

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

ASSESSMENT OF FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

Basic data about the specific evaluation

Evaluation: Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture (ECOC)

Purpose of the evaluation: legal base requirement: Article 12 of Decision n° 1622/2006/EC¹

Evaluator: Ecotec

Budget of the evaluation: 156 000 EUR

Time period of execution: 17/12/2008 – 30/11/2009

Assessment

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

Date: 01/12/2009

¹ OJ L304 of 3 November 2006

1. Evaluation subject

The evaluation covered the four cities designated as European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2007 (Luxembourg, Sibiu) and 2008 (Liverpool, Stavanger). The general objectives of the action were to "highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens"². The specific objectives³ were to develop cultural activities; promote the European dimension of and through culture; and support the social and economic development of the city through culture.

2. Scope of evaluation

The evaluation looked at the 2007 & 2008 ECOC discretely and considered how they performed against the requirements of the Decision and their own objectives. This included examining the linkages between ECOC in the same year and, to a lesser extent, the linkages between years. Recommendations draw on the evidence and conclusions emerging from ECOC as well as additional research undertaken at EU-level.

3. Methodology applied for the evaluation

The methodology combined a review of secondary data supplied by the ECOC as well as the collation of primary data (e.g. through interviews and site visits). The research took place after the completion of the cultural programmes of all ECOC in the first semester of 2009. The evaluator was therefore reliant on the cities to provide baseline data and information about activities before and during the title year.

4. Results of the evaluation

The ECOC Action succeeded in stimulating four extensive, exciting and innovative cultural programmes that would not otherwise have taken place. All ECOC had a distinctively European dimension, although this could have been strengthened in all cases (albeit in different ways as the nature of the dimension and the extent of effectiveness varied). Audiences for cultural activities had in general been far greater than in the preceding years; the ECOC involved and enabled broad participation from across the city. One of the most important benefits reported across all four ECOC is the greater professionalism and operational capacity of local cultural operators. ECOC have created a significant legacy in each city, although some opportunities have been missed both in terms of the capacity for the governance of culture and in terms of some specific cultural activities. All ECOC were effective in achieving impacts related to economic, social (notably the widening of access to culture and participation in volunteering), tourism and urban development objectives. The networking between past, present and future ECOC is active and was welcomed by all ECOC. The EU funding formed a very modest proportion of the total expenditure on the cultural programme of each ECOC. The designation has a very effective leverage effect; it is doubtful if any other policy mechanism could have achieved the same impact for the same level of EU-investment. A more significant support and monitoring role from the Commission would have been welcomed.

5. Follow-up of the evaluation results

The Commission will make use of the evaluation results to fine tune its selection and monitoring procedures of future ECOCs.

6. Conclusions of the assessment of the Evaluation Report

The final report provides full coverage of the evaluation questions set out in the ToR, as well as a number of other questions considered pertinent by the evaluator. Robust conclusions are drawn and underpinned by evidence. Recommendations follow logically from the conclusions. The budget was appropriate to the scale and scope of the evaluation, although the timescale was challenging. As the first formal evaluation of the action at EU level, the exercise has proved valuable in terms of developing and testing conceptual and methodological approaches to evaluating ECOC.

² Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019.

³ as defined by the evaluator, drawing on the 2006 Decision