



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

Evaluation: Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged European Union

Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division SDC
Quality and Resources Unit SECO





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Evaluation: Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged European Union

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Bern, March 2016

I Foreword

With the purpose of learning and accountability, the Swiss Agency for Development (SDC) and the Cooperation and Economic Cooperation and Development Division at the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) undertake regular and systematic assessments of on-going and/or completed projects, programs or policies. The aim is to determine the relevance, the development effectiveness and the efficiency, the sustainability and the impact of its different modalities of interventions in partner countries. Based on credible and useful information, evaluations should also enable the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors, in order to foster continuous improvements of development support.

Independent evaluations are a well-established and valuable instrument aiming at providing an entirely independent assessment of larger themes or project portfolios. This can be the assessment of sectors, programs, strategies, instruments, country cooperation strategies, cross-cutting issues and impact evaluations.

On average, the two organizations commission in total three to five independent evaluations per year. Often they are prepared jointly with other donors or partner organizations, in line with SDC and SECO's commitment to the Paris Declaration. The two organizations expect evaluations of its development interventions to adhere to the DAC/OECD standards and to the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL) standards.

This report presents the key findings, conclusions and recommendations of the independent evaluation of the current "Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged European Union". The purpose of the Swiss enlargement contribution is to contribute to the reduction of social and economic disparities between the partner states and the more advanced countries in the enlarged EU and to contribute to enhance bilateral relations between Switzerland and the partner states. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program and to identify lessons learned, SDC and SECO commissioned this independent evaluation.

The evaluation report was used as reference for the formulation of SDC's and SECO's Management Response which was subsequently approved by SDC's Board of Directors and SECO's WE's Management Committee.

The Management Response is published together with the Final Evaluators' Report.

Process

Step	When
Approach Paper finalized	October 2014
Implementation of the evaluation and elaboration of the Report	April 2015 – February 2016
Management Response	February 2016

II Management Response

Management Response to the Evaluation Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged European Union

The management response reflects the consolidated joint position of the evaluated units unless otherwise indicated by:

- SDC - Department for Cooperation with Eastern Europe and the CIS
 - SECO - Economic Cooperation and Development Division
-

1) General Remarks

- After eight years of implementation of the Swiss Contribution (SC) to the EU-10, the Report provides a timely and useful assessment of the SC. The two main purposes of the evaluation, accountability (to the Parliament and the Swiss public) and supporting the learning process, have been met. SDC/SECO appreciate the quality and the good results of the Evaluation Report. In general, we agree with the twelve recommendations.
- The evaluation has been conducted in a professional way. The high competence and the ability of the GOPA team to understand the complexity of the SC and its environment have been recognized by SDC and SECO both at headquarters and in the SC Offices.
- The evaluators have taken into account a number of external factors which had made it necessary to adjust the original time schedule and the disbursement planning of most projects and programs. Among these factors were and still are the institutional instability due to public sector re-organizations as well as limited institutional capacities in some Partner States, time-consuming procurement processes and the strong appreciation of the Swiss Franc. The Report shows that SDC/SECO reacted quite flexibly to these challenges. So far none of the ca. 300 projects had to be cancelled and despite various delays in project implementation it can be assumed that all the projects will be completed before the ultimate deadline stipulated in the bilateral Framework Agreements with the Partner States.
- SDC/SECO have taken note with satisfaction that the evaluation confirms that the concept and the design of the SC as a whole have been appropriate to meet the high expectations of the stakeholders in Switzerland and the Partner States and that the overall implementation has been successful so far. Moreover, the analysis and the findings of the Report will be useful to further improve the implementation of the current SC and to prepare a possible second SC.

2) Appreciation of Report and Evaluation Process

- The evaluation process has been well structured and managed by the Evaluation Services of SDC and SECO. Deadlines for sub-products and the Final Report have been respected throughout by the evaluation team.
- The Report is well structured, based on a coherent table of contents and developed along the OECD/DAC methodological approach. It also addresses all the questions identified in the Approach Paper.

- The Report outlines the background and the implementation framework of the SC and describes the objectives and the methodological approach of the independent evaluation. The findings regarding the four OECD/DAC criteria relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are presented in the main part of the Report. Finally, one of the twelve very informative annexes of the Report presents the Case Study Reports (factsheets) of the 29 projects selected for in-depth analysis.
- The evaluation process was conducted very efficiently and in line with international standards. There were regular contacts and meetings between the evaluators and SDC/SECO. At various stages of the evaluation process, SDC/SECO were given the opportunity to verify facts and to give their views regarding for example the draft inception report, the organization of the four field missions and the draft final report.

3) Main findings

- We have taken note with satisfaction that overall, the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the SC is judged to be good.
- The Evaluation has been guided by 33 evaluation questions related to the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, effectivity and sustainability. The rating for all the related findings along the evaluation questions has been summarized based on the Evaluation Report and presented in the following overview:

Criteria	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Sustainability
Rating				
Highly satisfactory (Very good)	2	3	1	
Satisfactory (Good)	5	12	5	3
Unsatisfactory (Fair)			2	
Highly unsatisfactory (Poor)				

- In general, the findings and recommendations of the Report are largely consistent with the lessons learnt and conclusions which SDC and SECO have identified up to now and they give valuable additional thoughts and hints for a possible continuation of the programme.
- Since 2012, SDC/SECO have periodically assessed by themselves the implementation of the SC. For this purpose, we organized for example seminars with the National Coordination Units of the Partner States, the SC Offices, our embassies and our own staff. Some of the lessons learnt have been taken into account in the case of the SC to Croatia (e.g. stronger thematic concentration,

simplification of the 2-loop approach, no reserve allocation in the Bilateral Framework Agreement).

- Moreover, starting in 2009, the Swiss Federal Audit Office has conducted four audits covering different aspects of the SC program, the last audit report being published in April 2015. Since 2007, we also had a regular exchange of experience with the Financial Mechanism Office in Brussels which is in charge of the Norwegian and the EFTA/EEA Financial Mechanisms benefitting the same Partner States as the SC, plus also Greece, Portugal and Spain.
- Against this background, SDC and SECO have appreciated the substantial in-depth discussions with the evaluation team. This allowed not only to validate and confirm many of our own findings, but, most importantly, the evaluation team gave us a lot of feedback and suggestions on how to further improve our strategic as well as operational activities. One issue that could have been discussed in more detail in the Report is the project versus the program approach. If there is a follow-up SC, the risks and opportunities of both approaches will have to be analysed carefully before the elaboration of the new co-operation strategy.
- Three out of twelve recommendations are dealing with the use of possibly unspent funds in the projects. It is important to note that the responsibility and the initiative for the meaningful and results-oriented investment of the funds provided by Switzerland is the Partner States' role. Switzerland has shown flexibility when it came to the definition of additional project activities, but a highest possible spending rate is not an objective in itself.

The following findings are of special interest:

- The well-structured process of project identification and assessment allowed to set-up a portfolio with highly relevant projects of good conceptual quality. At the same time, this process is judged to be rather heavy and time-consuming. The challenge is to find a way to design the best mix between the two conflicting objectives "high quality" and "high efficiency".
- The bilateral cooperation programs will make a contribution to the reduction of economic and social disparities. This contribution of individual projects is in most cases obvious, nevertheless, the overall impact in the Partner Countries will be difficult to measure. Strengthening the monitoring system and results assessment will be advisable for the present program and also for a possible continuation of the program.
- In terms of the benefits that have arisen to Switzerland, the Report stresses a number of direct and indirect impacts due to the SC, most clearly in terms of an enhanced level of bilateral relations that it has delivered with the Partner States. Among them are new or strengthened partnerships between organizations in Switzerland and in the Partner States, the enhanced environmental protection on the European continent, as well as increased economic opportunities for Swiss companies. The validity of the concept concerning the promotion of institutional partnerships between Swiss and Partner Country institutions has been confirmed. Nevertheless, additional efforts should be undertaken in favour of communication and visibility of the overall program.
- The Report mentions a number of factors that impaired the efficiency of the cooperation programs and of a substantial number of projects. The setting up of the cooperation schemes with the EU-10, including the elaboration of a huge number of legal documents in the Partner States, the recruitment of staff on both sides and for the SC Offices and the decisions regarding the use of the reserves,

took much more time than originally planned. In some cases, limited management capacity, delays in the procurement process (rejection of tender documents, appeals) and in the granting of building/work permits were other reasons for a lack of efficiency on the project level. Depending on the institutional set-up and capacity, efficiency varies greatly, in particular on project level. The challenge is to introduce more concise instructions on the overall program level which still are applicable within the different Partner Country systems. Both sides, the Partner States and SDC/SECO, learnt from each other and could continuously improve their cooperation. This learning process, confirmed by the Evaluation Report, and the general experience with the first SC would be very beneficial for a possible continuation of the SC, in particular regarding the efficiency aspects.

- Sustainability is well ranked for most projects despite the general “one-phase approach” of the SC, thanks to the generally solid embedding of the projects and strong ownership on the side of the project Executing Agencies. Nevertheless, certain risks related to financial aspects and capacity building persist. SDC and SECO are fully aware of the sustainability risks in some projects. As for the seven projects where the Evaluators have identified relatively high risks, SDC and SECO will address them in due time on an individual base with the National Coordination Units and the Executing Agencies.

4) Management Response to the Recommendations

Please, refer to the table in the annex.



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with Eastern Europe and the CIS SDC



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Head of the Economic Cooperation and
Development Division SECO

Recommendations and Management Response

Recommendations	Management Response			Responsibility	Timing
A - Programming Framework					
A1 - Recommendations linked to the possible continuation of the SC					
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>If there is a follow-up SC, the menu as to the Swiss offer requires minor fine-tuning, to reflect the five 'specific objectives' of the SC and the thematic areas as now defined. Generally the thematic areas offered are all still of potential relevance to the Partner States, and include many areas where Switzerland can offer added value. But, reflective of the goal to enhance bilateral relations with the Partner States, and partnership approach of the SC in terms of the utilization of Partner Country systems, it would be natural that SDC and SECO seek to conduct a preliminary exchange of ideas with the Partner States, e.g. at the 2016 and 2017 Annual Meetings in the Partner States, as to the potential thematic areas for intervention of interest to them for the possible continuation of SC support. Reflective of the goal to enhance partnerships between organizations in Switzerland and in the Partner States, it would also be valuable that SDC and SECO seek to gain feedback from Swiss partners actively engaged under the present SC as to</p>	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<p><u>Response</u></p> <p>If there is a 2nd SC, we share the view that it would be appropriate to define the menu of thematic options according to the five specific objectives. In that case, we agree that preliminary discussions with the Partner States about potential thematic areas for a 2nd SC should be held and their views regarding a further strengthening of our bilateral relations by the continuation of our cooperation should be taken into consideration. In addition, the thematic focus of the SC is expected to be part of the possible respective discussions between Switzerland and the EU.</p>			SDC/SECO	open
<p><u>Measures</u></p> <p>In view of a possible 2nd SC, preliminary discussions with the Partner States about lessons learnt and recommendations of the Evaluation and first reflections about possible future cooperation should be held in due course.</p>					

Recommendations	Management Response			Responsi- bility	Timing
their potential offer.					
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>If there is a follow-up SC, in order to maximize SC program effectiveness in terms of its contribution to the reduction of socio-economic disparities, the Partner States should be encouraged to strengthen the thematic and/or geographic and also financial concentration of the SC support, e.g. in the Visegrad Partner States, maximum 10 thematic areas, with minimum 50% of overall SC-funding geographically concentrated on peripheral regions.</p>	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<p><u>Response</u></p> <p>Based on the experience with the SC to the EU-10, the thematic focus of the SC to Bulgaria / Romania and Croatia has been increased. The allocation of at least 40% of the SC to Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the poorest / structurally weak regions has proved to be appropriate. A higher geographic concentration would have impaired too drastically the identification of high-quality projects. If there is a 2nd SC, the thematic and geographic focus will have to be negotiated bilaterally with each partner state. Given the fact that all Partner States are principally in favour of a stronger thematic concentration (meaning also larger projects or programs), it should be possible to reach this objective. On the other hand, there are new areas of strong needs in the Partner States such as vocational training and the integration of refugees where a possible 2nd SC might contribute significantly.</p>				
	<p><u>Measures</u></p> <p>In view of a possible 2nd SC, preliminary discussions with the Partner States about potential thematic and geographical areas for future cooperation and for further enhancing our bilateral relations should be held in due course. We are committed to negotiate a stronger thematic focus.</p>			SDC/SECO	open
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>If there is a follow-up SC, the bilateral Framework Agreement per partner state should specify the indicative program allocation for the full sum of SC-funding provided, i.e. there is no need for a 10-20% 'reserve' budget line. This will enhance the efficiency of decision-making linked to overall budget management: the governments of the Partner States will have endorsed the full indicative allocation;</p>	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<p><u>Response</u></p> <p>There were two main reasons for the reserve: First, we wanted to have some built-in flexibility in order to be able to react within the first two years of the SC to new priorities and / or emergencies (e.g. bird flu) in the Partner States. Second, we thought that after the first waves of project proposals in the years 2-3, we would then get the second waves in the years 4-5. Unfortunately, this "reasonable" assumption contributed – among other, external factors - to the not intended big wave of Final Project Proposals in the last year of the commitment period. What we underestimated was the time needed by the Partner States to decide internally about the final allocation of the reserve</p>				

Recommendations	Management Response			Responsibility	Timing
proposing operational reallocations between the budget lines during SC implementation would principally be within the NCU remit	amounts (ministerial or Government level).				
	<u>Measures</u> In the SC to Bulgaria and Romania we have reduced the reserve to a relatively small amount of 3,5 respectively 4,5 million Swiss francs. In the SC to Croatia we did not foresee any reserve amount. If there is a 2 nd SC we would refrain from putting a reserve amount in the bilateral Framework Agreements.			SDC/SECO	already implemented
Recommendation 4 If there is a follow-up SC, SDC and SECO should further develop the guidance provided to the Partner States regarding a limited series of standard 'core' objectives/indicators to be included for programs/projects per SC 'specific objective' and thematic objective.	Fully agree Partially agree Not agree				
	<u>Response</u> Due to other priorities, the five specific objectives and the tentative concept with different clusters including a limited number of projects (e.g. SME Financing, CO2 Reduction, Biodiversity) to be evaluated at a later stage have been introduced relatively late during the implementation of the SC. We share the view that in the case of a 2 nd SC, SDC/SECO and the Partner States should discuss and agree at an early stage on the core objectives, the respective results indicators (primarily outcome indicators) and the methods for their measurement. This could be done for instance in the form of a "best practice" workshop supported by experts. Based on the experience with the current SC we would be well prepared to do that. Nevertheless, experience has shown that this approach requires a rather homogeneous project portfolio which cannot be guaranteed because also the priorities of the Partner States have to be taken into account. At the same time, results orientation will be a key issue when projects and programs are going to be conceived.				
	<u>Measures</u> None for the time being				
Recommendation 5 If there is a follow-up SC, the efficiency of the 'two-loop' approach should be enhanced, although this should not be at the	Fully agree Partially agree Not agree				
	<u>Response</u> A. In the bilateral Framework Agreements (Annex 2) it is stipulated that "the Project Outline (approximately 5 pages) should include all necessary				

Recommendations	Management Response	Responsibility	Timing
<p>cost of good quality in program/project design:</p> <p>The Project Outline should be a concise concept note and statement of project readiness, e.g. 5-pages narrative, a 1-page LFM (precisely summarizing the activities, outputs and outcomes levels), a 1-page statement of project readiness (e.g. permits required, permits obtained, feasibility studies undertaken, or still to be completed, procurement dossiers to be prepared, or provisionally prepared). This will enhance the efficiency of project preparation by the overall group of project promoters as well as of the appraisal and decision-making both for the Partner States and for the Swiss-side – as noted in section 3.3.1., this is variable in terms of the time required by the Partner States to process their review and submission of proposals to Switzerland, as well as the speed for appraisal by the Swiss-side.</p>	<p>information to allow a general appraisal of the Project.” The main problem with the Project Outline was in many cases the poor quality of the information which delayed the decision process on the Swiss side. Instead of describing the required content of the Project Outline in the Agreement, we could, in the case of a 2nd SC, elaborate a standard template and, as suggested, request already a (draft) LFM. The fine-tuned and final LFM would then be part of the Final Project Proposal. (fully agree)</p> <p>B. Our approach for the implementation of the SC is to use as far as possible the systems of the Partner States. This means that they (not SDC/SECO) are responsible for the identification and preparation of their projects (principle of ownership). A direct involvement of Swiss experts in the elaboration of the Final Project Proposals would dilute the division of responsibilities between the Partner States and the Swiss side and could impair the decision process of SDC/SECO. We consider it more promising to encourage the Executing Agencies to make better use of the Project Preparation Facility to hire the necessary (Swiss) experts and, in the case of a 2nd SC, we would give some preference to thematic areas and partners with a positive track record from the 1st SC (provided that the needs are still there). (not agree)</p>		
<p>For the development of projects of public entities nominated via direct appointment, the efficiency of the process for technical development of the Final Project Proposals could be enhanced – for projects that have not required PPF support this took on average 4-6 months, after approval of the Project Outline, before the submission of the Final Project Proposal to Switzerland. This could be enhanced, e.g. the early engagement of Swiss experts, in order to</p>	<p><u>Measures</u></p> <p>None for the time being. Nevertheless, SDC/SECO remain attentive regarding possible adjustments towards simpler processes for project preparation and approval.</p>	SDC/SECO	open

Recommendations	Management Response	Responsibility	Timing
assist/advise the project promoter, should be offered by SDC or SECO, such as a consultation on the development of the Final Project Proposal 6-weeks into the process.			

B - Operational Framework

B1 - Recommendations linked to the on-going SC

Recommendation 6	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<p>Linked to the on-going SC, delays in the submission and processing of formal reports could be addressed – where judged appropriate and agreed between the Swiss-side and the individual Partner States – via EAs providing a single Interim Report for the entire period not already covered by a report submitted by the EA to the NCU, or designated IB.</p>	<p><u>Response</u> This practice has been introduced and widely applied in Hungary in order to catch up reporting delays. It is noteworthy that in other countries this practice has not been considered feasible for formal reasons by the national partner institutions.</p> <p><u>Measures</u> SDC/SECO will propose where judged appropriate to accept single interim reports covering more than one reporting period.</p>			SDC/SECO
Recommendation 7	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
<p>Linked to the on-going SC, if there are funds unspent at project level, these could be utilized for further communication efforts, where practical and justified.</p>	<p><u>Response</u> For all Projects there is a plan for their public relations and communication activities. In many cases it makes sense to channel additional remaining budgetary resources towards these activities</p>				

	<u>Measures</u> This measure is being implemented in numerous cases on Project level. Executing Agencies will be further encouraged to perform meaningful efforts in this area. Moreover, remaining budgetary resources in the NCU's Technical Assistance Fund will be used for documentation and communication activities on thematic and programme levels, including results assessment efforts.			SCO	During 2016
				SCO	2016 and 2017
B2 - Recommendations linked to the on-going SC - and for a potential follow-up SC					
Recommendation 8 Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – the Partner States should be encouraged to strengthen the communication efforts linked to the SC program and the range of programs/projects, e.g.: A. Conferences bringing together different projects united by a thematic and/or a geographic concentration focus. B. Brochures to communicate the results at thematic and/or a geographic level. C. Brochures to communicate the results at SC program level in the partner state. Such program level communication efforts should be covered under the TAF.	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<u>Response</u> Exchange of experiences and networking between thematically or geographically close projects have a high potential to create additional value. First Events of this type have already taken place (e.g. Poland, Slovakia). The performance of NCU concerning communication efforts varies broadly; some NCU manage, e.g., excellent websites, others not.				
	<u>Measures</u> NCU and Intermediate Bodies / Executing Agencies will be encouraged to organize thematic conferences for the exchange of experiences and networking, and to prepare related documentation. NCU will be encouraged to produce brochures, to organize events and to implement other measures strengthening the communication efforts concerning the programme of the Swiss Contribution in the Partner Country.			SDC/SECO	Annual Meetings 2016
				SDC/SECO	Annual Meetings 2016
Recommendation 9 Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – SDC and SECO should review the strategy for information provision and communication on the SC to Swiss stakeholders and define additional measures to be undertaken to raise awareness, notably to key stakeholder	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<u>Response</u> The website of the Swiss Contribution (www.erweiterungsbeitrag.admin.ch) provides complete and frequently updated information. On the website there is not only background information on the Swiss Contribution to be found, but also news and fact sheets on projects and specific issues. In particular, there is a Project Database which gives public access to all the project descriptions and results achieved. (not agree)				

groups such as business/trade bodies, and civil society groups.	A more pro-active information provision and communication involving also higher political levels towards Swiss stakeholders and interest groups is desirable in order to raise awareness concerning the results achieved in the Partner Countries. (fully agree)		
	<u>Measures</u> A concept and a procedure for pro-active information and communication measures in Switzerland will be defined, in cooperation with the information services of the involved Federal Departments (EDA and WBF).	EDA-Info WBF-Info SDC/SECO/ DEA	2016
Recommendation 10 Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – EAs should clearly define how capacity building measures, including training capacity and knowledge, will be institutionalized to ensure sustainability. If there are project funds unspent, these could be utilized to establish in-house capacity, e.g. via e-learning, trained trainers, manuals.	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree
	<u>Response</u> Capacity building is a crucial factor for project sustainability together with financial capacities that have to be ensured. Institutional capacities have been one of the selection criteria at the outset of the process, and projects do all have training and capacity building components. Where the need and financial means exist, these measures can be reinforced.		
	<u>Measures</u> SDC/SECO will encourage Executing Agencies to integrate additional tailor-made capacity building measures that do not require further modifications of Project Agreements in the last phase of project implementation. In addition, in the case of those projects where high risks of financial sustainability have been identified, SDC/SECO will discuss with the NCU and the Executing Agencies measures to reduce these risks.	SDC/SECO	Immediately Annual Meetings 2016
Recommendation 11 Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – support for the strengthening of partnerships between Swiss and partner state institutions/organizations, if there are project funds unspent these could be utilized to finance joint meetings allowing for further	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree
	<u>Response</u> Exchange of experience and knowledge with Swiss partner institutions has been highly appreciated in all Partner Countries. Under the condition that it contributes to the sustainability of projects and partnerships, such an exchange can be encouraged also towards project completion. This recommendation has to be seen in relation with the recommendations no. 7 and no. 10. Making meaningful use of unspent funds is welcomed by		

planning the development of the partnership (which could be also, e.g. for proposal development for third funding sources – there is no certainty for a follow-up SC).	Switzerland, but a high spending rate is not an objective in itself.				
	<u>Measures</u> With the purpose of strengthening existing partnerships and sustainability SDC/SECO will encourage partner state institutions/organizations to integrate additional meetings with Swiss partner institutions in the last phase of project implementation where feasible and meaningful.			SDC/SECO	Immediately Annual Meetings 2016
B3 - Recommendations linked to the possible continuation of the SC					
Recommendation 12 If there is a follow-up SC, the efficiency and effectiveness of the formal monitoring and reporting systems operated by the Partner States need to be enhanced, primarily via a simplification and greater precision of the reporting templates and drafting guidance provided to the EAs: A. There should be greater differentiation between the Interim Report (a brief report, linked to activities/outputs and delivery risks; strictly covering the current reporting period and the plan for the next reporting period) and the Annual Report (a more detailed report, providing the assessment of the EA of the implementation progress in the delivery of quality outputs, take-up/utilization by stakeholders, the achievement of the outcomes, issues of longer-term sustainability and risks, etc.). B. SDC and SECO should propose a simpler format, as a base for all Partner States.	Fully agree	Partially agree	Not agree		
	<u>Response</u> We fully agree with this recommendation. However, the templates to be elaborated should not only satisfy the needs of SDC/SECO but also correspond to the requirements of the Partner States. Therefore, in the case of a 2 nd SC we could first define simplified templates in line with our needs and allow each partner state to add additional information requirements according to its legal and operational rules. Thus, we would have some “flexible” template for the Interim and the Annual Reports respecting both principles, the equal treatment of all the Partner States and the taking into account of their needs according to their country systems. Still, the clear results-orientation of the reporting system will be enhanced				
	<u>Measures</u> None for the time being			SDC/SECO	open

III. Evaluators' Final Report

The evaluation report for the Evaluation of the Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged European Union has been elaborated in collaboration between the Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division from SDC, the Quality and Resources Unit from SECO and an international team of GOPA Consultants.

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January 2016

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BG	Bulgaria
CH	Switzerland
CHF	Swiss Franc
CRUS	Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EA	Executing Agency
EE	Estonia
EEA	European Economic Area
EQ	Evaluation Question
EU	European Union
EU-10	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia - states which acceded to the EU in 2004
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HU	Hungary
IB	Intermediate Body
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MT	Malta
NCU	National Coordination Unit
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics / common classification of territorial units for statistics
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PL	Poland
PPF	Project Preparation Facility
PPS	Purchasing Power Standards
RO	Romania
SC	Swiss Contribution (i.e. the Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged EU)
SCO	Swiss Contribution Office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SFAO	Swiss Federal Audit Office
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia

SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TAF	Technical Assistance Fund
ToR	Terms of Reference
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWTP	Wastewater Treatment Plant
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Executive Summary

DONOR	SDC - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SECO – State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
REPORT TITLE	Evaluation: Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged European Union
GEOGRAPHIC AREA	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
SECTOR	Country programme evaluation
LANGUAGE	English
DATE	January 2016
AUTHORS	GOPA Consultants, 61348 Bad Homburg – Germany

Subject Description

This evaluation analyses the **Swiss Contribution (SC) to the Enlarged European Union (EU)**, covering the period from mid-2007 to September 2015. The SC was established to **reduce the economic and social disparities** faced by the ‘new’ EU member states within the enlarged EU. The SC expresses Switzerland’s sense of **solidarity with the enlarged EU** and is at the same time the continuation of a policy of pursuing Swiss interests in Europe. **Switzerland benefits politically and economically** from the closer bilateral relations with the partner states, and the EU, and the increased security, stability and prosperity on the European continent due to the further socio-economic development of the partner states and their successful integration as ‘new’ EU member states.

On 14/06/2007 the Swiss Parliament approved a framework credit of CHF 1,000 million for the SC for the ten states that joined the EU in 2004; a credit of CHF 257 million was approved for Bulgaria and for Romania on 07/12/2009. A credit of CHF 45 million was approved for Croatia on 11/12/2014 – this credit is not addressed by this evaluation.

Switzerland supports interventions in the partner states under its own responsibility. The responsible federal offices are the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Nevertheless, the support occurs in very close cooperation with the partner states and substantially makes use of the partner country systems to lead and take responsibility for program implementation. The framework credits for the SC have a 10-year validity period. The final date for commitment of the funds (i.e. grant approval by SDC or by SECO) was 5-years after approval of the framework credit, the final date for completion of the SC program a subsequent 5-years.

Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

The overall objective is to provide an independent evaluation of the performance of the SC. The main purposes of the evaluation are accountability and learning. In terms of accountability, it is opportune to evaluate the program – for ten of the partner states the SC is now into the ninth year of maximum ten years for implementation – as to the effective and efficient use of public funds. In terms of learning, it is opportune to identify lessons learnt linked to the program, as well as identify recommendations for the possible continuation of Swiss support to the partner states in reducing socio-economic disparities.

The research and analysis combined: (a) desk study review and analysis of SC program documentation covering the overall portfolio, complemented by the in-depth assessment

of a sample of 29 selected interventions; (b) field mission interviews and focus group discussions linked to the sample of SC projects and the SC program in four focus partner states (Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Slovakia); (c) interviews with Swiss stakeholders; (d) plus utilized questionnaire surveys sent to program partners. The sample of 29 projects represents approximately CHF 175 million in SC-funding grant. The evaluation report presents the overall evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The 29 in-depth project assessment case study reports (1-page factsheet) are provided in Annex.

Major Findings and Conclusions

The performance of the SC to the Enlarged EU has been satisfactory (“good”). It has produced socio-economic benefits both for the partner states and for Switzerland. It has also supported the further deepening and strengthening of bilateral relations between Switzerland and the partner states. Switzerland is thereby regarded as a responsible partner, helping to overcome major challenges on the European continent.

Overall, the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the SC is judged to be satisfactory (“good”). Based on the sample of 29 SC projects for in-depth assessment (of the 210 SC projects in the ‘EU-10’ partner states) the overall performance ratings are:

Evaluation Criteria	Highly Satisfactory (“very good”)	Satisfactory (“good”)	Unsatisfactory (“fair”)	Highly Unsatisfactory (“poor”)
Relevance	16	10	3	0
Effectiveness	9	18	2	0
Efficiency	3	13	13	0
Sustainability	1	21	7	0

Relevance

Overall, the relevance of the SC is judged to be **satisfactory (“good”)**. The overall rating of highly satisfactory (“very good”) for the sample of projects is a reflection on the relevance of the projects on an individual level. The judgment on the overall relevance of the SC, i.e. satisfactory, reflects on the wider SC program, the intervention strategy and approach adopted, its coherence/complementarity to other programs, etc. **The overall goals of the SC are still relevant.** The areas highlighted on the SC menu as to the Swiss offer of support include many areas where **Switzerland can offer added value.**

At the level of the partner states the **detailed prioritization of needs** linked to the SC is conducted by the national authorities. The **strategic approach** adopted for the SC program and the selection of specific programs/projects for SC funding is led **by the partner states**, but conducted in close cooperation with the Swiss-side, which is ultimately responsible for the commitment of the Swiss grant. The process of pre-selection and project preparation is detailed, with the quality of the Final Project Proposals generally good. However, the **coherence of the results chain** presented in the programs/projects’ Logical Framework Matrix and the **quality of indicators** of achievement, notably for outcomes and impacts, and the risk-analysis could, in part, **be further improved.**

The level of **SC-funding**, even allowing for the extent of appreciation of the Swiss Franc, represents **approximately 0.8% of the EU Cohesion Policy funding** for the partner states. The SC is, generally, financially and thematically coherent with and **complementary to other programs/projects aiming to reduce socio-economic disparities** in the partner states. Primarily this is achieved via the concentration of the SC on thematic areas, geographical locations, or target groups not at all or insufficiently addressed by the other programs in the partner states. The fact that the SC was

programed and implemented by the partner states autonomously to the timing of the programing of the EU Cohesion Policy package has facilitated the targeting of the SC.

Effectiveness

Overall, the effectiveness of the SC is judged to be **satisfactory (“good”)**. The intended SC program/project outputs have/will be delivered beyond the original scale of target. The **extended scale of delivery** is primarily due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc and the additional opportunities thereby provided for implementing program/project actions, rather than due to extremely innovative design or project delivery performance. Based on the outputs delivered the prospects for achievement of the intended program/project outcomes is satisfactory. Field mission interviews and focus group discussions held with SC beneficiaries confirm that a range of **positive outcomes** have already been achieved. In the case of financial instruments supporting the private sector plus infrastructure renovation/modernization projects the achievement of the outcomes will be partially enhanced due to the increased number of final users directly benefiting due to the SC, and thereby the extent of the immediate and potential longer-term benefits achieved. However, based on the sample of projects it is evident that for a limited number **‘medium risks’ exist in terms of the timely delivery and fulfilment** of their objectives, or that a minority of the outputs will be achieved below target, or outputs may not be fully utilized.

It is not realistic to assume the SC interventions can/will significantly close the disparities between the partner states and the EU-average in statistical terms, but based on the sample of projects it is evident that the **interventions have/are providing added value** and are/will make a positive contribution at some level to the promotion of socio-economic development in the specific targeted sectors/regions, e.g. via jobs created, improved health care and social support service delivery, reduced environmental pollution, increased access to the judicial system. **Where the design of the SC program has been significantly concentrated this should generate added value.** However, the extent of such targeted concentration of the SC is variable between the partner states. Also, it is not easy to quantify the longer-term effectiveness of the SC due to the often variable measurability of the program/project results objectives/indicators. These have been defined on the basis of each individual project, with only limited consideration to the inclusion of a limited series of standard objectives and ‘core’ indicators per SC objective.

In terms of the **benefits** that have arisen **for Switzerland** due to the SC and the enhanced level of bilateral relations with the partner states, a number of positive direct and indirect impacts are identifiable, most clearly in terms of **increased economic opportunities**, but also in terms of **enhanced environmental protection** on the European continent. In addition, the performance of the SC has been highly satisfactory (“very good”) in terms of support provided to renew or to start new **partnerships between organizations in Switzerland and in the partner states** across a range of sectoral areas, at national, regional and local level, for the public sector, civil society and other partners. Based on feedback from the Swiss Ambassadors, due to the SC program the level of engagement between the Swiss Embassies and the partner states, notably at the senior level of policy decision-makers in the states, has also now greatly been enhanced.

Communication and visibility efforts are generally satisfactory, but could be enhanced in terms of the effectiveness of the communication activities of the SC so as to promote broader awareness, beyond the project level, in the partner states and also in Switzerland.

Efficiency

Overall, the efficiency of the SC is judged to be **satisfactory (“good”)**. The SC is a ‘new’ – i.e. ‘first’ generation – program of assistance/solidarity, significantly based on the **use of partner country systems**. There has, naturally, been a ‘learning-curve’, for the partner states and for the Swiss-side; but management of the SC has successfully ensured 100% commitment of SC funding by the 5-year deadline. In light of the appreciation of the Swiss Franc it is also recognized that the SC has become a more substantive cooperation

program, which has necessitated additional management tasks, for the partner states and the Swiss-side, to ensure successful implementation. **Management responsibilities** between the program actors have generally been distributed in a balanced way, and flexibility has been demonstrated at program and at project level to adapt to factors so as to achieve the intended objectives, and maximize the results. The principal factors influencing aid performance have been: the budgetary constraints that most public sector institutions/entities still face, the level of management capacity of the Executing Agencies (EAs) and the level of engagement with partners and stakeholders, which is variable.

However, it is evident that a number of **partial constraints** exist in terms of the **adequacy of the overall system**, e.g. (1) **delays** experienced by the partner states in preparing procurement dossiers, or due to procurement objections/complaints, or delays in the granting of building/works permits, (2) efficiency of the 'two-loop' approach could be enhanced, and overall administrative burden reduced, while still ensuring quality in project design, for which Swiss experts are called upon to assist in project technical appraisal and development, (3) the **overall administrative burden**, efficiency and effectiveness of the formal **monitoring reporting systems** put in place by the partner states at the project level could be simplified; the quality of the data and the presentation of analysis could also be sharpened, including via greater differentiation between the Interim and Annual Report.

Sustainability

Overall, the sustainability of the SC is judged to be **satisfactory ("good")**. The commitment of the beneficiaries at the operational level and ownership of the SC results by the direct target group of stakeholders has, predominantly, been positively exhibited. Sustainability and the prospects for further development and extension of the delivered results seems to be strong in the case of actions implemented by **institutions with clear policy decision-making capacity and power and/or service-delivery cost-efficiency interest** in the policy field.

Financial sustainability of the SC interventions is primarily assured by the institutions involved. In many cases the project results will be operated and maintained without further external financial support, or EU-funds are already allocated or planned. However, in view of continued budgetary constraints in the partner states there are **certain risks** for the sustainability of the results. Linked to the sample of projects judged to be unsatisfactory, financial sustainability is the most significant risk to the maintenance of the results.

Recommendations

The evaluation presents 12 recommendations (of which 6 are highlighted below) regarding the programming framework and operational framework. Recommendations are sub-divided in terms of their application regarding: possible continuation of Swiss support to the partner states, the operational delivery and effectiveness of the on-going SC program and recommendations linked to both the on-going and a potential follow-up SC.

SC Programming Framework

- If there is a follow-up SC, the partner states should be encouraged to **strengthen the thematic and/or geographic and the financial concentration** of the SC support.
- If there is a follow-up SC, SDC and SECO should further develop the guidance provided to the partner states regarding a limited series of **standard 'core' objectives/indicators** to be included for programs/projects **per SC 'specific objective' and thematic objective**.
- If there is a follow-up SC, the **efficiency of the 'two-loop' approach should be enhanced**, although not at the cost of good quality in program/project design: (A) the Project Outline should be a concise concept note and statement of project readiness; (B) for projects of public entities nominated via direct appointment, the early

engagement of Swiss experts should be offered by SDC/SECO in order to assist/advise project promoters during technical development of Final Project Proposals.

SC Operational Framework

- Linked to the on-going SC, delays in the **submission and processing of formal reports** could be addressed – where judged appropriate and agreed between the Swiss-side and the individual partner states – via Executive Agencies (EAs) providing a single Interim Report for the entire period not already covered by a report submitted by the EA to the National Coordination Unit (NCU), or designated Intermediate Body (IB).
- Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – partner states should be encouraged to **strengthen the communication efforts** linked to the SC program and the range of programs/projects (financed via the TAF), e.g.: (A) conferences bringing together projects united by a thematic and/or a geographic concentration focus; (B) brochures to communicate the results at thematic and/or a geographic level; (C) brochures to communicate the results at SC program level in the partner state.
- If there is a follow-up SC, the efficiency and effectiveness of the **formal monitoring and reporting systems** operated by the partner states need **to be enhanced**, primarily via simplification and greater precision of the reporting templates and drafting guidance provided to the EAs: (A) there should be greater differentiation between the Interim Report (a brief report) and the Annual Report (a more detailed report); (B) SDC and SECO should propose a simpler format, as a base for all partner states

Kurzfassung¹ (Executive Summary)

Beschreibung des Themas

Diese Evaluation untersucht den **Beitrag der Schweiz zugunsten der erweiterten EU (Erweiterungsbeitrag)** für den Zeitraum von Mitte 2007 bis September 2015. Ziel des Erweiterungsbeitrags ist die **Verringerung der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Ungleichheiten**, mit denen die «neuen» EU-Mitgliedsländer innerhalb der erweiterten EU konfrontiert sind. Zudem ist der Erweiterungsbeitrag ein Zeichen für die Schweizer **Solidarität mit der erweiterten EU** und stellt die Weiterführung einer Politik dar, mit der die Schweiz ihre Interessen in Europa verfolgt. **Politisch und wirtschaftlich profitiert die Schweiz** von den engeren bilateralen Beziehungen zu den Partnerstaaten und der EU sowie von mehr Sicherheit, Stabilität und Wohlstand auf dem europäischen Kontinent, was der sozio-ökonomischen Weiterentwicklung der Partnerstaaten und ihrer erfolgreichen Integration als «neue» EU-Mitglieder zu verdanken ist.

Am 14. Juni 2007 hat das Schweizer Parlament einen Rahmenkredit in Höhe von 1000 Millionen Schweizer Franken für den Erweiterungsbeitrag zugunsten der zehn Staaten bewilligt, die 2004 der EU beigetreten sind (EU-10-Staaten). Für Bulgarien und Rumänien wurde am 7. Dezember 2009 ein weiterer Kredit von 257 Millionen Schweizer Franken und für Kroatien am 11. Dezember 2014 ein Kredit von 45 Millionen Schweizer Franken genehmigt. Der Kredit für Kroatien wird im Rahmen dieser Evaluation nicht untersucht.

Die Schweiz unterstützt Projekte in den Partnerstaaten, die unter ihrer eigenen Verantwortung stehen. Die dafür zuständigen Bundesstellen sind die Direktion für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (DEZA) und das Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft (SECO). Die Unterstützung erfolgt jedoch in sehr enger Zusammenarbeit mit den Partnerstaaten. Um die Umsetzung des Programms zu leiten und die Verantwortung dafür zu übernehmen, werden vor allem die Systeme der Partnerstaaten genutzt. Der Rahmenkredit für den Erweiterungsbeitrag läuft über zehn Jahre. Bis fünf Jahre nach der Genehmigung des Rahmenkredits konnten Mittel verpflichtet werden (z.B. Mittelbewilligung durch die DEZA oder das SECO). Für den Abschluss des gesamten Programms waren weitere fünf Jahre vorgesehen.

Evaluationsziele und -methode

Das übergeordnete Ziel dieser Beurteilung ist es, die Leistung des Erweiterungsbeitrags einer unabhängigen Evaluation zu unterziehen. Dabei soll in erster Linie Rechenschaft abgelegt und es sollen Lehren gezogen werden. Was die Rechenschaft anbelangt, galt es zu untersuchen, ob die öffentlichen Mittel im Rahmen des Programms wirksam und effizient verwendet werden (zehn Partnerstaaten des Erweiterungsbeitrags befinden sich inzwischen im neunten von maximal zehn für die Umsetzung vorgesehenen Jahren). Mit Blick auf den Lernprozess sollten Lehren aus dem Programm gezogen und Empfehlungen für ein mögliches Schweizer Nachfolgeprogramm in den Partnerstaaten formuliert werden, damit die sozio-ökonomischen Ungleichheiten weiter verringert werden können.

Die Evaluation kombinierte: (a) eine Desk Study zur Überprüfung und Analyse der Programmunterlagen des gesamten Portfolios, ergänzt durch eine vertiefte Beurteilung von 29 stichprobenmässig ausgewählten Projekten; (b) Interviews im Feld und Fokusgruppensitzungen zu den für die Stichprobe ausgewählten Projekten und dem Programm in vier Schwerpunktpartnerstaaten (Ungarn, Lettland, Polen und Slowakei); (c) Interviews mit Schweizer Stakeholdern; (d) zusätzlich wurden Fragebogenerhebungen bei Programmpartnern ausgewertet. Die 29 Projekte der Stichprobe machen rund

¹ Übersetzung des englischen Originaltextes

175 Millionen Schweizer Franken der im Rahmen des Erweiterungsbeitrags gewährten Mittel aus. Der Evaluationsbericht enthält die Gesamtergebnisse, Schlussfolgerungen und Empfehlungen. Die Auswertungen der 29 Projekte, die einer vertieften Beurteilung unterzogen wurden (Fact Sheets von je einer Seite), finden sich im Anhang zum Evaluationsbericht.

Wichtigste Erkenntnisse und Schlussfolgerungen

Die Leistung des Erweiterungsbeitrags zugunsten der erweiterten EU war gut. Sowohl für die Partnerstaaten als auch für die Schweiz entstand ein sozio-ökonomischer Nutzen. Ausserdem konnten die bilateralen Beziehungen zwischen der Schweiz und den Partnerstaaten weiter vertieft und gestärkt werden. Dadurch wird die Schweiz als verantwortungsbewusste Partnerin wahrgenommen, die dazu beiträgt, die grössten Herausforderungen auf dem europäischen Kontinent zu meistern.

Insgesamt werden Relevanz, Wirksamkeit, Effizienz und Nachhaltigkeit des Erweiterungsbeitrags als gut bewertet. Gestützt auf die Stichprobe der 29 Projekte, die einer vertieften Beurteilung unterzogen wurden (von 210 Projekten, die im Rahmen des Erweiterungsbeitrags in den EU-10-Staaten umgesetzt werden), sieht die Gesamtleistung wie folgt aus:

Evaluationskriterien	Sehr gut	Gut	Ausreichend	Mangelhaft
Relevanz	16	10	3	0
Wirksamkeit	9	18	2	0
Effizienz	3	13	13	0
Nachhaltigkeit	1	21	7	0

Relevanz

Insgesamt wird die Relevanz des Erweiterungsbeitrags als **gut** eingestuft. Das Gesamtrating von sehr gut für die Projekte der Stichprobe zeugt von der Relevanz der einzelnen Projekte. Die Beurteilung der Gesamtrelevanz des Erweiterungsbeitrags mit gut bezieht sich auf das Gesamtprogramm, die ausgewählte Strategie und den verwendeten Ansatz sowie auf die Kohärenz und Komplementarität mit anderen Programmen. **Die übergeordneten Ziele des Erweiterungsbeitrags sind nach wie vor relevant.** Die Bereiche, in denen die Schweiz im Rahmen des Erweiterungsbeitrags Unterstützung leistet, sind oftmals Bereiche, in denen **unser Land Mehrwert bieten kann.**

Auf Ebene der Partnerstaaten entscheiden die nationalen Behörden darüber, **welchen Bedürfnissen** sie im Rahmen des Erweiterungsbeitrags **Priorität einräumen** wollen. Der **strategische Ansatz** des Programms und die spezifischen Projekte, die durch den Erweiterungsbeitrag finanziert werden sollen, werden **von den Partnerstaaten ausgewählt.** Dabei arbeiten sie eng mit der Schweizer Seite zusammen, die letztlich für die Verpflichtung der Schweizer Mittel verantwortlich ist. Das Verfahren für die Vorauswahl und die Ausarbeitung der Projekte ist genau definiert, was eine allgemein gute Qualität der endgültigen Projektvorschläge sicherstellt. **Verbesserungspotenzial besteht** hingegen bei der in der Logical Framework Matrix der Projekte ersichtlichen **Kohärenz der Wirkungskette** und der **Qualität der Indikatoren** für die Zielerreichung, insbesondere für die Ergebnisse (*outputs*) und Auswirkungen (*impact*), sowie teilweise bei der Risikoanalyse.

Selbst wenn man berücksichtigt, dass der Schweizer Franken gegenüber dem Euro stark aufgewertet hat, macht der Erweiterungsbeitrag nur **etwa 0,8 Prozent der von der EU im Rahmen ihrer Kohäsionspolitik für die Partnerstaaten aufgewendeten Mittel** aus. Generell ist der Erweiterungsbeitrag finanziell und thematisch kohärent mit **anderen Programmen/Projekten zur Verringerung der sozio-ökonomischen Ungleichheiten** in

den Partnerstaaten und **ergänzt diese**. Das ist insbesondere möglich, weil sich der Erweiterungsbeitrag auf bestimmte Themenbereiche, geografische Gebiete oder Zielgruppen konzentriert, die von anderen Programmen in den Partnerstaaten überhaupt nicht oder nicht genügend berücksichtigt werden. Da der Erweiterungsbeitrag von den Partnerstaaten unabhängig von der Programmperiode der EU-Kohäsionspolitik geplant und umgesetzt wurde, war die Zielausrichtung einfacher.

Wirksamkeit

Die Wirksamkeit des Erweiterungsbeitrags wird insgesamt als **gut** bewertet. Die vom Programm/von den Projekten angestrebten Ergebnisse wurden bzw. werden sogar übertroffen. Zurückzuführen ist diese **verbesserte Zielerreichung** weniger auf die äusserst innovative Planung oder die Leistung bei der Projektabwicklung, sondern vielmehr auf die Aufwertung des Schweizer Frankens und die zusätzlichen Gelegenheiten, die sich daraus für die Umsetzung der Tätigkeiten der Projekte ergaben. Gestützt auf die realisierten Ergebnisse sind die Aussichten für die Zielerreichung der Projekte gut. Interviews im Feld und Fokusgruppendifkussionen mit den Begünstigten des Erweiterungsbeitrags bestätigen, dass bereits zahlreiche **positive Ergebnisse** erzielt wurden. Bei der Unterstützung des Privatsektors und von Projekten zur Infrastrukturmodernisierung mithilfe von Finanzinstrumenten wird die Zielerreichung teils dadurch verbessert, dass durch den Erweiterungsbeitrag mehr Personen direkt davon profitieren werden. Somit wird auch der unmittelbare und mögliche längerfristige Nutzen erhöht. Ein Blick auf die 29 Projekte verdeutlicht jedoch: Bei einigen Projekten besteht ein **«mittleres Risiko» in Bezug auf den rechtzeitigen Abschluss und die Zielerreichung**, bei einer geringfügigen Anzahl dürften die Zielsetzungen nicht erreicht oder der Output unter Umständen nicht vollumfänglich genutzt werden.

Es wäre unrealistisch zu glauben, dass die aus dem Erweiterungsbeitrag finanzierten Projekte die Ungleichheiten zwischen den Partnerstaaten und dem EU-Durchschnitt statistisch betrachtet massgeblich verringern können bzw. werden. Die 29 Projekte zeigen jedoch, dass sie durchaus **Mehrwert generiert haben bzw. generieren** und auf die eine oder andere Weise positiv zur Förderung der sozio-ökonomischen Entwicklung in den einzelnen Sektoren/Regionen beitragen oder beitragen werden, z.B. durch die Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen, bessere Gesundheits- und soziale Unterstützungsleistungen, eine geringere Umweltverschmutzung oder einen besseren Zugang zum Justizwesen. **Wo bei der Planung des Programms gezielt eine Konzentration angestrebt wurde, kann damit Mehrwert geschaffen werden.** Diese gezielte Konzentration des Erweiterungsbeitrags erfolgte jedoch nicht in allen Partnerstaaten gleichermassen. Zudem ist es nicht leicht, die längerfristige Wirksamkeit des Erweiterungsbeitrags zu beziffern, da die Messbarkeit der Ergebnisse/Ziele/Indikatoren des Programms/der Projekte häufig variiert. Die Ergebnisse/Ziele/Indikatoren wurden für die einzelnen Projekte jeweils individuell festgelegt, wobei nur begrenzt darauf geachtet wurde, für die einzelnen übergeordneten Ziele des Erweiterungsbeitrags zumindest einige gemeinsame Standard-Unterziele und -Indikatoren zu berücksichtigen.

Was die durch den Erweiterungsbeitrag **für die Schweiz erzielten Vorteile** sowie die Vertiefung der bilateralen Beziehungen mit den Partnerstaaten anbelangt, lassen sich verschiedene direkte und indirekte positive Auswirkungen ausmachen. Am Deutlichsten sind: die **gesteigerten wirtschaftlichen Chancen**, aber auch der **verbesserte Umweltschutz** auf dem europäischen Kontinent. Sehr gut war das Ergebnis des Erweiterungsbeitrags in Bezug auf die Erneuerung oder Schaffung von **Partnerschaften zwischen Organisationen in der Schweiz und in den Partnerstaaten** in verschiedenen Sektoren sowie auf nationaler, regionaler und lokaler Ebene. So sind Partnerschaften im öffentlichen Sektor, in der Zivilgesellschaft und zwischen anderen Stellen entstanden. Gemäss Rückmeldungen der Schweizer Botschaften in den Partnerstaaten führte der Erweiterungsbeitrag inzwischen auch zu einer markanten Verbesserung beim Zugang zu hochrangigen politischen Entscheidungsträgern vor Ort.

Die **Bemühungen in Bezug auf die Kommunikation und Sichtbarkeit** sind allgemein gut. Die Wirksamkeit der Kommunikationstätigkeiten im Zusammenhang mit dem Erweiterungsbeitrag könnten allerdings noch verbessert werden, um in den Partnerstaaten und auch in der Schweiz über die Projekte hinaus ein breiteres Bewusstsein zu schaffen.

Effizienz

Insgesamt wird die Effizienz des Erweiterungsbeitrags als **gut** eingestuft. Der Erweiterungsbeitrag stellt eine «neue» Art von Unterstützungs-/Solidaritätsprogramm dar – ein sogenanntes Programm der «ersten» Generation –, das sich wesentlich auf die **Systeme der Partnerstaaten** abstützt. Natürlich gab es eine «Lernkurve» sowohl für die Partnerstaaten als auch für die Schweiz. Die Verwaltung hat es indessen geschafft, dass 100 Prozent der Mittel nach Ablauf der Frist von fünf Jahren verpflichtet waren. Angesichts der Aufwertung des Schweizer Frankens ist nunmehr auch unbestritten, dass es sich beim Erweiterungsbeitrag inzwischen um ein substanzielleres Zusammenarbeitsprogramm handelt. Für eine erfolgreiche Umsetzung kamen daher sowohl auf Seite der Partnerstaaten wie auch der Schweiz zusätzliche Verwaltungsaufgaben hinzu. Die **Managementverantwortung** wurde zwischen den verschiedenen Akteuren des Programms generell ausgeglichen aufgeteilt. Das Programm und die Projekte erwiesen sich als genügend flexibel und anpassungsfähig, um die angestrebten Ziele sowie ein maximales Ergebnis zu erreichen. Die Performance des Programms/der Projekte wurde hauptsächlich durch die folgenden Faktoren beeinflusst: Budgeteinschränkungen (mit denen die meisten Einrichtungen/Einheiten des öffentlichen Sektors nach wie vor konfrontiert sind), die Managementfähigkeiten der Projektträger (*Executing Agencies*) und der unterschiedliche Einsatz der Partner und Stakeholder.

Bei der Frage nach der **Eignung des Gesamtsystems** gilt es jedoch **gewisse Einschränkungen** zu beachten: (1) In den Partnerstaaten gab es **Verzögerungen** bei der Vorbereitung der Beschaffungsunterlagen oder wegen Einwänden/Beschwerden im Zusammenhang mit der öffentlichen Vergabe oder aufgrund von zu spät erteilten Bau-/Arbeitsbewilligungen. (2) Das zweistufige Projektgenehmigungsverfahren könnte effizienter gestaltet und die administrative Belastung insgesamt verringert werden, wobei die Qualität der Projektplanung dennoch gewährleistet werden kann, indem die technische Beurteilung und Entwicklung der Projekte mit Unterstützung von Schweizer Expertinnen und Experten erfolgt. (3) Bei den von den Partnerstaaten geschaffenen formellen **Überwachungs- und Berichterstattungssystemen** für die Projekte könnten der **administrative Aufwand** insgesamt verringert sowie Effizienz und Wirksamkeit gesteigert werden; die Datenqualität und die Präsentation der Analysen könnten ebenfalls verbessert werden, unter anderem durch eine stärkere Unterscheidung zwischen dem Zwischen- und dem Jahresbericht.

Nachhaltigkeit

Die Nachhaltigkeit des Erweiterungsbeitrags wird insgesamt als **gut** bewertet. Das Engagement der Begünstigten auf operativer Ebene und die von den Stakeholder-Zielgruppen gezeigte Eigenverantwortung in Bezug auf die Ergebnisse des Erweiterungsbeitrags wurden mehrheitlich positiv beurteilt. Die Nachhaltigkeit der Projekte und die Aussichten auf eine Weiterentwicklung und breitere Anwendung der erreichten Ergebnisse scheinen vor allem dort gegeben, wo Projekte von **Institutionen** umgesetzt werden, **die über politische Entscheidungsbefugnisse und -macht verfügen und/oder Interesse daran haben**, in dem politischen Bereich **eine Dienstleistung kosteneffizienter zu erbringen**.

Die **finanzielle Stabilität** des Erweiterungsbeitrags wird grundsätzlich durch die beteiligten Institutionen gewährleistet. In vielen Fällen können die Projektergebnisse ohne zusätzliche externe finanzielle Unterstützung betrieben und weitergeführt werden oder die EU hat dafür bereits Mittel gesprochen oder geplant. Da die Partnerstaaten allerdings

auch künftig mit Budgeteinschränkungen konfrontiert sein werden, bestehen **gewisse Risiken** hinsichtlich der Nachhaltigkeit der Ergebnisse. Bei den Projekten der Stichprobe, die als genügend eingestuft wurden, stellt die finanzielle Stabilität das grösste Risiko für den Erhalt der Ergebnisse dar.

Empfehlungen

Die Evaluation präsentiert zwölf Empfehlungen für die Aufgleisung eines Gesamtprogramms und die operative Abwicklung (sechs davon werden unten erläutert). Für die Unterteilung der Empfehlungen war ausschlaggebend, wo diese zur Anwendung kommen sollen. So gibt es Empfehlungen für eine mögliche Fortsetzung der Schweizer Unterstützung in den Partnerstaaten, Empfehlungen für die operative Umsetzung und die Wirksamkeit des laufenden Programms sowie Empfehlungen für das laufende sowie ein allfälliges Nachfolgeprogramm.

Aufgleisung eines Gesamtprogramms

- Bei einem allfälligen Nachfolgeprogramm sollten die Partnerstaaten angehalten werden, eine **stärkere thematische und/oder geografische und finanzielle Konzentration** des Erweiterungsbeitrags zu bevorzugen.
- Bei einem allfälligen Nachfolgeprogramm sollten die DEZA und das SECO für die Partnerstaaten Richtlinien vorgeben und für die Projekte **auf Ebene der übergeordneten und thematischen Ziele des Erweiterungsbeitrags Standard-Unterzielen und -Indikatoren** vorsehen.
- Bei einem allfälligen Nachfolgeprogramm sollte das **zweistufige Projektgenehmigungsverfahren effizienter** gestaltet werden, allerdings nicht auf Kosten der Qualität bei der Programm-/Projektplanung: (A) Der Projektentwurf sollte ein kurzes Konzeptpapier umfassen und den Projektstand darlegen. (B) Für Projekte, die direkt von dazu beauftragten öffentlichen Stellen ausgeführt werden, sollten die DEZA und das SECO frühzeitig die Hilfe von Schweizer Expertinnen und Experten anbieten, die die Projektträger bei der technischen Entwicklung des endgültigen Projektvorschlags unterstützen und beraten.

Operative Abwicklung

- Beim laufenden Programm könnten Verzögerungen bei der **Lieferung und Bearbeitung formeller Berichte** verhindert werden, indem – sofern dies als zweckmässig erachtet und zwischen der Schweizer Seite und den einzelnen Partnerstaaten so vereinbart wird – die Projektträger (*Executing Agencies*) nur einen Zwischenbericht für den gesamten Zeitraum liefern, der noch nicht in einem Bericht des Projektträgers zuhanden der Nationalen Koordinationsstelle (*National Coordination Unit, NCU*) oder des bezeichneten externen Fondsverwalters (*Intermediary Body, IB*) abgedeckt ist.
- Beim laufenden Programm – sowie bei einem allfälligen Nachfolgeprogramm – sollten die Partnerstaaten dazu ermutigt werden, ihre **Kommunikationsbemühungen** im Zusammenhang mit dem Erweiterungsbeitrag und den einzelnen Projekten zu **verstärken** (finanziert über den *Technical Assistance Fund*), d.h.: (A) Konferenzen für die Verantwortlichen von Projekten mit ähnlichem thematischem und/oder geografischem Fokus; (B) Informationsbroschüren, um die Ergebnisse auf thematischer und/oder geografischer Ebene bekannt zu machen; (C) Informationsbroschüren mit den Ergebnissen des Gesamtprogramms im Partnerstaat.
- Bei einem allfälligen Nachfolgeprogramm müssen die Effizienz und Wirksamkeit der von den Partnerstaaten verwendeten **formellen Überwachungs- und Berichterstattungssysteme verbessert** werden, vorab durch die Bereitstellung von einfacheren und präziseren Berichtsvorlagen und Anleitungen für die Projektträger: (A) Es sollte ein grösserer Unterschied gemacht werden zwischen dem Zwischenbericht

(kurzer Bericht) und dem Jahresbericht (detaillierter Bericht). (B) Die DEZA und das SECO sollten für die Vorlage für alle Partnerstaaten ein einfacheres Format wählen.

Résumé² (Executive Summary)

Description

La présente évaluation analyse la **contribution de la Suisse à l'Union européenne (UE) élargie** (ci-après « contribution suisse ») durant la période allant de l'été 2007 à septembre 2015. La contribution suisse a pour objectif de réduire **les disparités économiques et sociales** dans les nouveaux pays membres de l'UE. La Suisse exprime ainsi son sentiment de **solidarité avec l'UE élargie** et poursuit en même temps la défense de ses intérêts en Europe. Elle profite **sur les plans économique et politique** du resserrement des relations bilatérales avec les pays partenaires et l'UE dans son ensemble, ainsi que de la hausse de la sécurité, de la stabilité et de la prospérité sur le continent européen grâce à l'avancée du développement socioéconomique des pays partenaires et à leur intégration réussie en tant que nouveaux pays membres de l'UE.

Le 14 juin 2007, le Parlement suisse a adopté un crédit-cadre d'un milliard de francs suisses pour financer la contribution à l'élargissement en faveur des dix pays ayant rejoint l'UE en 2004; un crédit de 257 millions de francs suisses a ensuite été adopté le 7 décembre 2009 en faveur de la Bulgarie et de la Roumanie. Enfin, un crédit de 45 millions de francs suisses a été adopté en faveur de la Croatie le 11 décembre 2014, mais ce crédit n'est pas pris en considération dans la présente évaluation.

La Suisse assume seule la responsabilité des interventions qu'elle soutient dans les pays partenaires. Les offices compétents en la matière sont la Direction du développement et de la coopération (DDC) et le Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie (SECO), qui travaillent en étroite collaboration avec les pays partenaires et s'appuient largement sur les systèmes de ces pays pour diriger les opérations et assumer la responsabilité de la mise en œuvre du programme. Les crédits-cadre ont une durée de validité de dix ans. Les fonds devaient être engagés (allocation d'une aide par la DDC ou le SECO) au plus tard cinq ans après l'adoption du crédit-cadre, et le programme de la contribution suisse devait être achevé dans les cinq années suivantes.

Objectifs et méthodologie de l'évaluation

L'objectif général est de réaliser une évaluation indépendante de la performance de la contribution suisse, en mettant l'accent sur l'obligation de rendre des comptes et l'apprentissage. S'agissant de l'obligation de rendre des comptes, il convient d'évaluer l'efficacité et l'efficience de l'utilisation des fonds publics dans le cadre du programme, étant donné que celui-ci se trouve dans sa neuvième année de mise en œuvre (sur les dix au maximum) dans dix pays partenaires. Concernant l'apprentissage, il s'agit d'identifier les leçons tirées du programme et d'émettre des recommandations pour une éventuelle poursuite du soutien suisse aux pays partenaires dans la réduction des disparités socioéconomiques.

L'étude et l'analyse ont combiné les éléments suivants: (a) examen théorique et analyse des documents couvrant l'intégralité du portefeuille de projets de la contribution suisse et évaluation approfondie d'un échantillon de 29 projets sélectionnés; (b) entretiens sur le terrain et discussions de groupe liés aux projets sélectionnés et au programme de la contribution suisse dans quatre pays partenaires (Hongrie, Lettonie, Pologne et Slovaquie); (c) entretiens avec des acteurs suisses; et (d) enquêtes par questionnaire envoyées au partenaires de programme. L'échantillon de 29 projets représente environ 175 millions de francs suisses engagés dans le cadre de la contribution suisse. Le rapport d'évaluation présente les principaux résultats, conclusions et recommandations de

² Traduction de la version originale en anglais

l'analyse. Les rapports sur l'évaluation approfondie des projets sélectionnés (feuilles d'information d'une page chacune) sont joints en annexe.

Principaux résultats et conclusions

La performance de la contribution suisse à l'UE élargie est jugée comme étant « bien ». La contribution a généré des bénéfices socioéconomiques aussi bien pour les pays partenaires que pour la Suisse, et elle a permis d'approfondir et de renforcer les relations bilatérales entre la Suisse et les pays partenaires. La Suisse est perçue comme un partenaire responsable qui contribue à relever les défis majeurs auxquels le continent européen est confronté.

