

# DG EAC

## ANALYSIS OF EVALUATION RESULTS – INTERNAL RELAY DOCUMENT

### Context

**Purpose:** To provide an analysis of the results of individual interim and ex-post evaluations, in view of providing:

1. inputs for the Annual Evaluation Review and the Activity Statements (of the Preliminary Draft Budget);
2. possible inputs for the Evaluation Programme and Terms of Reference for upcoming evaluation exercises, on the basis of information gaps identified by the evaluation;
3. possible inputs for the relevant programme/policy monitoring framework/arrangements, including identification of specific information gaps that could be filled by the monitoring;
4. possible lessons learned for developing the EAC evaluation/impact assessment framework.

### To be completed

**Evaluation:** Interim evaluation of the Culture Programme 2007-2013

**Evaluator:** ECORYS UK Limited

**Time period of execution:** 08.07.2009 – 03.12.2010

**EAC Unit responsible:** D2

**Evaluation Manager:** Sheamus CASSIDY

**Analysis carried out by:** Marika Vaarik Unit R2/Evaluation

**Date:** 08.11.2010

**Next evaluation(s) currently planned for the evaluation subject, including related exercises:**

1. Ex-post evaluation of the Culture Programme (2007-2013): Q2 in 2014

**Validity for Annual Evaluation Review of:** 2010

**Validity for Activity Statements of:** 2011-2014

**Validity for Evaluation Programme of:** N/A

**Distribution (e-mail, by R2):** Evaluation Steering Group, HoU responsible for the evaluation, staff of planning functions for the policy areas/programmes concerned.

## 1. Assessment of the results of the evaluation

- Does the scope definition of the evaluation cover the whole scope of the evaluation subject, or does it leave room for information gaps?

*The evaluation provides a true and complete picture of the Culture Programme over the years 2007-09 as far as was possible within the budget and to the extent that data was available. The final report provides full and explicit coverage of the evaluation questions set out in the terms of reference for the evaluation. However given the specific nature of the cultural sector, the question about cost effectiveness of the policy instruments (Nr 18 in ToR) was interpreted to assess if the activities undertaken in the programme were effective in contributing to the achievement of the programme's objectives. Taking into account the specific nature of the cultural sector, this was a slightly narrower interpretation of the question than posed in the ToR. Nevertheless this question will be answered in the second assignment of the contract (support for the IA of the future programme on Culture), which started in July 2010 and will last till June 2011.*

*Robust conclusions are drawn and underpinned by sound evidence drawn. Recommendations follow logically from the conclusions and will be of value to the future operation of the Culture Programme, albeit within the limits of Decision No. 1855/2006/EC. The budget was appropriate to the scale and scope of the evaluation.*

- Were all relevant aspects of the evaluation subject evaluable, or was it not feasible to fully respond to all issues and questions raised by the Terms of Reference due to unavailability of information?

*The evaluator encountered some difficulties in retrieving certain monitoring data. However this was compensated by using other data sources (e.g. through interviews, an online survey and a site visit to EACEA to review project reports).*

Was the methodology adequate for delivering the requested results, or did it generate any information gaps?

*Due to the well elaborated methodology (combining a review of data supplied by DG EAC and the EACEA as well as the collation of primary data) the evaluation results were achieved to the Steering Group's satisfaction.*

- Is the evaluation reliable and does it give a true and complete picture of the results of the intervention? Are conclusions duly supported by sound evidence?

*The evaluation provides a true and complete picture of the Culture Programme over the years 2007-09 as far as was possible within the budget and to the extent that data was available.*

- How well were the purposes of the evaluation achieved?

*The final report provides full and explicit coverage of the evaluation questions set out in the terms of reference for the evaluation. Robust conclusions are drawn and underpinned by sound evidence drawn. Recommendations follow logically from the conclusions and will be of value to the future operation of the Culture Programme, albeit within the limits of Decision No. 1855/2006/EC.*

- What are the open issues, if any?

*No*

- Was the budget of the evaluation sufficient?

*The budget was appropriate to the scale and scope of the evaluation.*

- What were the (strong and) weak points of the exercise?

