the pilot projects

Table 2.2 below outlines some of the main characteristics of the projects (overall aim, profile of the volunteer, sector of the intervention, and approach to selection and deployment).

It was the goal of each of the pilots to **‘pilot’ different methods for implementing an EUAV programme** (volunteer selection, training, etc.). However, at the same time, **each of the pilot actions had goals which to a greater or lesser extent reflected operational objectives of the future initiative**¹¹ i.e.:

- Skills-building of humanitarian volunteers and professionalisation of the humanitarian sector and (FRC 2011, SCUK 2011-2013);
- Capacity-building of hosting organisations in third countries (ADICE 2012, ICCO 2012, DPC 2013, VSOI 2013) (with expert volunteers);
- Building solidarity through volunteering, focusing on the multiple benefits that this can give to both volunteers and sending organisations (through the partnerships they create) (VSOI 2012, Solidaridad 2013); and
- Creating new opportunities for volunteerism in Humanitarian Aid for those with existing experience (GRC 2012, FV 2012).

For the more detailed project objectives please see Annex 3, in which column B in Table A3.1 summarises the project goals, based on the evaluators’ assessment.

In order to fulfil these objectives, **the lead organisations targeted different profiles of volunteer**: in some cases enthusiastic, but less skilled (and usually young) volunteers (e.g. FRC), technical experts in their field (SCUK, DPC VSO 2013),¹² or a mix of the two (ADICE, FV, ICCO, Solidaridad). Four of the pilot projects (FV, ADICE, VSOI 2013, Solidaridad) also included opportunities for online volunteering and three of the pilots (GRC 2012, DPC 2013 and Solidaridad 2013) also targeted corporate volunteers.

¹¹ See Article 7(1) of Regulation 375/2014 on ‘operational objectives. These operational objectives are:

- (a) Increase in and improvement of the capacity of the Union to provide Humanitarian Aid.
- (b) Improvement of the skills and competences of volunteers in the field of Humanitarian Aid and the conditions under which they are working
- (c) Building the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries.
- (d) Promotion of the visibility of the Union's Humanitarian Aid values.
- (e) Enhancement of coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for Union citizens to participate in Humanitarian Aid activities and operations.

¹² E.g. in logistics, engineering, IT and communications, etc.

Article 11(1) of Regulation 357/2014 states that the selection of volunteers should be based on a “*prior assessment of the needs in third countries by sending or hosting organisations or other relevant actors*”. In alignment with the Regulation, **most lead organisations** (all except SCUK and ICCO), **first selected the hosting organisations they would work with before identifying volunteers**. Only SCUK and ICCO first selected volunteers before identifying the organisations in which they would be hosted. In the case of SCUK, this is because the target volunteer profile was decided on a broader assessment of needs in the humanitarian sector as a whole and because, since volunteers were sent to field offices of the sending organisations, the capacity assessment could be done internally from HQ, without the need for consultation. Once both volunteer and hosting organisation were selected, the interventions were then designed collaboratively between the volunteer and the organisation.

In half of the pilot projects (SCUK 2011-2013, VSOI 2012, FRC 2011, ICCO 2012) **volunteers were deployed individually or in pairs, whereas in four** (GRC 2012, FV 2012, ADICE 2012, Solidaridad 2013) **volunteers were deployed in groups** with a view to their exchanging expertise and learning collaboratively. **The two remaining pilots** (DPC, VSOI 2013) **deployed volunteers in ‘batches’**: DPC first sent volunteers to assess the needs of the hosting organisations, then sent technical experts to address these needs and a final group of volunteer to train staff in the hosting organisation; and VSOI 2013 first sent out volunteers to carry out a baseline assessment of the capacity needs of the hosting organisations before sending out the remaining volunteers to address these.

Table 2.2 Overview of the pilot projects

Project	Overall aim	Volunteer profiles	Selection process	Deployment type
SCUK 11	Entry-level programme to train up specialists from outside of the humanitarian sector with a view to their entering a career in HA.	EU citizens with specific technical expertise, who wish to launch a career in the Humanitarian Aid sector	Hosting orgs matched to volunteers: Organisational needs of sending organisations assessed > volunteer profiles designed and volunteers selected > “hosting orgs” (field offices of sending orgs) informed of the recruitment and asked to express interest in hosting > voluntary intervention designed by hosting org with inputs from volunteer	Deployment of individuals in individual projects. Two deployment modes tested: (1) 2 x 4.5 month deployment for juniors (2) 1 x 9 month deployment for seniors.
SCUK 12				Deployment of individuals for 5.5 months
SCUK 13				Deployment of individuals for 6 months
FRC 2011	To provide an opportunity for motivated and interested young people to gain an opportunity get into the humanitarian sector	Motivated but inexperienced junior volunteers.	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Hosting organisations (red cross / crescent societies) asked to express interest in hosting > hosting societies assessed for their suitability to host > volunteer positions advertised and volunteers selected	Individual deployment of single volunteers to Red Cross societies in third countries where they assist heads of delegation or of projects (i.e. ‘learning on the job’) over a six month period. Each sending organisation managed its own volunteers
VSO 2012	To create standards in volunteer selection, training and management	Unclear – appears to be those with an interest in volunteering	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Centralised selection of organisations (by VSO) > volunteer situation designed > volunteers recruited to fit this	Deployment of individuals volunteering to set up projects in DRR etc.
GRC 2012	To give EU citizens already volunteering in their own country the opportunity to volunteer abroad and to build capacity in the host third countries, as well as to promote solidarity with these countries	Persons with experience in HA / CP volunteering	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Sectors of possible deployment selected > Volunteer positions advertised > hosting orgs asked to express interest in hosting > volunteers selected on basis of matching to selected host orgs	Deployment in group of 2-3 volunteers through a 4-12 week period
ADICE	To strengthen local communities’ capacity to reduce risk of disaster (DRR) and recover post-crisis & to evaluate impact of these actions and express solidarity with third countries in need.	Experts (9) + inexperienced (21) – the ‘expert volunteer’ acts as volunteer team coordinator	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Hosting organisations identified and selected > Hosting orgs identify their needs and draft a ToR for the deployment > intervention design refined with sending org > volunteers selected	Deployment of 3-4 volunteers of different nationalities per hosting organisation for 4 to 6 months

Frances Volontaires 2012	Provide opportunities for Europeans to engage as volunteers in Humanitarian Aid and / or Civil Protection activities outside the EU test innovative methods of Humanitarian Information Management	Mix of 18 young and less experienced and more senior volunteers (to be sent together on mission) + 26 online volunteers	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Hosting organisations partner with sending organisations and participate in project design > deployment interventions designed collaboratively > volunteer positions advertised and volunteers selected	Deployment of mixed groups of 6-7 European volunteers, plus host country volunteers over six month period.
ICCO 2012	To build capacity in the hosting organisation in resilience and DRR	'Experts' (significant working experience abroad + relevant background) and 'young professional volunteers' (relevant academic backgrounds & some international work experience)	Hosting orgs matched to volunteers: Sectors of possible deployment selected > volunteers selected > hosting orgs selected (suggested and screened) > selected organisation and selected volunteer draft a detailed work programme together.	Deployment of individuals volunteering in specific roles over 6 month period (also to build capacity in hosting organisation)
DPC 2013	To provide an exchange of information and to build capacity in the host country to respond to hydro-meteorological disasters	Experts in the area of hydro-meteorological disasters	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Hosting organisations identified > suitable candidates identified.	Deployment of different one month "shifts" of volunteers over a six month period: (i) deployment of "generalists" to analyse the emergency management systems and identify priorities; (ii) deployment of technical/scientific volunteers to implement solutions; (iii) deployment of trainers to deliver specific training to 20 local volunteers.
Solidaridad 2013	Increase visibility of EU's humanitarian values and to increase the coherence of volunteering in Europe by offering opportunities to volunteers from different European countries to join the same field missions.	On-line, junior, corporate, expert and locals	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Assess operational and technical needs of the local organizations > local organisations determine a ToR > local organisations define the kind of volunteer (background, level of expertise, skills) that they need > volunteers selected	Deployment of 2-3 volunteers per country (one from each sending org). Also recruited two people per deployment position, so as to have a back-up volunteering case of withdrawals.



VSO 2013	Provide capacity development to local organisations in the areas of planning, community engagement and volunteer management	Expert volunteers with skills in community engagement, organisational development, volunteer management, DRR planning, sustainable livelihoods and natural resource management, among others	Volunteers matched to hosting orgs: Hosting orgs selected > hosting orgs assessed > volunteers matched and selected	Deployment of 3 short-term volunteers to (i) support the matching process and ensure placements are feasible and developed and planned with partner organisations and (ii) to carry out baseline assessment against which to assess impact of capacity-building at end of project; followed by individual deployment of 14 volunteers over 9 month period.
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2.3 Challenges faced and key achievements

Annex 3, section A3.2 outlines some of the main implementation challenges faced during the pilot projects, as well as some of the key strengths of these pilots. The information is taken from external or internal evaluations of the projects (where available) and/or from interviews with sending and hosting organisations, other partners / associates and volunteers. The main challenges were as follows:

- **Assessing volunteer capacity** (SCUK 2011, FRC 2011, VSOI 2012, ADICE 2012) - particularly soft skills (Solidaridad 2013) and intercultural skills (ADICE 2012).
- **Assessing hosting organisations' needs** (FRC 2011, VSOI 2012, GRC 2012 and ICCO 2012) – particularly within the time period provided (Solidaridad 2013),
- **Budgetary planning** (FRC 2011, VSOI 2012, SCUK 2013),
- **Security** (VSOI 2012, FV 2012),
- **Measuring impacts** (ADICE),¹³ and
- **Training** (ADICE, VSO 2013).

Some volunteers participating in the SCUK 2011, SCUK 2012 and ICCO 2012 projects were not fully satisfied with the **coaching offered** and those participating in the France Volontaires 2012 project complained that there was insufficient **pre-deployment preparation**.

The lessons generated in addressing these above-listed challenges are discussed in section 3.2. Table A3.3 in Annex 3 outlines some of the strengths of the individual pilot projects as identified in the project evaluations (where available) and/or in project reporting or interviews with sending and hosting organisations and volunteers. These can be summarised as follows:

- **The quality of volunteer selected** (DPC 2013, Solidaridad 2013)
- **Attracting high numbers of applications** (GRC 2012, ADICE 2012)
- **Quality of training** (SCUK 2011-13, VSOI 2012)
- **Quality of deployment** (SCUK 2011),
- **Volunteer performance monitoring system** (FRC 2011)
- **Needs assessment of hosting organisations** (ADICE 2012, FV 2012, DPC 2013)
- **Quality of the capacity-building exercises** (ADICE 2012, FV 2012, DPC 2013)
- **The solidarity and team ethic** which resulted from the project (FRC, VSOI 2012, FV 2012, ICCO 2012, DPC 2013).

Factors critical to project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are discussed in section 3.9.

¹³ Arguably other pilot actions faced challenges to measuring impacts, but did not report them here.

3 Key findings specific to the evaluation questions, analyses and overall conclusions.

This section outlines our responses to the ten evaluation questions. The ordering of the questions has been slightly changed and the questions on models tested and lessons learnt will be covered together since these are highly interlinked. Key findings are highlighted in **bold** throughout this section 3. The conclusions to each section and subsequent recommendations are provided at the end of each sub-section.

3.1 Models tested

EQ7: To what extent have the projects tested different models that will be applicable in the future programme? Which models remain untested?

The EU Aid Regulation establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps was adopted on 3 April 2014. It covers the following:

- Content of the standards to be produced by the Commission in the Delegated and Implementing Acts (Article 9);
- Content of the certification mechanism for sending & hosting organisations (Article 10);
- Identification of volunteers (Article 11);
- Training of volunteers (Article 12);
- Function of the EU Database of volunteers (Article 13);
- Deployment of volunteers (Article 14);
- Eligible capacity-building activities (Article 15);
- Network of EU Volunteers (Article 16); and
- Communication and awareness-raising activities (Article 17).

Annex 4 provides a comprehensive mapping of the models tested by the twelve pilot projects. **The EUAV pilot tested all aspects of the activities to be covered by this except for three, which are discussed below:**

The database model of deployment (Art.13)

The proposed database of volunteers effectively creates a roster of trained EU volunteers (i.e. those who have received training as per Article 15 of the Regulation), who are ready and willing to be deployed. Whilst it is not specified in the Regulation, DG ECHO have informed the evaluation team¹⁴ that EUAV volunteers will be deployed from the database only in response to Calls for Proposals – that is, certified sending organisations will not be able to use the database for their own non-EUAV deployments. In response to such Calls, certified sending organisations will have the choice of (i) selecting volunteers already registered on the database (including those deployed under previous EUAV Calls) or (ii) identifying new candidate volunteers not yet registered in the database. In this respect, it seems that the purpose of the database is to facilitate recruitment, but it is not quite clear why. In consultation, DG ECHO also intimated that the database might be used for future surge capacity if a large scale disaster warranted it.¹⁵

The database model was not explicitly tested through the pilot actions, although two organisations (GRC and DPC) recruited some of their volunteers from existing

¹⁴ Conversation with DG ECHO, unit A3 - Policy and Implementation Frameworks

¹⁵ See also the background section (section 1.1) of the 2012 Call for Proposals for the EUAV Pilot Action

rosters. The evaluation team consider that it would have been useful for DG ECHO to have developed a roster in the first phase of the pilot action from which sending organisations could have selected volunteers during later phases.

Exchange of staff and volunteers (Art.15b)

In at least one of the pilot projects (the GRC 2012 project), the “one-way nature” of the EUAV pilot action (i.e. involving deployment of a European to a third country rather than a two-way exchange) was identified as a factor which had deterred potential hosting organisations from participating. Outside observers familiar with other humanitarian volunteer schemes have also expressed the view that this could be a limiting factor of the programme in attracting organisations, volunteers and also in reaching the goal of third country capacity-building. Through Article 15b of the new Regulation, however, the future EUAV initiative will provide for the possibility of such exchanges when they have a capacity-building purpose. The Article states that capacity-building activities may include “exchange of best practices, technical assistance, twinning programmes and exchange of staff and volunteers, creation of networks and other relevant actions”. **Given that this model has not yet been tested, it will be important for DG ECHO to monitor the outcomes and lessons learnt of this model (where used) in the early stages of the EUAV and to adapt the programme (where necessary) on this basis.**

Certification mechanisms - sending / hosting organisations (Art.10)

Models of certification were not tested since this is an activity to be led by the EU. However, the pilot projects did test different models of sending organisations and sending partnerships (see section 2.1) and certification of hosting organisations was tested in the case of one pilot project (VSO 2013). More could have been done to test models of certification for hosting organisations through the pilot action (e.g. by requiring sending organisations to set parameters for selection as part of the pilot project). Nonetheless, lessons can be learnt from the experiences of sending organisations assessing the capacity and suitability of hosting organisations to host volunteers (see section 3.2.5). **Although certification mechanisms were not comprehensively tested, useful lessons have been generated to support the Commission in developing the mechanism.**

Conclusions and recommendations relating to models tested (EQ7)

- Almost all of the different now aspects included in the new Regulation were first ‘tested’ through the pilot actions. Overall the pilot action was robust to the extent that multiple models / approaches were trialled for each ‘dimension’ of the EUAV.
- The fact that some aspects of the future EUAV outlined in Regulation 375/2014 establishing the initiative (database model of deployment, twinning programmes, certification mechanisms) were not tested means that lessons have not been generated to inform the practical delivery of these aspects of the programme. Further, in relation to the database, it means that complementarity with existing roster systems cannot be assessed.
- **§ Strategic recommendation:** Given that for some dimensions included in the Regulation models have not been comprehensively tested, DG ECHO should make sure to monitor the implementation in the early stages of the programme so as to shape them as necessary.

3.2 Lessons learnt

EQ1: To what extent and how have the pilot projects provided relevant ‘lessons learnt’ for each of the actions of the future EU Aid Volunteers programme? On which of the future dimensions of the initiative did they and did they not deliver ‘lessons learnt’?

The testing of models has clearly generated lessons which have already informed the development of the Regulation and which will now inform the development of the Delegated and Implementing Acts. Lessons from the projects were reported in obligatory interim and final reports as well as in external evaluations in five cases. DG ECHO held four “capitalisation meetings” with EUAV sending organisations (in December 2011, June 2012, January 2013 and December 2013) and also held a ‘Back to Base’ conference with EUAV volunteers at which lessons were gathered. Sending organisations report that they have been able to input into the development of the EUAV. Indeed, for at least one organisation this was their motivation for participating in the EUAV pilot action. It appears that **there have been fewer opportunities** (this present evaluation being one such opportunity) **to gather opinions from hosting organisations.** A number of organisations (SCUK, Solidaridad, German Red Cross, Diaconia) worked on pilots in more than one phase and it is clear from our interviews with stakeholders from these organisations, that lessons learnt from the first experience of the EUAV were taken on board in the second project. **It would be useful for organisations wishing to apply to the EUAV in the future to also be able to learn from these pilots.** In view of this, the evaluator recommends that DG ECHO compiles a list of good practices and lessons learnt as a reference and guiding document for the future EUAV. The lessons learnt which could be included in this are described in the remainder of this section.

Very few of the dimensions have not generated lessons, except for those related to online volunteering and employee volunteering. There are few findings in relation to these from completed projects – partly because some of the projects that implemented these forms of volunteering are not yet complete, but also because for those completed projects, little evaluation has been conducted into these aspects. It is expected that the final reports and evaluations of the 2013 projects will provide more insight into these activities.

3.2.1 Project design / approach to the EUAV

3.2.1.1 Project aims and objectives

As illustrated in section 2.2, each of the pilot projects reflected the operational objectives of the future EUAV, as outlined in the Regulation (Article 7). The impact of the pilot projects in relation to the five operational objectives is discussed in section 3.8. It appears that pilot projects that set out to improve the skills of volunteers were largely successful, as some volunteers went on to find jobs in the sector (although see section 3.8 for further discussion on this). The impact on capacity-building was mixed (see section 3.2.6 and 3.8.3), with success in building capacity depending on the hosting organisation’s sense of ownership of the project and their investment in it. Visibility and solidarity are less tangible and measurable goals, but this is an area where stakeholders considered there was little impact (see section 3.8.4 for more details).

3.2.1.2 *Types of volunteer profiles targeted*

Throughout the EUAV piloting phase, DG ECHO has left it relatively open to sending organisations to define the type of volunteer they will deploy. Only in 2013 and (partly) in 2012 did DG ECHO explicitly state in the Calls for Proposals that the EUAV pilot projects should target ‘expert’ volunteers. Since DG ECHO did not define these different types of volunteers / levels of experience, this led to variation in the sending organisation’s interpretation within the pilot projects. Some of the different understandings of these volunteers are described in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Definitions of the different volunteer profiles in selected pilot projects

	Senior professional	Junior professional
ICCO	‘experts’ = those with “significant working experience abroad and relevant background, furthermore more senior in age”	‘young professional volunteers’ = relevant academic backgrounds, as well as some – for some international – work experience
SCUK 2011	“level 2” experts = as for level 1, but with a NOHA masters or an existing Bioforce qualification in addition	“level 1” experts = those with a relevant academic background and experience volunteering / working in an NGO, coping with stress and (for logistics) technical expertise
ADICE	<p>“expert” = person with previous experience of at least several months on the same kind of activities in a third country with team management competences and evaluation capacities, as well as some experience of the humanitarian sector.</p> <p><i>Purpose of involving this profile:</i> <i>to open up opportunities for international humanitarian volunteering to all EU citizens: to avoid any risk linked to amateurism and to ensure a certain supervision of the other type of volunteers.</i></p>	<p>“young people qualified but not experienced” = young people (around 23 to 30), with a qualification in keeping with humanitarian sector (e.g. International Relations, International Cooperation, Humanitarian Action, International Law, Human Rights, etc...), and no similar <u>international</u> experience in the field of humanitarian / volunteering action in DRR/LRRD (may have had experience in home country).</p> <p><i>Purpose of involving this profile:</i> <i>to open up opportunities for international humanitarian volunteering to all EU citizens.</i></p>

As shown in the table, the definition of “senior professional volunteer” was not uniform across the pilots. In some cases ‘experts’ were those with demonstrable leadership skills (e.g. ADICE), in other cases ‘experts’ were those with specific technical skills (e.g. DPC) and in other cases it was those who had volunteered and/or worked in humanitarian or Civil Protection work in the past (e.g. ICCO, GRC). In sum, the definitions were dependent on expected role of the volunteers and the overall objective of the intervention. **For greater consistency it would be advisable for DG ECHO to provide a definition of ‘senior expert’ – e.g. by defining the number of years’ experience and the sectoral expertise required.** DG ECHO could also define two different ‘sets’ of senior experts - i.e. (i) those with a background in HA/CP and thus a high level of competence in areas specific to HA/CP; and (ii) those with “X” years’ experience in a particular technical area.¹⁶

¹⁶ See ICF GHK (2014) Proposal for a Training Programme for EU Aid Volunteers, 22 July 2014

Where experts have no previous HA/CP expertise, they should receive technical adaptation courses.

Four of the pilot projects (FV 2012, ADICE 2012, VSOI 2013, Solidaridad 2013) tested e-volunteering / online volunteering. The evaluators were not able to collect many findings on the ‘testing’ of these models and this is an area where DG ECHO should seek to collate more information once the 2013 projects are complete. Data collected from participants in the FV project have suggested that it may be difficult to recruit online volunteers, but lessons learnt in relation to management of such volunteers is still to be collected.

Four out of the twelve (France Volontaires, SCUUK 2012, VSOI 2013, Solidaridad 2013) deployed local volunteers. This was seen to add real added value to both the overall volunteer experience – i.e. because it allowed European volunteers to exchange experiences and knowledge with non-European ones, and also to the outcomes for hosting organisations and third countries. **Most stakeholders interviewed underlined that working with local volunteers was an effective way to build capacity to deliver Humanitarian Aid in third countries.** Of the 28 volunteers responding to the survey who were aware of other volunteering programmes at the time of applying for the EUAV, 7 (i.e. 25%) chose the EUAV partly because it would allow them to participate with local volunteers. **This suggests that including local volunteers generates greater solidarity between EU volunteers and persons in third countries.**

3.2.1.3 Form of deployment and intervention

The pilot projects also deployed volunteers in a range of situations reflecting the different stages of the disaster management cycle. This is reflected in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2 Types of deployment and the stage of disaster management targeted

Stage of the disaster management cycle	Pilot action	Example of type of activity involved
Disaster risk reduction	2 (ICCO 2012, VSOI 2013)	Awareness-raising, technical support
Strengthen resilience / implement DRR	2 (ADICE, VSOI 2013)	Such actions included environmental preservation, rural development, habitat rehabilitation, job creation, social integration, promoting women in civil society, local and community development, as well as environmental risk reduction and psychosocial assistance to refugees. ¹⁷
Emergency preparedness	2 (France Volontaires 2011 DPC 2013 and SCUUK 2012)	Providing specialised technical support to implement systems: Humanitarian Information Mapping and hydrometeorological emergency management that will improve response in future crisis situations.
Emergency response	5 (SCUUK 2011-& 2013, FRC 2011, Solidaridad 2013)	Helping INGO field offices and Red Cross societies in third countries implement emergency response (e.g. logistics, health, team management)

¹⁷ ADICE actions as listed in ADICE (2013) Conclusions and Recommendations based on the European Corps of Solidarity Volunteers experimental project

LRRD	1 (Solidaridad 2013, SCUUK 2012)	Recovery
Other	2 (GRC 2012, VSOI 2013)	Deployed volunteers specifically to build the capacity of hosting organisations in Civil Protection (GRC 2012) and in volunteer management, government engagement and community-led DRR (VSOI 2012).