Globalement, la pertinence, l'efficacité, l'efficience et la durabilité de la contribution suisse sont jugées selon le critère d'évaluation « bien ». Sur la base des 29 projets analysés en détail (sur les 210 projets de la contribution suisse dans les dix pays membres de l'UE), l'évaluation globale de la performance est la suivante:

Critère d'évaluation	Très bien	Bien	Suffisant	Insuffisant
Pertinence	16	10	3	0
Efficacité	9	18	2	0
Efficience	3	13	13	0
Pérennité	1	21	7	0

Pertinence

Dans l'ensemble, la pertinence de la contribution suisse est jugée selon le critère d'évaluation « **bien** ». Le résultat « très bien » qu'ont obtenu les projets sélectionnés reflète la pertinence des projets au niveau individuel, tandis que l'évaluation « bien » reçue pour la pertinence générale de la contribution suisse porte sur le programme dans son ensemble, la stratégie d'intervention et l'approche adoptée, la cohérence du programme et sa complémentarité avec les autres programmes. **Les objectifs généraux de la contribution suisse sont toujours pertinents.** Pour fournir son soutien, la Suisse privilégie principalement les domaines dans lesquels **elle peut apporter une valeur ajoutée.**

La **définition exacte des besoins prioritaires** dans les pays partenaires au titre de la contribution suisse incombe aux autorités nationales. Le choix de l'**approche stratégique** adoptée et des projets spécifiques financés par la contribution suisse est **confié aux pays partenaires**, en étroite collaboration avec les représentants suisses, qui décident en dernier lieu de l'attribution de l'aide suisse. L'évaluation montre que le processus de présélection et de préparation des projets est détaillé et que la qualité des propositions de projet finales est généralement bonne. Toutefois, **la cohérence de la chaîne des résultats** présentée dans la matrice de planification du projet (*Logical Framework Matrice*), la **qualité des indicateurs**, en particulier des résultats à moyen terme et de l'impact, et l'analyse des risques pourraient en partie **être améliorées.**

La **contribution suisse**, même en tenant compte de l'appréciation du franc suisse, ne représente qu'**environ 0,8% des fonds alloués par l'UE** aux pays partenaires **dans le cadre de sa politique de cohésion.** Sur les plans tant financier que thématique, la contribution suisse est, de manière générale, cohérente avec les **autres programmes et projets visant à réduire les disparités socioéconomiques** dans les pays partenaires ou **les complète.** Pour ce faire, elle concentre son aide sur les domaines thématiques, les régions géographiques et les groupes cibles qui ne sont pas ou pas suffisamment visés par les autres programmes menés dans les pays partenaires. La sélection des domaines ciblés par la contribution suisse a été facilitée par le fait que celle-ci a été programmée et

mise en œuvre par les pays partenaires indépendamment de la période de programmation de la politique de cohésion de l'UE.

Efficacité

Globalement, l'efficacité de la contribution à l'élargissement est jugée comme étant « bien ». Les résultats seront **supérieurs aux attentes**, ce qui est principalement dû aux possibilités supplémentaires offertes par l'appréciation du franc suisse lors de la mise en œuvre des projets et non à une approche ou à une exécution particulièrement innovante. Sur la base des résultats déjà obtenus, la perspective d'atteindre les objectifs visés par le programme et les projets est bonne. Les entretiens menés sur le terrain et les discussions de groupe réalisées avec des bénéficiaires de la contribution suisse confirment qu'une série de **résultats positifs** peuvent déjà être constatés. S'agissant du soutien, par des instruments financiers, du secteur privé et des projets de modernisation et de rénovation des infrastructures existantes, les résultats seront partiellement meilleurs que prévu en raison de l'accroissement du nombre de bénéficiaires finaux. Les bénéfices immédiats et les bénéfices potentiels à long terme seront donc plus importants. Il ressort toutefois de l'examen des projets sélectionnés qu'il **existe des «risques moyens»** pour quelques projets **en ce qui concerne la réalisation du projet et des objectifs dans les temps**. Il est également à craindre qu'une petite partie des résultats n'atteignent pas les objectifs ou que les résultats ne soient pas pleinement exploités.

Il n'est pas réaliste de s'attendre à ce que les interventions de la contribution suisse réduisent considérablement les disparités entre les pays partenaires et la moyenne de l'UE en termes statistiques. Néanmoins, sur la base des projets examinés, il est manifeste que les **interventions génèrent de la valeur ajoutée** et contribuent à la promotion du développement socioéconomique des secteurs et des régions ciblées, que ce soit par la création d'emplois, l'amélioration du système de santé et de l'assistance sociale, la réduction de la pollution, ou encore l'amélioration de l'accès au système judiciaire. **La contribution suisse devrait apporter de la valeur ajoutée dans les régions ou domaines où son approche a été particulièrement ciblée**. Cependant, le degré de concentration de la contribution suisse varie d'un pays partenaire à l'autre. De plus, il n'est pas simple de quantifier l'efficacité de la contribution suisse à long terme en raison du caractère parfois difficilement mesurable des objectifs et des indicateurs de résultats du programme et des projets. Ces objectifs et indicateurs ont été définis individuellement pour chaque projet, sans réellement tenir compte d'une série d'objectifs standards et d'indicateurs de base pour chaque objectif général de la contribution suisse.

La contribution suisse et le renforcement des relations bilatérales avec les pays partenaires ont également généré un certain nombre de **bénéfices** directs et indirects **pour la Suisse**, grâce notamment à une **hausse des opportunités économiques**, mais également à une **meilleure protection environnementale** du continent européen. De plus, la performance de la contribution suisse a été jugée selon le critère d'évaluation « très bien » en ce qui concerne le soutien fourni pour renouveler ou conclure des **partenariats entre des organisations en Suisse et des organisations dans les pays partenaires** dans un grand nombre de domaines sectoriels aux niveaux national, régional et local. Des partenariats ont ainsi été conclus dans le secteur public, entre des acteurs de la société civile et entre d'autres organisations. D'après les ambassadeurs suisses, l'interaction entre les ambassades suisses et les pays partenaires, en particulier à l'échelon des décideurs politiques de haut rang de ces pays, a également été considérablement renforcée grâce à la contribution suisse.

La communication et les efforts consentis pour faire connaître le programme ont été évalués avec le critère « bien » quand bien même l'efficacité des activités de communication pourrait être améliorée concernant la promotion du programme au-delà du niveau des projets dans les pays partenaires et en Suisse.

Efficiences

Dans l'ensemble, l'efficiences de la contribution suisse est jugée comme étant « bien ». La contribution suisse est un programme de « première génération », c'est-à-dire un nouveau programme d'assistance et de solidarité qui **s'appuie largement sur les systèmes des pays partenaires**. Les pays partenaires et la Suisse ont dû traverser une période d'apprentissage, mais les responsables de la contribution suisse sont parvenus à allouer 100 % de l'aide à disposition dans le délai imparti de cinq ans. En raison de l'appréciation du franc suisse, l'évaluation souligne que la contribution suisse est devenue un programme de coopération plus substantiel, dont la mise en œuvre a généré des tâches de gestion supplémentaires aussi bien pour les pays partenaires que pour la Suisse. Dans l'ensemble, les **responsabilités en matière de gestion** ont été réparties de manière équilibrée entre les différents acteurs du programme, qui ont fait preuve de flexibilité aux niveaux du programme et des projets pour s'adapter aux réalités afin de pouvoir atteindre les objectifs visés et de maximiser les résultats. Les principaux facteurs ayant influencé la performance de soutien ont été les contraintes budgétaires que connaissent encore la plupart des institutions du secteur public, la capacité de gestion des organismes d'exécution et le niveau d'engagement variable avec des partenaires et des acteurs.

Toutefois, la **pertinence du système dans son ensemble** est entravée par un certain nombre de **difficultés et de points à améliorer**: (1) les pays partenaires ont subi des **retards**, d'une part lors de la préparation des dossiers de candidature ou en raison de plaintes liées à l'adjudication, et, d'autre part, lors de l'obtention de permis de construire ou de permis de travail; (2) l'approche en deux étapes pourrait être améliorée et la charge administrative générale allégée, tout en assurant la qualité des projets. A cet effet, les experts suisses seraient appelés à fournir un soutien dans le développement et l'évaluation du projet sous l'angle technique; (3) la **charge administrative générale** pourrait être réduite, et l'efficiences et l'efficacité des **systèmes formels de suivi et de compte rendu** mis en place par les pays partenaires au niveau des projets pourraient être optimisées; il serait également possible d'améliorer la qualité des données et la présentation des analyses, notamment en faisant une meilleure distinction entre le rapport intermédiaire et le rapport annuel.

Pérennité

Globalement, la pérennité de la contribution est jugée selon le critère d'évaluation « bien ». L'engagement des bénéficiaires au niveau opérationnel et l'appropriation des résultats de la contribution suisse par les groupes cibles ont été majoritairement évalués de manière positive. La pérennité des projets semble être assurée et la perspective d'approfondir et de développer les résultats obtenus semble être bonne dans le cadre de projets mis en œuvre par des **institutions habilitées à prendre des décisions politiques ou qui ont un intérêt à fournir des prestations efficaces dans le domaine politique**.

La pérennité financière des interventions de la contribution suisse est principalement garantie par les institutions concernées. Dans bon nombre de cas, les résultats du projet seront exploités et maintenus sans aide financière extérieure ou à l'aide de fonds de l'UE déjà alloués ou planifiés à cet effet. Toutefois, dans le contexte des contraintes budgétaires constantes dans les pays partenaires, il existe **certaines risques** quant à la pérennité des résultats. En examinant les échantillons de projets jugés « suffisants », il apparaît que la pérennité financière est le principal risque pouvant entraver le maintien des résultats.

Recommandations

L'évaluation émet douze recommandations (dont six sont présentées ci-dessous) concernant la mise en place du programme et le cadre opérationnel. Les recommandations sont subdivisées: poursuite éventuelle du soutien suisse aux pays

partenaires, mise en œuvre opérationnelle et efficacité du programme en cours, et recommandations concernant à la fois le programme en cours et l'éventuel programme subséquent.

Mise en place du programme de la contribution suisse

- Si la contribution suisse est renouvelée, les pays partenaires devraient être encouragés à renforcer la **concentration** de la contribution suisse **aux niveaux thématique, géographique et financier**.
- Si la contribution suisse est renouvelée, la DDC et le SECO devraient approfondir les conseils donnés aux pays partenaires concernant une série **d'objectifs standard et d'indicateurs de base** à intégrer dans les projets **pour chaque objectif spécifique et objectif thématique de la contribution suisse**.
- Si la contribution suisse est renouvelée, **l'efficacité de l'approche en deux étapes devrait être améliorée**, tout en veillant à préserver la qualité du programme: (a) le descriptif du projet devrait être une note de concept concise informant sur l'état d'avancement du projet; (b) pour les projets exécutés par des entités publiques nommées directement, la DDC et le SECO devraient proposer des experts suisses suffisamment tôt afin d'assister et de conseiller les promoteurs de projets durant le développement technique des propositions de projet finales.

Cadre opérationnel de la contribution suisse

- S'agissant de la contribution suisse en cours, il serait possible d'examiner, si les circonstances le justifient et en accord avec les pays partenaires, les retards survenus dans **la transmission et l'examen des rapports formels**. A cet effet, les organismes d'exécution pourraient soumettre un seul rapport intermédiaire pour la période entière qui n'est pas déjà couverte par un rapport soumis au service national de coordination (SNC) ou à l'organisme intermédiaire désigné.
- S'agissant de la contribution suisse en cours et de l'éventuel programme subséquent, les pays partenaires devraient être encouragés à **renforcer leurs efforts de communication** (à l'aide du fonds d'assistance technique) liés au programme de la contribution suisse et aux projets. Il peut s'agir (a) de conférences réunissant des projets ciblant le même domaine thématique ou la même région géographique; (b) de brochures d'information sur les résultats obtenus dans un domaine thématique ou une région géographique; (c) de brochures d'information sur les résultats obtenus par la contribution suisse dans le pays partenaire.
- Si la contribution suisse est renouvelée, l'efficacité et l'efficacité des **systèmes formels de suivi et de compte rendu** exploités par les pays partenaires doivent être améliorées, en particulier via la simplification et la précision des modèles de compte rendu et des guides de rédaction à l'intention des organismes d'exécution. (a) Il conviendrait de mieux différencier le rapport intermédiaire (un rapport bref) et le rapport annuel (un rapport détaillé), et (b) la DDC et le SECO devraient proposer un format plus simple, qui servirait de base pour tous les pays partenaires.

Sintesi³ (Executive Summary)

Descrizione del progetto

La presente valutazione analizza **il contributo svizzero (CS) all'Unione europea (UE) allargata** tra il secondo semestre del 2007 e settembre del 2015. Finalizzato a **ridurre le disparità socio-economiche** nei «nuovi» Stati membri dell'UE, il CS testimonia il senso di **solidarietà della Svizzera nei confronti dell'UE allargata** ed è nel contempo uno strumento che le consente di difendere gli interessi nazionali in Europa. Le relazioni bilaterali più strette con i paesi partner e con l'UE **giovano alla Svizzera in termini sia politici sia economici**: grazie all'ulteriore sviluppo socio-economico in questi paesi e alla loro efficace integrazione nell'UE, infatti, il continente europeo diventa più sicuro, stabile e prospero.

Il 14 giugno 2007 il Parlamento svizzero aveva approvato un credito quadro di un miliardo di franchi svizzeri quale contributo svizzero ai dieci paesi che hanno aderito all'UE nel 2004. Il 7 dicembre 2009, inoltre, le Camere federali avevano stanziato 257 milioni per Bulgaria e Romania e, l'11 dicembre 2014, altri 45 milioni per la Croazia (credito, quest'ultimo, che non è però oggetto della presente valutazione).

Nei paesi partner la Svizzera agisce di propria responsabilità per il tramite della Direzione dello sviluppo e della cooperazione (DSC) e della Segreteria di Stato dell'economia (SECO). Nel realizzare i loro programmi di sostegno, tuttavia, questi uffici federali collaborano strettamente con i paesi partner, avvalendosi dei sistemi già esistenti in loco per dirigere e sorvegliare i lavori di realizzazione. I crediti quadro del CS hanno una validità di 10 anni: l'ultimo termine di allocazione delle risorse (per approvazione da parte di DSC o SECO) scade 5 anni dopo l'approvazione del credito quadro e quello per realizzare l'intero programma dopo altri 5 anni.

Obiettivi e metodi della valutazione

L'obiettivo generale è quello di analizzare l'impatto del CS da un punto di vista indipendente e imparziale. La valutazione mira a tracciare un bilancio del lavoro finora svolto e a trarne i giusti insegnamenti. È opportuno fare il punto della situazione proprio ora, cioè in un momento in cui per dieci paesi partner i programmi del CS sono ormai giunti in dirittura d'arrivo (al nono anno su dieci). Nel concreto si tratta di verificare se le risorse stanziato sono state impiegate in modo efficace ed efficiente. D'altro lato, invece, è bene raccogliere e analizzare gli insegnamenti appresi durante il programma e formulare raccomandazioni su come la Svizzera potrebbe contribuire anche in futuro a ridurre le disparità socio-economiche nei paesi interessati.

L'analisi e la valutazione si fondano sui seguenti elementi: (a) studi compilativi dell'intera documentazione del programma CS integrati da analisi approfondite su un campione di 29 progetti; (b) interviste in loco e discussioni con i gruppi target dei progetti in esame in quattro paesi partner (Ungheria, Lettonia, Polonia e Slovacchia); (c) interviste con stakeholder svizzeri; (d) un questionario inviato ai partner di programma. Il campione dei progetti in esame copre un importo di circa 175 milioni di franchi svizzeri tratto dai fondi del CS. Il rapporto presenta i principali risultati emersi dalla valutazione, trae conclusioni e formula raccomandazioni. Le analisi approfondite dei 29 progetti sono riportate in allegato (fact sheet di una pagina).

³ Traduzione del testo originale inglese

Principali risultati e conclusioni

L'impatto del CS sull'UE allargata si è rivelato buono. Ha prodotto benefici socio-economici sia per i paesi partner sia per la Svizzera e ha approfondito e consolidato i legami bilaterali tra le parti. Nel contesto del CS, il nostro paese viene percepito come un partner responsabile, disposto a contribuire al superamento di alcune delle maggiori sfide europee.

In generale, la rilevanza, l'efficacia, l'efficienza e la sostenibilità del CS sono considerate buone. Per quanto riguarda i 29 progetti analizzati nel dettaglio (sui 210 progetti realizzati in tutto nei Paesi UE-10), la valutazione dell'impatto complessivo è la seguente:

Criterio di valutazione	Ottimo	Buono	Sufficiente	Insufficiente
Pertinenza	16	10	3	0
Efficacia	9	18	2	0
Efficienza	3	13	13	0
Sostenibilità	1	21	7	0

Rilevanza

Nel complesso, la rilevanza del CS **viene giudicata buona**. Il voto «ottimo» ottenuto dai progetti selezionati riflette la loro rilevanza a livello individuale, mentre il giudizio buono si riferisce al programma del CS nel suo insieme, alla strategia d'intervento, all'approccio adottato, e alla sua coerenza e complementarietà rispetto ad altri programmi. **I macro-obiettivi del CS sono tuttora validi.** Nell'offrire il suo sostegno, la **Svizzera punta su settori in cui è in grado di fornire un chiaro valore aggiunto.**

Nei paesi partner l'esatta **classificazione dei bisogni prioritari legati ai CS** spetta alle autorità nazionali. La scelta di un **approccio strategico** per il programma e la selezione dei progetti specifici è stata **effettuata dai paesi interessati** in stretta collaborazione con gli organi responsabili svizzeri, cui compete in ultima istanza la decisione sull'allocazione dei fondi. Il processo di preselezione e preparazione dei progetti è stato dettagliato e la qualità delle proposte finali generalmente buona. Tuttavia, **la coerenza della catena dei risultati** presentata all'interno della matrice del quadro logico (*Logica Framework Matrix*), l'analisi dei rischi e la **qualità degli indicatori** – in particolare quelli sui risultati a medio termine e sull'impatto – **potrebbero essere ulteriormente migliorati.**

Anche tenendo conto dell'apprezzamento del franco svizzero, il livello dei versamenti a titolo del CS **costituisce approssimativamente lo 0,8 per cento dei finanziamenti effettuati nell'ambito della politica di coesione dell'UE** a favore dei paesi partner. In generale, ma anche sotto il profilo finanziario e tematico, il CS si è rivelato coerente e **complementare rispetto da altri programmi e progetti volti a ridurre le disparità socio-economiche** in questi paesi. Tale traguardo è stato raggiunto innanzitutto perché il CS si è concentrato su campi tematici, regioni e gruppi target trascurati completamente o quasi da altri programmi. Il fatto che i progetti finanziati con il CS siano stati pianificati e realizzati dai paesi partner indipendentemente dalle scadenze dei programmi di coesione dell'UE ha permesso di ritagliarli meglio sulle esigenze dei destinatari.

Efficacia

Nel complesso, l'efficacia del CS è da **considerarsi buona**. **I risultati conseguiti hanno superato o supereranno le aspettative.** Questo è dovuto principalmente all'apprezzamento del franco svizzero e alle conseguenti opportunità supplementari in sede di realizzazione dei programmi o progetti, piuttosto che a una progettazione particolarmente innovativa o a un buon rendimento in fase di esecuzione. Alla luce dei risultati già ottenuti, le prospettive di raggiungere gli obiettivi di programma e progetto ancora in sospeso sono buone. Le interviste in loco e le discussioni con i destinatari degli

aiuti svizzeri confermano che **è già stata raggiunta tutta una serie di risultati positivi**. Per quanto riguarda gli strumenti finanziari a sostegno del settore privato nonché il rinnovo e la modernizzazione delle infrastrutture, i risultati conseguiti superano parzialmente le aspettative grazie al maggior numero di beneficiari finali e, di conseguenza, alla maggiore portata dei vantaggi sia immediati sia a lungo termine. La valutazione ha tuttavia evidenziato una serie di «**rischi di media entità**», **relativi alla realizzazione dei progetti o al raggiungimento degli obiettivi nei tempi previsti**. È anche possibile che certi risultati non soddisfino le aspettative o non vengano sfruttati nel migliore dei modi.

Non è realistico supporre che i traguardi raggiunti con il CS bastino o basteranno a colmare in modo significativo il divario in termini statistici tra i paesi partner e la media dell'UE. Dall'analisi del campione di progetti risulta però che **gli interventi svizzeri hanno creato o creeranno valore aggiunto** e che contribuiscono o contribuiranno, seppure in modi diversi, a promuovere lo sviluppo socio-economico nei settori e nelle regioni target (p. es. grazie alla creazione di posti di lavoro, al miglioramento del sistema sanitario e di assistenza sociale, alla riduzione dell'inquinamento o al miglioramento dell'accesso ai sistemi giudiziari). **Il massimo valore aggiunto sarà presumibilmente generato dai progetti maggiormente focalizzati in fase di pianificazione**. La portata di questa concentrazione, tuttavia, varia anch'essa da paese a paese. A causa delle tipologie di misurazione spesso diverse, basate su risultati, obiettivi e indicatori, non è facile quantificare l'efficacia del CS sul lungo periodo. Queste tipologie, definite separatamente per ogni progetto, contengono soltanto pochi obiettivi standard e indicatori chiave.

La Svizzera, dal canto suo, **trae benefici** sia diretti sia indiretti dal CS e dalle relazioni bilaterali più strette con i paesi partner. Al primo posto figurano le **maggiori opportunità economiche**, ma anche la **migliore protezione dell'ambiente** in Europa. In diversi campi, inoltre, il CS ha prodotto ottimi risultati sul fronte del rinnovo o dell'avvio di **partenariati tra organizzazioni svizzere e straniere** a livello nazionale, regionale o locale nel settore pubblico e nella società civile. Secondo i feedback ottenuti dai nostri Ambasciatori, il CS ha contribuito a intensificare i contatti tra le Ambasciate elvetiche e i paesi partner, in particolare fra politici di alto livello.

Le attività di comunicazione e divulgazione sono considerate generalmente buone, ma potrebbero essere perfezionate sotto il profilo della loro efficacia – il che darebbe al CS una visibilità che andrebbe ben oltre il livello dei singoli progetti.

Efficienza

L'efficienza complessiva del CS è può essere **considerata buona**. Il CS è un programma di assistenza e solidarietà «nuovo» – cioè della prima generazione – largamente basato **sull'impiego dei sistemi dei paesi partner**. Anche se, ovviamente, c'è stata una «curva d'apprendimento» per entrambe le parti, gli organi responsabili sono riusciti ad allocare il 100 per cento del budget entro i cinque anni previsti. Alla luce dell'apprezzamento del franco svizzero, il CS è diventato un programma di cooperazione ancora più sostanziale, il che ha comportato ulteriori compiti gestionali da entrambi i lati. **Le responsabilità manageriali** sono state ripartite in maniera complessivamente equilibrata tra i diversi attori coinvolti. Con una buona dose di flessibilità a livello di programmi e di progetti, questi ultimi hanno saputo adeguarsi alle circostanze, ottenendo così i risultati auspicati e massimizzandone l'utilità. I principali fattori d'influenza sugli effetti del CS sono stati: le restrizioni budgetarie imposte alla maggior parte delle istituzioni/enti del settore pubblico, le capacità manageriali delle agenzie esecutive e il livello d'impegno nei confronti di partner e altri attori interessati, che è variabile.

In alcuni punti, tuttavia, il sistema nel suo complesso ha dimostrato di avere anch'esso **i suoi limiti**. A questo proposito si possono citare: (1) **i ritardi** nel preparare i dossier d'appalto, i ricorsi legati alle aggiudicazioni o la lentezza nel rilascio dei permessi di costruzione o di lavoro necessari; (2) l'approccio a due fasi può essere migliorato e il

carico amministrativo ridotto senza per questo compromettere la qualità del programma. Nel valutare e pianificare i progetti sotto il profilo tecnico, è consigliabile coinvolgere esperti svizzeri; (3) i sistemi formali di monitoraggio implementati dai paesi partner a livello di progetto possono essere migliorati sotto il profilo dell'efficacia, dell'efficienza e degli **oneri amministrativi totali** che comportano; la qualità dei dati e la presentazione delle analisi possono essere perfezionate, anche operando una distinzione più netta tra i rapporti intermedi e i rapporti annuali.

Sostenibilità

Nel complesso, la sostenibilità del CS è **da considerarsi buona**. L'impegno dei beneficiari a livello operativo e lo sfruttamento dei risultati del CS da parte dei gruppi target sono stati recepiti in modo prevalentemente positivo. La sostenibilità e le prospettive di un ulteriore sviluppo ed estensione degli obiettivi raggiunti sembrano particolarmente importanti per le attività realizzate da istituzioni con poteri politici decisionali, interessate a fornire prestazioni efficienti in termini di costi.

La sostenibilità finanziaria dei progetti del CS è garantita in primo luogo dalle istituzioni interessate. In molti casi i risultati saranno sfruttati e salvaguardati senza altri aiuti esterni oppure mediante fondi dell'UE già stanziati o previsti. La sostenibilità dei risultati, tuttavia, potrebbe risultare compromessa dal margine di manovra finanziario molto ristretto di certi paesi. Anche per i progetti giudicati sufficienti, sotto questo profilo, il mantenimento dei risultati sembra essere a rischio proprio a causa dell'aspetto finanziario.

Raccomandazioni

Il rapporto di valutazione contiene 12 raccomandazioni (di cui 6 presentate qui di seguito) sul quadro di programmazione e sul quadro operativo dell'intero programma. Esse si riferiscono, da un lato, all'eventualità di un rinnovo del CS e, dall'altro, alla realizzazione e all'efficacia dei progetti ancora in corso.

Quadro di programmazione del CS

- Nell'eventualità di un rinnovo del CS occorre sollecitare i paesi partner a concentrare **maggiormente i campi d'intervento tematici, geografici e finanziari**.
- Nell'eventualità di un rinnovo del CS la DSC e la SECO devono sviluppare ulteriormente le loro linee guida e focalizzarle su un numero limitato di **obiettivi e indicatori chiave** standard da integrare nei programmi e nei progetti, associandoli agli obiettivi specifici e tematici particolari.
- Nell'eventualità di un rinnovo del CS **l'efficienza dell'approccio a due fasi va migliorata**, ma non a scapito della qualità di pianificazione: (a) la descrizione del progetto dovrebbe limitarsi a una nota sintetica che fornisca informazioni anche sul grado di fattibilità del progetto; (b) per i progetti realizzati da enti pubblici su mandato diretto, la DSC e la SECO dovrebbero proporre fin dall'inizio il coinvolgimento di esperti svizzeri allo scopo di affiancare i responsabili durante la preparazione tecnica delle loro proposte di progetto finali.

Quadro operativo del CS

- Per quanto riguarda i progetti in corso, le agenzie esecutive potrebbero affrontare la questione dei ritardi nella **presentazione e nell'esame dei rapporti formali** – se necessario e così convenuto dalle parti – presentando un solo rapporto intermedio per l'intero periodo non contemplato già in un resoconto sottoposto al servizio nazionale di coordinamento o all'organismo intermedio competente.
- Sempre per i progetti in corso e per un eventuale programma successivo, occorrerebbe sollecitare i paesi partner a **concentrare le loro attività di comunicazione** legate al programma e all'intera gamma dei progetti (con l'aiuto del fondo di assistenza tecnica) ad esempio mediante: (a) conferenze su progetti che

rientrano nello stesso campo tematico e/o geografico; (b) opuscoli per divulgare i risultati a livello tematico e/o geografico; (c) opuscoli per divulgare i risultati dell'intero programma nel paese interessato.

- Nell'eventualità di un rinnovo del CS, l'efficacia e l'efficienza dei **sistemi formali di monitoraggio e reporting dei paesi partner vanno aumentate**, in primo luogo attraverso una semplificazione e una maggiore accuratezza dei modelli e delle guide di redazione fornite alle agenzie esecutive: (a) occorre operare una distinzione più netta tra i rapporti intermedi (concisi) e i rapporti annuali (più dettagliati); (b) la DSC e la SECO dovrebbero proporre un formato più semplice che possa fungere da base per tutti i paesi partner.

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives of the Independent Evaluation of the Swiss Contribution

The objectives of the evaluation of the Swiss Contribution (SC) to the Enlarged European Union (EU) are to:

- Provide an independent review of the performance of the SC to the Enlarged EU in terms of the results assessment and institutional analysis,
- Provide analysis of the Swiss benefits regarding enhanced bilateral relations with the partner states,
- Identify good/poor practices and innovative approaches, generate lessons learnt and identify recommendations for possible continued Swiss support in reducing economic and social disparities in the Enlarged EU.

The evaluation's analysis covers the period from mid-2007⁴ to September 2015 and is primarily, but not exclusively, focused on the SC provided to the ten states that joined the EU in 2004⁵ (the 'EU-10'), rather than on the SC program for Bulgaria and Romania. This is reflective of the maturity of the SC program in the 'EU-10', two-and-a-half years ahead of the program for Bulgaria and Romania in terms of implementation and potential results.

The main purposes of this evaluation are accountability and learning. In terms of accountability, it is opportune to evaluate the program – for the 'EU-10' partner states now into the ninth year of maximum ten years for implementation – in order to provide an independent assessment to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) – and thereby to the Swiss Parliament and the Swiss public – as to the effective and efficient use of public funds. It is also opportune – with the initial program advanced in terms of implementation – to identify lessons learnt linked to the program as well as to identify recommendations for the possible continuation of Swiss support in reducing economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU. The independent evaluation is jointly commissioned by SDC and SECO.

1.2. Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged EU – Background context

As part of the 'fifth wave' of EU enlargement ten countries acceded to the EU on 01/05/2004, i.e. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, with two further countries acceding on 01/01/2007, i.e. Bulgaria and Romania. It marked an unprecedented enlargement in terms of its scope, of its complexity and its diversity; extending EU membership from 15 to 27 countries⁶.

It was a significant step in terms of the realization of European integration and in closing the division of Europe created during the Cold War. For the ten former communist states, of Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic, it marked recognition by the EU of the significant progress achieved by the individual countries over the previous decade to undertake socio-economic transformation and governance reforms of unparalleled scale⁷.

The EU's 'fifth wave' of enlargement involved the accession to the EU of countries whose per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was substantially lower than the EU average and, despite the rapid growth in the countries that characterized the years immediately

⁴ On 14/06/2007 the Swiss Parliament approved a framework credit of CHF 1,000 million for the Swiss Contribution for the ten states that joined the EU in 2004; it subsequently approved a framework credit of CHF 257 million for Bulgaria and Romania on 07/12/2009. The Swiss Parliament approved a framework credit of CHF 45 million for Croatia on 11/12/2014; the SC to Croatia is not addressed by this evaluation.

⁵ Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

⁶ Subsequently, Croatia acceded to the EU as its 28th member state on 01/07/2013.

⁷ Switzerland, as with the EU and international and bilateral donors, provided specific transitional development cooperation assistance to the countries since the 1990s to encourage their transformation and the development of a democratic system and the rule of law, based on a market economy, the promotion of social cohesion, good governance and sustainable environmental development.

prior to and following their joining the EU, the level of prosperity in the 'new' EU member states, while considerably diverse across the countries, remains relatively low and the gap to the EU average per capita GDP is often still significant – as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: GDP per capita (PPS) as a percentage of the 'EU-27' average (=100%)

Year	BG	CY	CZ	EE	HU	LT	LV	MT	PL	RO	SI	SK	CH
1999	28	90	72	41	53	38	36	82	48	26	80	50	152
2004	34	96	79	55	62	50	47	80	49	34	85	56	141
2009	44	105	83	62	64	56	53	84	59	49	85	71	153
2014	45	85	84	73	67	73	64	85	68	53	82	76	160

BG = Bulgaria; CY = Cyprus; CZ = Czech Republic; EE = Estonia; HU = Hungary; LT = Lithuania; LV = Latvia; MT = Malta; PL = Poland; RO = Romania; SI = Slovenia; SK = Slovakia; CH = Switzerland

Source: Eurostat

The EU recognized the challenges that this posed in terms of its internal cohesion and also for the successful integration and further development of the countries within the EU. Accordingly the EU decided to significantly increase its allocation of financial funding targeted towards the promotion of economic and social cohesion within the EU; notably so since 2007 via the enlarged EU's first, post-accession, multi-annual financial perspective (2007-2013). Over the period total funding under the EU's Cohesion Policy increased by approximately 50% compared to the previous EU multi-annual financial perspective (2000-2006), with the focus of Cohesion Policy funding also increasingly targeted to the 'new' member states compared to under the previous multi-annual financial perspective.

On 12/05/2004, the Swiss Federal Council declared its readiness to make a contribution to help reduce the economic and social disparities in the ten states that joined the EU in 2004. The contribution expresses Switzerland's sense of solidarity with the enlarged EU and is at the same time the continuation of a policy of pursuing Swiss interests in Europe. Switzerland benefits both politically and economically from the closer bilateral relations with the partner states, and the EU, and the increased security, stability and prosperity on the European continent due to the successful integration of the 'new' EU member states.

On 26/11/2006 the Swiss electorate were consulted, via referendum, on the adoption of the Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe and voted in favor. In doing so, they signaled their approval for Switzerland's provision of financial support aimed at reducing economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU. Subsequently a Federal Council Dispatch was issued on 15/12/2006 concerning the SC to the 'EU-10'; the Swiss Parliament approved a framework credit of CHF 1,000 million on 14/06/2007. The Federal Council Dispatch concerning the SC for Bulgaria and Romania was issued on 05/06/2009 and a framework credit of CHF 257 million was approved on 07/12/2009.

Initially the SC funding provision corresponded to approximately 0.5% of the EU's funding for the states provided via the EU's Cohesion Policy – due to the subsequent appreciation of the Swiss Franc the SC now represents approximately 0.8% of the EU's funding.

In addition to the EU and Switzerland, financial support contributing to the reduction of economic and social disparities within the European internal market is also provided to the 'new' EU member states, since 2004, via the European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism – funded by Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. In addition, Norway as an individual, autonomous country also recognized that the reform processes in the 'new' EU member states required further consolidation, post-accession to the EU in 2004 / 2007 and established the Norwegian Financial Mechanism as a complementary contribution to the 'new' EU member states to support the reduction of economic and social disparities.

An overview of funding support provided to the SC partner states for the reduction of economic and social disparities and the promotion of cohesion – provided by the SC, the EEA and the Norway Grants, plus the EU's Cohesion Policy – is presented in Annex 1.

Swiss Contribution – Program Implementation Framework

At the bilateral level of Switzerland and the EU, the main terms and overall scope of the SC to the Enlarged EU is defined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Swiss Federal Council and the Council of the EU on 27/02/2006. This defines four funding guidelines and 27 potential funding areas as to the overall menu offered by Switzerland for SC intervention. At the level of Switzerland and the individual partner states a bilateral Framework Agreement was negotiated and thereafter signed – on 20/12/2007 with the individual 'EU-10' and on 07/09/2010 with Bulgaria and Romania – establishing a framework of rules and procedures for the planning, the implementation and the coordination of the SC. Annex 1 to the bilateral Framework Agreements defines the SC program objectives, principles, strategies, geographic and focus area priorities selected for SC intervention in the individual partner states, from the overall menu offer.

The framework credits for the SC have a 10-year validity period. The final date for commitment of the funds (i.e. the approval of the Swiss grant commitment by SDC or by SECO) was 5-years after approval of the framework credit, i.e. it expired on 14/06/2012 for the 'EU-10' and on 07/12/2014 for Bulgaria and Romania. The final date for completion of the SC program is by 14/06/2017 for the 'EU-10', 07/12/2019 for Bulgaria and Romania. By the end of the commitment period for the SC, 100% of the Swiss grant was committed.

Switzerland supports interventions in the partner states under its own responsibility. The responsible federal offices are SDC and SECO. Both agencies provide financial funding, indicatively planned as an approximate 50 / 50 share at overall program level. The actual share is determined by the projects and grant approved by the commitment deadline, with funding committed by SDC slightly higher as a share, while the final share will reflect the grant disbursement actually realized by program/project completion. In the partner states Switzerland is represented by an Embassy⁸, plus has set-up a Swiss Contribution Office⁹ (SCO) to facilitate overall SC program/project implementation, monitoring and control. The management costs of the Swiss government are covered by the SC, at a maximum of 5% of the program budget. Such costs include staffing and administrative costs, mission expenses for officials and consultants, and the cost of financial controls and evaluation.

Nevertheless, while overall responsibility for the SC rests with Switzerland, the support occurs in very close cooperation with the partner states and substantially makes use of the partner country systems to lead and take responsibility for program design, initial project review and pre-selection, and responsibility for program/project implementation, monitoring and control. While this presents potential implementation risks, in terms of the management and absorption capacities of the partner states to implement the SC, the extent of use of country systems is appropriate; reflective of the unique nature of the SC to the Enlarged EU, i.e. support to relatively advanced countries – 6 of the 12 are OECD Member countries – that, despite their economic and social disparities compared to the European average, should have the capacity to take maximum management responsibility and accountability. For this purpose the individual partner states have nominated a National Coordination Unit (NCU) with overall responsibility for the coordination and running of the SC program. As appropriate, the NCU has delegated certain responsibilities for the management and coordination of thematic programs/projects to sectoral Intermediate Bodies (IBs), a public authority or entity directly appointed or selected via an

⁸ The Swiss Embassy based in Riga represents Switzerland in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. The Swiss Embassy based in Rome represents Switzerland in Malta.

⁹ The SCO based in Riga is responsible for the SC in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. There is no SCO to oversee the program in Cyprus, Malta, or Slovenia. SDC and SECO therefore undertake oversight of the SC in these partner states, supported by the relevant Swiss Embassy.

open call. The implementation of individual programs/projects, including sub-projects under Block Grant instruments, is undertaken by Executing Agencies (EAs) – the project promoter awarded the grant. In addition, a Paying Authority has been appointed to ensure appropriate financial control over the use of the SC, as well as an internal Audit Authority.

2. Independent Evaluation – Methodological Approach

The evaluation has been conducted in adherence to the OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee) evaluation criteria, utilizing standard methodological approaches for conducting research and analysis. The evaluation has also been directed by the guidance and good practice on conducting evaluations issued by SDC and by SECO, e.g. the Evaluation Policy and Evaluation Guidelines that each agency has issued.

As defined in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation, the research and analysis has combined: (a) desk study review and analysis of SC program documentation covering the overall portfolio, complemented by the in-depth assessment of a sample of selected interventions, (b) field mission interviews and focus group discussions linked to the sample of projects and program in four focus partner states, (c) interviews with Swiss stakeholders, (d) plus utilized questionnaire surveys sent to program partners in the 'EU-10' plus Bulgaria and Romania, and to project partners in the four focus partner states.

The research and analysis approach has thereby enabled the evaluators to gather and cross-reference information and observations provided from program and project partners, beneficiary users and other stakeholders, both in the partner states and in Switzerland.

In order to ensure the research and analysis was undertaken in a structured manner, a detailed evaluation matrix was prepared based on the 17 evaluation questions (EQ) presented in the ToR. For each EQ the judgement criteria to be utilized were defined, as well as the specification of the performance rating definitions per judgement criteria. The performance rating is based on a 4-scale ranking system: highly satisfactory ("very good"), satisfactory ("good"), unsatisfactory ("fair"), and highly unsatisfactory ("poor")¹⁰. The detailed evaluation matrix and performance rating definitions are presented in Annex 10.

Following a kick-off meeting held in Bern (9 April 2015) and initial interviews with SDC and SECO staffs, plus with the Swiss Federal Audit Office¹¹ (SFAO), the evaluators undertook desk study review of key program documentation plus conducted a detailed portfolio analysis and geographical mapping of the full range of programs/projects funded via the SC: in total there are 210 projects in the 'EU-10' and 85 projects in Bulgaria and Romania.

An overview of SC program funding awarded per partner state by 'specific objective' and thematic areas of the SC is presented in Annex 2.

The criteria for and the subsequent selection of the sample of projects for in-depth assessment was agreed in consultation between the evaluators and SDC and SECO. This was undertaken based on the following criteria:

- **Thematic balance:** selected projects need to cover the 5 SC 'specific objectives',
- **Geographical balance:** selected projects should, to the extent possible, include and balance interventions in different countries and regions in the 'EU-10',
- **Institutional balance:** selected projects need to reflect different types of projects,
- **Time balance:** selected projects need to represent the whole observation period.

Additionally, the sample of projects should represent roughly 10% of the overall number of projects financed through the SC (in the 'EU-10'), which should reflect both (a) minimum 10% of the overall number of projects and (b) minimum 10% of the overall Swiss financial support for interventions in the partner states ('EU-10'). The project sample should also be representative with regard to the financial volumes (i.e. grant) of the projects.

¹⁰ The performance rating corresponds with the following terminology: (1) in French: "très bien", "bien", "suffisant", "déficient"; (2) in German: "sehr gut", "gut", "ausreichend", "mangelhaft".

¹¹ SFAO had recently issued (20/03/2015) a performance audit of the SC on the division of labour. SFAO has also issued three compliance audits of the SC: 14/09/2009 (audit of the control system), 25/01/2013 (SC in Romania), and 10/10/2013 (SC in the Czech Republic).

Based on the above, a sample of 29 specific projects was agreed, implemented in four of the partner states: 10 projects in Poland, 8 in Hungary, 6 in Slovakia, and 5 in Latvia. The Swiss Contribution to the 29 specific projects is budgeted at approximately CHF 175 million – representing 18-19% of the Swiss Contribution to the 'EU-10' for project funding.

The four focus partner states selected are representative of the differing population size of the range of countries and thereby the extent of support provided, plus are also representative of the different geographical locations: reflecting the SC experience of a large, a medium and a small Central European country, plus a small Baltic country. The sample of 29 projects addresses the five 'specific objectives' for the SC: (1) Promoting Economic Growth and Improving Working Conditions, 9 projects, (2) Improving Social Security, 5 projects, (3) Protecting the Environment, 6 projects, (4) Improving Public Safety and Security, 5 projects, (5) Strengthening Civil Society, 4 projects. The projects address 20 of the thematic areas offered for potential support under the SC.

During the period June-August 2015 the evaluators held interviews with responsible staff members at SDC and at SECO linked to the sample of projects. At the end of the evaluation's preparatory phase the evaluators also participated in the annual Regional Seminar on the SC to the Enlarged EU, conducted by SDC and SECO to bring together relevant staff at headquarters, plus staff based in the partner states. In addition to presenting the overall scope of the evaluation to the wider audience, the evaluators were provided 90 minutes to hold a focus group discussion with the Ambassadors of Switzerland to the partner states.

The on-line questionnaire surveys were formally opened at the start of September 2015, with invitations to participate targeted to key partners: Swiss Embassies, SCOs, and NCUs covering all of the 12 partner states, plus IBs and EAs in the four focus partner states for field mission visits. The response-rate was as follows: Embassies (9 of 10), SCO (6 of 7), NCU (10 of 12), IBs/EAs (40 of 127), and sub-project EAs under the Civil Society/Partnership Block Grants (71 of 172). The surveys were structured in order to include a series of common questions, thereby allowing for the 'triangulation' of responses. An overview of the questionnaire survey responses is presented in Annex 9.

Field mission visits to the four focus partner states were undertaken in September 2015, two experts undertaking the in-depth assessment of projects per partner state:

- Poland 2-19 September 2015,
- Latvia 6-11 September 2015,
- Hungary 13-25 September 2015,
- Slovakia 20-25 September 2015.

During the field mission visits a series of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. At the SC program level this included interviews with staff at the NCU, the SCO and with the Ambassador of Switzerland to the partner state. At project level this included interviews and focus groups with IBs, EAs, project partners, plus project final beneficiaries (e.g. students, micro-enterprises, staff of public institutions) and stakeholders (e.g. mayors of villages). Interviews were also conducted with economic and social partners and SC stakeholders in Switzerland between 5th and 8th October 2015 (face-to-face) and from September to November 2015 (telephone). The evaluation's factual findings reflect the status of the SC program and the sample of projects in September 2015. Financial data at SC program level is valid as on 16/11/2015.

Limitations to the approach or the research

In terms of limitations, the most significant obstacle to the efficient and effective conduct of the research was the variable extent to which formal program/project monitoring reports have been prepared/provided by the partner states to the Swiss-side. For a sizeable minority of the sample of 29 projects for the evaluation's in-depth assessment the Annual Reports, beyond the first or second, did not formally exist.

3. Evaluation Findings

3.1. Relevance

The evaluation will verify the relevance of the main areas / specific objectives and the Swiss Contribution interventions in terms of its contribution to reducing economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU.

3.1.1. Swiss Contribution – Program design

EQ 1: How relevant is the Swiss Contribution in terms of its contribution to reduce economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU (Goal of the Swiss Contribution)?

Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
The focus areas, programs/projects selected correspond to real problems, needs and priorities of partner states and stakeholders regarding the reduction of economic and social disparities.	Highly Satisfactory
The selected strategy, approach, intervention logic, and risk analysis of the programs/projects are well defined (coherence of the results chain) to deliver achievement of program/project goals and the objectives of the SC.	Satisfactory
The programs/projects are coherent with and complementary to other programs/projects aiming to reduce socio-economic disparities.	Satisfactory

Global objectives of the SC

The global objectives of the SC to the Enlarged EU are:

- To contribute to the reduction of economic and social disparities between the partner states and the more advanced countries of the enlarged EU,
- To contribute within the partner state to the reduction of economic and social disparities between the dynamic urban centers and the structurally weak peripheral regions,
- To contribute to enhancing the bilateral relations between Switzerland and the partner states.

Switzerland and the EU: Memorandum of Understanding on the SC

Recognizing that the EU contributes considerable financial funding to its member states targeted towards the promotion of economic and social cohesion within the EU, the overall scope of the SC to the Enlarged EU is designed so as to broadly align with the EU's Cohesion Policy. At the time of approval of the framework credits by the Swiss Parliament the budgetary allocation for the SC¹² corresponded to approximately 0.5% of the EU's funding to the states via the EU's Cohesion Policy – due to the subsequent appreciation of the Swiss Franc the SC now represents approximately 0.8% of the EU's funding.

In order to promote alignment of the SC with the EU interventions in the area, Switzerland and the EU concluded the brief MoU concerning the SC, signed between the Swiss Federal Council and the Council of the EU on 27/02/2006. This defines the allocation of SC funding per partner state and establishes four funding guidelines and 27 potential

¹² CHF 1,000 million for the 'EU-10' approved by the Swiss Parliament on 14/06/2007, and CHF 257 million for Bulgaria and for Romania approved by the Swiss Parliament on 07/12/2009.

funding areas as to the overall menu of support offered by Switzerland under the SC. The 27 areas are broadly defined, e.g. regional development initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions, prevention and management of natural disasters, sanitation and modernization of basic infrastructure (energy efficiency, drinking water, waste water, waste disposal, public transport), technical and vocational training. The range of broadly defined areas offered for support under the SC are plausibly linked, as policy goals, to the potential reduction of economic and social disparities within the enlarged EU.

Switzerland and the Partner States: bilateral Framework Agreements on the SC

In order to guide the programming and the implementation of the SC in the partner states, the Federal Council Dispatches concerning the SC established the detailed strategic principles, parameters and strategic approaches to be followed, as well as the potential range of implementation instruments available, and the geographical focus of the support.

The Dispatches highlighted the need to ensure the concentration of the available SC funding in order to enhance its effectiveness. In each partner state the SC is thereby targeted to concentrate funding in a limited number of focus areas, e.g. in Latvia the SC supports interventions in six focus areas, in Slovakia in eight focus areas. In addition to the thematic concentration of funding, in the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) the SC program is also geographically concentrated: at least 40% of program funding to be spent in peripheral and less-developed regions.

The process of identifying focus area priorities and in outlining the broad intervention goals and program/project financial size for support by the SC, and the geographical focus in the Visegrad countries, was led by the individual partner states. These were defined following several inter-ministerial meetings to agree particular priorities. The NCUs presented these to Switzerland as part of the negotiation of Annex 1 to the bilateral Framework Agreement concluded between Switzerland and the individual partner states.

Overall, the focus areas identified in the bilateral Framework Agreements – and the programs/projects subsequently selected for support – correspond to real problems, needs and priorities of the individual partner states and stakeholders regarding the reduction of economic and social disparities. The selected areas for intervention are, to a large extent, specifically identified as a priority in national, sectoral and/or regional development plans, e.g. the National Development Plan, the National Youth Strategy, the Energy Efficiency Program, the Judicial System Development Strategy, or the Strategy of Sustainable Development. However, the questionnaire survey responses indicate that a limited number of focus areas were not clearly defined as a priority in strategic plans¹³.

At the level of the individual partner states the overall, internal coherence, cross-linkages and synergies within the SC program, in light of the strategic approach adopted, the focus areas and programs/projects supported is, generally, adequate. Clearly, in the case of Cyprus, Malta, and Slovenia, the available funding does not allow for significant synergies. Via the geographic focus of support to peripheral and less-developed regions in the Visegrad countries, and in areas with low economic and social indicators in Bulgaria and in Romania, the SC program supports a mix of actions addressing social services, environmental infrastructure, nature protection, public transport, economic and human resources development goals, etc. In this way the outcomes of the different actions supported by the SC can have a multiplication effect. However, the questionnaire survey responses indicate that overall, internal coherence, potential cross-linkages and synergies within the SC program in the partner states could have been strengthened¹⁴. In Latvia and

¹³ One NCU responded that the focus areas are 'only partially' identified as a priority in strategic plans, while 12.5% of IBs/EAs responded that the focus areas are 'not' identified in strategic plans.

¹⁴ 3 of the 6 SCOs responding to this question judged the overall, internal SC program coherence in the partner states to be 'good', but 2 judged it to be 'limited', while 4 of the 9 NCUs responding to this survey question judged overall, internal SC program coherence to be 'good', but 5 judged it only as 'adequate'.

in Lithuania the overall, internal coherence, cross-linkages and direct synergies across the SC program, due to the clear strategic approach adopted, is specifically noteworthy.

SC Program Coherence – Latvia	SC Program Coherence – Lithuania
<p>The program focuses on the reduction of disparities between the dynamic urban centers and structurally weak peripheral regions via combining actions to improve school transportation services, school fire safety systems, youth initiatives/centers, and (nationally/locally) via modernization of the courts and access to justice, grants for NGOs and micro-loans for entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>The program focuses 67% of SC support on the rehabilitation/modernization of health infrastructure and services in selected hospitals (perinatal and neonatal health care) as well as the improvement of the environment via improving the efficiency of the energy, heating and water systems, and the air ventilation and air conditioning systems operated in the hospitals.</p>

Switzerland and the Partner States: program/project selection under the SC

The partner states are responsible for identifying and preparing potential programs/projects for funding in accordance with the bilateral Framework Agreement concluded with Switzerland. The Framework Agreement defines several eligible program/project selection mechanisms, e.g. the identification of projects in the result of an open call for proposals; a list of priority projects provided by designated competent public authorities; a list of priority projects provided by the Government; a proposal by the NCU; a proposal by Switzerland.

The partner states are responsible to propose the specific selection mechanisms per focus area plus for the management of the process: the NCU, or designated IB, launches the process (e.g. the specification of necessary guidelines and forms), receives the draft proposals, which are then subsequently assessed by the partner state, including by independent experts, prior to a decision as to which draft proposals be formally submitted to Switzerland for its consideration as to the project's suitability, including an assessment by independent Swiss experts. Traditionally, a 'two-loop' approval approach is followed under the SC – (1) Project Outline, (2) Final Project Proposal. The selection of potential projects for funding is therefore done mutually, primarily partner state led, although the final competence concerning the award of SC financing, naturally, rests with Switzerland.

The relevance of the selected SC programs/projects is satisfactory, in many cases highly satisfactory. Based on the specific sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, relevance of 16 is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 10 judged to be satisfactory, and three judged to be unsatisfactory. The projects judged to be highly satisfactory represent interventions under each of the five 'specific objectives' of the SC.

The quality of program/project design is, generally, good¹⁵. This is due to the thorough project development and assessment process. Swiss involvement in the process, including the independent experts involved in the development design itself, certainly adds value and leads to increased relevance of the proposed interventions. The coherence of the results chain presented in the programs/projects' Logical Framework Matrix (LFM) is, generally, satisfactory, although substantially variable. The results chain is usually clearly defined in terms of outputs leading to outcomes, with credible indicators of achievement provided for outputs to be delivered, and usually, but not always, also for outcomes, but the results chain in terms of outcomes leading to impacts is usually weaker, due to the frequently broad nature of the anticipated result the programs/projects will contribute to, for which the declared indicators of achievement do not always provide adequate clarity.

¹⁵ 3 of the 6 SCOs and 6 of the 10 NCUs responding to this survey question judged the quality of project design 'good'; 1 SCO and 2 NCUs rated it 'very good'; while 2 SCOs and 1 NCU rated it as 'average'.

SC: coherence with and complementarity to other programs/projects

Overall, the SC program in the partner states is, generally, financially and thematically coherent with and complementary to other programs/projects (including EU programs, the EEA and the Norwegian Grants) aiming to reduce socio-economic disparities.

Primarily this has been achieved via the concentration of the SC on areas or geographical locations or target groups that are not at all or are insufficiently addressed by the EU's programs or the EEA and Norway Grants in the partner states, e.g. in regard to SC support for health care and services modernization, or to smaller agglomerations for the rehabilitation/modernization of basic environmental infrastructure and services, or loans to micro-enterprises not targeted by other programs. In this way the SC contributes to the achievement of the common goal to reduce socio-economic disparities in the partner states and in the enlarged EU with limited risk in terms of the potential duplication of effort.

Where the SC builds clear linkages to the EU's programs in the partner states the design of the SC support is traditionally clearly demarcated, e.g. SC support for the development of the Hungarian air quality network focuses on the extension of the manual monitoring network and laboratories providing inputs to the National Air Quality Monitoring Network, while EU funding supports the extension of the automatic on-line monitoring network.

The principal area in which the provision of support may potentially mirror that of other programs appears to be in the area of support for non-governmental organizations (NGOs): frequently the Block Grants are openly defined in terms of the environmental or social support goals, that are often, equally loosely defined, supported by other programs.

3.1.2. Swiss Contribution – Program ownership

EQ 2: To what extent do partners (government, beneficiaries) regard the finally approved and implemented projects as relevant?	
Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Preparatory and pre-feasibility assessment activities were undertaken by partners during the program/project design phase.	Highly Satisfactory
Key stakeholder groups and senior management/decision-makers were consulted during the design phase and will be consulted during the implementation phase.	Satisfactory

The vast majority of partners (government and beneficiaries) regard the finally approved and implemented projects as relevant. In most cases the EAs and the immediate partners (direct beneficiaries of the SC) interviewed by the evaluators linked to the sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment regard their specific project as highly relevant.

As indicated above, due to the thorough project development and assessment process, project promoters are required to undertake detailed pre-planning and analysis – e.g. feasibility studies, financial analysis, project partnership agreements, confirmation on the possession of funds required for co-financing, draft tender specifications, zoning land-use approvals, building permits lodged, the ownership structure of the equipment purchased in the frame of the SC, environmental impact assessment or environmental statement, plus assorted technical annexes – prior to the final decision on the award of SC grant. To support project promoters with the preparation of such technical analysis and dossiers required for the Final Project Proposal, the SC included a small-scale Project Preparation Facility (PPF) in the SC program – utilized by 10 of the 12 partner states; not in Cyprus or Malta. Feedback indicates that the PPF – in total, an allocation of CHF 6.9 million in the 10 partner states – is regarded to be a highly relevant tool to support the effective development of project technical analysis and solutions where this is required.

Overall, the consultation of stakeholder groups and the involvement of senior management in the development phase are satisfactory. This is essential for building overall program/project ownership of the goals and success of implementation delivery, plus serves as the basis for promoting longer-term sustainability of the achieved results.

At the SC program level the involvement of stakeholder groups in the partner states is traditionally ensured via partners' participation – as members or as observers – on program/project selection committees and/or also the SC program monitoring committee. Traditionally this involves engagement with a structured/defined group of regional/local government representatives, plus also those from economic, social and NGO partners. At the project level, EAs responding to the questionnaire survey regarding the extent of stakeholder consultation indicate that joint planning workshops are undertaken in the majority of cases, as necessary supported by preliminary surveys of the target group(s)¹⁶.

At the level of senior management/decision-makers, the respective governments (cabinet) of the partner states were consulted as to the overall design of the SC, and in many partner states the cabinet also adopted government level resolutions/decisions and guidelines in this regard. At the project level, EAs responding to the questionnaire survey indicate that senior decision-makers are traditionally involved in the project development phase via their participation at joint planning workshops and via internal briefing notes and updates during the period required for project preparation and approval¹⁷.

Project preparation has been detailed and stakeholders and senior decision-makers have been consulted and program/project ownership has traditionally been clearly exhibited – as evidences linked to the sample of 29 projects demonstrate. Relevance and ownership of projects is also demonstrated by the partner states and project promoters via the provision of project co-financing and in their commitment to undertake the pre-financing of programs/projects – i.e. prior to requesting reimbursement from Switzerland. However, recognizing that the time period from the formal submission of the Project Outline to Final Project Proposal approval is usually up to 1-year, or up to 2-years for projects requiring PPF support, there have been a limited number of cases where co-financing could no longer be guaranteed or was made available only after considerable delay.

3.1.3. Swiss Contribution – Continued program relevance

EQ 3: Are the objectives of the Swiss Contribution still valid?	
Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
The SC remains relevant to the expectations of the partner states and stakeholders.	Satisfactory
The SC remains relevant to the expectations of Switzerland (SDC and SECO, Swiss partners and stakeholders).	Satisfactory

Regarding the objectives of the SC, the MoU between Switzerland and the EU concerning the SC and the relevant Federal Council Dispatches establish four funding guidelines (or main areas) and 27 potential funding areas as to the overall menu of support offered by the SC. In mid-2012, SDC and SECO adopted the “Monitoring and Evaluation concept for the Swiss Contribution” which presented a redefinition of the four funding guidelines as five specific objectives. As noted in the ToR for this evaluation, "the five specific objectives allow a better identification of the needs of the partner states and the realities of implementation". Broadly, the redefinition as five specific objectives does indeed provide a

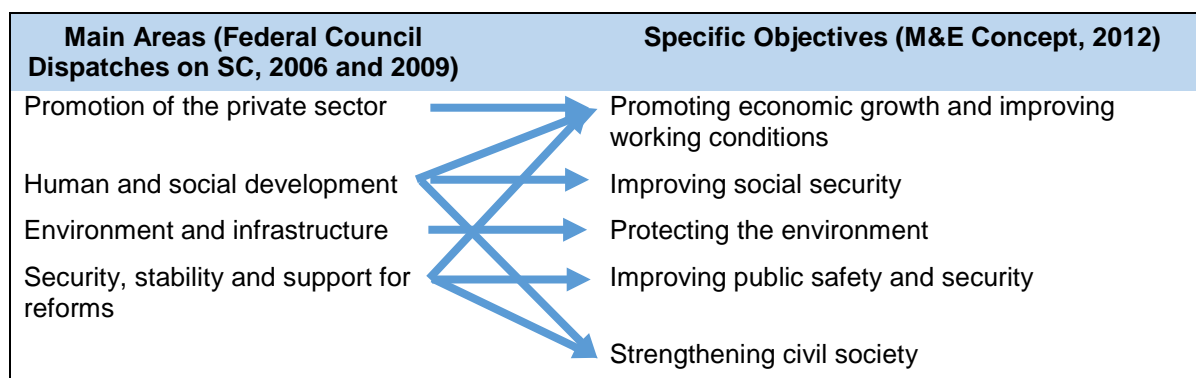
¹⁶ 32.5% of the EAs indicated that stakeholder partners were 'fully' involved in the design/programming phase and 47.5% that they were involved 'to some extent'; 20% did not answer the specific question.

¹⁷ 72.5% of the EAs indicated that senior decision-makers participated in the design phase; 12.5% indicated that senior decision-makers were only involved in the final approval of the project submission.

more holistic program approach, with a clearer specification, from a programming perspective, of the socio-economic needs of the partner states. However, it is not evident that "the five specific objectives allow a better identification of the needs of the partner states", notably as all of the bilateral framework agreements were already prepared with reference to the main areas¹⁸.

The generic SC program objective tree, corresponding to the five specific objectives for the SC, is presented in Annex 3. Our understanding of the linkage between the original and the reconstructed intervention logic – at the strategic level for focus of the SC – is summarized below.

Figure 1: Swiss Contribution – Main Areas and Specific Objectives



Overall, the SC interventions are judged to remain of clear relevance in terms of their response to the development needs of the partner states, the project promoters and stakeholders, and also for their contribution to the reduction of socio-economic disparities within the individual partner states and/or within the enlarged EU. Feedback from a diverse range of program/project partners in the partner states, as well as SC program/project partners and stakeholders in Switzerland, indicates this as the predominant view.

Questionnaire survey responses indicate that:

- All SCOs and all NCUs regard the SC programs/projects to remain either 'fully' or 'to a large extent' relevant to the needs of the project promoter and target group,
- 77% of EAs are of the same judgement in terms of rating continued relevance of the SC; though 10% indicated relevance was now judged only 'to some extent',
- 76% of NGO/Partnership sub-project grantees responding, from the four focus partner states, indicated that projects remain of clear relevance to their needs 'to a large extent' – the survey did not present the option 'fully' – though 17% indicated that relevance was now judged only 'to some extent', and 3% as 'only partially'.

¹⁸ Additionally, as the 5-year commitment period for the 'EU-10' closed in June 2012, the redefinition could clearly, provide only minimal opportunity for the "better identification of the needs of the partner states".

3.2. Effectiveness

The primary objective of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of Switzerland's contribution and to highlight areas of success or in need of improvement.

3.2.1. Swiss Contribution – Delivery of results in the partner states

EQ 4: To what extent do interventions of the Swiss Contribution contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in the respective EU member state (in the intervention area supported, in qualitative and quantitative terms)?

Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
The objectives have / will be achieved at program/project output level.	Highly Satisfactory
The objectives have / will be achieved at program/project outcome level.	Satisfactory
The objectives have / will be achieved at program/project impact level.	Satisfactory
The program/project results have realized the specific objectives of the SC in the partner states.	Satisfactory
There are no programs/projects or SC specific objectives for which there is 'high risk' as regards results achievement by 2017.	Satisfactory

Successful delivery of program/project outputs beyond the original scale of target

Overwhelmingly, the evidence highlights that the intended SC program/project outputs have/will be delivered beyond the original scale of target. Questionnaire survey responses indicate a clear majority of SCOs, NCUs, and EAs expect the intended outputs to be either fully delivered or significantly delivered beyond the original scale of target¹⁹.

Primarily this is due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc since the framework credits for the SC were approved – in mid-2007 and in late-2009 – and the additional opportunities that have thus been provided to extend SC program/project actions, where this has been justifiable, so as to maximize the commitment and the disbursement of the Swiss grant within the set program period. Whereas the SC grant commitment and disbursement is provided to the partner states in Swiss Francs, this is calculated based on the utilization of the effective exchange-rate of the time between the Swiss Franc and the partner state currency²⁰. The appreciation of the Swiss Franc in 2010-2011 and in 2015 has thereby, fortuitously, allowed for the implementation of a more substantive cooperation program with the partner states. In addition to the increased opportunities due to the exchange-rate, project savings arising from public tender procedures have also been reinvested.