*Strong points of the current evaluation:*

*Despite the difficulties to get some monitoring data, the evaluation provides a complete picture of the implementation of the programme. The evaluator successfully worked out a complex intervention logic, by elaborating the evaluation questions to the sub-questions with a detailed set of objectives and indicators.*

*Weak points:*

*The extent to which interviewees who were leading individual projects had views concerning the programme as a whole was limited. The online surveys employed provided a valuable evidence base of quantitative data, although as is the nature of such surveys these were collected largely against 'closed' questions. Given the diversity of strands and activities across years, it proved challenging to process data provided by the Commission and the EACEA into a coherent and consistent database. The way in which the programme is structured into 'strands' posed a particular challenge for the evaluation, insofar as a balance had to be struck between evaluating each component individually, and considering the programme as a whole. Finally, at this interim stage, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions on the medium and especially longer-term impacts of the Culture Programme.*

## **2. Inputs for AER and AS**

### **2.1. Main conclusions**

#### *1. Relevance:*

*The Culture Programme plays a very important role in protecting and promoting Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity and it plays a unique role in cross-border cultural cooperation.. It is also relevant to user needs as well as to key EU policies including Europe 2020 and the European Agenda for culture in a globalizing world.*

#### *2. Effectiveness:*

*The programme has been successful in stimulating cross-border co-operation, supporting artistic and literary creation and improving the circulation of cultural expressions. In this way, it has made an important contribution to the overall aim of the Treaty to promote cultural diversity across Europe, whilst bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.*

#### *3. Efficiency:*

*The efficiency of the application process and the management of the programme have been considerably improved in comparison to its predecessor, the Culture 2000 Programme. Cultural Contact Points continue to provide a satisfactory level of service. There have been a high number of applications relative to funding available: only around one in four applications to the co-operation projects strands has been funded and only around one in three applications from organisations active at European level. The acceptance rate for literary translations is higher, with around one in two of all applications being funded. However there is a low level of applications for translations into the larger languages, largely due to lack of awareness, and there is therefore a potential latent demand here. The programme has mostly met expectations in terms of participation by type of organisation and geographic balance.*

#### **4. Sustainability:**

*Many co-operation projects have generated follow-on opportunities and activities, building solid foundations for future activity, fostering a more European and international outlook among individuals, and forming partnerships that are strong and valuable enough to endure. Organisations active at European level rely on EU support for operating costs related to the European dimension of part of their activities. A number of these organisations would continue in some form without an EU grant, albeit on a reduced scale. The European prizes would be unlikely to achieve the desired long-term impacts in the absence of EU support, though the two that existed prior to the period of EU recognition (architecture, heritage) might continue to be sustained by the sector in the absence of EU support, but at a much reduced scale. European Capitals of Culture have left an enduring legacy for the involved cities in the form of new cultural infrastructure, new cultural activities, greater capacity within the cultural sector and cultural governance of the cities, a more vibrant cultural scene and a generally improved image.*

*In terms of the sustainability of effects, project results concerning experiential learning are being disseminated mostly to cultural operators involved in the project partnerships, whereas dissemination to “external” audiences is largely via passive media channels such as websites. Tangible project results in the form of books or works of art are disseminated extensively and proactively - thus contributing to the transnational circulation of works. The primary effect on policy is likely to be the generation of results and outputs that are relevant to policy-makers, rather than the direct formulation of new policies.*

## **2.2. Summary of recommendations**

### **Current programme**

- 1. The Commission should continue to review the level of grants provided for literary translations to ensure they are consistent with prevailing market rates in each country.*
- 2. There is no direct advantage to continuing support for festivals as a discrete sub-strand within Strand 2. Such support has been changed in the new Programme Guide published in May 2010, with a specific sub-strand created under Strand 1, so that they can be supported as projects rather than via operating grants. Festivals can also continue to apply for co-operation projects provided they meet the relevant criteria, e.g. are based on a co-operation agreement.*
- 3. The introduction of changes to the working arrangements of CCPs should be completed, making any adjustments as necessary as the process advances, to ensure continuous improvement, with a view to ensuring the best possible service to cultural operators.*
- 4. Annual visits to projects by the Commission/EACEA should be continued in order to assist beneficiaries and ensure Commission's/EACEA's familiarity with the content of projects.*
- 5. Final reports should require co-operation projects and organisations active at the European level to state the numbers of individuals benefitting from periods of mobility.*

6. *Current efforts to promote project results through annual conferences and publications should be continued and, if resources permit, further activities of this nature should be considered. CCPs could invite project beneficiaries to share their experience at local 'info-days'.*