No clear lessons resulted from this testing as to which type of intervention is more or less suitable for the EUAV – all types of intervention had their pros and cons. The fact that all sending organisations participating in the EUAV and DG ECHO agree that EUAV volunteers should not be sent to “high risk areas” suggests that there is less of an inclination to send volunteers to implement emergency response. However, one sending organisation noted that particularly in situations where volunteers wish to later pursue a career in Humanitarian Aid / civil protection, it is useful for them to gain expertise not only in preparedness and recovery, but also emergency response.

As discussed in section 2.2, volunteers were either deployed individually, in groups or in ‘batches’ of deployment where the activities of the first ‘batch’ of volunteer informed that of the later ones. Some volunteers deployed individually found this a useful opportunity to develop their skills and integrate within the hosting organisation, but they also were more likely to feel isolated. **Volunteers spoke positively about group deployments and hosting organisations found it very constructive to receive ‘batches’ of volunteers as the benefits were cumulative.**

The duration of deployment ranged from 1-2 months for the Civil Protection projects (GRC and DPC) through to (up to) 9 months for the SCUUK 2011 and VSO 2013 projects. All other projects deployed volunteers for four to six months. The French Red Cross recommend a duration of 6-12 months¹⁸ to allow the volunteer to settle into the hosting organisation, to understand the support that they would need and the activities they were supposed to be involved in, and to bring the work to a useful end, yet DPC found it possible to achieve results through three groups of ten day deployments (see section 3.2.6). **This is one of the main differences between CP and HA volunteering and arguably between expert volunteering and junior volunteering:** the former group of volunteers may be able to get results quicker. According to one of the expert volunteers consulted, it is also difficult to deploy experts who have usual employment elsewhere for periods of longer than one month. At least one stakeholder also commented that **long deployments also run a greater risk of volunteers conducting work that could / should be done by local staff.** See also section 3.8.3.2 for more discussion.

3.2.2 Volunteer identification, selection and preparation (Articles 9 & 11)

The different profiles of volunteer targeted and selected were discussed in sections 2.2 and 3.2.1. This sub-section outlines the different models of volunteer recruitment, assessment and pre-deployment preparation ‘tested’, and the lessons learnt from this piloting.

¹⁸ Red Cross EVHAC project final gathering Recommendation Report, November 2012

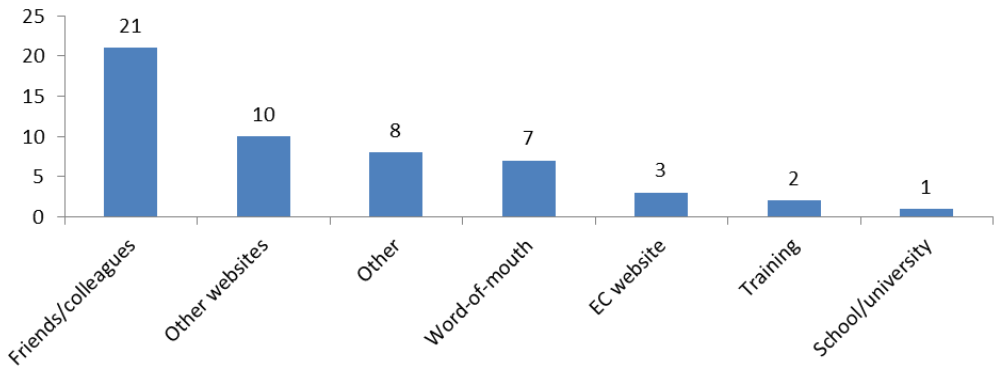


3.2.2.1 Advertising

Sending organisations used a variety of methods for advertising volunteer positions. Where organisations sought to identify candidates with existing expertise, they often advertised positions through internal communication channels – e.g. DPC and Solidaridad selected volunteers through their network of associations and GRC recruited through its existing volunteer rosters, as well as through other channels. Solidaridad advertised through universities and through its database of members, volunteers and supporters. VSO, Solidaridad and SCUK advertised through public websites and VSO also advertised through the “tell a friend” ‘email campaign’. The projects that received the highest number of applicants were the ones led by VSOI in 2011 (585 applicants), SCUK in 2012 (766), and especially ADICE (1080). VSOI engaged in an in-depth recruitment campaign, but this was more costly and required a longer period for advertising.

Of the volunteers surveyed for this evaluation, the majority (40% of the 52 responding to this question) found out about the EUAV through a friend or colleague. For example, at least two of the volunteers we interviewed for this study had previously interned with the European Commission and one had been involved in the setting up of the EUAV. However, this also implies that the range of volunteers reached through the pilot action recruitment phase was slightly limited to those who have already experienced opportunities to volunteer with the EU. DG ECHO and applicant partners should ensure that volunteer positions are advertised in as wide a forum as possible so as to ensure that EU citizens who wouldn’t normally participate in EU initiatives (e.g. EVS, Erasmus, internships) can also access this opportunity.

Figure 3.1 Means through which volunteers heard about the EUAV opportunity (n = 52)



3.2.2.2 Factors affecting application rates

Other factors which affected application rates were:

- **The timeframe for recruitment and assessment:** the timeframe varied from 3 months (France Volontaires 2012) to six months (VSOI 2012). Those partners that advertised positions through the summer found the application rate was low, because people were less likely to be checking job advertising websites, looking for positions, etc. **All organisations argued for a longer period than 3 months for recruitment**, notably to get more applications and to allow for sufficient time for a rigorous assessment and selection of candidates.

- **Availability during the training and deployment would take place:** this was a key deciding factor for many citizens interested in applying to the EUAV. To a large extent, the length of the average deployment (6 months +) limits the kind of people who will be able to participate in the EUAV to those who are not working.
- **Outcomes for volunteers:** Some organisations argue that in order to make the EUAV initiative more attractive to younger volunteers aiming to start a career in the development or humanitarian sectors, **the EUAV should consider accrediting volunteers for their training/deployment;** however, it was noted in project evaluations that this accreditation would be less likely to attract senior / experienced volunteers..
- **Per diem and allowance amounts:** the lack of sufficient allowance caused problems for a number of EUAV volunteers (see section 3.7), and volunteers interviewed for this evaluation stated that **they would not have been able to participate had they not had savings to rely on.** This was usually because living costs during the training and preparation (e.g. placements in European head offices) was often not covered by the project. Other volunteer interviewed said that she would only recommend the EUAV to her friends who she knew “could afford it”.

3.2.2.3 Volunteer assessment and selection

Table 3.3 outlines the main selection criteria applied for shortlisting candidates in each of the pilots.

Table 3.3 Main selection criteria (Pref. = preferred / not essential criteria, X = essential)

	Age	Academic background	Previous HA / CP experience	Previous volunteering / NGO experience	Previous field experience	Inter-cultural skills	Soft skills (e.g. resilience / stress-management)	Technical skills ^[1]	(English) lang. skills	Availability between the set dates	Commitment to the sector
SCUK 2011		X		X	X	X	X	Pref			X
FRC 2011	X							Pref	X	X	X
VSO 2012						X	X	X	X		X
ADICE 2012	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
FV 2012	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
GRC 2012			X					Pref	X	X	
ICCO		X	X		X		X		X		X
SCUK 2012 / 2013		X		X			X	X	X		X

^[1] With regard to technical skills, to be shortlisted SCUK candidate volunteers were required to have expertise in logistics, project management or (in 2013) specific sectors of Humanitarian Aid (to fit the advertised profiles). To be selected, experience as trainer and/or team leader, Spanish language skills, report writing skills and project management skills were preferred for the GRC project.

	Age	Academic background	Previous HA / CP experience	Previous volunteering / NGO experience	Previous field experience	Inter-cultural skills	Soft skills (e.g. resilience / stress-management)	Technical skills ^[1]	(English) lang. skills	Availability between the set dates	Commitment to the sector
VSO 2013			X	X		X	X	X			X
DPC			X								
Solidaridad		X		X			X		X		

Inter-cultural skills were given less priority in the assessment, although a few organisations highlighted this as very important. Almost all sending organisations found some way to assess soft skills such as resilience and team-playing (see 3.3.2.3 below). **Commitment to the sector was also increasingly recognised as an important selection criterion** (see also Box 1 below).

Box 1 The relative importance of previous experience

Prior experience in either international volunteering and/or emergency response were highlighted as very important, as sending organisations (e.g. FV, VSO) found that it affected the extent to which the volunteer implemented effective aid. For example, VSO reported that volunteers who have not lived and worked in a developing country before sometimes require more support from the sending organisation and from their host organisation¹⁹ - this can be therefore more costly. By contrast, to attract more applicants, the German Red Cross - which implemented a four week deployment of Civil Protection experts – made international experience only a secondary requirement in order to increase the number of applications within the short recruitment timeframe. However, SCUK noted that where humanitarian specialists were recruited this sometimes increased the drop-out rate, as the volunteer was more likely to get a job mid-way through the volunteering programme.

At least four of the pilots (SCUK 2011, VSOI 2012, ICCO and ADICE) had high dropout rates – for SCUK and Solidaridad this was during deployment and for VSOI and ICCO prior to it. **SCUK report that this was because they had not sufficiently taken the volunteer’s level of commitment and project loyalty into account when assessing them** (see Box 1 above). To improve this in the 2012 and 2013 pilots, SCUK **first deployed volunteers to headquarters in Europe so that they would feel a greater investment in the organisation and the project.** France Volontaires (2012) and GRC (2012) also deployed volunteers in offices of the sending organisations. Learning lessons from the 2012 project, VSOI in 2013 **interviewed candidates in order to assess personal circumstances and realistic commitment to the organisation’s values.** Solidaridad, learning from its experience as a partner organisation to the ADICE 2012 project also recruited 40 people for only 24 deployment positions, so as to **have a back-up volunteering case of pre-deployment withdrawals.** Trained candidates not deployed will have the opportunity to volunteer online.

¹⁹ See Final Evaluation of the VSO (2011) Evhac Pilot Project

Both SCUK and Solidaridad, learning from earlier involvement in the EUAV pilots, **used the training period to refine their selection of volunteers**. According to Solidaridad this meant that the quality of the selection increased, but also meant that the process took longer (2.5 months from the Call to selection), meaning that there was also a risk of candidates withdrawing from the process. In the future EUAV, through apprenticeships, certified sending organisations will be able to assess whether the volunteer is suitable for deployment (see Article 12(3)).

In at least three of the projects (SCUK 2012, SCUK 2013 and VSO 2013), candidate volunteers were also **assessed against ‘core humanitarian competences’** through a number of tasks and tests, which was considered important for testing both the candidate’s soft, as well as technical, skills. After 2011, Save the Children UK also adopted a **highly rigorous process for the selection of volunteers** involving shortlisting, interviews and an assessment day with assessment ongoing throughout the training period. VSOI (2013) also held an ‘assessment day’ and ran Situational Judgement Test (SJT) with candidates and Solidaridad assessed volunteers’ “group dynamics” before selection and deployment. The GRC 2012 project simulated the complete deployment cycle and tested volunteers.

Article 12(5) of the new regulation requires the training to involve an assessment of the candidate volunteers’ readiness to be deployed to support and complement Humanitarian Aid in third countries, and to meet the local needs (Article 12(5)). This assessment will follow guidelines of the Commission (Article 12(6)).

To save on the costs of rigorous assessment methods, both VSO (2012) and SCUK (2013) carried out selection remotely: VSO asked volunteers to complete and submit written essays and held a webcam interview and SCUK held a virtual group assessment day. In the case of SCUK, this was seen as highly effective, as it reduced the costs to both candidate volunteer and sending organisation without affecting the quality of the assessment tasks. VSOI also found that the method provided good data and saved on costs; however, it also found the process highly time and labour intensive and found that it did not provide data on candidate’s observed behaviour and ability to work with others.

3.2.3 Training (Article 12)

Article 12 of the new Regulation requires all candidate volunteers to participate in the training programme of the Commission, the individual scope and content of which will be established by the certified sending organisation on the basis of a volunteer needs assessment.

All sending organisations provided training to volunteers, although the content, duration and format of this differed project to project. A full outline of the content of these training programmes and their key features is provided in Annex 5.

The results of our survey of volunteers suggest there was satisfaction with the training, notably on security,²⁰ and most responding volunteers also thought that their expectations of the programme and needs as a volunteer (e.g. in relation to professional development, security, etc.) were taken into account in the design of the project to a large extent (31% or 22 respondents) or to some extent (54% or 38 respondents). External evaluations of two of the projects (ADICE and SCUK 2011)

²⁰63 out of 71 volunteers surveyed partially or strongly agreed that safety / security training was satisfactory

suggested **there could have been greater emphasis on inter-cultural awareness training.**

Training was most commonly delivered through a combination of online training (all pilot projects except for GRC 2012 and DPC 2013), and face to face training. In all of the pilots, at least part of the training was provided face-to-face to all volunteers at the same time (i.e. jointly). **Joint training allowed volunteers to meet each other, thus helping to build a sense of belonging and the feeling of an ‘EUAV corps’** (see also section 3.3 also). In the case of at least two pilot projects, however, (France Volontaires and SCUUK), the logistical effort and expense to bring volunteers to the same place at the same time was considered problematic. Further, volunteers usually came with different backgrounds and different levels of experience, which sometimes made it challenging to meet all needs at the same time. The external evaluation of France Volontaire’s 2012 Eurosha project therefore recommends that a common training programme be supplemented by extra sessions for volunteers who may require an extra boost in certain subjects.

Additional training was provided in the destination third country in at least four of the projects (SCUK 2011 & 2012, VSOI 2012 & 2013, ICCO 2012). Further, SCUUK and VSOI (2012) promoted “experiential learning” during deployment. To enable this, VSOI 2012 asked volunteers to self-assess and monitor their own performance and learning in a “Development Passport”. In its 2013 project, VSOI 2013 instead evaluated volunteers on return in an assessment day. SCUUK also plan to do this for their 2013 project and they will issue a certificate afterwards. SCUUK, France Volontaires and VSO appointed professional mentors who usually had a different role to play than the welfare supervisors (see 3.2.4.4). ADICE and ICCO published guidelines for volunteers which were supposed to enhance their learning. Most also made available online learning tools that could be consulted during deployment. VSO also offered support with post-deployment resettlement, which included welfare support (see below), returned volunteer activities and events, career support by career adviser, debrief - psychological support, resettlement medical support, connection to network of returned volunteers. **Post-deployment self-assessment can be considered good practice for consolidating learning.**

At least five pilot projects (FRC 2011, ADICE 2012, GRC 2012, Solidaridad 2013, SCUUK 2013) issued certificates to their volunteers in recognition of their training. However, only VSOI delivered training accredited with an official crediting body (Harper Adams University College), although SCUUK have recently managed to accredit one of their courses with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

In the case of the three SCUUK projects, the training was provided by SCUUK (the lead partner) and its partnering training organisations (Bioforce, NOHA), as well as an associate training organisation (Clarity training) in phase 1 (2011). ICCO also sub-contracted a training provider. Using a sub-contracted (for-profit) trainer proved expensive in all of these pilot projects. The external ex-post evaluation of the ICCO project found that, “*alternatives could be sought in providing in-house field experts for initial volunteer training and coaching and in more results-oriented monitoring of volunteers with clear follow-up*”. However, humanitarian experts consulted for this project warn that **the promotion of in-house training, could privilege the large, established NGOs in western Europe as sending organisations** and instead suggest that **pooling options for training** (where a number of sending organisations would come together to share costs of training their separate volunteers) **might be a way to avoid exclusion of small or newer sending organisations.** The experts also

underlined that in-house training can be just as expensive as contracted training when salary, benefits, office space and organisational investment in training are considered.

3.2.4 Models of managing deployment (Articles 9 and 14)

3.2.4.1 Pre-deployment preparation

Pre-deployment preparation involved arrangement of the following: pre-deployment briefing (see section 3.2.3 above), insurance, visas, injections, security clearance for volunteers, and travel arrangements. Table 3.4 outlines which stakeholder was responsible for each of these in each of the pilot projects.

Table 3.4 Pre-deployment preparations and the actor responsible (for arranging them)

	Pre-deployment briefing	Insurance	Visa	Vaccinations / medication / health check	Security clearance
SCUK 2011	SO	No info	No info	SO	SO
FRC 2011	SO	Vol ²¹	No info	Vol	N/A
VSOI 2012	SO	SO	SO	Vol	SO
GRC 2012	SO / HO	SO	? Vol	SO	SO
ADICE 2012	SO	SO	SO	SO	SO
FV 2012	SO	SO	SO	SO	N/A
ICCO 2012	SO	SO	Vol / HO	SO	N/A
DPC 2013	SO	SO	No info	No info	No info
SCUK 2012	SO	No info	No info	SO	SO
Solidaridad 2013	SO	SO	SO	SO	N/A
SCUK 2013	SO	No info	No info	SO	SO
VSOI 2013	SO	SO	SO	Vol	SO

Where the volunteer or hosting organisation was responsible for pre-deployment preparations, some issues ensued. For example, ICCO left it to hosting organisations to arrange visas for volunteers, but due to a lack of experience they selected inappropriate visas, which led to unplanned leave of volunteers from the country, shorter deployment period and higher costs in some cases. By contrast, GRC highlight that one factor **critical to the effectiveness** of the mission was **involving the hosting organisations in the pre-deployment briefings**. Similarly, ICCO, VSO and DPC arranged travel insurance centrally for all of its volunteers, but VSO volunteers had to arrange their own medical checks and pre-departure vaccinations in order to be added to VSO's medical insurance policy. At least one of the 2012 volunteers did not manage to arrange these vaccinations (and therefore was not insured) by the time of her departure. Again, this suggests that **for hosting**

²¹ Volunteers were given a lump sum allowance for each month of mission (1600€) which covered their allowance, social and medical protection, and insurances.

organisations and volunteers to undertake responsibility for pre-deployment preparations they require information and guidance.

3.2.4.2 *Volunteer status*

In almost all of the pilot projects, volunteers coming from different EU countries had to follow national regulations regarding volunteer (legal) status. This meant that there was no **'common' volunteer status** and subsequently volunteers from different countries were provided different levels of social protection. This created a major workload for sending organisations, who had to analyse all the different legislation and in several cases, induced delays in deployment (e.g. 2011 FRC) or created tensions / frustrations amongst volunteers (e.g. 2012 GRC). Only the France Volontaires pilot project applied the same French international volunteer status to all its volunteers regardless of their Member State of origin. However, this limited the eligibility to persons under 26 years of age, as per the status' legal requirements, when the sending organisations had initially wished to also deploy more experienced volunteers. Some organisations suggested using a common insurance scheme similarly to what is used under the EVS. **It is proposed therefore that when DG ECHO sets its minimum standards that these also cover allowances, insurance, etc., so as to guarantee a more even treatment of volunteers.**

3.2.4.3 *Volunteer allowances, benefits and insurance*

Volunteer allowances are discussed under section 3.7.2 on the distribution of budgets.

3.2.4.4 *Volunteer welfare and duty of care during deployment*

The support provided to volunteers during deployment is crucial for their success and must involve both sending and hosting organisations. The models of welfare provision / welfare monitoring tested included:

- Coaching/mentoring systems (SCUK, FRC)
- Regular phone calls and volunteer reporting requirements (FRC)
- Post-deployment psychological assessment (SCUK, FRC)
- Monitoring mission by HQ (FRC)
- Rest and Recuperation breaks (VSO 2012)
- Buddy system / peer support system (GRC 2012)
- Dedicated online platform (e.g. Facebook page) for exchange of information and experiences (SCUK 2012, SCUK 2013, VSO 2013, Solidaridad 2013) and
- A dedicated contact person for ad-hoc support on return (VSO).

Post-mission support was considered by many organisations as essential. VSO also recognised that it was important to offer volunteers based isolated and crisis-ridden countries like South Sudan rest and recuperation' breaks at least every six months (or even every three months). It underlines that the level and/or type of psychological support is, however, dependent on the extent to which the volunteer is exposed to traumatic or upsetting experiences (e.g. war zones, suffering communities) and or is isolated from the outside world (e.g. in locations with poor communication). **One of the humanitarian experts consulted as part of this evaluation considered comprehensive and sustained support to volunteers as essential, but underlined that this was also expensive.**

Information collected through interviews with all stakeholders suggests that DG ECHO could do more to support volunteer welfare. A number of stakeholders highlighted that they did not manage to make links with the ECHO branches in-

country and that they did not find ECHO Field offices very willing to help volunteers (e.g. in evacuation situations).

3.2.5 Certification of organisations

As stated in section 3.1, certification mechanisms have not been explicitly ‘tested’ through the pilot action, although sending organisations did assess the capacity and suitability of organisations to host volunteers. In most cases, hosting organisations were those with whom the sending organisation had an existing relationship. Sending organisations found this approach much easier as **where sending / hosting partnerships were new (e.g. ADICE 2012), this created a greater administrative burden in setting the project up and made communication more challenging. Identifying and vetting suitable organisations to partner ideally requires more time than is possible within the duration of the EUAV Call.**

Solidaridad also learnt from its experience in conducting the earlier ADICE 2012 pilot that it is difficult to establish good missions with hosting organisations “from a distance” – i.e. **much easier to establish partnerships with organisations in countries in which the sending organisation also has offices, where possible.** This makes it easier – and quicker - to assess both the hosting organisation’s needs and their capacity to manage the volunteers. It also ensures that there are stronger support networks in place in case there are security issues and saves costs of travel to monitor the pilots.

Box 2 Identifying hosting organisations – a possible role for DG ECHO

Given that it can be challenging to establish new relationships with hosting organisations, this might then be an excluding factor for those sending organisations which do not already have established networks in third countries. For the future EUAV, DG ECHO could perhaps play a greater role in where sending organisations do not have the advantage of having an office in the hosting country, e.g. by maintaining a database of local organisations who have worked with ECHO FPA partners in the past, or who have participated in previous EUAV projects or registered and interest in hosting EUAV volunteers. For example, the DPC Civil Protection pilot carried on work started under a previous EU co-funded project, so the host organisations had already been involved with the EU and EU partners and there was therefore a vetted contact list available to the sending organisations.

3.2.6 Local capacity building (Art. 15)

Article 15 of the Regulation indicates that the ‘Commission can support capacity building actions of the hosting organisations so as to ensure effective management of the EU Aid Volunteers and sustainable impact of their work, including the promotion of local volunteering’. Local capacity-building was a major focus of all of the 2013 pilot projects (because local capacity-building was a focus of the 2013 Call), as well as the FRC 2011 project, the 2012 France Volontaires project, the ICCO 2012 and GRC 2012 projects. It was a lower priority of the remainder. The transfer of skills from volunteers to local staff was done through the following means:

- Targeted capacity building in specific technical areas (FV 2012, DPC 2013, VSO 2013);

- Formal training in general skills for Humanitarian Aid / Civil Protection delivery (SCUK 2011, GRC 2012, ICCO 2012);
- Establishment of work plans together with local partners (VSO 2012, ADICE 2012, Solidaridad 2013);
- Involvement of community volunteers (SCUK 2012, SCUK 2013).

Feedback provided by volunteers at the EU Aid Volunteers ‘Back to Base’ conference suggests that **local capacity-building can only work when the local organisation feels ownership over the project: this underlines the importance of selecting organisations – and actions – on a needs basis.**

When participating in capacity-building projects, **EUAV volunteers transferred organisational skills** (fundraising, donor relations, proposal writing, training, logistics) **or technical skills** (mapping, logistics etc.) **which were either needed** (2011 FRC) **or in which local organisations or communities were interested** (2012 France Volontaires). In some projects, the **EUAVs acted as multipliers by training local trainers** (2012 France Volontaires, 2013 DPC, SCUK 2013). Just over half of the volunteers surveyed for this evaluation (59% or 42 out of 71) reported that they helped to build capacities of local volunteers/staff and around the same amount (58% or 41 out of 71) reported that they offered different / new skills sets, which were not already available amongst paid staff.

The DPC 2013 project sought to build the technical capacity of hosting organisations during very short deployment periods. Box 3 provides some analysis of the immediate achievements of this project and the factors critical to its success.

Box 3 Capacity building through short-term deployments – DPC’s Evreca!