However, the questionnaire survey responses from the NCUs, and EAs also indicate that not all of the intended outputs will be delivered. Based on the sample of projects for in-depth assessment it is also evident that for a limited number of projects a minority of the outputs will be achieved below target, and that for a minority of projects there is a risk that the outputs will not be fully utilized by the project beneficiaries as initially intended.

¹⁹ The survey question defined 'significantly beyond the scale' as minimum 10% extra delivery of outputs. 4 SCOs indicated outputs will be 'significant' and 1 indicated 'fully'; 1 'no answer'. 5 NCUs indicated outputs will be 'significant' and 3 indicated 'fully'; 2 indicated 'most, but not all'. 27.5% of EAs indicated outputs will be 'significant', 40% indicated 'fully', 10% 'most', 2.5% 'only partially'; 20% 'no answer'.

²⁰ In June 2007 the CHF exchange-rate was valued at 0.61 EURO, in December 2009 the CHF was valued at 0.66 EURO, in June 2012 the CHF was valued at 0.83 EURO, and in June 2015 it valued 0.97 EURO.

Based on the project sample the following are highlighted per SC specific objective with regard to the generally very successful, but not uniformly so, delivery of outputs:

<p>Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions</p> <p>Hungary: Development of bionic and genetic tools to help the visually impaired</p> <p>Progress has been booked in terms of developing a portable cell phone based visual recognition device (i.e. bionic eyeglasses) and applications. These have added value compared with already existing technologies/devices: the application(s) developed combine several visual recognition tasks (e.g. of banknotes, color recognition) in one device only, has enhanced feed-back capacity (i.e. does inform user on correct positioning of device/mobile phone for image interpretation) and may be used on mobile phones (provided that these have enough computational power).</p> <p>Poland: Polish-Swiss research program</p> <p>Overall, 31 projects are financed, with the involvement of 49 research institutions (31 Polish and 18 Swiss) and 434 scientists. The six projects visited during the current evaluation mission revealed a high degree of accomplishment of the main research work. Some of the projects are yet behind the targets for publications, but this is not necessarily related to their effectiveness. For example, the Institute of Physics' project has made notable progress in a very difficult area of identifying and sampling a new solar energy absorbent, yet there is not much to be published at this stage.</p>
<p>Improving social security</p> <p>Hungary: Public health focused model program for organizing primary care services</p> <p>The community oriented primary health care model is developed and has been pilot-tested. Despite difficulties to identify and retain specialized personnel in the region and areas targeted by the project, the teams operating under each of the four clusters were formed, trained and consolidated. The public health coordinator and general practitioners play an important role in this respect. The availability of new services provided by physiotherapists, dietitians and psychologists are particularly beneficial for key vulnerable groups: Roma, children and elderly. Based on the pilot-test results, policy analyses and proposals are to be prepared to support take-up in national policy.</p> <p>Latvia: Youth initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions</p> <p>The program is on target to achieve or exceed its targets (e.g. by the end of 2014, 65 out of 100 seminars for young people had been organized, with participation in total of 1280 persons of the target for 2,000 young persons). Some important targets are surpassed (e.g. due to savings 23 instead of 17 centers initially planned have been renovated/established; these represent around 25% of the centers functioning in 2014 in Latvia). Overall, activities targeting youngsters (e.g. on topics such as self-development, setting personal goals, entrepreneurship, critical and innovative thinking) and youth workers (e.g. trainings and materials on "coaching") have proven effective.</p> <p>Poland: Preventing overweight and obesity</p> <p>Effectiveness of the project is only partly satisfactory as the output achievement rates vary. C1: 6,114 pregnant women (22%), hence there is a high risk as regards output achievement. C2: 1,600 educational institutions covering 381,870 children (over 100%). C3: 1,348 weight reduction patients (84%); of these 226 patients dropped out (17%); in addition dietary advice for 9,952 patients (78%). C4: Aims to reach 10% of customers of included supermarket outlets; the 2013 evaluation on the first nationwide roll-out in supermarkets notes that the data could not be considered as robust.</p>
<p>Protecting the environment</p> <p>Hungary: Water supply in the settlements of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County</p> <p>As of September 2015 the modernization of the water supply network was completed in 6 (of 13) settlements, with works in 2-3 other settlements assumed to be completed in the last quarter of 2015. Works in Mezőcsát are commenced and will be finalized in spring 2016; works in Alsózsolca, Nyékládháza, and Tokaj will start after permits are secured. It is feasible to complete the project by the end of June 2016 although risks exist. On completion the 13 settlements will each be served by a more reliable, safe and affordable water supply, to the same level of service provision.</p>

Poland: Asbestos waste removal safe storage of products – Malopolskie Voivodship

Due to the low financial capacity of the households for installing new roofs, the project achieved the targets partially: by September 2015 the project had removed asbestos roofs for 3,588 houses and buildings (the target is 6,120) and for 8 public buildings (target 11), which makes 16,265 tonnes of asbestos (target 25,201). 108 poorest households (target 800) have been provided new roofing. The EA recognizes that additional tenders could have been launched in parallel, however, were not. In the meantime, the EA assumes that by the end of 2016 the targets can be still met. The project has successfully delivered outputs related to awareness, education and trainings, promotion and visibility. The project's web-site has already approached to the target number of 50,000 'hits'.

Poland: Carpathians Unite

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. Approximately 50% of the outputs were delivered by the third quarter of 2015, when over 70% of implementation time has passed. Yet, only one indicator for outcome has been fulfilled partially. A significant number of activities and outputs are still pending across each of the project's components. Within a relatively advanced component – 'Carpathian Informatorium' – the 'exchange network' was supported via meetings, consultations and a web-platform; however, the Web awaits significant updates since late 2014.

Improving public safety and security**Poland: Preparation of customs service mobile groups**

78 vehicles with special equipment were procured, including vans, estate cars, and dog handlers' cars. 210 customs officers were trained in English and Russian languages; 237 officers in special driving techniques; 110 officers in crisis management. 10 officers participated in mutual exchange with Swiss colleagues. Workshops were provided on x-ray images' interpretation and verification, plus on emergency response and use of techniques of coercive measures. Additionally an x-ray scanner and video endoscopes have been procured. Over 90% of Customs officers of the mobile groups on the eastern Polish border have increased qualifications through specialized trainings.

Slovakia: Enhancement of the preparedness of the rescue forces

The project will deliver a modernized center and operational capacity for the training of service dogs and dog-handlers of the security and rescue forces. In addition to training police dog-handlers it is planned that the center, starting during 2016, will provide training to civilian rescue force dog-handlers. It will also serve as an international center of expertise and training. The project has delivered effective modernization and enhanced operational capacity of the Control Chemical Laboratories: the delivery of laboratory and mobile testing equipment and related staff training. The capacity to detect organic compounds is estimated to have increased to more than 200,000 new (previously non-detectable) agents, as well as 100 new (previously non-detectable) radionuclides.

Strengthening civil society**Hungary: Twinning and Partnership Block Grant**

The Block Grant bypassed its targets in terms of sub-projects implemented (50 versus 44 planned). Particularly in demand were partnership projects implemented by smaller non-profit organizations (39 versus 26 planned); 4 social dialogue projects were financed (1 more than targeted). However, creating new partnerships between towns was challenging (i.e. 7 projects versus 15 planned) despite targeted information and promotion activities carried out and dedicated calls organized. Establishing formal partnerships between public institutions is a complex process, lengthier than the time at disposal between the call opening and its dead-line. A roll-on procedure accompanied by an actively and strategically managed partner search forum might bring better results.

Slovakia: NGO Block Grant and Partnership support

All three quantified output level indicators have been by-passed: 33 NGOs built their capacities (e.g. 22 NGOs strengthening technical expertise through training; 23 NGOs developing enhanced capacities through an upgrade of equipment/facilities; 11 NGOs strengthening of organizational capacities, including development of organizational, fundraising or communication strategies; 8 NGO increased their staffing); 22 projects supported social services/environment initiatives; 18 joint projects were implemented. A total of 18 projects were implemented (fully or partially) in the marginalized regions of Slovakia. With regard to the number of applied examples of good practices the last available from the Block Grant IB indicates transfer through all 18 joint projects. With

regard to continuing partnerships, according to sub-project EAs' own analysis they indicate that 10 of the 18 joint projects will have some form of continuing partnership with their Swiss partners.

Successful achievement of program/project outcomes

Overall, based on the very successful delivery of the program/project outputs, the prospects for the successful achievement of the intended outcomes is satisfactory.

Based on the outputs of the projects the immediate outcomes achieved at the level of the EAs, partner beneficiaries, final users, and sub-project grant recipients relate to their enhanced technical and organizational capacity to manage and operate their agenda and thereby more effectively contribute to the delivery and achievement of public services/goals and development priorities. Apart from the diverse range of project-specific outcomes achieved, the EAs and NGOs responding to the questionnaire survey indicate that their capacities have predominantly been strengthened by means of:

- The identification of good practices – to be implemented / disseminated;
- Capacity building via dialogue and sharing of experience / peer learning;
- Strengthening of technical knowledge and expertise;
- Strengthening of administrative and management skills;
- Strengthening of communication skills and 'outreach' to stakeholders;
- Increased effectiveness in the delivery of services.

The field mission interviews and focus group meetings held with staff trained via the SC in a range of project beneficiary institutions, plus with Sciex²¹ Scholarship Fund recipients, entrepreneurs, social care/service workers, mayors, etc., confirm the positive achievement of immediate outcomes at the personal and organizational level as identified above.

Based on the specific sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, effectiveness of 9 is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 18 judged to be satisfactory, and two judged to be unsatisfactory. The projects judged to be highly satisfactory represent interventions under each of the five 'specific objectives' of the SC.

In the case of institutional capacity building actions the extension of the program/project outputs delivery is mainly represented via additional numbers of staff trained, or additional technical equipment supplied, which will enhance the overall speed of the process of modernization and results take-up and thereby facilitate the achievement of the intended outcomes. In the case of financial instruments supporting the private sector, e.g. micro-enterprises or SMEs, plus infrastructure renovation/modernization projects, e.g. health, social, environmental, the achievement of the intended outcomes will be enhanced due to the increased number of final users directly benefiting due to the SC support, and thereby the extent of the immediate and potential longer-term benefits achieved.

Questionnaire survey responses indicate that a majority of NCUs and EAs expect the outcomes to be either fully achieved or significantly achieved beyond the original scale of target. Responses from the SCOs indicate a comparatively less optimistic perception as to the level of the achievement of outcomes beyond or fully to the original scale of target²².

²¹ Sciex – Scientific Exchange Programme: Sciex is the promotion tool for research teams from all disciplines, consisting of team-members from the partner states and Switzerland. Ten of the partner states have participated in the Sciex under the SC: BG, CZ, EE, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, SI, and SK. Via the program Sciex Fellows pursue their research in cooperation with Swiss researchers in Swiss research institutions. Ideal working and framework conditions support the success of their research.

²² Respondents were asked "Have/will the intended program Outcomes be achieved?" with four potential responses offered (with only one to be selected): (1) Yes, fully and also significantly [defined as minimum 10% extra achievement] beyond the scale of the target; (2) Yes, fully; (3) Most of the Outcomes have/will be achieved, but not all and/or achieved below target; and (4) Only partially achieved.
1 SCO indicated that the outcomes have/will be 'significant', 2 indicated 'fully', 2 indicated 'most, but not all'; 1 provided 'no answer'. 4 NCUs indicated that outcomes have/will be 'significant', 4 indicated 'fully', 2

Based on the project sample the following are highlighted per SC specific objective with regard to the generally successful, but not uniformly so, delivery of outcomes:

<p>Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions</p>
<p>Latvia: Micro-lending program</p> <p>The program improved access to micro-loans for micro enterprises and self-employed persons to set-up and develop business activities, exceeding the targets in terms of the volume of loans and grants disbursed (e.g. CHF 10.3 million in loans compared to CHF 8.3 million initially planned) and the number of micro-loans (i.e. 1,037 compared to the target of 650). Via the program almost three times more jobs have been created or maintained than initially envisaged. 70% of the beneficiaries of micro-loans participating in the survey carried out for the purpose of this evaluation reported that their turnover increased either by 10-15% or even by more than 15% (i.e. 25% of responders) due to the finance received under the program, an effect apparently even stronger than jobs created.</p>
<p>Slovakia: Vocational Education and Training (VET) for the labor market</p> <p>The Ministry of Education highlighted that the project provided important input into legislative change. VET schools emphasized promotional activities contributing to combat decreasing student enrolment figures. At the Chemical VET School Bratislava 26 students enrolled in chemical operator classes, a field for which classes had been previously vacant and which responds to a demand of collaborating chemical companies; 70% of pupils who enrolled had participated in promotional events. The VET school Farského (bakery/pastry) recorded a 15% enrolment increase. The United School Prešov (mechanic electrical technician) recorded a 50% enrolment increase. The project also contributed to decrease student drop-out rates as it built confidence and a clearer understanding about career paths. The large interest of companies resulted in exceeding numbers of contractual arrangements, e.g. technical United School Prešov collaborates with 16 companies. Collaboration with the Swiss partner is viewed to be successful and has a potential for a longer-term commitment. The VET project is considered to be a showcase project. The partnership also triggered engagement with other Swiss institutions and companies, e.g. Nestlé.</p>
<p>Improving social security</p>
<p>Poland: A helping hand in a safe environment</p> <p>751 staff of sub-grantees (8 Social Welfare Houses, 5 Emergency Care and Education Institutions) were trained and the social infrastructure upgraded. The project has enhanced the quality of services and because of the combination of capacity building with infrastructure, a wider range of services can now be offered. Other outcomes include, e.g. employees more self-confident, preventing occupational burnout; enabling compliance with current/new regulations/policies; lower maintenance costs/energy-efficiency; increased resident safety. Moreover, the project already had considerable impact for the city of Krakow by reducing patient waiting time for a Social Welfare House place from up to 3 years to close to zero. In addition, the project contributed to a number of patients acquiring skills necessary to move from 24-hours care to a protected housing scheme.</p>
<p>Slovakia: Community on its way to prosperity</p> <p>Outcome indicators will be measured by the end of 2015 but the EA carried out surveys from which the conclusion can be drawn that the project is well on its way to achieve its projected outcomes; e.g. recent data of the Preschool Club activities indicates that none of the children needed to attend special classes. Almost 80% of the 61 primary school children who participated in the Mentoring Program enrolled to secondary school. Stakeholders also highlighted that more Roma children attend vocational schools. The project also led to policy level impact, e.g. greater visibility of tested approaches with key ministries. Project results feed into important governmental mechanisms for the advancement of Roma; e.g. the working group on inclusive education. The Steering Committee proved to be a show-case trigger as four relevant Ministries were represented on the committee.</p>

'most, but not all'. 35% of EAs indicated that outcomes have/will be 'significant', 27.5% 'fully', 17.5% 'most', 2.5% 'only partially'; 17.5% provided 'no answer'.

Protecting the environment

Poland: Renewable energy sources in Mszana Dolna and in partner communities

The project achieved and, in some aspects, over-achieved the planned outputs. Thus, 2,602 residential houses were installed with solar heating systems versus 2,300 planned; the current installations allow an annual substitution of 10 million kW/h energy generated through combustion of coal and gas, allowing reduction of 5,000 tonnes of CO₂ (surpassing the planned reduction for over 50%), saving annually 162,160 tonnes of coal. The project put in place a comprehensive web-site (e.g. for guidelines, description of on-going works, cooperation with partner municipalities, awareness and visibility materials). By September 2015 the web-site has had over 56,000 'hits'. The project put notable efforts to advocate the usage of solar panel-based heating systems among the population. Currently, according to the project's estimates, there are over 2,000 households, that would be eager to install the new systems in addition to those who participated in this project.

Slovakia: Public sewerage and sewerage plant for the Village of Častá

Construction works linked to the public sewage network are nearing completion, with testing of the systems expected by summer 2016. On activation of the commissioned facilities, all of the urban area currently under the land use plan for Častá will be connected to the waste water collection and treatment facilities: approximately 750 houses/buildings (625 are new connections). The WWTP will deliver the efficient biological processing and treatment of the waste water in line with environmental standards before discharging water to the recipient watercourse. The municipality actively provides information to the inhabitants linked to the project's purpose and implementation, as well as provides channels for their feedback. This is essential to ensure maximum project effect in terms of the elimination (or reduced use), after the activation of the sewage collection/treatment facilities, of septic tanks/cesspools. In many cases these are leaking and thus threaten the quality of surface water and groundwater, as well as other environmental elements, in the region.

Improving public safety and security

Hungary: Multi-level community policing network

The project has successfully pilot-tested the introduction of the community policing concept and working methods in 4 towns. Based on feedback received from diverse partners in 2 of the pilot-test towns the effectiveness of the community policing approach is rated as highly satisfactory. While the public reaction to the community police officers, embedded in the local community with high visibility was initially one of surprise (due to the novelty), awareness of their role to facilitate public safety, security and the resolution of potential problems is now better understood and the officers are well integrated. It will require a period of years to ensure the effective embedding of the approach. As of September 2015 the Permanent Expert Group was undertaking analysis of the results of the pilot-test phase, leading to its preparation, in late 2015, of recommendations for roll-out of a country-wide implementation of community policing. It is anticipated that the extension of community policing initially cover 20 additional towns, with training for staff in the first half of 2016.

Latvia: Modernization of courts in Latvia

The 94 video conference equipment and 308 audio recording equipment units in courts and prisons, plus the State Forensic Science Bureau, are utilized on a daily basis in order to connect parties to the court proceedings. Usage of the video conference equipment has increased from an average of 250 times per month in 2013 to an average of 370 per month in 2015. Linked to usage of the audio recording equipment, which is used on average for 2,500 civil cases and 500 criminal cases per month, an audio protocol tagging system was developed which allows for the efficient review of recordings and the appropriate sharing of data with partners. Citizens and business access to the judicial system has been increased (e.g. 46 E-kiosks, 5 court E-services, 72 E-forms for claims and documents for proceedings, and 85 scanners in court buildings for the processing of forms only available, still, in paper-format. The national court portal, accessed via the E-kiosks and internet, received an average of 65,000 'hits' per month in 2013 rising to 81,000 per month in 2015. The Court Administration reports that significant administrative cost-savings have been delivered.

Strengthening civil society

Latvia: NGO Fund

By the end of 2012 implementation in all 62 sub-projects (21 macro, 41 micro) was completed; the target was 50 sub-projects. Via the sub-projects 191 NGOs participated in implementation, with 60 sub-projects based on partnership – primarily between Latvian actors, but also 20 partnerships with Swiss partners). In regard to fostering cooperation between NGOs and public/municipal bodies, 26 NGOs have started new forms of cooperation in policy development and implementation; target of at least 5. Via the sub-projects 20,699 persons from the target groups at risk of social exclusion and/or risk of poverty (i.e. children, youth and retired persons) have directly benefitted from the range of support measures provided by the NGOs. The sub-projects have also strengthened civic participation of the target groups, with more than 675 persons involved in the NGOs activities.

Poland: Partnership Fund

A total of 21 partnership projects were implemented. Available reports contain little information on the nature and results of the partnerships. This evaluation was able to establish outcomes for the projects visited, e.g. (1) the Municipal Office of Kraków in cooperation with the Krakow University of Economics and the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland HES-SO in Sierre, developed a survey tool for the city to assess the contribution of business tourism to the municipal budget. First survey findings established that the business tourism industry contributes 2.5% to the city budget and helped to develop a strategy to promote business tourism further; (2) the Association of Municipalities Polish Network "Energie Cites" in cooperation with Zurich University of Applied Sciences, promoted green roofs to Polish local authorities as a contribution to energy saving and climate protection. This included Swiss technology transfer that turned out to be more cost-effective than the widely used German technology as it does not require the installation of expensive roofing layers or a completely new roof. Based on the success, the technique has been included in 12 municipal action plans via the covenant of mayors' initiative to lower CO₂ emissions.

Positive contribution of the program/project to reducing socio-economic disparities and the successful achievement of the Swiss Contribution's specific objectives

The SC program has/will deliver the intended program/project outcomes, which do/will positively contribute to the overall achievement of the specific and wider goals of the SC.

Based on the sample of 29 projects it is evident that these contribute at some level to the promotion of socio-economic development in the specific targeted sectors/regions. But, recognizing the extent of SC funding provision – CHF 1,000 million for the 'EU-10' – it is evident that the SC interventions are primarily contributory elements within the wider framework of socio-economic development in the partner states. Even after the appreciation of the Swiss Franc – positive for the extent of SC program delivery – the SC funding equates to approximately 0.8% of the EU's Cohesion Policy funding provision. In addition, despite the impact of the global financial crisis in 2008-2010, most of the SC partner states have, broadly, resumed to experience longer-term economic growth rates exceeding the EU-average, thereby contributing to the longer-term reduction of economic disparities; with the exception of Cyprus, which has experienced lower growth compared to the EU-average since 2010, and up to 2013 also Slovenia, while in the Czech Republic and in Hungary economic growth rates have partially struggled to re-establish the longer-term trend of dynamic growth experienced in the states compared to the EU-average.²³

While it is not realistic to assume that the SC interventions can/will significantly close the development gap between the partner states and the EU-average in statistical terms, based on the sample of projects it is evident that the interventions have/are providing added value and are/will make a positive contribution to the wider achievement of the

²³ Eurostat data indicates that GDP per capita (PPS), by NUTS level 2 region in the 12 partner states, increased over the period 2008-2013 compared to the EU-average in all NUTS level 2 regions with the exception of: Cyprus, Slovenia, one region in Bulgaria (Varna) and three regions in the Czech Republic (North-West Bohemia, Central Bohemia, and Prague).

reduction of socio-economic disparities between the partner states and the more advanced EU countries and/or to the reduction of internal disparities in the partner states between dynamic urban centers and structurally weak peripheral regions.

For example, in Slovakia the SC provides sizeable support – approximately 43% of SC funding – for the modernization/extension of wastewater collection and treatment systems. While the statistical development gap in Slovakia in terms of the percentage of the population connected to wastewater treatment will predominantly be closed via actions under the EU Cohesion Policy, the SC has been clearly targeted to smaller-populated municipalities – whereas the EU Cohesion Policy targets larger urban areas – and the SC will thereby ensure that development benefits are also delivered in the peripheral regions.

In Latvia the Micro-lending program has contributed via the creation of 550 new jobs in the supported enterprises, while 70% of the beneficiaries participating in the specific survey carried out for the purpose of this evaluation reported that their turnover has increased either by 10-15% or even by more than 15% (i.e. 25% of responders) due to the finance received under the program, an effect apparently even stronger than jobs created.

Where the overall design of the program has been suitably geographically concentrated this could generate certain synergies between interventions, thereby enhancing the overall life-quality and the socio-economic opportunities in the least developed or peripheral regions. For example, in the Małopolskie region in Poland the SC supports fourteen projects, promoting: local economic development initiatives, improved social care and services, energy efficiency in hospitals, the installation of renewable energy systems, asbestos waste removal and disposal, plus a range of biodiversity initiatives. In addition to the regionally focused projects, partners in the Małopolskie region have also benefited via SC projects implemented at the national level, e.g. SMEs linked to Corporate Social Responsibility measures, institutions undertaking joint Polish-Swiss research projects, research fellows under Sciex, medical staff linked to preventing overweight and obesity.

Where the design of the program has been significantly thematically and financially concentrated the extent of longer-term impact of the SC in terms of closing the development gap may be more evident. For example, in Lithuania in regard to perinatal and neonatal health care benefits and improved energy efficiency in hospitals.

In addition, a minority of SC programs/projects support the promotion of systemic changes in the partner states via the 'pilot-testing' of new approaches for public service delivery, e.g. in Hungary the Community Policing project and the Primary Healthcare project. These have the potential to deliver significant longer-term impact if the models are indeed subsequently rolled-out on a wider-scale. In Slovakia the VET project has provided a good practice model for cooperation between stakeholders – employers, VET schools, students – to ensure the relevance and attractiveness of the VET offer, as well as the adjustment of programs that have now been included by the Slovak authorities into state VET programs.

However, while it is judged that the SC interventions will positively contribute to the overall achievement of the specific and wider goals of the SC, it will not be easy to quantify the longer-term effectiveness of the SC due to the often variable measurability of the project results objectives and indicators. These have been defined on the basis of each individual project, with only limited consideration at the stage of design and approval to the inclusion of a limited series of standard objectives/indicators per SC specific or thematic objective. In addition, the quality of the indicators, for impacts and in part also outcomes is variable.

Programs/projects or Swiss Contribution specific objectives judged of 'high risk'

There are no programs/projects or SC specific objectives for which there is 'high risk' as regards results achievement by 2017. Based on the sample of projects, there are a small number of projects where 'medium risks' exist in terms of full delivery and completion in the present implementation period as set in the specific Project Agreements, as amended. But, as some of these are presently due to be completed by mid-2016, e.g. water supply

in the Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, it is feasible to extend implementation for the limited additional period that may possibly be required. Based on the sample of projects, there are also projects at 'medium risk' in terms of the fulfilment of their objectives, e.g. Carpathians Unite and Malopolska Local Product. The NCU in Poland also indicates that the Transport Center in Legionowo project faces a tight implementation schedule.

EQ 5: Which internal and external factors enhance or hinder aid performance and results achievements? Which strategic or program related measures of correction were undertaken to address existing weaknesses and challenges?	
Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Flexibility has been demonstrated by program/project management to adapt to internal and external factors to achieve the intended objectives.	Highly Satisfactory
Management responsibilities have been distributed in a balanced way and partners and stakeholder target groups suitably interact.	Satisfactory

A series of external factors have influenced aid performance and results achievement. Most significant, for the majority of partner states, are the continued budgetary constraints that face most public sector institutions/entities, national and local. This has affected aid performance both in terms of the difficulties experienced under a minority of projects to secure co-financing grant or to manage the pre-financing of projects, as well in terms of the overall level of staffing that are resourced. In a number of partner states, aware of the need to ensure the financing for projects supported by external donors, a portion of the co-financing grant is provided via a central government budget to ensure its timeliness.

In addition, and in part due to the wider budgetary constraints, institutional instability due to re-organizations affected the efficiency of SC: while not in all partner states, in a majority this has affected the main SC program bodies, the NCU, the Paying Authority, or the IBs designated by the NCU. In a minority of cases the process of re-organization has been significant, e.g. the NCU transferred to a new ministry/public entity, and at times frequent. Feedback from some EAs indicated that some projects have seen 5-6 project officers changed in the NCU and its support-IB during the project implementation. New officers have the same questions and clarifying them and creating ownership takes time.

Frequently the re-organizations, as well as changes of senior decision-makers, have also affected the efficiency of decision-making processes within the institution, e.g. linked to the approval of project specifications, or the adoption and institutionalization of the results.

The principal internal factor influencing aid performance and results achievement has been the level of management capacity of the EAs and partners. This is variable, in terms of staffing levels and in terms of the extent to which management is truly results-oriented.

Management responsibilities between the program actors have generally been distributed in a balanced way, both between the Swiss-side and the partner states and between the authorities within the partner states. Recognizing that the SC is a 'new' support program for the partner states there has, naturally, been a 'learning-curve'. But, overall, flexibility has been demonstrated by management, at the program and at the project level, to adapt to factors and to achieve the intended objectives, e.g. via the extension of the project implementation period, within the remaining period for implementation of the SC, so as to allow for full project delivery and the maximum utilization of the available grant, or finding solutions when report templates did not suitably accommodate projects' characteristics.

Based on the field mission interviews and observations it is evident that there is, generally, good working-level cooperation between the SCOs and the NCUs. This is a vital working-level relationship, allowing for regular consultative review of SC program and

project level issues, the planning of upcoming events, including missions by the Swiss-side, and generally the timely identification of potential risks and their resolution.

Poland: Malopolska Local Product

The project component construction of a Kitchen Incubator was constrained due to the insufficiently elaborated budget and its subsequent adjustments – launching of construction was in autumn 2015 with over 2-years delay. Nevertheless, the local partner leading the component provided for two temporary premises, renovated those and installed the equipment in those premises. Thus, in fact, the Kitchen Incubator – split into two – has been in place for about a year in temporary facilities.

At the project level, management responsibilities have also generally been distributed in a balanced way and partners and stakeholder target groups suitably interact. Questionnaire survey responses from the EAs indicate that the majority gather feedback from their stakeholder groups and immediate beneficiary users directly targeted as to the quality and suitability of the outputs, e.g. via joint planning workshops, phone conferences, post-training questionnaires, e-mail. The responses also indicate that the majority of EAs have/ will jointly develop the post-project plan via some form of stakeholder consultation.

3.2.2. Swiss Contribution – Delivery of benefits for Switzerland

To appraise the Swiss benefits regarding enhanced bilateral relations with the partner states (effectiveness).

EQ 6: Which impacts on Switzerland may be identified in terms of opportunities for the Swiss economy, migration, security risks, environmental protection and other issues?

Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Impacts on Switzerland are identifiable in the areas due to the SC.	Satisfactory

The extent of opportunities arising, overall, for Switzerland due to the SC is judged to be satisfactory in regard to the range of different issues highlighted in the EQ. The following aspects are highlighted in terms of direct/indirect impacts on Switzerland due to the SC:

- Economic: Swiss companies and Swiss organizations/institutions are, naturally, eligible to participate under the SC – as further detailed under EQ 7 and EQ 8. Directly linked to the SC, by the end of 2014 it is estimated that approximately CHF 103 million of SC funding to the 12 partner states was accounted for in ‘back-flows’ to Switzerland, and that by the end of the SC program implementation period not less than CHF 140 million is expected in ‘back-flows’ to Switzerland²⁴.
- Migration: The impacts on Switzerland are primarily indirect, linked to the benefits arising due to the limited number of specific SC projects addressing protection along the outer border of the Schengen area – primarily in Poland and in Estonia. In Poland the SC has supported the modernization of infrastructure and equipment at six border crossings in order to optimize border traffic operations and combat organized crime, while mobile task forces are equipped with 70 special vehicles to improve surveillance along the 1,200-kilometer-long external Schengen border. Cooperation with Swiss authorities regarding migration has also been promoted.

²⁴ Data provided to the evaluators by SECO. The ‘back-flows’ by the end of 2014 are accounted for as: 41% stipends (for Swiss institutional staffs), 24% research, 12.5% Swiss IBs (including CRUS), 10.5% contracts/orders awarded to Swiss companies, and 5% consultancy awarded to Swiss companies.

- **Security risks:** The impacts on Switzerland are primarily indirect, linked to the benefits arising due to the range of specific SC projects addressing modernization and reinforcement of the national judicial and law enforcement authorities in the partner states. SC support helps to fight corruption, organized crime, terrorism and human trafficking – notably in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovakia. SC support helps to promote modernization of the judiciary and access to justice – most notably in Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, and Slovakia. In addition to advanced training measures, the technical equipment used by judicial and law enforcement authorities to undertake their tasks has also been updated, and IT systems funded for the purpose of investigation and analysis. Most of the projects promote cooperation between the national judicial and law enforcement authorities, as well as their further integration into the European cooperation processes and European networks. Cooperation with the Swiss authorities has also been promoted.
- **Environmental protection:** As environmental pollution and climate change risks do not stop at international borders, Switzerland directly benefits due to the efforts to protect the environment and to promote biodiversity and the benefits arising due to the range of specific SC projects addressing environmental issues – undertaken in all of the partner states with the exception of Malta. For example, SC projects supporting energy efficient construction and the use of renewable energies in the ‘EU-10’ should reduce annual CO₂ emissions by around 70,000 tonnes. Cooperation with the Swiss authorities and civil society has also been promoted.
- **Other issues:** Other impacts relate to the opportunities that have directly arisen due to the SC to valorize Swiss experience and specialist knowledge and to deepen bilateral relations via advisory and institutional partnerships between a diverse range of Swiss and partner state actors: governmental offices (national, regional and local), service-providers (e.g. hospitals, VET schools, research institutions), civil society groups, economic and social partners. The SC projects have also enhanced goodwill to Switzerland at the operational level due to the positive perception of the partner states of the implemented projects and the clear appreciation of the majority of SC beneficiaries that the projects are Swiss-funded.

EQ 7: Which tangible direct effects have emerged for Swiss companies and their respective competitive goods in countries of the enlarged EU? To what extent do economic activities result in new business opportunities for Swiss companies?

Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Tangible direct effects have emerged for Swiss companies in the ‘new’ EU member states.	Satisfactory
Swiss companies have enhanced business/trading operations and cooperation with the ‘new’ EU member states.	Satisfactory

As noted above, Swiss companies are eligible to participate under the SC. Calls for bids for supplies, as well as for construction and other services required for SC projects, are publicly advertised by those responsible for a project in the 12 partner states. Contracts are awarded in compliance with the international laws on procurement and the applicable laws of the partner state. Information on the announcement and progress of open public tenders is freely available to Swiss companies on the relevant EU and partner state public procurement Webpages. Switzerland also publishes the tenders on the Swiss procurement information system²⁵. Linked to the SC tangible direct effects have emerged for Swiss companies via their participation in the implementation and delivery of the SC. By the end of 2014 it is estimated that approximately CHF 16 million of funding was

²⁵ www.simap.ch

accounted for via 'back-flows' to Swiss companies in the framework of SC projects: approximately two-thirds as contracts/orders, one-third consultancy. In addition, consultants have also been appointed by SDC and by SECO to undertake detailed project appraisal and to monitor project actions – under the Swiss-side's 5% SC management costs – for which it is estimated that approximately CHF 8-9 million has been awarded. In addition, as noted above Swiss organizations/institutions also account for SC 'back-flows'.

Furthermore, while not a direct effect of the SC, Swiss companies have also benefited by the expanded development of business and trade opportunities with the partner states of the enlarged EU²⁶. The 2012 "Monitoring and Evaluation concept for the SC" defines this as one of the overall aspects to be considered in regard the wider expectations of effects arising for Switzerland due to the enhanced bilateral relations with the partner states. In accordance with World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements and the additional Swiss-EU agreement on public procurement, Swiss companies have mostly equal access to participate in public tenders in the partner states, including EU-funded projects. Since 2010 the Swiss Embassies have provided data to SECO based on their review of the potential level of engagement of Swiss companies via the award of orders/contracts linked to EU-funded projects. By the end of September 2015 the data available to SECO indicated that at least 582 contracts to a value of CHF 2,000 million had been awarded to Swiss companies via EU-funded projects in the partner states since 2010. These figures only represent the data available to the Swiss Embassies from public information plus from companies that choose to respond to the Embassies' survey of Swiss companies in this regard. It is very likely the level of contracts/orders is far higher. In regard to foreign trade²⁷ between Switzerland and the 12 partner states, while still low overall compared to Swiss trade with many of the 'older' EU member states²⁸, the value of total foreign trade with the 12 states, including both total exports and total imports by Switzerland, continued to progressively grow over the period from the early-1990s up to 2008. There was a noticeable increase in the level of trade, compared to the longer-term trend, over the period 2006-2008. The value of Swiss trade with the 12 states decreased in 2009, but has increased again since 2010. The total value of Swiss trade with the 12 states increased from CHF 8,484 million in 2004 to CHF 15,177 million in 2014. At the level of the individual 12 partner states, since 2004 the value of Swiss trade with the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia has significantly increased, while the value of trade with Bulgaria has markedly increased since 2011, and Slovenia since 2012. In regard to Swiss direct investment²⁹, this has considerably increased since 2004 in regard the value of investments in Hungary, Poland, Romania, and to a lesser degree the increase in Slovakia. The value of direct investment in Hungary has significantly increased since 2009, with Hungary now accounting for 3.6% of Swiss direct investment in the EU. Overall, the 12 partner states now account for 7.1% of Swiss direct investment in the EU.

EQ 8: How many new partnerships have been created between Swiss stakeholders and actors from the 'new' member states? How many follow-up activities have resulted from these new partnerships? Do these partnerships continue to function?

Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
New partnerships in the partner states have been created for Swiss stakeholders arising from the SC.	Highly Satisfactory
Follow-up activities have resulted due to the SC-support and/or the partnerships continue.	Satisfactory

²⁶ EU enlargement from 15 to 27 member states extended the EU's population by 103.4 million.

²⁷ Swiss Customs Administration: foreign trade statistics covering the period 1994-2014.

²⁸ Overall, in 2014, the 12 partner states accounted for 6.5% of Swiss exports to the EU, and for 5.8% of Swiss imports from the EU; overall, for approximately 3% of total, global Swiss foreign trade.

²⁹ Swiss National Bank: Swiss direct investment abroad (capital stocks by country).

Implementation of the SC has provided four main pathways for the promotion of Swiss expertise and of partnerships between Swiss and partner state stakeholders and actors:

- Advisory support provided by Swiss experts during the design and implementation.
- Institutional cooperation between public sector authorities/entities linked to the technical design and/or the technical delivery of projects, via agreements on specific inputs and/or via longer-term project level partnership agreements.
- Support to the promotion of civil society via Block Grants including partnerships between Swiss and partner state NGOs and public sector authorities/entities.
- Research and development: joint research projects and cooperation, as well as via institutional and personal links due to individual Scholarship Fund research grants.

The potential involvement of Swiss organizations/institutions in the implementation of SC projects is actively considered by SDC and by SECO during the process of project development, where Swiss expertise could offer added value and relevance to the achievement of the intended project goals and/or the deepening of bilateral relations via institutional partnerships. In addition project promoters in the partner states have sought to identify potential Swiss partner institutions where this may be relevant to needs and/or the renewal of partnerships; as well as where this may provide a minor additional point in the rating of the project outline's technical relevance, e.g. under civil society Block Grants.

There is no data available as to the number of 'new' partnerships that have been created linked to the SC. However, data has been estimated as to the number of partnerships between Swiss and partner state actors that have been supported by the SC grant:

- SDC and SECO estimate approximately one-third of projects have Swiss specialist institutions as consulting partners, and around 300 new institutional partnerships to be created or existing partnerships to be renewed and promoted in the 'EU-10'³⁰.
- Questionnaire survey responses – received from 10 of the 12 NCUs – indicate that the NCUs collectively estimate up to 550 formal partnerships are/were supported.

Questionnaire survey responses from the Swiss Embassies indicate that they understand that at least 25-50% of programs/projects directly make use of Swiss sectoral expertise via some form of project partnership. Survey responses from the EAs indicate just under 25% confirming a formal project partnership with a Swiss organization. The EAs note that the most relevant ways of support provided by the Swiss partner(s) was, in particular, technical cooperation and advice via short-term experts, followed by the study tours and the on-request advice provided via telephone or Skype. The study tours provided useful platforms for know-how exchange and the fostering of personal and institutional contacts, which also seems to have been beneficial for Swiss partners. The majority of EA survey respondents indicate that they had already established contact prior to the development and implementation of the project, either through previous joint projects, engagement in joint networks or some form of personal contact. Hence, the SC project served particularly as a trigger to deepen relationships and take them further. Survey responses also indicate that the partner state organizations want to maintain the partnership, the majority via expanding the partnership to include other policy and delivery issues, and to a lesser degree by rolling-out the current project. Respondents indicate that first steps towards driving the partnership forward have already been taken, mainly by starting to jointly developing future project ideas but also by looking for possible funding opportunities.

The survey and field interviews suggest that the parameters for successful partnerships for standard programs/projects seem to work best when (a) the project is concerned with a sector/theme for which Switzerland has proven sectoral experience, e.g. VET (hence partnership of the VET project in Slovakia is widely seen as beneficial and potentially sustainable); (b) it concerns institutions which are key stakeholders in their respective field and in this context; (c) a partnership might work particularly well at policy/strategic level

³⁰ "The Swiss Enlargement Contribution Interim report for the end of the EU 10 commitment period".

and (d) between similar institutions (e.g. under the Slovak Block Grant, a project between the Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic and the Swiss Federal Audit Office).

Questionnaire survey responses from the NGOs indicate 52% confirming formal project partnership with a Swiss organization. The responses indicate that the most relevant ways of support provided by the Swiss partner(s) was capacity building support via dialogue and the sharing of experience / peer learning, plus the identification of good practices. The extent to which such partnerships continue will be variable, with the lack of funding viewed as the key constraint explaining the uncertainty with regard the continuity of partnerships.

EQ 9: To what extent are the information and communication efforts of the Swiss Contribution efficient? How well do public relation activities of the Swiss Contribution and their projects and programs contribute to the visibility of Switzerland in the 'new' EU member states?	
Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
The visibility and publicity rules are clear and the information and communication strategy and activities in place is adequate.	Satisfactory
The communication activities of the SC promote awareness in the partner states of Switzerland's contribution to reduce socio-economic disparities and thereby to the visibility of Switzerland.	Satisfactory

The efficiency of the information and communication efforts of the SC has, overall, been satisfactory. Information, communication and publicity measures are implemented by the partner states at program level, by the NCU and/or IB, and at the level of each project, by the EAs. In addition, information and communication on the overall SC is undertaken by the Swiss-side, e.g. publication of the SC Annual Report, the central Webpage on the SC.

The communication and publicity measures undertaken primarily consist of standard tools for such measures, utilized as appropriate to the needs of the specific program/project:

- Billboards and commemorative plaques linked to infrastructure development actions and commemorative plaques linked to the supply of technical equipment,
- Information material such as posters, publications (e.g. booklets, leaflets, newsletters), audio-visual material, press releases, or provided via electronic means (e.g. websites, tools and databases for potential beneficiaries),
- Information events such as conferences, seminars, fairs and exhibitions,
- Formal events marking key milestones (e.g. project inauguration and other significant phases of project implementation) with the participation of the Swiss Ambassador (or Embassy staffs) and high-ranking officials from the partner state.

The measures provide visibility for the SC via an indication the program/project is funded via the SC and include the SC program logo as adopted by the individual partner state.

Information and communication activities and the promotion of visibility of the SC support generally operates adequately at the project level. Each EA has a budget for such measures and prepares an information and publicity plan – as annex to the Project Implementation Agreement, signed with the NCU or designated IB – to outline the aims, the target groups and the methods to be utilized for implementing such actions. Each EA also reports regularly, via the formal monitoring reports, on the individual actions undertaken and those planned for the up-coming project reporting period.

At the program level, in addition to maintaining Webpages on the SC since 2008/2009, the NCUs have also prepared information material such as press releases linked to key events, e.g. calls for proposals, project inauguration and closure events, plus issued general booklets/brochures, e.g. in the initial phase of program implementation to

summarize the program objectives and main mechanisms, or after the end of the commitment period to summarize the full range of individual projects supported.

Since 2010/2011, with the initial projects in the early phase of implementation, the NCUs have also prepared annual information plans linked to the SC, which are useful tools for the scheduling of formal project events with the Swiss-side, e.g. in order to plan for the attendance by the Swiss Ambassador and high-level representatives.

Based on the information and evidences available to the evaluators, it is evident that the information and communication efforts have contributed to the visibility of Switzerland in the partner states. However, very few detailed opinion surveys have been undertaken in the partner states to assess the extent of visibility of or how Switzerland is perceived³¹. Questionnaire survey responses from the SCOs, NCUs, EAs and the Swiss Embassies all confirm that the SC stakeholders' awareness of Switzerland has been enhanced, although 17% of SCOs and of EAs suggest that this has "only partially" been enhanced.

Based on the sample of 29 projects, it is also evident that the level of awareness of different stakeholder groups as to the SC projects and/or that the grant is provided by Switzerland is generally satisfactory, although the level of awareness is variable. For example, in Latvia the Youth Initiatives and the School Transportation programs/projects have both achieved very high visibility for Switzerland, with the youth centers supported by the SC called locally, by stakeholders as "Swiss centers", while under the Micro-lending program not all grant recipients interviewed by the evaluators were even aware as to the original source of the financing grant provided to them, i.e. Switzerland.

However, while individual SC projects usually achieve reasonable visibility at the level of the immediate stakeholders, there are few clear strategies for communication on the SC beyond the immediate project level. In a number of cases thematic conferences have been held so as to bring together a number of projects or sub-projects supported under the SC. But beyond such one-off conferences that generate a certain level of publicity and media attention – notably when attended by high-ranking dignitaries – there are few examples of more substantial communication efforts undertaken on the SC program.

Based on feedback it is evident that SCOs perceive the adequacy of the communication and visibility efforts linked to the SC less positively than the NCUs; with exception of the SCO's perception of the generally effective program level visibility achieved in Lithuania.

Thus, while the efficiency of the information and communication efforts of the SC has, overall, been satisfactory, the effectiveness of the efforts could be improved. The overall SC visibility and communication systems have essentially been developed in a piecemeal fashion, learning by doing. They are primarily technical requirements, performed at the level of each individual program/project, rather than guided by a wider strategic concept.

In addition, with regard to the information and communication efforts undertaken directed to Swiss stakeholders, interviews with stakeholders – e.g. Economie Suisse, Verband der Schweizer Maschinen-, Elektro- und Metallindustrie, Solidar Suisse – indicate that while they are aware of the SC and its general purpose in terms of solidarity and the advancement of Swiss interests, each also accepted that their level of detailed exposure to the SC or awareness as to the interventions supported or the results was limited. Swiss project partners under the SC – e.g. BirdLife Schweiz, Caritas – also indicated that their knowledge of and exposure to the SC was primarily only related to their field of action.

³¹ Présence Suisse included Poland in the "Nation Brands Index 2013" survey, issued on 19/02/2014. However, no earlier comparable data, i.e. as a baseline, is available on the website.

EQ 10: To what extent does the Swiss Contribution enhance goodwill towards Switzerland and thus contribute to improved quality of bilateral relations with the EU?

Judgement Criteria

The services/products (benefits) delivered via the SC appropriately correspond to the needs and expectations of the partner states (thereby enhancing goodwill).

Performance Rating

Satisfactory

Too few opinion surveys have been consistently conducted, over a sufficiently frequent period of time, to statistically confirm that goodwill in the partner states towards Switzerland has been altered due to the SC. However, based on the interview and questionnaire survey feedback received, the SC is positively received by program actors and, generally, very positively received by the targeted project beneficiaries and final users of the support – notably so projects at the regional/local level of the public sector and service providers, plus for its support to NGOs and research fellowships. At the institutional level, the project partnerships created, or renewed, between Swiss public sector institutions and those in the partner states are also generally very well regarded. Additionally, based on feedback from the Swiss Ambassadors, due to the SC program the level of engagement between the Swiss Embassies and the partner states, notably at the senior level of policy decision-makers in the states, has now greatly been enhanced.

3.3. Efficiency

To assess the efficiency of the organizational set-up and institutional collaboration within and among the partner states. The assessment shall address the differences between the “Swiss” and the “Norwegian” approach in regard to their contributions to the enlarged EU. Other objectives comprise the assessment of the procedure performance for selecting project and program interventions (which differ from classical aid support) as well as the analysis of the information and communication efforts of the Swiss Contribution.

3.3.1. Swiss Contribution – Mixed efficiency of portfolio management

EQ 11: How efficient is the portfolio management (e.g. organizational set-up, financial and human resources, transversal themes if relevant) and what are its contributions to an optimal achievement of results (at outcome and output level)?

Judgement Criteria

Management systems and operations have efficiently deployed and transformed program/project resources into achieved results as planned, in a timely and result-oriented manner.

Performance Rating

Satisfactory

SC: program institutional, administrative and procedural set-up

While overall responsibility for the SC rests with Switzerland, the support occurs in very close cooperation with the partner states and substantially makes use of the partner country systems to lead and take responsibility for program design, initial project review and pre-selection, and responsibility for program/project implementation, monitoring and control. While this presents potential implementation risks, in terms of the management and absorption capacities of the partner states to implement the SC, the extent of use of country systems is appropriate; reflective of the unique nature of the SC to the Enlarged EU, i.e. support to relatively advanced countries that, despite their economic and social

disparities compared to the European average, should have the capacity to take maximum management responsibility and accountability for the SC program delivery.

Pursuant to the Federal Council Dispatches on the SC, the government of each partner state undertook consultations as to the prioritization of the focus areas to be proposed for inclusion in Annex 1 to the bilateral Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreements with the 'EU-10' were signed 6-months after approval of the framework credit for the SC by the Swiss Parliament. The Framework Agreements with Bulgaria and Romania were signed 9-months after approval of the framework credit by the Swiss Parliament.

The Framework Agreements establish a framework of rules and procedures for the planning, the implementation and the coordination of the SC in the partner states. These were further detailed by SDC and SECO in their guidance notes (23/04/2008) on "Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by the partner country" and "Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by Switzerland".

During the program set-up phase, each partner state ensured the establishment and necessary compliance audit of its management and implementation system for the SC: (1) the appointment of institutional structures, e.g. the NCU, IBs, Paying Authority, Monitoring Committee, (2) the creation of the legal basis for the cooperation program, (3) the development of a framework of implementation rules, regulations, internal procedural manuals, etc., and standard templates and guidelines for project promoters linked to project preparation. For partner states utilizing the PPF and/or the Technical Assistance Fund (TAF) to support the efficient and effective implementation of the SC, it was also assumed the project scope was defined and the Project Agreements signed during the program set-up phase. Overall, the efficiency of the program set-up was satisfactory, although not uniform across the states. The main delays in the 'EU-10' related to establishment of the PPF and TAF – Cyprus does not use either, Malta only the TAF. By the end of 2008, the PPF was only approved for four of the eight partner states. The final agreement on the PPF (with the Czech Republic) was concluded in January 2010. The purpose of the PPF is to support the preparation of Final Project Proposals, e.g. via feasibility studies, environmental impact assessments, and therefore its establishment ensured in a more timely fashion.

SC: program/project selection and approval of grant commitment by Switzerland

Subsequent to program set-up the NCU, or designated IB, was responsible for the launch of the requests for Project Outlines linked to the range of focus area interventions: via an open call or via direct appointment of a public authority/entity. The efficiency with which this was undertaken was significantly variable across the partner states. Of the 'EU-10' partner states, seven – Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland and Slovenia – formally submitted a first set of Project Outlines to Switzerland for its opinion in 2008. With the exception of Cyprus and Malta these only covered a selection of the SC focus area supported: the vast majority of Project Outlines from Poland were submitted in 2009-2010, and a further sizeable number submitted by Hungary in 2010. Lithuania submitted the majority of its Project Outlines in 2009. Slovakia submitted all Project Outlines in 2010, the vast majority in the final quarter. The Czech Republic submitted the vast majority in 2011.

While the SC grant was fully committed³² prior to the end of the 5-year period following the approval of the framework credit, the efficiency of the management and project selection systems in terms of the initial commitment of the SC grant to projects – i.e. as the basic for subsequent transformation of resources into achieved results via the implementation of the approved projects – is judged to be extremely mixed. An overview of the commitment

³² Commitment of the SC is provided via the formal Decision Letter of SDC or SECO approving the grant linked to a Final Project Proposal; the Project Agreement can be signed after the 5-year deadline.

of program funds by Switzerland is provided in Annex 4. Overall, the most intense period for commitment of the grant by Switzerland was the final months prior to the deadline³³.

Beyond the commitment of the SC program grant to approved projects by the end of the 5-year commitment period, a specific challenge for the SC management, Swiss and partner states, in terms of the efficient deployment and transformation of program/project resources has arisen due to the significant appreciation of the Swiss Franc – notably in 2010-2011 and in 2015. The Swiss grant, converted to local currencies, has appreciated by approximately 50% since 2009. The extended value of the Swiss grant, in local currencies, is available to the individual, specific projects to utilize, along with any project savings that may have arisen linked to procurements, for the extension of on-going project activities and deliverables within the SC program time period of up to 10-years for completion, where this can be suitably justified and timely delivery also assured³⁴.

However, notably so in light of the appreciation of the Swiss Franc, it is evident that the SC grant will not be fully disbursed: not all projects will be able to absorb and/or utilize the full extent of funding within the available time, and there is no mechanism, following the SC 5-year commitment deadline, to subsequently reallocate savings between projects.

In terms of obstacles to the efficient commitment of the SC grant – Final Project Proposal approval or subsequent extension of authorization – the following factors are highlighted:

- Delays in the detailed preparation and launch of requests for Project Outlines, due to the need to further develop the technical focus of interventions based on the briefly defined description in Annex 1 of the bilateral Framework Agreement.
- The time required by the partner states to undertake an open call for projects, to assess the received proposals and to submit Project Outlines to Switzerland was variable, e.g. in Hungary calls were usually open for 2-months, with the submission of the pre-selected Project Outlines to Switzerland on average 3-months later, whereas the environmental infrastructure call in Slovakia was open for 4-months and submission of pre-selected Project Outlines to Switzerland 8-months later.
- The constraints experienced at times in the Visegrad partner states in terms of the limited number of eligible project proposals received via open call or, at times, the identification of projects by authorities directly appointed for the purpose. The introduction of an 'over-booking' system for project pre-selection was essential in terms of Switzerland's commitment of the grant within the 5-year period.
- The identification of suitable activities for support due to program savings (e.g. due to procurement, exchange rate gains) to be reinvested in the program.
- The inclusion of a 10-20% 'reserve' in the original program design, for later decision-making as to its allocation, after 2-years of implementation, was highlighted by the NCUs as a weakness in terms of program efficiency. While allowing for some built-in flexibility, the NCUs highlight that as decision-making on the side of the partner states for the allocation of the 'reserve' budget line was usually taken at the level of the government, it was clearly a time consuming process to undertake for what was a comparatively small level of funding. In addition, it is evident that suitable flexibility exists already in the management of the program to allow for the inclusion of new focus areas even without a 'reserve'.
- The time required for formal decision-making on the Swiss side prior to funding commitment is highlighted by seven (of ten) NCUs responding to the questionnaire survey. Primarily this relates to the perceptions of the partner states, in part also shared on the Swiss side, as to the efficiency of the 'two-loop' approval approach.

³³ At the end of 2011, i.e. less than 6-months prior to the commitment deadline for the 'EU-10', more than 25% of the SC was still to be committed; for the Czech Republic and for Slovakia more than 60%.

³⁴ SDC or SECO assess and approve the extension of project activities / utilization of the Swiss grant. Both agencies have also provided clear guidance to the partner states that all projects should be completed minimally 6-months prior to the 10-year deadline to allow for subsequent final audits and reimbursement.

SC: the 'two-loop' approval approach

The 'two-loop' approval approach – (1) submission of a Project Outline, for preliminary appraisal, (2) submission by invited project promoters of a Final Project Proposal, for appraisal and final decision-making – is one of the standard approaches utilized by program managers for the commitment of grant. The key advantage of the approach, in theory, is that it reduces the administrative burden for the wider group of project promoters due to the requirement under the 'first-loop' for a brief concept note rather than a fully detailed proposal; based on the preliminary appraisal and short-listing of project concepts (including a suitable over-booking), a smaller number of project promoters thereby need to undertake full project preparation and the level of detailed technical analysis this requires.

The approach allows the targeting of PPF support, as part of the 'first-loop' decision, to those promoters invited to proceed that require detailed technical preparatory analysis. The approach also supports the early exchange of ideas between the partner state, the project promoters and Switzerland – SDC or SECO and an independent Swiss expert(s) – in terms of the identification of specific strategic or technical issues to be considered by the project promoter during the development of the Final Project Proposal. Interviews and questionnaire survey responses highlight that this early exchange of technical ideas has supported improve the overall quality of project design, as well as for project promoters to better understand how the Swiss-side views the most important project aims. As such, the 'two-loop' approval approach has positively supported the overall good quality of design.

However, interviews and questionnaire survey responses indicate a clear division of opinion as to the efficiency of the process. The surveys to the Swiss Embassy, SCO, NCU, and EAs/IBs each included the question "Is the 'two-loop' approach an efficient way to identify and select projects?"; 65 responses were received from the four target groups, with 39% responding 'yes', 36% responding 'no'³⁵. The 'first-loop' assessment and decision-making on the Swiss-side required, on average, approximately 3-4 months; in a minority of cases just 1-2 months, or more than 6-months. Subsequently, the promoters of accepted Project Outlines prepared the Final Project Proposal; for projects that did not require PPF support, it took, on average, approximately 4-6 months before submission of the Final Project Proposal to Switzerland. The 'second-loop' assessment and decision-making on the Swiss-side required, on average, approximately 3 months; although the time required was far more variable: in a significant number of cases just 1-2 months, or even less, but also a clear number of cases taking well beyond 6-months.

Interviews and questionnaire survey responses indicate that the approach is considered by some partner states as too time-consuming and/or administratively burdensome. The project appraisal and approval period – from the formal submission of the Project Outline by the NCU to Switzerland, through to approval of the Final Project Proposal – lasts for approximately 12 months, for projects not requiring PPF support. This is not markedly different to experience under previous EU external assistance programs for the partner states – for which far fewer project pre-preparation actions were completed. As noted above, the time required by the partner states to process calls for projects and their initial assessment is also a key factor to consider within the overall timeframe for project preparation; for which the performance of the partner states is variable.

Feedback from the partner states indicates that they would welcome some level of simplification, e.g. for the development of projects by public entities nominated via direct appointment. Feedback from NCUs and some SCOs also highlights that the requirements for preparation of the Project Outlines are considered by most partners as too detailed, representing a large number of the elements for the Final Project Proposal, rather than a

³⁵ The 9 Embassies responded: 4 'yes', 2 'no' and 3 'no answer'. The 6 SCOs responses indicate a 50:50 split between 'yes' and 'no'. The 10 NCUs responded: 3 'yes', 6 'no' and 1 'no answer'. The 40 EAs/IBs responded: 15 'yes', 12 'no' and 13 'no answer'.

brief concept note; as such it is considered to fail in terms of substantially limiting the wider administrative burden for the overall group of project promoters at the ‘first-loop’.

3.3.2. Swiss Contribution – Federal Council Dispatch priorities

EQ 12: To what extent does the Swiss Contribution implement defined strategic principles and strategic approaches, instruments, thematic priority areas and geographic focus in reference of the related Federal Council Dispatch?	
Judgement Criteria The SC suitably reflects the defined strategic principles and strategic approaches, instruments, thematic priority areas and geographic focus.	Performance Rating Highly Satisfactory

Implementation of the SC has been satisfactory in terms of the application of the defined strategic principles and strategic approaches, instruments, thematic priority areas and geographic focus in reference of the related Federal Council Dispatch.

At the level of the strategic design of the SC program per partner state – Annex 1 to the bilateral Framework Agreements – the program provides very clear, appropriate reference to the related Federal Council Dispatch. Thematic concentration of the program has ensured that support has been targeted to a relatively limited number of focus areas per partner state, while still addressing the five ‘specific objectives’ of the SC program; due to the extent of funding available for the smaller populated partner states, the program in Cyprus, Malta, and Slovenia cannot efficiently/effectively address all ‘specific objectives’. Design of the SC program per partner state also reflected consideration of the strategic principles of the SC in terms of the involvement of various administrative levels (national, regional, local), civil society groups, entrepreneurs, researchers, the targeting of groups at risk of social inclusion, and the incorporation of environmental sustainability objectives.

Implementation of the SC program via the portfolio of projects has suitably reflected the strategic approaches in terms of the concentration of the SC on thematic areas or geographical locations or target groups that are not at all or are insufficiently addressed by the EU’s programs. Implementation of the program has delivered the geographical focus planned for the SC on peripheral and less-developed regions, e.g. in Poland 43% of funding supports the Lubelskie, Małopolskie, Podkarpackie and Świętokrzyskie Voivodeships, in Slovakia 43% supports East Slovakia (Prešov and Košice regions).

Implementation of the program has also been delivered with consideration provided as to the potential for embedding Swiss experience and added value. At minimum this is provided by the specific involvement of independent Swiss experts to advise SDC and SECO on the development and the implementation of projects. In addition, the appraisal of Project Outlines allows for SDC and SECO to consider the potential Swiss added value offer and to suggest relevant expertise to project promoters – e.g. institutional partners – and to highlight this during the development of project ideas and/or in final decision letters. Where appropriate open calls for proposals for ‘soft actions’ have frequently also ensured some consideration is provided by project promoters as to the engagement of Swiss partners/expertise in projects – via the award of an extra point for the technical proposal.

Design and delivery of the program has also utilized the full range of implementation instruments available under the SC as identified in the Federal Council Dispatches:

- Financial contributions for projects and programs – all of the 12 partner states;
- Guarantees, risk capital and lines of credit in favor of micro-enterprises and SMEs – 5 of the partner states;

- NGO and partnership Block Grant: Contributions to the implementation of small NGO projects, plus twinning of towns and communes – 10 of the partner states³⁶;
- Research and Scholarships – 11 of the 12 partner states;
- Start-up funding for project development (PPF) – 10 partner states;
- Technical assistance for local development and implementation of projects (TAF) – 11 partner states.

3.3.3. Swiss Contribution – Mixed efficiency in the delivery of projects

EQ 13: To what extent is the Swiss Contribution implemented according to plan and time?	
Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Programs/projects are implemented according to plan and time.	Unsatisfactory
Management responded to internal/external factors in a timely and result-oriented manner.	Satisfactory

The efficiency of program/project implementation by the partner states, according to plan and time, is considerably mixed. The majority of projects have required the extension of the period for implementation and delivery of the results. Based on detailed feedback provided by the NCU in the four partner states for the evaluation's field mission visits, approximately 65% of the portfolio of programs/projects have been extended in Hungary and in Poland, 75% in Slovakia, with Latvia reporting a project extension rate at 33%.

It is recognized by the evaluators that not all of the project extensions have been due purely to delayed implementation and delivery – although the majority are – and that in a minority of cases projects have been implemented according to plan and time but have requested an extension of the project period so as to utilize project savings and the full extent of available Swiss grant that has arisen due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc.

However, it is evident that efficiency in the delivery of projects is considerably mixed: taking the collective portfolio across the four partner states, approximately 35% of projects have been implemented according to time, 65% have been extended for implementation.

An overview of the disbursement of program funds by Switzerland is provided in Annex 5. On 16/11/2015 – i.e. after the completion of the eighth of maximum ten-years for SC implementation in the 'EU-10' – 57% of the SC program funding had been reimbursed to the partner states by Switzerland³⁷. The partner states are responsible to pre-finance projects and subsequently to request periodic reimbursement, at the level of the SC program, from Switzerland. Therefore the real level of disbursement of funds by the partner states is higher than 57% indicated; subject to confirmation of the validity of the expenditures by the partner states, and by Switzerland of future reimbursement requests.

Based on the specific sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, efficiency of three is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 13 judged to be satisfactory, and 13 judged to be unsatisfactory.

In terms of obstacles to the efficient implementation of the programs/projects and delivery results of the intended results, the following factors are highlighted:

- Overwhelmingly, the principal reason for delays is the difficulties experienced linked to the procurement processes undertaken at the level of individual projects by the

³⁶ In addition, the SC program in Cyprus supports NGOs via a specific project, rather than a Block Grant.

³⁷ Data provided to the evaluators by SDC, valid 16/11/2015.

