

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 EA C) 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 the ir 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/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/index_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 fo llow-up of evaluation results. A central Evaluation Cell, 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 2009 European Capitals of Culture

Purpose of the evaluation: legal base requirement: Article 12 of Decision n° 1622/2006/EC ¹

Evaluator: Ecotec

Budget of the evaluation: €75 000

Time period of execution: 01.12.09 – 20.09.10

Assessment

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

Date: 21.09.2010

¹ OJ L304 of 3 November 2006

1. Evaluation subject

The general objectives of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) are 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 objectives of the ECOC, as defined by the evaluator, are to 1) develop cultural activities; 2) promote the European dimension of and through culture; and 3) support the social and economic development of the city through culture.

This evaluation is the second independent evaluation of ECOC carried out since it became a Community Action in 1999. The first evaluation covered the 2007 & 2008 ECOC and was carried out in 2009.³

2. The scope of evaluation

The evaluation covered the two cities designated as ECOCs in 2009: Linz and Vilnius. Each of the designated cities created a specific Cultural Programme for the year. The Cultural Programmes were required to have a European dimension, based principally on cultural co-operation.

Each of the cities received EU funding of up to €1.5m from Strand 1.3 of the Culture Programme (2007 - 13) for specific projects within its Cultural Programme

3. Methodology applied for the evaluation

The methodology combined a review of secondary data as well as the collation of primary data (e.g. interviews, surveys, site visits). Most of the research took place in the first semester of 2010, i.e. after the completion of the cultural programmes of both ECOC. It was therefore not possible for the evaluator to gather data or observe activities during the title year to any great extent, although initial data gathering and preparatory visits were undertaken in December 2009. For this reason, the evaluator was reliant on the cities to provide baseline data and information about activities before and during the title year. The agencies charged with the delivery of the ECOC remained in operation in the early months of 2010 and provided the evaluator with data collected during the course of their operations.

4. Results of the evaluation

- **Relevance:** Both cities embraced the objectives of the ECOC Action and customised them in line with their own specific contexts and priorities. Indeed, the two Cultural Programmes and associated activities (e.g. communications, volunteering, etc.) were supportive of the objectives of "developing cultural activities", "promoting the European dimension of and through culture" and "supporting the social and economic dimension of the city through culture".

- **Effectiveness:** Both cities were successful in implementing a more extensive Cultural Programme than would have taken place in the absence of an ECOC designation, although in Vilnius the scale of implementation was much smaller than intended. The European dimension was prominent in the programme of both cities and was complemented by a programme of infrastructure investment. The Linz ECOC generated significant economic benefits for the cities, as well as an increase in tourism, improvements in its internal and external image and wider participation in cultural activities. In contrast, Vilnius is much less likely to have secured significant economic or social impacts as a result of the ECOC.

- **Efficiency:** Linz developed an efficient and effective governance structure and thus demonstrated how main challenges of implementing the action can be met. Vilnius, in contrast, demonstrated to a certain extent the consequences of failing to meet such challenges. The lack of stable and effective arrangements influenced negatively on the implementation of the Cultural Programme.

To be mentioned is that the Commission did not provide any significant support and monitoring in relation to the 2009 ECOC. However, the view of the evaluator is that such a function could have brought certain benefits.

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 2109.

³ Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture; study prepared for the European Commission; ECOTEC Research & Consulting; 2009.

The ECOC title remains highly valued by cities, generates extensive cultural programmes and achieves significant impacts; and the view of the evaluator is that it is doubtful whether any other policy instrument would be as cost-effective.

- Sustainability: Both the 2009 ECOC have generated cultural activities that will be sustained beyond the title year as well as capacity for undertaking better, more ambitious events and for undertaking international co-operation.

5. Follow-up of the evaluation results

Experience gained from the evaluation will be applied for the implementation of future studies and evaluations for the Commission, e.g. impact assessment for the future programme on culture, impact assessment of ECOC legal basis after 2019.

6. Conclusions of the assessment of the Evaluation Report

The final report provides full and explicit coverage of the evaluation contract specification. Robust conclusions are drawn and underpinned by sound evidence. Recommendations flow logically from the conclusions and will be of value to the future operation of the action, albeit within the limits set by commitments made to date (such as the designation of titles for 2011, 2012, etc. and the order of entitlement to 2019). The budget was appropriate to the scale and scope of the evaluation, although the timescale of six months was challenging.