DPC deployed volunteers in three groups of volunteers for ten days each. The hosting society stated that in those ten days a lot was achieved:

- (i) **Scoping:** a survey of Caribbean disaster management organisations was conducted profiling different characteristics indicative of their capacity to host volunteers;
- (ii) **Awareness-raising:** in participating in the survey, disaster management and emergency response organisations were introduced to volunteerism as a future possibility for dealing with disasters – the hosting organisation consulted noted that this really created new possibilities for them in disaster management
- (iii) **Innovation:** a concept note for a ‘crowd-sourcing’ tool for exchanging data on the impact of disasters between ‘first responders’ (often based in the affected community) and central disaster management and meteorological centres was created.

The factors critical to the success of such a short-term deployment were:

- (i) Good relations between sending and hosting organisations;
- (ii) Willingness of potential hosting organisations to get involved;
- (iii) Design of the volunteer intervention around identified HO needs
- (iv) Intensive preparation (background research and reading) by volunteers pre-deployment;
- (v) Willingness of volunteers (and HO) to put in long hours during the deployment.

3.2.7 Monitoring & Evaluation (Art. 26)

Different M&E methods and tools were tested across projects (see Annex 4), although the purpose was similar in each case. One lesson learnt from all pilot

projects is that **local partners should directly contribute to M&E** (e.g. through regular reporting, evaluation questionnaires, feedback sessions with pilot partners) to better **and constantly adapt the volunteering mission to the local needs**. The 2011 VSOI pilot project highlighted the need for **reliable communication channels with volunteers and partners** to access reliable Internet or phone connections.

Five of the pilot projects (SCUK 2011, FV 2012, VSO 2012, ICCO 2012, Solidaridad) conducted **external evaluations**. **SCUK and VSO demonstrably learned lessons from these evaluations that they integrated into later pilot projects**. ADICE sub-contracted an evaluator to help shape the project, but the quality of the evaluation was not as high as – for example – the external evaluation of the France Volontaires project. Other pilot projects only undertook internal evaluations.

3.2.8 Communication, Awareness-raising, visibility (Art.17)

All pilot projects were required, as part of their grant agreement, to ensure the visibility of the EUAV. Several dissemination and awareness-raising activities were conducted across pilot projects, through various means: informational press video (to be uploaded on DG ECHO website or YouTube), newspaper articles and press briefings, participation in specific events (with distribution of leaflets), blogs from volunteers, specific project's website, dedicated Twitter/Facebook group, newspaper article, logo of DG ECHO on published material, etc. Overall, project coordinators considered that blogging was a particularly useful tool for reaching out to a wider public. Some of the projects reported that visibility activities reached a much wider audience than initially planned. For example, the 2012 ICCO project estimated to have reached 49,000 EU citizens instead of the initially planned 10,000. With regard to the awareness of volunteers, 46% (33 out of 71 respondents) were not aware of any other national and/or international programmes with similar purposes before applying for participation in the EUAV. The visibility of the EUAV is particularly important during the recruitment phase, as **several pilot projects attributed the fact that they could not reach the targeted number of volunteers to a lack of awareness of the EUAV initiative**. For the pilot projects 2011-2012, three out of eight projects managed to deploy the target number of volunteers, with the remainder not reaching this number.

3.2.9 EUAV Network (Art. 16)

A number of the pilot projects fostered networks as a result of the EUAV pilot projects. Volunteers report that they **mainly keep in touch with volunteers of either their deployment group** or with those of the **same nationality**, and largely within the **same project**. Nonetheless, **methods for cross-project communications have been made available and are being used**. The EUAV Facebook group, created in October 2013, and DG ECHO's call for application webpage were reported as the ways to maintain links and sustain interactions following participation to the project. 168 volunteers are currently members of this group. Approximately half of the volunteers make regular use of the tools, e.g. the viewing of posts on the Facebook group has varied approximately between 70 and 140 persons, with higher viewings in 2013 than currently. Volunteers participating in the online focus group conducted for this evaluation reported that they use the Facebook page and also regularly check DG ECHO's EUAV page. They stated that they feel part of a **'virtual corps'**; however they also underlined that **DG ECHO and EUAV partners should further promote**

debriefings and post-deployment meetings to really foster a feeling of an EUAV network.

3.2.10 Conclusions and recommendations relating to lessons learnt

All projects were able to generate useful lessons learnt, often reflecting the pilot nature of the programme, which meant that some models had to be developed from scratch or existing ones had to be significantly adapted.

These lessons have clearly informed the development of the Regulation and will now inform the development of the Delegated and Implementing Acts.

DG ECHO has been diligent in gathering lessons learnt from sending organisations and volunteers, but less so from hosting organisations.

The following lessons are of particular relevance for the future EU AV initiative. Other relevant lessons can be found through sections 3.3 to 3.10:

- Working with local volunteers was an effective way to build capacity to deliver Humanitarian Aid in third countries and generates greater solidarity between EU volunteers and persons in third countries
- No type of intervention (preparedness, emergency response, LRRD) etc. appeared to be more or less suitable for the EUAV, as long as volunteers were suitably matched (in terms of skills, expertise and resilience) to the activity.
- The profile of ‘senior expert’ currently differs greatly between projects – greater guidance (a definition) of ‘senior expert’ from DG ECHO would increase consistency between future projects in the recruitment of experts.
- Shorter deployments appear to have worked well for expert volunteers volunteering in Civil Protection – for Humanitarian Aid projects / junior volunteers longer durations are preferable to participants to allow for time settling in.
- Commitment to the sector and prior international experience are important criteria for selecting suitable candidates (who are less likely to drop out, more likely to cope).
- Using the training period to refine the selection of volunteers can improve the selection process, but the longer recruitment period can also risk candidates dropping out.
- Joint training allowed volunteers to meet each other, thus helping to build a sense of belonging and the feeling of an ‘EUAV corps’, but the administrative burden and costs are higher than training in the volunteer’s country of origin.
- Remote (online) assessments of volunteers (during selection) can reduce costs.
- Pre-deployment placements in EU help sending organisations to assess and train volunteers, but increase expenses to volunteers who have to cover accommodation and subsistence, and thus risks limiting volunteers to ‘those who can afford it’.
- The administrative burden of running pan-European volunteering deployment project, are high, having to take account of different Member State contexts when organising visas, insurance, travel, etc. In particular, for hosting organisations and volunteers to undertake responsibility for pre-deployment preparations (e.g. visa

arrangements, medical checks) they require information and guidance to ensure all requirements are met accurately.

- Where sending / hosting partnerships are new, this creates a greater administrative burden in setting the project up and can make communication more challenging. Identifying and vetting suitable organisations to partner ideally requires more time than is possible within the duration of the EUAV Call.
- During the volunteer placements, more attention could be given to ‘volunteer welfare’ especially in crisis situations, with greater involvement, if possible, of the local ECHO offices.
- The visibility of the EUAV is particularly important during the recruitment phase, as several pilot projects attributed the fact that they could not reach the targeted number of volunteers to a lack of awareness of the EUAV initiative.
- **§ Operational recommendations**
 - 1): Publish a good practice guide covering volunteer selection, volunteer-matching, hosting organisation selection, project development, needs-assessment, consortium-management, post-deployment activities, team working, strengthening of team spirit, etc.
 - 2) Ensure that mechanisms are created for continuous generation and dissemination of lessons learnt and good practices once the programme is up and running (e.g. project + programme reporting (annual), evaluations, partner meetings, feedback forms, etc.).

3.3 Coherence and complementarity

EQ3: To what extent were the actions undertaken in the pilot projects coherent with and complementary to other national and international programmes and policies?

3.3.1 Coherence

The pilot projects were largely coherent with existing relevant EU and wider policies and programmes, including in particular:

- Regulation 1257/1996 – the proposed EUAV Regulation states that the actions of the EU Aid Volunteers shall be conducted in **compliance with the Humanitarian Aid principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence**. There is no evidence to suggest that the pilot projects did not adhere to these principles or that sending and host organisations had not been compliant with Humanitarian Aid principles. Indeed, sending organisations focused on training volunteers in humanitarian principles and also cross-cultural sensitivities to ensure that the principle of ‘do no harm’ was respected, particularly in sensitive, conflict contexts (e.g. Myanmar, South Sudan). The focus of some projects was more on development than humanitarian actions (e.g. the two VSO projects); however, by bringing together humanitarian and development activities, the EUAV could prove to be a useful forum where LRRD activities could be practices and lessons generated to improve the implementation of LRRD. Box 4 provides a description of LRRD.

Box 4 What is LRRD?

The recovery stage following a disaster provides an opportunity to identify the root causes

of vulnerability and address future risk. By improving conditions during rehabilitation, the idea is to create a fertile ground for medium and longer term **development** programmes.

However, given that crises do not have a constant linear nature, the humanitarian needs of a country may widely vary at any one given time, so that some zones may still require emergency aid, while in other zones aid can be re-directed towards more typically ‘development’ activities. LRRD takes this reality into account.

Effective LRRD can address the poverty that disasters and conflicts generate (or intensify) by **laying the groundwork for sustainable development during humanitarian interventions**. LRRD thinking seeks to **ensure that humanitarian programming does not undermine development work** and that development programming is building on humanitarian knowledge and results. LRRD also involves **better linkages, coordination and streamlining between development and humanitarian programming**.²²

- Projects with a **Civil Protection** focus did not go against any of the principles which underlie the **EU Mechanism for Civil Protection**.²³ Civil Protection volunteers, deployed under the 2012 GRC and 2013 DPC projects, conducted capacity-building activities, which were consistent with the approach of similar activities (e.g. prevention and preparedness projects and training programmes) under the EU Civil Protection and the Financial Instrument. Indeed, if links are made between the EUAV CP projects (2012 GRC and 2013 DPC) and the EU Mechanism for Civil Protection, **lessons learnt and knowledge acquired under the EUAV** could be used to (continuously) inform the approach taken in EU CP *emergency responses*.
- The **agenda for the professionalisation of the Humanitarian Aid sector** – i.e. the agenda of increasing professional pathways and increasing accessibility to and standardisation of progression routes into the humanitarian sector. The EUAV pilot projects have been consistent with this agenda (see also section 3.2.1.1), as they have provided volunteers, sending and hosting organisations the opportunity to improve skills and competences in the field of HA. A majority of stakeholders consulted reported that volunteering through the EUAV initiative has provided a way for volunteers to enter the HA profession or consolidate their experience (see also section 3.8.2). There have also been capacity-building and standard-setting results for participating organisations, which in the long term (1) professionalise the sector, (2) improve the delivery of international HA and (3) even out the level-playing field across the EU (by involving sending organisations and volunteers from EU13).

3.3.1.1 *Conclusions and recommendations relating to coherence (EQ3a)*

- EUAV design and implementation is coherent with principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and implemented with respect to the principle of ‘do no harm’.
- Some EUAV projects were clearly development projects, but – if carefully managed – such similar projects in the future could provide a useful opportunity for exploring, implementing and possibly standardising practices on LRRD.

²² Description taken from: the VOICE/CONCORD position paper on Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD): Towards a more joined up approach enhancing resilience and impact, July 2012 given at the 2012 DG DEVCO Dev Day, available at: <http://eudevdays.eu/sites/default/files/VOICE%20CONCORD%20position%20paper%20Linking%20Relief%20Rehabilitation%20and%20Development-July%202012.pdf>

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/disaster_response/mechanism_en.htm

- The CP projects were coherent with the EU Mechanism for Civil Protection and lessons learnt and knowledge acquired under the EUAV could possibly be used to (continuously) inform the approach taken in EU CP emergency responses.
- The EUAV projects were consistent with the agenda for the professionalisation of Humanitarian Aid sector.
- **§ Strategic recommendations:**
 - 1) Consider using EUAV strategically to develop good practices in LRRD and/or to implement LRDD (where this is not possible through other programmes).
 - 2) Increase linkages between EUAV & (i) ECHO Field, (ii) EU CP mechanism, and (iii) wider ECHO operations, so as to enhance the possibilities for coherence and complementarity with ongoing operations.

3.3.2 Complementarity

3.3.2.1 Complementarity with sending organisation's existing volunteering schemes

Out of the twelve pilot projects, eleven were led by organisations that had already participated in either their own volunteering schemes or in the European Voluntary Service or Youth in Action. Further, several lead or partner sending organisations were already either running or participating in volunteering programmes at the time of their involvement in the EUAV initiative. Table A6.1 in Annex 6 presents a brief overview of these. **By allowing organisations with existing (and often well established) programmes to participate presents a risk that the EUAV is (mis-)used as an additional funding source to maintain existing schemes, and possibly discourage new organisations from starting their own.**

However, **these existing volunteer schemes of sending organisations were largely complementary with the EUAV initiative**, as the evidence gathered shows that the EUAV initiative has allowed lead and partner sending organisations to **recruit or deploy 'new' profiles of volunteer** which either (1) would not have met the requirements of sending organisation's existing volunteering schemes or which (2) sending organisations would not have engaged with previously (see also Box 5 below). Thus, **participation in the EUAV allowed sending organisations to enrich their portfolio of volunteering activities.**²⁴ This was in particular achieved by coupling organisations with prior experience in managing HA volunteers with some with no or little experience. Participation in the project allowed sending and hosting organisations to broaden their portfolio of activities, but in order to achieve this, they were **required to adapt existing recruitment, training and deployment processes to the profiles of the EUAVs.** This in particular meant adapting to different levels of expertise and to different EU nationalities. However, in some EUAV pilot projects the approach to recruitment, training and/or deployment was very similar, if not identical, to those of sending organisation's existing programmes – e.g. the SCUK traineeships (and other entry, mid-level, senior staff deployment programmes)

²⁴ E.g. Red Cross and Open Street Map (2012 FV) deployed volunteers abroad, whereas they usually sponsor volunteers in their home country; Via Koln and ADICE (2012 ADICE) usually deploy school leavers, but deployed semi-professional volunteers as part of their EUAV project; IMC (SCUK 2012 and 2013) deployed junior/generalist volunteers under the EUAV action, whereas they usually only deploy qualified doctors. ■ Volunteers and employees of Civil Protection agencies would not usually qualify for deployment under missions conducted by other sending organisations (e.g. by the Red Cross Emergency Response Units), but were given this opportunity through the 2012 GRC and 2013 DPC projects. Red Cross Emergency Response Units are a standardised package of trained personnel and modules of equipment, part of the global IFRC Disaster Response system. Source: Description of the Action (annex 1).

include extensive pre-deployment, field-mission specific training provided at headquarters, as did the SCUK EUAV pilot project(s).

Box 5 Ways in which existing processes were adapted

- Within the 2011 Red Cross France project, the training, preparation and briefings were based on the usual Red Cross delegates' path but adapted to the volunteers' more "junior" profiles (security, cultural awareness, stress management, etc.)²⁵;
- The 2011 VSO project adapted its usual recruitment process to candidates to the EUAV initiative and also developed a EUAV-specific training course²⁶.

Complementarity is linked to the overall objective of the pilot project – i.e.:

- **The projects whose primary objective was to professionalise EU volunteers** to work in HA (2011 FRC, 2012 GRC, SCUK projects) considered that their projects **were complimentary** in that (1) they filled a gap by providing junior, or HA-inexperienced volunteers, with opportunities to develop or consolidate skills and field experience in HA which the volunteers would not have had elsewhere; and (2) differed from trainee opportunities, as **the level of responsibility given was higher than to a trainee**, and host organisations also reported that volunteers had more experience than trainees and were thus more autonomous.²⁷
- **In projects which primarily focused on delivery of Humanitarian Aid, some stakeholders interviewed considered that the pilot projects added to an already high number of volunteers present in certain countries and thus did not fill a need in resources.** This was the case especially in countries which were high recipients of foreign aid, and which met the security requirements of the EUAV initiative and were thus already likely to host numerous international aid workers.

In the case of the 2012 VSO project, the external evaluation report indicates that *“the project engaged volunteers who had been working internationally elsewhere either with VSO or other organisations. When EU Aid volunteers arrived in country they continued to have an awareness of the [EUAV] programme but did not perceive a need to differentiate themselves from other VSO volunteers, many of whom were working in similar placements”*. To address this issue of overlap, the 2013 VSO project aims to deploy its EU aid volunteers in programmes run by VSO Associates (Sphere and Oxfam India) rather than in VSO programmes.

3.3.2.2 Complementarity with existing programmes conducted by local organisations or communities

The extent to which the EUAV interventions complemented that of local volunteers / staff varied across the pilot projects. Most hosting organisations

²⁵ Evhac final workshop recommendation report.

²⁶ A 3-part remote assessment methodology was used in pilot project, different from VSO's traditional assessment methodology (face-to-face interviews and group activities during an assessment day). This was considered as a valuable alternative assessment option in those circumstances where a volunteer is unable to travel to an assessment centre. As regards training, rather than adding a 2 days of EUAV-specific training to the 3 days training course for 'standard' VSO volunteers, a 4.5 day EUAV specific course was developed specifically for EU Aid Volunteers, with sessions on the EU, Humanitarian Aid, and the EU Aid Volunteer programme itself, as well as content specific to the destination countries. Source: Final Narrative Report.

²⁷ Analysis based on evidence gathered through interviews and survey of volunteers.

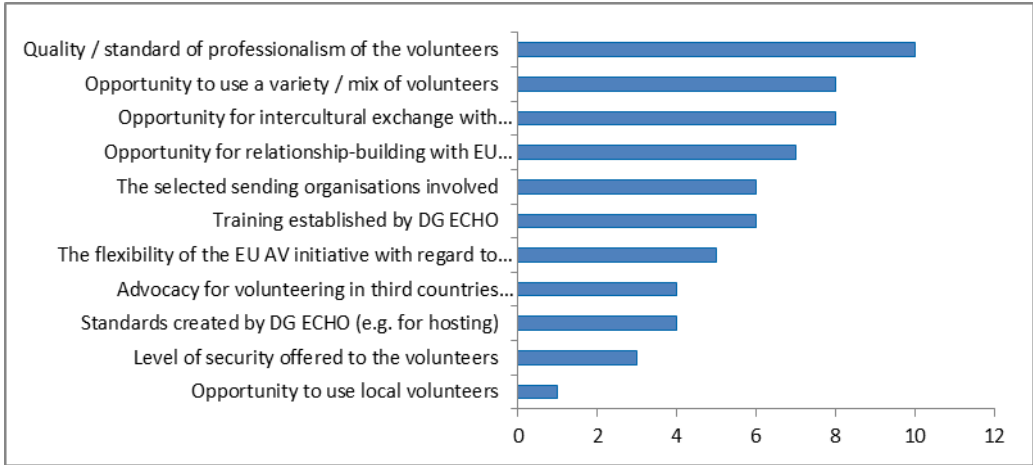


surveyed reported that deployed volunteers did not replace nor duplicate the work conducted by:

- *Volunteers of existing national and/or international programmes* (88% or 14 out of 16 respondents)
- *Remunerated staff of humanitarian organisations.* (75% or 12 out of 16 surveyed in total)
- *Local volunteers* (63% or 10 out of 16 surveyed in total).

Three out of the 16 hosting organisations reported that the work of the EUAV volunteers replaced that of local volunteers to some extent and one respondent reported that it did to a large extent. The sixteen hosting organisations responding to our survey noted the following ‘added value’ of using EU aid volunteers over remunerated professionals (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Aspects of the EUAV initiative that can be considered to be unique to the EU initiative



In some projects (e.g. 2012 ADICE, 2012 GRC, some of the 2012 France Volontaires placements), **whilst the EUAVs did not necessarily transfer new skills to the hosting organisations, they filled a gap in the labour force** i.e. filling positions which could not be filled by employees in the host country, on account of salary and other working conditions. Of the volunteers surveyed for this evaluation, 35% (25 out of 71) of reported that they worked on the same tasks as paid staff but provided extra man-power so that more could get done.

In a few cases, EU volunteers were not well recruited (e.g. lack of appropriate level of foreign language, lack of appropriate attitude, lack of necessary qualifications), and thus were not in a position to provide local organisations or communities with new skills or knowledge, and were more a burden than a help. This concerned projects which deployed junior volunteers and which mainly aimed to skill-up Europeans interested in a career in HA. A total of 18% of volunteers surveyed (13 out of 71) reported that their work replaced the work of the paid staff to some extent and 13% (9 out of 71) reported that their work duplicated

the work of the paid staff to some extent.²⁸ This was not the experience of only one particular project either, as the respondents came from seven different projects.²⁹

3.3.2.3 *Complementarity with (volunteering) programmes of international organisations*

When looking at the tables included in Annex 6 which examine existing international volunteering schemes, it appears that **overall the EUAV initiative fills a gap, by being the first trans-European Humanitarian Aid volunteering scheme open to persons from all EU Member States, with different levels of seniority and expertise, providing tailor-made training prior to deployment.** Some stakeholders drew a parallel with the US Peace Corps or the UNV programme.

Complementarity in the field between the EUAV's work and the work conducted by other international actors already present at local level was not taken into account by many stakeholders, who rather focused largely on the needs within partner organisations in the field, or needs addressed by their projects implemented in the field. Only a few projects assessed complementarity with the ongoing projects of other international organisations, e.g. ADICE mentioned that more attention could have been paid on how the mission of the volunteers could have been articulated with other international actors already present at local level. The 2012 France Volontaires project reports good integration of the volunteers' activities with ongoing projects run by partner organisations (e.g. those of ACRA Foundation of Milan /UNHCR project in Chad).

3.3.2.4 *Complementarity with DG ECHO's other humanitarian work*

Generally most stakeholders consulted considered that the EUAV programme complemented DG ECHO's existing HA / CP work and in this way, the EUAV volunteers represent an additional tool for DG ECHO to implement its work. The three EUAV Calls for Proposals indicated that projects should focus on countries with ongoing ECHO interventions or which received ECHO funding in the past. The box below provides examples of this type of complementarity:

- Some projects **deployed EUAV volunteers within ECHO funded projects**, e.g. the 2011 FRC project deployed volunteers mostly and intentionally in ECHO funded projects implemented by Red Cross societies
- The 2013 Solidaridad project aimed to work *“in coordination with prevention and recovery projects in humanitarian situations funded by ECHO”*

Stakeholders consulted suggested that **some more support from, or contact with, the ECHO field offices would have been beneficial to the EU volunteers deployed in country, in terms of visibility and support to the activities they conducted.** This could have entailed, for example, an introductory and closing meeting with DG ECHO (or EU Delegation) in order to present the EUAV's missions and activities, to report on their results, and in turn to maximise opportunities for complementarity in the field. Some stakeholders interviewed suggested that DG ECHO field offices could have been involved the identification of hosting organisations (see section 3.2.4). In Burundi, at the time of the implementation of the 2012 France Volontaires Open Source mapping project, the EU Delegation was working on an imaging project, but was unable to share the

²⁸ Volunteers were asked to mark any statements they agreed with including “Our work replaced the work of the paid staff to some extent” and “Our work duplicated the work of the paid staff to some extent”.

²⁹ SCUK 2011 (3 respondents), SCUK 2012 (2 respondents), SCUK 2013 (1 respondent), ADICE 2012 (3 respondents), FRC 2012 (2 respondents), GRC 2012 (2 respondents) and VSOI 2012 (2 respondents)

images with the EUAV volunteers – this was an opportunity in synergising and complementarity lost.³⁰

3.3.2.5 *Conclusions and recommendations relating to complementarity (EQ3b)*

- The fact that organisations with established volunteering schemes participate in EUAV presents a risk that EUAV is used as an additional funding source to expand existing schemes, and possibly discourage new organisations from starting their own.
- Indeed, some of the pilot projects showed evident overlap in purpose and approach between the EUAV programme and existing programmes of sending organisations. These projects only demonstrated complementarity to the extent that they targeted different profiles of volunteer and thus allowed sending organisations to enrich their portfolio of volunteering activities.
- There is evidence to demonstrate that EUAV volunteers complemented the work of local staff either by helping staff to build new skills, filling technical gaps and/or providing additional manpower. One eighth to one fifth of volunteers surveyed and one fifth of hosting organisations surveyed, however, thought that their work had sometimes replaced or duplicated the work of local staff.
- More support from, or contact with, the ECHO field offices would have helped promote complementarity by increasing visibility of the EUAV and supporting synergies with ongoing humanitarian work in-country.
- There is also potential for much greater information sharing – and subsequent cooperation – with the ECHO department responsible for the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.
- **§ Strategic recommendation:** Clarify in the Calls for Proposals in which areas specifically (e.g. objectives, target volunteers, sector of working, etc.) sending organisations must demonstrate complementarity between EUAV and their existing programmes.