EAs³⁸. This has been a common factor across the majority of the partner states. While the Final Project Proposals provide a draft outline of tender specifications, these need to be reassessed and validity confirmed by the EAs by the time the project starts, i.e. after ‘second-loop’ approval by Switzerland and then the conclusion of the Project Agreement. This frequently took longer than planned, leading to partial delays from the outset in terms of the launching of procurement.

- Delays in the finalization of tender dossiers have also been experienced due to changes that have occurred in terms of the public procurement legal framework, with the need to adapt dossiers not successfully launched prior to the changes. This was highlighted during field mission interviews conducted with NCUs.
- Additionally, the ‘non-objection’ process by which the Swiss-side may request to receive tender documentation prior to launch – for tenders above the threshold of CHF 0.5 million, with an English translation above the threshold of CHF 1.0 million – is perceived by most NCUs and at least 1 SCO as adding unnecessary burden.
- In addition to delays in the finalization of tender dossiers, difficulties have also frequently been experienced linked to the procurement process in terms of non-successful procurement, e.g. no bids or no technically compliant proposals, and/or due to objections/complaints submitted linked to the procurement process, which therefore need to be investigated by the responsible authorities prior to judgement.
- Regarding other factors affecting efficiency, the level of resources (staffing and/or financial) and the certainty of co-financing availability so as to efficiently manage project delivery has been variable. Following the global financial crisis all of the partner states experienced budgetary constraints, requiring major budget cuts. As a result, expenditure for staffs was reduced and certain investments put on hold.
- In the case of infrastructure development components, certain difficulties have also been experienced in terms of securing the necessary building permits to proceed; based on the evaluation’s sample of projects, this varies between partner states.

Despite the common experience of delays, for which many are due to factors beyond the immediate control of the EAs, program and project management has generally responded to these internal/external factors in a timely and result-oriented manner, primarily via the adjustment of tender dossiers and the relaunch of procurement. Once procurement is complete and implementation commenced, the efficiency of projects has broadly been satisfactory in terms of the final delivery of the intended results; although the sample of projects indicate that the extent to which EAs’ management structures and systems are results oriented, efficient and effective is considerably variable. In the case of infrastructure development components, the sample of projects indicate that the adoption by partners of corrective technical measures to maximize the overall efficiency of project delivery is well performed, and for environmental infrastructure projects that EAs are active in seeking final land permission and building permits linked to the further extension of works, due to savings and appreciation of the Swiss Franc, to include new construction.

3.3.4. Swiss Contribution – Implementation instruments’ effectiveness

EQ 14: Which implementation instruments (and their respective implementing agencies) prove to be particularly effective?	
Judgement Criteria The implementation instruments successfully deliver the intended program/project results under budget and/or ahead of time and/or significantly beyond target within the available budget and time.	Performance Rating Satisfactory

³⁸ The questionnaire survey responses show that 7 NCUs regard tendering/procurement processes as the main obstacle to the efficient delivery of the intended program/project results.

Regarding the effectiveness of the range of different implementation instruments utilized by the SC, each instrument has proven to be effective, within the general expectations for the specific instruments, for the delivery of the intended results.

With regard to NGO and partnership Block Grants the overall performance has been highly satisfactory. Over 600 environmental, social and health care sub-projects have been implemented in eight of the 'EU-10' partner states and many have proved to produce some remarkable results; as evidenced via the field mission interviews with sub-projects. The Block Grants provide an opportunity to seek partnership with Swiss institutions, either as a direct requirement or via its consideration within the technical evaluation of proposals. Overall, sub-project staff interviewed view these partnerships as an invaluable component of their projects ensuring the transfer of know-how and experience. However, identifying Swiss partners has proved to be a challenge. In Hungary creating new partnerships between towns proved to be difficult (i.e. 7 projects implemented versus 15 planned) despite targeted information and promotion activities carried out and dedicated calls organized. Supportive tools such as the SCO database were only effective in a limited way as certain contacts were out of date or requests to listed institutions were not answered. In the Czech Republic the option for an on-going 'open' call approach was more successful, allowing time for the identification of Swiss partners. A further challenge constituted the fact that the level of financing was low from the Swiss perspective, the promotion of common projects benefits was insufficient in Switzerland, and rules seemed complex. Also financial planning was challenged by the appreciation of the Swiss Franc.

The PPF instrument and the financial volumes allocated were appropriate to ensure program efficiency. Frequently the initial project allocation was reduced, prior to the 5-year commitment deadline for the SC program, so as to reallocate project savings. The PPF modalities were appropriate to ensure program efficiency and effectiveness. The feasibility studies and related analysis provided added value to the logic of the proposed interventions, as this supported the identification of problems/needs and technical solutions more precisely and also contributed to the quantification of indicators. The clear majority of SCO and NCU regard the range of eligible activities under PPF appropriate.

The only instrument highlighted by the clear majority of NCUs as only partially appropriate to their needs so as to ensure program efficiency and effectiveness is the TAF³⁹. But this almost entirely relates to the NCUs perception as to the range of activities that should be considered in terms of eligibility under the TAF, rather than to the effectiveness of the instrument per se: a majority of NCUs indicate that salary costs of permanent staff of the main program institutions should be either fully or in part covered via the TAF, to reflect that the staffing positions either in part or fully relate to costs for the national authorities to manage and administer the SC program. In addition, NCUs also highlighted that while staff costs are partially eligible for IBs for staff working exclusively on the SC, it does not cover, even in part, the costs for IBs professional experts, e.g. lawyers, engineers, that work only a share of their time on the SC program. Very clearly, the salary costs of partner state, permanent civil service staff, even if pro rata, is extremely difficult to justify as a cost to be considered to be borne by Switzerland – as well as likely extremely complex to administer and control, pro rata. However, in addition to the issue of staff costs, a minority of NCUs also highlighted that the inclusion of training expenses for staff of the NCU etc. should also be addressed, as well as provision for the costs of exchange visits by the program actors to other partner state beneficiaries – these are clearly far more justifiable.

³⁹ The questionnaire survey responses show that 8 NCUs regard the range of eligible activities under TAF to be 'only partially' appropriate to their needs, with 2 responding that it was appropriate to their needs.

3.3.5. Swiss Contribution – Mixed efficiency of the monitoring systems

EQ 15: How efficient is the process management of the monitoring system, in order to provide evidence-based data/information for accounting of results (reporting) and steering of the Swiss Contribution (at the level of the program and the partner states)?

<p>Judgement Criteria</p> <p>The SC monitoring and reporting systems and steering mechanisms are adequate and effectively used for the efficient implementation of actions and for reporting on results.</p>	<p>Performance Rating</p> <p>Unsatisfactory</p>
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Building on the requirements for monitoring and reporting already established in the bilateral Framework Agreements, SDC and SECO issued guidance notes (23/04/2008) on the “Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by the partner country” and “Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by Switzerland”. The guidance notes were updated in September 2012 in line with the “Monitoring and Evaluation concept for the Swiss Contribution” adopted by SDC and SECO.

These set-out the formal requirements for reporting by individual programs/projects:

- Interim Reports: on a 6-monthly basis, with information on financial and physical progress, deviations, etc., in support of payment claims/reimbursement requests.
- Annual Project Reports: describing the progress in the delivery and achievement of the results, comparing actual with planned progress, based on quantified targets for output and where possible outcome indicators, corrective measures suggested. Annual Project Reports are not linked to reimbursement requests.
- Project Completion Report: documenting and commenting the overall achievement of outputs and outcomes against the original plan, compliance with principles such as cross cutting themes and sustainability, the lessons learned and conclusions. Together with the final Interim Report and final Financial Report, the Project Completion Report is the base for the final reimbursement.

The NCU also prepares an Annual Report on the progress in implementation and achievement of the SC, which is approved by the SC Monitoring Committee in the partner state prior to its submission to Switzerland. The Annual Report is a base for consultations between the Swiss-side and the partner state at the SC Annual Meeting per partner state.

In addition to the formal reporting systems, monitoring of implementation is also supported via regular steering meetings held between the SCO and the NCU – usually on a monthly basis, introduced in 2009/2010 to support steering and implementation and real-time monitoring of the SC program and risks – as well as via participation by the SCO and the NCU on project level annual steering committees. Follow-up to the SC Annual Meeting per partner state is also ensured via a mid-term program review meeting. In addition, the partner state authorities and the Swiss-side also undertake on-site visits and direct consultations with project implementing partners during the project implementation period.

The overall monitoring and reporting system is logically designed, building clear linkages between the project level and program level systems. However, the efficiency of the process management of the system by the partners, and the extent to which it effectively provides data accounting for results and for steering of the SC, is considerably variable across the program/projects and the four partner states for this evaluation’s field mission visits. Each of the four partner states has experienced delays, to varying extent, in terms of the efficiency of formal reporting provision from the project level to the program level.

In addition to delays in the submission of reports, on the basis of the reports reviewed by the evaluators, it is evident that the formal monitoring system also suffers due to the significantly variable quality of the data and the presentation of analysis in the reports

between the four partner states for the field mission visits; which thereby creates further delays in terms of the need for revisions, based on the quality control comments provided by the NCU, or designated IB, prior to the approval of reports by the NCU for submission to Switzerland. The length of the reports in certain partner states is not conducive to the efficient or effective process management of the monitoring system and steering of the SC. Additionally, at times it is not evident that reporting is results oriented, e.g. EAs have struggled to focus on the reporting period covered, or have overly repeated information across a number of reporting sub-sections, or have overly reported as to the specific project's unique management and technical details that the reports ultimately lack any clear focus in terms of the communication of information.

The specification of the templates for reporting is prepared by the partner states, based on their own needs, country systems and standards, plus via a process of consultation with the Swiss-side. The page length of the templates is not significantly different between the Interim Report and Annual Report, but does vary between and within the partner states: averaging 10-pages in Slovakia, 10-15 in Latvia, 10-20 in Hungary, and 20-pages in Poland. At the requirement of two Interim Reports and one Annual Report, at such page length of the templates, the system is not conducive of timely reporting by the EAs; equally it is not conducive of timely analysis and control of project reports by the NCU, or designated IB. For a sizeable minority of the sample of 29 projects for the evaluation's in-depth assessment the Annual Reports, beyond the first or second, did not formally exist – at least not as reports formally received by the Swiss-side from the partner state NCU.

Eventually, limited attempts in the simplification of the formal reporting system and/or templates has necessarily been introduced by NCUs so as to reduce the administrative burden for EAs, e.g. in some cases via the combination of one of the six-monthly Interim Reports with the Annual Project Report, or via the review/revision of the templates so as to facilitate the process for report completion – and thereby how formal project reporting supports the subsequent assessment of related payment claims/reimbursement requests. Strangely, despite the administrative burden experienced, questionnaire survey responses from the NCUs indicate that they regard the system as satisfactory in terms of the report templates utilized and the required frequency of reporting⁴⁰. However, survey responses from EAs and SCOs indicate a lower degree of satisfaction with the reporting system⁴¹.

3.3.6. Swiss Contribution – Overall efficiency of the “Swiss approach”

EQ 16: How efficient is the execution of the Swiss Contribution in terms of operational implementation, procedures, coordination and controlling, and evaluation? To what extent does the “Swiss” approach differ from the “Norwegian” approach?	
Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Overall, the day-to-day management and implementation etc. (at SC program, SC partner state program/project levels) has been suitable for achieving the results.	Satisfactory
The overall efficiency of the “Swiss” approach does not negatively differ compared to the “Norwegian” approach.	Satisfactory

⁴⁰ Questionnaire survey responses indicate that 9 NCUs (of 10 responding to the survey) regard the system suitable for the reporting templates and the frequency of reporting; 1 NCU indicated that the templates are not adequate; 1 NCU indicated that the reporting requirements are too frequent.

⁴¹ Survey responses indicate that 27.5% of EAs regard the templates as only partially adequate, and 27.5% regard the reporting requirements too frequent; while 7.5% of EAs suggest the frequency is insufficient. 12.5% of EAs chose ‘no answer’. The 6 SCOs responses indicate a 50:50 split as to the adequacy of the reporting templates, and also in regard to whether the frequency of reporting is adequate or too frequent.

Overall, efficiency in the execution of the SC in terms of operational implementation, procedures, coordination and controlling, and evaluation is judged to be satisfactory.

While partial weaknesses in the efficiency of program/project execution have been identified, as highlighted in the EQs above (section 3.3), it is also fully recognized by the evaluators that the SC to the Enlarged EU is a 'new' – i.e. 'first' generation – program of assistance/solidarity for which the SC implementation framework substantially makes use of the partner country systems. As such new structures and operational systems had to be established linked to the SC and there has, naturally, been a 'learning-curve' – for the partner states and also for the Swiss-side. Based on the NCU Annual Reports from the 12 partner states it is evident that the "Swiss" approach was initially difficult to understand for most partner states – e.g. due to the initial uncertainties as to the level of demarcation of responsibilities between the Swiss-side and the partner states, or due to the lower level of detailed Swiss guidance notes than under other programs to which they are accustomed.

While there are clear operational implementation and procedural differences between the "Swiss" approach and the "Norwegian" approach – e.g. Norway adopts a more tightly defined thematic concentration, via a so-called program approach; utilizes a 'one-loop' approach for project submission; utilizes electronic monitoring/reporting systems; provides a reasonable level of detailed guidance and templates, plus guidance as to a 'core' set of standard program/project indicators per intervention sector; manages its program via a central Financial Mechanism Office rather than local offices in the partner states – the overall efficiency of the donor programs does not appear to markedly differ, within the context of the timeframes for the different programs for commitment and disbursement.

The overall timeframe for implementation of the SC has been able to accommodate for the potential 'first' generation program delays. Management of the SC has successfully ensured 100% commitment of SC funding by the deadline – 5-years after the date of approval of the framework credit by the Swiss Parliament – and the physical completion of the projects can be delivered by the implementation deadline – a subsequent 5-years. So far, there are no projects where there exists a 'high risk' to implementation completion. So far, there are no significant 'irregularities' linked to the SC implementation that have necessitated putting programs/project on-hold, or terminated. Furthermore, in light of the appreciation of the Swiss Franc it is also recognized that the SC has become a more substantive cooperation program with the partner states. While this has allowed for the extension of program/project actions, this has also necessitated additional management tasks, for the partner states and the Swiss-side, to ensure successful implementation.

As noted above, while the "Swiss" approach was initially difficult to understand for most partner states, the field mission interviews indicate that partner states now have a clearer perception and understanding as to the potential operational expectations of the Swiss-side. The interviews highlight, and the evaluators concur, that the role of the SCO in the operational framework for management of the SC is appreciated by the partner states as this facilitates the discussion of emerging program/project issues or problems, plus their resolution, as well as enhances the level of Swiss engagement in and awareness of the status of program delivery and achievement. However, interview and questionnaire survey feedback indicate that the overall efficiency of SC implementation could be improved if the level of formal guidance provided to the partner states by the Swiss-side were extended⁴².

The questionnaire survey – to the Swiss Embassies, the NCU, EAs and NGOs – asked respondents to rate "How Switzerland is perceived/viewed as a 'donor country' and the SC as a program of bilateral cooperation". The responses indicate that Switzerland is primarily regarded as 'flexible/reactive', followed by 'reliable' and thereafter 'engaged', 'committed' and 'transparent'. Only a small minority rated Switzerland as 'bureaucratic'.

⁴² The 6 SCOs responses indicate a 50:50 split as to the sufficiency of the overall level of Swiss guidance. The 10 NCUs indicate: 60% that the guidance is sufficient 'to a large extent', 30% 'only to some extent' and 10% that the overall level of guidance was not sufficient.

3.4. Sustainability

In terms of sustainability, the evaluation will appraise whether the benefits of the interventions will be sustained beyond 2017, when the project funding will end.

EQ 17: Which actions have been taken at country level (by the partner state) to enhance the sustainability of the Swiss Contribution?

Judgement Criteria	Performance Rating
Results (outputs, outcomes, benefits) will continue after program/project closure (i.e. after 2017).	Satisfactory
Partner institutions' and stakeholders' capacities have been strengthened to sustain the results.	Satisfactory
Financial sustainability has been achieved.	Satisfactory

Overall, it is likely that the sustainability of the results obtained/to be obtained arising from the SC will be maintained by the partner states beyond the program/project completion.

However, for a minority of programs/projects there are risks in terms of the prospects for sustainability of the results. Based on the specific sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, the sustainability of one is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 21 judged to be satisfactory, and 7 judged to be unsatisfactory. Feedback from the questionnaire survey indicates that while NCUs consider that the sustainability risks are 'low', 25% of the participating EAs indicate that the risks to sustainability are 'medium', or even 'high' (in accordance with 2% of the EAs responding to survey questionnaire). Equally, 3 of the 6 SCOs responding to the survey indicate their perception of the level of risk to sustainability as 'medium'.

The commitment of the beneficiaries at the operational level and ownership of the results at program/project level by the direct target group of stakeholders have, predominantly, been positively exhibited and the specific societal benefits delivered via the SC clearly recognized by the partners. The importance attached to outlining the sustainability approach during the project development and assessment process has contributed to this positive result. Moreover, the SC interventions have further strengthened the already existing capacities of the partners; the involved institutions (mainly the EAs) already had a certain level of capacity as this constituted one key element optimally taken into account in the original project development and appraisal process prior to the grant of SC-funding. In many cases during project implementation specific actions, including via trainings, the exchange of experiences (peer learning), were carried-out for capacity to be further built and, consequently, for results to be optimally utilized. NGOs indicate that the SC has enabled them to strengthen their organizational capacities and also their confidence to pursue additional fundraising activities and local sources, e.g. companies. However, to a certain extent staff fluctuations in the range of supported institutions/organizations do constitute a risk to sustainability, despite measures taken to strengthen the institutions. Recognizing that many projects have supported capacity building measures, as an integral part of post-project planning the EAs should clearly define how such measures, including training capacity and knowledge, will be institutionalized to ensure sustainability.

The sustainability of and the prospects for progressive further development and extension of the delivered results seems to be particularly strong in the case of interventions implemented by institutions with clear policy decision-making capacity and power and/or service-delivery cost-efficiency interest in the relevant policy field, for example:

- Slovakia: the VET project has provided a model which can now be replicated through the sector councils for the establishment of the National Occupations Framework and

National Qualifications Framework, for which a strong political commitment and a legislative framework are in place to ensure this.

- Latvia: the modernization of the courts project has delivered clear cost-efficiencies via enhancing the effectiveness of judicial operations and the means for citizens' gaining access to the judicial system via increased use of on-line systems.
- Poland: the preventing overweight and obesity project has initiated systemic change in particular with regard to the approach to nutrition education for children, and has piloted issues which are emerging on the Polish health agenda.
- Latvia: the modernized youth centers, across the sub-regions, will continue functioning and, moreover, will constitute the focal points for tackling the situation of NEETs⁴³ in the country under the EU's 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy program.
- Slovakia: consideration of longer-term strategy and cost-effectiveness has been clearly exhibited by the project linked to preparedness of the emergency service rescue forces, for which the rescue forces have a clear vision for the continuation and further enhancement of the benefits and to ensure the sustainability of training through longer-term multiplication, including accredited training for civilian forces.
- Hungary: similarly as in Slovakia, the National Directorate General for Disaster Management is the central organization responsible for professional disaster management, including state level flood-defense and in this capacity oversees and contributes to policy-making in the field and the sustainability of the results as regards flood protection, to which the collective series of SC-funded projects also contributes in terms of complementarity with EU-funded interventions in the area.
- Hungary and Latvia: the financial instruments are managed and implemented by institutions (private and public) with longstanding experience and expertise in the field of SMEs and access to finance for this group, with preoccupations advocated and input delivered in terms of policy analysis and formulation at national level.

Financial sustainability of the SC interventions is primarily assured by the institutions involved. In many cases the results will be operated and maintained by the beneficiary without further external financial support, or Cohesion Policy funds are already allocated or planned for the continuation of support. However, in view of continued budgetary constraints in the partner states there are certain risks for the sustainability of the results, notably in terms of the sustainability of 'soft' results and the extension of pilot-tests. Linked to the sample of projects judged to be unsatisfactory in terms of sustainability, financial sustainability is the most significant risk to the maintenance of the results. In addition, other risks to sustainability relate to the need for some EAs still to develop detailed business plans and marketing strategies to support longer-term generation of finances.

Despite registered positive outcomes, challenges to sustainability are faced by the health sector mobile general practitioner units pilot-test project in Hungary as financing for all project elements is needed in order to maintain and extend the community-based primary health care model developed, which is only partially arranged. In addition, other threats to sustainability and/or effective follow-up relate to the pace of senior decision-making linked to the adoption and roll-out of pilot-test approaches developed, e.g. Community Policy in Hungary. Other threats in terms of effective sustained delivery and further development of the benefits relate to the purely technical focus of some partners on the achievement of immediate outcomes without sufficient consideration to long-term, policy-related issues, e.g. upgrading the technical reliability of the communication of air quality data within the network in Hungary versus the wider focus of effective future orientation of public policy decision-making in respect to combating serious pollutant causes/risks.

Although supported NGOs have strengthened their fundraising and project management capacity, their financial sustainability is more at risk than in the case of projects implemented by public institutions. In the case of social care and social services, the

⁴³ Not in Employment, Education or Training.

continuation of NGO services is often supported by national/local sources, in exchange for services delivered, and/or Cohesion Policy funds are already allocated or planned for this.

The sustainability of public service infrastructure related interventions is primarily ensured via a mix of user charges, backed as necessary by additional governmental means. Consumer charges for public service utilities are regulated by the relevant public authority.

Financial instruments targeting private sector enterprises are, primarily, sustainable in themselves and the necessary arrangements are already in place or are under preparation for the maintenance of the funding mechanisms up to 2020 or beyond, e.g. the micro-lending program in Latvia, or Euroventures IV venture-capital fund in Hungary. However, there is room for improvement as regards the sustainability of the outcomes registered (e.g. jobs created/maintained) beyond the immediate results/benefits, which should be monitored based on clear procedures (i.e. regular durability reports and/or monitoring visits) optimally presented and agreed with sub-project beneficiaries. A particular threat to sustainability has been encountered under Euroventures IV, where positive effects booked in the development of a venture capital market and its institutional structure may not be sustained if venture capital's availability decreases in the next years.

While the sustainability of the SC results is, overall, judged to be satisfactory, risks to sustainability should be formally assessed also during project implementation, prior to project closure; at this point apparently only Project Completion Reports cover to some extent this matter. While post-project planning is reportedly undertaken by many partners, the interviews and questionnaire survey feedback indicate that responsibilities and duties related to reporting on sustainability vary among actors or are not implemented: two SCOs and three NCUs indicate that the NCU has issued specific guidance to EAs including a reporting template; three NCUs indicate that they formally consult with EAs on post-project planning; two SCOs and two NCUs consider that only the EAs are responsible to ensure the adequacy of post-project planning; two SCOs and 35% of EAs assess that a clear policy and guidance linked to post-project planning is missing.

As such, there is room for improvement as regards post-project planning and in monitoring the follow-up of projects after their completion, during their durability phase, with a view to fulfilling expectations as regards sustainability.

4. Conclusions (Overall Assessment / Lessons Learned)

4.1. Overall Assessment

Relevance

Overall, the relevance of the SC is judged to be satisfactory.

The overall goals of the SC – to contribute to the reduction of socio-economic disparities within the enlarged EU, to contribute to the reduction of disparities within the partner states between dynamic centers and peripheral regions, and to contribute to enhancing bilateral relations between Switzerland and the partner states – are still relevant.

The SC represents Switzerland's solidarity with the 'new' member states of the EU, and also its interest to support the successful integration of the states within the enlarged EU, as a contribution to increased security, stability and prosperity on the European continent. The level of SC-funding, allowing for the extent of appreciation of the Swiss Franc, now represents approximately 0.8% of the EU Cohesion Policy funding for the partner states. For the partner states the SC represents an additional source of funding to support their efforts to promote socio-economic development and to reduce internal disparity gaps.

The broad framework for the SC is defined bilaterally between Switzerland and the EU, in the MoU on the SC. The areas highlighted on the menu as to the Swiss offer of support include many areas where Switzerland can offer added value to the partner states arising from Swiss expertise. While not all of the areas offered on the menu were selected by the partner states for support, e.g. the protection of intellectual property, this is a reflection of the partner states' priorities/needs at the time, rather than on the potential role of the areas offered in addressing development disparities. If there is a follow-up SC, the menu as to the Swiss offer requires minor fine-tuning, to reflect the five 'specific objectives' of the SC and the thematic areas as now defined, which are generally all still relevant.

At the level of the partner states the detailed prioritization of needs linked to the SC is conducted by the national authorities. The selection of specific programs/projects for SC funding is led by the partner states, but conducted in close cooperation with the Swiss-side, which is ultimately responsible for the commitment of the Swiss grant.

Overall, the SC program in the partner states is, generally, financially and thematically coherent with and complementary to other programs/projects (including EU programs, the EEA and the Norwegian Grants) aiming to reduce socio-economic disparities. Primarily this has been achieved via the concentration of the SC on areas or geographical locations or target groups that are not at all or are insufficiently addressed by the EU's programs or the EEA and Norway Grants in the partner states. In this way the SC contributes to the achievement of the common goal to reduce socio-economic disparities in the partner states and in the enlarged EU with limited risk in terms of the potential duplication of effort. The fact that the SC was programmed and implemented by the partner states autonomously to programming of the EU Cohesion Policy package has facilitated the targeting of the SC.

The process of pre-selection and project preparation is detailed, with the quality of the Final Project Proposals generally good. The coherence of the results chain presented in the programs/projects' LFM is, generally, satisfactory, although mixed. The results chain is usually clearly defined in terms of outputs leading to outcomes, with credible indicators of achievement provided for outputs to be delivered, and usually, but not always, also for outcomes, but the results chain in terms of outcomes leading to impacts is usually weaker, due to the frequently broad nature of the anticipated result the programs/projects will contribute to, for which the declared indicators do not always provide adequate clarity.

Based on the sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, relevance of 16 is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 10 judged to be satisfactory, and three judged to be unsatisfactory. The projects judged to be highly satisfactory represent interventions under each of the five 'specific objectives' of the SC.

All SCOs and all NCUs, plus 77% of EAs and 76% of NGOs responding to the evaluation's questionnaire survey regard the SC programs/projects to remain either 'fully' or 'to a large extent' relevant to the needs of the project promoter and target group.

Effectiveness

Overall, the effectiveness of the SC is judged to be satisfactory.

Based on the specific sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, effectiveness of 9 is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 18 judged to be satisfactory, and two judged to be unsatisfactory. The projects judged to be highly satisfactory represent interventions under each of the five 'specific objectives' of the SC.

The intended SC program/project outputs have/will be delivered beyond the original scale of target. Primarily this is due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc since the framework credits for the SC were approved and the additional opportunities that have thus been provided to extend program/project actions so as to maximize the commitment and the disbursement of the Swiss grant within the program period. However, based on the sample of projects for in-depth assessment it is evident that for a limited number of projects 'medium risks' exist in terms of the timely delivery and fulfilment of their objectives, or that a minority of the outputs will be achieved below target or that there is a risk that the outputs will not be fully utilized by the project beneficiaries.

Based on the outputs delivered the prospects for successful achievement of the intended program/project outcomes is satisfactory. The field mission interviews and focus group meetings held with staff trained via the SC in a range of beneficiary institutions, plus with Sciex Scholarship fellows, entrepreneurs, social care/service workers, mayors, NGOs, etc., confirm that a range of positive immediate outcomes have already been achieved.

In the case of institutional capacity building actions the extension of outputs delivery is mainly represented via additional numbers of staff trained, or additional technical equipment supplied, which will facilitate the achievement of the intended outcomes. In the case of financial instruments supporting the private sector plus infrastructure renovation/modernization projects the achievement of the intended outcomes will be partially enhanced due to the increased number of final users directly benefiting due to the SC, and thereby the extent of the immediate and potential longer-term benefits achieved.

While it is not realistic to assume that the SC interventions can/will significantly close the development gap between the partner states and the EU-average in statistical terms, based on the sample of projects it is evident that the interventions have/are providing added value and are/will make a positive contribution at some level to the promotion of socio-economic development in the specific targeted sectors/regions. Where the design of the SC program has been significantly thematically and/or geographically and also significantly financially concentrated this should also generate certain synergies between the SC interventions, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life and socio-economic opportunities nationally and in the least developed or peripheral regions. However, the extent of such targeted concentration of the SC is variable between the partner states.

However, while it is judged that the SC interventions will positively contribute to the overall achievement of the specific and wider goals of the SC, it will not be easy to quantify the longer-term effectiveness of the SC due to the often variable measurability of the project results objectives and indicators. These have been defined on the basis of each individual project, with only limited consideration at the stage of design and approval to the inclusion of a limited series of standard objectives/indicators per SC specific or thematic objective.

While project level communication and visibility efforts are generally satisfactory, there are certain weaknesses in terms of effectiveness of the communication activities of the SC so as to promote broader awareness, beyond the project level, in the partner states and also in Switzerland, of the SC and thereby to the visibility of Switzerland and of its solidarity.

In terms of the benefits that have arisen for Switzerland due to SC and its enhanced level of bilateral relations with the partner states, a number of positive direct and indirect impacts are identifiable, most clearly in terms of increased economic opportunities for the Swiss economy as the purchasing power of the region increases, but also in terms of enhanced environmental protection on the European continent. In addition, the SC has provided valuable support to renew or to start new partnerships between organizations in Switzerland and the partner states across a range of sectoral areas, at national, regional and local level, for the public sector, NGOs, and other partner groups. Feedback from the Swiss Ambassadors indicates that the level of engagement between the Swiss Embassies and the partner states, notably with senior decision-makers, has been greatly enhanced.

Efficiency

Overall, the efficiency of the SC is judged to be satisfactory.

While overall responsibility for the SC rests with Switzerland, the SC implementation framework makes substantial use of the partner country systems. While this presents potential risks, in terms of the management and absorption capacities of the partner states to implement the SC, the approach is fully appropriate, reflective of the unique nature of the SC to the Enlarged EU. In addition, it is recognized by the evaluators that the SC is a 'new' – i.e. 'first' generation – program of assistance/solidarity and that there has, naturally, been a 'learning-curve' – for the partner states and also for the Swiss-side.

Reflecting that the SC required formal institutional, regulatory and operational systems be established, the pace of program set-up by the partner states was generally satisfactory; although not uniformly so across the partner states. This also influenced the efficiency of the partner states to process the initial launching of requests/calls for Project Outlines. One of the 'EU-10' partner states submitted the vast majority of Project Outlines to Switzerland for its review/opinion only in 2011, another only in the last quarter of 2010.

Nevertheless, the overall timeframe for implementation of the SC has been able to accommodate for such potential 'first' generation program delays. Management of the SC has successfully ensured 100% commitment of SC funding by the deadline – 5-years after the approval of the framework credit – and project physical completion can be delivered by the implementation deadline – a subsequent 5-years. Such program set-up delays would, presumably, be less substantive if there were a follow-up SC; although there are risks in terms of staff stability in the partner states if the decision on follow-up is not timely.

Management responsibilities between the program actors have generally been distributed in a balanced way. Flexibility has been demonstrated at program and at project level to adapt to factors and to achieve the intended objectives: e.g. via extension of the project implementation period, within the remaining period for implementation of the SC, so as to allow for full project delivery and the maximum utilization of the available grant. So far, there are no projects where there exists a 'high risk' to implementation completion. In light of the appreciation of the Swiss Franc it is also recognized that the SC has become a more substantive cooperation program with the partner states. This has allowed for the extension of program/project actions, but has also necessitated additional management tasks, for the partner states and the Swiss-side, to ensure successful implementation.

However, it is evident that a number of partial constraints exist in terms of the adequacy of the overall system. Based on the specific sample of 29 projects subject to in-depth assessment by the evaluators, efficiency of three is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 13 judged to be satisfactory, and 13 judged to be unsatisfactory.

In terms of external factors, the most significant, for the majority of partner states, has been the continued budgetary constraints that face most public sector institutions. In addition, institutional instability due to public sector re-organizations has affected the efficiency of SC; in a majority of partner states this has affected the main SC program bodies. The main internal factor influencing aid performance has been the level of

management capacity of the NCU, the EAs and partners. This is variable, in terms of staffing levels and in terms of the extent to which management is truly results-oriented.

There are constraints in terms of the efficiency of programs/projects being implemented according to plan and time. Primarily the delays have been experienced by the partner states in preparing procurement dossiers, or due to procurement objections/complaints, or delays in the granting of building/works permits, although NCUs and EAs also refer to the 'non-objection' process on the Swiss-side linked to the review of tender documents.

There are partial constraints in terms the efficiency of the 'two-loop' approach. The NCUs and many SCOs consider that the requirements for the Project Outline are too detailed, indicating that a concise concept note outlining the proposed intervention would be preferable at the 'first-loop' stage. The development of projects by public entities nominated via direct appointment could also be partially simplified; this should not be at the cost of good quality in project design, for which Swiss experts would still be called upon to assist in the appraisal and technical development of the Final Project Proposals.

The inclusion of a 10-20% 'reserve' budget line is a weakness in terms of program efficiency: as decision-making on the side of the partner states for the allocation needs to be taken at the level of the government, this was clearly a time consuming process to undertake for what was a comparatively small level of funding.

There are weaknesses in terms the efficiency of the program/project monitoring and reporting systems. Primarily this relates to the efficiency constraints often faced by EAs in the preparation and the processing of formal project reports – between the EAs and the NCU, or designated IB. This is due to the lengthy templates that have been adopted by the partner states – in some cases excessively lengthy reporting formats. In addition, on the basis of the reports reviewed by the evaluators it is evident that the monitoring system also suffers due to the significantly variable quality of the data and the presentation of analysis in the reports between the partner states. The reporting process would also benefit from a greater differentiation between the Interim Report and the Annual Report.

While now coming to the end of the SC implementation period, feedback from SCOs and NCUs indicates that the efficiency of the SC – and certainly a potential follow-up – could still be improved if the level of formal guidance provided by the Swiss-side were extended.

Sustainability

Overall, the sustainability of the SC is judged to be satisfactory.

However, for a minority of programs/projects there are risks in terms of prospects: based on the sample of 29 projects for in-depth assessment, sustainability of one is judged to be highly satisfactory, with 21 judged to be satisfactory, and 7 judged to be unsatisfactory.

The commitment of the beneficiaries at the operational level and ownership of the results at program/project level by the direct target group of stakeholders has, predominantly, been positively exhibited and the societal benefits delivered by the SC clearly recognized by the partners. The importance attached to outlining the sustainability approach during the project development and assessment process has contributed to this positive result. In addition to delivering societal benefits, the SC interventions have also further strengthened the existing capacities of the partners and beneficiaries to manage and operate their agenda, which will also support results sustainability over the longer-term.

Recognizing that many projects have supported capacity building measures, as an integral part of post-project planning the EAs should clearly define how such measures, including training capacity and knowledge, will be institutionalized to ensure sustainability.

The sustainability of and the prospects for progressive further development and extension of the delivered results seems to be particularly strong in the case of interventions implemented by institutions with clear policy decision-making capacity and power and/or service-delivery cost-efficiency interest in the relevant policy field.

Financial sustainability of the SC interventions is primarily assured by the institutions involved. In many cases the project results will be operated and maintained without further external financial support, or Cohesion Policy funds are already allocated or is planned for the continuation of support. However, in view of continued budgetary constraints in the partner states there are certain risks for the sustainability of the results, notably in terms of the sustainability of ‘soft’ results and linked to the extension of ‘pilot-tests’. Linked to the sample of projects judged to be unsatisfactory in terms of sustainability, financial sustainability is the most significant risk to the maintenance of the results. In addition, other risks to sustainability relate to the need for some EAs still to develop detailed business plans and marketing strategies to support longer-term generation of finances. In addition, to a certain extent staff fluctuations in the range of supported institutions/organizations does constitute a risk to sustainability.

While the sustainability of the SC results is, overall, judged to be satisfactory, risks to sustainability should still be formally assessed also during project implementation, prior to project closure. Responsibilities and duties in the partner states related to reporting on sustainability vary among actors. There is room for improvement as regards post-project planning and in monitoring the follow-up of projects after their completion, during their durability phase, with a view to fulfilling expectations as regards sustainability.

4.2. Lessons Learned

Regarding a potential follow-up SC to the Enlarged EU, the SCOs and the NCUs were asked via the questionnaire survey as to “what would be the most effective way for improving the Swiss Contribution program between Switzerland and the partner state?”

The responses received are provided below, indicating how the two groups ranked the options – the top seven response rankings (of the 12 options offered), from top (most important), down to second most important, etc.

Table 2: Most effective ways for improving the SC program

SCOs	NCUs
Clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side to facilitate implementation	Clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side to facilitate implementation
Fewer focus areas prioritized in the bilateral Framework Agreement with Switzerland	Fewer projects supported (selecting larger programs/projects where appropriate)
Clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side on a ‘standard’ minimum set of core indicators of achievement to be utilized linked to the SC (per focus area/ program specific objectives and global objectives)	Simplification (via the improved focus/improved quality) of standard program/project templates (e.g. Project Outline, Interim Reports, Annual Reports)
A briefer ‘menu’ of potential focus areas to be identified in the Switzerland-EU MoU on the SC to the Enlarged EU	Fewer focus areas prioritized in the bilateral Framework Agreement with Switzerland
Increased emphasis on and support for the promotion of bilateral partnerships between Switzerland and the partner state	Better division of labor (roles, tasks and responsibilities) between program actors
Fewer projects supported (selecting larger programs/projects where appropriate)	Increased geographical focus on supporting peripheral, structurally weaker regions
Simplification (via the improved focus/improved quality) of standard program/project templates (e.g. Project Outline, Interim Reports, Annual Reports)	Clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side on a ‘standard’ minimum set of core indicators of achievement to be utilized linked to the SC (per focus area/program specific objectives and global objectives)

5. Recommendations

The evaluation presents 12 recommendations linked to: (1) the SC programming framework and (2) the SC operational framework. The recommendations are further subdivided in terms of their application regarding: the possible continuation of Swiss support to the partner states, the operational delivery and effectiveness of the on-going SC program and recommendations linked to both the on-going and a potential follow-up SC.

5.1. Programing Framework

Recommendations linked to the possible continuation of the SC

Recommendation 1

If there is a follow-up SC, the menu as to the Swiss offer requires minor fine-tuning, to reflect the five 'specific objectives' of the SC and the thematic areas as now defined. Generally the thematic areas offered are all still of potential relevance to the partner states, and include many areas where Switzerland can offer added value. But, reflective of the goal to enhance bilateral relations with the partner states, and partnership approach of the SC in terms of the utilization of partner country systems, it would be natural that SDC and SECO seek to conduct a preliminary exchange of ideas with the partner states, e.g. at the 2016 and 2017 Annual Meetings in the partner states, as to the potential thematic areas for intervention of interest to them for the possible continuation of SC support. Reflective of the goal to enhance partnerships between organizations in Switzerland and in the partner states, it would also be valuable that SDC and SECO seek to gain feedback from Swiss partners actively engaged under the present SC as to their potential offer.

Recommendation 2

If there is a follow-up SC, in order to maximize SC program effectiveness in terms of its contribution to the reduction of socio-economic disparities, the partner states should be encouraged to strengthen the thematic and/or geographic and also financial concentration of the SC support, e.g. in the Visegrad partner states, maximum 10 thematic areas, with minimum 50% of overall SC-funding geographically concentrated on peripheral regions.

Recommendation 3

If there is a follow-up SC, the bilateral Framework Agreement per partner state should specify the indicative program allocation for the full sum of SC-funding provided, i.e. there is no need for a 10-20% 'reserve' budget line. This will enhance the efficiency of decision-making linked to overall budget management: the governments of the partner states will have endorsed the full indicative allocation; proposing operational reallocations between the budget lines during SC implementation would principally be within the NCU remit.

Recommendation 4

If there is a follow-up SC, SDC and SECO should further develop the guidance provided to the partner states regarding a limited series of standard 'core' objectives/indicators to be included for programs/projects per SC 'specific objective' and thematic objective.

Recommendation 5

If there is a follow-up SC, the efficiency of the 'two-loop' approach should be enhanced, although this should not be at the cost of good quality in program/project design:

- A. The Project Outline should be a concise concept note and statement of project readiness, e.g. 5-pages narrative, a 1-page LFM (precisely summarizing the activities, outputs and outcomes levels), a 1-page statement of project readiness (e.g. permits

required, permits obtained, feasibility studies undertaken, or still to be completed, procurement dossiers to be prepared, or provisionally prepared). This will enhance the efficiency of project preparation by the overall group of project promoters as well as of the appraisal and decision-making both for the partner states and for the Swiss-side – as noted in section 3.3.1., this is variable in terms of the time required by the partner states to process their review and submission of proposals to Switzerland, as well as the speed for appraisal by the Swiss-side.

- B. For the development of projects of public entities nominated via direct appointment, the efficiency of the process for technical development of the Final Project Proposals could be enhanced – for projects that have not required PPF support this took on average 4-6 months, after approval of the Project Outline, before the submission of the Final Project Proposal to Switzerland. This could be enhanced, e.g. the early engagement of Swiss experts, in order to assist/advise the project promoter, should be offered by SDC or SECO, such as a consultation on the development of the Final Project Proposal 6-weeks into the process.

5.2. Operational Framework

Recommendations linked to the on-going SC

Recommendation 6

Linked to the on-going SC, delays in the submission and processing of formal reports could be addressed – where judged appropriate and agreed between the Swiss-side and the individual partner states – via EAs providing a single Interim Report for the entire period not already covered by a report submitted by the EA to the NCU, or designated IB.

Recommendation 7

Linked to the on-going SC, if there are funds unspent at project level, these could be utilized for further communication efforts, where practical and justified.

Recommendations linked to the on-going SC - and for a potential follow-up SC

Recommendation 8

Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – the partner states should be encouraged to strengthen the communication efforts linked to the SC program and the range of programs/projects, e.g.:

- A. Conferences bringing together different projects united by a thematic and/or a geographic concentration focus.
- B. Brochures to communicate the results at thematic and/or a geographic level.
- C. Brochures to communicate the results at SC program level in the partner state.

Such program level communication efforts should be covered under the TAF.

Recommendation 9

Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – SDC and SECO should review the strategy for information provision and communication on the SC to Swiss stakeholders and define additional measures to be undertaken to raise awareness, notably to key stakeholder groups such as business/trade bodies, and civil society groups.

Recommendation 10

Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – EAs should clearly define how capacity building measures, including training capacity and knowledge, will be

institutionalized to ensure sustainability. If there are project funds unspent, these could be utilized to establish in-house capacity, e.g. via e-learning, trained trainers, manuals.

Recommendation 11

Linked to the on-going SC – and for a potential follow-up SC – support for the strengthening of partnerships between Swiss and partner state institutions/organizations, if there are project funds unspent these could be utilized to finance joint meetings allowing for further planning the development of the partnership (which could be also, e.g. for proposal development for third funding sources – there is no certainty for a follow-up SC).

Recommendations linked to the possible continuation of the SC

Recommendation 12

If there is a follow-up SC, the efficiency and effectiveness of the formal monitoring and reporting systems operated by the partner states need to be enhanced, primarily via a simplification and greater precision of the reporting templates and drafting guidance provided to the EAs:

- A. There should be greater differentiation between the Interim Report (a brief report, linked to activities/outputs and delivery risks; strictly covering the current reporting period and the plan for the next reporting period) and the Annual Report (a more detailed report, providing the assessment of the EA of the implementation progress in the delivery of quality outputs, take-up/utilization by stakeholders, the achievement of the outcomes, issues of longer-term sustainability and risks, etc.).
- B. SDC and SECO should propose a simpler format, as a base for all partner states.

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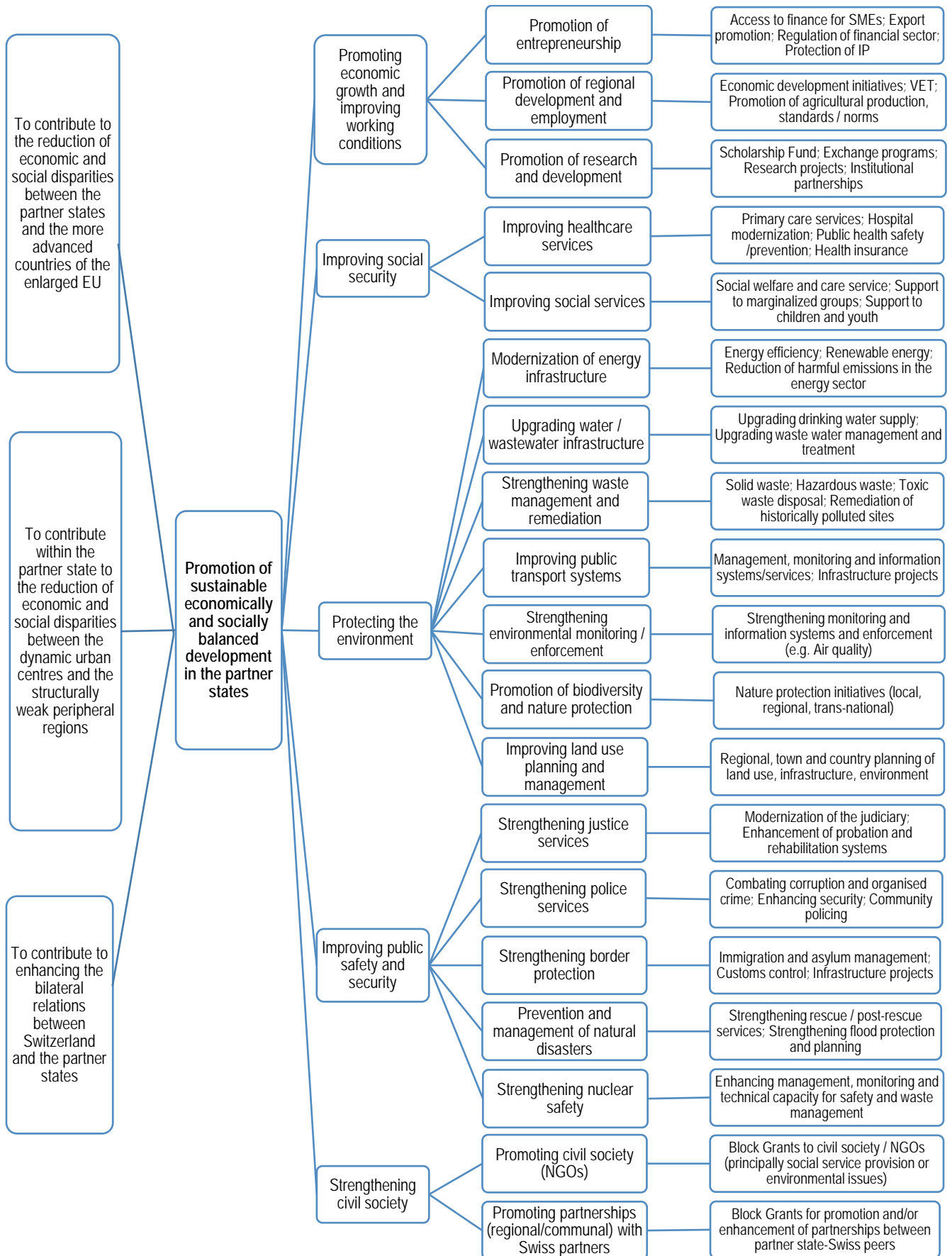
Annex 1: External Public Sector Funding Support for Economic and Social Cohesion in the 'new' EU Member States – Overview

Beneficiary	Swiss Contribution CHF million / Period		Norway Grants € million / Period		EEA Grants € million / Period		EU Cohesion Policy € million / Period	
'EU-10'	1 000	2007-2017	567	2004-2009	488.6	2004-2009	21 624	2004-2006
'EU-2'	257	2009-2019	68	2007-2009	72	2007-2009	-----	-----
'EU-12'	-----	-----	800	2009-2014	821.3	2009-2014	178 053	2007-2013
							185 490	2014-2020
Partner States	Swiss Contribution		Norway Grants		EEA Grants		EU Cohesion Policy	
Bulgaria	76.00	2009-2019	20.00	2007-2009	21.50	2007-2009	6 853	2007-2013
			48.00	2009-2014	78.60	2009-2014	7 588	2014-2020
Cyprus	5.99	2007-2017	3.40	2004-2009	1.26	2004-2009	108	2004-2006
			4.00	2009-2014	3.85	2009-2014	640	2007-2013
							736	2014-2020
Czech Republic	109.78	2007-2017	62.37	2004-2009	48.54	2004-2009	2 404	2004-2006
			70.40	2009-2014	61.40	2009-2014	26 692	2007-2013
							21 983	2014-2020
Estonia	39.92	2007-2017	22.68	2004-2009	10.08	2004-2009	615	2004-2006
			25.60	2009-2014	23.00	2009-2014	3 456	2007-2013
							3 590	2014-2020
Hungary	130.74	2007-2017	74.28	2004-2009	60.78	2004-2009	2 837	2004-2006
			83.20	2009-2014	70.10	2009-2014	25 307	2007-2013
							21 906	2014-2020
Latvia	59.88	2007-2017	34.02	2004-2009	19.74	2004-2009	1 031	2004-2006
			38.40	2009-2014	34.55	2009-2014	4 620	2007-2013
							4 512	2014-2020
Lithuania	70.86	2007-2017	40.26	2004-2009	27.00	2004-2009	1 379	2004-2006
			45.60	2009-2014	38.40	2009-2014	6 885	2007-2013
							6 823	2014-2020
Malta	4.99	2007-2017	1.70	2004-2009	1.92	2004-2009	81	2004-2006
			1.60	2009-2014	2.90	2009-2014	855	2007-2013
							725	2014-2020
Poland	489.02	2007-2017	277.83	2004-2009	280.80	2004-2009	11 202	2004-2006
			311.20	2009-2014	266.90	2009-2014	67 284	2007-2013
							77 567	2014-2020
Romania	181.00	2009-2019	48.00	2007-2009	50.50	2007-2009	19 668	2007-2013
			115.20	2009-2014	190.75	2009-2014	22 994	2014-2020
Slovakia	66.87	2007-2017	37.99	2004-2009	32.34	2004-2009	1 544	2004-2006
			42.40	2009-2014	38.35	2009-2014	11 588	2007-2013
							13 992	2014-2020
Slovenia	21.96	2007-2017	12.47	2004-2009	6.10	2004-2009	423	2004-2006
			14.40	2009-2014	12.50	2009-2014	4 205	2007-2013
							3 075	2014-2020

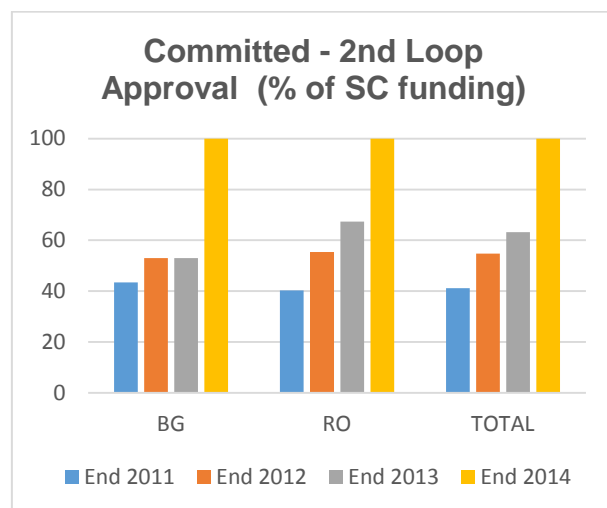
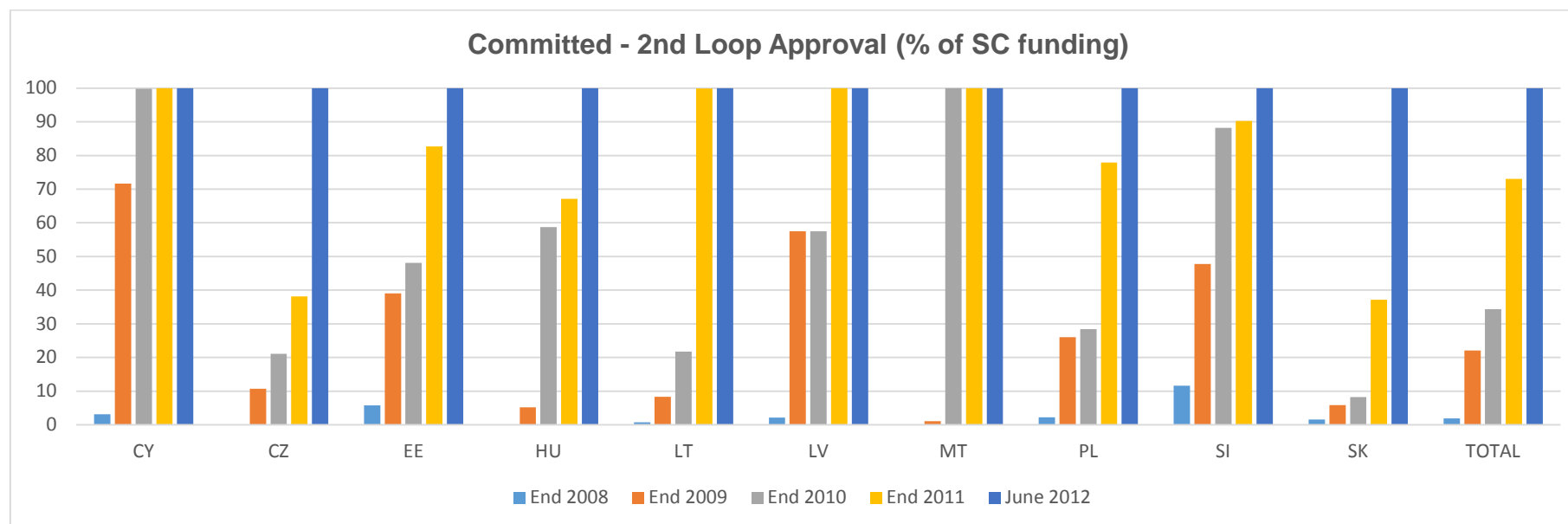
Annex 2: Swiss Contribution – Program Funding by Specific Objective and by Thematic Area per partner state (millions CHF)

Specific Objective / Thematic Area	PL	RO	HU	CZ	BG	LT	SK	LV	EE	SI	CY	MT	TOTAL
Promoting Economic Growth and Improving Working Conditions	157.78	55.05	35.36	19.00	9.07	13.06	10.57	11.95	4.02	2.50	1.60	1.90	321.86
-Financing for micro-enterprises / SMEs	53.00	24.50	15.22	10.00				7.92					110.64
-Competitiveness / Export Promotion	4.88	2.50	2.15										9.53
-Regulation of the Financial Sector	10.00	3.53		2.00				1.53	1.80	1.50			20.36
-Regional Development & Employment	47.70	8.34	7.38		3.07		7.57				1.60		75.66
-Research & Development	42.20	16.18	10.61	7.00	6.00	13.06	3.00	2.50	2.22	1.00		1.90	105.67
Improving Social Security	39.48	22.55	14.00	24.23	11.99	26.60	4.81	17.77	10.23	5.53		2.79	179.98
-Basic Healthcare Services		10.90	13.00	11.18	2.41								37.49
-Hospital Modernization						26.60			0.34	5.53		2.79	35.26
-Prevention (health and safety)	17.05												17.05
-Social Services	22.43	11.65	1.00	13.05	9.58		4.81	17.77	9.89				90.18
Protecting the Environment	198.75	52.09	49.68	31.53	34.64	19.00	31.18	13.00	15.00	8.97	3.94		457.77
-Public Transport	38.03	8.50		30.53	2.55								79.60
-Drinking Water Supply			24.91										24.91
-Wastewater Treatment							27.02	13.00			3.94		43.96
-Energy Efficiency / Renewable Energy	115.15	41.25	5.77		0.46	19.00			6.50	8.97			197.10
-Environmental Monitoring		0.35	10.83						8.50				19.68
-Waste Disposal	35.75				27.43								63.18
-Biodiversity	9.82	1.99	8.17	1.00	4.20		4.16						29.34
Improving Public Safety and Security	32.00	17.73	13.01	15.10	7.19	1.77	9.90	10.38	5.99				113.08
-Modernization of the Judiciary		2.20	4.23	2.84		1.77	3.21	8.00	0.64				22.89
-Border Protection	30.99	0.03			0.13				3.96				35.11
-Combating Corruption / Organized Crime		15.50	2.00	11.18	7.06		3.37						39.11
-Managing Natural Disasters / Emergencies	1.01		6.78	1.08			3.32	2.39	1.39				15.97
Strengthening Civil Society	28.10	21.25	9.00	11.64	7.80	5.55	5.51	3.50	2.50	3.23	0.15		98.23
-Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	24.70	12.03	5.00	6.59	3.80	5.55	5.51	3.50	2.50	3.23	0.15		72.56
-Bilateral Partnerships	3.40	9.22	4.00	5.05	4.00								25.67
Project Preparation Facility (PPF) / Technical Assistance Fund (TAF)	8.50	3.04	3.15	2.79	1.50	1.34	1.55	0.27	0.18	0.63		0.05	23.00
TOTAL (millions CHF)	464.60	171.71	124.20	104.29	72.19	67.32	63.52	56.88	37.92	20.86	5.69	4.74	1193.92
Projects	58	59	39	38	26	8	23	12	18	8	3	3	295

Annex 3: Swiss Contribution – Generic Program ‘Objective Tree’



Annex 4: Swiss Contribution – Commitment of Program Funds by Switzerland per partner state



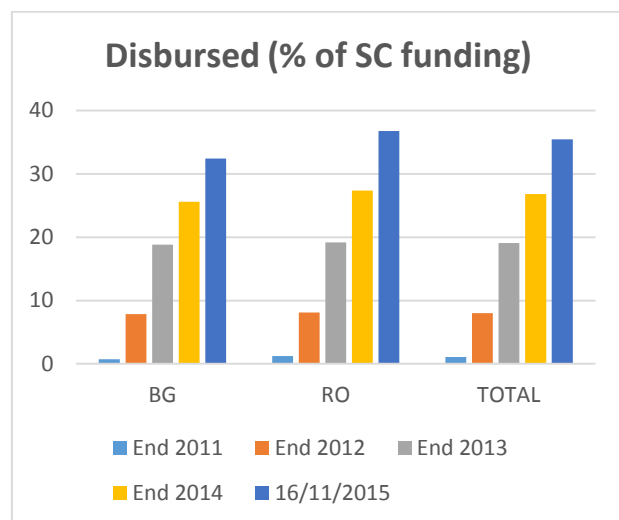
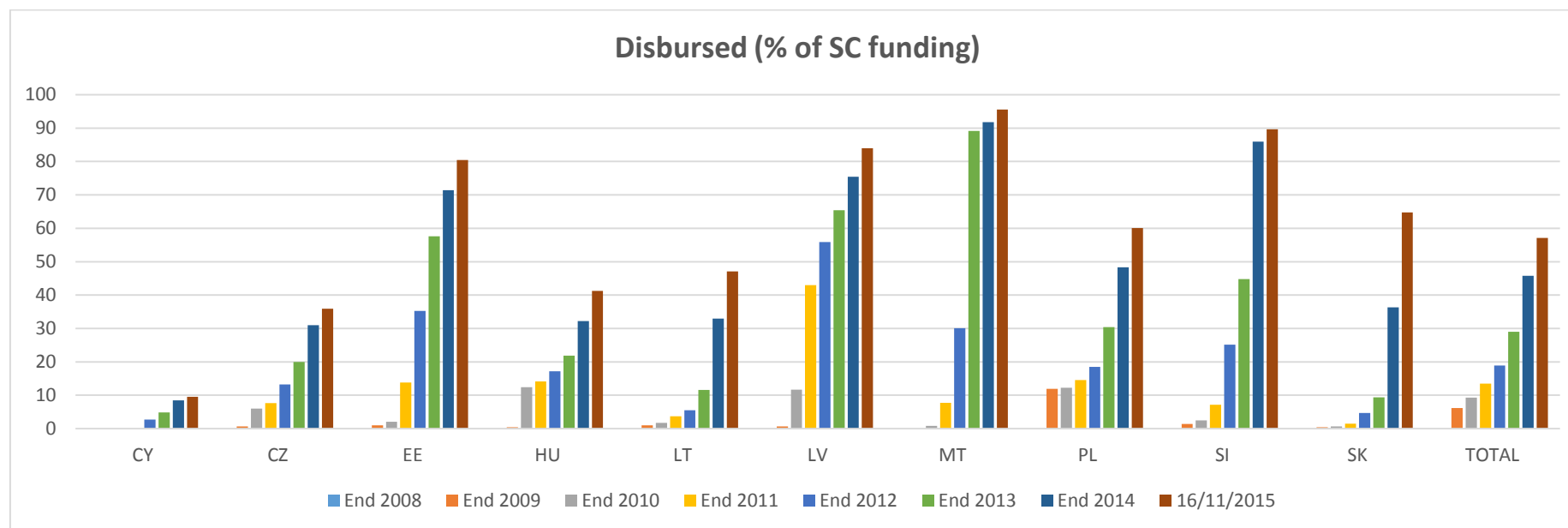
N.B. Data presented in the two figures are not directly comparable, apart from the final statistical data as to the level of commitment achieved per partner state at the end of the 5-year period. The financial credit for the 'EU-10' was approved on 14/06/2007 and therefore the end of year data represents, e.g. end 2008 data after 18-months implementation. The financial credit for Bulgaria and Romania was approved on 07/12/2009 and therefore the end of year data represents, e.g. end 2011 data after 24-months implementation.

All of the partner states achieved 100% commitment of the SC grant; 99.99% in CZ, EE, SI and SK.

By the end of 2009, representing half of the 5-year commitment period for the 'EU-10', 22% of the SC grant was committed; by the end of 2011, with less than 6-months prior to the end of the 5-year period, 27% of the 'EU-10' grant was not committed. Four states consistently out-performed the average for the commitment (i.e. basic deployment) of the SC grant: CY, EE, LV and SI; while MT achieved 100% commitment already by the end of 2010. While HU was traditionally below average for SC commitment, it did achieve significant progress in 2010. The pace of commitment of the SC in CZ and SK traditionally trailed the overall average.

By the end of 2011, representing 40% of the 5-year commitment period for Bulgaria and Romania, 41% of the SC grant was committed; while 37% of the SC grant was committed in the final year.

Annex 5: Swiss Contribution – Disbursement of Program Funds by Switzerland per partner state



N.B. As noted, data in the figures is not directly comparable in terms of the timeline of the financial credits.

By 16/11/2015, after almost 8½-years of the 10-years for implementation of the SC to the 'EU-10', the Swiss-side had received and reimbursed to the partner states requests for disbursement covering 57% of the SC grant. The reimbursement requests are submitted to Switzerland after the partner states have pre-financed the actions; the processing of the partner states' request, covering the whole SC program, is usually submitted to the Swiss-side on a quarterly basis, although delays in the processing of requests by the partner states exist, e.g. due to the lack of formal project monitoring/reporting, or delayed processing from project to program level.

