



Ex post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture

ASSESSMENT OF FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Evaluator: Ecorys

Assessment carried out by:

The Evaluation Team of DG EAC (Unit R2)

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/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 follow-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 the 2013 European Capitals of Culture

Purpose of the evaluation: Legal base requirement

Evaluator: Ecorys

Budget of the evaluation: 73,525 EUR

Time period of execution: 18.10.2013 – 15.12.2014

Assessment

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

Date: 18.12.2014

1. Evaluation subject

The "European City of Culture" (ECOC) action was launched in 1985. Each calendar year, two European cities hold this title. The overall aim of the Action is to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens. The European Commission gives each city a conditional prize of 1,5m EUR; the rest of the funding comes mainly from municipal, regional or state sources. The Action is evaluated yearly.

2. Scope of evaluation

The evaluation assessed the implementation of the two 2013 ECOC: Košice in Slovakia and the Marseille-Provence area in France. It examined the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the Action, drew conclusions emerging from these two ECOC and considered implications for the ECOC Action as a whole.

3. Methodology applied for the evaluation

The two cities were first evaluated individually, based on primary data either collected during the fieldwork or provided by each ECOC, as well as the analysis of a range of secondary data sources. Primary data sources included face-to-face and telephone interviews to a variety of stakeholders; whereas secondary data sources included information in the original ECOC applications, studies and reports produced or commissioned by the ECOC, events programmes, promotional materials and websites, statistical data on culture and tourism and quantitative data supplied by the ECOC. These individual assessments were then used to derive conclusions on the Action as a whole.

4. Results of the evaluation

Despite the significant differences between the two cities, they implemented interesting and innovative ECOC that were consistent with the objectives of the Action. Both cities benefited from extensive and varied cultural programmes; Marseille-Provence 2013 in particular was a high profile national and international event, generating considerable media interest. It was perhaps the best-attended ECOC to date, with events reaching an estimated 11 million people. Both programmes reflected the European dimension of ECOC, especially Marseille-Provence, which featured numerous exchanges with other European countries as well as new collaborations with the wider Mediterranean region. Both ECOC made significant efforts to involve residents and bring culture to new audiences through artist residences and activities focusing on specific neighbourhoods or ethnic groups. In Košice this was supported by the development of new cultural infrastructure, financed in large part through the ERDF. Both ECOC attracted strong support and funding from government partners, though their budgets varied significantly. Košice's final budgets were affected by the economic context and political changes, while Marseille-Provence's pledged budget of €98 million was delivered, including €16.5 million of private sector contributions. For Marseille-Provence, the main legacy effects were increased recognition as a cultural and tourism destination and strengthened networking between cultural operators and policymakers across the territory and internationally. Košice 2013 was part of a long-term plan for urban transformation; as a result of ECOC the city has new cultural

facilities, legacy bodies in culture and tourism, new long-term cultural development strategies and ongoing funding commitments by public agencies.

5. Follow-up of the evaluation results

The findings from this evaluation will continue to enrich the pool of knowledge on ECOC, which will help both the Commission and future designated cities to improve the management and implementation of the Action.

6. Conclusions of the assessment of the Evaluation Report

The evaluation provided a true and complete picture of the 2013 ECOC as far as was possible within the budget and to the extent that relevant data and evidence was available. The budget was appropriate to the scale and scope of the evaluation and the only significant constraints in terms of evidence gathering related to the time frame for the evaluation and the importance of locally generated, secondary information. Ideally, such an evaluation would seek to develop a 'before and after' picture to assess the impact of ECOC. The fact that the evaluation has to be completed in a defined time period (when key staff are available and memories are fresh) means that to a certain extent the analysis depends on the recollections and perceptions of those involved and affected. Relatively little quantitative data was made available for Košice. The evaluator sought to address this through a proactive approach to data-gathering as well as increasing the number of face-to-face interviews of projects undertaken during the fieldwork visits in order to boost the evidence base. The evaluation addressed all questions set out in the ToR, with conclusions based on the balance of available evidence and any limitations highlighted in the report. Insights on EU added value were rather weak. Recommendations followed logically from the conclusions and were designed to be of value to the future operation of the ECOC action.