3.4 EU Added Value

EQ4: To what extent have the pilot projects demonstrated an EU added value, in view of existing volunteering initiatives?

3.4.1 The EU Added Value for sending organisations

For those organisations with existing volunteering programmes, the EUAV initiative differed mainly **because of its transnational dimension** within the EU, as per one of the calls' requirements: applicants were required to act with at least two partner organisations from two different Member States. The inclusion of more than two partner organisations and Member States was considered an asset by ECHO, as per its call for application guidelines.

The possibility to work on an ECHO project and build partnerships with organisations from other EU Member States was reported by sending organisations interviewed as one of the key reasons for having responded to ECHO's calls for applications. Whilst this may not have been an added-value for large and established HA organisations, the EUAV gave newcomer organisations, including those from EU13, and candidate volunteers interested in Humanitarian Aid

³⁰ Final workshop recommendation report.

volunteering, the opportunity to professionalise themselves in the HA sector. **No other funding sources would have enabled this on the same scale.**

The partnership approach, bringing together organisations with experience in volunteering, Humanitarian Aid and other competences, from different EU Member States in one project has resulted in **capacity-building at the level of each partner organisation, and also across European or international movements or NGOs** (e.g. the Red Cross, Save the Children, the Order or Malta organisations). This was **especially the case for smaller organisations with few resources, or those from EU13 with little experience in HA volunteerism. Capacity-building took the form of setting common recruitment, preparation and deployment standards across participating organisations within a consortium.** Finally some organisations interviewed reported they had benefitted from the exchange of experience during the capitalisation meetings and identified ideas of activities in HA at home which they wished to explore further.

Capacity-building of smaller organisations worked best under **the following conditions:**

- **When organisations had already worked together in the past**, e.g. in the case of 2012 ADICE, 2012 VSO, 2013 DPC
- **When organisations belonged to the same umbrella organisation or movement and communication channels and some common procedures were already in place**, e.g. SCUK projects, 2011 FRC and 2012 GRC
- **When the division of responsibilities for the different components of the programme (e.g. recruitment, training, deployment) built on each organisation's expertise.** For example, within the 2011 FRC project, the Austrian Red Cross society brought its expertise in management of volunteer recruitment campaigns, the Bulgarian Red Cross brought its expertise in youth mobilisation and the French and German Red Cross societies brought their expertise in the organisation and implementation of the Red Cross IMPACT training and deployment of delegates abroad.

At least four out of the twelve sending organisations (FRC 2011, ADICE 2012, GRC 2012, DPC 2013) applied to implement the pilot actions with existing partners. At least three (SCUK 2011, France Volontaires 2012, Solidaridad 2013) created new partnerships. All of the pilot actions involved at least one volunteering or one humanitarian organisation with previous experience in recruiting and placing volunteers (e.g. in the case of SCUK). Five sending partnerships were made up of a combination of humanitarian, volunteering and training organisation (all of the SCUK pilots, France Volontaires 2012, Solidaridad 2013).

Two sending organisations (2012 ADICE and 2012 France Volontaires project) reported that they first had to overcome their internal 'cultural differences' with their sending partners and agree on a common vision – and common terminology. For example, under the 2012 France Volontaires project, differences in the understanding amongst consortium partners on the hierarchy of the project's objectives (learning development for the volunteer versus addressing local communities' HA needs) led to lengthy discussions on the project orientation during its implementation, and thus, to some delays.

Whilst the review of the award decisions indicates that the involvement of a large number of participating Member States was considered as a positive aspect of an application, **evidence shows that the greater the number of partners in the**

consortium, the longer communication and agreements would take and the heavier the administrative and project management burden (2012 VSO, 2012 France Volontaires, 2011 FRC). The EU AV initiative could, in the future, seek to make applicants aware of this and favour consortia made up of smaller number of organisations, or consortia based on existing partnerships which already have a shared understanding.

Added value for organisations from EU 13

Humanitarian organisations in the EU13 have historically had very limited experience with deployments or with the provision of HA abroad. **Twelve out of the 39 sending organisations (i.e. 31%) were from EU13.** Being part of a consortium with more experienced organisations gave them the opportunities to (1) learn about HA provision abroad and also (2) about EU or ECHO-funding and also (3) how to send volunteers from EU13 abroad. **For some sending organisations from EU13, their participation in the EUAV initiative, especially if this was spread over more than one call, raised their profile at Member State level and positioned them as a credible partner in international HA.** It also helped to achieve one of the EUAV initiative's objectives, namely to professionalise the sector and create a level-playing field across the EU. Box 6 below provides some examples of this:

Box 6 How projects contributed to the professionalisation of the HA sector

- The Bulgarian Red Cross gained substantial knowledge and expertise from IFRC Geneva and from the lead organisations (FRC and GRC) with regard to the recruitment, preparation and deployment of volunteers in HA missions abroad, which it had not done prior to its participation in the 2011 and 2012 Red Cross projects³¹.
- This was also the case for the Croatian Red Cross participating in the 2012 GRC project, which had however sent Croatian volunteers to international disaster response projects in the past, but reported to have learnt a lot from the project partners.
- This was also the case for Diaconia ECCB, the Czech partner in 2012 ICCO project and within the 2012 France Volontaires project. They reported the two EUAV pilot projects provided them with their first experiences in deploying volunteers abroad, and that working in a consortium with experienced organisations had been very educational, e.g. lessons on safety rules, learning from existing practices, avoiding common mistakes etc.
- Diaconia ECCB also reported that it participated in the pilot projects in order to give young Czechs the opportunity to serve as volunteers abroad as few possibilities existed at national level and the EUAV provided a proper framework for deployment as well as funding. This was also reported by Pro Vobis, the Romania partner in 2012 VSO project.

3.4.2 The EU Added Value for the volunteers

The bringing together of volunteers from different nationalities in a programme was one of the most distinct features of the initiative reported by sending and host organisations and volunteers. Hosting organisations and volunteers largely reported that, despite language and cultural barriers amongst EU volunteers, **the cross-fertilisation of their different national experiences, skills and experience, was one of the most positive outcomes of participation in the project.**

³¹ For example, it learnt about whole cycle of management of international HR, including insurance provision for volunteers abroad, vaccination, preparing volunteers against threats and dangers in the field, supporting deployed volunteers from the back office.

Of the 28 respondents to the volunteer survey who were aware of other volunteering programmes at the time of applying to the EUAV, 13 (46%) stated that they chose the EUAV in part because of the opportunity to work with organisations or volunteers from other EU countries. Volunteers participating in the Facebook virtual focus group also argued that the trans-national dimension was one of the main added values of the programme.

This is, to some extent, an unanticipated positive outcome as only 25% of volunteers surveyed (7 out of a total of out of 28 responses to that particular question) replied that the opportunity to volunteer with people from other EU countries motivated their choice to apply to the EUAV initiative, and only 14% (4) replied that the opportunity to work with organisations based in other EU countries motivated their choice. In addition, bringing together of volunteers from different Member States in a programme sent a positive signal to host communities that different nationalities can work together in a similar manner (following training and team-building activities) to reach a shared objective.

The European dimension was stronger when e.g.

- The recruitment process was EU-wide (SCUK projects) rather than purely national;
- Volunteers from different EU countries were trained together; and
- Volunteers were deployed in groups, and if so, when groups were formed of mixed nationalities. The Box below provides two examples.

In most projects, training and capitalisation exercises were generally occasions when EU volunteers could get together and benefit from inter-cultural and cross-organisational exchanges.

The added value for volunteers from EU 13

In terms of numbers, based on the data available on the volunteers' nationality,³² of the 258 volunteers listed in the DG ECHO's excel database of volunteers (shared with the evaluation team), **only 14% of all EAUV volunteers (i.e. 36 out of the 258) were from EU13.**³³ The main reason for the limited participation from EU13 volunteers is the difficulty in identifying volunteers in EU13 with required language skills, prior relevant experience and HA-related qualifications.

Even when sending organisations from EU13 participated in the EUAV action (e.g. FRC 2011, VSOI 2012, DPC 2013), few EU13 candidates were selected. **To improve recruitment from EU13, some interviewees suggested having separate recruitment processes tailored to the academic backgrounds and experience of EU13 candidate volunteers.** It was also suggested that greater investment be placed in **targeted advertising to potential candidate volunteers in EU13 universities and professions** – e.g. in the health sector, in engineering and in international relations / international development courses, where these exist in EU13 universities.

³² The database does not contain data for all volunteers that participated in the pilot action in total.

³³ Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Romanian, Slovenian.

3.4.3 The extent to which the pilot action created a recognisable and visible ‘European Corps’

Overall, the pilot action succeeded in creating a feeling of belonging to a “European corps” amongst participants. 76% of volunteers surveyed considered that participation in the EU AV pilot action increased, to some extent or to a large extent, their feeling of belonging to a European Humanitarian Aid force, and to the EU more generally (54 out of a total of 71). Only 18% replied ‘not at all’ to this statement. These findings were confirmed by volunteers participating in the Facebook focus group and some of the volunteers interviewed. This sentiment was generated when volunteers from different EU countries were deployed together at the same time and were trained together. However, evidence shows that under some projects, volunteers’ ‘loyalty’ was first and foremost to their sending and/or hosting organisation.

Volunteers were more like to be *recognised* as being part of an EU corps – i.e. by hosting organisations and local communities - when:

- The hosting organisations had been involved, early on, in the selection and definition of the volunteers’ missions,
- Local partners’ were familiar with EU/ECHO projects in general,
- Hosting organisations or volunteers clearly communicated their EUAV status to local national and international partners,
- Volunteers were deployed in programmes or missions specifically designed for them (e.g. 2012 France Volontaires) rather than in ongoing programmes ran by the hosting organisations (e.g. VSO 2012, 2011 FRC, SCUK projects).

The ‘European Dimension’ could also be improved by having common standards / procedures for the management of volunteers (see section 3.2.4). It is likely that the ‘European Dimension’ will also be improved by the further development of the EUAV network, which has already been initiated through social media networks (see 3.2.9).

3.4.4 Conclusions and recommendations relating to EU added value

- The pilot projects demonstrated EU added value for smaller organisations (including EU13 organisations) the opportunity to further professionalise themselves in the HA sector and work within ECHO funding schemes and policies.
- Partnerships worked best when the size was “manageable”, either by being small in size or by including (more) organisations which had previously worked together (thus minimising high administrative burdens and communication issues).
- Volunteers unanimously recognised benefits of working with volunteers from other countries and overall the EUAV pilot action succeeded in creating the feeling of a European Corps amongst its volunteers. Bringing together of volunteers from different nationalities in a programme led to the cross-fertilisation of different experiences, skills and experience.
- It is expected that the ‘European Dimension’ of the initiative will be notably enhanced by having standard procedures for the management of volunteers and an established EUAV network.

- Accessibility to the EUAV for potential volunteers from EU13 is still very limited. This is due in a great part to the absence of a historical investment in the EU13 region, but also language and financial barriers and in some cases due to inadequate targeting of candidate volunteers at recruitment stage.
- **§ Strategic recommendation:** Consider setting aside a proportion of the money in each Call for Proposals for (i) projects involving EU13 sending organisations; (ii) EU13 volunteer recruitment only.
- **§ Operational recommendations:**
 - 1) Consider holding training days or other opportunities for exchanges for newcomer organisations (especially those from EU13) interested in deploying volunteers under the EUAV. This could form part of the technical assistance proposed under Article 10(6) of the new Regulation.
 - 2) Encourage or require EUAV sending organisations to place greater investment / innovative campaigning into encouraging potential candidate volunteers esp. from EU13 (but acknowledge risks of high costs to sending orgs in doing this).
 - 3) Encourage or require EUAV sending organisations to place greater investment / innovative campaigning into encouraging potential candidate volunteers in EU13. In doing so, acknowledge in its Tender documents the higher administrative burden and possible higher costs of this transnational dimension and require applicant organisations to outline how they will address this risk.

3.5 Needs assessment

EQ5: To what extent were the mechanisms applied in the different projects for analysing the needs of the sector and how these can be met by EU Aid Volunteers relevant and appropriate?

In carrying out the pilot projects, the sending organisations assessed four different types of needs:

- The needs of the sector, in terms of skills and capacity;
- The needs of local communities / host countries that they set out to address through the humanitarian / Civil Protection interventions;
- The ‘internal’ capacity needs (skills, training, workload) of the hosting organisations; and
- The training and developmental needs (learning needs) of the volunteers.

The mechanisms used to assess these needs and the relevance and appropriateness of these methods are discussed below. The effectiveness is discussed in section 3.6.

3.5.1 Methods used to assess the needs of the sector

At least four of the pilot projects (SCUK 2011, 2012, 2013 and FRC 2011) designed the pilot intervention around an assessment of the capacity needs of the sector, as based on literature and their own understanding of gaps in technical skills. The volunteer profiles to be targeted were designed on the basis of this assessment. This was also the case in a further four of the pilots (GRC 2012, DPC 2013, VSO 2012 and 2013). In each of these eight cases, the hosting organisations’ needs and their capacity to host volunteers was then assessed, and the volunteers were matched to the organisations afterwards. In the case of the GRC 2012 project, the original intention was to determine the needs of the hosting organisation before advertising

the volunteer roles; however, due to the tight timeframe of the pilots these stages were conducted in parallel with the call for applications of interested volunteers being based on the first expression of interest of the hosting partner organisations rather than on a full assessment of their capacity needs. In the remaining four cases, hosting organisations were selected before volunteer profiles were created, and the hosting organisation had a role in the targeting.

3.5.2 Methods used to assess the needs of local communities

Evidence shows (see Annex 7) that local communities were rarely consulted *directly* on their needs. Rather it was assumed that the local branches of sending organisations or local partners would adequately voice the needs of local communities or consult them. **The quality of the needs assessment was therefore highly dependent on the hosting organisations already having a system in place for needs assessment.** The assessment of local communities' needs was embedded as the first phase of some of the projects (2011 FRC, 2012 France Volontaires, 2013 DPC). In other projects, the needs of the local communities were looked at in more detail in the deployment phase, when volunteers reached out and consulted them to ensure they targeted their outreach activities in the most appropriate manner (2012 France Volontaires).

3.5.3 Methods used to assess the capacity needs of local hosting organisations

The needs of host organisations can be understood both as the organisation's specific need for human resources (of a certain type / with certain skills and competences) which the EU volunteer can fill, as well as the wider needs of the hosting organisation to successfully implement its HA mandate and /or strengthen its organisational capacity.

All sending organisations conducted some form of assessment of the hosting organisations' needs as well as of their organisational capacity to host EUAVs. Most highlighted that a sound needs assessment was to a pre-condition to the effective recruitment, preparation and deployment of the volunteers under the EUAV pilot projects. **The majority of hosting organisations surveyed (15 out of 16) reported that the sending organisations, when designing the project, accurately assessed their needs as a volunteer host,** (e.g. gaps in expertise, human resourcing requirements, need for well-prepared / experienced volunteers, etc.). In two of the pilots (ADICE 2012, Solidaridad 2013), hosting organisations played a key role in helping to design the overall intervention and therefore also the target volunteer profiles. This was also the intention of the France Volontaires project; however, the evaluation of this project found that the project was set up "via a top-down approach" and "although project activities were obviously of great interest for a number of local organisations, they were not decided upon locally".

The following methods were applied by sending organisations to assess the needs of hosting organisations and local communities: **field visits** to host countries (2012 ADICE, 2012 France Volontaires, 2013 DPC), **project visits** (2012 ADICE), **existing needs assessment processes** (in case of established organisations, e.g. analysis of SCUK Global Roster and involvement of HR department; SWOT Analysis), **use of questionnaires/fiches** sent to potential hosting organisations (2012 ADICE in case of In Via Köln, 2012 GRC, 2012 ICCO), **workshops in offices** spread across a country in question (2012 ADICE in case of In Via Köln), simple

email/phone call exchanges (2012 ADICE in case of Solidaridad, 2013 Solidaridad, 2013 VSO).

The majority of hosting organisations surveyed considered that the needs assessments, which they and their partner/sending organisations were involved in, had been **used to a large extent or to some extent to support the implementation of the pilot projects**³⁴. Indeed, the needs assessments were used to:

- Design the volunteer profile (where this was decided upon with inputs from hosting organisations)
- Determine the thematic focus of the volunteer's missions and match it to volunteers' profile/interests;
- Calculate the level of support/mentoring available to the volunteer in the field. The time required to do this was sometimes under-estimated by personnel in hosting organisations, including in local branches of sending organisations;
- Plan how the volunteer intervention would be integrated into ongoing activities of the hosting organisation. Some volunteers (ADICE 2012) reported that the lack of proper structure or integration into existing local teams in certain host organisations or communities was detrimental to their experience
- Provide a baseline assessment which would enable the volunteer to make a change in the most appropriate / relevant areas and also to gain a useful experience (2012 VSO) and avoid duplication with existing work.

The evidence collected (see Annex 7) shows however that **the extensiveness and thoroughness of the needs assessments of hosting organisations varied, sometimes largely, from one project to another, and could generally have been better**. The quality of the needs assessment was better when:

- The needs assessment was conducted by one organisation (often the lead one) for all sending organisation's partners, rather than conducted separately by each partner sending organisations. When needs assessments were conducted separately by each sending organisation (even within the same umbrella organisation), discrepancies in thoroughness were found (e.g. 2011, FRC, 2012 GRC, 2012 ADICE).
- The needs assessment included field visits, considered by close to all stakeholders as the best method to check that needs presented on paper were those on the ground, although more expensive.
- The needs assessment was refined at different stages of the project, e.g. during pre-deployment (2012 GRC, 2013 DPC) training or during the first phase of deployment (2013 DPC).

3.5.4 Assessment of the needs of volunteers

The evidence collected in the frame of the evaluation shows that **the assessment of volunteers' needs in terms of learning development and support at pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment phases varied across projects**. The assessment of volunteers' needs was more thorough when they were junior/generalist volunteers and when the primary objective of the pilot project was on the professionalisation of the HA sector (e.g. for the SCUK projects, the volunteer intervention was designed collaboratively between volunteer and hosting

³⁴ 13 out of a total of 16 responses.

organisation). When the assessment of the volunteers' needs was thorough, the pre-deployment training was generally better tailored and that the volunteers' missions were also better defined to match the needs at local level.

The survey sent to volunteers shows that the **majority of respondents** (60 out of 71 or 85%) **consider that their expectations of the programme and needs as a volunteer** (e.g. in relation to professional development, security, etc.) **had been taken into account the design of the project**, and that the **majority** of volunteers (66 out of 71 or 93%) surveyed **consider that the project they took part in succeeded in meeting their needs**.

Some projects encountered **delays and time pressures which prevented them from fully assessing the volunteers' needs**. For example, in the case of the **2012 France Volontaires** project, delays in recruiting the trainers reportedly resulted in sub-optimal adaptation of content to the needs of the selected EU Aid Volunteers³⁵. In 2012 ADICE, the time and effort taken for volunteers to obtain a visa was insufficiently anticipated by the host organisations and created, in some cases, delays in deployment.

3.5.5 Conclusions and recommendations relating to needs assessment (EQ5)

- Stakeholders consulted report that the mechanisms applied to assess the capacity needs of the sector, of local communities, of the hosting organisations and of volunteers were, overall, relevant and appropriate, although they could have been more thorough, making use of more intensive methods such as field visits and ensuring that the findings of the needs assessments.
- To a large extent, the nature and focus of the needs assessment is dependent on the overall objective of each individual project – e.g. if the main focus is to professionalise the humanitarian sector, then greater attention is given to the needs of the volunteer, whereas if the project has a greater focus on building capacity in hosting countries, then there will be a greater focus on the needs of hosting organisations.
- **§ Operational recommendations:**
- **1) Incentivise use of needs assessments**, for example by sharing different needs assessment approaches and methods as part of the guiding document mentioned in section 3.1.1.
- **2) Operational recommendation:** Encourage or require that sending organisations monitor needs and performance of hosting organisations and volunteers, in an ongoing fashion throughout the project cycle.

3.6 Relevance

EQ6: To what extent have the actions of the pilot projects responded to the humanitarian needs of local communities and the requirements of hosting organisations?

3.6.1 Relevance to local communities

This study did not consult the local communities directly; therefore this assessment is based on the opinions of other stakeholders involved in the project (sending and

³⁵ Final report.

hosting organisations and volunteers) and project reporting, as well as an assessment of the adequacy of the needs assessment.

First, **the pilot projects did not set out specifically to deliver Humanitarian Aid in countries / communities with the *greatest* needs nor in countries / communities where capacity to implement EU Humanitarian Aid was *most lacking***. This is evident in the fact that the target country / region of the project was not selected on the basis of a Global Needs Assessment. At programme level, the Calls for Proposals did not specify which countries or regions the pilot actions should target and **at project level the countries targeted were selected on the basis of either the location of hosting organisations** with whom the sending organisations had prior relationships (VSOI 2013, Solidaridad 2013, ADICE 2012 – for Solidaridad and In Via Koln, France Volontaires 2012, ICCO 2012), **expressions of interest** from sending organisation’s networks or field offices (SCUK 2011-2013, FRC 2011, GRC 2012), sending organisation’s **assessment of suitability for volunteers** (SCUK 2011-13, VSOI 2012), in relation to the **nature of disaster targeted** (DPC 2013),

Nonetheless, all of the pilot projects were implemented in communities at risk of (or currently experiencing) a humanitarian crisis / natural disaster. Further, just over half of the pilot projects deployed volunteers to deliver direct Humanitarian Aid (SCUK 2011-13, FRC 2011, Solidaridad 2013, ADICE 2012, VSOI 2013) – e.g. logistics, project management, local and community development, promoting women in civil society, disaster risk reduction, psychosocial assistance, etc. (see table 3.2 in section 3.2.1.3).³⁶ In each of these cases the pilot projects either contributed to ongoing humanitarian actions that had been designed on the basis of an assessment of local needs (SCUK, FRC 2011, Solidaridad 2013) or were designed on the basis of an assessment of local needs by the hosting organisation (ADICE 2012) or by the volunteers (VSOI 2013), although the feedback from the survey of hosting organisations suggests that the effectiveness of these needs assessments in accurately identifying the needs of local communities were mixed.³⁷

Overall, it seems **that the EUAV initiative is not the *most* relevant way to deliver Humanitarian Aid that addresses the immediate needs of local communities in the short-term**, because volunteers do not always have either the most relevant technical or professional expertise to enable them to deliver aid in the most effective and efficient way.³⁸ To the extent that the EAUV will build capacity both amongst hosting organisations and volunteers (who may go on to work in the sector in the future), it is expected that the EUAV will contribute to the improvement of aid delivery in the long-term, thus indirectly meeting the needs of communities.

3.6.2 Relevance to hosting organisations

Relevant hosting organisations were not selected on the basis of a Global Needs Assessment, but rather - as described above - on the basis of pre-existing relationships / networks. This, however, is logical in view of the fact that, as stated in

³⁶ In the remaining pilot actions the focus was on capacity-building of staff in hosting organisations rather than direct aid delivery.

³⁷ Twelve hosting organisations strongly agreed (6) or partially agreed (6) with the statement: “The needs of the local communities benefitting from the pilot actions were accurately assessed before the pilot action was designed.”

³⁸ Feedback from the survey of hosting organisations suggests that volunteers sometimes lacked sufficient experience, technical expertise, or cultural sensitivity to meet the needs as well as humanitarian workers would.

section 3.4.1, there were a number of implementation challenges when the EUAV projects involved new relationships.