Four states have consistently out-performed the average for the disbursement (i.e. realized utilization) of the SC grant: EE, LV, MT and SI, while LT and SK have both achieved clear progress in the implementation of actions and the disbursement of funds since 2014; the trend of disbursement in SK has been significantly maintained during 2015. While recognizing that PL sets the overall trend for SC commitment/disbursement, it has consistently out-performed/achieved the average for SC disbursement. Disbursement requests received and approved by Switzerland to CY and CZ have consistently below the average for the 'EU-10'.

The pace of disbursement of the SC grant to Bulgaria and Romania is somewhat faster than experienced under the SC to the 'EU-10', e.g. after 4-years a faster pace than the 'EU-10' after 5½-years implementation.

Annex 6: Sample of Projects (for in-depth assessment)

Country	Project Title	Project Number	Swiss Budget (CHF)	Start Date	End Date	Swiss Agency
Specific Objective: Promoting Economic Growth and Improving Working Conditions						
Hungary	Euroventures IV venture capital fund	UX-00304.01.01	15,215,904	01/04/2011	31/12/2016	SECO
Latvia	Micro-lending program	UX-00603.01.01	7,923,078	01/07/2011	31/01/2015	SECO
Poland	Enhancement of regional competitiveness through corporate social responsibility measures	UX-01005.02.01	4,866,117	04/08/2011	31/12/2016	SECO
Poland	Malopolska local product – developing local enterprises and agricultural processing using a partnership approach to economic education and a regional system for marketing Malopolska products	7F-07085.01.01	3,576,610	04/08/2011	30/09/2016	SDC
Slovakia	Vocational Education and Training for the labor market	7F-07864.01.01	3,885,000	27/01/2012	31/03/2016	SDC
Hungary	Development of bionic and genetic tools to help the visually impaired	7F-07103.01.01	1,239,052	15/10/2010	14/10/2015	SDC
Latvia	Block Grant for the Swiss researchers activities in Latvia	7F-07652.01.01	216,212	01/07/2011	30/09/2015	SDC
Poland	Polish-Swiss research program	7F-06728.02.01	30,200,000	16/12/2009	31/12/2016	SDC
Slovakia	Sciex–NMS ^{CH} (scientific exchange program / Scholarship Fund)	7F-06801.01.01 06801.01.02	3,000,000	16/04/2009	31/12/2016	SDC
Specific Objective: Improving Social Security						
Hungary	Public health focused model program for organizing primary care services by a virtual care service center	7F-08179.01.01	13,000,000	12/07/2012	30/06/2016	SDC
Poland	Preventing overweight and obesity as well as chronic diseases by education on nutrition and physical activity of the society	7F-07228.01.01	4,500,000	01/07/2011	14/06/2017	SDC

Country	Project Title	Project Number	Swiss Budget (CHF)	Start Date	End Date	Swiss Agency
Latvia	Support for the development of youth initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions	7F-06974.01.01	4,000,000	10/06/2011	31/03/2017	SDC
Poland	A helping hand in a safe environment	7F-07614.01.01	6,114,987	01/01/2012	30/04/2016	SDC
Slovakia	Community on its way to prosperity	7F-07913.01.01	1,410,000	25/02/2012	31/12/2015	SDC
Specific Objective: Protecting the Environment						
Hungary	Change of main lines for drinking water made of asbestos cement in the settlements of the micro-regions of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County	UX-00302.01.01	7,803,000	10/11/2010	30/06/2016	SECO
Slovakia	Public sewerage and sewerage plant for the village Častá	UX-00410.01.01	5,539,305	14/06/2012	31/12/2016	SECO
Poland	Renewable energy sources in Mszana Dolna and in partner communities	UX-01008.10.01	9,094,519	01/04/2012	31/12/2016	SECO
Hungary	Development of the Hungarian air quality network and laboratory background	UX-00301.01.01	5,750,250	01/03/2011	29/02/2016	SECO
Poland	Dismantling and safe storage of products containing asbestos from Malopolskie Voivodship	UX-01007.04.01	10,590,988	14/06/2012	14/06/2017	SECO
Poland	The Carpathians Unite – mechanism of consultation and cooperation for implementation of the Carpathian Convention	7F-07428.01.01	1,943,054	01/01/2012	31/06/2016	SDC
Specific Objective: Improving Public Safety and Security						
Latvia	Modernization of courts in Latvia	7F-06613.01.01	8,000,000	01/07/2009	31/12/2013	SDC
Poland	Preparation of customs service mobile groups to perform rapid reaction and crisis management duties	7F-06892.01.01	2,847,755	01/05/2011	31/10/2016	SDC
Hungary	Multi-level community policing network for the cooperation based crime prevention	7F-08178.01.01	2,000,000	02/07/2012	31/05/2016	SDC

Country	Project Title	Project Number	Swiss Budget (CHF)	Start Date	End Date	Swiss Agency
Hungary	Protection with mobile dams in flooded areas	7F-08205.01.01	3,007,097	01/10/2012	31/12/2015	SDC
Slovakia	The enhancement of preparedness of the rescue forces of the Ministry of Interior	7F-07713.01.01	3,319,150	08/08/2011	31/12/2016	SDC
Specific Objective: Strengthening Civil Society						
Hungary	Twinning and Partnership Block Grant	7F-07618.01.01	4,000,000	15/12/2010	31/12/2016	SDC
Latvia	Block Grant for the NGO Fund	7F-06665.01.01	3,500,000	01/01/2010	30/04/2013	SDC
Poland	Partnership Fund	7F-07199.01.01	3,400,000	08/12/2010	31/12/2015	SDC
Slovakia	NGO Block Grant and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation	7F-07776.01.01	5,510,901	08/08/2011	28/02/2015	SDC

Annex 7: Case Study Reports / Project Factsheets

The sample of projects for in-depth assessment, agreed in consultation between the evaluators and SDC and SECO on the basis of agreed selection criteria linked to the portfolio mapping, consisted of 29 projects, implemented in four of the partner states:

- 10 projects in Poland,
- 8 projects in Hungary,
- 6 projects in Slovakia,
- 5 projects in Latvia.

The four focus partner states selected are representative of the differing population size of the range of countries and thereby the extent of support provided, plus are also representative of the different geographical locations: reflecting the SC experience of a large, a medium and a small Central European country, plus a small Baltic country.

The sample of 29 projects addresses the five 'specific objectives' for the SC:

- Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions, 9 projects,
- Improving social security, 5 projects,
- Protecting the environment, 6 projects,
- Improving public safety and security, 5 projects,
- Strengthening civil society, 4 projects.

The projects address 20 of the thematic areas offered for potential support under the SC.

The Swiss Contribution to the 29 specific projects is budgeted at approximately CHF 175 million – representing 18-19% of the Swiss Contribution to the 'EU-10' for project funding.

For each project, a one-page factsheet is provided in the annexes below:

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Annex 7.1: Promoting Economic Growth and Improving Working Conditions

Linked to the Swiss Contribution's specific objective “**promoting economic growth and improving working conditions**” the following projects were assessed per thematic area:

Access to external financing for micro-enterprises and SMEs

- 1) Hungary: Euroventures IV venture capital fund
- 2) Latvia: Micro-lending program

Business competitiveness / export promotion for SMEs

- 3) Poland: Enhancement of regional competitiveness through corporate social responsibility measures

Regional development and employment

- 4) Poland: Malopolska local product – developing local enterprises and agricultural processing using a partnership approach to economic education and a regional system for marketing Malopolska products
- 5) Slovakia: Vocational Education and Training for the labor market

Research and development

- 6) Hungary: Development of bionic and genetic tools to help the visually impaired
- 7) Latvia: Block Grant for the Swiss researchers activities in Latvia
- 8) Poland: Polish-Swiss research program
- 9) Slovakia: Sciex–NMS^{CH} (scientific exchange program / Scholarship Fund)

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions
SC Thematic Area	Access to external financing for micro-enterprises and SMEs
SC Project	Euroventures IV venture capital fund
Executing Agency	Euroventures Venture Capital Fund Ltd., Hungary
SC Grant	CHF 15,215,904 Total Project Eligible Costs ca. CHF 36 million

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged as highly satisfactory. The project directly contributes to improved access to finance and job creation as envisaged under FA 5 "Improving the business environment and the access to finance for SMEs". Increased employment was part of the overall objective of the New Hungary Development Plan 2007-2013, under which improving capital provision for enterprises was a priority action. 21.6% of the total allocation to the Economic Development Operational Program (EDOP) 2007 -2013 was dedicated to financial instruments including venture capital as its limited availability in the pre-seed/early stage phase was identified as a key problem. Euroventures IV is the only VC fund in the portfolio of MFB Invest Plc available in the region of Central Hungary including Budapest, where most investment opportunities exist and is implemented in complementarity with 28 other venture capital joint funds implemented in the other 7 development regions of Hungary. The logic of the intervention is coherent and results chain clear (i.e. equity investments-access to finance-jobs/employment) however external factors/risks/assumptions not identified in the LFM and indicators are not quantified. VC Funds continue to be relevant as the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020 aims to improve and continue programs such as Euroventures IV under the new Economic Development and Innovation OP.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged as highly satisfactory. Six months prior to the end of the investment period (i.e. 31st of December 2015) Euroventures IV bypassed its target in terms of amount committed (contracted) as this is HUF 5.58bn, 0.58bn more than initially envisaged and thus contributed to a reduction in the equity gap existing on the Hungarian domestic SME finance market. The most investments financed are innovative (e.g. MediMass which develops an intelligent surgical knife), early-stage (e.g. TresorIT which has developed the Encrypted cloud storage with the same name) and/or start-up (e.g. SequenceIQ which has developed a big data processing platform as a service). Similarly, the sectors covered are largely coherent with the initial intentions (i.e. of investing in IT, health services, green technology). Competitiveness / performance of supported SMEs increased as positive outcomes were registered in terms of increase of turnover and number of staff (e.g. 156 new jobs created at the end of 2014) and many of them are successfully present on international markets (e.g. Ubichem Pharma Manufacturing) or have expanded regionally (FürgeFutár Kft). Among factors of success the following need mentioning: focus on investing in excellence in Hungary and in internationally competitive enterprises (e.g. TresorIT, Ubichem, SequenceIQ, selected in 2014 in the top 10 leading big start-ups in the world), including in (successful) cases where risks would not have been taken by a privately-financed fund (e.g. MediMass), professional scrutiny of business opportunities proposed and existing network of co-investors of an experienced Fund Manager, effective communication with potential investees and investees themselves, supporting the latter at operational level in terms of business structuring, management and marketing and closely monitoring their evolution.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. An agreement on EUROVENTURES IV was reached relatively late after BFA was signed; joining the Co-Investment Fund of the JEREMIE Program was an efficient approach in this context. This decision was weighted carefully and the selection of the Fund Manager based on due diligence. The extension of the investment period until the end of 2015 (until December 2015) had positive effects on effectiveness as it allowed the Executing Agency to build-up a high-quality portfolio of investments. The Investment Board meetings are organized on a need-basis and investment decisions are taken operatively. Cooperation among key stakeholders runs smoothly and delays on submitting reports under the SC are minor, despite the supplementary burden they represent for Fund Managers (next to JEREMIE-related reporting). Monitoring investees is a thorough and thus a resources-consuming exercise, but it is necessary with a view to secure investments and their success.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Euroventures IV is in place until 2020 in accordance with the provisions of the PA and no risks in this respect were identified. A series of risks do exist as regards the outcomes obtained by investee (i.e. level of international competition) and the gains registered in terms of development of VC market and its institutional structure may not be sustained if venture capital's availability decreases in the next years.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Access to external financing for micro-enterprises and SMEs		
SC Project	Micro-lending program		
Executing Agency	JSC "Development Finance Institution Altum", Latvia		
SC Grant	CHF 7,923,078	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 9,712,568

Relevance

Relevance is judged to be highly satisfactory. The program is focused on access to finance for self-employed and micro-enterprises, both already established and starting-up. Making microfinance available to a category of entrepreneurs amounting to almost 80% of SMEs in Latvia was a necessity for tackling rising unemployment (i.e. from 8.3% in January 2009 to 17.1% of the active population in 2010), as envisaged also by the "Concept on Support Measures for Micro-enterprises adopted in 2009 and the National Development Plan 2007-2013, as finance for start-ups and micro-enterprises is not available through commercial banks. The intervention logic and results chain is coherent (i.e. loans-access-jobs-employment-wealth of household-people out of poverty). The number and volume of loans is relatively equally distributed among the 5 regions, whereas focusing on the less developed areas might have had a stronger impact in terms of reducing socio-economic disparities. The program was set up to complement existing schemes targeting micro-enterprises, EU- or nationally-funded, and consequently ensured access to finance to categories not covered under other interventions (e.g. microenterprises older than 3 years, or sectors other than agriculture). Access to finance, including microfinance, continues to be a need, as confirmed by the National guidelines of industrial policy for 2013 -2020, the Smart Specialization Strategy and the results of the survey carried out for the evaluation of this program: 44.65% of the responders consider that lack of investment capital is one of the most significant obstacle for their growth.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The program did improve access to micro-loans for micro enterprises and self-employed persons to set-up and develop business activities as envisaged at the outset, through the volume of loans and grants disbursed (e.g. CHF 10.3 million in loans and CHF 661 thousand (EUR 535 thousand) in grants compared to CHF 8.3 million initially planned). The program aimed to disburse up to 650 micro-loans, significantly less than actually achieved, i.e. 1037, and created or maintained almost three times more jobs than initially envisaged. 70% of the beneficiaries of Micro lending participating in the survey carried out for the purpose of this evaluation reported that their turnover increased either by 10-15% or even by more than 15% (i.e. 25% of responders) due to the finance received under the program, effect apparently even stronger than jobs created. Consequently the program did contribute, in overall terms, to employment and rising living standards and of a more intense economic activity of the micro-business sector. The program created more welfare in rural areas and among family businesses and thus contributes to closing the development gap in the country.

Efficiency

Efficiency is judged to be highly satisfactory. The internal management system set up by ALTUM worked optimally and booked the results expected 8 months earlier than planned. Risks were identified and contained through adequate monitoring mechanisms at operational/final beneficiary level (internal weekly and monthly reports) but also at program level. The key to success in this regard seems to be a well-articulated internal implementation and monitoring system (including IT platform), sustained by regional/local specialized presence which ensures direct, need-based contact and support. Notable efforts were made to ensure efficiency: the program was shortened when its operational phase ended and beyond January 2014 management costs were calculated and reimbursed on a cost sharing methodology which avoided wasting resources involved in documenting and requesting reimbursement on real costs. Due to the overachievement of targets, the administrative cost per micro-loan was CHF 800, instead of 1089 as calculated in the FPP.

Sustainability

Sustainability is judged to be satisfactory. Operation of the Loan Fund is ensured up to mid-2020. According to the survey results, also the benefits of the loans (i.e. jobs and turnover) will be sustained at least 3 years (30% of responders) or 1-2 years (29% % of responders) after project completion. But, there is room for improvement in monitoring the sustainability of loan effects.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Business competitiveness / export promotion for SMEs		
SC Project	Enhancement of regional competitiveness through CSR measures		
Executing Agency	Polish Agency for Enterprise Development / PARP, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 4,866,117	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,866,117

Relevance

The relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. It contributes to the widespread knowledge on and practices on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through awareness and knowledge building for Regional partners, Marshall Offices and Centers of Investors and Exporters (MOs/CoIEs), Employers' associations, and supporting SMEs in practicing CSR through specific grants. In doing so the project fulfils a gap in the map of assistance to Poland and EEA / Norway Financial Mechanism in the area of improvement of the competitiveness of the private sector. No similar support is available through EU Regional Development Fund and the Social Fund.

The intervention logic and methodology of implementation of the project has been clear enough. Those might need improvement as regards: 1) better elaboration on the participation of MOs/CoIEs and their further role; 2) better assessment of incentives and motivation of SMEs for investing into CSR practices in different clusters of economy; 3) improved, comprehensive and easily accessible database of CSR consultants. The outcome indicators might include those characterizing: 1) exit strategies and ex-project continuation and planning of CSR activities by SMEs and MOs/CoIEs.

Any possible follow-up on this project may focus more on capacity building, strategic approaches to foster CSR practices (MOs, Employers' Associations and consultants) and less on SME grants.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project delivered all planned outputs with sufficient quality and surpassed the targets for some of them. Thus, 157 SMEs received CSR grants during the first two calls - out of 324 submitted proposals. The scope of awareness and training activities much surpassed the targets in all but one region. The number of CSR consultants reached 325 (25 planned). Marshall Offices / CoIEs were trained in all but one regions.

The project yet needs to study, summarize and report on the effects of the implemented CSR projects both on the SMEs and their environment / partners, to also assess the achievements against the targets set for the Objective and some of those for the Outcomes. The reflections of the sample of SMEs and CSR consultants interviewed during the current evaluation mission allows the following assumptions, which are still to be carefully analyzed by the project:

- 1) Investments into continuous CSR practices are, yet, affordable for only the part of the SMEs, whose activities and economic performance can be positively influenced in the short run: typically, these are SMEs engaged in waste management, recycling, those with an opportunity for flexible usage of human resources and those exporting or supplying to 'CSR conscious' companies.
- 2) The Marshall Offices / CoIEs did not turn to be as active as had been expected: instead, the employers' associations (e.g. Lewiatan) and PARP's regional branch are very interested and actively involved, promoting CSR practices in efficient and flexible usage of human resources
- 3) While about 70% of grant projects are concentrated in environmental cluster, those in human resources cluster perform more efficiently: effects of flexible work hours are seen in a short run.
- 4) The database of CSR consultants on PARP's web-site can be improved with: more visibility of accessibility; more information on the experience and accomplishments of individual consultants; being open to all consultants with respective experience and references.

The current evaluation undertaken by the project (September – November 2015) might respond to these issues, to learn sufficient lessons for any further follow-up to the project.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The selected approach and modality proved to be valid. The scope of competences and inputs were sufficient and provided with good quality. Despite of some delays, the project managed to reach and surpass the planned outputs. The operations were carried out to the planned and even reduced costs thanks to the savings within the first component and rationalizing the budgets for CSR grant projects. This together with the appreciation of Swiss Franc made possible multiplying the number of grant projects. The project was extended from August 2015 to end of 2016, which is reasonable to finalize the additional third call for grant projects, evaluation, to learn lessons and disseminate those among the stakeholders.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The promotion of CSR practices among SMEs is not conceptualized in the framework of national policies. Most probably, the current project will not be continued by PARP or other agencies without external support. It assumed that SMEs in many sectors will not be able to afford investments into new CSR projects without aside support.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Regional development and employment		
SC Project	Malopolska local product		
Executing Agency	Environmental Partnership Foundation, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 3,576,610	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 3,951,820

Relevance

Overall, the project's relevance is unsatisfactory. The project responds to the need for the organization of 'hubs or processing and marketing centers' to cover the growing needs of the population in healthy and natural products from local small farms. Once the regulatory framework became restrictive for selling processed food and beverages from local small farms (tax and sanitary legislation), the demand did not diminish and the supply went through 'hidden market'. The project puts efforts to create a food and beverage processing center, with sufficient facilities and capacities to ensure the quality and compliance with sanitary regulations, and to organize sells to the buyers, who want to be sure in the quality of products among the variety of options. This market is still in the first phase of development: the core idea of the project has been bringing together all participants of the market and provide for infrastructure for quality products and quality assurance for products. However, the project design and methodology under-estimated the efforts needed for such a difficult task even in one sub-region. While the idea of the processing center (Kitchen Incubator) was very relevant, the involvement of the market participants has been based on awareness and knowledge building, trainings, fairs and events. Without denying the value of these activities, it is now clear that the project needs to undertake somewhat more 'business approach'; i.e. proper analysis on the motivation of different stakeholder groups for the new business scheme, market analysis and adequate business planning. The project complements the interventions in the area of improvement of competitiveness under the EEA / Norway Financial Mechanisms.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. 1) Within the first component the project managed to: conclude partnerships with 14 organizations, over 100 farmers; bring in local products development into the Malopolska Regional Development Strategy 2014-2020. The targets for trainings, workshops and study tours have been overachieved. 2) The construction of Kitchen Incubator was constrained insufficiently elaborated budget and its subsequent adjustments – with finally launching the construction in autumn 2015 with over 2-year delay. Nevertheless, the local partner leading the component provided for two temporary premises, renovated those and installed the equipment in those premises. Thus, in fact, the Kitchen Incubator - split into two - have been in place for about a year. 3) Over 400 farmers are identified - potentially interested entering the new Local Product (LP) System; over 100 farmers (the target was 75) sell 25 product groups, using 3 'local brands' under the LP 'regional brand'. The outlet at the Nowa Huta Cultural Centre (Carrot Bistro) became a model sales-distribution center and is operation since mid-2015. 4) The project concluded the 2nd round of grants for local initiatives: the results are yet to be assessed and summarized. 5) The promotional activities have been intensive, overcoming the planned scope, including fairs, advertisement, trainings, seminars and conferences. Seems, the project enters the final stage of implementation, where it will need to finalize the mobilization of stakeholder groups and integrate the above achievements into a sustainable business (See below - Sustainability).

Efficiency

Overall, the project's efficiency has been unsatisfactory. While the selected modality and partnerships were adequate, the project lacked competences in business engineering, management and marketing. It incurred sizable and sequential delays due to difficulties in consolidation of stakeholders - other than direct partners, erroneous assessment of the investments and construction costs for the kitchen incubator and some bureaucracy related to approval of the reports, all together making over 2 years' time period. The project's initial duration of 48 months was extended by 14 months (30 September 2016), which is reasonable to finalize the kitchen incubator and any marketing and business planning activities. Furthermore, more extension may be needed for piloting and monitoring the first results of the kitchen incubator in autumn 2016.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The project managed to work the LP model, however, yet, without carrying out the full maintenance costs of the kitchen incubators. To be sustainable these incubators need to become, at least, publicly held businesses with a sufficiently elaborated marketing strategy and business plan. The human resources development and transport/logistics underpinning sustainability also need to be in the focus. It would be reasonable, if the marketing research and business planning are performed independently.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Regional development and employment		
SC Project	Vocational Education and Training for the labor market		
Executing Agency	State Institute for Vocational Education (EHB)		
	Partner: Swiss Federal Institute of Vocational Education and Training		
SC Grant	CHF 3,885,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,637,000

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The project contributes to the VET reform promoting cooperation between stakeholders (employers/secondary VET schools) to adjust VET to labor market demands and increase its attractiveness by assessing employer needs. In Slovakia the unemployment rate for school graduates has been increasing to over 30%. On the other hand VET reform was pushed by employer concerns about work force shortages (especially from the automobile industry). In March 2015 a new Act on VET was adopted providing incentives for companies to certify for apprenticeship schemes. In this context stakeholders emphasized the continuous relevance of the project in order to support the ongoing VET system reform in Slovakia. The project links into a number of national projects co-financed by the European Social Fund; e.g. "Development of secondary vocational education" (implementers: the Ministry of Education / ŠIOV).

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is judged to be highly satisfactory. Out of 7 planned output indicators 3 have been bypassed: 6 state educational programs innovated (planned: 5), 230 pupils testing these programs (180), 120 VET promotion activities (100); 3 outputs as planned: 10 employers involved in practical education, VET promotion in 10 technical high schools, cooperation with 50 primary schools; one output on VET teacher training is in progress (PIR 10). Concerning outcomes the Ministry of Education highlighted that the project provided important input into legislative change. Schools emphasized promotional activities contributing to combat decreasing student enrolment figures. At the Chemical VET School Bratislava 26 students enrolled in chemical operator classes, a field for which classes had been previously vacant and which responds to a demand of collaborating chemical companies. Overall, around 70% of pupil who enrolled in the Chemical VET School Bratislava previously participated in promotional events. The VET school Farského 9 (bakery/ pastry) recorded a 15% enrolment increase. For mechanic electrical technician specialization adapted through the project, the technical United School Prešov recorded a 50% enrolment increase. The project also contributed to decrease student drop-out rates as it built confidence and a clearer understanding about career paths. The large interest of companies resulted in exceeding numbers of contractual arrangements, e.g. technical United School Prešov collaborates with 16 companies. Due to high unemployment rates in the Prešov region, employers have no incentive to obtain certification. Also budgetary implications of the VET reform and legislative changes for companies and schools are still unclear. Media coverage is high and presents the project as a good VET intervention example. Collaboration with the Swiss partner is viewed to be successful and has a potential for a longer-term commitment. The VET project is considered to be a showcase project as it promotes the Swiss VET model on the basis of Swiss sectoral experience. The partnership also triggered engagement with other Swiss institutions and companies, e.g. Nestlé.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The PPF was viewed as essential for the preparation of a feasibility study helping to avoid design errors (which were said to have occurred in previous ESF projects). Initially the project was in delay due to the lengthy public procurement processes; overall this did not influence planned outputs achievement. An exception is the late completion of public procurement for VET teachers training. In 2015 it was decided to extend the project to November 2016, also to ensure spending of appreciation savings. The project had no formal risk assessment. The Steering Committee was perceived as functional and representing well all relevant stakeholders (government office, EHB, Swiss embassy, technical VET schools). The NCU provided sufficient support, including training. Overall, modalities of the SC are seen as user-friendly. Its flexibility is highlighted to have contributed to results achievement by allowing adjustments in response to context changes.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. For the EA the project provided a model which can now be replicated in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. Adjusted specialization fields have been included into state VET programs. There is a strong political commitment and a legislative framework is in place. Concerning financial sustainability priority axis 1: Education (458 million Euro) of the 2014-2020 OP Human Resources contains as one of the four investment priorities improvement of the quality of the VET system based on labor market needs.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Research and development		
SC Project	Development of bionic and genetic tools to help the visually impaired		
Executing Agency	Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 1,239,052	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 1,628,916

Relevance

Relevance is judged to be highly satisfactory. In the context of Lisbon Agenda and Europe 2020 Strategy, building a knowledge based economy has been a priority for Hungary as for Switzerland. In 2007-2013 this was the first objective under the priority of the New Hungary Development Plan ("Creation of an innovative, knowledge-based economy" under "Economic development"). The joint research project in applied research in the area of health/life sciences is carried out in partnership between leading Hungarian and Swiss institutions. The activities are relevant to many of the 285 million people visually impaired worldwide, in particular the 39 million blind. In the short-term (i.e. bionic-glasses) the project aimed to produce a tool to be immediately used by the target group while in the medium-term the research team is working towards finding a solution to efficiently and effectively replace retina implant interventions. Targeting visually impaired persons is fully in line with the principles of the SC to include socially disadvantaged individuals/groups. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (thematic objective of 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy) remains of major importance in Hungary (see the Partnership Agreement 2014-2020).

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Progress has been booked in terms of developing a portable cell phone based visual recognition device (i.e. bionic eyeglasses) although this isn't a marketed product, yet. Due to delays in commercial availability of the cellular platform initially planned to be used the development process slowed down but results are registered in the form of cell phone applications. These have added value compared with already existing technologies/devices: the application(s) developed combines several visual recognition tasks (e.g. of banknotes, color recognition) in one device only, has enhanced feed-back capacity (i.e. does inform user on correct positioning of device/mobile phone for image interpretation) and may be used on mobile phones (provided that these have enough computational power). For the medium and long-run outputs and outcomes planned have been achieved. The 3D two-photon scanning technology for high throughput testing of retinal function developed by Femtonics Kft. is reportedly 10 million times faster than previous systems and the most performing in the world at this stage. The microscope, as well as the viruses developed by the Szeged University, were instrumental to opto-genetic tests realized by the FMI. The results of the tests contribute to developing in medium run (5 years) techniques to replace highly invasive procedures for VI people as retina implant. The partnership between leading institutions in fields at the same time complementary and highly relevant for the project, the multidisciplinary approach (i.e. combining visual technology with neuroscience and biology) and innovations developed constitute key elements which determine effectiveness.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The implementation phase needed to be extended from 37 to 60 months due to a number of challenges encountered: late advance payments which triggered delays in purchasing needed equipment, delays registered in carrying out public procurement procedures, irregular expenditures triggering extra procedural steps in processing interim reports, unexpected situations deriving from reimbursing procedures related to the Swiss partner, delays occurred in activities to be carried out due to external factors (i.e. launching of the Toshiba platform needed for the bionic glasses) and templates difficult to adjust to the specificities of the project. Project implementation period was extended also due to exchange rate gains and the innovative character of research undertaken. Despite significant resources planned to be involved in the project management (i.e. 540 person-days plus 73 for public procurement, legal and financial expertise) progress interim reports have been submitted late from the outset; delays became severe as multiple actors have been sequentially involved in verifying and in approving them and project managers changes several times on the IB side.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project consolidated the partnership between the 4 complementary institutions which continue cooperate informally and formally, under smaller contracts and projects and prepare to apply for a large Horizon 2020 application. Femtonics leads internationally the market of 3D microscopes and continuously develops its products to maintain its competitive edge.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Research and development		
SC Project	Block Grant (BG) for the Swiss researchers activities in Latvia		
Intermediate Body	State Education Development Agency, Latvia		
SC Grant	CHF 216,212	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 254,367

Relevance

Relevance of the BG is judged to be satisfactory. Via a series of small project grants (maximum size CHF 11,680), the BG supports the development of the potential of Latvian higher education and research institutions through their enhanced access to high quality education and research via the sharing of academic and research experience delivered by Swiss researchers in Latvia and in the establishment of sustainable partnerships between institutions in Latvia and Switzerland. The goals of the BG are in line with the strategic guidelines for the development of education in Latvia, e.g. the promotion of international collaboration via joint projects, and the improvement of study programs offered by Latvian institutions, including their potential attractiveness to international students/researchers. The BG was proposed by the Latvian-side as a complementary measure to the Sciex Scholarship Fund. The latter focuses support on individual doctoral or post-doctoral young researchers to undertake research in Switzerland, whereas the BG targets a broader range and greater number of Latvian beneficiaries, blending the sharing of knowledge and experience with institutional capacity building. However, the BG design was not adequately based on an assessment of needs on the Latvian-side or of the level of interest and operative capacity on the Swiss-side to undertake such activities. The original SC grant awarded to the project – CHF 0.5 million – had to be reduced due to the limited capacity for absorption of the available grant.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the BG is judged to be satisfactory. The BG has exceeded many of the targets set for the achievement of results for outputs and outcomes – e.g. the number of small project grants awarded (92 versus the target of 45), the number of Latvian academic staff members and students and researchers ‘participating’ in the lectures and research activities (the IB reports approximately 6,500 versus a target of 2,000). However, it has to be recognized that 67% of the grants were for actions of maximally one-week only (including travel time) and therefore the immediate delivery of results, in terms of the substantive collaboration envisaged by the BG, is only partially achieved. In addition, only 13 of the 58 institutions in Latvia that were the target group of stakeholders received support under the BG, for which three institutions alone account for 67% of the small projects – the School of Business and Finance alone accounts for approximately 33% of the projects, followed by the Latvian Academy of Music and the Latvia University of Agriculture. As an immediate result of the implemented small projects the IB recognizes that the improvement of study programs offered by Latvian institutions has been facilitated as opposed to actually delivered and institutionalized. In addition, the target for 30 stable partnerships established between Latvian and Swiss institutions is only partially demonstrated: the IB reports 14 follow-up operational partnerships were maintained.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the BG is judged to be unsatisfactory. Implementation of the BG faced a number of obstacles, notably the relatively low level of proposals received in terms of the intensity of the research activities proposed that could feasibly be undertaken within the framework of the BG design. Therefore the actual take-up of the available SC grant was both slow and, overall, limited. The principle obstacles in terms of efficient take-up were: (1) unless some level of contact or associated networking links already existed, interested Latvian institutions experienced difficulties in finding partners/contacts in Switzerland, (2) the required seniority ranking of the Swiss researchers and thereby their actual availability to undertake missions, even of minimum 5-days duration let alone for up to 2 months, (3) the relatively unattractive payment conditions to the Latvian final beneficiary institution – initially a 20% advance payment, with 80% upon approval of the sub-project completion report and supporting documentation – as well as for the Swiss researchers – whom, as employees of their institution, received standard daily allowance and travel costs only, with the researchers/institution therefore not truly compensated in terms of the required preparatory actions prior to their mission, or in terms of potential direct follow-up assistance. It is also recognized that almost 93% of all small project proposals were accepted, a significantly higher percentage than the average for a BG mechanism, and therefore quality control possibly not optimal. Cost-effectiveness of the BG, as realized, is unsatisfactory: as a result of the low take-up of the grant – and thereby the reallocation of 47% of funding to the Sciex Scholarship Fund – the fixed management costs of the IB have risen from 9.15% of the total eligible project costs to 21%.

Sustainability

Sustainability is judged to be satisfactory. The benefits delivered are maintained by the institutions.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Research and development		
SC Project	Polish-Swiss research program		
Executing Agency	National Information Processing Institute (OPI), Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 30,200,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 35,529,412

Relevance

The relevance of the program is judged to be highly satisfactory. It successfully complements and surpasses the opportunities availed EU-Poland operational program on human capital development, the EEA / Norway Financial Mechanism and the National Science Foundation. Specifically, the PSRP focuses on: 1) few basic scientific areas (ICT, Energy, Nanotechnologies, Health, Environment) – detrimental for development of science, research instruments and the potential of applied research; 2) avails long-term interventions, allowing full cycle or mature phase of research; 3) supports the scientists and institutions in getting the latest technological facilities and equipment. The program, being highly competitive and selective among both Polish and Swiss research institutions, brings notable value in both joint achievements and mutual learning. It encourages participation of young scientists and facilitates awareness on latest research topics.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the program is judged to be satisfactory. The program's progress towards its indicators is good. While the number of involved institutions is merely 20% less (which does not affect the number and quality of the projects), the number of involved scientists is merely 4 times more than had been planned. Overall, 31 projects were financed, with involvement of 49 (31 Polish and 18 Swiss) institutes and 434 scientists. The pace of implementation of the research projects is also good: it is expected that all of those will avail the planned results. The six projects visited during the current evaluation mission revealed a high degree of accomplishment of the main research work. Some of the projects are yet behind the targets for publications – a category of indicator for research projects. Nevertheless, in many projects the number of publications is not necessarily related to their effectiveness. For example, the project no 085 (Institute of Physics) has made a notable progress in a very difficult area of identifying and sampling a new solar energy absorbent, however, yet, there is no much to be published at this stage. Hence, the publications need to be planned carefully during the elaboration of indicators. An idea discussed with OPI and stakeholders is to foresee, for possible future, annual internal studies of the results / work-in-progress whether through expanding the mandate of the scientific members of the Joint Selection Committee or through specific evaluations. This together with annual reviews of the JSC may also allow the SC management, Polish and Swiss Public to have clear idea on the progress in these projects. The program has been also effective in awareness building and knowledge management. The projects' briefs are hosted on a specific – PSRP related page of OPI web-site, a major conference was organized with intensive participation of Polish and Swiss stakeholders, further visibility activities – organized, making PSRP well-recognized. Mutual exchange and benefits of Swiss and Polish stakeholders is very high and noticeable. Swiss institutions receive important and efficient inputs for their long-standing research themes.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The ongoing management and oversight by the OPI, the inputs of the Joint Selection Committee for selection of the projects and annual review of performance have been efficient. The main risks were related to: 1) the losses for Swiss partners due to the requirement to fix the payments in PLN and subsequent double exchange of currency; and 2) quarterly reporting (for Swiss partners) in two languages (for Polish partners), while there could be very little progress in one quarter. It is noted that the current annual reporting formats / templates limit the ability of the scientists to report on the 'real progress. The format of the completion report, nevertheless, makes this possible in the summary part. This can be further replicated in the annual reports. Some savings of the program are supposed to be reallocated for the extension of selected projects, which is a reasonable approach, however, the respective decision is pending since May 2015.

Sustainability

The sustainability of the program is judged to be satisfactory. From the selected sample, it can be assumed that the research projects will continue developing the results beyond the program. All the achievements in the projects constitute a part of a long-term process undertaken by the institutions. Furthermore, many of the achievements lay down basis for further applied research and practice. The cooperation with Swiss institutions seems to be also continuous in a long run. On the other hand, all involved institutions will need continuous funding to continue research operations, maintenance of current and investments into further research infrastructure.

SC Objective	Promoting economic growth and improving working conditions		
SC Thematic Area	Research and development		
SC Project	Sciex–NMS ^{CH} (scientific exchange program / Scholarship Fund)		
Coordination Body	Slovak Academic Information Agency, Slovakia		
SC Grant	CHF 3,000,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 3,264,705

Relevance

Relevance of Sciex-NMS^{CH} is judged to be highly satisfactory. Sciex contributes to the reduction of socio-economic disparities in the enlarged EU via fostering scientific cooperation and partnerships between scientific and research institutions in the partner states with those in Switzerland. Sciex provides support to develop the scientific capacities of junior researchers from the partner states – doctoral and post-doctoral students – via funding individual junior researchers to conduct research projects at a Swiss institution. The fellowships provide the opportunity for researchers to undertake their research in an international environment for which the Swiss-offer is regularly ranked as one of the global leaders with respect to innovation. The duration of the research fellowship varies from minimum 6-months to maximum 24-months, as necessitated by the individual research project. Via the research projects the fellows enhance their specific research skills, deepen their expertise, and proceed in their academic career in terms of supporting their attainment of higher degrees and/or their enhanced exposure to the international scientific environment, e.g. the submission of papers to renowned scientific journals, presentations of their research at professional conventions. In order to ensure that the research projects are suitably anchored in terms of relevance the overall projects are designed based on joint research goals agreed between senior researchers in the partner states (the 'home-institution' of the fellow) and in Switzerland (the 'host-institution' of the fellow). The senior researchers provide mentoring to the fellow to steer the research project, including via short-term research visits allowing for the senior researchers and their institutions to collaborate.

Relevance of the Sciex fellowships has also been strongly demonstrated by the level of demand experienced in most of the partner states: in Slovakia, the SC grant for Sciex was doubled.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of Sciex-NMS^{CH} is judged to be satisfactory. While the Sciex program in Slovakia has technically delivered a lower number of fellowships (40 versus a target of 64), this is explained due to the length of the research study in Switzerland for the Slovak junior researchers: on average 10-months per fellow, compared to the minimal time-length of 6-months. Sciex has delivered 400-months of research for Slovak fellows – compared to a target of 384-months – supporting 20 doctoral and 20 post-doctoral fellows. The Slovak fellows – 22 men, 18 women – have predominantly undertaken their research linked to aspects of biological research, physics, environmental and earth sciences, engineering sciences, and chemistry – the five fields of research account for 87.5% of Slovak fellows. Sciex has also supported research undertaken across the wider range of academic fields, e.g. for Slovak fellows areas of linguistics and literature, ethnology, and economics/finance. Based on questionnaire survey responses received from Slovak fellows – undertaken in early 2014 linked to the mid-term review of Sciex in the partner states – the research period boosted their international academic experience, established the basis for potential further research with the 'host-institution', and delivered clear personal benefits from the experience to the individual fellows, e.g. impact on their academic career or international reputation and visibility.

Efficiency

Efficiency of Sciex-NMS^{CH} is judged to be satisfactory. Overall management of Sciex-NMS^{CH} is undertaken by the Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) acting as the (Swiss) IB. In each participating partner state a Coordination Body for Sciex exists, based either on direct appointment or via a selection process. In Slovakia the latter option was utilized, with the process from announcing the open call for proposals to act as the CB entity to the conclusion of the Project Implementation Agreement between the NCU and the CB taking just under 12-months to complete. Despite the relatively lengthy period to appoint the CB, Sciex has been efficiently managed: Slovakia first participated in Sciex under the 3rd open call for research projects and participated in total in five of the ten open calls launched by CRUS between November 2009 and April 2014. The CB has efficiently promoted awareness of Sciex to the target audience, notably via information events in all of the regions in Slovakia, reaching well over 3,000 scientific and research workers. The vast majority of Slovak respondents (95%) to the 2014 survey indicated that fellows only required to contact one potential 'host-institution' mentor in order to agree the basis for the joint research project. The main constraint for fellows linked to the arrangement of housing conditions.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the benefits is judged to be satisfactory. 95% of Slovak fellows responding to the 2014 survey indicated they were continuing their academic career in Slovakia and internationally.

Annex 7.2: Improving Social Security

Linked to the Swiss Contribution's specific objective "improving social security" the following projects were assessed per thematic area:

Healthcare

- 1) Hungary: Public health focused model program for organizing primary care services by a virtual care service center

Prevention (health)

- 2) Poland: Preventing overweight and obesity as well as chronic diseases by education on nutrition and physical activity of the society

Social services

- 3) Latvia: Support for the development of youth initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions
- 4) Poland: A helping hand in a safe environment
- 5) Slovakia: Community on its way to prosperity

SC Objective	Improving social security		
SC Thematic Area	Healthcare		
SC Project	Public health focused model program for organizing primary care services		
Executing Agency	National Institute for Quality and Organizational Development in Healthcare and Medicines, Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 13,000,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 15,294,118

Relevance. Relevance is judged to be highly satisfactory. Health is set as a main priority under the area „Human and Social Development” (as per EU-10 Dispatch) and health-related interventions contribute to achievement of multiple objectives of the Swiss contribution, i.e. “Promoting economic growth” besides “Improving social security”. The project is interlinked with EU-funded interventions focused on National Health Informatics system (e-Health), rehabilitation of social infrastructure and social integration (including of Roma). The project brings forward the vision and actions envisaged for primary health care under the "Revitalized Healthcare, Recovering Hungary – Semmelweis Plan for Saving the Healthcare" and maintains its relevance in the context of the new strategy “Healthy Hungary 2014-2020”. The composition of the partnership involved in the project development and implementation is optimal for achieving results as its members are at the core of policy making in the area of health, at central government level and in academia: underpinning public intervention by optimal research is a prerequisite for its effectiveness.

Effectiveness. Effectiveness of the projects is judged as satisfactory; it may evolve into highly satisfactory provided that qualitative outputs for packages 7, “Research” and 8 “Health policy analyses and proposals” are produced and taken up in national public policy. Despite difficulties to identify and retain specialized personnel in the region and areas targeted by the project, the teams operating under each of the 4 clusters were formed, trained and consolidated and this is a key project achievement. The public health coordinator and general practitioners play an important role in this respect. The availability of new services provided by physiotherapists, dietitians and psychologists are particularly beneficial for key vulnerable groups: Roma, children and elderly. The health mediators proved to bring value to the project as they have contributed to high participation also among Roma population in the health status survey. Their education and training, as well as the jobs created are important secondary effects of the project. The extent to which the community-based delivery of primary care improved the overall health status of the population can be fully assessed only at the end of the project, when data is available; however, preliminary analyses, including the program mid-term review confirm the overall perception that improvements in this respect exist. For this assessment to be accurate it is essential that effects occur, thus that sufficient time passes between direct intervention and effects evaluation. The community oriented primary health care model is developed and under testing and municipalities and other important local organizations (e.g. schools) cooperate and support the process and results. More efficient and effective health care services make settlements more attractive and may contribute, in long run, to their social and economic development, together with other, complementary interventions targeting social integration and economic revival.

Efficiency. Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The project proposal was finalized and finally approved late (in April 2012), in a rather instable political context. A series of measures have been taken to streamline management-related tasks and activities (i.e. reallocation of tasks and budgets among partners, need-based meetings of the Program Supervisory Board) however efficiency of the project has been negatively influenced by the multiple involvement of the 9 partners in the several working papers of the project and the time needed to reach agreements in this setting. Delays in implementation have been registered under almost all working packages and these were in some cases triggered by elements not identified in the project development phase (e.g. public procurement procedures to be organized for hiring the general practitioners and interdependent activities). Currently there is a medium risk of not fully or adequately complete WP 07 and 08 (i.e. “research”, “health policy analyses and proposals”) and a high risk of not spend supplementary budget at disposal due to exchange rate gains until project closure (June 2016). Severe delays are registered in submitting and having interim projects approved, which determined a need to supplement advance payment and a disproportionate ratio between physical progress and reimbursements. Cooperation with local municipalities and community itself is satisfactory.

Sustainability. Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. Although some of the results of the projects are already taken up in follow-up ESF-financed projects (i.e. reforming GP training system), at this point there is a high degree of uncertainty about the sustainability of the 4 set-up clusters themselves, as well as about the extension of the model to more districts and about the taken up of the policy recommendations issued under the project.

SC Objective	Improving social security		
SC Thematic Area	Prevention (health)		
SC Project	Preventing overweight and obesity as well as chronic diseases		
Executing Agency	National Food and Nutrition Institute (NFNI), Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 4,500,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 5,294,000

Relevance

Relevance is judged to be satisfactory. In Poland the obesity rate among adults was 15.8% in 2009, up from 11.4% in 1996 (OECD). The project aims to prevent overweight/obesity through 5 components: (C1) health promotion for pregnant women; (C2) nutrition education/ promotion of physical activity of children; (C3) healthy lifestyle promotion/weight reduction for obese/overweight patients; (C4) consumer use of food labels/information; (C5) public information campaign. The project links into relevant national policies/programs; e.g. National Program for the Prevention of Overweight. The Ministry of Health highlights that the project initiated systemic change and piloted issues emerging on the Polish health agenda. With its components and different target groups the project has a very broad approach. A question might be as to why a weight reduction component had been included into a prevention project. Because of health sector privatization, private sector exclusion is seen as limiting. The project is complementarity to other programs, e.g. the 2013-2016 Obesity Prevention through European Network or the European School Fruit Scheme. The project design included a pre-feasibility assessment on nutritional status, physical activity and dietary risk factors. Stakeholders highlight that project objectives remain relevant. Latest research assumes that the percentage of obese people in Poland might exceed outdated official statistics.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. However, output achievement rates vary: C1: 6114 pregnant women (22%), hence there is a high risk as regards output achievement; C2: 1600 educational institutions covering 381,870 children (over 100%); C3: 1348 weight reduction patients (84%). Of these a total of 226 patients dropped out (17%). In addition dietary advice for 9952 patients (78%). C4: Aims to reach 10% of customers of included supermarket outlets. The 2013 evaluation notes on the first nationwide roll-out in supermarkets that data (12 million consumers informed in 2600 supermarkets/150,000 consumers advised in 100 supermarkets) could not be considered as robust. Data on the second campaign including 50 shops reaching 4118 consumers appears to be more realistic. Data on C5 still needs to be generated. Outcome data will be collected at the end of the project; exception is C2 indicator "number of educational institutions certified" which slightly exceeded its target figure of 800 institutions. Project stakeholders observe change; e.g. many schools reported behavior change (healthier nutrition habits/increased physical activeness). At impact level the project enabled the EA to contribute to the drafting of a new regulation on certification of school kiosks based on the provision of healthy food. The lack of establishing cost-effectiveness had been flagged up by the 2013 MTR. By now cost-effectiveness has only been established for C1.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The two-year gap between development and implementation led to a re-initiation of negotiation with project stakeholders as the inflation of the Zloty, the health reform and 2011 privatization of the health sector affected the accuracy of the proposal. Moreover as this project was the first of the IB to be implemented relevant procedures were still underway to be developed. Procedures and cooperation with the NCU and IB became more efficient over the years. The 2011 project start had been accompanied by a number of delays because of delay in signing one of the partnership agreements and difficult procurement procedures. Instalment waiting times of up to 9 months constituted a challenge for the EA, which after consultation with the SCO and NCU had been reduced. The 2014 minutes of the Swiss-Polish Annual Meeting indicates the project as risky due to management weaknesses. The collection of evidence based data varies across components. Whereas data is collected rigorously for C1, valid data collection for C4 and C5 is more challenging. In terms of project steering the Monitoring Committee proves to be efficient; SCO attendance adds value.

Sustainability

Sustainability is judged to be satisfactory. The project objective is an integral part of the EA's core mission who has sought funding for a project on nutritional status of population with the EU Food and Safety Authority. Certain components such as C3 will require continued financial support as implementing health institutions do not seem to have their own resources to maintain activities. Built capacities allow stakeholders to continue activities without support to a certain extend. The certification of schools proves to be a trigger for their sustainable engagement.

SC Objective	Improving social security		
SC Thematic Area	Social services		
SC Project	Support for the development of youth initiatives		
Executing Agency	Agency for International Programms for Youth, Latvia		
SC Grant	CHF 4,000,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,705,883

Relevance. Relevance is judged as highly satisfactory. The program was developed and implemented as a response to the need to improve the life quality of young people by promoting their initiatives, participation in decision-making and social life, as well as by supporting youth work identified at national level, according to the provisions of Youth Law in force and the Youth Policy Guidelines for Years 2009 – 2018 (updated for the years 2015-2020) and the Youth Policy State Program for the Years 2009 – 2013. Supporting youth centers and NGOs with a view to help young people to have an educated, active and wholesome life-style constituted an objective also under the National Development Plan 2007-2013. Although the integration of young people at risk of social exclusion is not its main objective (i.e. it is a “potential” as stipulated by the FPP), the program has developed a strong complementarity with EU and national initiatives targeting young NEETs (i.e. youngsters aged 16-25 not in education, employment and training), with notable cases in which the youth center is the central organization around which NEETs-related activities are/will be carried out. In the current socio-economic context, i.e. unemployment among youngsters higher than 25% in the country and a rapidly shrinking young population in Latvia, especially in disadvantaged regions, the need to create in these regions and in the country an attractive environment for living and working in order to retain young inhabitants is still noteworthy.

Effectiveness. The effectiveness of the project is judged as satisfactory. 2 years before program closure the targets were roughly 70-75% achieved (e.g. out of the 100 seminars for young people with participation in total of approximately 2000 young persons, 65 were organized with 1280 participants until the end of 2014). Some important targets are surpassed, e.g. due to savings 23 instead of 17 centers initially planned have been renovated/established; these represent around 25% of the centers functioning in 2014 in Latvia. Overall, activities targeting both youngsters (e.g. trainings on topics such as self-development, setting of personal goals, critical and innovative thinking, and entrepreneurship) and youth workers (e.g. trainings and materials on “coaching”) have proven effective. However, information on outcomes expected is only partially available: outcome indicators (e.g. “Reduced youth crime, substance misuse and other deviant behavior”) are not quantified and progress/ annual reports or mid-term evaluation present vague information on their attainment. The presence of the centers and the activities they organize certainly increased the number of visitors/active youngsters (e.g. from 6.272 in 2010 in Gulbene, before center rehabilitation, to 7.636 in 2013 and approximately 8.000 in 2014). In terms of social integration, results depend on the location of the center (i.e. if the municipality/commune is confronted with large categories of vulnerable youngsters) and its declared mission. Some centers are successful in terms of integrating problematic youngsters (e.g. from poor, dismantled families in Gulbene or ethnically Russian in Ane). Improved performance in dealing with vulnerable categories would be ensured if youth workers were better endowed with specific skills and if cooperation with local unemployment agencies and municipal police were further improved.

Efficiency. Overall, efficiency is judged to be satisfactory. The rather long project development and approval period was due to governmental reorganizations on the Latvian side and on adequately justifying the hard investment and their relevance for the effectiveness and sustainability of the program. In this context the PPF played an important role as it added value to the needs analysis and program implementation strategy. During implementation some delays occurred mainly due to public procurement processes and challenges in implementing rehabilitation works. Their negative effects on the program progress were largely set aside by an efficient program management and monitoring system, based on a close cooperation and communication among partners and stakeholders, mainly between the executing agency, the municipalities and centers themselves.

Sustainability. The sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Strong support from involved municipalities exists and no risk to their financial sustainability was identified. However, uncertainties were identified as regards continuation of activities for youngsters, including trainings and the stability of youth workers and staff in municipalities especially in more deprived areas. Training materials should be better circulated and disseminated to all centers and Latvia and municipalities should update and improve their youth strategies, as in 2014 this seemed to be the case only for approximately 61 municipalities.

SC Objective	Improving social security		
SC Thematic Area	Social services		
SC Project	A helping hand in a safe environment		
Executing Agency	Regional Centre for Social Assistance in Krakow, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 6,114,987	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 7,194,102

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project aims to improve the quality of life of residents/pupils of Social Welfare Houses (SWH) and Emergency Care and Education Institutions (ECEI) and increase quality of services employee qualifications through three components: (1) Improvement of SWH/ECEI infrastructure and (2) training for SWH/ECEI staff (both re-granting mechanisms); (3) specialist training for nurses. The project fully focuses on key development needs in the social service sector. The project is in line with relevant policies/ strategies also at municipal/regional level, e.g. the 2011-2020 Development Strategy for the Małopolska region. The logical framework has clearly defined indicators. The approach is optimal to achieve results in particular through the combination of infrastructure investment and training. The project is complementary to other actions, especially Structural Funds (OP for the Małopolska region; OP Knowledge, Education). A preparatory assessment during the project design phase included feedback by 60 out of 150 SWCs. Stakeholders highlight that the project continues to be relevant due to demographic developments and the continuous increase of mental disorders.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is judged to be highly satisfactory. As of June 2015 most output indicators achieved their targets: 751 staff of 13 sub-grantees (8SWHs/5 ECEIs) were trained; 8 sub-grantees completed infrastructure upgrading (5 ECEIs are to complete upgrade by September 2015); 193 nurses obtained additional qualifications; 185 medical equipment sets purchased. The coverage of trained staff of the grantee institutions is 50% to 100%. At the time of the evaluation it was not possible to verify outcome level achievements as these will be measured after project completion. However, focus groups with grantee representatives and trained nurses highlighted similar achievements as most relevant especially the enhanced quality of services and because of the particular SC approach of combining capacity building with infrastructure, a wider range of services that can be offered. Other outcomes included, e.g. employees more self-confident, preventing occupational burnout; enabling compliance with current/new regulations/policies; increased resident safety; lower maintenance costs/energy-efficiency. Moreover, the project already had considerable impact for the city of Krakow by reducing patient waiting time for an SWH place from 3 years to close to zero. In addition it has contributed to a number of patients being able to acquire skills necessary to move from 24 hours care to a protected housing scheme. The project had no formal Swiss partner, but the Switzerland study visits are in collaboration with 12 Swiss institutions.

Efficiency

Efficiency is judged to be satisfactory. The PPF proved to be essential to ensure an accurate needs assessment and hence provide the basis for good performance, although the '2 loop'-process took almost two years: the project finally starting in 2012. Instalment delays in the beginning challenged liquidity. IB and NCU support is viewed as adequate. Despite initial delays project activities were mostly delivered on time. Sub-grantees were supported through coaching of an external contractor which stakeholders highlighted to be efficient, in particular for those with no prior experience of managing international grants. The sub-project representative's focus group flagged up a number of common implementation challenges: Short implementation time-frames, procurement, additional workload for staff, proposal development, compliance with Polish regulations, safety of residents during project implementation; seasonal nature of construction work, employee turnover. The project had been extended to April 2016 to implement five additional projects financed through appreciation savings. After an initial risk analysis, regular reviews and if necessary corrective measures had been carried out. The monitoring/steering had been for the most part efficient. The Steering Committee played a crucial role in the selection/ approval process. All projects had been visited at least twice; in addition 4-eye principle control visits took place.

Sustainability

Sustainability is judged to be satisfactory. Regarding financial sustainability cities/municipalities have already demonstrated commitment in financial terms by exceeding the 15% co-financing rate (on average 20%; certain sub-projects up to 30%/40%). Calls under the new ESF OP Knowledge, Education and Development provide the biggest funding opportunity. Some SWHs have access to small philanthropic sources. Sustainability of infrastructure components are sought to be ensured through an obligatory 3-year contractor guarantees. However, sustainability of capacity building measures are challenged though staff fluctuation.

SC Objective	Improving social security		
SC Thematic Area	Social services		
SC Project	Community on its way to prosperity		
Executing Agency	Civic Association ETP Slovakia – Centre for Sustainable Development		
SC Grant	CHF 1,410,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 1,667,580

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The project contributes to the improvement of social conditions and quality of life of Roma children/youth by building the knowledge in children/youth, building community center (CC) staff/other stakeholders' capacities and equipping 10 CCs. In Slovakia the Roma population of 350,000-500,000 mostly living in the Košice/Prešov regions is the most poverty affected (e.g. according to estimates of the Council of Europe). Almost 40% are children aged up to 15 years. Approaches such as the Enrichment (FIE) method prove to be optimal to achieve the intended results. The Logical Framework Matrix is well developed with appropriate indicators and baselines. There is no formally documented risk review but risks are regularly assessed/mitigated, e.g. the reluctance of schools to disclose personal data through the introduction of a code system. The project supports national policies/action plans, e.g. the 2011-2015 National Action Plan of the Roma Inclusion Decade or the Strategy for the Integration of the Roma until the year 2020. It is also complementary to e.g. the EEA/Norway grant or the ESF OP Employment and Social Inclusion 2007 – 2013. Finally all stakeholders confirmed that the project continues to be relevant to the needs of the Roma communities.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is judged to be highly satisfactory. Five of the six output indicators have been bypassed: 125 CC staff trained (originally projected: 90); 312 partner institution staff trained (300); 27 proposals to secure funding developed (10); 7,754 children/youth access CC services (6,000); 91% children/youth complete financial education/health awareness (70%). 10 CCs were equipped as planned. Outcome indicators will be measured by the end of 2015 but the EA carried out surveys from which the conclusion can be drawn that the project is well on its way to achieve its outcomes; e.g. recent data of the Preschool Club activities indicates that none of the children needed to attend special classes. Almost 80% of 61 primary school children who participated in the Mentoring Program enrolled to secondary school. Stakeholder also highlighted that more Roma children attend vocational schools. On the whole there is no particular project component/activity for which there is a high risk as regard results achievement. The project also led to policy level impact, e.g. greater visibility of tested approaches with key ministries. Project results feed into important governmental mechanisms for the advancement of Roma; e.g. the working group on inclusive education. Especially the Steering Committee (SC) proved to be a show-case trigger as four relevant Ministries were represented in the SC. Involvement of relevant stakeholders from the beginning proved to be essential including communication with the Department of Social Affairs, social workers and community center coordinators to avoid duplication of activities.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory despite a lengthy project development and approval process of three years. The PPF was viewed as beneficial to finance a feasibility study. Coordination among stakeholders appears to be based on a solid working relationship. On demand support by the NCU is appreciated. Also the interest of the Swiss side has been positively noted, in particular with regard to a site visit by an SDC Roma Working Group member. The project is being implemented according to plan and time with funds being disbursed. Monitoring of the project ensures not only whether the project delivers efficiently but also to what extent applied approaches effectively reach its intended results. The EA collects relevant data through surveys which were developed in-house tracking beneficiaries throughout the project cycle.

Sustainability

Sustainability is judged to be satisfactory. Results are likely maintained without further financial support: 3 CCs through the VELUX foundation until 2018; 7 CCs through the national project "Community Centers" (OP Employment and Social Inclusion 2007-2013) since 02/2015 but funding ends by end October. Continuation in the programming period 2014–2020 (OP Human Resources) is likely. A package of basic intervention will be offered to 150 eligible municipalities. There is an understanding that six of the ten CCs are eligible but a funding gap for at least several months is expected. As a result in Košice-Šaca one key staff member trained in the FIE method has left to find more stable employment. Finally, staff turn-over threatens keeping expertise within the CCs.

Annex 7.3: Protecting the Environment

Linked to the Swiss Contribution's specific objective “**protecting the environment**” the following projects were assessed per thematic area:

Drinking water supply

- 1) Hungary: Change of main lines for drinking water made of asbestos cement in the settlements of the micro-regions of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County

Wastewater treatment

- 2) Slovakia: Public sewerage and sewerage plant for the village of Častá

Energy efficiency and renewable energy

- 3) Poland: Renewable energy sources in Mszana Dolna and in partner communities

Environmental monitoring

- 4) Hungary: Development of the Hungarian air quality network and laboratory background

Waste disposal

- 5) Poland: Dismantling and safe storage of products containing asbestos from Malopolskie Voivodship

Biodiversity

- 6) Poland: The Carpathians Unite – mechanism of consultation and cooperation for implementation of the Carpathian Convention

SC Objective	Protecting the environment		
SC Thematic Area	Drinking water supply		
SC Project	Drinking water supply in the settlements of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County		
Executing Agency	Borsodvíz Zrt., Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 7,803,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 9,180,000

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The project contributes to sustainable socio-economic development and improved life standards in 3 micro-regions of the county via the development of the drinking water supply infrastructure in 13 settlements; the 13 are served by the water utility operator Borsodvíz Ltd. In 2007 the micro-regions were classified by the government as among the “most disadvantaged” in the country; located in Northern Hungary the project also fully contributes to the Swiss Contribution’s geographic focus of program support: minimum 40% in two regions – Northern Hungary and Northern Great Plains. In 11 settlements modernization of the water supply network entails changing of the main lines to replace asbestos cement pipes that were utilized for construction in the 1970s: the network was increasingly prone to failure due to pipe fracture and water loss and thus posed environmental risks, as well as being inadequate for the supply of safe and healthy drinking water. In the other settlements modernization entails works linked to the extension of the supply capacity and coverage of the drinking water supply network. In total the project will benefit approximately 51000 inhabitants, while the region is also an important center for domestic and foreign tourists, including UNESCO protected areas. The project is in line with the priorities of Hungary in the areas of water policy and regional development. The project logic is noteworthy for its high quality. The project is complementary to actions financed by the EU, e.g. a larger sized intervention in Szerencs; another micro-region in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. As of September 2015 the modernization of the water supply network was completed in 6 settlements, with works in 2-3 other settlements assumed to be completed in the last quarter of 2015. Works in Mezőcsát are commenced and will be finalized in spring 2016; works in Alsózsolca, Nyékládháza, and Tokaj will start after permits are secured. The Executing Agency estimates the time period for works, control and testing is up to 3 months. It is therefore feasible to complete the project by the end of June 2016 although risks exist. On completion the 13 settlements will each be served by a more reliable, safe and affordable water supply, to the same level of service provision, and the capacity of the utility to efficiently operate and maintain the network increased due to the decreased rates of pipe fracture and water loss. The project has been implemented in close collaboration with the settlements via the mayoral office, to ensure suitable planning and to minimize disruption, and the project and the mayors have actively provided information to the inhabitants linked to the project’s implementation. The mayors report a high level of satisfaction of local inhabitants and regard the project as a significant contribution to the improvement of living standards. The mayors also recognize the improved opportunities created for the promotion of local socio-economic development, tourism, culture and business.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. Following an Open Call (1st Loop) launched in July 2008 the Project Agreement was signed in November 2010. While project procurement processes have overall been efficient the key works construction element was significantly delayed: contracted only in month 34 of project implementation. The delay was initially due to the Executing Agency’s change of approach in terms of the FIDIC methodology to be followed, but was primarily related to assuring the settlements’ co-financing contribution prior to launching the procurement process: 12 of the 13 applied to the Ministry of Interior to provide the grant in late 2012; the other settlement guaranteed the co-financing. The project period has been extended from 42 to 72 months to finalize delivery of the full range of project results (i.e. at latest by the end of June 2016). Efficiency of implementation has been satisfactory in terms of the delivery and technical supervision of the works and the adoption by partners of corrective technical measures. However, the time required for processing of necessary permit authorizations by the competent authorities linked to commencing specific works has been an obstacle to project efficiency: for 3 settlements the Executing Agency assumes the necessary permits will be secured in the last quarter of 2015.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Operation and maintenance of the drinking water system is provided by Borsodvíz, which is owned by the range of settlements it serves. Utility charges are regulated by the competent state office, although Borsodvíz noted that these have not increased since 2011. Nationally, in 2013, it was decided to transfer ownership of local water infrastructure to the settlements with the requirement they ensure the quality of service provision.

