

QUALITY GRID

Evaluation of European Commission Support to Conflict Prevention and Peace-building

Final Report, October 2011

Concerning these criteria, the evaluation report is:	Unacceptable	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1. Meeting needs: Does the evaluation adequately address the information needs of the commissioning body and fit the terms of reference?				x	
2. Relevant scope: Is the rationale of the policy and its set of outputs, results and outcomes/impacts examined fully, including both intended and unexpected policy interactions and consequences?					x
3. Defensible design: Is the evaluation design appropriate and adequate to ensure that the full set of findings, along with methodological limitations, is made accessible for answering the main evaluation questions?					x
4. Reliable data: Are the primary and secondary data selected adequate? Are they sufficiently reliable for their intended use?				x	
5. Sound analysis: Is quantitative and qualitative information appropriately and systematically analysed according to the state of the art so that evaluation questions are answered in a valid way?					x
6. Credible findings: Do findings follow logically from, and are they justified by, the data analysis and interpretations based on carefully described assumptions and rationale?					x
7. Validity of the conclusions: Does the report provide clear conclusions? Are conclusions based on credible findings?					x
8. Usefulness of the recommendations: Are recommendations fair, unbiased by personal or stakeholders' views, and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?				x	
9. Clearly reported: Does the report clearly describe the policy being evaluated, including its context and purpose, together with the procedures and findings of the evaluation, so that information provided can easily be understood?					x
Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered					x

Taking into account the contextual constraints on the evaluation, the overall quality rating of the report is considered excellent.

Meeting needs: VERY GOOD

The evaluation addresses fully the information needs of the commissioning body and fits the three sequential Terms of References. The evaluation provides the reader with a well thought through overview of the Commission's policies in the field of CPPB and their implementation during the evaluation period. The evaluation is situated on a strategic level but also gives insight on an operational level. The analysis provided allows for methodological development in the domain evaluated. The evaluation inputs are useful in strategic discussions on an international level.

Relevant scope: EXCELLENT

The report addresses the entire scope defined in the ToRs in its temporal, geographic and regulatory dimensions. Government's policies and support to them are looked at even beyond their intersections with the EU policies. Unintended effects have been analysed.

One of the main challenges of this evaluation was that the scope is potentially “all encompassing”. The strategy of the Commission providing support to CPPB is closely intertwined with development cooperation at large, so that the scope of a CPPB evaluation is potentially extremely wide, going from very specific activities such as support to demining, to activities that might at first sight seem further away from CPPB (e.g. regional integration, support to PSD). The evaluation managed to define an angle and scope which took this wideness into account but proposed a manageable and interesting scope.

The evaluation also devoted due attention to the unintended effects of the support by examining explicitly, whether the support to CPPB was well mainstreamed, was part of a conflict sensitive approach and did not produced unintended effects in terms of “doing no harm” (notably through a specific evaluation question and providing also conclusions and recommendations in this respect).

Defensible design: EXCELLENT

The evaluation is based on an excellent knowledge of and capacity to use the EC evaluation methodology and tools. The evaluation is structured in different phases and makes good use of evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators. The evaluation methodology is very clearly and thoroughly explained both in the main report and in Annexes. The evaluation used a combination of tools and techniques for data collection.

Limitations inherent in the evaluation method, scope, processes and tools have been clearly specified and analysed; the choices made have been thoroughly explained.

The evaluation had to design a specific methodology to evaluate the Commission's intended 'integrated approach' to conflict prevention and peace-building. To allow for useful

conclusions the potentially all-encompassing theme had to be stripped down to intrinsic principles and those had to be transformed into evaluation questions.

Reliable data: VERY GOOD

All data used for the evaluation are reliable and were extrapolated from trustworthy sources as: EC strategy and programming documents, documents by other international organisations, previous evaluations, result-oriented monitoring reports (ROMs), interviews etc.

Information has been cross-checked and verified through different primary (interviews, focus groups) and secondary (studies, monitoring and evaluation reports) information sources and employing several tools that are independent of one another (surveys, case study, interviews, briefings with EC Delegation and stakeholders in the field, document and data analyses).

Limitations pertaining to the reliability of data or to data collection tools are made explicit.

Sound analysis: EXCELLENT

Volume 2 Annexes shows in detail that analysis is carried out through precise and relevant logical steps and is of great support to further the understanding of the evaluation and its findings. The cause and effect links between intervention and consequences are clearly explained and limitations are highlighted. The analysis approaches are made explicit and their validity limitations are specified. Underlying cause-and-effect assumptions are explained. Validity limitations of comparisons made are pointed out. Each statement throughout the report compares systematically what can be drawn from the different sources mentioned above, examining whether data reinforce each other or not and justifying the findings on that basis.

Credible findings: EXCELLENT

Findings are the logical result of data analysis and interpretation. They are balanced and clearly presented. The combination of evidence provided by the different data collection tools is well managed and balanced. When interpretations are made this is made explicit and extrapolations are very rare or made explicit. Where possible effects external to the evaluation have been isolated, such effects being present by definition in a context where conflict resolution does not depend on one actor only. Contextual factors have been taken into account and are at the heart of the case studies. The limitations applying to interpretations and extrapolations are explained and discussed. Both internal validity (absence of analysis bias) and external validity ("generalisability" of findings) are satisfactory.

Validity of the conclusions: EXCELLENT

Conclusions are clear, logical consequences of findings and linkable with the facts and data recorded in the evaluation. Concepts are well summarized and the organization of conclusions in clusters makes them even more straightforward. Conclusions are debated upon in connection with the context in which the analysis was done. The conclusions are organized around four hierarchised clusters going from the more strategic issues to implementation issues. Given the nature of the subject the conclusions on the one hand operate at an overall and all-encompassing level, while relating explicitly to the specific contexts in which interventions take place, and including also detailed conclusions on operational issues

The limitations to conclusions' validity are made explicit and are well grounded.

Usefulness of the recommendations: VERY GOOD

Recommendations are usually clearly linked to conclusions. Incoherence has been however noticed as the conclusion 4 on the reactive rather than proactive attitude of the Commission to conflicts was not related to any recommendation whereas it is at the heart of the evaluation report. This might be an omission, as the 3rd recommendation seems to be deduced from it.

Recommendations are nevertheless substantiated by findings and presented in a very clear and structured way (organized in separate clusters). They also are prioritised. Recommendations are operational in that they provide practical options and steps to be taken to address the challenges highlighted through the evaluation.

Clearly reported: EXCELLENT

The report is clear and well structured; it offers complete and exhaustive information on the scope of the evaluation, the design and its results. In view of the complexity of the theme and the richness of the information to be conveyed, the report is relatively easy to read. It systematically refers to the annexes which further develop the basis for the analysis and show that the statements made in the report are well supported.

The summary is clear and presents the main conclusions and recommendations in a balanced and unbiased way.

Annexes are very extensive, useful and provide a very thorough back up to the report, which remains, nevertheless, self-standing.