There is some evidence to suggest also that **the operational set-up of the EUAV pilot action may have deterred some relevant hosting organisations from participating**. For example, the German Red Cross project identified some challenges in engaging hosting organisations in the EUAV pilot projects because they were ‘put off’ by the one-way nature – rather than the exchange – approach of the EUAV. Some were also deterred by a fear that the EUAV volunteers would replace local staff, or because they were already participating in other international volunteer schemes. **This suggests that the EUAV may not be entirely ‘demand-driven’ from hosting organisations**. Further, this pilot project identified that some hosting organisations were only motivated to participate in order to obtain additional funding for Humanitarian Aid when deploying volunteers. The fact that Article 15(2) of the new Regulation allows that the capacity-building activities of future EUAV projects may include exchange of staff and volunteers suggests that these deterrents will be mitigated.

Once hosting organisations were selected, the volunteer missions were designed around and appeared to address the specific needs of these organisations. All sending organisations conducted assessments of the capacity needs of their selected hosting organisations (see section 3.5.3 above). The majority of organisations responding to the survey of hosting organisations (15 out of 16) agreed that sending organisations had accurately assessed their needs. This is confirmed by data gathered in the interviews. Where the project activities were less effective in meeting the needs of the hosting organisations this was often because the relationships between the sending and hosting organisations was new and they had not developed strong communication channels to be able to respond to feedback and make necessary changes quickly (see above). **In order to ensure that the needs of organisations continue to be met by volunteers during the implementation of the project, it is essential that the volunteers have a thorough understanding of their mission, but remain flexible also.** In view of this, stakeholders highlighted the need for (i) involving hosting organisations in project design; (ii) having in place a mechanism for monitoring the hosting organisation’s and the volunteer’s experience of the mission and progress in performance; and (iii) ensuring that training covers the objectives of the mission and the hosting organisation’s specific needs and expectations – i.e. that the results match the objectives of the project.

Box 7 The importance of volunteer’s inputs for hosting organisations

“Volunteers must understand that their missions are at the service of local communities. ADICE will pay more attention in the future to the management of volunteers’ perceptions and expectations. They should understand that their competences must contribute to the development of local communities and add value in the long-term. They need to insist on that during volunteers’ training: volunteer will contribute to the sustainability of project (they support but do not decide).”³⁹

Finally, it should be underlined that around half of the lead sending organisations (SCUK, FRC, GRC, Solidaridad, VSO) participating in the pilot action deployed volunteers in their own field offices rather than (or sometimes as well as) in local

³⁹ Interview with hosting organisation.

NGOs. Given that iNGO field offices in third countries can already rely on greater access to resources (such as technical equipment), training courses, and other capacity-building tools, they may not be the most relevant targets of capacity-building activities.

3.6.3 Conclusions and recommendations relating to relevance (EQ6)

- All of the pilot projects were implemented in communities at risk of (or currently experiencing) a humanitarian crisis / natural disaster. However, as the pilot projects did not select target communities on the basis of a Global Needs Assessment, it is not possible to assert whether they addressed the needs of the most in need of the interventions or otherwise the most relevant.
- Overall, the EUAV initiative is not the *most* relevant way to address the immediate humanitarian needs of local communities in the short-term, because volunteers do not always have either the most relevant technical or professional expertise to enable them to deliver aid in the most effective and efficient way.
- Equally, the EUAV did not target local organisations based on a Global Needs Assessment, given that hosting organisations were mainly selected on the basis of existing relationships rather than a wider assessment. However, given the time and practical constraints this is a logical approach.
- Sending organisations overall were effective in assessing and addressing their needs of those hosting organisations that were selected.
- Some aspects of the operational set-up of the EUAV pilot (no possibility of exchange of volunteers i.e. twinning) may have deterred some potential hosting organisations from participating, but these aspects have been addressed in the future programmes envisioned under the Regulation.
- Through the pilot action, some good practices that may help ensure hosting organisations needs are addressed have been identified.
- **§ Operational recommendations:** Require projects, as part of the application, to:
 - Link their needs assessment to DG ECHO’s wider strategy and Global Needs Assessment.
 - Specify how their activities are relevant to DG ECHO’s needs assessments included in the HIPs of the countries of deployment.
 - Be transparent and clear about their rationale for targeting particular countries / communities of intervention and specific hosting organisations.
 - Specify the key impacts to will seek to achieve (e.g. by asking for an intervention logic).

3.7 Cost efficiency

EQ8: Was the size of budget appropriate and proportionate to what the projects are set out to achieve?

3.7.1 Overall project budgets

The total EU funding which was available for the pilot action was 4.5 million euro funding available for the pilot actions in the period 2011-2013.⁴⁰ The

⁴⁰ 0.85 million euro in 2011, 2.45 in 2012 and 1.2 in 2013

planned value of the 12 pilot projects together amounted to 6.5 million euro (including co-financing), with an average project value of EUR 0.54 million per project, ranging from EUR 0.245 million (2013 DPCI) to EUR 0.777 million (2012 France Volontaires). It appears that in the course of the pilot action, only one project (ICCO 2012) reported underspend (84% of the project value was spent upon completion) and the budget of another project (2012 France Volontaires) was reduced by DG ECHO.

Overall, projects were implemented without any major financial difficulties, although in a number of cases the initially planned budget allocations for certain types of expenditure or activities had to be revised. In particular, several projects needed to increase the human resources allocated to project implementation, due to:

- Time required to establish the consortia;
- A lack of coordination within consortiums, meaning that potential economies of scale were not fully exploited;
- Time and effort required to develop and organise (new) training tools and courses, selection and recruitment processes and management standards, etc.;
- Time spent on pre-deployment processes (visas, etc.); and
- Time spent piloting new tools.

Other unexpected costs arose from:

- Unplanned activities / responsibilities of volunteers during deployment – e.g. organising meetings, undertaking out-of-town project visits (requiring additional transport and accommodation);
- Certain expenses being higher than foreseen (e.g. visas, additional vaccinations, etc.) as well as the costs for administrating these items.

Whilst some level of re-budgeting is understandable considering the pilot nature of the programme, **some of the overruns and unexpected costs could perhaps have been prevented through better and more careful planning beforehand**. Some projects, for example ADICE 2012, organised preparatory visits to ensure a realistic budget and cost allocations adapted to the situation on-the-ground. The GRC 2012 project confirmed that the budgeting process indeed depended on good needs assessments. Several sending organisations commented that the pilot projects were more costly than their ‘normal’ volunteering schemes, due to the requirements with regard to recruitment, training, reimbursement of travel costs to volunteers, etc. although others found the costs to be more or less the same.

With regard to possible cost-efficiencies, the pilot projects highlighted some areas where it was possible to reduce the budget:

- Networking and communication costs were reduced as organisations made use of free online services (e.g. Skype) and use of already existing mailing lists to reach the relevant audience.
- Undertaking training, coaching, assessments, etc. in house, which also meant that controlled follow-up could be ensured.
- Preparatory visits, needs assessments and regular project monitoring also helped to improve financial management, in terms of being able to identify budgetary requirements and potential changes in a timely manner.

- Selecting smaller numbers of well-qualified and well-prepared volunteers, who would be deployed for a longer period, was seen as more cost-efficient than handling large numbers on short-term placements.

Two of the pilot projects included a specific contingency allocation in their budget to cope with unexpected events (up to 4.5% of the total budget). **Given the pilot nature of the programme, having a reserve in place was probably useful**, especially when the sending organisations had little experience with developing certain new elements. **Even in the full EUAV initiative, allowing for a contingency reserve may be beneficial**, especially when projects intend to organise placements which concern response (rather than prevention or preparedness), as in these situations there may be a need to organise evacuations or take additional security measures.

3.7.2 Cost-distribution across different categories

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 below show the budget distribution over key categories, in euro and as a percentage of the total budget. Annex 8 includes a detailed overview of all project budgets. Staff costs have proportionally increased over the three years, whereas the share of the budgets allocated to volunteer allowances and training has decreased. The latter may in part be explained by the fact that 2013 included two ‘repeat’ projects (SCUK and VSO), allowing for costs savings as they did not have to develop a training programme from scratch. Box 8 below provides an overview of the different items included in each category.

Table 3.5 Budget distribution on average per year, euro

	Staff	Volunteer allowance s/ expenses	Logistics	Training	Security ⁴¹	Equipment and Other ⁴²	Comm./ Visibility	Recruitment/ Selection ⁴³	Monitoring and Evaluation
Average 2011	114,275.00	214,650.00	74,350.00	107,046.50	1,200.00	8,670.00	5,825.00	2,990.00	3,765.00
Average 2012	214,180.87	121,868.04	77,404.31	106,821.07	6,019.17	30,455.01	12,931.24	6,911.64	8,733.97
Average 2013	143,912.52	96,336.08	42,352.69	35,602.76 ⁴⁴	360.00	9,299.67	12,649.76	6,559.34	12,337.50

Source: Project documentation, Financial Annex 8

⁴¹ Information from very few projects available, see **Error! Reference source not found.** for full details

⁴² No information from SCUK2011 and DPCI2013

⁴³ No information from ICCO2012, Solidaridad 2013 and DPCI2013

⁴⁴ No information from DPCI2013

Table 3.6 Budget distribution on average as a share of the total budget, 2011-2013

	Staff	Volunteer allowance s/ expenses	Logistics	Training	Security ⁴⁵	Equipment and Other ⁴⁶	Comm./ Visibility	Recruitment/ Selection ⁴⁷	Monitoring and Evaluation
Average 2011	19.33%	36.31%	12.58%	18.11%	0.20%	1.47%	0.99%	0.51%	0.64%
Average 2012	33.72%	19.18%	12.19%	16.82%	0.95%	4.79%	2.04%	1.09%	1.37%
Average 2013	37.49%	25.09%	11.03%	9.27%	0.09%	2.42%	3.29%	1.71%	3.21%

Source: Project documentation, Financial Annex 8

Box 8 List of costs that have been allocated under each category

The information below presents the types of costs are included under each of budget categories. Projects anticipating specific and different budget lines are mentioned between brackets. For example, only SCUK 2012 and SCUK2013 had volunteer allowance during the head-office placements.

Staff:

- Salaries of project staff:
- Per diems for staff travels
- Accommodation of staff when on the coordination visits

Volunteer allowances/ expenses:

- Allowances (also includes the subsistence allowance during the training if one distinguished into the budget)
- Medical checks, vaccinations
- Post-deployment debrief
- Insurance
- Housing/ Accommodation
- Administration costs (ICCO2012)
- Volunteer allowance during the head-office placements (SCUK2012, SCUK2013)
- Language support for local volunteers (SCUK2012)
- Resettlement (VSO2013)
- Mentorship (Solidaridad2013)
- For GRC2012, ICCO2012 information also includes costs of visas as a lump sum to volunteers was provided to do this on their own, as otherwise visas' costs are included under 'logistics'

Logistics:

- International travel to training and deployment
- Visas
- Local transportation
- Logistics related to the volunteer selection process (VSO2013)

Training:

- Training equipment
- Training materials and curricula
- Training events
- Accommodation for training visits
- Online training workshops

⁴⁵ Information from very few projects available, see **Error! Reference source not found.** for full details

⁴⁶ No information from SCUK2011 and DPCI2013

⁴⁷ No information from ICCO2012, Solidaridad 2013 and DPCI2013

- Workshops for capacity building
- In-country volunteer induction (VSO 2013)
- Venue hiring for the training (VSO2013, SCU2013)

Security:

- Criminal Record Bureau checks (SCUK 2011, SCUK2012, SCUK2013)
- Security advisor (SCUK2012, SCUK2013)
- In country training and security costs for volunteers in Sudan (VSO2012)

Equipment/ other costs:

- Computers
- Vehicles, fuel, maintenance
- Costs of local offices
- Mobile phones, internet connection
- Printers, furniture
- Stationery
- Lump sum to host for office rent, stationery and volunteer accommodation (GRC2012)
- IT costs due to online volunteering (GRC2012)
- Bank guaranties, financial services
- Purchase of licenses for Collaboration tool (VSO2012)

Communication/ Visibility:

- Visibility actions
- Publications
- Published guidelines
- Translations relevant for communication and visibility actions
- Seminars, events

Volunteer selection/ recruitment:

- Recruitment/ Selection events
- Adverts

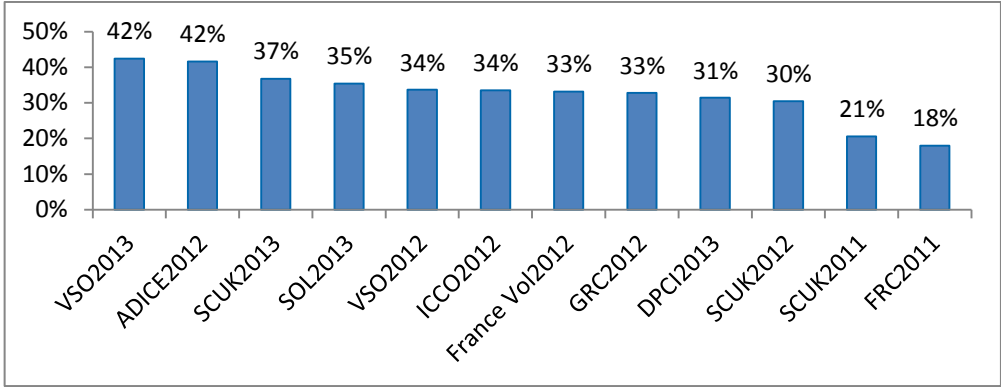
Monitoring:

- Evaluation costs
- Costs for the meeting where evaluation was planned/ discussed (GRC2012)
- Expenditure verification/ audit (VSO2013, DPCI2013)
- Monitoring and evaluation visits (SCUK2013)

When looking at the category of staff costs more in detail, these overall represent between 30-40% of the total project costs. As already discussed above, several sending organisations commented on these **costs being higher than initially planned, mostly because of projects underestimating the substantial human resources required for organisational and coordination activities**, working with partners from different EU Member States and deploying volunteers in multiple third countries. Views varied as to how much staff costs should ‘normally’ represent in projects of this type. One organisation indicated that 40% staff costs was an average share also in other volunteering schemes while another spoke of 10%.



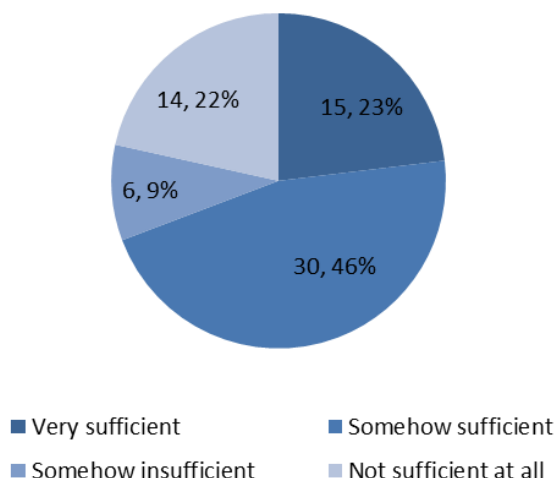
Figure 3.3 Budget allocated to staff as a share of the total budget per project



The share of the budget allocated to the volunteer allowance also varied between projects, as shown in figure 4.4 below, overall representing between 20-30% of the project costs. In addition to the ‘stipend’ paid directly to the volunteers, this category also covered other items such as insurance, housing, etc. When looking at the allowance paid to the volunteers, amounts varied between a few hundred euros in certain locations to EUR 3,000 paid to Swedish volunteers as part of the GRC 2012 project. Some projects, such as ADICE 2012 and Solidaridad made a distinction between junior and senior volunteers, with the allowance for juniors being EUR 650 and 800 respectively and for seniors EUR 850 and 900. Solidaridad also paid allowances based on the costs of living in the country of deployment, as did VSO. **Four sending organisations added that the allowances paid were similar to those they provided as part of other volunteering schemes.** France Volontaires had used the allowances permitted by the official national volunteering scheme. The **Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency**, partner in the GRC 2012 project, indicated that they **had to offer a relatively high allowance (EUR 3,000) to attract expert volunteer but that these were normal prices offered in Sweden.** As discussed in section 3.2.4, there may be scope in project partners agreeing on a common approach to the allowances as in some cases this has led to tensions with volunteers discovering that they received much less than colleagues from other Member States.

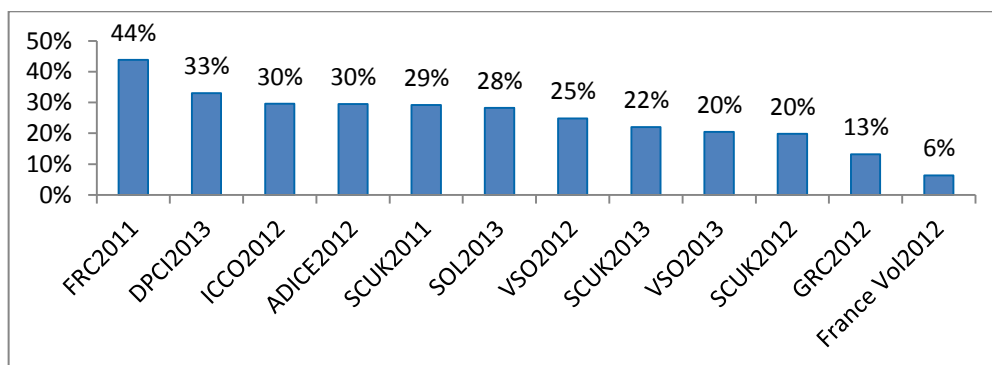
Approximately two-thirds of the surveyed volunteers found the monthly allocation (very / somewhat) sufficient (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Volunteer views on the monthly allowances they received⁴⁸



The remainder, who found it somehow insufficient (6) or not sufficient at all (14), were mostly junior professionals (two-thirds have less than 2 years of experience), perhaps because they did not have any other source of income, and half of them participated in projects led by Save the Children across the three rounds of pilot projects, which was unique amongst the pilot projects in that it entailed up to four months stay in European headquarters of iNGOs for which accommodation had to be paid out of the volunteer’s own pocket.

Figure 3.5 Budget allocated to the volunteer allowances/ expenses as a share of the total budget per project

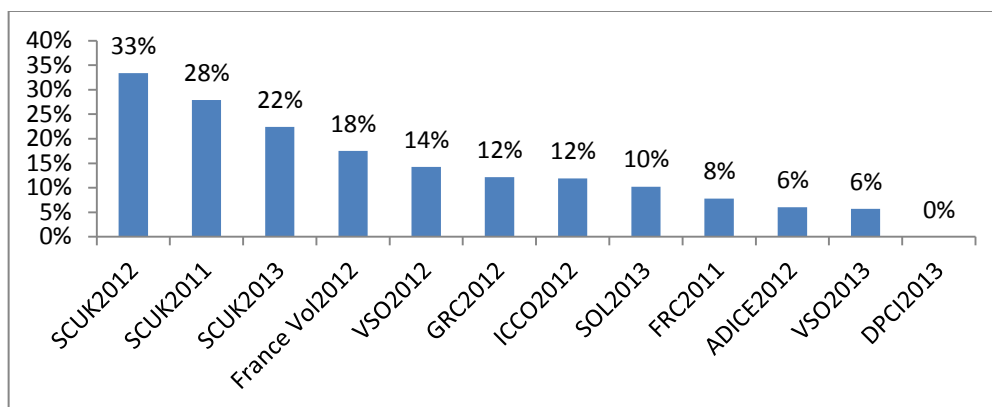


The budget allocated to training varied significantly and, overall, lower allocations in 2013 than in the previous years, in particular for repeat projects, as shown in figure 3.5 below, suggesting that this is an area where real economies of scale can be generated (as there are reduced costs for developing material). Sending organisations overall developed specific training or adapted their own existing schemes to better meet the requirements of the EU AV pilot action. Training costs are also highly dependent on (i) the prior experience of the volunteer (i.e. for the DPC project volunteers were Civil Protection experts), and (ii) the overall purpose of the project (i.e. for the SCUK projects the aim was to provide professional-level training to the volunteers). This evaluation has argued that training costs can be

⁴⁸ Responses to the question: “What is your view on the monthly allowance that you received as a volunteer?” respondents were given a choice between six answers: very sufficient, somewhat sufficient, somewhat insufficient, no sufficient at all, don’t know / no opinion, ‘other’.

reduced when carried out in-house (see section 3.2.3); however, apparent reductions in costs may be clouded by non-accounted in-house expenditure (e.g. staff time, overheads, stationary, etc.) and so any future training covered in-house should account for such expenditure in its budgets.

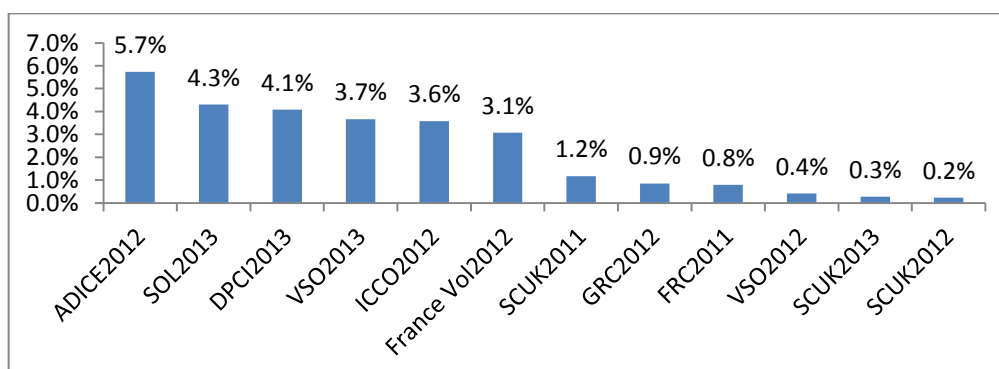
Figure 3.6 Budget allocated to the training as a share of the total budget per project



No specific information for DPCI2013 available

The budget allocated to communication and visibility activities was overall rather low – in four projects it represented less than 1% of the total planned budget. This reflects that not all projects actively promoted the pilot action. **If the EU wishes to increase the visibility of the scheme and EU Humanitarian Aid in general, more emphasis could be placed on communication and visibility activities being properly budgeted too.**

Figure 3.7 Budget allocated to the communication/ visibility as a share of the total budget per project



Very little went to the local offices (average 2.38% range 0% - 7.67% in 2011 and 2012) and **hosting organisations had mixed feelings about the fairness of budget distribution.** Most of the hosting organisations surveyed found that the budget allocations to volunteers (apart from two who did not have an opinion) were adequate. However, of the 16 hosting organisations which responded to the survey, five found that the budget available for training was inadequate, four the budget reserved for equipment, three the allocations to communication and visibility activities, two respectively the budgets allocated to staff and logistics and one the allocations to security. One hosting organisation remarked that they were not informed of the budget of the pilot action, nor in control of any resources, which were in the hands of the volunteer. Another considered that hosting organisations should be provided with some funds to carry out activities such as training and

awareness-raising campaigns and to cover costs for logistics, equipment and other materials. Another organisation added that the costs for logistics were underestimated. The involvement of hosting organisations in the planning of the ‘onsite budget’ would indeed benefit the accuracy of planned costs.