SC Objective	Protecting the environment		
SC Thematic Area	Wastewater treatment		
SC Project	Public sewerage and sewerage plant for the village of Častá		
Executing Agency	Municipality of Častá, Slovak Republic		
SC Grant	CHF 5,539,305	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 6,516,829

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project contributes to sustainable socio-economic development in the municipality of Častá (2,205 inhabitants) and improved quality of the groundwater and surface waters in the region by improving public infrastructure and services linked to waste water collection and treatment. The municipality area borders with the Little Carpathians Protected Landscape Area and Častá is an important center for domestic and foreign tourists. Prior to the project only 376 inhabitants were connected to the public sewage system, and the waste water treatment plant (WWTP), built in 1978, technically outdated. Other citizens have built their own septic tanks/cesspools, which are to be emptied on a regular basis. The project supports extend the public sewage collection system across the agglomeration and the replacement of the WWTP to ensure efficient waste water treatment (with capacity of 2500 population equivalent). The project is in line with the priorities of Slovakia in the areas of water policy and regional development and the EU-framework to improve waste water treatment. The project is complementary to actions financed by the EU and other funds, which focus the support on larger agglomerations in Slovakia.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. Realization of the construction works of the public sewage network and waste water connections to houses was commenced in summer 2014 and linked to the WWTP in spring 2015. Completion of the works and testing of the systems is expected in summer 2016. The Executing Agency estimates that 85% of the sewage network pipeline and 55% of the connections had been installed by September 2015. The lower latter figure reflects that finalization of the public part of the connections to houses can only be undertaken after the main pipes have been embedded, which is the priority for 2015; the preparatory works for the connections are undertaken in laying the main pipe and thereby final connections can effectively be achieved in spring 2016. On completion, and thereby activation of the commissioned facilities, all of the urban area currently under the land use plan for Častá will be connected to the waste water collection and treatment facilities: approximately 750 houses/buildings (of which 625 will be new connections) accounting for almost all the municipal inhabitants; for a small number of houses, distant from and spread around the town it is not cost-effective to provide the service. The WWTP will deliver the efficient biological processing and treatment of the waste water in line with environmental standards before discharging water to the recipient watercourse. The WWTP will be an unattended operation, only needing the supervision of an operator. The municipality actively provides information to the inhabitants linked to the project's purpose and implementation, as well as provides channels for their feedback. This is essential to ensure maximum project effect in terms of the elimination (or reduced use), after the activation of the sewage collection/treatment facilities, of septic tanks/cesspools. In many cases these are leaking and thus threaten the quality of surface water and groundwater, as well as other environmental elements, in the region. In addition to improved living standards for the inhabitants, the longer term, indirect benefits include the enhanced capacity of Častá to provide an attractive tourism offer or as a place for residence.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory: the Open Call was only launched in October 2009, the Project Outlines only submitted to Switzerland in October 2010, and the Final Project Proposals submitted to Switzerland in October 2011, while at project-level sizeable delays occurred with the procurement of works construction with the contract only signed in month 24 of project implementation. The project period has been extended from 34 to 55 months to finalize delivery of the full range of project results (i.e. by the end of 2016). Efficiency of project implementation has been satisfactory in terms of the delivery and supervision of the works and the adoption by partners of corrective technical measures, as well as the Executing Agency's preparations linked to securing land permission and building permits and linked to the further extension of the system, due to project savings and the appreciation of the Swiss Franc, to include new construction in the village.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project is designed to ensure the economically best solution in terms of longer-term running costs. Operation and maintenance of the waste water system will be undertaken by the Bratislava Water Company, based on a long-term service contract with the municipality, one of the shareholders of the water company, which also operates the local water supply. Prices for services are regulated by the competent state office.

SC Objective	Protecting the environment		
SC Thematic Area	Energy efficiency and renewable energy		
SC Project	Renewable energy sources in Mszana Dolna and partner communities		
Executing Agency	Municipality of Mszana Dolna, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 9,094,519	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 10,699,434

Relevance

The relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. It helps the households in Mszana Dolna and 4 neighboring communities to use environmentally friendly and energy efficient heating systems based on aluminum solar panels, which allows reducing the usage of conventional systems based on gas and coal.

The project efficiently complements other similar Swiss Contribution projects in Malopolska region and EU grants to local communities. Reportedly, currently, 90 solar systems are being installed in 22 communities each through EU funds, which does not overlap with the project. There are no similar interventions within EEA / Norway Financing Mechanism in the region. The project is also complementary to the generally formulated priorities of usage of alternative energy sources in the Malopolska Regional Development program 2011-2020. The design of the project is relevant and clear cut. It have had clear indicators to measure the progress at different levels of the intervention.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project achieved and, in some aspects, over-achieved some of the planned outputs. Thus, 2602 residential houses were installed with solar heating systems vs 2300 planned; the current installations allow annually a substitution of 10 million kW/h energy generated through combustion of coal and gas, allowing reduction of ca 5000 tons of CO2 (surpassing the planned reduction for over 50%), saving annually 162160 tons of coal. The project have put in place a comprehensive web-site with sections for guidelines, description of ongoing works, cooperation with partner municipalities, awareness and visibility materials. By September 2015, the web-site has had over 56k hits. The project is somewhat behind of visibility activities, which does not affect its achievements. Additional 600 installations are considered depending on the further appreciation of Swiss Franc in autumn 2015.

The project put notable efforts to advocate the usage of solar panel-based heating systems among the population: initially there was some mistrust for these systems and the project had to organize widespread awareness and promotional activities. Currently, according to the project's estimates, there are over 2000 households, who would be eager to install the new systems in addition to those who participated in this project. Hence, the project impacted on the positive attitude and eagerness of the population: in the near perspective, the impact can be higher upon the people's growing experience on the efficiency of solar heating systems versus conventional systems.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The selected approach of implementation through a partnership of municipalities proved to be valid. Despite the fact that one community resigned from the project at the start, the remaining 5 municipalities have been coordinating well and bringing in sufficient inputs for the implementation. The scope of competences and inputs of involved municipality officials, mayors and civic active groups were sufficient and provided with good quality. A few problems with the quality and timelines of initial supplies were noticed with the supply contractors, which, nevertheless, were finally managed after some intervention of the EA with support of SCO and NCU. The audit by the IB that the project has undergone during July 2015 was concerned with the timely finalization of the supplies and suggested to concentrate on its day-to-day monitoring and registration of the new fixed assets. This contract includes procurement of various main items for heating systems. The EA made an analysis of the situation and finds that the main item that could have been late of the deadline of September 2016 was the expected then remaining part of water tanks. Meantime, this has not been posing any significant risk to the finalization of installations within the overall timeframes.

The project has noticed that the progress in another similar project implemented in Busko-Zdroj community and its 8 partner communities is significantly behind the schedule, reportedly, due to a relatively high share of required contribution by the local households. The project has considered and, reportedly, discussed with the SCO the possibility to 'join' the both projects / transfer of funds for more efficient implementation. If this is possible procedurally, the idea worth to be promoted.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. This regards the potential for and capacities of the Polish partners to continue the delivery of the results via further installations themselves. Additionally, the households, reportedly, face constraints in terms of affording even some preferential credits made available through state support schemes.

SC Objective	Protecting the environment		
SC Thematic Area	Environmental monitoring		
SC Project	Development of the Hungarian air quality network and laboratories		
Executing Agency	Ministry of Agriculture, Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 5,750,250	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 6,765,000

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project contributes to sustainable socio-economic development via the improvement of the National Air Quality Monitoring Network (OLM), focused on the extension of the manual monitoring network of the OLM in terms of monitored sites, monitored compounds and components, cities and sub-regions covered by the manual monitoring network, and via the extension of the testing laboratories' technical capacities to measure gaseous and particulate pollutants. The project is complementary to actions financed by the EU and Hungary to extend the automatic on-line monitoring network of the OLM, which primarily covers the largest cities. The project is in line with the priorities of Hungary in the area of environmental policy, as well as Hungary's obligation, as an EU member state, to ensure compliance with the EU's legal framework and standards for the measurement of and reporting on ambient air quality. However, the project goals are limited in terms of how it might contribute to potential wider socio-economic development: the indicator of impact is purely that regulatory compliance is in line with legislation.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project has delivered improvements to the manual monitoring network of the OLM by increasing the number of locations utilized by the Environmental Protection and Conservation Inspectorates and by upgrading the equipment (144 samplers) utilized to collect samples for the manual measurement of gaseous pollutants (Nitrogen-dioxide and Sulphur-dioxide) as well of airborne particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} size fractions). The project has also delivered the upgrade of 31 professional laboratory analyzers used in everyday work for the analysis of samples in regard to potential toxic metals and carcinogenic poly-aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH compounds). This has extended the efficiency and the effectiveness of the regional environmental inspectorates: analytical and measurement capacity timeliness, as well as the accuracy of measurements. The project has also delivered the extension of the manual monitoring network of the OLM, and thereby the air quality database and mapping, to cover 6 additional settlements via the deployment of mobile measuring units for 2 regional inspectorates to undertake regular monitoring of air quality. Each of the 7 regional environmental inspectorates now operates a mobile measuring unit for the manual collection of air quality data. Data on air quality monitoring measurements is provided via the inspectorates to the OLM's Air Pollution Reference Center, which provides publically available data on the internet. However, the effectiveness of the project has, in part, been constrained by the purely technical/professional focus of the Ministry in regard to its achievement of results: i.e. so as to deliver the increased accuracy and measurement of air quality by Hungary in line with regulatory requirements, rather than how such data and trends may be effectively utilized by national and local decision-makers and stakeholders to reduce pollution risks. Collaboration with and the engagement of stakeholders in regard to the delivery of the project and the development of the OLM has been a lesser priority.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. Following an Open Call (1st Loop) launched in July 2008 the Project Agreement was signed in January 2011, with an implementation period of 15 months. Implementation and management planning linked to the timing of technical delivery of the project has been significantly demanding for the Ministry in terms of the provision of pre-financing for the project within the wider context of the Ministry's budgetary management planning. Start-up of project implementation was on-hold until mid-2012 due to the difficulties in securing the Ministry's pre-financing and the implementation period extended to 44 months; this was later extended to 56 months, maximally 60 months, linked to the utilization of final project funds, due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc, to procure additional equipment. The Executing Agency anticipates that project completion should be achieved, at the latest, in early 2016. Efficiency of implementation has been satisfactory in terms of the installation and hand-over of the equipment and the provision of related staff training for the laboratories: delivered in spring and autumn 2014.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The Ministry covers the operational and maintenance costs of the regional inspectorates which will continue to utilize the equipment so as to collect, analyze and deliver ambient air quality measurements and reporting, in line with regulatory requirements (and the EU's legal framework). The new equipment provides a more reliable air quality monitoring system and more efficient, reliable standards for laboratory work.

SC Objective	Protecting the environment		
SC Thematic Area	Waste disposal		
SC Project	Dismantling and safe storage of asbestos from Malopolskie Voivodship		
Executing Agency	Szczucin Community, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 10,590,988	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 12,459,986

Relevance

The relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The project is one of the three other similar projects aimed at supporting the local communities in safe dismantling and storage of asbestos roofing in Szczucin and surrounding communities (currently - 61), which are outdated and pose a risk to the health of the local population. The project has been a pioneering one in the sub-region. It is in line with the Poland's Strategy for asbestos removal by 2032, which is generally deemed to be too optimistic in its forecast of finishing the business by the year 2032. The local communities do not receive any other support for removal of asbestos roofing. The intervention area had been supported by the EU formerly and is not supported under any other funding mechanisms. There are unverified expectations that the Strategy 2032 for removal of asbestos will be funded by the EU.

The design of the project has been well-structured with relevant indicators. However, it has been somewhat ambitious as regards the number of households that could be reached, due to weak analysis on their motivation. Some of the impact indicators, such as the % of asbestos in the air, quantity of NO3 in the groundwater, were not provided with baseline values, targets and would need further monitoring. The methodology of implementation did not foresee an exit strategy.

In future similar projects it would be reasonable to foresee: 1) participation of the waste operator in any study visits to Switzerland or EU Member States for technological learning, advancement and exchange; 2) exchange of experience with other Swiss Contribution projects (e.g. with Waste Management System for the Region around Lubartów (KIK-42)) and 3) foreseeing wider financial assistance for the poorer households, who cannot afford changing the roofing.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The project achieved the targets partially, mainly due to low financial capacity of the household for installing new roofs. By September 2015 the project managed to remove asbestos roofs for 3588 houses and building (the target - 6120) and for 8 public buildings (target - 11), which makes 16265 tons of asbestos (the target - 25201). The EA recognizes that additional tenders could have been launched in parallel, however, were not. In the meantime, the EA counts that by the end of 2016 the targets can be still met. The project has been more successful in delivery of outputs related to awareness, education and trainings, as well as promotion and visibility. The project's web-site has already approached to the target number of 50 000 hits to the web-site. 108 houses (poorest households) out of 800 have been provided with new roofing. The asbestos removal and storage is implemented by a private company 'Środowisko and Innowacje Ltd.' (Environment and Innovation), which operates a waste storage site in Dobrow, Tuczepy Commune, Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship. Formerly, the site has been a sulphur mine. It is understood that the waste operator did not participate (as it was not planned) in a study visit to Switzerland, which, inter alia, was aimed at learning on experience of Swiss communities and companies in safe removal, processing and storage of asbestos waste. Furthermore, reportedly, the 4-day visit to Switzerland was too intense for sufficient learning.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. It was on a reserve list: the submission of outline took place in June 2009, the official start date was July 2012, however, the project finally started in the course of 2013. To support and boost the involvement of households, the project has launched widespread awareness activities and organized steering committees in each of the participating communities. While awareness building has been intensive, the launch of operations for asbestos removal took place only in mid-2014 due to lengthy process of preparation and approval of related documentation. Overall, 35% of the grant has been utilized by the July 2015. The project's implementation delivery deadline has now been extended up to the end of 2016.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory due to two main issues. The first is related to the weak financial standing of the communes and households for contributing to similar projects. The second may be related to the stability and efficiency of the landfill sites' operators. The evaluation mission did not receive sufficient response on how stable, efficient and guaranteed are the business practices in the target sector. It is difficult to detect whether any public-private partnerships and infrastructure business management practices are applied or not.

SC Objective	Protecting the environment		
SC Thematic Area	Biodiversity		
SC Project	Carpathians Unite		
Executing Agency	UNEP GRID, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 1,943,054	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 2,158,949

Relevance

The relevance of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The project does contribute to the preservation and environmentally friendly usage of Natura 2000 sites, in the majority Carpathian meadows, through developing wider networks and forums of supporters of the Carpathian Convention and via the promotion of traditional economic activities with neutralized environmental impact on the preserved territories. The project is complementary to Natura 2000 management priority area of EEA/Norway Financing Mechanism and EU Infrastructure and Environment Program. However, while the project sub-components are of relevance to local needs, the project design is weakened by the limited definition of a detailed results chain, poorly defined indicators of outcomes, as well as by the overly ambitious extent of the range of diverse stakeholder groups targeted. All in all the project consists of six sub-components: further, each sub-component consists of numerous outputs. The partnership structure has been also quite complex, involving both direct implementing partners and a variety of stakeholder groups. In addition, the project has had widespread geography in three regions and numerous sub-regions. In view of the central role of the EA in the development of the network and in building local ownership of the diverse stakeholder groups of the different project products/mechanisms, the level of complexity of the project was also under-estimated in terms of the management demands on the EA.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The SCO reports that that approximately 50% of the outputs were delivered by the third quarter of 2015, when over 70% of implementation time has passed. Yet, only one indicator for outcome has been fulfilled partially. The project is still in the process of identification of semi-natural mountain meadows for sheep grazing and the map is thereby not finalized. Within the Outcome 1 – Carpathian platform – the three Voivodships were ‘involved’ and a coalition of core partners has been formed, with trainings, workshops and study visits realized, while the full involvement of communities and scientific institutions is still pending for activation. Outcome 2 – revitalization of semi-natural meadows – is slightly more advanced: shepherding trainings, infrastructures, facilities, events, together with sheep were well-provided; however, only 15 out of 40 farmers were involved and, yet, no habitat area is identified and final mapping provided. Within the Outcome 3 – sustainable tourism – only the first series of activities undertaken and the first draft of the Regional Strategy prepared, however, it is still pending for consultations and revisions: further, a question is whether the communities will be in a position and enough prepared to undertake and start its implementation by the end of the project.

Within another relatively advanced component of the project – ‘Carpathian Informatorium’ – a horizontal component, not directly linked with the above Outcomes but, nevertheless, supporting those to different extent, the so-called exchange network was supported through meetings, consultations and establishing a web-platform (<http://karpatylacza.pl/>). The latter, however, needs significant updates, awaiting since the end of 2014. The project has also established a shepherding information portal www.pasterstwokarpat.pl.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The selected approach and modality did not prove to be efficient. Instead of widespread intervention the project would need focusing on the key deliverables contributing to the implementation of the Carpathian Convention matching with the capacities of the EA – UNEP GRID Warsaw. The scope of competences and inputs from other implementing partners needed much improvements. In addition, the project’s requests for financing has been pending for approval by the IB since the early 2015, which puts the implementation under a risk. The reasons are not explained: reportedly, the SCO is aware of and follows-up on the issue.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The majority of the project’s results need further financial support and stronger ownership than it is revealed currently. For example, while the Gazdowie Association is tasked to undertake the maintenance of the shepherding infrastructure, it is not evident that a detailed business/financial plan has yet been developed. It is also not evident whether any of the stakeholders will be in a position to continue trainings and maintenance of the web-sites. Nevertheless, the EA is a stable institution and will try finding ways to sustain and promote the assets of the project, as necessary with further external funding.

Annex 7.4: Improving Public Safety and Security

Linked to the Swiss Contribution's specific objective "improving public safety and security" the following projects were assessed per thematic area:

Modernization of the judiciary

- 1) Latvia: Modernization of courts in Latvia

Border protection

- 2) Poland: Preparation of customs service mobile groups to perform rapid reaction and crisis management duties

Combating corruption and organized crime

- 3) Hungary: Multi-level community policing network for the cooperation based crime prevention

Managing natural disasters and emergency situations

- 4) Hungary: Protection with mobile dams in flooded areas
- 5) Slovakia: The enhancement of preparedness of the rescue forces of the Ministry of Interior

SC Objective	Improving public safety and security		
SC Thematic Area	Modernization of the judiciary		
SC Project	Modernization of courts in Latvia		
Executing Agency	Court Administration, Latvia		
SC Grant	CHF 8,000,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 9,411,765

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The project contributes to enhanced security and safety via strengthening the capacity and improving the quality of the judiciary, as well as by enhancing access to the judicial system for inhabitants and business. The project is fully in line with the priorities of Latvia in the area of the judiciary and promotion of the efficient functioning of the rule of law. The project supports improve the quality of the judiciary via the provision of video conferencing appliances in all courts and prisons, and audio recording systems in all courts, plus by the introduction of more effective court procedures and cost-management approaches. The project enhances access to the judiciary via improving information and service delivery for citizens and business, including the development of electronic forms, and via the installation of electronic information kiosks in court buildings linked to the national court portal, providing access to information about courts as well as access to E-services linked to the judicial system. The project is also fully in line with E-justice activities at the European level to improve the quality and efficiency of cross-border judicial cooperation. The project is noteworthy for the high quality of its design, clear intervention logic, and the clear planning for set-up of management structures. Ownership of the Court Administration, the Ministry of Justice and of the related partners continues to be strong.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The 94 video conference equipment and 308 audio recording equipment units in courts and prisons, plus the State Forensic Science Bureau, are utilized on a daily basis in order to connect parties to the court proceedings, e.g. a court and a detained person in prison, or a person located in another court (in Latvia or in another country), which has enhanced the efficiency of the judiciary due to the ease for scheduling and thereby the processing of hearings, as well as the reduced need for travel by the parties. The video conference equipment is also utilized to facilitate internal communication, e.g. between courts to review procedures, for internal trainings and seminars. Usage of the video conference equipment has increased from an average of 250 times per month in 2013 to an average of 370 per month in 2015. Linked to usage of the audio recording equipment, which is used on average for 2500 civil cases and 500 criminal cases per month, an audio protocol tagging system was developed which allows for the efficient review of recordings and the appropriate sharing of data with partners. The project has also simplified the ways for citizens and business to access the judicial system via the introduction of 46 E-kiosks, 5 court E-services, 72 E-forms for claims and documents for court proceedings, and 85 scanners in court buildings for the processing by citizens and business of court application forms only available, still, in paper-format, plus scanning of associated documents in submission for court proceedings. The national court portal, accessed via the E-kiosks and the internet, received an average of 65000 'hits' per month in 2013, rising to 81000 per month in 2015. The project also introduced new procedures for cost accounting, control and reduction in the court system, plus improved court procedure effectiveness by unifying certain court procedures and upgrading the Court Information System. In addition, 13 study visits were undertaken with a total of 38 persons from the range of project partners and a diverse number of individual courts. This included study visits to Switzerland to meet with the Swiss Federal Supreme Court and the Swiss Federal Prosecutor's Office. The former also supported the Court Administration with the project's development, provided advice on the amendment of related Latvian legislation and also supported pan-Baltic exchange of knowledge and good practice regarding E-justice and court modernization.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Switzerland's approval of the Final Project Proposal, in May 2009, was provided 10 months after the submission of the Project Outline. While the project experienced certain delays linked to the procurement processes, the Executing Agency has efficiently deployed corrective measures so as to realize project procurements and project delivery. The project period was extended from 36 months to 54 months; the final 6 months were added so as to utilize final project savings and the gains arising due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc, i.e. not due to the initial procurement delays. The management and decision-making structures operated efficiently and responsibilities between the project partners was clearly defined.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. Administrative cost-savings have been delivered. The Court Administration has also extended the system with additional equipment.

SC Objective	Improving public safety and security		
SC Thematic Area	Border protection		
SC Project	Customs service mobile groups / rapid reaction and crisis management		
Executing Agency	Ministry of Finance, Customs Service, Poland		
SC Grant	CHF 2,847,755	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 3,350,300

Relevance

The relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. It contributes to the capacities and facilities of Polish Customs Service to secure Eastern borders / customs, to meet the increasing freight, passenger flow and to prevent unlawful border and trade activities. The project constitutes a part of the Polish policy on protection of external borders and the Schengen area. In that it is complementary to, adds value and does not duplicate the actions funded within the framework of EEA / Norway Financing Mechanism's priority area on Schengen Acquis / Infrastructure for customs services. The intervention logic has been coherent and realistic. The EA is in a position to successfully continue the trainings with EU and EEA/Norway funding. At the policy level, the project is in line with the 'Customs Service Business Strategy 2014-2020'. Reportedly, the investments made available through this project made up to 80% of those in total for eastern borders in 2012.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project achieved the main accomplishments and outputs, as those have been designed initially, already by the first deadline of end of October 2013. Further, the gains from appreciation of Swiss Franc allowed continuing the intervention with new targets updated twice in 2014 and 2015. The project was finally extended until April 2016.

By 2015, 78 vehicles with special equipment were procured, including vans, estate cars, and dog handlers' cars. 210 customs officers were trained in English and Russian languages; 237 officers – in special driving techniques; 110 officers – in crisis management. Several workshops were provided for x-ray images interpretation and verification. 10 officer participated in mutual exchange with Swiss colleagues. Specific workshops were provided on emergency response and use of techniques of coercive measures. Additionally an x-ray scanner and video endoscopes have been procured. Over 90% of Customs officers of the mobile groups on the eastern Polish border have increased qualifications through specialized trainings.

With this outputs the project significantly contributed to the capacity and the mobility of the Customs Service for well-organized inspection, prevention, analysis / data collection and processing, potential for managing difficult situations and, as needed, interdiction.

The indicators at the level of outcomes related to the number of preventive measures will be possible to assess upon completion of the project and follow-up monitoring in subsequent years. For the other indicators the project much surpassed the targets for indicators in a range of 20-50%.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. The 2-loop approach of the project was too long: from March 2009 up to May 2011. The selected approach and modality proved to be valid. The scope of competences and inputs were sufficient and provided with good quality. Some minor drawbacks during the implementation related to the preparation of a tenders and the time needed for approvals of reports and requests in the initial period of implementation. Nevertheless, these did not affect the implementation and the activities were accomplished mainly timely.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The Ministry Finance is committed to continue trainings through the trained trainers in each unit. Meantime, it would be reasonable to develop internal training facilities, as well as manuals and protocols for learned techniques, including maintenance and operation of the received equipment.

SC Objective	Improving public safety and security		
SC Thematic Area	Combating corruption and organized crime		
SC Project	Multi-level community policing network		
Executing Agency	Ministry of Interior, Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 2,000,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 2,352,941

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The project contributes to enhanced security and public safety via the pilot-testing and the preparation of the grounds for the introduction of a country-wide implementation of community policing, as a step towards improving the effectiveness of crime prevention and the sense of security of the citizens. The community policing concept and working methods introduce pro-active and problem-oriented approaches to crime prevention. Community policing requires a managerial approach supporting decision-making brought as close as possible to the problems themselves, and allowing that the police apply creative methods, tailored to local needs, for public engagement and in crime prevention. The task of community policing is to collect public security problems, map their causes and involve the stakeholders capable of influencing them in the elimination of the causes and on preventing the development of problems. The approach is built on close collaboration by the local police force with the safety oriented efforts of additional public and private or civil society stakeholders of the local community. The project is in line with the priorities of Hungary in the area of security policy and crime prevention. The project is noteworthy for the high quality of its design, clear intervention logic, and the clear planning for set-up of management structures. Ownership of the project by the Ministry of Interior and the National and the County Police Headquarters continues to be strong.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The Methodological Manual for establishing community policing in Hungary was adopted by the National Police Headquarters in September 2013. The manual was prepared by the Permanent Expert Group based on the positive exchange of experiences with relevant partners provided via study visits (to Latvia, Switzerland, and the UK), plus the analysis of relevant international materials linked to the introduction and operation of community policing. Training materials were subsequently prepared and detailed training on the approach and its application provided to 38 staff designated as community police officers in the 4 pilot-test towns, spread across Hungary, plus for police management. Since autumn 2014 introductory training on problem-solving approaches has been provided, at a regional police training school, for approximately 1000 police staff and civil partners from the 4 towns. Implementation of the community policing approach was pilot-tested from summer 2014 to summer 2015. In each town a baseline report on the criminal and public security situation was prepared and thereafter an updated crime prevention program, prepared in cooperation with local organizations involved in public security, adopted for introducing community policing approaches, pro-active and problem-oriented tools. Based on feedback received from diverse partners in 2 of the pilot-test towns the effectiveness of the community policing approach is rated as highly satisfactory. While the public reaction to the community police officers, embedded in the local community with high visibility was initially one of surprise (due to the novelty), awareness of their role to facilitate public safety, security and the resolution of potential problems is now better understood and the officers are well integrated. It will require a period of years to ensure the effective embedding of the approach. As of September 2015 the Permanent Expert Group was undertaking analysis of the results of the pilot-test phase, leading to its preparation, in late 2015, of recommendations for roll-out of a country-wide implementation of community policing. It is anticipated that the extension of community policing initially cover 20 additional towns, with training for staff in the first half of 2016.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The focus area "security" was added to the program during 2010, based on program savings in other focus areas and the unallocated reserve. The time period from the launch of the 1st Loop call (invitation to the Ministry of Interior) to the Swiss side's approval of the commitment of funds (Final Project Proposal approval) is noteworthy for its efficiency: merely 8 months to complete. Due to the partial delay in the preparation of initial procurement processes, implementation is 6-months behind schedule, but the implementation period of 41 months, maximally 47 months, has not yet required amendment. The management and decision-making structures operate efficiently and responsibilities of partners clearly defined.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. While a decision on the pace of roll-out is still to be taken, it is evident that the institutional capacity and tools exist to ensure successful continuation and that ownership at the level of the County Police Headquarters is very strong.

SC Objective	Improving public safety and security		
SC Thematic Area	Managing natural disasters and emergency situations		
SC Project	Flood protection with mobile dams		
Executing Agency	National Directorate General for Disaster Management (NDGDM), Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 3,007,097	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 3,537,762

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. Hungary is greatly exposed to floods and land-drainage as a transit country for different rivers flowing in its Eastern, Western and Northern parts. The risk is higher as regards quick and strong floods and mobile dams, particularly the type selected based on the assessment carried out in the feasibility study, represent the optimal and innovative solution for their protection. The project was in line with national strategies in place (e.g. National Strategy for Sustainable Development adopted for the long-run in 2007 and the Széchenyi Plan 2011-2013) and complementary with the actions eligible under the EU-funded Environment and Energy Operative Program (EEOP) 2007-2013, Priority Axis 2 "Wise management of waters". While EEOP financed projects targeting fixed flood protection infrastructure as owned by the government and municipalities the Mobile Dam project is implemented to resolve a complementary, pressing need, not covered by the OP. The project was needed also in order to strengthen disaster management and ensure its unfolding in a coherent and coordinated manner as the New Disaster Management Act (January 2012) reinforced the National Directorate General for Disaster Management position as the central organization responsible with professional disaster management, including state level flood-defense. Although the intervention is logical and approach prepared was optimal from effectiveness perspective, there is room for improvement as regards the LMF, particularly in terms of adequate formulation of objectives and risks/assumptions.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. In terms of output indicators, the length of mobile dam purchased and delivered bypassed (12.5 km) the initial plans (10 km). The mobile dam characteristics and, when available, the technical capacity to transport and manage its elements guarantee the achievement of the outcomes expected and overall, the effectiveness of the project. Mobile dams offer faster protection (in line with the maximum two days at disposal to optimally react to floods in Hungary) as they are more easily transportable and installed than sand-bags previously used in Hungary or other mobile solutions. Protection is offered also in an environmental-friendly manner (i.e. using mobile dam, although they may not fully replace sandbags, avoids hazardous waste to be disposed in the form of sand as a 1 m high and 100 m long dam hampers the formation of 210 tons of hazardous material). Mobile dams' flexibility allow their utilization in difficult to reach areas, which are in most cases disadvantaged in socio-economic developed terms, too. The perspective of being protected of floods by mobile dams contributes to the areas and regions' competitiveness.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. Although the tube dams are a proven, more cost-efficient solution for flood protection as sand-bags and the National Directorate General for Disaster Management has the capacity to ensure the efficient and effective utilization of the dams across the country, the project efficiency is negatively affected by multiple delays. In total the length of the project almost doubled and few of the program/ project activities and results have been delivered as initially planned, in terms of timing. Purchasing the mobile dam suffered more than one year delay mainly due to time needed to reconcile tender documentation with the objections raised on the side of the Swiss authorities. Public procurement issues delayed planned training activities, as well. Progress interim reports are submitted and approved with major delays, also due to the cross reporting approach (e.g. the interim report 2, covering the first quarter of 2013, received final approval in May 2015).

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. No risks to sustainability of the projects outputs and outcomes were identified. The NDGDM has the necessary financial capacity to sustain the utilization of the mobile dam (including adequate cleaning, storing, repairing, if the case) and trainings to be carried out will contribute in this sense. Further training needs should be covered also beyond the project life-time.

SC Objective	Improving public safety and security		
SC Thematic Area	Managing natural disasters and emergency situations		
SC Project	The enhancement of preparedness of the rescue forces		
Executing Agency	Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic		
SC Grant	CHF 3,319,150	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,089,000

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. It contributes to improving preparedness in the deployment and management of the rescue forces in Slovakia and improving the effectiveness of the integrated rescue system during interventions in areas stricken by natural disaster, technological accident or other disaster. The integrated rescue system in Slovakia is based on the Fire and Rescue Forces, the Control Chemical Laboratories of Civil Protection, and the kynology and hipology department of the Police Forces; each of the beneficiary partners is an organizational unit of the Ministry of Interior. The project supports the partners via the modernization of premises and of technological equipment, plus the enhancement of theoretical and practical preparedness of the forces. The project is fully in line with the national development priorities of Slovakia in the area of civil protection and safety and is coherent with the wider range of actions undertaken by Slovakia to enhance its capacity and its preparedness for European/international cooperation in the area.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The project will deliver a modernized center and operational capacity for the training of service dogs and dog-handlers of the security and rescue forces in Slovakia: final approval for the reconstructed training center was received in early 2015; the procurement and installation of veterinary and technical equipment is anticipated in late 2015; support for the training of trainers and dog-handlers will be completed in October 2015. In addition to training police dog-handlers it is planned that the center, starting during 2016, will provide training to civilian rescue force dog-handlers. It will also serve as an international center of expertise and training, for which a good level of cooperation already exists with partners in Slovakia's neighboring states, for which the trainers will be accredited to standards for FRONTEX. The project has delivered effective modernization and enhanced operational capacity of the Control Chemical Laboratories: the delivery of laboratory and mobile testing equipment and related staff training has been undertaken from late 2013, and the theoretical and practical training of 10 staff on CBRN issues provided by the NBC Laboratory Spiez was completed in February 2015. The partnership and exchange of experience with the NBC Laboratory was highly appreciated by the Slovak partner. In addressing the equipment deficiencies of the laboratories the ability to detect a wider range of chemical agents has been greatly enhanced: to date the technical capacity to detect organic compounds is estimated to have increased to more than 200,000 new (previously non-detectable) agents, as well as 100 new (previously non-detectable) radionuclides. The Fire and Rescue Forces sub-components are assumed to be completed in the first half of 2016. However, risks exist in terms of the timely delivery of the final activities – the 8 theoretical exercises for 115 other Fire and Rescue Forces and 3 simulation tactical exercises using the chief-command mobile vehicle as a management rescue headquarter involving 80 members of the integrated rescue system – as realization of these by the Ministry can only be undertaken after final delivery of the Swiss Contribution components in mid-2016. It is clear that the Ministry is committed to ensure the effective delivery of these final actions and results. Realization of the exercises in 2016 needs to be further monitored and, as appropriate, to ensure effective, timely delivery, finalized in early-2017.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory: notably the six months required following approval of the Project Outline for the preparation, review and submission of the Final Project Proposal, plus the sizeable implementation delays due to difficulties in the procurement processes. The period for implementation has been extended from 46 months to 65 months, in order to finalize procurements and the subsequent delivery of the full range of project results. The project was rated 'at risk' in 2013 and also in 2014, but good progress has been achieved in 2015, notably with contracting of the Fire and Rescue Forces sub-components finally in-place and satisfactory progress made linked to procurement of the final project deliverables, including the extension of the project activities that is feasible due to the appreciation of the Swiss Franc since 2011. Delivery of the activities financed via the Swiss Contribution grant will indicatively be completed in summer 2016, with the final project activities financed by the Ministry to be completed by the end of 2016.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Ownership of the results is strong. The partners have a clear vision for the continuation and further enhancement of the benefits and to ensure sustainability of training through their multiplication, i.e. the further training of rescue forces.

Annex 7.5: Strengthening Civil Society

Linked to the Swiss Contribution's specific objective "**strengthening civil society**" the following projects were assessed:

- 1) Hungary: Twinning and Partnership Block Grant
- 2) Latvia: Block Grant for the NGO Fund
- 3) Poland: Partnership Fund
- 4) Slovakia: NGO Block Grant and Partnership support of the Swiss-Slovak cooperation

SC Objective	Strengthening civil society		
SC Project	Twinning and Partnership Block Grant (TPBG)		
Intermediate Body	Széchenyi Programme Office, Hungary		
SC Grant	CHF 4,000,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,000,000

Relevance. Relevance of the project is judged to be satisfactory. Learning from more advanced models and developing civil society are among key factors which trigger socio-economic development. Furthermore, the program is relevant for the SC horizontal objectives of enhancing bilateral relations and visibility of Switzerland in Hungary and capitalize on the Swiss experience in terms of cooperation. Areas in which projects under the TPBG are implemented are relevant for the socio-economic development issues of Hungary. Project development and selection mechanism in place contributed to their quality; the works of the Small Project Approval Committees add value to applications, in this context.

Effectiveness. Effectiveness of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The program bypassed its targets in terms of projects implemented (50 in total vs. 44 planned). Particularly in demand seem to be the partnership projects, mainly implemented by smaller non-profit organizations (39 projects vs. 26 planned); 4 social dialogue projects were financed, one more compared to initial targets. However, creating new partnerships between towns was challenging (i.e. 7 projects implemented vs. 15 planned) despite targeted information and promotion activities carried out and dedicated calls organized. Establishing formal partnerships between public institutions is a complex process and lengthier than the time at disposal between the call opening and its dead-line. A roll-on procedure accompanied by an actively and strategically managed partner search forum might bring better results. Towns' cooperation seems stronger where sustained by dedicated associations (e.g. in Tápiógyörgye). Projects created or strengthened partnership but some of them also developed solutions for development challenges in Hungary with Swiss support (e.g. health prevention activities in Körmend; Szentgotthárd received the "Energy City" label under the European Energy Award with further ramifications for the development of the city as an ecological and tourism destination; development of a model and toolkit for human resources development for SMEs; policy recommendations for enhancing employability of elderly workers). Identifying Swiss partners was a challenge, as level of financing was low from their perspective, promotion of common projects benefits was insufficient in Switzerland, and rules seemed complex. Quality of partnership is mixed: in some cases the added value of the Swiss partner in terms of activities carried out under the project is not clear, while in other cases the project could not have been carried out without its support. Cooperation between new partners lead to common grounds based on which further projects may be developed, however, further steps need to be taken to consolidate these newly established partnerships and reach the BG objective, which seems ambitious for this stage of the SW-HU transnational cooperation. No partnerships were established at regional level between the two countries.

Efficiency. Efficiency of the project is judged to be satisfactory. The TPBG launch was one-year and a half delayed but quickly gained momentum and committed allocated funds before dead-line. Although institutionally the IB managed similar interventions before, certain elements intervened under the Swiss-funded TPBG and challenged the efficiency of its implementation process (e.g. as more beneficiaries were less experienced, a three-round control of one single report submitted until its approval was generally needed). Costs of TPBG management were reasonable adjusted to its final length and volume of work. Further than making co-financing available, a key challenge for beneficiaries was to manage Swiss institutions' involvement in the project as the systems are different from legal and financial perspectives. Solutions were identified for financial losses due to due to rate exchange variation and transfer of the grant to the Swiss partner and a "light reporting system" was successfully implemented for the latter. Still, implementation efforts are not proportional with the value of the grant and SC is strongly encouraged to use simplified cost options, especially lump sum in this case. Maintaining the same team in place contributed to the BG efficiency and effectiveness. Still, serious delays in submitting and having progress and annual report approved are registered.

Sustainability. Sustainability of the project is judged to be unsatisfactory. Although the program managed to create new and strengthen existing partnerships and these may facilitate further cooperation, few of them are actually maintained actively, in principal due to lack of funding (also in the case of town twinning). Moreover, outputs produced are not further used beyond the project lifetime and no procedures/rules are in place to facilitate/ensure such a development.

SC Objective	Strengthening civil society		
SC Project	Block Grant (BG) for the NGO Fund		
Intermediate Body	Society Integration Foundation (SIF), Latvia		
SC Grant	CHF 3,500,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,117,647

Relevance

Relevance of the BG is highly satisfactory. The BG promotes civil society's contribution to mitigating socio-economic disparities via support to NGOs to improve the life quality of and the social inclusion of two target groups at risk of social exclusion and/or of poverty: (1) children and youth, and (2) seniors. The needs of the two groups in terms of promoting their life quality and inclusion are of great significance for the country: (1) in 2008 children (aged 0-17) represented 18% of the total population, of which 26% were at comparatively high risk of poverty, while the level of youth (aged less than 25) unemployment was significantly negatively impacted post-global financial crisis, rising from 13.6% in 2008 to 33.3% in 2009; (2) in 2007 seniors (60 years or more) represented almost 21% of the population, with 32% of persons aged 75 or more judged (2006) at high risk of poverty as well as 30% of those aged 60-75 years. The BG provides support to NGOs to deliver social services and in the development of new services targeted to either group as well as those targeted to both groups. In addition to the delivery of services, an additional objective of the BG is to foster cooperation between NGOs and public/municipal authorities in terms of engagement on the development, implementation and monitoring of social care, children and youth policies, including also via potential partnerships with Swiss stakeholder groups. Relevance of the BG is also highly satisfactory in terms of national development goals and programs of Latvia, e.g. Civil Society Development 2008-2012, National Development Plan 2007-2013, which stress the role of civil society and the promotion of civic engagement, as well as the need to promote social inclusion. The BG is also clearly targeted in terms of the relative lack of alternative funding available for the development of small and medium sized NGOs that support the target groups.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is judged to be highly satisfactory. By the end of 2012 implementation in all 62 sub-projects (21 macro, 41 micro) was completed. The evaluation of the BG conducted in early 2013 found that in total 191 NGOs participated in the implementation of sub-projects (versus a target of 55), with 60 sub-projects implemented via partnerships (target of 20); these were primarily between Latvian actors, but there were also 20 partnerships with Swiss partners (target 5). In regard to fostering cooperation between NGOs and public/municipal authorities, 26 NGOs started new forms of cooperation in policy development and implementation (target of at least 5). Via the sub-projects 20,699 persons from the target groups at risk of social exclusion and/or risk of poverty (i.e. 14,483 socially and economically disadvantaged children and youth, and 6,216 senior persons) directly benefitted from the range of measures provided by the NGOs. The sub-projects also strengthened civic participation of the target groups, with more than 675 persons involved in the NGOs' activities (target at least 300). Feedback from the NGOs interviewed indicates that the BG has very effectively supported their development of operational capacity and the quality of service delivery.

Efficiency

Efficiency is judged to be satisfactory. The call for proposals was launched by the IB at the start of the 4-month of BG implementation, for which a 'two-loop' approach was utilized. Whereas the IB had anticipated approximately 100 proposals would be received, 455 were submitted: 272 micro-projects (CHF 10,000–49,999, up to 12 months duration) and 183 macro-projects (CHF 50,000–200,000, up to 18 months). Despite the number each proposal was assessed and the invitation to selected NGOs to submit a Final Project Proposal (FPP) announced seven weeks later. 110 proposals were received (65 micro- and 45 macro-projects) and assessed, with 56 selected (37 micro- and 19 macro-) with the sub-project agreements concluded in December 2010 – a process of just 9 months since the announcement of the initial call for proposals in April 2010. Due to BG savings an additional 6 sub-projects were also subsequently financed (4 micro- and 2 macro-). Management of the BG by the IB has been satisfactory: SIF has proven capacity and experience in the management of both national and external public support measures targeted to civil society and NGOs via grant scheme mechanisms, including of its necessary undertaking of sub-project oversight and support. Efficiency at sub-project level has been satisfactory, however, not all sub-projects fully utilized the grant, with approximately 5% of the grant not utilized via the sub-projects.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the benefits is judged to be satisfactory. Sustainability issues have been carefully considered throughout: project concept notes and FPPs were required to address this. Macro-projects are also required to provide ex post reports to the IB 3-years after completion. The majority of NGOs are in part supported by national or local public funds for operational delivery.

SC Objective	Strengthening civil society		
SC Project	Partnership Fund (PF)		
Intermediate Body	Ecorys Poland	Partner Euroregion Baltik	
SC Grant	CHF 3,400,000	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 4,000,000

Relevance

Relevance of the PF is judged to be unsatisfactory. The PF aims to develop partnership initiatives between self-government entities and institutions of Poland and Switzerland, which is relevant and should result in: (1) increased knowledge; (2) new partnership between self-government entities; (3) new projects within existing Swiss-Polish partnerships. Sub-project grantees interviewed indicated the relevance of their sub-projects, in particular the environmental actions. But, the PF results chain is poorly defined in terms of the intended hierarchy of intervention effects, evident also when looking at the indicators: these merely reflect steps of the grant cycle, rather than any intended deliverables or effects. For the FPP no specific beneficiary needs assessment was carried out. The Block Grant Guidelines were prepared via consultation of the Forum of the Public Benefit Council and within the Polish NGO sector. The PF focus was also opened to include Voivodship offices and Swiss associations due to difficulties finding Swiss partners. The PF approach did not stipulate specific thematic fields, which the EA saw as a challenge. Similarly to the SC, the EEA/ Norway grant provides the opportunity for bilateral cooperation between Poland and EEA countries.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory. A total of 21 partnership projects were implemented. Available reports contain little information on the nature and results of the partnerships. The evaluation was able to establish outcomes for the three projects visited, e.g. the Municipal Office of Kraków in cooperation with the Krakow University of Economics and the University of Applied Sciences, of Western Switzerland HES-SO in Sierre developed a survey tool for the city to assess the contribution of business tourism to the municipal budget. First survey findings established that the business tourism industry contributes 2.5% to the city budget and helped to develop and a strategy to promote business tourism further. All three projects indicated that transfer of Swiss know-how had been essential, e.g. the Association of Municipalities Polish Network "Energie Cites" in cooperation with Zurich University of Applied Sciences promoted green roofs to local authorities as a contribution to energy saving and climate protection. This included Swiss technology transfer that turned out to be more cost-effective than the widely used German technology as it does not require the installation of expensive roofing layers or a completely new roof. The grant initiated contact between the Swiss company Bauder and the municipality of Raciechowice.

Efficiency

Efficiency of the PF is judged to be satisfactory. Overall, the PF is viewed to have experienced little risks with regard to efficient implementation especially in view of the re-granting component and procurements. The IB, which had previously managed the EEA grant applied similar management structures. The 1.5-year process from the announcement of the tender result to the IA signing was seen as a challenge. The partner Euroregion Baltik had been involved in various steps of the implementation in particular the Steering Committee (SC) and training for applicants. Management positions were split between the NGO Fund and the PF (90%/10%). In 2013 the PF was increased from 1,800,000 to 4,000,000 CHF. The 2014 AR identified a "very high" risk of not fully using the funds leading to the approval of additional measures for completed. On the basis of the initial risks analysis risks was reviewed following submission of quarterly reports including checking the eligibility of costs. The role of the SC seems to have been limited to the project selection phase. After the NCU noted insufficient monitoring, the IB increased activities, monitoring around 80-90% of all projects. Overall grantees were satisfied with the timely and adequate IB support, timely instalment transfers, reasonable reporting and pre-financing option. One of the grantees pointed out on the inadequacy of the project time frames to pursue the advocacy component of the project. Grantees with EU funding experience highlighted the user-friendliness of the PF.

Sustainability

Sustainability is judged to be satisfactory. The 2014 AR noted the establishment of 5 long-term sustainable partnerships, although the IB interview confirmed only 3 sustainable partnerships including one, which had been previously established. Interviews verified that the Association of Municipalities Polish Network "Energie Cites" continues cooperation with its Swiss partner, seeking additional funding for future joint projects. The outputs produced under grants such as tools, handbooks, concepts, innovation and platforms will remain after project completion. Moreover, sub-projects have also delivered systemic changes, e.g. data collection with the business community in Krakow on business tourism (Municipal Office, Kraków) or amendment of the Polish fiscal law (Employer Republic of Poland). Finally, grantees have/aim to tap into relevant EU funding streams.

SC Objective	Strengthening civil society		
SC Project	NGO Block Grant (BG) and Partnership support		
Intermediate Body	Ekopolis Foundation,	Partners Carpathian Foundation/SOCIA Foundation	
SC Grant	CHF 5,510,901	Total Project Eligible Costs	CHF 6,483,413

Relevance

Relevance of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. The BG contributes to active participation of NGOs in decreasing economic and social disparities and in cooperation between Swiss and Slovak institutions. To this end the BG strengthened NGO capacities, enabled their contribution to the development of social services and environmental protection and transferred good practice between Swiss and Slovak institutions. Slovakia consists of a vibrant NGO sector with around 31,000 NGOs (2010). NGOs play a key role promoting environmental issues and advocating for the implementation of environmental laws. In the social services field Slovakia has worked towards decentralization over the past decade moving competencies to local government and introducing NGOs as providers but new competencies are often not matched with sufficient resources. The BG approach is adequate in particular because of the specific capacity building result. Besides the SC the EEA/Norway grant constitutes the second major funding source for NGOs addressing social inequalities, poverty and exclusion and the protection of the environment and climate change. Grantees interviewed highlighted that the BG continues to be of relevance.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. All three quantified output level indicators have been bypassed: 33 NGOs built their capacities; 22 projects supported social services/environment initiatives, 18 joint projects were implemented. A total of 18 projects were implemented (fully or partially) in the marginalized regions of Slovakia. With regard to the number of applied examples of good practices in partner institutions the last available IR indicates transfer through all 18 joint projects. This evaluation can confirm transfer for all 7 projects visited. Despite the difficulty of capturing outcomes in the field of social services/environment due to the logframe design and the broad scope of the project portfolio. The evaluation established thematically specific contributions for most of the projects visited. With regard to continuing partnerships, according to the EAs own analysis a total of 10 of the 18 joint projects will have some form of continuing partnership with their Swiss partners. The evaluation can verify this finding for a total of 6 of 7 joint projects visited. In particular environmental sub-grants contain innovative approaches and contribute to the formulation or implementation of new environmental legislation or strengthening capacities to absorb structural funds available for environmental protection/climate change initiatives. Finally a total of 33 NGOs built their capacities including 22 NGOs strengthening technical expertise through training; 23 NGOs developing enhanced capacities through an upgrade of equipment/facilities; 11 NGOs strengthening of organizational capacities, including development of organizational, fundraising or communication strategies; 8 NGO increased their staffing.

Efficiency

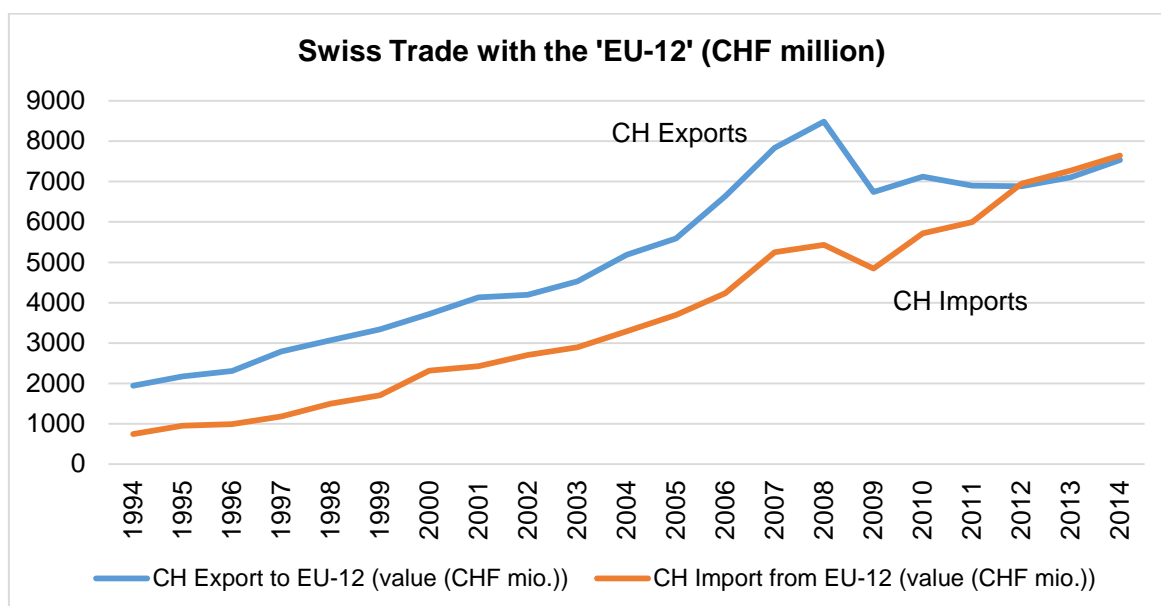
Efficiency of the project is judged to be highly satisfactory. Despite the lengthy project development and approval process input and support coming from the NCU and Swiss was appreciated. The PPF had been beneficial for project development. The project was extended from 08/2014 to 02/2015 and increased by 1,210,901 CHF. A point of concern for the EA had been the thematic broadness of the BG. Here the EA would have argued for a more narrow focus. Grantees submitted summarized monthly expense reports and quarterly financial/technical performance reports. All projects had been monitored at least or twice. On the basis of a project events calendar the EA, often jointly with the NCU, attended relevant project events. The three Steering Committees (SCs) worked well, governmental representatives, e.g. Ministry of Interior on the Joint Project SC, had been supportive. Consortium partners brought in social service expertise (SOCIA Foundation) and regional expertise and staff based in Eastern Slovakia (Carpathian Foundation). In 2010 concerns about a potential overlap with the second EEA/Norway NGO grant scheme did not materialize: of the 40 BG grantees only 9 had received funding from the second EEA/Norway grant.

Sustainability

Sustainability of the project is judged to be satisfactory. With regard to financial sustainability larger NGOs and institutions with a focus on environmental issues already have experience with and can resort to larger international funding schemes, e.g. the Global Environment Fund or EU Life+. Alternative funding approaches also exist, e.g. ZIVICA extended project activities through crowd-funding. Social services NGOs cannot resort to similar international schemes and a national scheme to support low threshold activities has not yet materialized. However, particular social services NGOs indicated the BG enabled them to strengthen their organizational capacities and confidence to pursue added fundraising activities to tap local funding sources, e.g. companies.

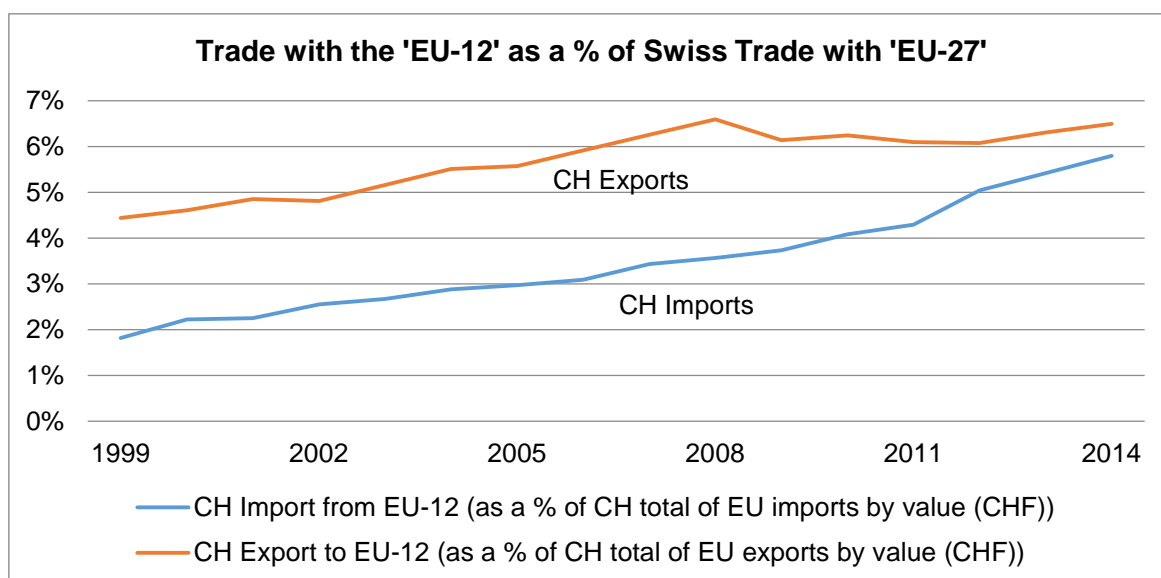
Annex 8: Bilateral Relations – Switzerland and the Partner States

Closer economic bilateral relations



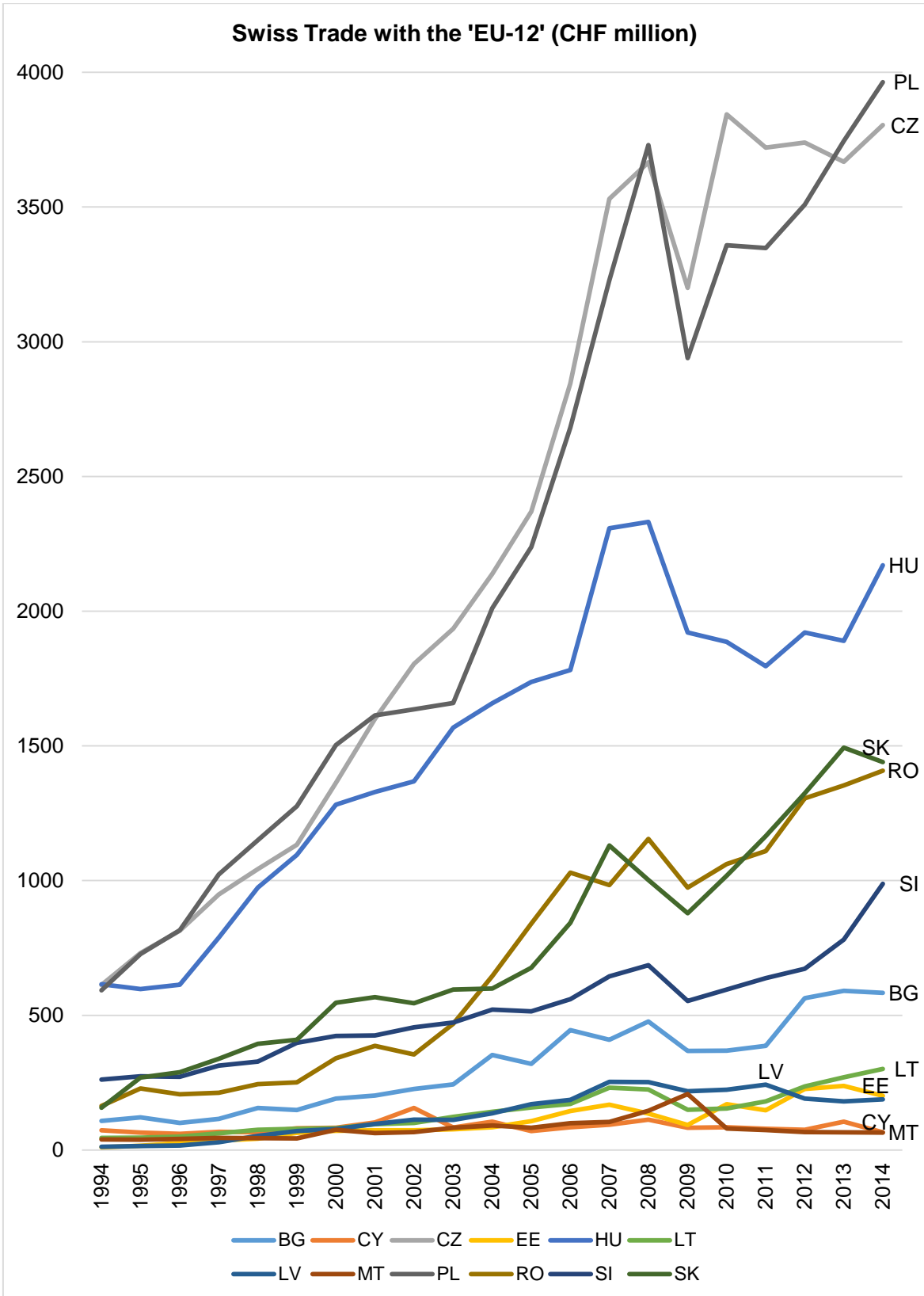
Source: Swiss Customs Administration

Swiss trade with the 12 partner states, including both total exports and total imports, progressively grow over the period from the early-1990s up to 2008. There was a noticeable increase in the level of trade, compared to the longer-term trend, over the period 2006-2008. The value of Swiss trade with the 12 states decreased in 2009, but has increased again since 2010. The total value of Swiss trade with the 12 states increased from CHF 8,484 million in 2004 to CHF 15,177 million in 2014.



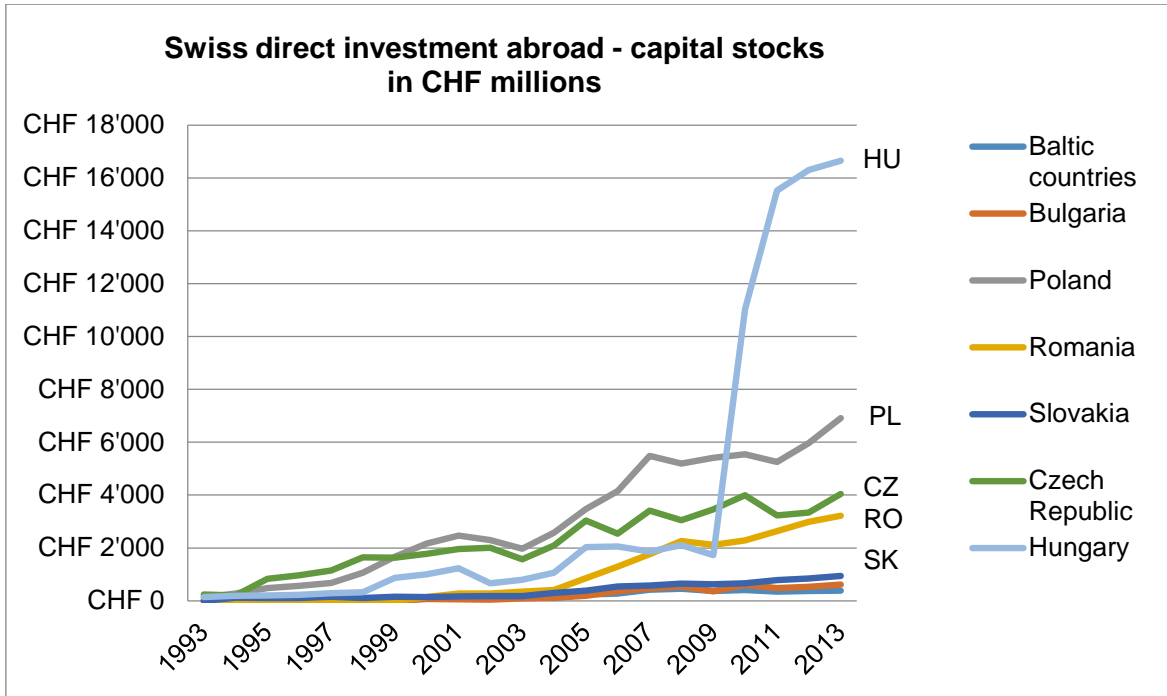
Source: Swiss Customs Administration

The population of the 12 partner states – 101.4 million in 2013, down from 103.4 million in 2004 – represents 20-21% of the 'EU-27' total population. While still low, overall, compared to Swiss trade with the more economically developed EU member states, the proportion of Swiss trade (by value) with the 12 partner states has steadily grown as a share of Swiss trade with the 'EU-27': in 2014 approximately 6.5% of Swiss exports to the EU and 5.8% of Swiss imports from the EU.