#### ***Future programme***

7. *The general and specific objectives of the future programme should be revised to reflect developments since the last programme was designed, including changes affecting the cultural sector and policy developments such as the EU2020 Strategy, its flagship initiatives, and the European Agenda for Culture.*

8. *Consideration should be given to the appropriate level of maximum co-financing within the programme. A relatively low level of maximum co-financing permits a larger number of projects to be funded; however an excessively low level of co-financing may dissuade operators from applying and being able to carry out ambitious projects. Indeed, if the co-financing level does not reflect realities (e.g. severe cuts in public funding at the national level, an economic downturn making it more difficult to procure private sponsorship, etc), a large number of cultural operators could effectively find themselves excluded from applying under the programme and this could inadvertently prevent the programme from being able to achieve its objectives. The advantages and disadvantages of the co-financing rate should therefore be carefully assessed in the future programme in the light of its objectives and priorities and prevailing circumstances.*

9. *The interdisciplinary approach of the programme should be continued, reflecting the reality of developments in the cultural sector, including the impact of digitisation, in which boundaries between sectors are becoming more fluid and cross-sectoral experimentation is common.*

10. *Consideration should be given as to whether the distinction between multi-annual and two-year co-operation projects should be retained in the light of the fact that they pursue the same objectives.*

11. *Consideration should be given to the third country dimension as the current approach of selecting one or more countries for a specific year appears to have limited demonstrable long-term impact since it lacks critical mass.*

12. *Since many barriers to mobility and circulation continue to exist despite the single market and freedom of movement for workers, consideration should be given to including support for better information/intelligence and guidance for cultural operators needing to work in another EU country.*

13. *The Commission and the EACEA should consider ways in which more literary translations can be encouraged from under-represented languages (particularly those in new Member States) into more dominant ones such as English, French, German and Spanish, which often serve as pivot languages for further translations and would therefore make a valuable contribution to promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. Consideration should be given to other initiatives to help stimulate the translation of literature.*

14. *Consideration should be given to changing the category 'Advocacy networks' in favour of reverting to 'networks' as organisations do not necessarily have to have an advocacy role in order to bring substantial benefits to artist mobility, the circulation of works, etc.*

15. *The evaluation has shown the need for and the potential of the programme to stimulate new, creative and innovative developments and structures, but that the costs entailed by transnational co-operation can make it difficult to sustain structures or projects beyond the duration of the EU grant. For this reason, thought should be given as to how future award criteria can strike a balance between encouraging the emergence of new and innovative activities and structures, whilst ensuring that established structures that are playing a continued, fundamental role in promoting the objectives of the programme and with a clear European added value are not penalised.*

16. *Consideration should be given to the role, working arrangements and processes for the appointment of CCPs in any new programme. Where necessary, these should be revised to*

*reflect the requirements of the new programme and in light of good practice in other EU programmes.*

*17. Management of the future programme should be as streamlined and light as possible, in the interests of applicants and beneficiaries within the possibilities offered by the Financial Regulations, building upon the progress made under the current programme.*

### **3. Inputs for the Evaluation Programme**

On the basis of the evaluation and its results;

- Were any information gaps identified?

*No*

- Were needs identified to plan any new evaluation?

*No*

- Does any evaluation need to be rescheduled?

*No*

- Does the scope of any already planned evaluation need to be modified?

*No*

### **4. Inputs for the monitoring arrangements**

Referring to any relevant points raised under section 1 above, how could the monitoring arrangements for the policy area/programme concerned be strengthened to facilitate future delivery of management information?

*One of the evaluator's recommendations suggests that annual visits to projects by the Commission/EACEA should be continued in order to assist beneficiaries and ensure Commission's/ EACEA's familiarity with the content of projects. This action could facilitate future delivery of monitoring and management data.*

### **5. Inputs for the Evaluation/Impact Assessment framework (Lessons Learned)**

Referring to any relevant points raised under section 1 above, how could the EAC evaluation/IA framework be further improved?

*In the formulation of the evaluation questions attention should be paid to the sub-questions, in order to see if the main questions are interpreted in a manner that they contribute to achieving the expected results. The inception meeting should be used to clarify the evaluation questions. It could be considered to update the checklist for consultancy's offer.*