3.7.3 Costs per month of deployment

In total, 277 volunteers were deployed as part of the 12 pilot projects⁴⁹, for a total of 1,480 volunteer months. Figure 3.8 and Table 3.7 represent the cost of a volunteer placement per month of the 12 pilot projects. This was calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{total budget of the project}}{\text{number of deployment months} * \text{number of volunteers deployed}}$$

Figure 3.8 Total cost of volunteer per deployment month, 2011-2013⁵⁰

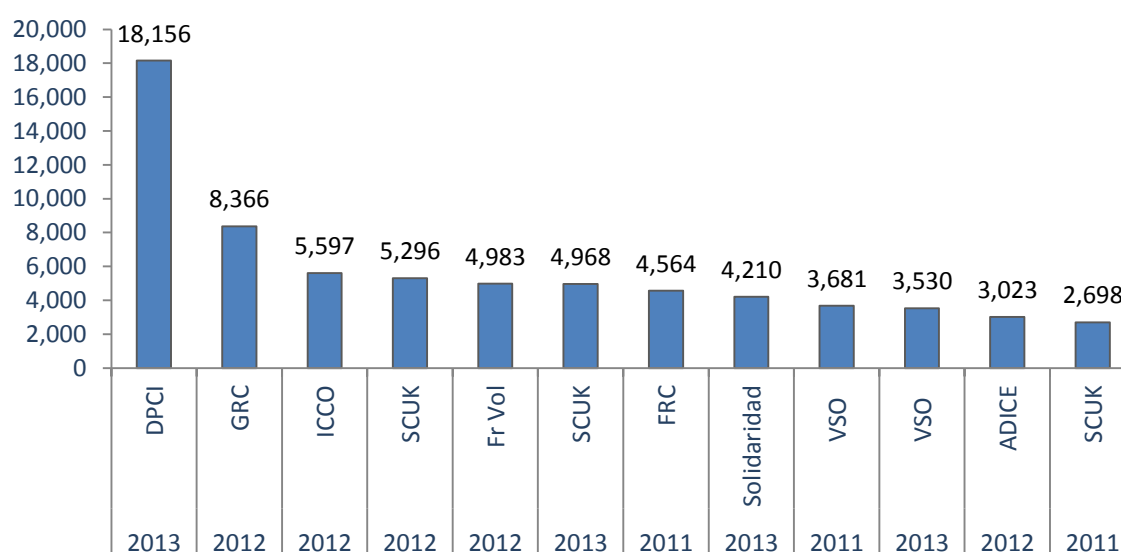


Table 3.7 Total cost of volunteer per deployment month

Year	Project Leader	Total budget of the action, euro	Average time of deployment (months)	Number of volunteers deployed	Cost of volunteer per deployment month, euro
2011	SCUK	607,142.86	9	25	2,698.41
2011	FRC	575,121.61	6	21	4,564.46
2011	VSO	684,756.26	6	31	3,681.49
2012	ADICE	438,405.00	5	29	3,023.48
2012	Fr Vol	777,376.04	6	26	4,983.18
2012	GRC	702,751.00	2	42	8,366.08
2012	SCUK	704,402.45	7	19	5,296.26

⁴⁹ For the 2013 projects, planned numbers of volunteers have been used.

⁵⁰ The calculation is based on the total budget of the pilot project divided by number of months of deployment and the number of volunteers actually deployed. For 2013 calculations are based on the planned number of volunteer placements.

2012	ICCO	503,706.82	6	15	5,596.74
2013	VSO	540,097.75	9	17	3,530.05
2013	SCUK	285,650.68	5.75	10	4,967.84
2013	Solidaridad	464,823.00	4.6	24	4,210.35
2013	DPCI	245,100.00	0.75	18	18,155.56

The highest cost per month of deployment was for the DCP 2013 project (EUR 18,156) whilst the lowest cost was incurred by the 2011 SC UK project (EUR 2.698). The average cost per volunteer placement based on all 12 pilot projects was EUR 4,414 per month. Considering that this average costs comprises all project-related expenditure, ranging from design and development, administration, travel and subsistence to recruitment, selection, training, monitoring and evaluation, etc., this cost seems to be reasonable in the majority of cases. The relatively high costs for GRC are in part due to the much higher allowances given to volunteers by one of the partners, quoted as up to EUR 3,000 per month, for highly experienced people with experience in the field. DPCI 2013 is a Civil Protection project, including significant international travel. The SCUK 2011 project incurred lower costs partly due to volunteers dropping out partway through the project. As also mentioned by a few sending organisations, it is also important to take account of the pilot nature of the actions, meaning that at least part of the budget was related to ‘learning’ and setting up new structures and procedures. On this basis, **it is likely that the average cost per volunteer placement per month will further decrease in the new EU AV programme.**

Box 9 Benchmarking with other UNV

Due to the lack of publicly available data it is not possible to compare the volunteer costs of different international volunteering programmes. The evaluation team has only been able to provide data on average monthly volunteer costs for the UNV scheme (see Table 3.8). These costs cover accommodation, travel, settling-in allowance, daily allowance, insurance, medical and security evacuations, as well as repatriation travel and resettlement allowance.

Table 3.8 UNV Average Monthly Volunteer Costs (US\$), 2008 and 2011

	2008		2011	
	International UNV	National UNV	International UNV	National UNV
Monthly living allowance including accommodation	2,208.33	600.00	2,183.33	591.67
Other costs*	2,116.67	258.33	1,400.00	258.33
Total monthly average cost	4,325.00	858.33	3,583.33	850.00

*Source: UNV Annual Reports 2008 and 2011; * Comprises non-recurrent costs relating to assignment travel and settling-in allowance, insurances, provisions for medical and security evacuations, repatriation travel and resettlement allowance*

The monthly costs per volunteer for UNV in 2011 (the most recent year for which we have data) are 19% lower than the EUAV monthly cost per volunteer, but do not include training and hosting organisation expenditure (given that for UNV these are always UN offices).

3.7.4 Conclusions and recommendations relating to cost efficiency (EQ8)

- Overall, the size of the budget was appropriate and proportionate to what the projects had set out to achieve, also considering that part of the budget was related to ‘learning’ and setting up new structures and procedures.
- Projects were implemented without any major financial difficulties, although in a number of cases the initially planned budget allocations for certain types of expenditure or activities had to be revised in particular, to increase the human resources for organisational and coordination activities, working with partners from different EU Member States and deploying volunteers in multiple third countries.
- Whilst some level of re-budgeting is understandable considering the pilot nature of the programme, some of the overruns and unexpected costs could perhaps have been prevented through better and more careful planning beforehand, or by setting aside a contingency as part of the budget.
- The average cost per volunteer placement based on all 12 pilot projects was EUR 4,414 per month, with variations reflecting often the type of placement (requiring a highly experienced volunteer or not) and the type of project (short-term specific missions or not).
- Considering that this average costs comprises all project-related expenditure, ranging from design and development, administration, travel and subsistence to recruitment, selection, training, monitoring and evaluation, etc., this cost seems to be reasonable in the majority of cases and is likely to further decrease in the new EUAV initiative.
- Reliable benchmarking with other voluntary schemes has not been possible within the scope of this evaluation.
- **§ Strategic recommendation:** Issue minimum standards in relation to the volunteer allowance, the insurance coverage, volunteer welfare, allocations to hosting organisations, communication and visibility activities, etc.
- **§ Operational recommendations:**
 - 1) Provide examples of cost-efficient approaches, for example as part of the guiding document (see 3.1.1).
 - 2) Require projects, as part of the application, to:
 - Specify the key impacts to will seek to achieve (e.g. by asking for an intervention logic).
 - Specify and justify the average monthly cost of deployment; and
 - Review, in each country of deployment, the risk of unexpected costs (e.g. because of political situation).

3.8 Possible future impacts of the EUAV

EQ9: What evidence have the pilot projects provided showing that the EUAV initiative may contribute to: (a) an increased and improved capacity of the Union to provide Humanitarian Aid and civil protection responses? (b) Improving skills and competences, as well as working conditions of volunteers? (c) Building capacities of hosting organisations at local level and fostering volunteering in third countries? (d) Promoting the visibility of the Union's Humanitarian Aid values by project coordinators, and of the identity of an EU Aid Volunteers initiative? (e) Increasing the coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States and improve the opportunities for Union citizens and organisations to participate in Humanitarian Aid activities and operations*

3.8.1 Impacts on capacity of EU to provide Humanitarian Aid

One of the objectives of the EUAV is to strengthen the Union's capacity to respond to humanitarian crises, by creating a register of trained volunteers who can be deployed by certified organisations in response to calls for proposals for humanitarian activities, published as part of DG ECHO's annual work programme. Most of DG ECHO's humanitarian / Civil Protection focuses on relief work in response to disasters, followed by the other areas of the disaster management cycle (i.e. preparedness / resilience-building, DRR and LRRD). Most likely, EU Aid volunteers will mainly be deployed in these other areas,⁵¹ as also shown by the pilot projects, and hence, the impact of the EUAV initiative will mostly occur in these areas too.

For the EUAV to increase the capacity of the Union to provide Humanitarian Aid and civil protection, the actions implemented should correspond to a specific humanitarian need on the ground. Both the design of the 2012 and 2013 programmes and of the individual pilot projects were developed on the basis of a recognition of needs:

- The 2012 and 2013 calls sought to “add value to Humanitarian Aid operations in the fields of resilience, disaster risk reduction, crisis response and post crisis recovery through volunteering and by promoting partnerships between organisations active in Humanitarian Aid and / or Civil Protection operations” and in 2013 “to preventing, crisis response, post crisis recovery and linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)”.
- As previously stated, all pilot projects involved a needs assessment.

However, as discussed in section 3.6, during the pilot action, target communities and hosting organisations were rarely selected on the basis of a Global Needs Assessment because there was insufficient time, because of other practical limitation, (e.g. the challenges to creating new partnerships) and because this was not required by the terms of reference. This approach is unlikely to change in the future initiative unless DG ECHO introduces requirements to link the projects to wider Global Needs Assessments and/or DG ECHO's wider strategy. This means that the EUAV initiative may not have an impact on DG ECHO's capacity where it is most needed.

Final reporting of the 2011 FRC project states that “*Volunteering is recognized as an entry door to the profession*”, as it is an experience close to the reality of paid

⁵¹ See Article 4 of Regulation 357/2014

humanitarian work. In this sense, **the EAUV contributes to increasing the capacity of the Union to provide Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection responses, in that it will increase the pool of Europeans trained in the profession willing to work in it.** The online survey of volunteers suggests that the pilot projects had had a positive impact on the of volunteers' willingness to volunteer / work in the Humanitarian Aid sector in the future (see 3.8.2).

To the extent that the EUAV is an EU initiative that will create a *European Union* register of volunteers (although this is yet to be developed), the EUAV could be said to numerically add to the Union's direct capacity; however, as a proportion of DG ECHO's overall capacity (through its FPA partners), the EUAV adds numerically much less. Through the EUAV pilot projects, around 300 volunteers were trained and deployed in total. During the period 2014 to 2020, DG ECHO intends to train 4,800 candidate volunteers, offer 2,000 humanitarian apprenticeships, and offer 3,950 deployments through the initiative.⁵² This would average at around 658 deployments per year over the six year period. The UN Volunteers initiative which also aims to increase the capacity of the agency to provide humanitarian (and development) response, on the other hand, deploys up to 8,000 volunteers per year. Being a global player which is not 'limited' to EU volunteers, acting both as a donor and implementing agency, the UN arguable has a greater absorption capacity for its volunteers. **At the project rate of growth, the EUAV in numbers alone is unlikely to have a tangible impact on the EU provision of Humanitarian Aid.**

3.8.2 Impacts on volunteers

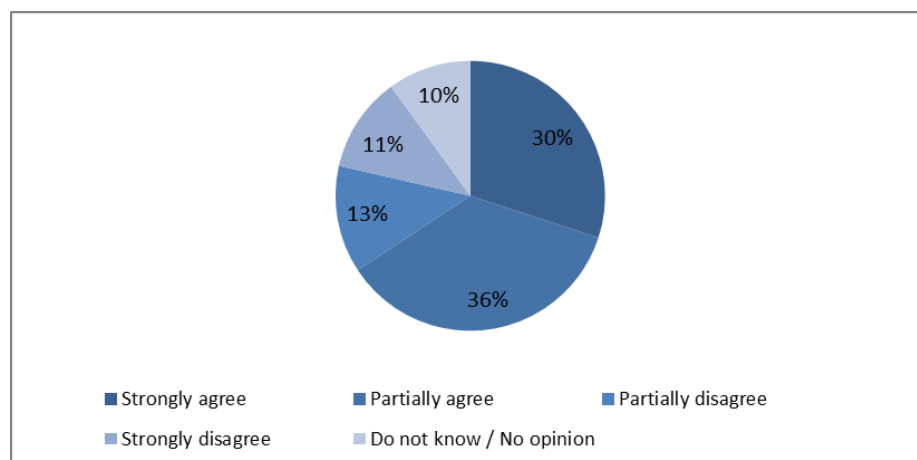
On the basis of 71 responses to the volunteer survey, **87% (59) of the respondents agreed that their participation had a positive impact on their willingness to volunteer or work in the humanitarian sector in the future.** Ninety two per cent of the volunteers (64 of 71) agreed that **the pilot projects provided them with skills and competences that improved their employability in the Humanitarian Aid sector.** One highlighted that they mainly developed behavioural skills and competencies, which were also seen as particularly useful in view of future employment. A total of 65 volunteers (93%) agreed that they had acquired skills and competencies (including behavioural ones) that improved their employability in general.

Volunteers participating in some of the pilot projects (e.g. the SCUK ones, the FRC 2011 and the ADICE project) were successful in gaining employment after the project ended. However, often they were employed by the sending organisation itself (therefore the EUAV served as an extension of the organisation's staff recruitment process).

Of the 16 hosting organisations responding to the online survey, six partially agreed and six strongly agreed that working conditions of their organisation were improved thanks to the Pilot Project. Only two HO somewhat disagreed and two did not respond. Most of the respondents to the volunteer survey (Figure 3.9) also strongly or partially agreed that the working conditions of hosting organisations had improved thanks to the pilot projects, but the 53 responding volunteers (or 75% of respondents) also stated that they (already) found the working conditions (health, safety, working hours, tasks, etc.) in the hosting organisation to be adequate

⁵² ECHO Factsheet on EU Aid Volunteers.

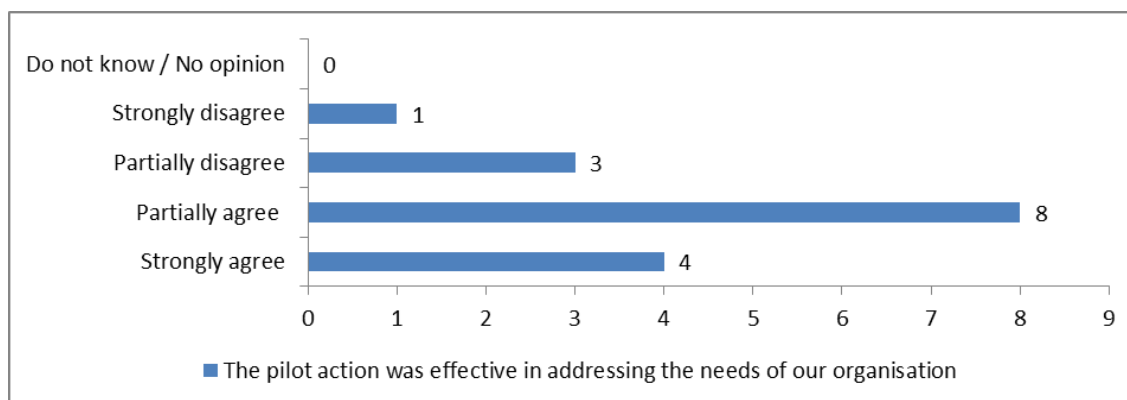
Figure 3.9 Proportion of respondents to the volunteer survey (n=71) who agree that the status, competences and working conditions of hosting organisations were improved thanks to the Pilot Projects



3.8.3 Impacts on capacity-building of hosting organisations

As described in 3.5.3, 15 out of 16 hosting organisations surveyed reported that the EUAV pilot projects in which they had participated had been effective in assessing their needs. A further twelve (75%) either partially (8) or strongly agreed that these needs had been met.

Figure 3.10 Hosting organisations’ responses to the statement: ‘the pilot action was effective in addressing our needs’



Some lessons learnt in relation to capacity-building were provided in section 3.2.6. It appears that the pilot projects have had mixed success in achieving outcomes for hosting organisations. However, there is still a lack of data on the true impact for hosting organisations in relation to capacity-building. Some pockets of success are noticeable (e.g. DPC’s work in the Caribbean – see section 3.2.6).

Pilot projects also tested the involvement of local volunteers (see section 3.2.1.2). Several projects alongside to the EU volunteers also deployed locals, for example: 2012 France Volontaires, 2012 SC UK, 2013 DPC and 2013 VSO. Stakeholders consulted have largely commented that involvement of local volunteers is an effective way of building capacity in Humanitarian Aid in third countries. Ten out of 16 hosting organisations which responded to the survey agreed (five strongly and five partially) that pilot projects reinforced local volunteering and capacity building through support to local capacities.

3.8.4 Promoting the visibility of the Union's Humanitarian Aid values by project coordinators and of the identity of an EU Aid Volunteers initiative

As described in section 3.4.3, the EUAV pilot action has to some extent generated a feeling of an 'EUAV identity' amongst volunteers. However, other stakeholders (e.g. hosting organisations, local communities, etc.) still cannot differentiate fully between the EUAV and other schemes (see section 3.3.2). This suggests that the EUAV is yet still to develop an external identity. Such a lack of visibility may have been in part due to the low budget spent on communications and visibility (see section 3.7.2).

Ten out of the 16 hosting organisations which responded to the relevant question in the survey agreed that the action had contributed to increasing awareness of the Humanitarian Aid values, while only one disagreed. Also, 14 out of the 16 responding organisations consider that the pilot action improved their perception of the EU's role as a key actor in Humanitarian Aid. This suggests that the EUAV pilot projects may have had some impact on raising awareness of EU values within these organisations. However, at a broader level (i.e. within the hosting countries), the EUAV is unlikely to have any major impact on increasing awareness of these values, as the budget is too low and the interventions too localised. Most stakeholders interviewed did not think that it had, notably because DG ECHO already has a presence in many of the countries which hosted volunteers and there is little difference between the visibility actions of the EUAV and those of other ECHO actions.

3.8.5 Impacts on volunteering standards in the EU

According to the Regulation, the EUAV will develop standards for volunteer preparation and management, with a view to improving consistency within the EUAV initiative. The study has shown so far that the pilot projects encountered several practical and administrative issues around the status, which made it difficult to treat all volunteers evenly in that regard. Concerning the standards in relation to volunteer placements, the pilot projects have shown the importance of having standards around placement description and content (objectives, responsibilities and activities) and the working conditions (allowances and what these cover, insurance), which have helped to ensure a 'smooth' volunteering experience and have also been used in subsequent pilot projects.

Beyond the EUAV, some organisations with existing volunteer schemes, participating in the pilot action, adapted their own protocols / procedures to comply with the specificities of the EUAV initiative (see section 3.3.2.1) and it can be assumed that future sending organisations may do the same. The extent to which the subsequently may have considered these adaptations an improvement and applied them to their standard protocols and procedures is to be further explored as part of the evaluation.

3.8.6 Conclusions and recommendations relating to impacts (EQ9)

- The EUAV will provide additional capacity, in particular when the placements are based on needs assessments and the volunteers well matched to the humanitarian / Civil Protection needs of affected communities. However, the EUAV's scale of impact on DG ECHO's overall capacity to deliver Humanitarian Aid will be limited given its size, the lack of linkages to Global Needs Assessments and the lack of experience of volunteers.

- The EUAV can have a strong potential on (i) increasing willingness of volunteers to work in the sector in the future; (ii) improving the skills of volunteers of volunteers. Some of those who volunteered through the pilot action went on to find jobs in the sector, but this was largely within the sending organisations that recruited them and the direct pathway from EUAV volunteering to employment is less direct / guaranteed than e.g. traineeship / internship schemes.
- Hosting organisations overall felt that the EUAV pilot action had a positive impact on their capacity, with success in building capacity depending on the hosting organisation's sense of ownership of the project and investment in it. The EUAV has the potential to make a stronger contribution if needs assessments are improved.
- Improving the visibility of the EU humanitarian principles and the EUAV initiative will require more attention and, where possible, closer links with local ECHO offices and other ECHO programmes running in the countries where volunteers will be placed.
- Whilst pilot projects have tested new standards and approaches to volunteer management and preparation, with some adapting their existing protocols and procedures, it is not possible to assess whether they will keep using these in the future nor whether these standards will have a wider impact beyond the EUAV.
- **§ Strategic recommendations:**
 - 1) Develop a strong framework of indicators for monitoring impacts.
 - 2) Develop and publish a strong logic model for the programme for use in the design of Calls for Proposals and disseminate this to potential applicants.
- **§ Operational recommendations:**
 - 1) As mentioned in section 3.5.3, to increase impact on the ground, require EUAV applicant organisations as part of project design, to:
 - Link their needs assessment to DG ECHO's wider strategy and Global Needs Assessment.
 - Specify the key impacts to will seek to achieve (in an intervention logic).
 - 2) To increase impact on the ground, link the EUAV projects with other ongoing operations of DG ECHO and ECHO partners by enhancing linkages between EUAV & (i) ECHO Field, (ii) EU CP mechanism, and (iii) wider ECHO operations, so as to enhance the possibilities for coherence and complementarity with ongoing operations (*as mentioned in section 3.3.2*).
 - 3) To increase visibility, consider hosting events at which volunteers can meet and exchange experiences.
 - 4) Also to increase visibility and the 'feeling of a European Corps', continue to invest in the social media networks and to ensure that the network remains 'live' and generates innovation, exchanges of good practices and greater standardisation of approach.

3.9 Critical Success Factors

EQ2: What were the key success factors that contributed to the effectiveness, cost-efficiency and the sustainability of the actions on the ground?

3.9.1 Factors which increase effectiveness

Overall considerations of effectiveness were outlined in sections 3.2 and 3.8.

3.9.1.1 Critical success factors

The pilot projects considered that factors which increased effectiveness included:

- Allowing sufficient time for the identification and mapping of volunteers;
- Setting clear goals and tasks specifically for short-term placements;
- Including local partners in the recruitment and management of volunteers;
- Using appropriate recruitment channels.

Each of these is briefly elaborated below.

Allowing sufficient time for the identification and mapping of volunteers

Sufficient time should be reserved for the identification, recruitment and selection process, which can take up to a few months. The screening of volunteers (pre-selection) should take place before the training, while the final selection must take place afterwards – based on the evaluation of the volunteers' technical and behavioural performance during the training. Besides, the launch of the application process needs to be well timed to attract an appropriate number of volunteers (e.g. not in the summer period). Selecting well qualified volunteers will have a positive effect on the success of the deployment in the long-term.

Short term placements require clear goals and tasks

In order to add value to hosting organisations and local communities as well as to ensure an effective placement, short term volunteering (less than 9 months) should have clear goals and well defined tasks. For particularly short-term placements (i.e. a few weeks only as was the case for the GRC 2012 project), the integration of volunteers in missions that are a continuation of projects undertaken by local partners is essential. In addition, regular monitoring and support should be provided to volunteers, to ensure that the deployment period is maximised (e.g. guidance for less experienced volunteers, coordination and communication support).

Inclusion of local partners in the recruitment and management of volunteers

The inclusion of local partner organisations in each step of the volunteer's recruitment and management process is crucial to: (i) share relevant information and knowledge between all actors involved; (ii) empower local organisations as key players in the development of volunteer missions; (iii) develop a precise definition of the volunteer's role and responsibilities, based on the local needs and agreed by all partners; (iv) better define the expected activities to be conducted by volunteers in the profiles advertised.

Use of appropriate recruitment channels

Public advertisements or the intranet, especially in the case of larger sending organisations, helped to reach the highest number of appropriate applicants. Depending on the type of profiles needed (e.g. junior vs. senior professionals, generalists vs. specialists) and the types of missions to be conducted (e.g. short-term

vs. long-term, preparedness vs. post-deployment recovery), different advertisement and communication channels can be used to publish calls for applicants – e.g. volunteering platforms, humanitarian networks, dedicated recruitment websites, existing rosters – to be agreed between consortium partners.

3.9.1.2 *Conclusions on factors critical to the effectiveness of projects (EQ2a)*

The critical main success factors for effectiveness were:

- Amount of time provided for the identification and mapping of volunteers (facilitates volunteer matching),
- Setting clear goals and tasks specifically for short-term placements,
- Including local partners in the recruitment and management of volunteers; and
- Use of appropriate recruitment channels.