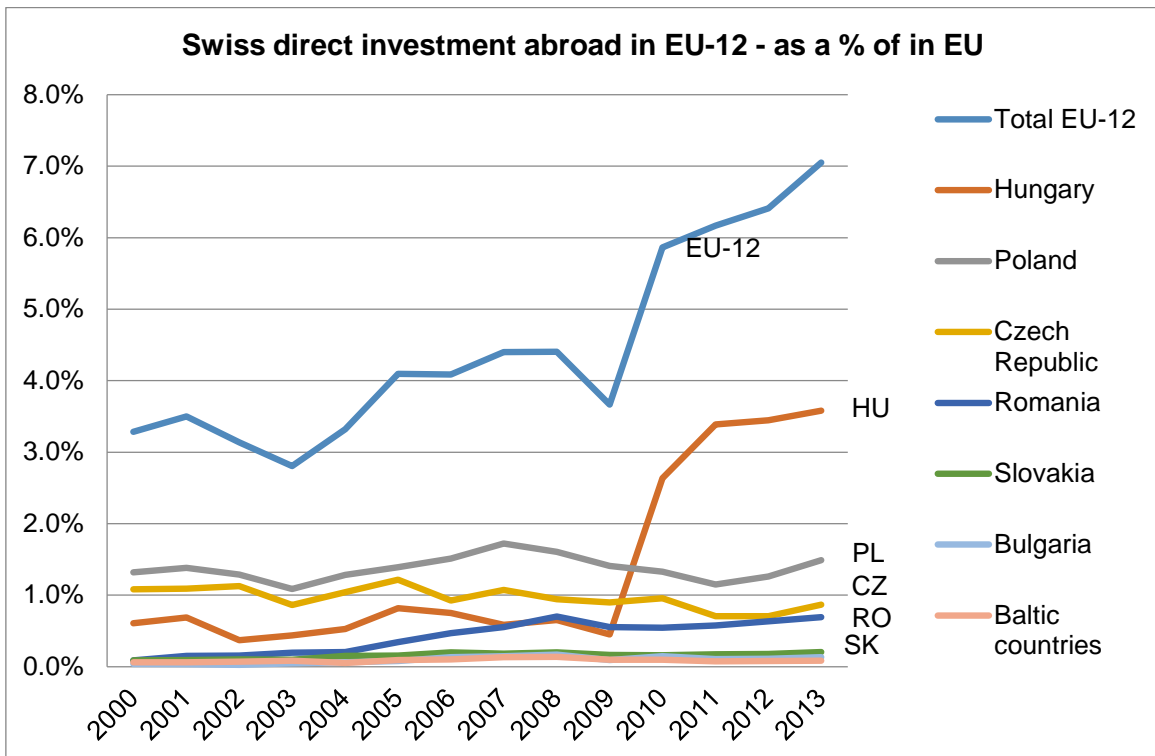
Source: Swiss Customs Administration

At the level of the individual partner states, the value of Swiss trade with Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary has historically been more intense. Since the early-2000s the value of Swiss trade with the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania and Slovakia has significantly increased, while the value of trade with Bulgaria has markedly increased since 2011, and with Slovenia since 2012. The value of trade with the Baltic States has also increased but with lower stability in terms of the trend.



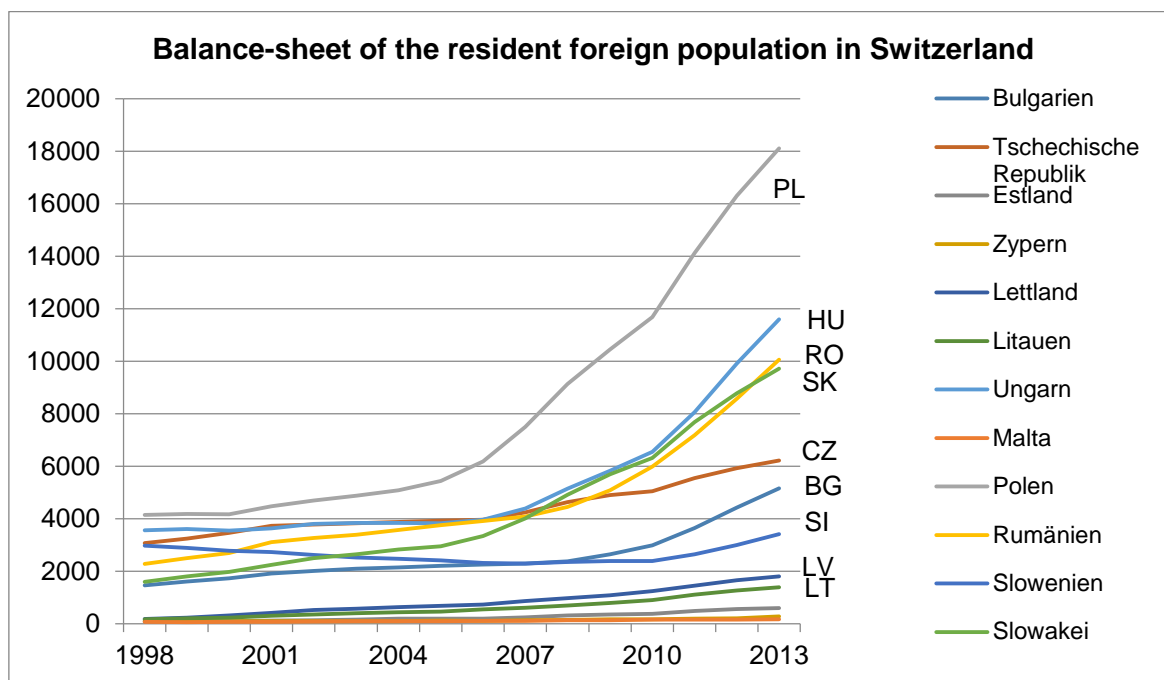
Source: Swiss National Bank

The level of and the trend in the allocation of Swiss direct investment has noticeably increased since 2004-2005 in regard the total value of Swiss investments in Hungary, Poland, Romania, and to a lesser degree the Czech Republic. In 2013 these four states accounted for 94% of Swiss direct investment in the 12 partner states. While from a lower base in 2004, the growth of Swiss investments in Slovakia is also notable: rising from CHF 300 million in 2004 to CHF 943 million in 2013. The value of Swiss direct investment in Hungary has significantly increased since 2009, with Hungary, as shown below, now accounting for 3.6% of Swiss direct investment in the EU. Overall, the 12 partner states now account for 7.1% of Swiss direct investment in the EU.



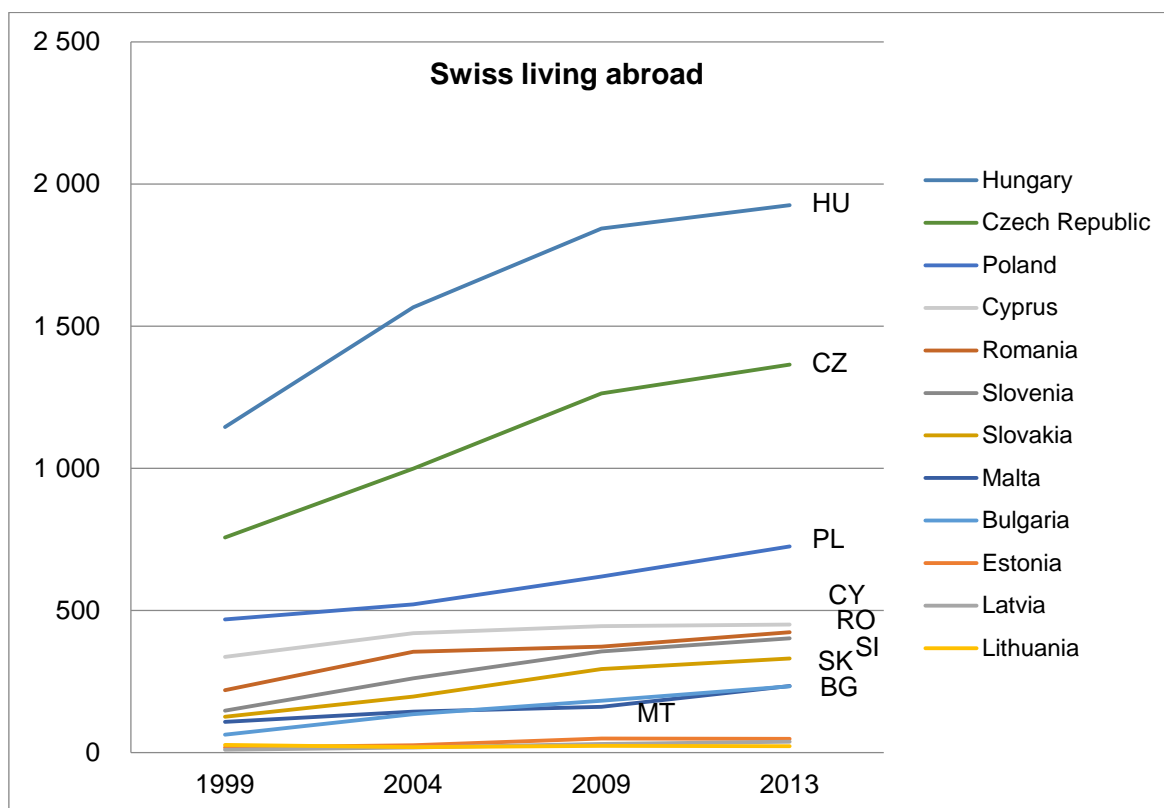
Source: Swiss National Bank

Closer people-to-people bilateral relations



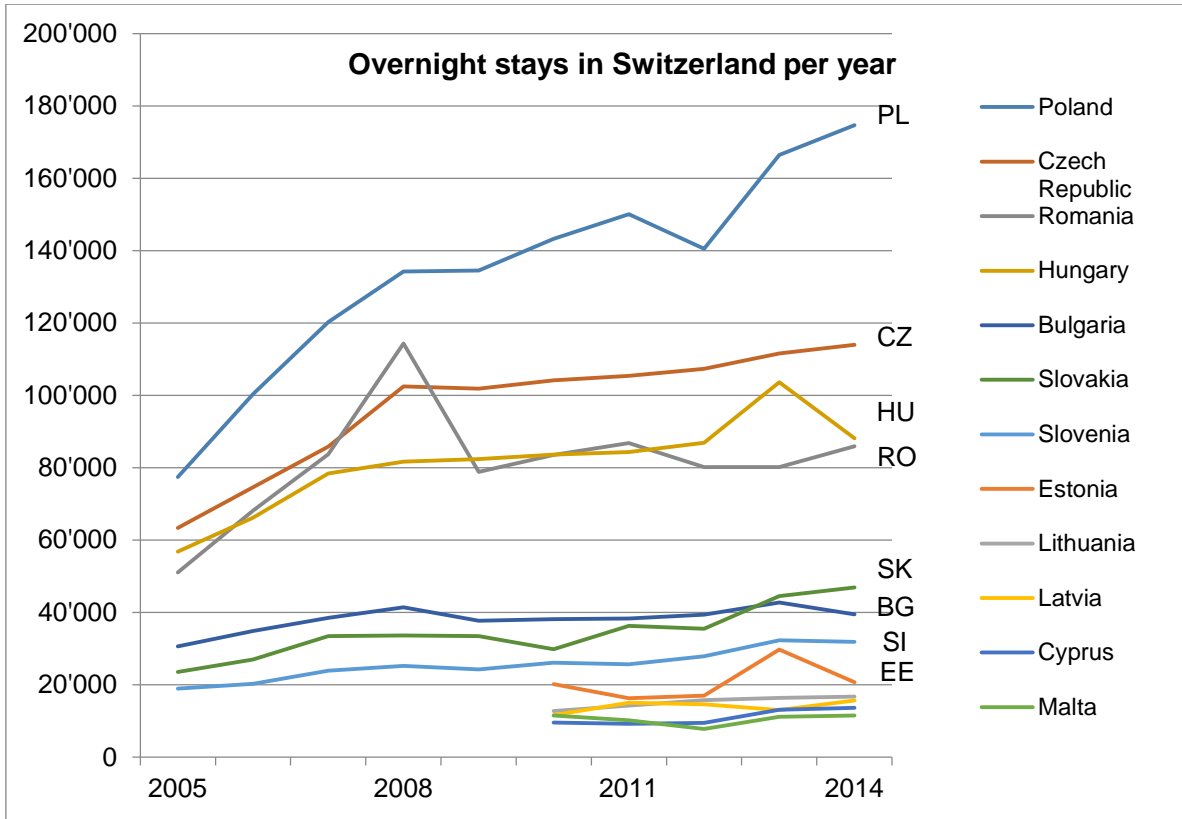
Source: Statistik Schweiz

Since 2004 the number of citizens from the 12 partner states resident in Switzerland has risen from approximately 25,000 to 68,000 in 2013, the largest single group are persons of Polish citizenship.



Source: Statistik Schweiz

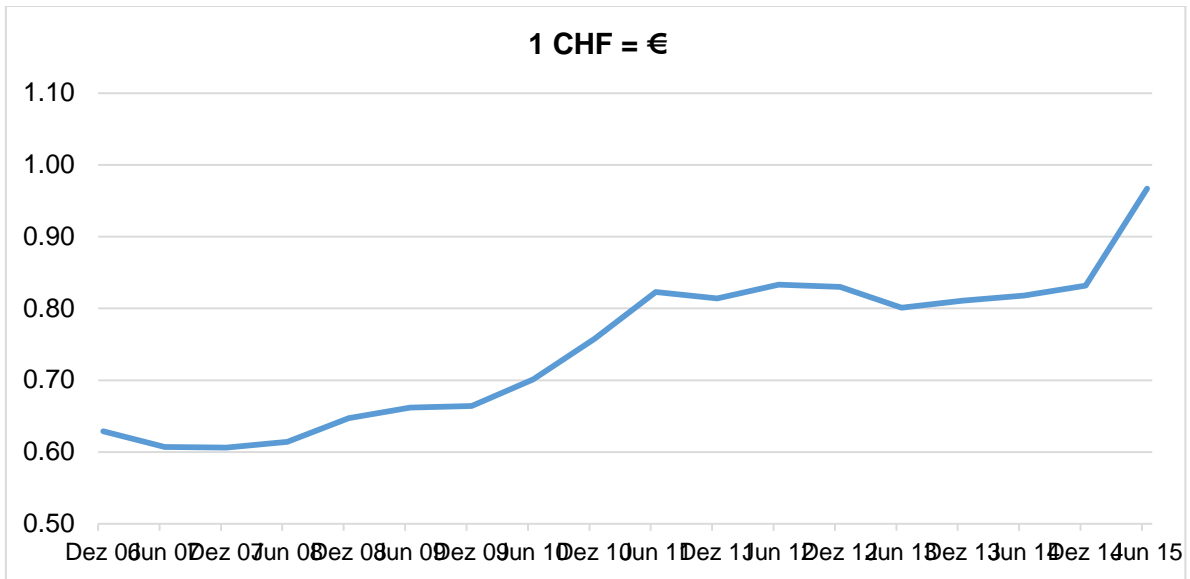
The number of Swiss citizens resident in the 12 partner states has increased from approximately 4,700 in 2004 to 6,200 in 2013, with the largest number resident in Hungary.



Source: Statistik Schweiz

In regard to total overnight stays in Switzerland by residents from the 12 partner states, in 2005 the states (without data for Cyprus or Malta) represented 2.4% of the annual total. This has progressively increased and represented 4.1% of the total in 2014 (all 12 partner states). The largest number of visitors were from Poland, followed by Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania.

The appreciation of the Swiss Franc over the life-time of the SC to the Enlarged EU



Source: European Commission, InforEuro

The value of the Swiss Franc, compared with the local currencies of the partner states, notably increased during 2010 and the first half of 2011 and again since the start of 2015, as indicated above in regard the appreciation of the Swiss Franc compared with the Euro (€).

Annex 9: Evaluation Questionnaire Surveys – Response Overview

The evaluation's research and analysis has combined: (a) desk study review and analysis of SC program documentation, (b) field mission interviews and focus group discussions linked to the sample of projects and program in four focus partner states, (c) interviews with Swiss stakeholders, (d) plus utilized questionnaire surveys sent to program partners in the 'EU-10' plus Bulgaria and Romania, and to project partners in the four focus states for this evaluation – i.e. Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Slovakia.

The on-line questionnaire surveys were formally opened at the start of September 2015, with invitations to participate targeted to key partners: Swiss Embassies, SCOs, and NCUs covering all of the 12 partner states, plus IBs and EAs in the four focus partner states for field mission visits. The response-rate was as follows: Embassies (9 of 10), SCO (6 of 7), NCU (10 of 12), IBs/EAs (40 of 127), and sub-project EAs under the civil society NGO/Partnership Block Grants (71 of 172). The surveys were structured in order to include a series of common questions, thus allowing for the 'triangulation' of responses.

The surveys were structured presenting a series of questions linked to issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, as well as lessons learned. The questions presented were predominantly 'closed questions' – i.e. select one option from a range of options, e.g. (1) 'yes' or 'no', (2) 'fully', 'to a large extent', 'only partially', or 'no'. There were also a limited number of questions where respondents were requested to rank the potential options, or to select maximum two or three of those available. Where appropriate, a limited number of 'open questions' were also presented within the survey so as to elicit specific examples and to allow for narrative responses to be provided.

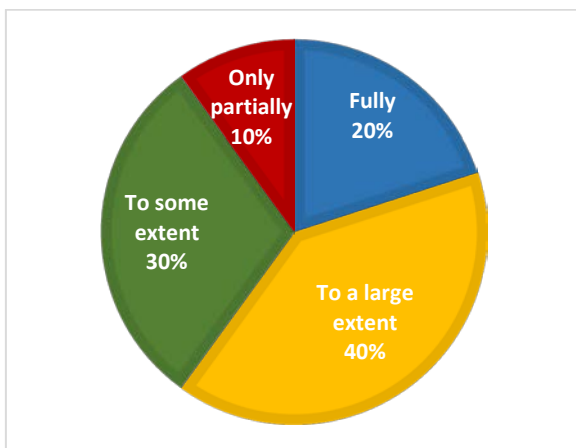
This annex presents an overview of the responses provided in relation to 33 of the survey questions posed.

Relevance

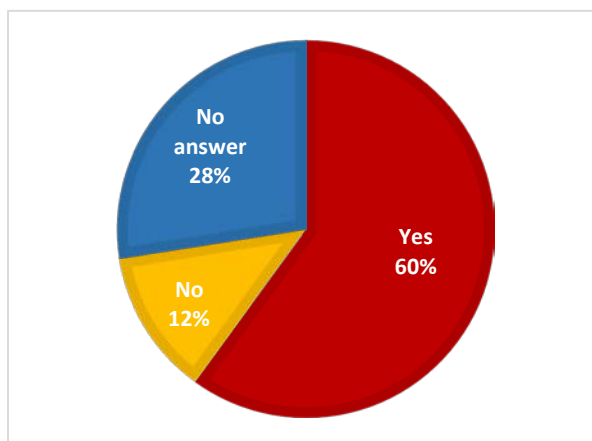
1) Were all the focus areas selected for support specifically identified, at the time, as a priority in a national, sectoral and/or regional development strategy/action plan?

2) Is the focus area, under which your project is supported, identified as a priority in a national, sectoral and/or regional development strategy/action plan?

NCUs



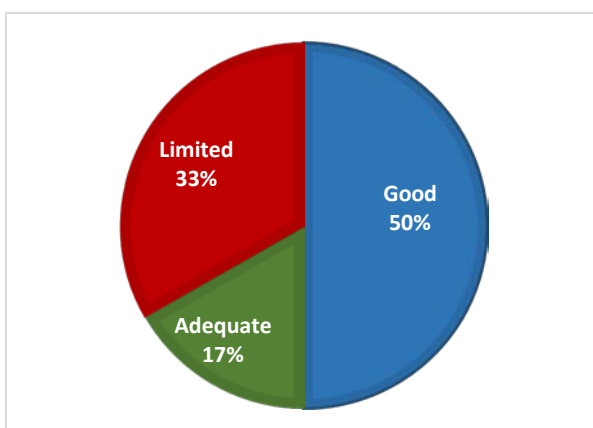
EAs



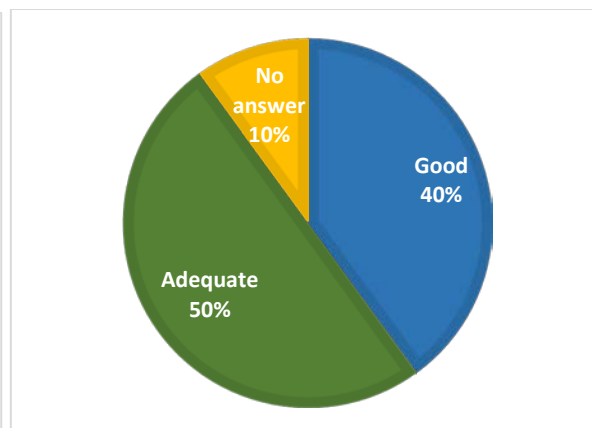
Most of the NCUs consider that the focus areas selected for support were specifically identified at that time fully or to a large extent as a priority in a national, sectoral and/or regional development strategy/action plan (60%). Equally, the majority of the EAs agree with the fact that the focus area, under which their projects were supported, were identified as a priority in a national, sectoral and/or regional development strategy/action plan (60%). However, it is evident that linkages of the focus areas selected to national, sectoral and/or regional development strategy/action plan could potentially be strengthened, with a minority of NCUs indicating that the focus areas were identified as a priority only to some extent (30%) or only partially (10%). Equally, a smaller minority (12%) of EAs consider that the focus areas were not identified as national/sectoral/regional priorities.

3) In your opinion, what is the overall strategic coherence of the Swiss Contribution program to the partner state in terms of the cross linkages and/or direct synergies between the focus areas?

SCOs



NCUs

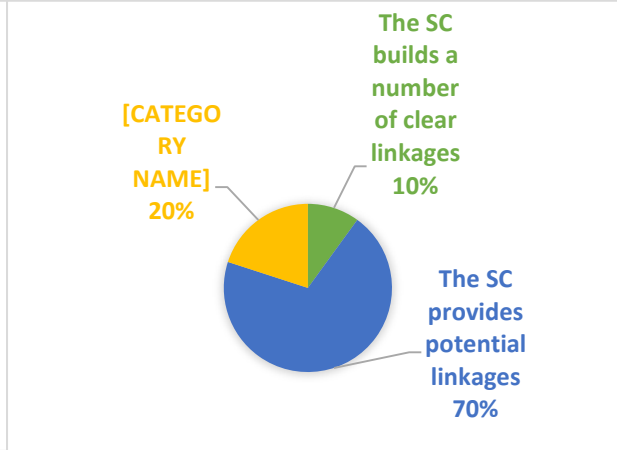
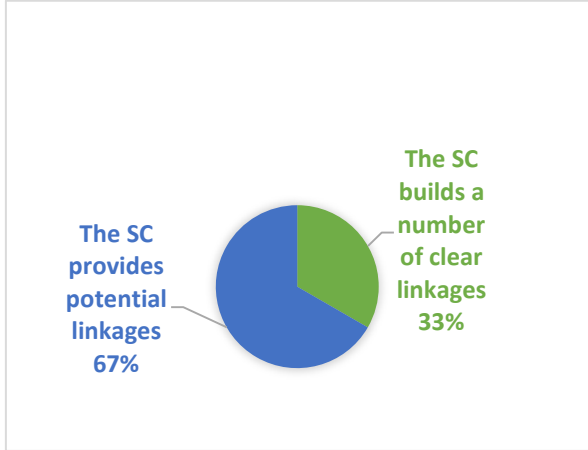


The internal coherence of the Swiss Contribution program in the individual partner states, in terms of the cross linkages and/or direct synergies between the focus areas, is judged by SCOs and NCUs to be good (50% and 40% respectively) or adequate (17% and 50%). However, a third of the SCOs (33%) think that the internal coherence of the SC program in the partner state is limited.

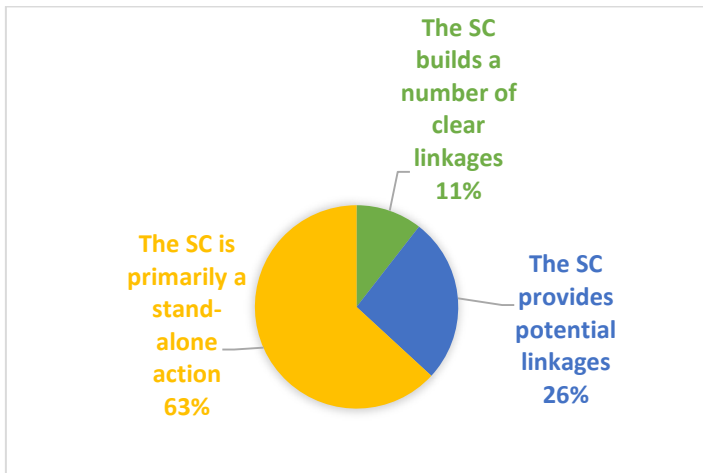
4) In your opinion, what is the level of coherence of the Swiss Contribution program of support within the wider context of the support to the partner state to reduce socio-economic disparities?

SCOs

NCUs



EAs

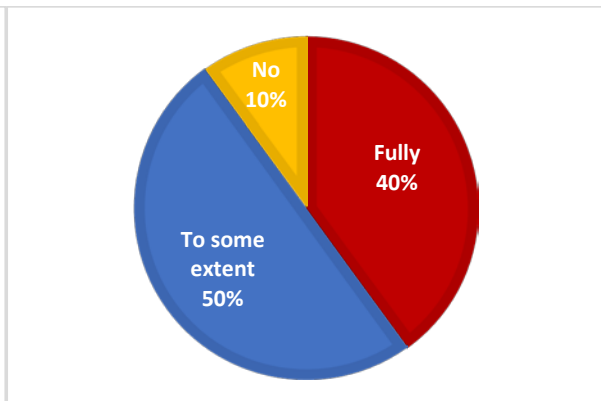
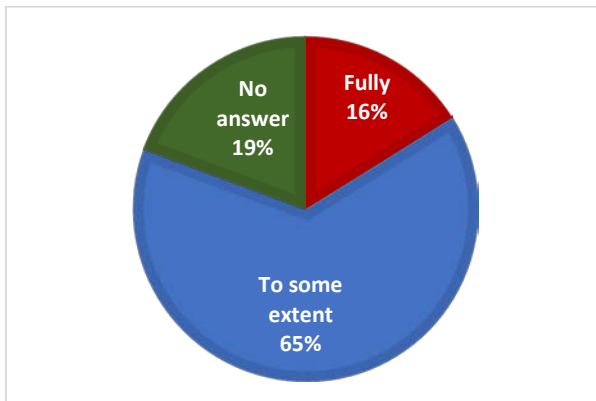


The majority of SCOs and NCUs consider that the SC program is coherent within the wider context of the support to the partner state to reduce socio-economic disparities. Primarily this is via the focus of the SC in areas or on groups not adequately targeted by other funding, rather than via direct linkages between SC and other programs. The majority of EAs consider that SC is primarily a stand-alone action (63%).

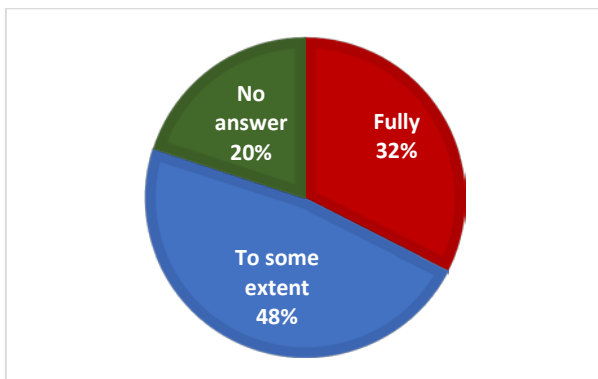
5) Are stakeholder partners (non-central government organizations/institutions, plus civil society representatives), involved in the Swiss Contribution programming process in the partner state?

SCOs

NCUs



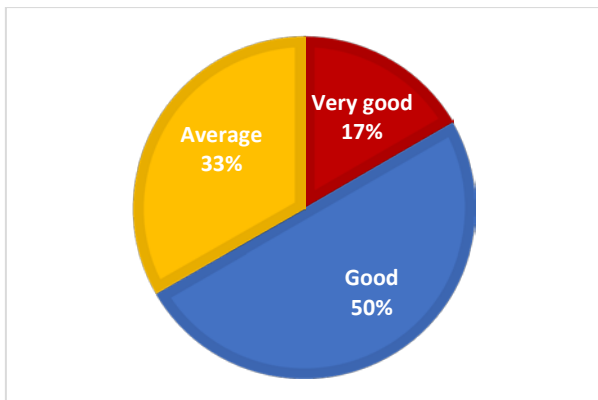
EAs



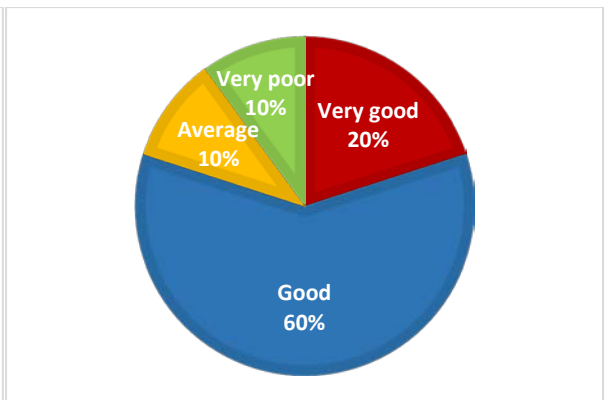
Only 16% of the SCOs consider that the stakeholder partners are fully involved in the programming process, while 40% of the NCUs and 32% of the EAs agree. Half of the NCUs and EAs consider that the stakeholder partners are involved in this process to some extent (50% and 48%), while 65% of the SCOs agree with this statement. 10 percent of the NCU do not consider that the stakeholders are involved in the programming process in the partner state.

6) In your opinion, what is the overall quality of project design (Project Outlines and Final Project Proposals) under the Swiss Contribution in the partner state (e.g. coherence of the intervention logic, clearly defined results chain, inputs and time planning, indicators and sources of verification, baseline data, monitoring systems, etc.)?

SCOs



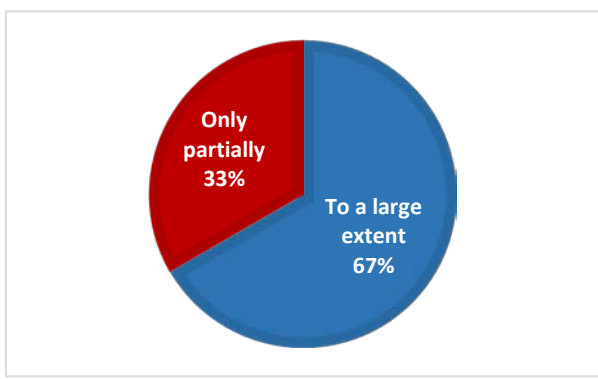
NCUs



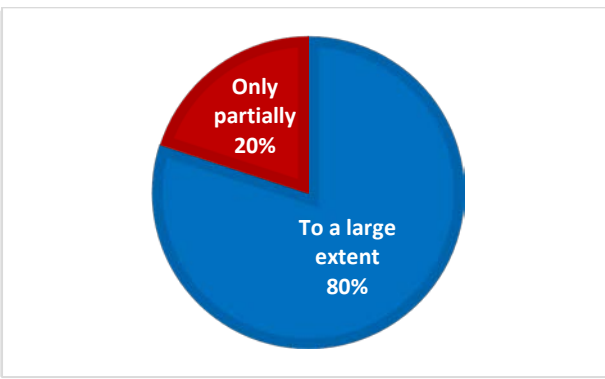
Most of the SCOs and NCUs consider that the overall quality of the project designs is good or very good. 17% of the SCOs and 20% of the NCUs consider that level of projects quality is very good. Half of the SCOs and more than half of the NCUs appreciate the quality of the project designs as good. However, a minority judge that the quality could be strengthened: 33% of SCOs and 10% of NCUs regard the quality of project design as average; 10% of NCUs think the quality is very poor.

7) In your opinion, are the projects' indicators of achievement (Output, Outcome, and Impact) adequate to measure the progress and the achievement of the objectives?

SCOs



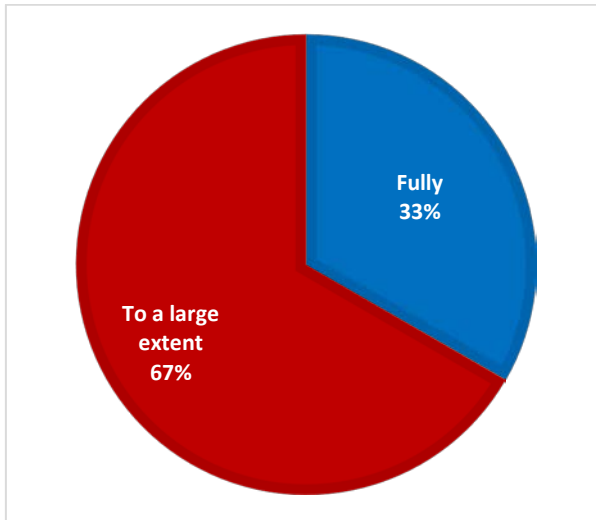
NCUs



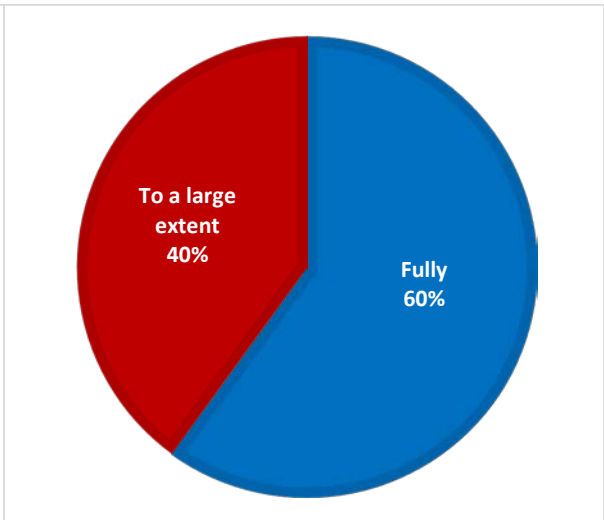
Most of the SCOs and NCUs consider that the projects' indicators of achievement (Output, Outcome, and Impact) are adequate to a large extent to measure the progress and the achievement of the objectives (67% and 80%). 33% of the SCOs and 20% of NCUs consider that the indicators are partially adequate. None of the respondents believe that the projects' indicators are not adequate to measure the level of objectives' achievement.

8) Overall, to what extent do you think that the supported projects remain relevant for the beneficiary organizations in the partner state (i.e. now, in 2015)?

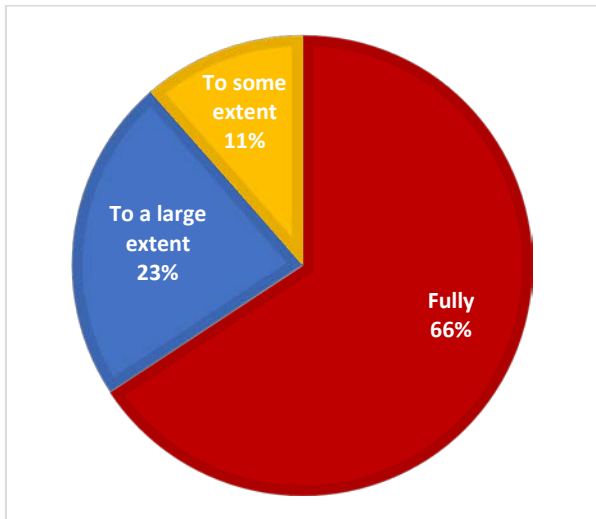
SCOs



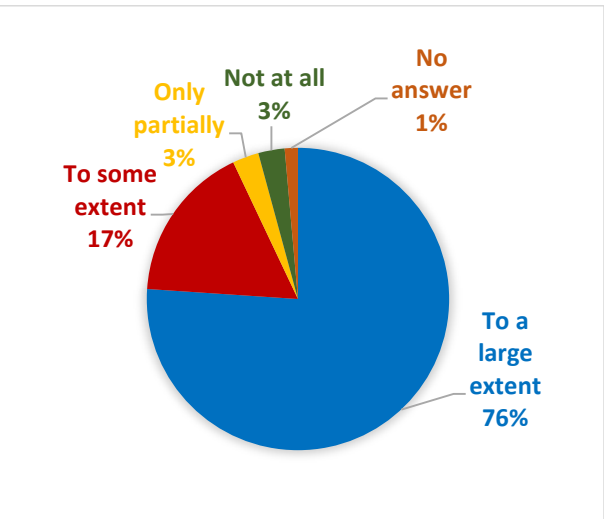
NCUs



EAs



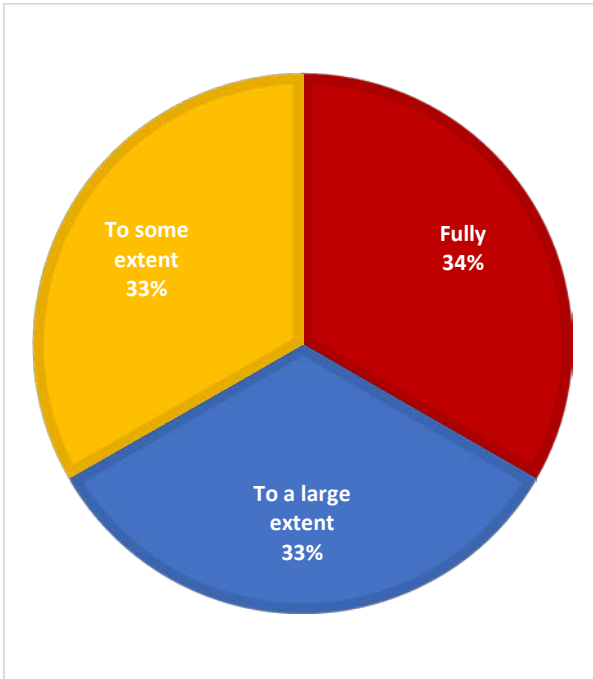
NGOs



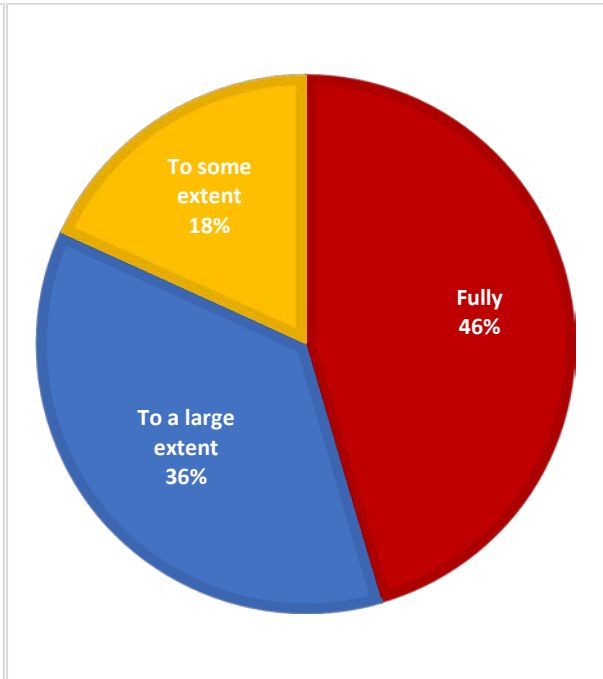
The overall conclusion from the SCOs and NCUs responses refers to the fact that the projects remain fully (33% and 60%) or to a large extent (67% and 40%) relevant for the beneficiary organizations in the partner countries. The EAs and NGOs agree to this statements. 66% of the EAs consider that that projects remain fully relevant to the beneficiaries and 23% consider that this statement is true to a large extent. None of the SCOs, NCUs and EAs consider that the project are not relevant at all and only 3% of the NGOs do not agree with them.

9) Overall, to what extent do you think that the supported projects remain relevant to the priorities and needs in the partner state in terms of the reduction of socio-economic disparities?

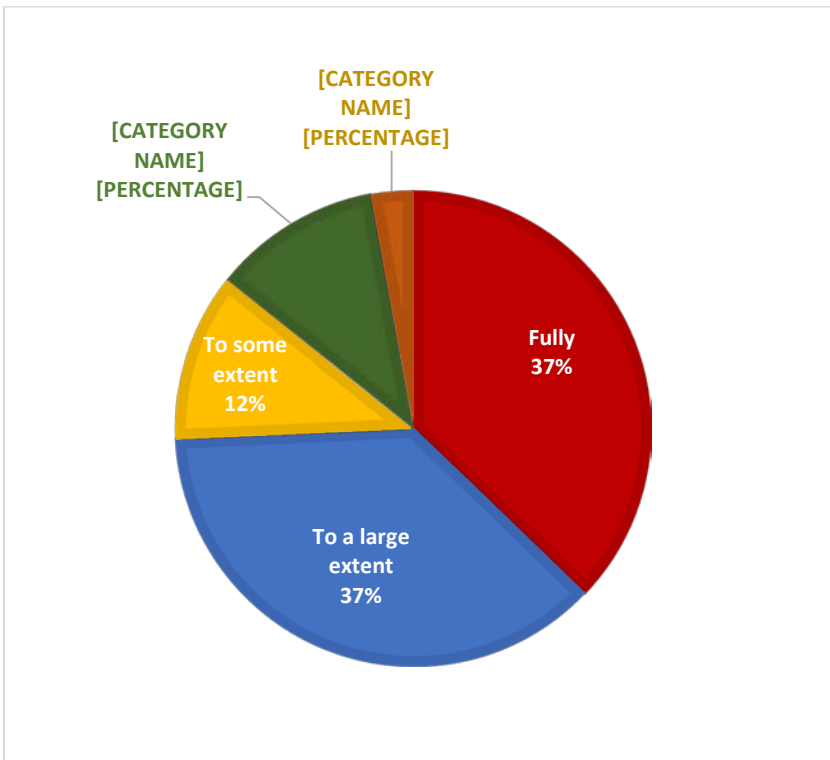
SCOs



NCUs



EAs



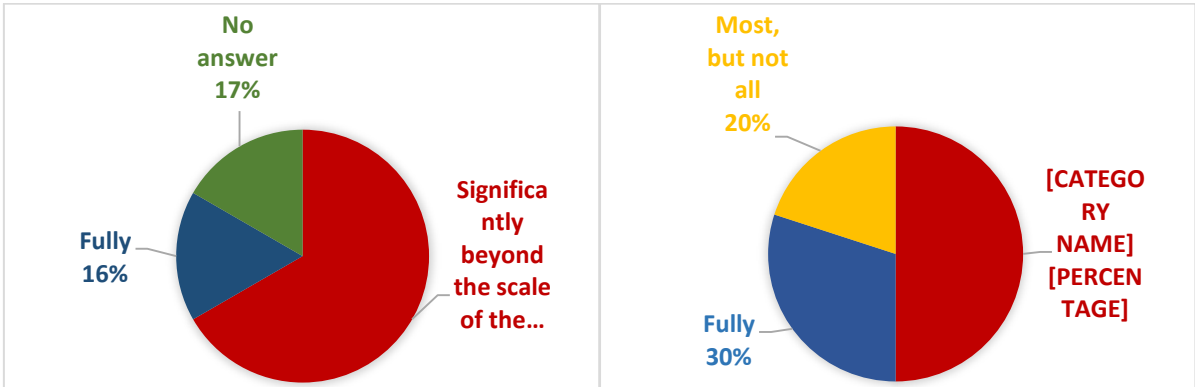
Most of the SCOs (67%), NCUs (82%) and EAs (74%) consider that the supported projects remain relevant to the priorities and needs in the partner state in terms of the reduction of socio-economic disparities fully or to some extent. 33% of the SCOs, 18% of NCUs and 12% of the EAs consider that the projects remain relevant to some extent and only 14% of the EAs think that the projects remain only partially or not at all relevant to the partner states in terms of socio-economic disparities reduction.

Effectiveness

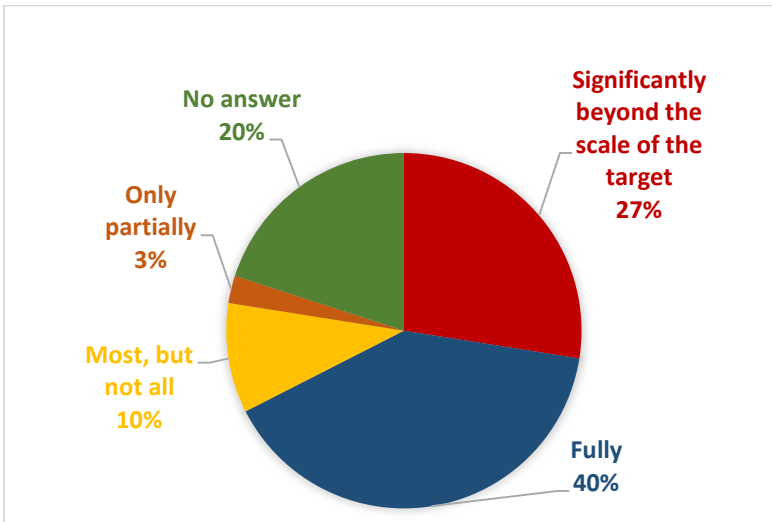
10) Have/will the planned program Outputs (as defined in the project LFMs) be delivered?

SCOs

NCUs



EAs

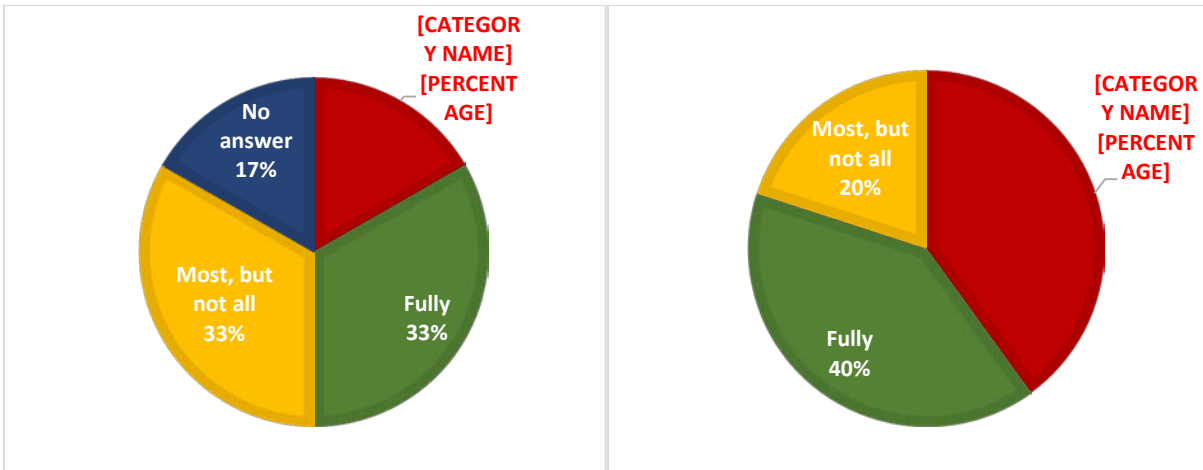


Only 16% percent of the SCOs consider that the planned program outputs are or will be fully delivered, while 30% of the NCUs and 40% of the EAs agree with this statement. Most of the SCOs (67%) consider that the outputs will be significantly beyond the scale of the target and 50% of the NCUs agree. 20% of the NCUs and 10% of the EAs think that most of the planned outputs will be delivered, but not all.

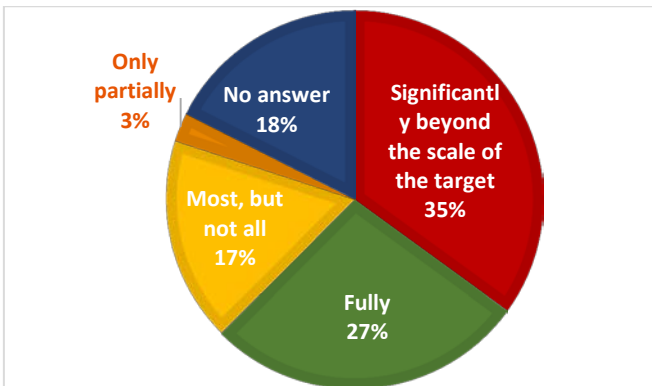
11) Have/will the intended program Outcomes (as defined in the project LFMs and as set-out at program-level in the bilateral Framework Agreement, Annex 1) be achieved?

SCOs

NCUs



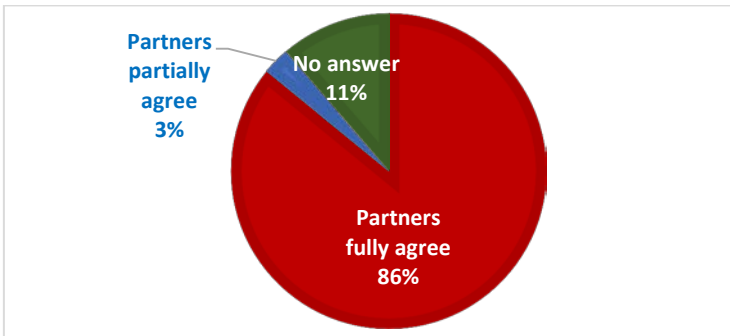
EAs



33 percent of the SCOs, 40 percent of the NCUs and 27 percent of the EAs consider that the intended program Outcomes (as defined in the project LFMs and as set-out at program-level in the bilateral Framework Agreement, Annex 1) will be or have been fully achieved. But, most of the NCUs (40%) and EAs (35%) consider that the initial objectives will be achieved significantly beyond the scale of the target.

12) Do you and your partner(s) agree on whether the project has been completed / or is going to be completed successfully (i.e. the socio-economic benefits will largely be achieved as intended)?

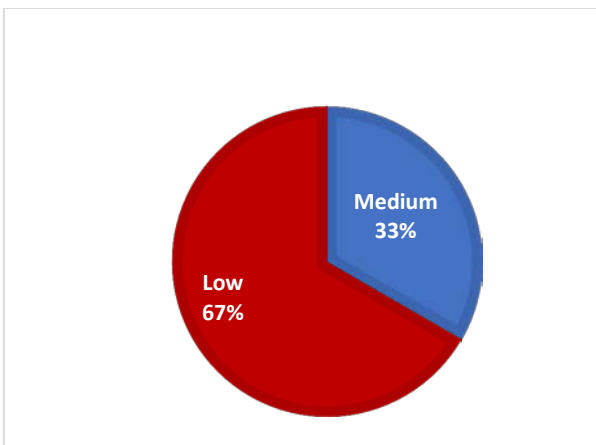
NGOs



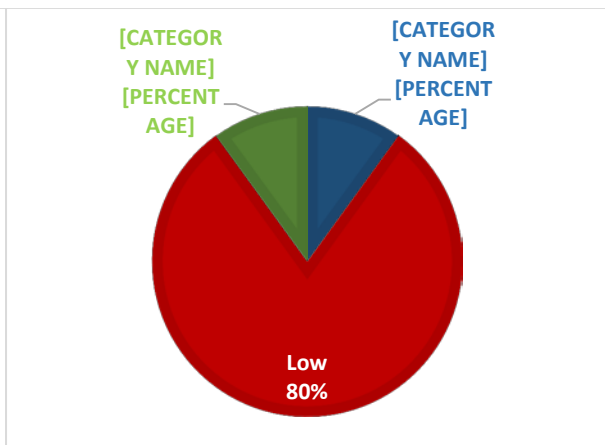
Most of the respondents (86%) say that the partners fully agree that the projects is or is going to be completed successfully. Only 3 percent of them say that partners partially agree to this statement. 11 percent of the NGOs did not respond to this questions.

13) In your opinion, what is the level of risk that the program/project outcomes (and targets) will not be achieved?

SCOs



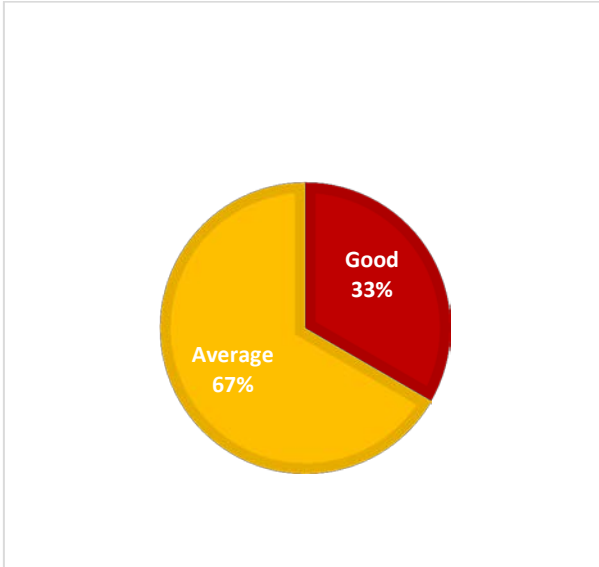
NCUs



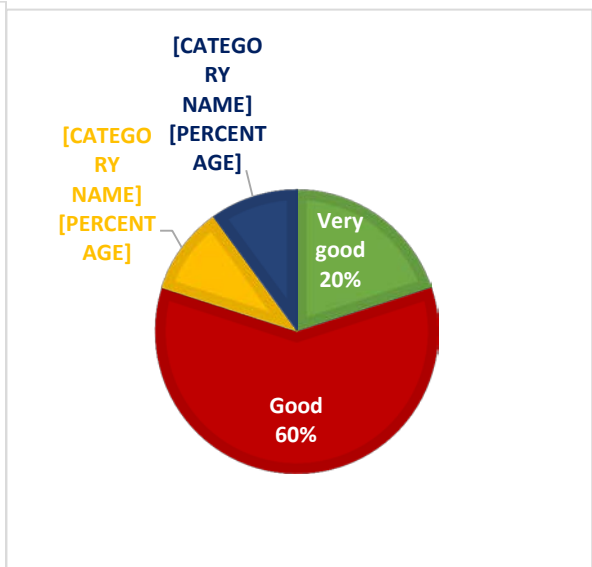
Both, SCOs (67%) and NCUs (80%) consider that the chances of not achieving the outcomes of the projects/program are rather low. 33 percent of the SCOs and 10 percent of the NCUs consider that there are medium chances of not achieving the planned outcomes and only 10 percent of the NCUs didn't answer this questions.

14) In your opinion, what is the level of outreach to and awareness of the stakeholder target groups of the Swiss Contribution program/projects as to the benefits generated / available to access?

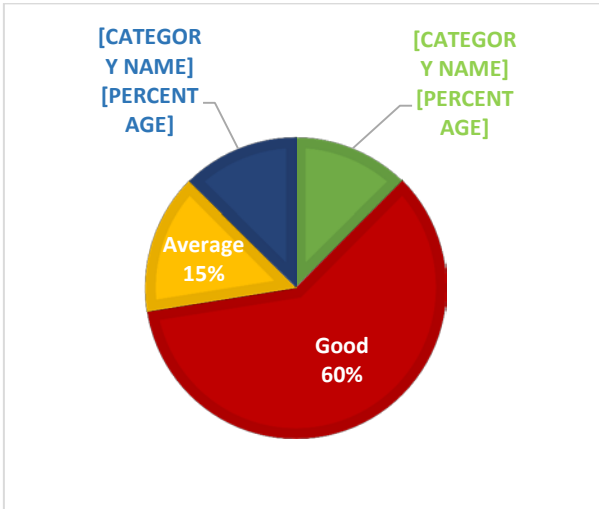
SCOs



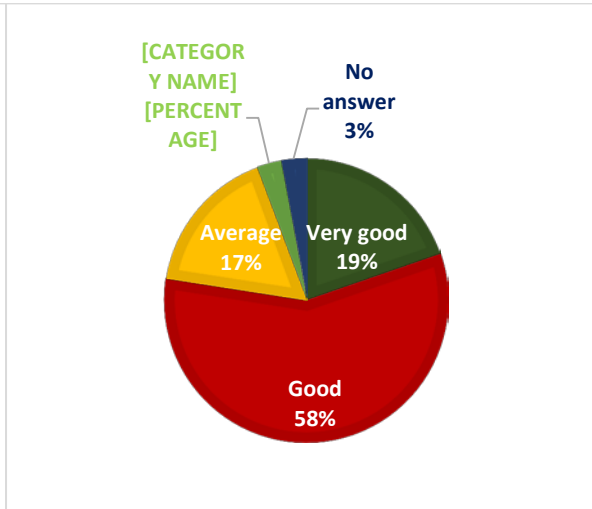
NCUs



EAs



NGOs

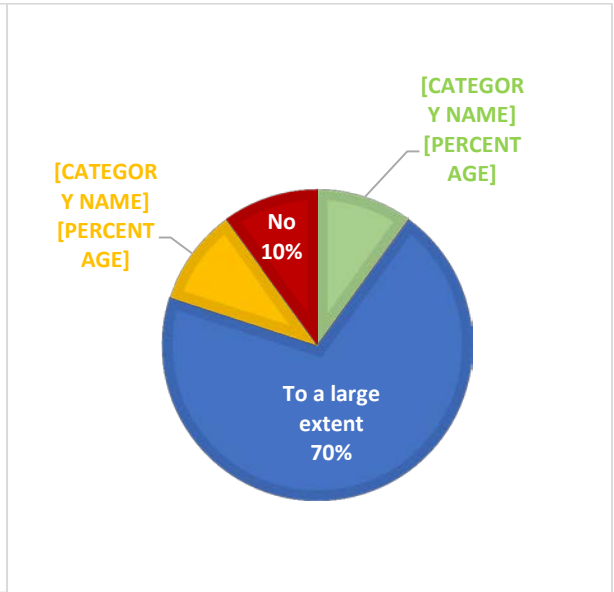
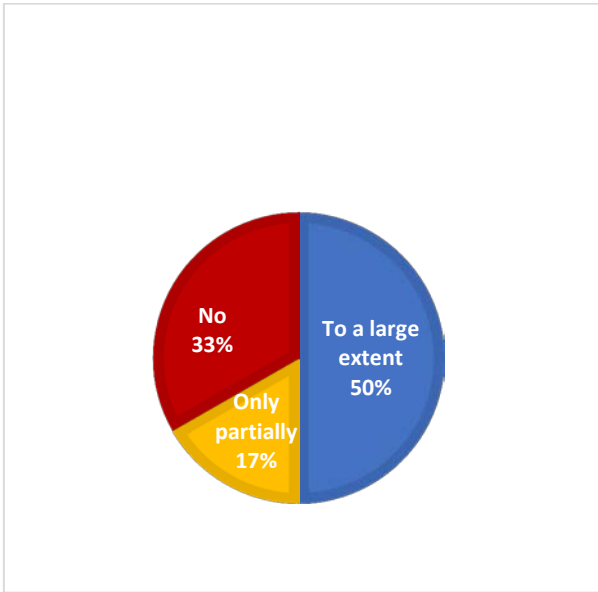


Only 33 percent of the SCOs consider that the level of awareness among the potential beneficiaries of the projects supported through the SC program regarding its benefits is good and none consider that is very good. Meanwhile, 80 percent of the NCUs, 72 percent of EAs and 77 percent of NGOs consider that the level of awareness among potential beneficiaries is good and very good. Most of the SCOs (67%) consider that the awareness level is average and only 10% of NCUs, 15% of EAs and 17% of NGOs agree with this statement.

15) In your opinion, are the visibility and publicity rules and guidance provided linked to the Swiss Contribution clear and thereby implementation, generally, efficiently and effectively delivered?

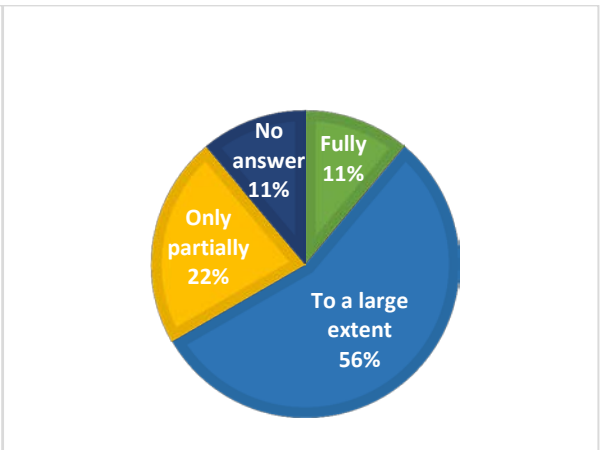
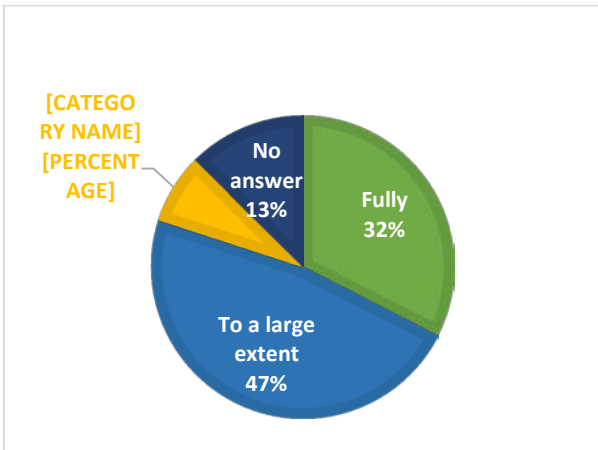
SCOs

NCUs



EAs

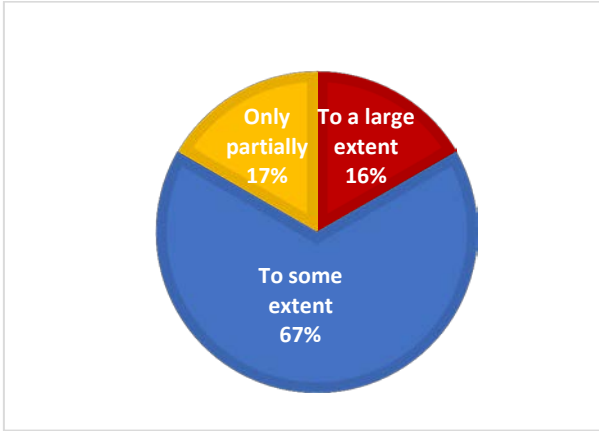
Swiss Embassies



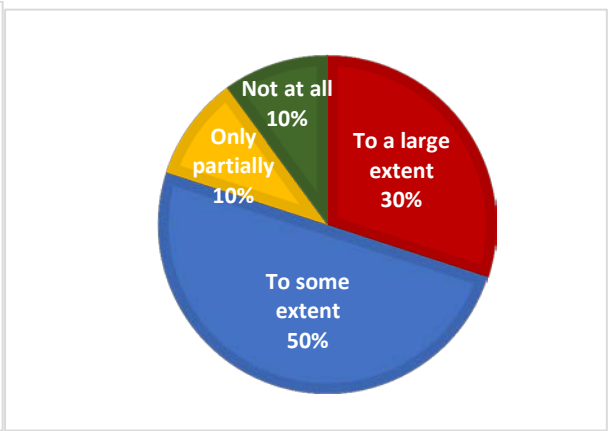
None of the SCOs, 10% of the NCUs, 32% of EAs and 11% of the embassies consider that the visibility and publicity rules and guidance provided linked to the Swiss Contribution were fully clear and efficiently delivered. 50% of SCOs, 70% of NCUs, 47% of EAs and 56% of the embassies consider that they were clear and efficiently delivered to a large extent. 33% of SCOs and 10% of the NCUs do not agree at all with this statement.