3.9.2 **Factors which increase efficiency**

Overall considerations of efficiency were outlined in sections 3.7.

3.9.2.1 *Critical success factors*

Experts and pilot projects considered the following factors critical for ensuring the efficiency of the projects:

- Careful budgeting of staff costs for implementing the projects;
- Using innovative tools to save on costs;
- Allocating part of the budget to the activities of hosting organisations;
- Adding a reasonable contingency reserve to the project budget and also considering having a ‘contingency’ of volunteers; and
- Improving budgetary administration.

Each of these is briefly elaborated below.

Budgeting of staff costs

Many pilot projects had to face unexpected costs during implementation, compared to the initially planned budget. Most of these unforeseen costs relate to underestimating the allocation of staff time required for implementing the projects. In one case, staff time initially budgeted (20%) had to be raised significantly (100%). Several elements must be taken into account when budgeting staff costs, notably: time to find suitable partners and set up / coordinate a consortium; development of training and standards for volunteers’ deployment and management; development and piloting of new tools and processes; recruitment; administration of unexpected costs or unplanned activities; overall management; etc.

In order to avoid these unexpected costs and increase general project efficiency, it is important for projects to carefully plan staff costs from the start of a project, taking into account the various elements listed above. Several leads could be explored to improve budget planning and save costs, e.g. favouring in-house training/coaching, conducting regular project (financial) monitoring, using online communication platforms, etc. These issues will be further investigated through the in-depth interviews with project leaders.

Allocations to hosting organisations

One of the critical success factors for efficiency was the provision of funding to hosting organisations, to finance elements related to preparation of the mission, the accompaniment of the volunteer, the monitoring and evaluation of the activities conducted and logistical organisation. With the funding, hosting organisations were expected to manage the volunteers' arrival and induction, ensure mentorship, organise accommodation, etc. These allocations were considered by several organisations as essential to ensure the quality of projects and their efficiency.

Contingency reserve

Given that unexpected events can happen in the locations where volunteers are deployed (notably in high-risk areas), a reasonable part of the budget could be dedicated to serve as back-up funds in case of safety and security issues (e.g. evacuation).

Three pilot projects had clearly allocated part of the total budget of the project to contingency, i.e. ICCO (1.7% of total project costs), German Red Cross (4.45%) and France Volontaires (4.5%). The first experts' workshops concluded that a contingency reserve should not exceed 10% of the project budget, but also that well-planned projects should in principle not need to use this kind of budget item. None of the other pilot projects had included a provision for contingency reserve in their budget. The critical value of contingency reserves will be further explored through interviews in the next research phase.

Reserve of volunteers

Several sending organisations argued that a possible way to increase cost-efficiency at selection and training stage was to set up a pool of additional volunteers for each placement, i.e. a kind of reserve list with one or two volunteers, in case of last minute withdrawals. Indeed, directly selecting more than one volunteer for each available position will save costs over launching an additional recruitment procedure. At recruitment stage, face-to-face assessments were found relatively cost-effective because they were the best way to enable sending organisations to observe volunteers and assess their soft skills. Some organisations also suggested to involve more local volunteers in future missions, so as to enhance projects' efficiency and sustainability.

Financial administration

In terms of budget administration, some pilot projects highlighted as good practice the publication of monthly financial reports as monitoring tools to ensure sound financial management, e.g. in the project led by ICCO because it helped to reallocate underspent funds. This project also put forward the need to better adjust volunteer allowance to local living costs, and to give more flexibility to volunteers in managing their own budget (e.g. housing), so as to reduce administrative burden and additional management costs. For the same flexibility and cost-efficiency purposes, it was suggested to jointly plan the budget with local partners, which could administer part of the volunteer's work budget themselves.

3.9.2.2 *Critical success factors for efficiency (EQ2b)*

The main critical success factors for efficiency were:

- Careful budgeting of staff costs
- Allocating % of budget to hosting organisation for 'managing' the placement,
- Creating a contingency reserve

- Creating a ‘reserve pool’ of volunteers in case of drop-outs
- Obliging administrative practices (e.g. monthly financial reporting)
- Building on existing partnerships with sending organisations

3.9.3 Factors which increase sustainability

3.9.3.1 *Overall considerations on sustainability*

There are different ways in which the impacts of the EUAV pilot projects could be sustainable. Possible sustainable results may include:

- Local (hosting) organisations are made aware of the benefits of international volunteers and are willing to continue working with volunteers;
- Local (hosting) organisations and communities have strengthened their capacity to implement their mission and respond to disasters in the future;
- Volunteers are trained and better able to support humanitarian responses in the future, and can transfer what they have learned to other stakeholders;
- New relationships are created between EU and third-country organisations.

The extent to which the pilot projects managed to ensure these different types of sustainability and the factors which helped them achieve this are briefly elaborated below.

Local organisations continue to work with volunteers

Well-selected volunteers, with a relevant profile, contribute to building and/or reinforcing the capacities of their hosting organisations. If sufficient communication and awareness raising activities are conducted around the impacts brought by volunteers, both the organisations where volunteers directly worked and other organisations in the same region/country (with or without the same needs) will be willing to engage additional European and other volunteers.

Local organisations strengthen their (response) capacity

Capacity building was a key feature in all pilot projects. The needs assessments conducted as part of the projects have helped local organisations to better understand their own strengths and weaknesses. The activities of the EU Aid volunteers have helped them to improve their practices and increase their overall capacity, also in the longer term.

Volunteers gain and transfer new skills and competences

The skills and competences gained by volunteers also contribute to the longer-term sustainability of the pilot action. As a result of their deployment, volunteers are expected to gain expertise and aptitudes which could for example enable them to take on a professional role in their sending organisations (or in other Humanitarian Aid organisations), where they could bring new perspectives and add value. Volunteers can also decide to engage in additional placements, with other sending and hosting organisations, which will help them to transfer the lessons they have learned.

New relationships are created between EU and international organisations

The pilot projects had an important impact on the development of ties between EU and international organisations, notably through exchanges of experience and transfer of skills between partners. Positive consequences of the pilot projects include the mutual understanding of organisations from different countries, more

frequent exchanges of volunteers (mainly from the EU to third-countries but also vice-versa on some occasions), capacity building and development of new perspectives on Humanitarian Aid and civil protection. The Pilot Action laid down the basis for tighter relationships and further cooperation between organisations.

3.9.3.2 *Critical success factors*

Experts and pilot projects considered the following factors critical for ensuring sustainability of the results / impacts of the intervention (as per the above indicators):

- Making use of longer-term volunteer placements, especially with first-time volunteers and new hosting organisations;
- Developing a clear communication strategy;
- Paying attention to the mutual learning process
- Undertaking a detailed needs assessment.

Each of these is briefly elaborated below.

Longer-term volunteer placements

All the humanitarian pilot projects agreed on the usefulness of longer deployments (at least 9-12 months) to increase the sustainability of learning for both volunteers and local organisations. Short-term placements may be preferable for expert volunteers deployed to deliver highly specific and time-limited projects (see section 3.2.1.3). For the volunteers, especially those participating for the first time, short-term placements do not allow them to integrate in the new country, to understand the hosting organisations' requirements and deliver what they want. The external ex-post evaluation of the 2012 ICCO project indicates that most volunteers felt the deployment should have last 9 (25%) or 12 (42%) months or more.

For hosting organisations, longer-term deployments give them sufficient time to launch a project and assess its results. Several pilot projects highlighted organisations' preference for a single long-term placement over two shorter ones, as the latter provided better results in terms of capacity building and effectiveness.

Communication strategy

Projects need to develop their communication strategy at an early stage, setting clear objectives, messages and desired target groups. At the EU level, communication mainly serves to attract more suitable volunteer and showcase results, which helped to make projects more effective and secure new funds, thus improving sustainability. Examples of successful activities include volunteers' blogs, the publication of articles for, for example, the Parliament magazine and the VOICE Out Loud Newsletter (SCUK 2011); Facebook and Twitter dedicated pages, short films produced and uploaded on YouTube, leaflets distributed to Irish Parliament (2011 VSO project); participation in workshops, debates and events (2012 ICCO project); etc.

At local level, communication strategies should focus on sharing the results with local stakeholders and building bridges with potential future hosting organisations. Examples of successful visibility activities include local media events, use of existing networks to promote the programme and contacts in-country (2011 VSO project), awareness raising campaigns, use of social networks to make initiatives more visible, etc.

For a communication strategy to be effective, all consortium members involved in need to have a shared vision and understanding of the project, its mission and its achievements, and communicate the same key messages. Sufficient budget should also be dedicated to communication.

Ensuring a mutual learning process

The integration of local partner organisations in the full volunteer management cycle benefited the sustainability of the actions, as it increased the relevance of the activities and allowed for exchanges of experience and learning by all those involved in the project, i.e. the sending organisation, the hosting organisation and the volunteer.

At the level of the hosting organisation, both staff and local volunteers learned techniques and skills that they could use in the future as a result of the partnership with the sending organisation and the placement of the volunteer. The 2011 VSO project in Pakistan emphasised the importance of encouraging the local volunteers to act as multipliers once the project was completed. At the level of the EU Aid Volunteers, many pilot projects insisted on the importance of deploying volunteers with the necessary soft skills (open-mindedness, cultural awareness, flexibility) and willingness to learn from the hosting organisations and the specific contexts in which they operated, which would help them also to be better prepared and integrate faster as part of any further deployments.

Needs assessments

The sustainability of a project strongly depends on the relevance of the placement. This requires a needs assessment of the hosting organisation and the local community and the development of clear ‘terms of reference’ for the volunteer placement based on the identified needs.

3.9.3.3 *Conclusions relating to sustainability*

The critical success factors for sustainability were:

- Using longer-term volunteer placements;
- Developing clear communication strategy;
- Paying attention to mutual learning processes and
- Undertaking a detailed needs assessment.

3.10 Security

EQ10: To what extent was the safety and security of volunteers a priority issue in each project?

3.10.1 ECHO’s requirements with regard to safety security

Article 5 of the new Regulation states that the safety and security of candidate volunteers and EU Aid Volunteers will be a priority. In accordance with Article 9, DG ECHO will outline in the Implementing Acts, “procedures to be followed before, during and after deployment to ensure duty of care and appropriate safety and security measures, including medical-evacuation protocols and security plans that cover emergency evacuation from third countries, including the necessary procedures for liaison with national authorities”.

In addition, Article 14(3) of the Regulation states that EU Aid Volunteers should not be deployed to operations conducted in the theatre of international and non-international armed conflicts. Similarly, the guidelines for grant applicants 2012 and 2011 mention that un-experienced volunteers should be dealing with pre/post crisis activities rather than emergency response (Disaster Risk Reduction and activities in transition contexts).

In 2013, the grant application form included a requirement for projects to describe the provisions foreseen to ensure safety and security of the volunteers and duty of care. More specifically it required the applicants to explain the security architecture and procedures foreseen to ensure safety and security of the volunteers at all times, both at HQ level and in the field. The applicants were also under the obligation to describe the safety and security training foreseen for volunteers prior to deployment.

3.10.2 Security and safety activities in the pilot projects

The table in Annex 9 describes the security architecture and procedures foreseen by sending organisations to ensure safety and security of the volunteers at all times, both at HQ level and in the field. The table also summarises the existence and delivery of security training by the organisations.

The table shows that the majority of organisations put in place security arrangements in order to ensure the security and safety of volunteers at all time. These are, for example:

- Criteria for selecting deployment countries and hosting organisations were established in some cases (specifically looking at the political stability of the hosting country and at security-related factors);
- Risk assessments/on-site assessment visits were also conducted by some organisations in order to mitigate security-related risks;
- Codes of conduct or guidelines for volunteers to follow once deployed;
- Establishment of specific roles/staff in order to ensure that security arrangements are effectively implemented (for example, security advisers or crisis management teams).

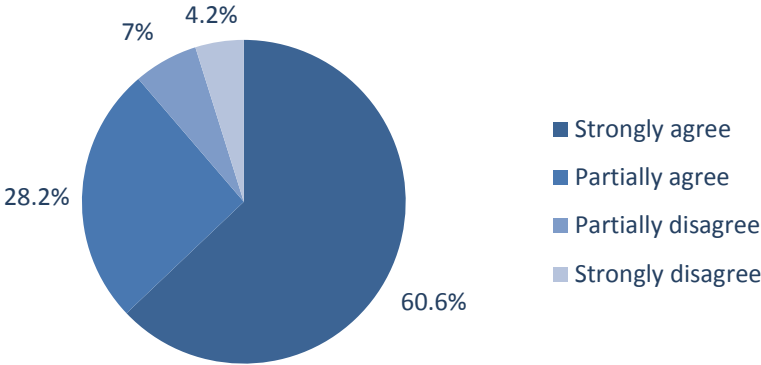
The safety and security dimension was adequately taken into account in the full project cycle, from recruitment to the end of the placement. Only one interviewee mentioned that, currently, some sending organisations do not have procedures to maintain in contact with volunteers deployed on the ground and that this could lead to risks, especially in more dangerous areas.

- As part of the recruitment and selection phase, 13 out of 16 hosting organisations responding to the survey agreed (10 strongly agreed) that the experience of volunteers was taken into account when making decision on deployment. Similarly, 13 out of 16 hosting organisations also agreed (eight strongly and five partially) that the level of resilience of the applicant volunteers was taken into account when deciding on the deployment of volunteer. The follow-up interviews with hosting organisations corroborate these findings.
- With regard to the pre-departure training on safety and security, only six out of the 71 respondents indicated that they had not received such training. A further eight volunteers considered that safety and security matters were only partially addressed during their pre-departure training. When asked about the quality, as



shown in Figure 3.11 below, nearly all (89%) volunteers found the training satisfactory or somewhat satisfactory, although around 11% did not consider the training (fully) satisfactory.

Figure 3.11 The safety / security training was satisfactory, volunteer survey, 2014



- With regard to briefings and training upon arrival, 13 out of 16 hosting organisations which responded to the survey confirmed that they had indeed organised this.

Good practices cited by the actors interviewed in the context of this assignment include measures such as drafting risk assessments with the support of actors active on the ground as well as conducting assessments visits on site to evaluate risks and identify mitigating measures. The use of simulations (for example kidnapping situations) during pre-deployment training was also considered as a good practice by an interviewee. On-site training was also mentioned as useful by an interviewee as it provided more detailed information on the security-related issues within the region of deployment (i.e. the information provided on the ground was more accurate and tailored).

As far as the role of DG ECHO is concerned, nine out of 16 hosting organisations which responded to the survey considered that DG ECHO played an important role in setting standards to ensure that the safety and security of volunteers was adequately ensured.

3.10.3 Handling of security incidents

When asked to indicate whether security issues occurred during their placement, **23 out of 71 volunteers (32%) responded that a security threat or incident had occurred**, with 39% of these being related to violence and 43% to the threat of a conflict. Additionally, three volunteers reported being exposed to a threat of theft and one exposed to threat of rape.

Almost three quarters (74%) of the volunteers who had been exposed to a threat agreed that the security threat or incident was handled appropriately and further damage mitigated. Similarly, three quarters (74%) of these volunteers considered that the damage was mitigated by the fact that they had been adequately trained on what to do in these circumstances. However, more than a third (39%) of volunteers responded that hosting organisations did not have a clear protocol in place to respond to the situation. In one case, an emergency helpline for the volunteers was only available in one language (which was not English) and could not provide an adequate

response or follow up to a security incident. The volunteer in this case had to rely on the hosting organisation. Discussions at the EUAV 2013 ‘Back to Base’ conference⁵³ showed that there were quite a few evacuations across the pilot programme and in at least one case there was great uncertainty about the issue of responsibility resulting in a questionably and uneasy situation for a group of Volunteers (in Central African Republic): “We were not incorporated in an organisation so the evacuation was not well prepared.”

3.10.4 Perceptions on how security should be approached in the future EUAV

The evidence collected showed that stakeholders involved in the EUAV overall agree that security procedures are key to volunteer management and therefore efforts should focus on continuously improving such procedures in the future. Stakeholders had different views on how security (and different aspects of security) should be approached in the future EUAV namely⁵⁴:

- **Need to avoid complex security contexts** - for this kind of programme and objective, including the professionalisation of young inexperienced volunteers, emergency contexts should be avoided. The general environment should be as safe as possible or comply with standards of security. The EUAV programme should not foresee the deployment of volunteers into crises or unstable regions and/or immediate disaster response missions due to unacceptable safety and security risks;
- **Training** - security training is crucial in order for volunteers to be able to make informed judgements about security context in a country and their personal security. However, the training should be harmonised across the programme. Also, practical training is important when it comes to security aspects and should therefore enhanced;
- **Cooperation between sending and hosting organisations** - security management should be a shared responsibility between the sending organisation and the hosting organisation (familiar with the local context). The idea of a programme-wide standard manual was put forward. The latter should, inter alia, include procedures agreed between hosting and sending organisations on how to manage the process of risk assessment and devising an evacuation plan for each situation;
- **Responsibilities of hosting organisations** - it would be important ensure the presence of skilled security staff in the hosting organisation;
- **Role of DG ECHO in ensuring that setting standards on safety and security of volunteers was adequate** – the views of stakeholders were quite mixed on this topic. Some called for ECHO’s involvement in the establishment of minimum standards for security (in form, for example, of briefings, common manuals/protocols, a list of good practices, etc.). Others envisaged the involvement of ECHO in monitoring the security of volunteers on the ground through the organisation of regular checks. Some stakeholders also suggested that ECHO could support organisations when drafting and defining their security plans. Such support could come in the form of guidelines such as those that DG

⁵³ EU Aid Volunteers back to base Lessons learnt and ways forward, 14 - 16 September 2013, Brussels Conference Report

⁵⁴ This is based on evidence collected through interviews as well as the review of projects’ lessons learned and the minutes of EU-level meetings like the “EU Aid Volunteers back to base Lessons learnt and ways forward” conference

ECHO has produced for NGOs in the past.⁵⁵ Finally, some stakeholders did not envisage the involvement of ECHO in guaranteeing safety and security as this should be the sole responsibility of organisations.

3.10.5 Conclusions and recommendations relating to security (EQ 10)

- Overall, the safety and security dimension was adequately taken into account in the pilot projects. Safety and security measures were, in the majority of cases, included in the full project cycle, from recruitment to the end of the placement.
- Some weaknesses were identified in relation to how organisations handled security incidents on the ground, in particular with regard to the lack of clear protocols to evacuate volunteers and provide post-incident support (e.g. counselling) created by incidents as well as the lack of evacuation plans of some sending and hosting organisations.
- There is room for improvement in particular with regard to training, cooperation between sending and hosting organisations; responsibilities of hosting organisations; and the role of DG ECHO in ensuring that setting standards on safety and security of volunteers are well-defined and adequate.
- **§ Strategic recommendations:**
 - 1) Set minimum standards for security and clarify the support that can be provided in-country by DG ECHO (e.g. with regard to evacuation measures)
 - 2) Incorporate safety and security issues in the central training programme and require that these are also further contextualised as part of the in-country preparation of volunteers.
- **§ Operational recommendations:**
 - Require projects to include a security plan in their project applications / project design:
 - Including a description of the responsibilities of the different partners;
 - Demonstrate how they will incorporate safety and security issues in in-country preparation of volunteers;
 - Tailored to each country of deployment; and
 - Including risk mitigation measures and evacuation plans.

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http://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=3&ved=0CDEQFjAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fecho%2Ffiles%2Fevaluation%2Fwatsan2005%2Fannex_files%2FECHO%2FECHO12%2520-%2520echo_generic_security_guide_en.doc&ei=L36zU831GYSyPIXfgOgK&usq=AFQjCNEXEObLeV24f3WolHmDwLq7KJzIQ&sig2=iM-o6Db8I7N87uMFePV4VA&bvm=bv.69837884,d.ZWU

4 Development of a monitoring and evaluation framework

As per the Terms of Reference, this evaluation also proposes a framework to monitor and evaluate the performance of the future initiative. This is to be based on the intervention logic of the initiative. Performance will then be measured in relation to progress made in attaining the expected outputs, outcomes and impact of the intervention. For each of these aspects, indicators will be developed so that the progress can be systematically measured.

The logic model contains the following components:

1. The objectives of the programme
2. The inputs into the programme (resources)
3. Expected immediate outputs of the work
4. Expected results
5. Expected outcomes
6. Expected impacts.

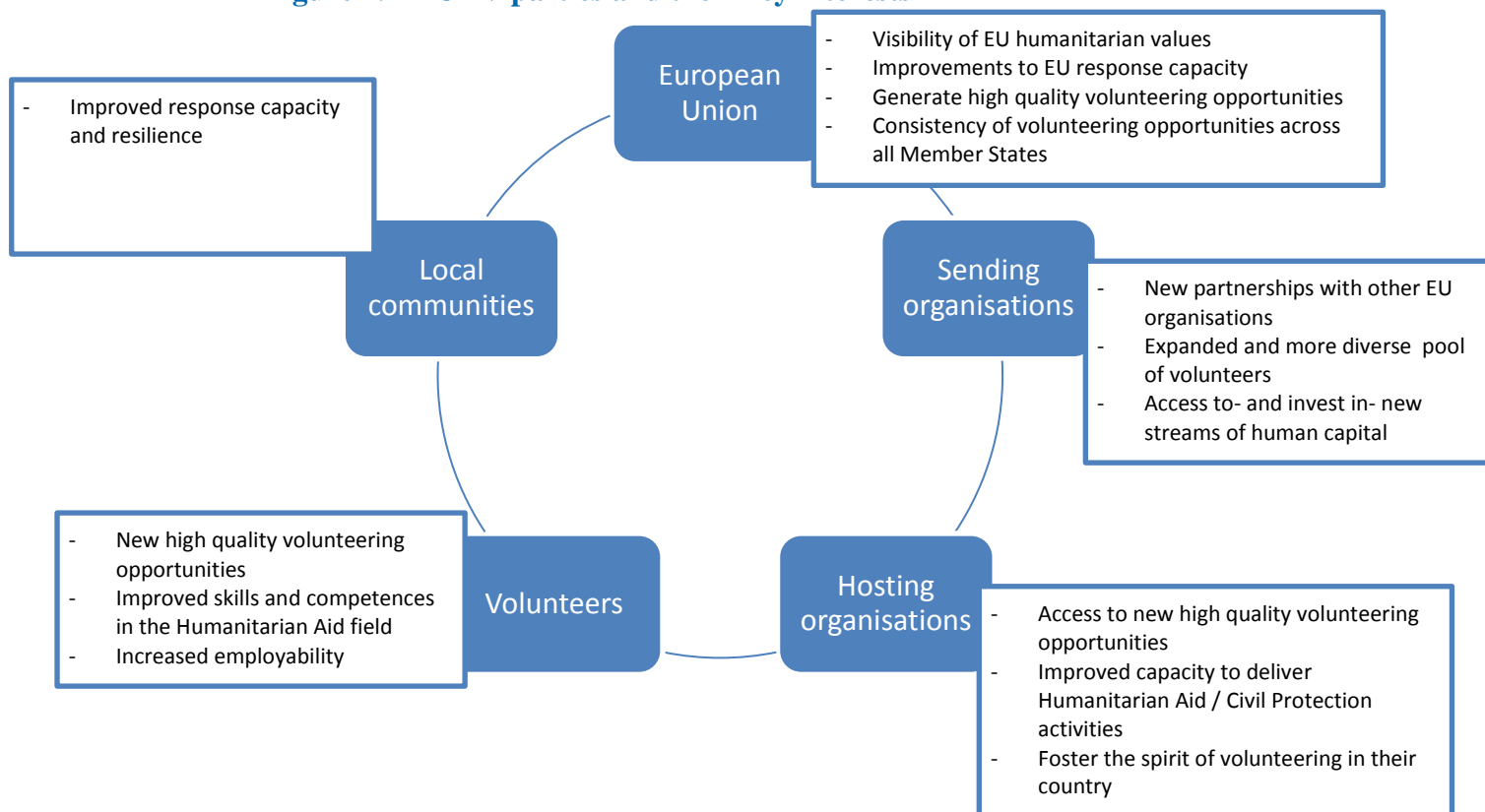
4.1 Issues to consider for the intervention logic

The intervention logic is based on the proposed Regulation establishing the EU Aid Volunteers Initiative⁵⁶ and on the basis of our analysis of the content of the pilot actions. The key articles of the Regulation describing the EUAV's objectives, principles and activities are outlined below.

The analysis of the pilot actions has shown that the intervention logic will need to be built around the five key actors or groups of actors involved and/or affected by EUAV, namely the European Union, sending organisations, hosting organisations, volunteers and local communities. The desired results, outcomes and impacts will vary in relation to the actor affected (although some will of course be identical or at least very similar for each). Figure 4.1 below shows some of the key interests of each of these parties.

⁵⁶ Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/euaidvolunteers/com2012-514_proposal_regulation_en.pdf

Figure 4.1 EUAV parties and their key interests



4.1.2 EU Aid Volunteers: programme objectives

Article 3 of the proposed EU Aid Volunteers Regulation states that the (overall) objective of the EU Aid Volunteers shall be “*to contribute to strengthening the Union's capacity to provide needs-based Humanitarian Aid aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity and to strengthening the capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster-affected communities in third countries, particularly by means of disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and by enhancing the link between relief, rehabilitation and development. That objective shall be attained through the added value of joint contributions of EU Aid Volunteers, expressing the Union's values and solidarity with people in need and visibly promoting a sense of European citizenship*”.

In addition, **Article 4** of the proposed Regulation lists the general principles of the EUAV as follows:

1. The actions under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative shall be conducted in compliance with the Humanitarian Aid principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.
2. The actions under the EU Aid Volunteers initiative shall respond to the humanitarian needs of local communities and the requirements of the hosting organisations and shall aim to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the humanitarian sector.
3. The safety and security of candidate volunteers and EU Aid Volunteers shall be a priority.

4. The EU Aid Volunteers initiative shall promote needs-based joint projects and transnational partnerships between participating volunteers from different countries and organisations implementing the actions under that initiative as referred to in Article 10.

The **Legislative / Financial Statement** to the proposed Regulation also states that an expected impact of the EUAV will be to deploy EU Aid Volunteers in third countries “while avoiding the crowding out of local employment and local volunteering”.

Article 7 outlines the initiative’s operational objectives, as well as some indicators for measuring these. The operational objectives are as follows:

- (a) Contribute to increasing and improving the capacity of the Union to provide Humanitarian Aid
- (b) Improve the skills, knowledge and competences of volunteers in the field of Humanitarian Aid and the terms and conditions of their engagement
- (c) Build the capacity of hosting organisations and foster volunteering in third countries
- (d) Communicate the Union's Humanitarian Aid principles agreed in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid
- (e) Enhance coherence and consistency of volunteering across Member States in order to improve opportunities for Union citizens to participate in Humanitarian Aid activities and operations.

4.1.3 EU Aid Volunteers: programme activities

The Regulation also outlines the kinds of **activities** to be covered:

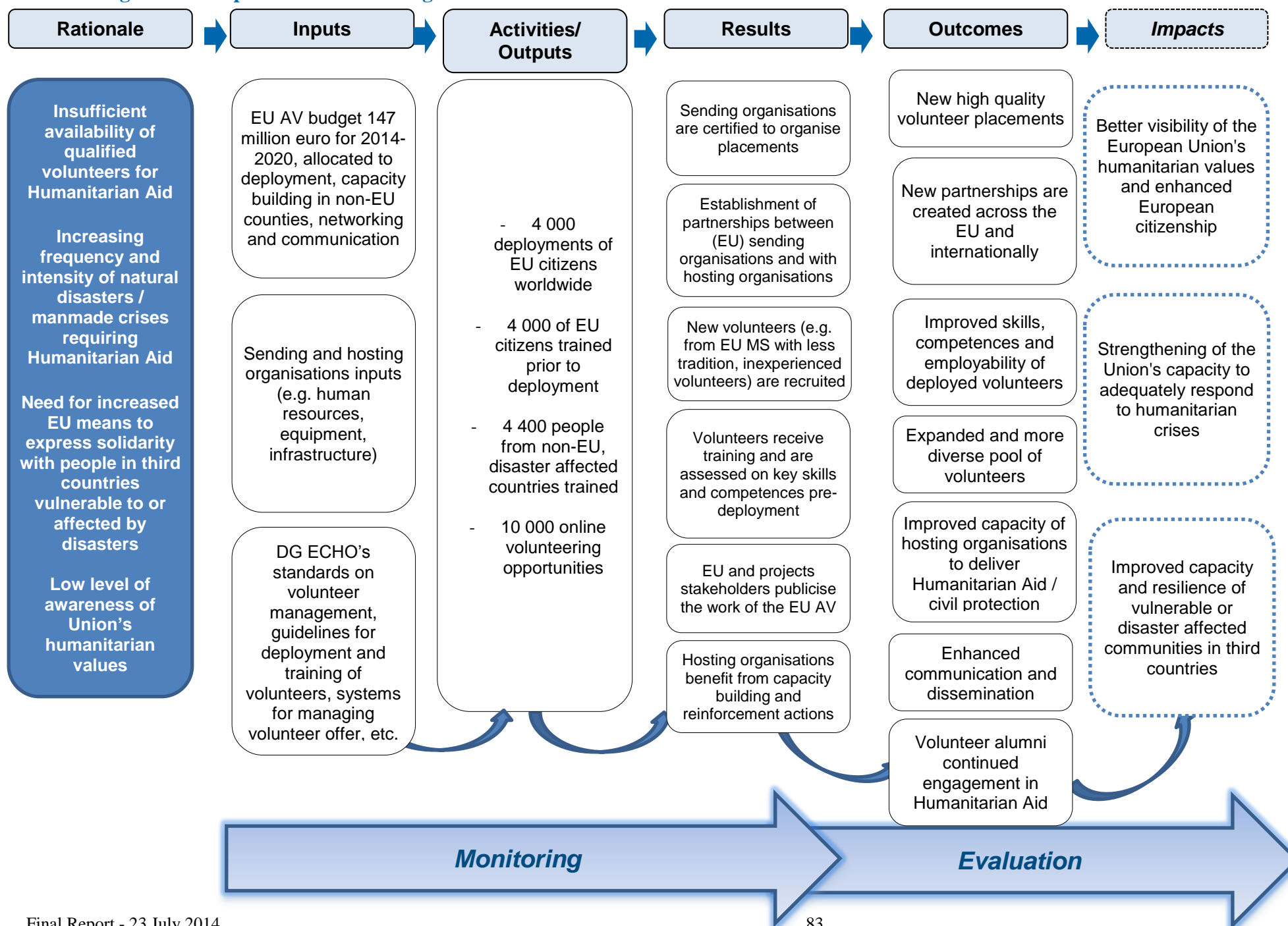
- Standards regarding candidate and EU Aid Volunteers (Article 9)
- Certification (Article 10)
- Identification and selection of candidate volunteers (Article 11)
- Training of candidate volunteers and apprenticeship placements (Article 12)
- Register of EU Aid Volunteers (Article 13)
- Deployment of EU Aid Volunteers in third countries (Article 14)
- Capacity building of hosting organisations (Article 15)
- EU Aid Volunteers' Network (Article 16)
- Communication, awareness raising and visibility (Article 17)

On the basis of the above, we have developed a logic model for the future intervention. The objectives are those outlined in Article 3 of the Regulation and the expected outcomes reflect the operational objectives of Article 7.

4.2 The intervention logic

The proposed intervention logic is presented in figure 6.2 below.

Figure 4.2 Proposed intervention logic of the EUAV



4.3 Indicators

Based on the programme theory and through the interviews, a list of indicators for each output, outcome and impact has been developed.

4.3.1 Input indicators

The input indicators are simple, quantitative indicators, relating to:

- The number of sending and hosting organisations involved in the projects
- The human and financial resources invested at EU level in the programme, per project and on other items (e.g. communication, training, networking, etc.)
- The human and financial resources invested within each project, by category of expenditure.

Monitoring of the input indicators will nearly exclusively rely on programme data (e.g. Calls for proposals, project applications, Commission financial administrative information, etc.) and project reporting. As part of the monitoring framework, it will be important to allow for the collection of this data, e.g. in a database or in Excel.

4.3.2 Output indicators

Like the input indicators above, the output indicators are simple quantitative indicators, relating to:

- The number of people deployed, trained, providing online volunteering
- The duration of the deployment, training and online volunteering
- The number of placements offered and filled by type (Humanitarian Aid, civil protection), sector(s), and focus(es) (e.g. volunteer development, hosting organisation capacity building, etc.).
- The number of placements fully completed (i.e. the whole duration).
- The number of people reached by the project

Output indicators can also be related to the average costs of the intervention, for example, the average cost per volunteer month of deployment or the average cost per person reached by the Humanitarian Aid delivered through the EUAV initiative, etc.

Monitoring of the output indicators will nearly exclusively rely on reporting by projects and external contractors (e.g. the training provider). It will thus be important to prepare projects and contractors for having to provide this information, for example as part of reporting guidelines and templates. The latter could include (example) sets of indicators and specific templates for the different project stakeholders (sending organisations, hosting organisations, volunteers) to be completed.

4.3.3 Results indicators

The results indicators are mostly quantitative, but often to be combined with qualitative ones to inform whether the expected result has been fully achieved. The table below shows example indicators for each of the results listed in the intervention logic above.

Table 4.1 Possible results indicators

Results	Possible indicators
Sending organisations are certified to organise	- Number of sending organisations certified against number of organisations requesting certification

Results	Possible indicators
placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share of sending organisations receiving technical assistance, by type of assistance - Qualitative views on the certification process
Establishment of partnerships between (EU) sending organisations and with hosting organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of sending and hosting organisations involved in each project - Share of new sending and hosting organisations involved in each project
New volunteers are recruited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of candidate / deployed volunteers by nationality - Number of candidate / deployed volunteers by profile (e.g. inexperienced, experienced but not in HA, experienced in HA, etc.) - Qualitative views on the fulfilment and adequacy of the standards for management of candidate volunteers
Volunteers receive training and are assessed on key skills and competences pre-deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of applicant volunteers against those recruited - Main reasons for rejecting volunteer applicants - Main types of skills and competences used for selection of volunteers - Main types of skills and competences trained - Qualitative views on recruitment process and training - Qualitative views on learning gained - Qualitative views on the level of knowledge and competences of the volunteer
EU and projects publicise the work of the EU AV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and type of communication and visibility activities developed by the EU, costs of the activities - Number and type of communication and visibility activities developed the sending and hosting organisations, costs of the activities - Number and type of communication and visibility activities developed the volunteers (also when back in the EU after deployment)
Hosting organisations benefit from capacity building and reinforcement actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number and type of capacity building actions organised for hosting organisations - Number of third-country staff and volunteers participating in the capacity building actions - Share of volunteer placements which focused on capacity building of the hosting organisation - Qualitative views on level of capacity building and reinforcement, including views quality and the effectiveness of the capacity building actions

The indicators which are about measuring the effects of the EAUV Initiative will mainly rely on programme data, information from project reporting and reporting by external contractors, including the training providers, IT support for the database and, possibly external evaluators. Especially for obtaining the qualitative views, this may include (online) surveys, workshops, interviews, etc.

4.3.4 Outcome indicators

The outcome indicators combine quantitative with qualitative indicators, again to inform whether the expected outcome has been fully achieved. Most need to be

combined with output and results indicators too in order for such assessments to be made. The table below presents example indicators for each of the outcomes listed in the intervention logic above.

Table 4.2 Possible outcome indicators

Outcomes	Possible indicators
New high quality volunteer placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of placements which were ‘distinct’ and new from those normally offered by the project’s sending partners - Number of placements filled and completed - Main reasons for placements not being filled and/or completed - Number of hosting organisations and volunteers confirming that the placement met their needs - Number of sending and hosting organisations confirming that they offer / host placements which are different from the ‘usual’ ones - EUAV standards and procedures disseminated and replicated in other volunteering schemes - Qualitative views (volunteers, sending and hosting organisations) on the quality of the placements and on the fulfilment and adequacy of the standards for management of EU Aid Volunteers
New partnerships are created across the EU and internationally including organisations new to international volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share of new sending and hosting organisations involved in each project - Number of partners dropping out / being inactive - Number of projects which applied with the same partner sending organisations - Number of projects which reapplied for funding with the same hosting organisations - Qualitative views on partnerships
Improved skills, competences and employability of deployed volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share of volunteers who accessed their ‘preferred’ employment after the placement (and within 6 months following the placement) - Share of volunteers who found employment the humanitarian / Civil Protection sectors after deployment - Qualitative views on new skills and competences gained by volunteers - Qualitative views on improved (existing) skills and competences gained by volunteers, including satisfaction with the training and the learning gained through the deployment - Qualitative views on employability
Expanded and more diverse pool of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of volunteers registered in the EU database, by nationality and profile - Number of volunteers registered in rosters, lists, etc. of sending organisations, by nationality and profile - Qualitative views on pool of volunteers created by EUAV
Improved capacity of hosting organisations to deliver Humanitarian Aid / civil protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of hosting organisations increasing their financial and/or human resources following the placement (and share which attribute this to the project) - Number of hosting organisations reporting improved capacity - Number of hosting organisations developing new Humanitarian Aid / Civil Protection activities - Qualitative views on capacity of hosting organisations

Outcomes	Possible indicators
Enhanced communication and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main topics communicated and disseminated (e.g. standards and procedures, project activities, project results, etc.) - Number of references to the project in media
Volunteer alumni continued engagement in Humanitarian Aid / civil protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of volunteers signing up for new placements after first deployment - Number of volunteers accessing employment in Humanitarian Aid / Civil Protection field - Number of volunteers organising follow-on activities after deployment (e.g. communication, sponsorships, etc.) - Qualitative views on continued engagement of volunteer alumni

As mentioned above, information on the indicators will be need to be collected through a combination of programme data, project reporting and additional exercises possibly by external stakeholders.

4.3.5 Impact indicators

Impact indicators are mostly ‘aspirational’ indicators concerning the longer term effects of the projects. They draw on the evidence collected as part of the output, result and outcome indicators and some additional qualitative indicators to assess the extent to which the impacts are being achieved and the extent to which the achievement of these objectives can actually be attributed to the projects (and not to external factors).

The table below presents example indicators for each of the impacts listed in the intervention logic above.

Table 4.3 Possible impact indicators

Outcomes	Possible indicators
Better visibility of the European Union's humanitarian values and enhanced European citizenship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of media references to EU Humanitarian Aid - Evolution in applications to participate in EUAV - Evolution in applications of other ECHO funding opportunities - Qualitative views on EU values and European citizenship
Strengthening of the Union's capacity to respond to humanitarian crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resources allocated to EU Humanitarian Aid - New framework partners signing up - Evolution in EUAV partnerships - Qualitative views on EU capacity, including satisfaction with the effective humanitarian contribution made through the EU AV initiative
Improved capacity and resilience of vulnerable or disaster affected communities in third countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human and financial resources allocated within local communities to prevention, preparedness and response - Share of local communities confirming improved capacity and resilience - Qualitative views on local capacity and resilience - Qualitative views on better management of crises by local communities

4.4 Data collection process

As already mentioned above, information on the indicators will be need to be collected through a combination of financial and administrative programme data, project reporting, surveying and possibly additional exercises by external stakeholders. In addition, other ECHO evaluations could also be reviewed.

As emphasised in the terms of reference, the proposed approach to programme monitoring should be realistic and hence not require significant additional human and financial resources in the Commission and the Executive Agency. For this purpose, most of the ‘onus’ is placed on project reporting. In addition, a centralised approach is proposed with regard to the online surveying of key project stakeholders, as this will be a cost-efficient way to make sure that these are all consulted consistently and exhaustively, at the same moments in time.

4.4.1 Purpose of data collection

The data collection tools and sources will vary depending on the purpose of the data collection (monitoring or evaluation) and the related levels of indicators which are being measured (see also Figure 4.2 above).

Monitoring is the continuous review and assessment of implementation of projects or projects in relation to the work programme, the budget and the activities of programme and project beneficiaries. Monitoring should provide project managers and the Commission with continuous feedback on performance and should enable the identification of obstacles and problems at an early stage and in time to make adjustments. Monitoring thus primarily focuses on collecting and assessing information on **inputs, outputs** and **results**.

Evaluation is the periodic assessment of a programme or project’s relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts and added value in relation to overall aims and stated objectives. It mainly serves the purposes of accountability, (future) direction and allocation of resources and learning. Evaluation thus focuses on collecting and assessing information on **results, outcomes** and **impacts**.

It is very important to bear in mind that evaluation is not possible, or as a minimum made very difficult, without good monitoring data.

4.4.2 Data collection tools and sources

Monitoring

For the monitoring of the EUAV initiative, the different data collection tools and sources are described in the table below. The Commission would prepare the annual reports to the European Parliament and the Council on the EUAV initiative on the basis of the monitoring information collected (although possibly some ‘evaluative information’ could be added. These reports could also serve as a means to promote the initiative to a wider audience.

The main data collection tools for the purpose of monitoring the EUAV initiative are:

- Centralised collection of programme administrative data (on projects and on contractors)
- Centralised collection of (financial project reporting
- Centralised collection of (financial contractor) reporting, including annual progress report(s) and a final report

- Internal resource allocation overviews
- Online surveys to volunteers, sending and hosting organisations (two surveys per group, one at project completion and another one 12 months after project completion)
- Workshops organised by the Commission (two to four per year).

Table 4.4 Data collection tools and sources for monitoring

Type of indicator	Data collection tool	Source
Input indicators	In order to serve monitoring, core administrative data (e.g. on committed and final project budget, project duration, etc.) should ideally be saved in a single database or excel file.	Commission administrative data on the projects.
	As above, administrative data on procurement (e.g. the organisations contracted to deliver the training) should in as far as possible be recorded centrally.	Commission procurement data
	As part of their financial reporting, projects will provide information on their initial and final budgets by type of expenditure, activity, etc. As above, this data should be recorded centrally.	Project reporting to the Commission
	As above, contractor reporting will provide information on the financial status and should be saved centrally.	Contractor reporting to the Commission
	In order to monitor the human resources allocated to programme management and administration, staff working on the programme could be asked to complete timesheets, which could also categorise the type of activity (e.g. project administration, volunteer database, contractor management, monitoring and evaluation, etc.)	Commission / Executive Agency internal reporting
Output indicators	Financial information recorded by the Commission can be used for the calculation of average unit costs (e.g. cost of training per volunteer trained). This information could however also be requested as part of project reporting	Programme and contractor data
	The reporting template should require projects to present information on each output indicators in as far as these are relevant, in terms of expected and achieved outputs. Reporting should be annually as a minimum.	Project reporting to the Commission
	As above, contractors should also be required to complete a template which contains the relevant indicators (e.g. number of persons trained for training providers, number of volunteers registered for data base managers). Reporting should also be annually as a minimum.	Contractor reporting to the Commission
Results indicators	Some financial and administrative information could still be useful for the results indicators, e.g. data on the number of sending and partner organisations.	Programme and contractor data
	The reporting template should require projects to present information on each result indicator, in as far as these are relevant, in terms of expected and achieved result. Reporting should be annually as a minimum. The Commission could also prescribe the kind of activities which projects should undertake to collect information on the results, for	Project reporting to the Commission

Type of indicator	Data collection tool	Source
	example require the organisation of monitoring and debriefing meetings with hosting organisations and volunteers, the use of a log by volunteers, etc.	
	As above, contractors should also be required to complete a template which contains the relevant indicators. Reporting should also be annually as a minimum.	Contractor reporting to the Commission
	<p>In particular in order to obtain qualitative views, sending organisations, hosting organisations and volunteers could be requested to complete an online survey which, for each category, contains a specific set of questions which cover all aspect of the EUAV initiative (serving also the outcome and impact measurements).</p> <p>One survey could be required at completion and a second one 1 year after project completion.</p> <p>The survey could be developed and managed centrally by the European Commission / Executive Agency.</p> <p>The sending organisations would be made responsible for inviting hosting organisations and volunteers to respond (although for volunteers use could be made of the volunteer database). Analysis could either be made the responsibility of the sending organisation or be done centrally by the Commission / Executive Agency</p>	Project stakeholders through online surveys
	<p>The Commission could organise a series of workshops, between two (during the first years) to four times (towards the end of the programming period) per year, to discuss results (as well as outcomes and impacts).</p> <p>The workshops could be organised by stakeholder type (sending organisation, hosting organisation, volunteer) or by theme (e.g. training, capacity building, lessons learnt, etc.)</p>	Project stakeholders through workshops

Evaluation

For the evaluation of the EUAV initiative (including interim and ex-post evaluation), the different data collection tools and sources are described in the table below. It is assumed that the ex-post evaluation will be prepared by external evaluators. The interim evaluation could – potentially – be prepared by the Commission on the basis of the annual reports and additional (central) data collection as mentioned in the table below.

The main data collection tools for the purpose of monitoring the EUAV initiative are:

- Project and contractor reporting (annual and final reports)
- External project evaluations (to be submitted with the final report)
- Online surveys to volunteers, sending and hosting organisations (two surveys per group, one at project completion and the second one 12 months after project completion)
- Workshops organised by the Commission (two to four per year)
- External evaluation of the EUAV initiative (ex-post evaluation including additional data collection techniques such as interviews and case studies).

Table 4.5 Data collection tools and sources for monitoring

Type of indicator	Data collection tool	Source
Results indicators	See above.	See above
	The external evaluators would make use of the monitoring information collected.	External evaluation
Outcome indicators	<p>The reporting template should require projects to present information on the outcome indicators, in as far as these are relevant, as already highlighted under the results indicators above. In addition, as part of the general reporting template, projects could be asked to respond to more qualitative questions on the outcomes (for example: Did your organisation or any of the other partner sending organisations adopt the EUAV standards and procedures replicated in other volunteering schemes? What kind of communication activities did you organise and what was their topic?)</p> <p>As mentioned above, the Commission could also prescribe the kind of data collection tools to be used by the projects as part of their evaluation activities, for example evaluation workshops with volunteers, etc.</p>	Project reporting to the Commission
	As above, contractors should also be required to complete a template which contains the relevant indicators. They could also be asked to answer specific questions.	Contractor reporting to the Commission
	As already discussed under the results indicators above, in particular in order to obtain qualitative views, sending organisations, hosting organisations and volunteers could be requested to complete an online survey which, for each category, contains a specific set of questions which cover all aspect of the EUAV initiative (serving also the results and impact measurements).	Project stakeholders through online surveys
	The Commission could make the commissioning of an external project evaluation to accompany the project’s final report compulsory (the EUAV pilot has shown the benefit of such evaluations) and also provide the key evaluation questions to be addressed.	External project evaluation
	<p>The Commission could organise a series of workshops, two to four times per year, to discuss outcomes (as well as results and impacts).</p> <p>The workshops could be organised by stakeholder type (sending organisation, hosting organisation, volunteer) or by theme (e.g. training, capacity building, lessons learnt, etc.)</p>	Project stakeholders through workshops
	An external evaluation could be commissioned. In addition to making use of the wealth of data already collected through the tools above, the Commission could require interviews and case studies to be undertaken as part of the method of approach, to further explore issues identified, success factors, possible improvements, etc.	External evaluation report
	Impact indicators	As above - Project reports – key questions on impacts and template for impact indicators

Type of indicator	Data collection tool	Source
	As above – Contractor reports - key questions on impacts and template for impact indicators	Contractor reporting to the Commission
	As above	Project stakeholders through online surveys
	As above	External project evaluation
	As above - Workshops focusing in particular on discussing impacts	Project stakeholders through workshops
	As above	External evaluation report