16) In your opinion, to what extent has the stakeholders' level of knowledge of Switzerland and its contribution to reducing socio-economic disparities in the enlarged EU been enhanced?

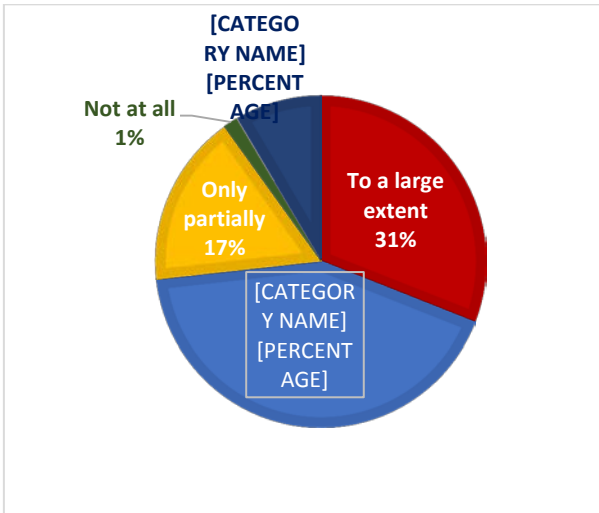
SCOs



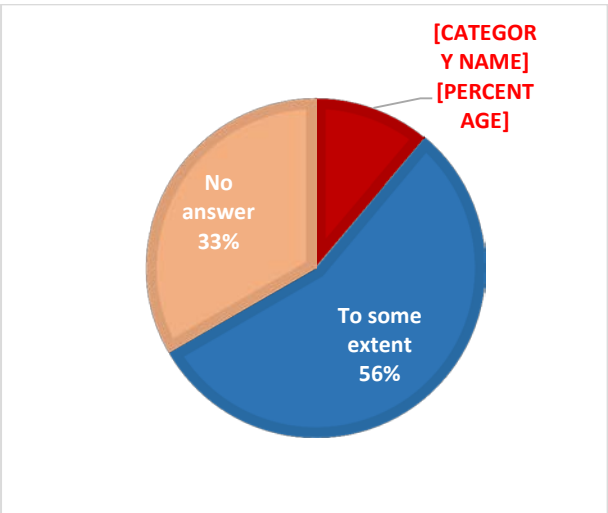
NCUs



NGOs



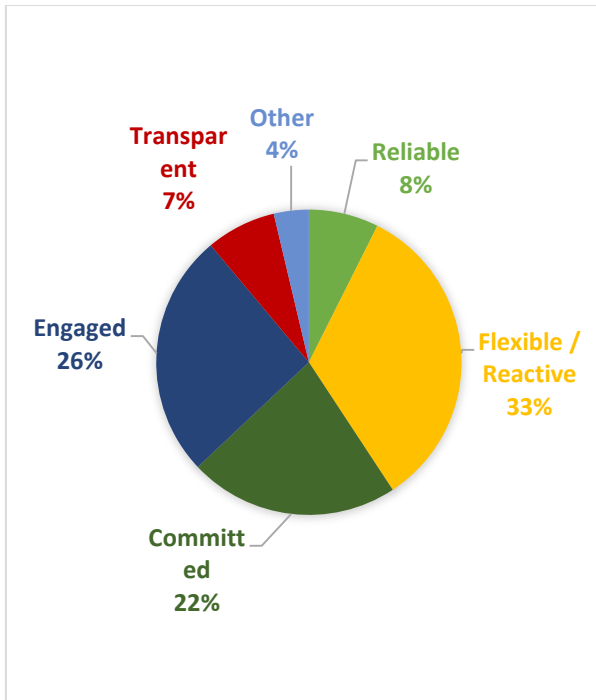
Swiss Embassies



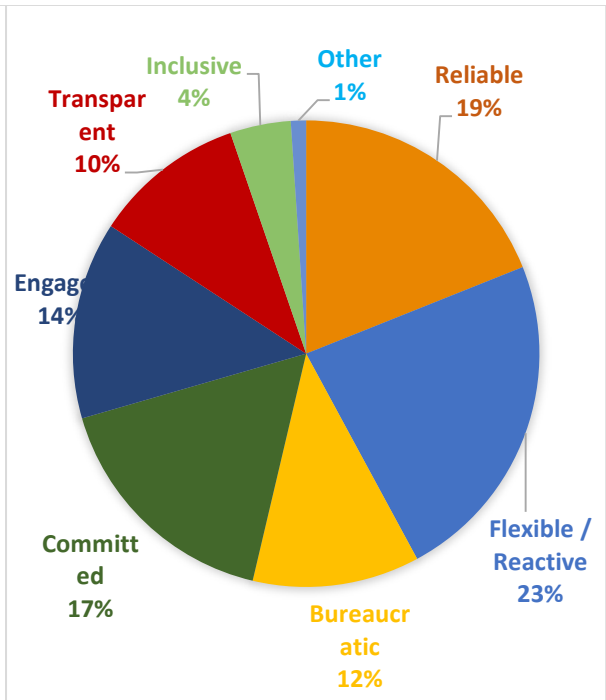
16% of SCOs, 30% of NCU, 31% of NGOs and 11% of embassies consider that the stakeholders' level of knowledge of Switzerland and its contribution to reducing socio-economic disparities in the enlarged EU has been enhanced to a large extent. 67% of SCOs, 50% of NCUs, 42% of NGOs and 56% of the embassies consider that the level of stakeholders' knowledge was enhanced to some extent. 10 percent of the NCU think that the level of knowledge regarding the SC program and its impact hasn't been enhanced at all and 33 percent of the embassies did not respond to this question.

17) How is Switzerland perceived/viewed as a 'donor country' and the Swiss Contribution as a program of bilateral cooperation?

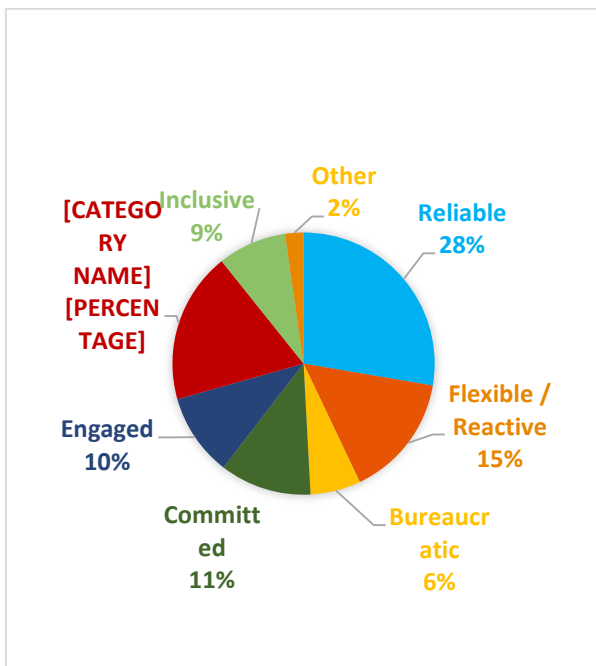
NCUs



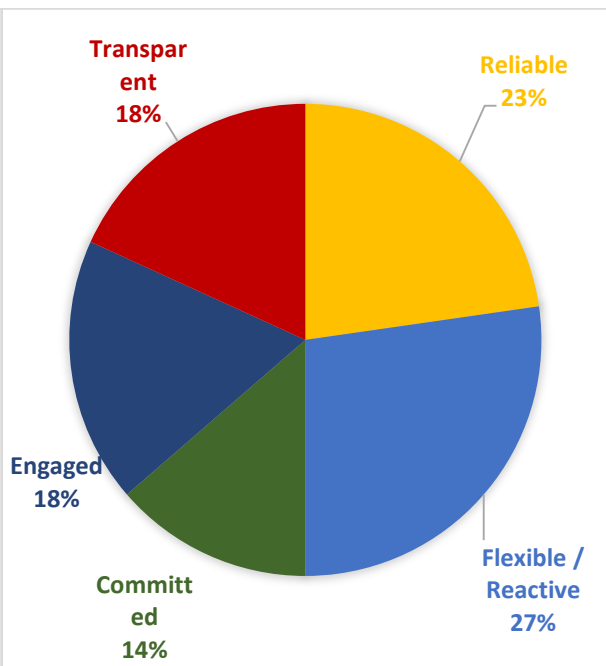
EAs



NGOs



Swiss Embassies

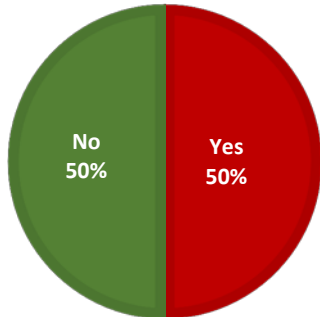


NCUs consider that Switzerland as a 'donor country' and the Swiss Contribution as a program of bilateral cooperation are perceived mostly as flexible (33%), engaged (26%) and committed (22%). EAs consider that SC program is seen mostly as flexible (23%), reliable (19%) and committed (17%). 28 percent of NGOs and 27 percent of the embassies consider that the SC program is seen mostly as flexible.

Efficiency

18) In your opinion, is the '2-loop' approach (Project Outline; Final Project Proposal) an efficient way to identify and select projects?

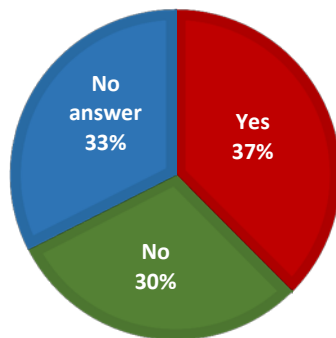
SCOs



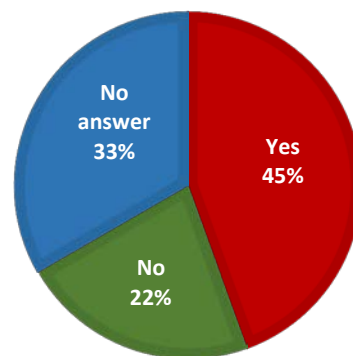
NCUs



EAs



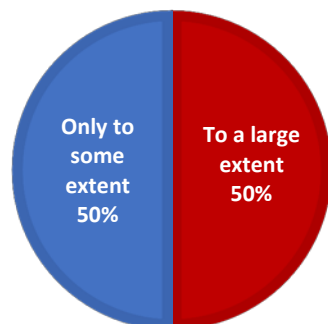
Swiss Embassies



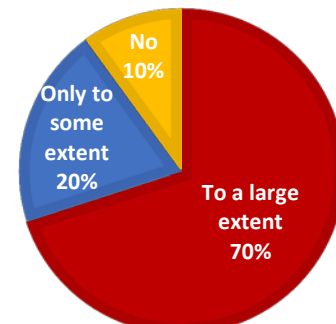
Half of the SCOs consider that the 2-loop approach is efficient, the other half consider it efficient only to some extent. More than half of the NCUs (60%) consider that this selection procedure is not efficient. 37% of EAs and 45% of the embassies think that the procedure is efficient, while a third of the EAs and of the embassies did not respond to this questions.

19) In your opinion, is the project application template (Project Outline, Final Project Proposal) adequate to support the detailed design of projects (i.e. do they serve as useful management tools in the design and for the future implementation overview of projects)?

SCOs



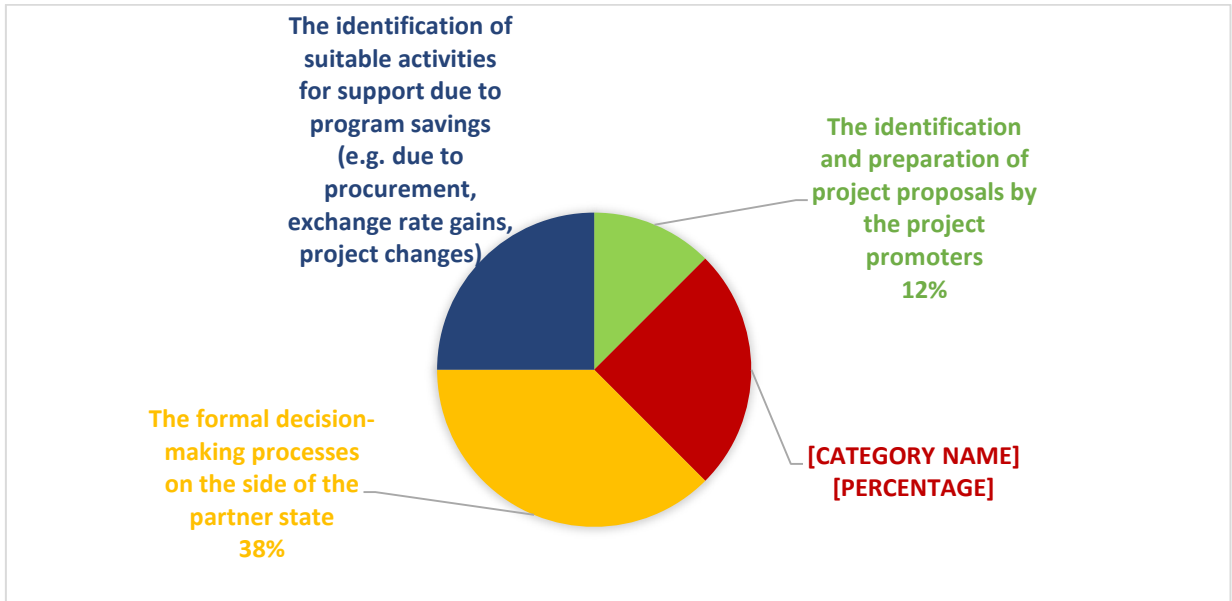
NCUs



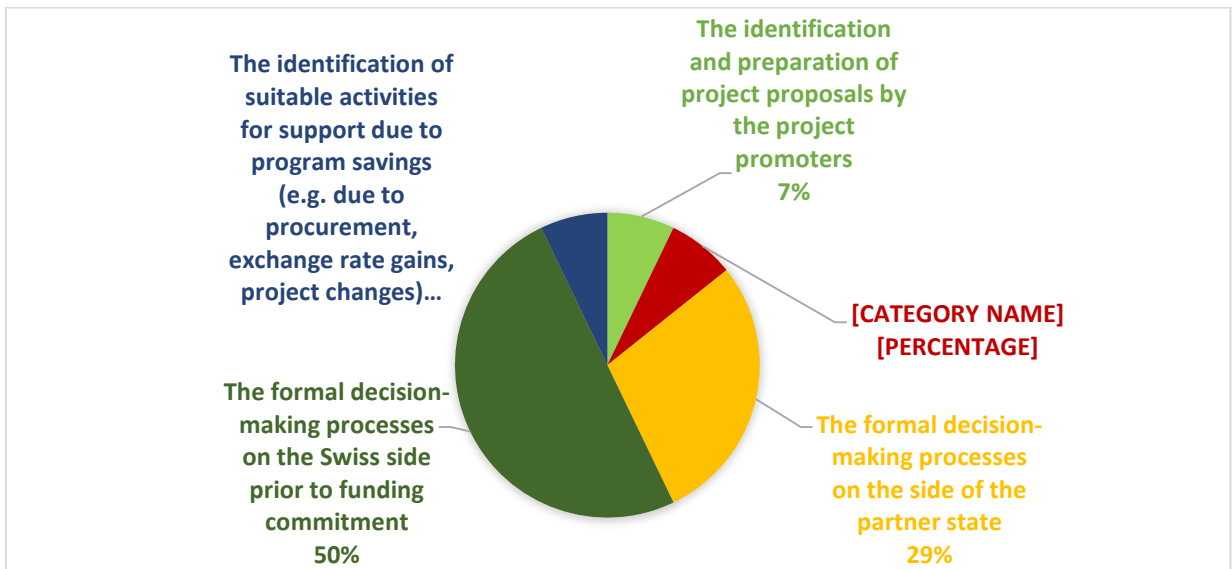
Half of the SCOs think that the project application template is adequate to a large extent to support the detailed design of projects, while 70% of the NCUs agree to this statement. 50% of the SCOs and 20% of the NCUs think that the project application template is adequate to some extent to support the detailed design, but 10% of the NCUs do not agree at all to this statement.

20) In your opinion, what were the main obstacles to the efficient commitment of the Swiss Contribution funding in the partner state (i.e. 2nd loop approval granted or the subsequent amendment of funding support for signed Project Agreements granted)?

SCOs



NCUs

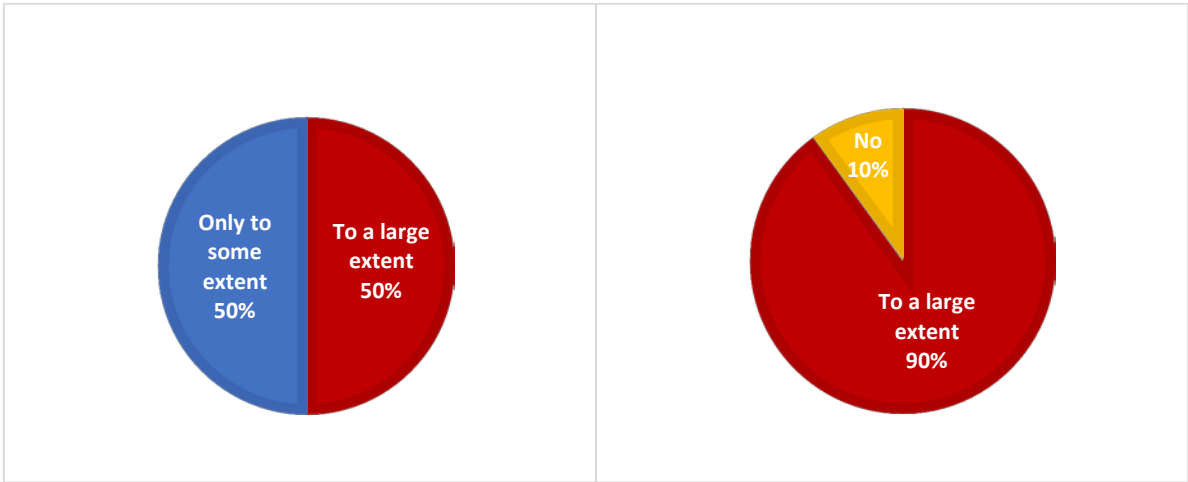


SCOs consider the main obstacles to the efficient commitment of the Swiss Contribution funding in the partner state are the formal decision-making process on the side of the partner state (38%), the time required to undertake an open call for initial project proposals (25%) and the identification of suitable activities for support due to program savings to be reinvested in the program (25%). On the other hand, the NCUs consider that the main obstacle is the formal decision-making processes on the Swiss side prior to funding commitment (50%). They also consider that an important obstacle is also the formal decision-making process on the side of the partner state (29%).

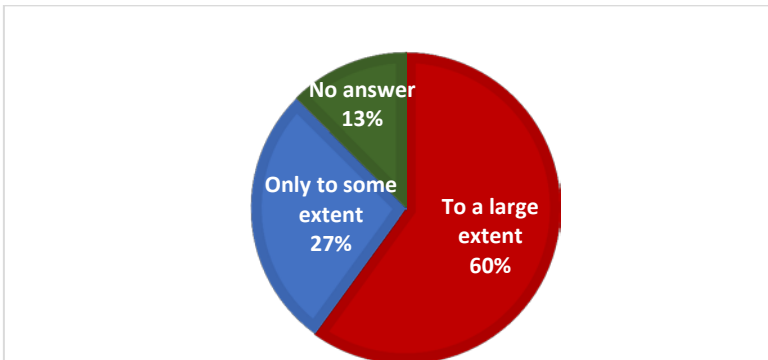
21) In your opinion, are the formal program/project reporting templates adequate to support project-level and program-level decision-making, and for accountability on the use of public funds?

SCOs

NCUs



EAs

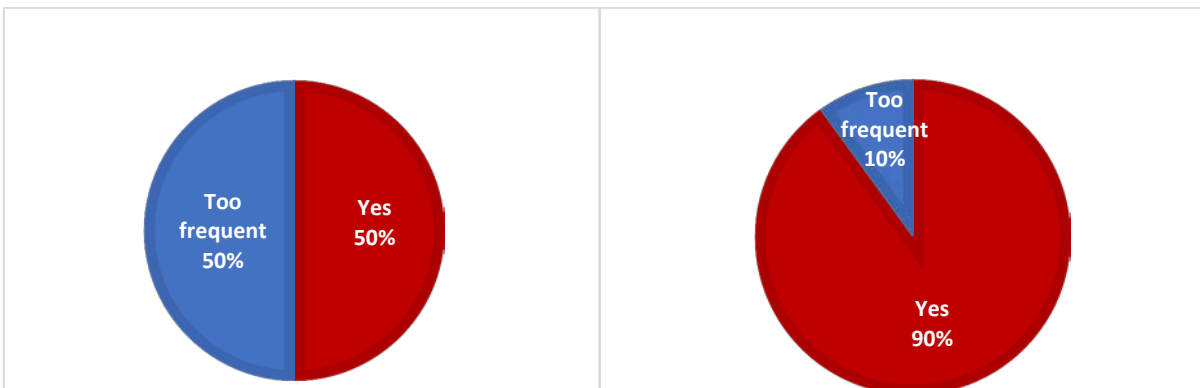


Most of the SCOs (50%), NCUs (90%) and EAs (60%) consider that the formal program/project reporting templates are adequate to a large extent to support project-level and program-level decision-making, and for accountability on the use of public funds.

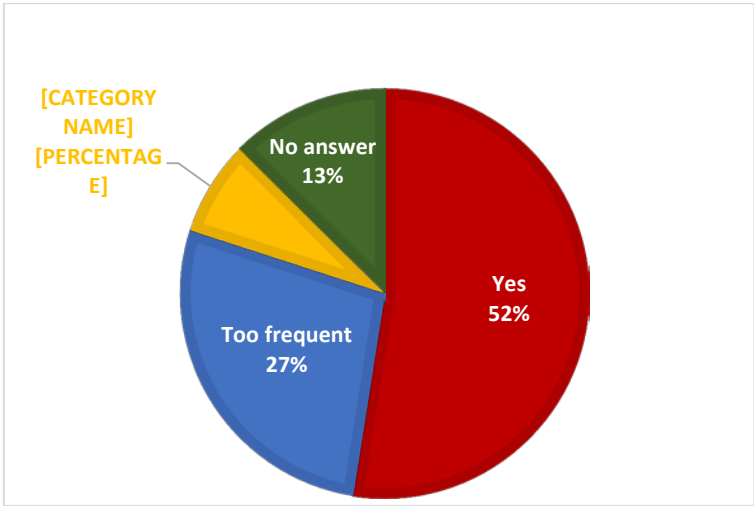
22) Do you think that the number of formal project Interim Reports (Progress and Annual Reports) to be provided by project implementation partners (NCU; IBs/EAs) is adequate?

SCOs

NCUs



EAs

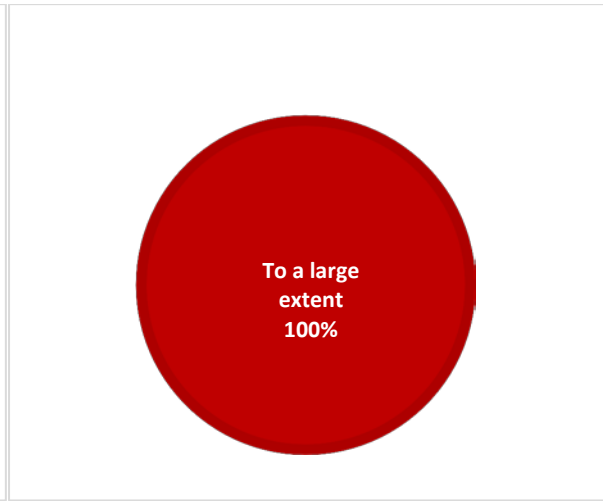
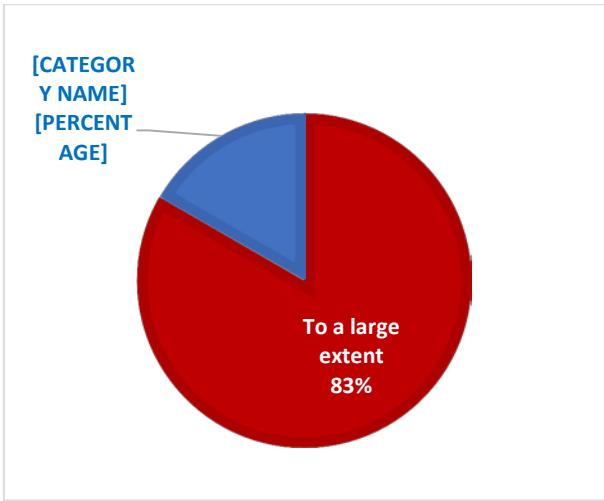


Most of the SCOs (50%), NCUs (90%) and EAs (52%) consider that the number of formal project Interim Reports (Progress and Annual Reports) to be provided by project implementation partners (NCU; IBs/EAs) is adequate. 50% of SCOs, 10% of NCUs and 27% of the EAs consider that the reports are too frequent and 8% of the EAs consider the number of the interim reports to low.

23) In your opinion, is the overall control and risk management system (at project-level and at program-level, undertaken by the partner state and undertaken by the Swiss side) adequate to support the achievement of goals / to identify risks to the achievement of goals?

SCOs

NCUs

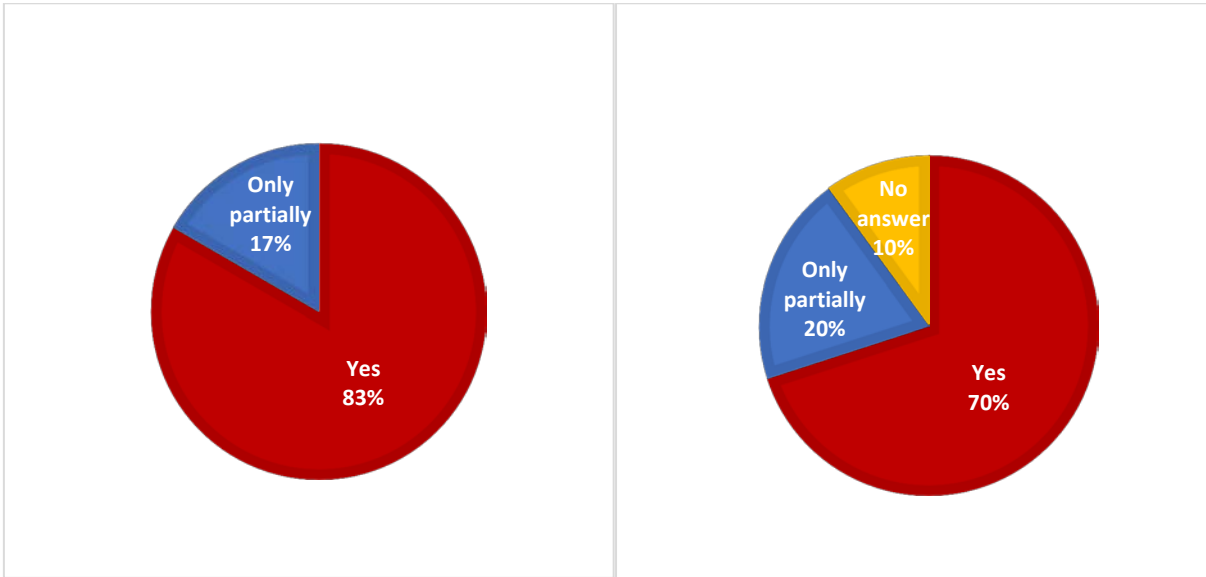


Most of the SCOs (83%) and all of the NCUs (100%) consider that the overall control and risk management system (at project-level and at program-level, undertaken by the partner state and undertaken by the Swiss side) was adequate to support the achievement of goals / to identify risks to the achievement of goals. Only 17 percent of the SCOs think that the overall risk management system was sufficient only to some extent.

24) In your opinion, was the range of activities eligible under the PPF appropriate to needs?

SCOs

NCUs

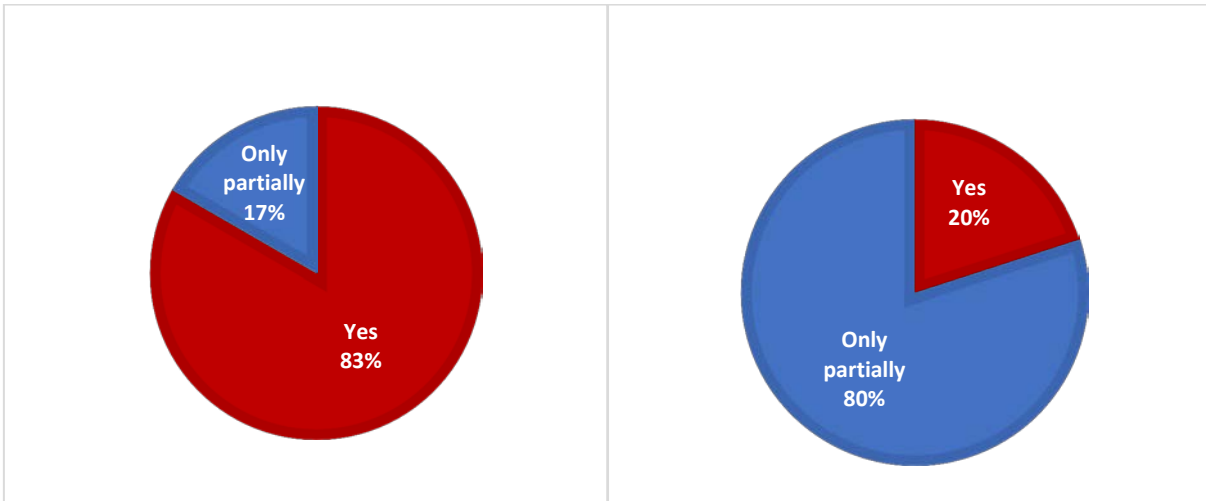


A great percent of both SCOs (83%) and NCUs (70%) consider that the range of activities eligible under the PPF is appropriate to the needs. Only 17% of the SCOs and 20% percent of the NCUs do not agree to this statement.

25) In your opinion, is the range of activities eligible under the TAF appropriate to needs?

SCOs

NCUs

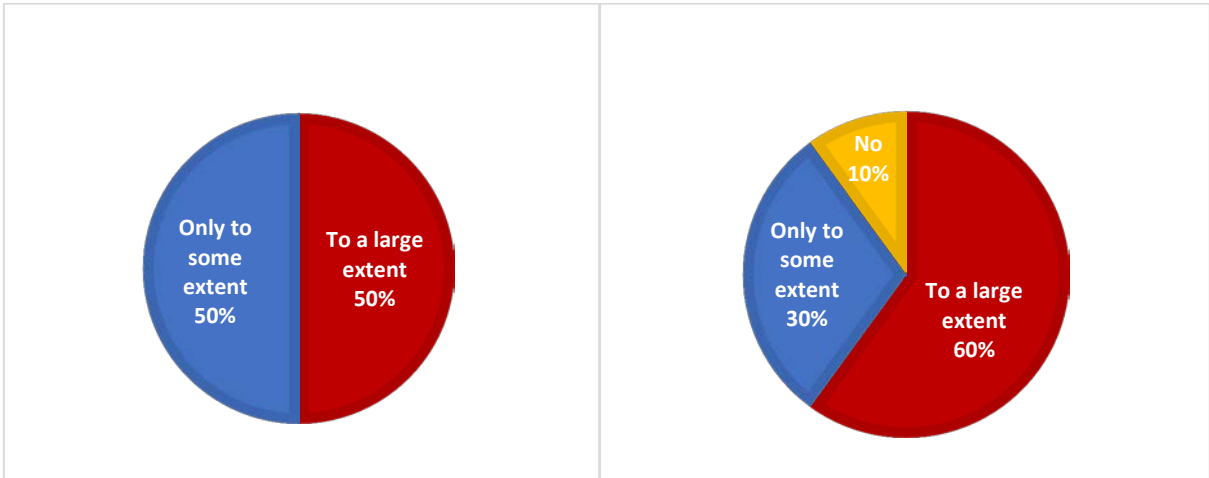


Most of the SCOs (83%) consider that the range of activities eligible under the TAF is appropriate to needs, while only 20% of the NCUs agree to this statement. Most of the NCUs (80%) consider that range of activities are only partially appropriate to the needs.

26) In your opinion, was the overall guidance provided to the NCU by the Swiss side linked to the implementation of the Swiss Contribution sufficient to facilitate efficient implementation?

SCOs

NCUs

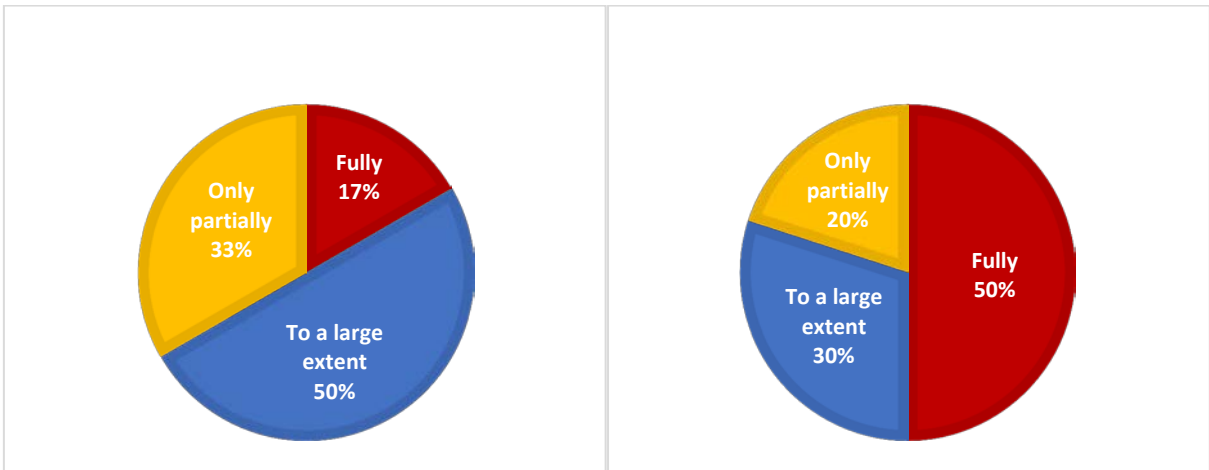


Half of the SCOs and 60 percent of the NCUs consider that the overall guidance provided to the NCU by the Swiss side linked to the implementation of the Swiss Contribution was sufficient to facilitate efficient implementation. Moreover, the other half of the SCOs and 30 percent of the NCUs consider that this guidance was sufficient only to some extent. 10 percent of the NCUs think that the overall guidance provided by the NCUs wasn't sufficient.

27) In your opinion, are the roles, tasks and responsibilities between all program actors (NCU, IBs/EAs, the Swiss side) clearly defined (in the signed agreements, guidelines, etc.), well understood and followed in practice by the program actors in your country?

SCOs

NCUs

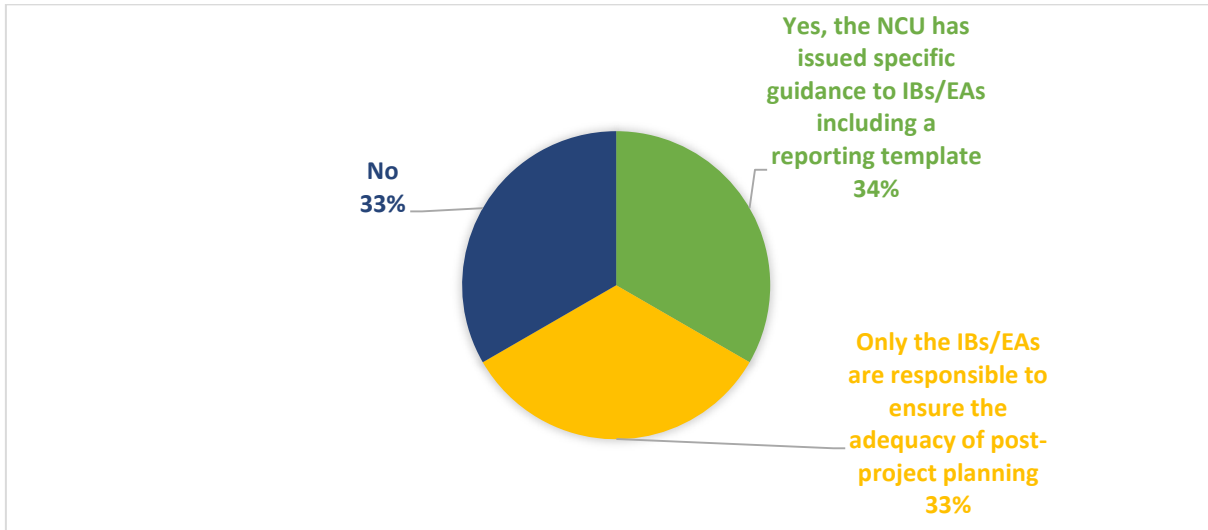


Only 17% of the SCOs and half of the NCUs consider that the roles, tasks and responsibilities between all program actors (NCU, IBs/EAs, the Swiss side) clearly defined, well understood and followed in practice by the program actors, to a fully extent. 50 percent of the SCOs and 30 percent of the NCU consider that they are clearly defined, well understood and followed in practice to a large extent and 33 percent of the SCOs and 20 percent of the NCU think that they are clear only to some extent, partially.

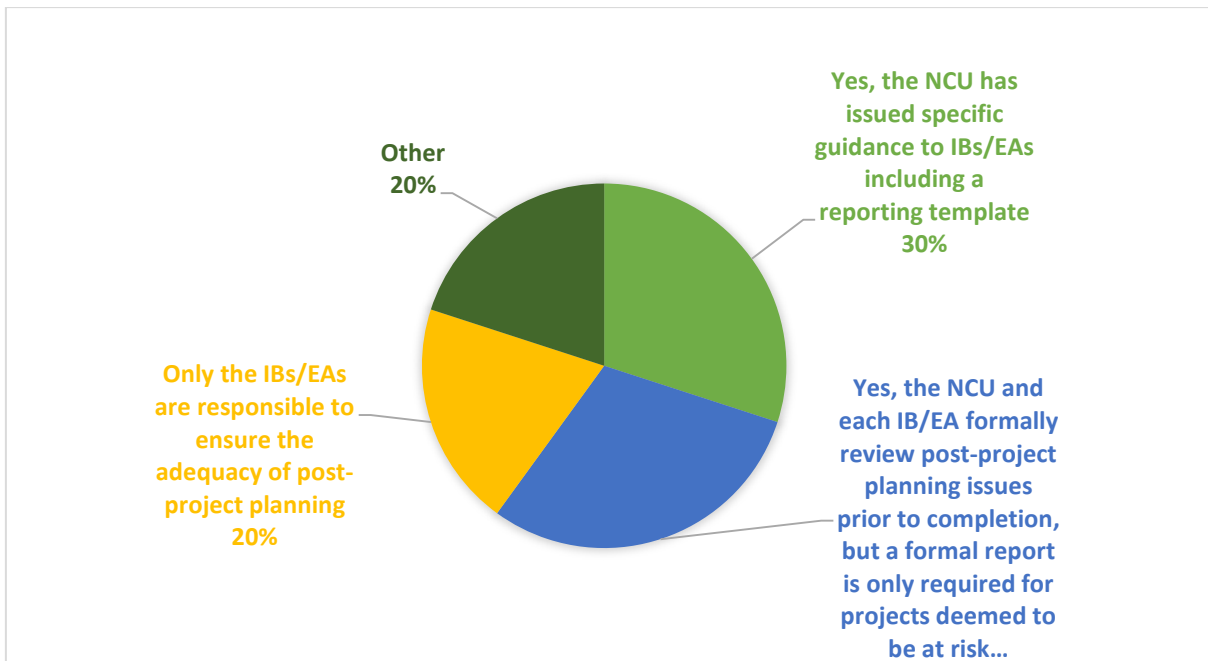
Sustainability

28) Is there a clear policy / guidance provided in the partner state linked to post-project planning?

SCOs



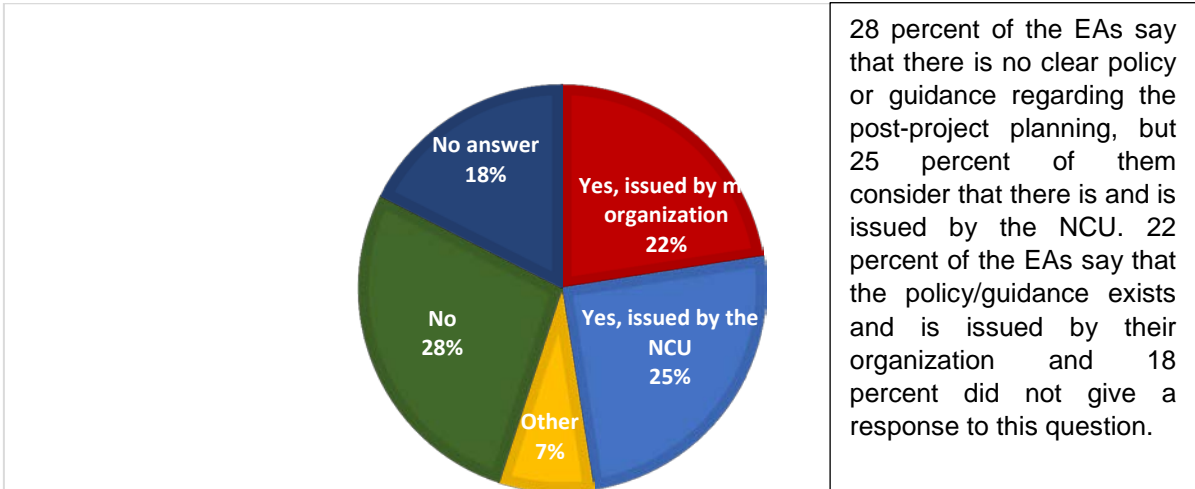
NCUs



A third of the SCOs and 30 percent of the NCU say that NCU has issued specific guidance to IBs/EAs including a reporting template, another third of the SCOs and 20 percent of NCU consider that only the IBs/EAs are responsible to ensure the adequacy of post-project planning and the last third of SCOs and 30 percent of NCUs say that NCU and each IBs/EAs formally review post-project planning, but a formal report is only required for projects deemed to be at risk.

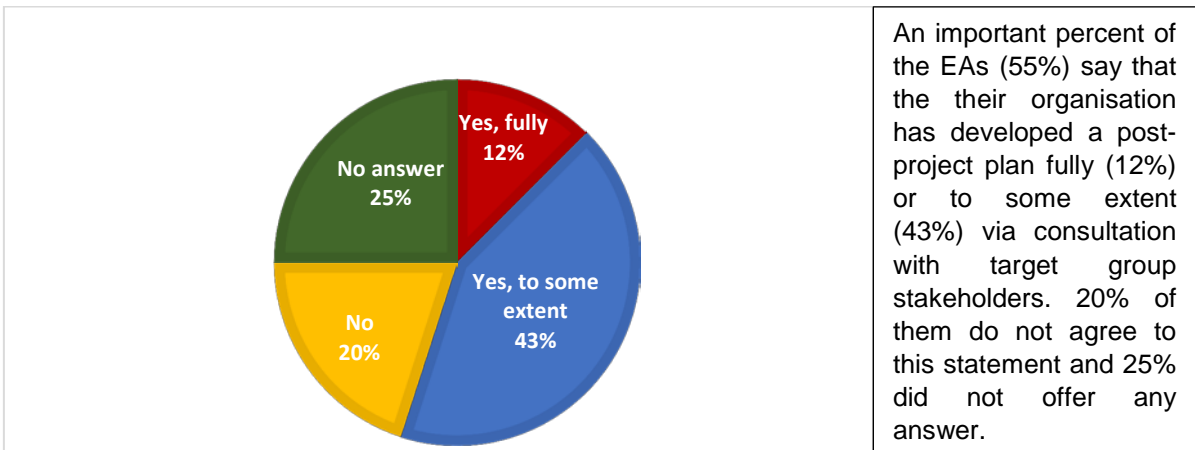
29) Is there a clear policy and guidance linked to post-project planning?

EAs



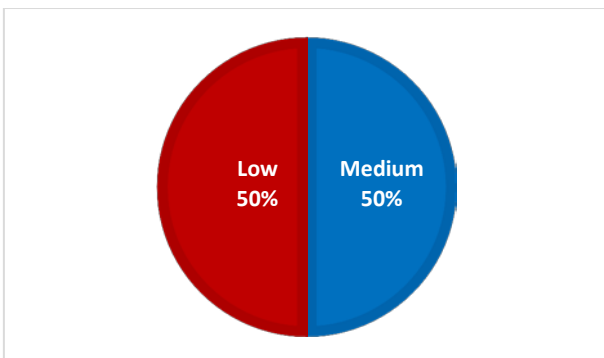
30) Did your organization jointly develop the post-project plan via consultation with target group stakeholders (including the definition of goals, the allocation of tasks and financial resources)?

EAs

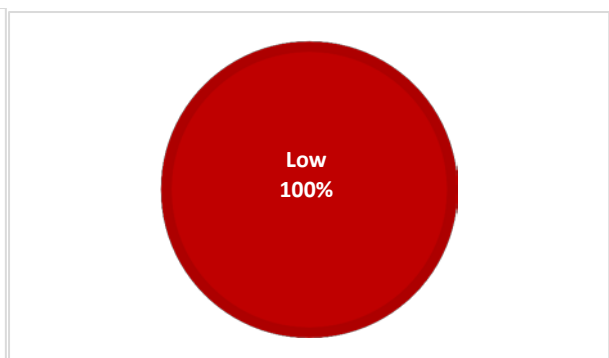


31) In your opinion, what is the level of risk to the sustainability of the program/project results and benefits?

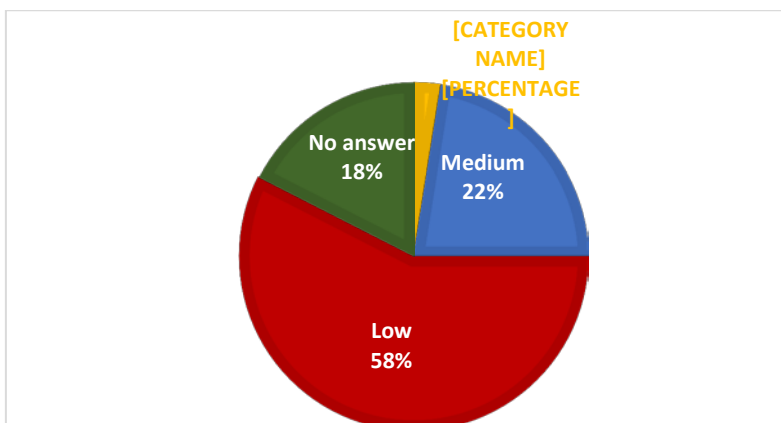
SCOs



NCUs



EAs

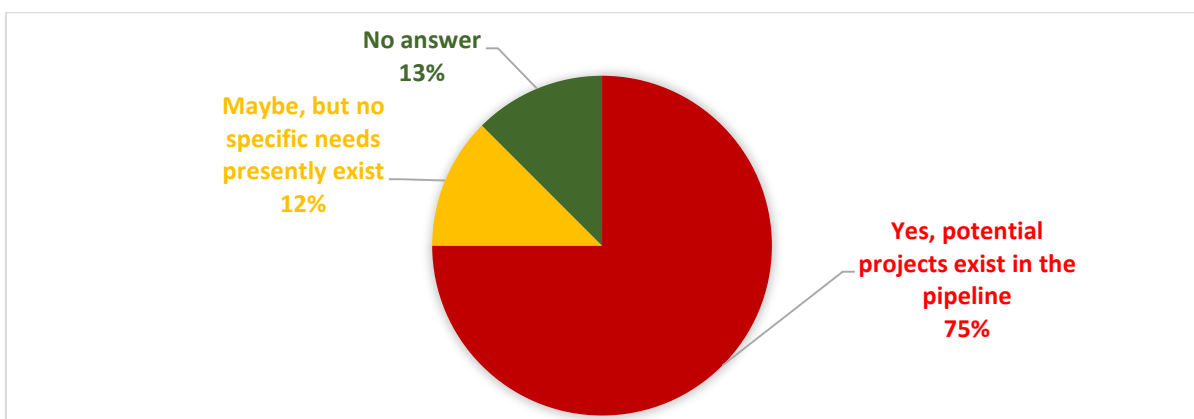


The SCOs consider that the level of risk to the sustainability of the program/project results and benefits is low (50%) or medium (50%). All the NCUs consider that the level of risk is low. 58 percent of the Eas say also that the risk is low and only 2 percent of the EA consider that the risk is high.

Possible continuation of SC support

32) Regarding a possible second Swiss Contribution to the enlarged EU, would your organization be interested to be involved in potential future projects?

EAs



Most of the EAs say that potential projects exist in the pipeline and 12 percent say that is possible, but there are no specific needs at this moment. None have excluded the possibility.

33) Regarding a possible second Swiss Contribution to the enlarged EU, if endorsed and authorized by the Swiss side, in your opinion, what would be the most effective way for improving the Swiss Contribution program between Switzerland and the partner state?

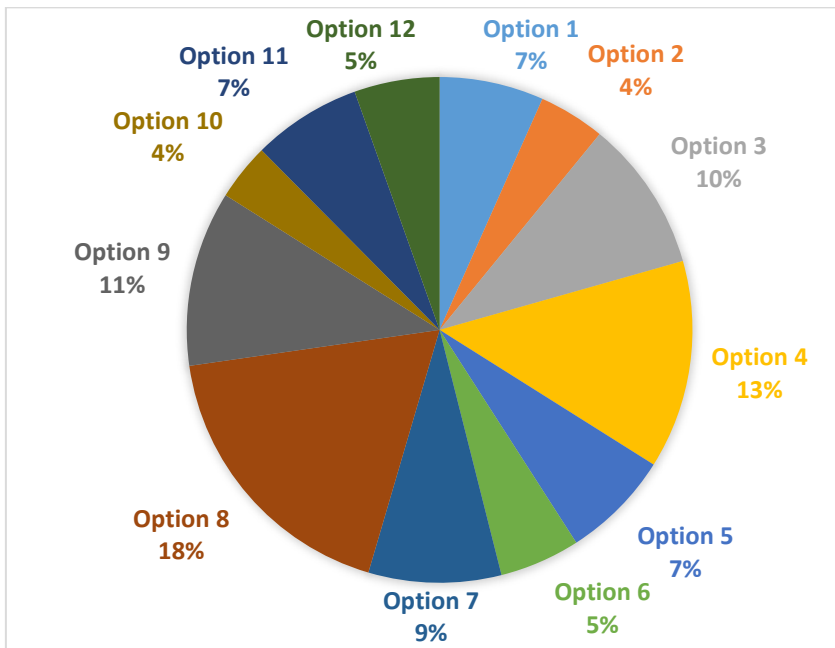
SCOs and NCUs were asked to consider 12 potential options/measures to be undertaken linked to a possible follow-up SC to the Enlarged EU. They were asked to prioritize these, as far as they saw relevant, in descending order of priority. Responses received were weighted to reflect the ranking.

Options:

1. Closer coordination of its programing/implementation time-line with that of the other major programs to the partner states for promoting the reduction of socio-economic disparities (i.e. the EU's Cohesion Policy, and the Norway Grants/EEA Grants)
2. Clear demarcation of its programing/implementation time-line with that of the EU's Cohesion Policy (to promote the Swiss Contribution's effective focus on needs)
3. A briefer 'menu' of potential focus areas to be identified in the Switzerland-EU 'Memorandum of Understanding' on the Swiss Contribution to the enlarged EU
4. Fewer focus areas prioritized in the bilateral Framework Agreement with Switzerland
5. Fewer projects supported (i.e. selecting larger programs/projects where appropriate)

6. Increased geographical focus on supporting peripheral, structurally weaker regions
7. Increased emphasis on and support for the promotion of bilateral partnerships between your country and Switzerland
8. Clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side to facilitate implementation
9. Clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side on a 'standard' minimum set of core indicators of achievement to be utilized linked to the Swiss Contribution (per focus area/ program specific objectives and global objectives)
10. Better division of labor (roles, tasks and responsibilities) between program actors
11. Simplification (via the improved focus/improved quality) of standard program/project templates (e.g. Project Outline, Interim Reports, Annual Reports, etc.)
12. None, no specific improvements in the focus or in the management of the Swiss Contribution program are necessary

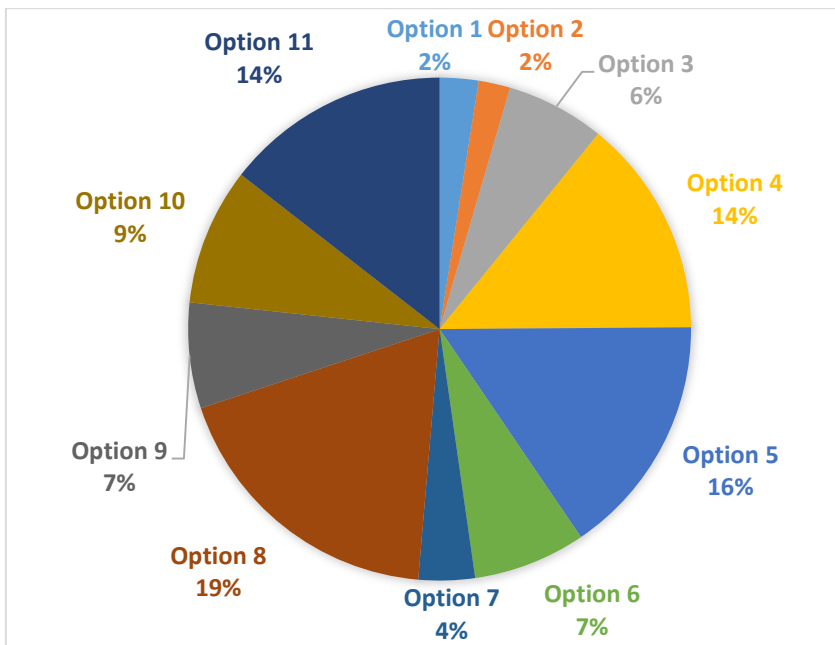
SCOs



SCOs and NCU's both rank as priority number one the need for "clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side to facilitate implementation" (option 8).

SCOs and NCU's also highlight the need for greater concentration of the SC program: via "fewer focus areas prioritized in the bilateral Framework Agreement with Switzerland" (option 4) and via "fewer projects supported (i.e. selecting larger programs/projects where appropriate)" (option 5). SCOs also indicate the need for "a briefer 'menu' of focus areas to be identified in the Switzerland-EU MoU" (option 3).

NCUs



NCU's highlight as priority number 3 the need for the "simplification of standard program/project templates" (option 11). SCOs consider this is necessary, but rank it a lower priority from the list of options/measures.

SCOs highlight as priority number 3 the need for the "clearer formal guidance issued by the Swiss side on a 'standard' minimum set of core indicators linked to the SC" (option 9). NCU's consider this is necessary, but rank it a lower priority from the list of options/measures.

Annex 10: Evaluation Matrix – Evaluation Questions and Judgement Criteria

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
RELEVANCE					
EQ1. How relevant is the Swiss Contribution in terms of its contribution to reduce economic and social disparities in the enlarged EU (Goal of the Swiss Contribution)?					
JC 1.1: The focus areas, programs/projects selected correspond to real problems, needs and priorities of partner states and stakeholders regarding the reduction of economic and social disparities	Fully focused on key development issues of the beneficiaries and fully aligned with national/regional development plans	Largely addressing key development issues of the beneficiaries, largely aligned with national/regional development plans	Partly addressing key development issues of the beneficiaries, partly aligned with national/regional development plans	Issues addressed are not priorities of the beneficiaries, and are not aligned with national/regional development plans	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 1.2: The selected strategy, approach, intervention logic, and risk analysis of the programs/projects are well defined (coherence of the results chain) to deliver achievement of program/project goals and objectives of the SC	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels and the LFM is clearly and logically defined (results oriented) on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels and the LFM is adequately and logically defined (results oriented) although not on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels and the LFM is only partly clear or logically defined (results oriented) to support implementation	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels and the LFM is not clear or logically defined (results oriented) to support implementation	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 1.3: The programs/projects are coherent with and complementary to other programs/projects aiming to reduce socio-economic disparities	Programs/projects actively coordinate with other programs/projects	Programs/projects coordinate occasionally or in parts with other programs/projects	Programs/projects consult with other programs/projects	Programs/projects are implemented as 'stand-alone' with no links to or consideration of other activities	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ2. To what extent do partners (government, beneficiaries) regard the finally approved and implemented projects as relevant?					
JC 2.1: Preparatory and pre-feasibility assessment	The program/project is fully prepared and all	The program/project is largely prepared, but not	The program/project is only partially prepared,	The program/project lacks detailed feasibility	Evaluation makes no

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
activities were undertaken by partners during the program/project design phase	necessary permits etc. authorized allowing for immediate launch of implementation	all pre-studies or permits etc. authorized, with limited delays for launching full implementation	with significant delays for launching full implementation	assessments or these are inadequate, with substantial delays for launching full implementation	mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 2.3: Key stakeholder groups and senior management/decision-makers were consulted during the design phase and will be consulted during the implementation phase	Strong capacities have been built to facilitate and promote a good level of consultation and follow-up	Reliable capacities have been built to facilitate and promote an adequate level of consultation and follow-up	Limited capacities have been built to facilitate and promote consultation or follow-up with stakeholders	Local capacities are still too weak or do not engage in facilitating or promoting consultation with stakeholders	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ3. Are the objectives of the Swiss Contribution still valid?					
JC 3.1: The SC remains relevant to the expectations of the partner states and stakeholders	The program/project is still judged to be fully focused on key development issues of the beneficiaries	The program/project is still judged to be largely addressing key development issues of the beneficiaries	The program/project is now judged to be only partly addressing key development issues of the beneficiaries	The program/project is now judged to be addressing issues that are not priorities of the beneficiaries	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 3.2: The SC remains relevant to the expectations of Switzerland (SDC and SECO, Swiss partners and stakeholders)	The program/project is still judged to be fully focused on key development issues of the beneficiaries	The program/project is still judged to be largely addressing key development issues of the beneficiaries	The program/project is now judged to be only partly addressing key development issues of the beneficiaries	The program/project is now judged to be addressing issues that are not priorities of the beneficiaries	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EFFECTIVENESS					
EQ4. To what extent do interventions of the Swiss Contribution contribute to reducing economic and social disparities in the respective EU member state (in the intervention area supported, in qualitative and quantitative terms)?					
JC 4.1: The objectives have / will be achieved at program/project output level	All output objectives achieved/bypassed	Majority of output objectives achieved	Few of output objectives achieved	Very few output objectives or none achieved	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
					status of criteria
JC 4.2: The objectives have / will be achieved at program/project outcome level	All outcome objectives achieved/bypassed	Majority of outcome objectives achieved	Few of outcome objectives achieved	Very few outcome objectives or none achieved	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 4.3: The objectives have / will be achieved at program/project impact level	All impact objectives achieved/bypassed	Majority of impact objectives achieved	Few of impact objectives achieved	Very few impact objectives or none achieved	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 4.4: The program/project results have realized the specific objectives of the SC in the partner states	All specific objectives of the SC achieved/bypassed	Majority of the specific objectives of the SC achieved	Few of the specific objectives of the SC achieved	Very few of the specific objectives of the SC or none achieved	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 4.5: There are no programs/projects or SC specific objectives for which there is a 'high risk' as regards results achievement by 2017	It is very unlikely that program/project or SC specific objectives are at 'high risk' as regards results achievement	There is little likelihood that program/project or SC specific objectives are at 'high risk' as regards results achievement	It is likely that a few of the program/project or SC specific objectives are at 'high risk' as regards results achievement	It is very likely that the majority of the program/project or SC specific objectives are at 'high risk' as regards results achievement	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ5. Which internal and external factors enhance or hinder aid performance and results achievements? Which strategic or program related measures of correction were undertaken to address existing weaknesses and challenges?					
JC 5.1: Flexibility has been demonstrated by program/project management to adapt to internal and external factors to achieve the intended objectives	The management and steering of programs/projects ensures a highly effective use of the resources and full achievement of results	The management and steering of programs/projects ensures the effective use of the resources and adequate achievement of results	The management and steering of programs/projects is weak or hardly exists and the effective use of the resources and achievement of results is limited	The management and steering of programs/projects is absent or inadequate and is not suitable to ensure effective delivery	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
JC 5.2: Management responsibilities have been distributed in a balanced way and partners and stakeholder target groups suitably interact	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels	There would be alternative, more effective approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EFFECTIVENESS					
EQ6. Which impacts on Switzerland may be identified in terms of opportunities for the Swiss economy, migration, security risks, environmental protection and other issues?					
JC 6.1: Impacts on Switzerland are identifiable in the areas due to the SC	Significantly positive impacts on Switzerland are identifiable in most of the areas; the overall impact is very good	Positive impacts on Switzerland are identifiable in most of the areas; the overall impact is good	Few positive impacts on Switzerland are identifiable in most of the areas and/or negative impacts are identifiable that negate these; the overall impact is neutral	Negative impacts on Switzerland are identifiable in most of the areas, out-weighting the positive impacts; the overall impact is negative	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ7. Which tangible direct effects have emerged for Swiss companies and their respective competitive goods in countries of the enlarged EU? To what extent do economic activities result in new business opportunities for Swiss companies?					
JC 7.1: Tangible direct effects have emerged for Swiss companies in the 'new' EU member states	Swiss companies have secured sizeable tangible direct returns via increased market access and via contracts awarded to them	Swiss companies have secured tangible direct returns via increased market access and via contracts awarded to them	Swiss companies have secured limited tangible direct returns via increased market access or via contracts awarded to them	No significant tangible direct effects have emerged for Swiss companies in the 'new' EU member states	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 7.2: Swiss companies have enhanced business/trading operations and cooperation with the 'new' EU member states	Swiss companies have significantly enhanced operations and cooperation (compared to longer-term trends)	Swiss companies have positively enhanced operations and cooperation (compared to longer-term trends)	Swiss companies have not enhanced operations and cooperation (compared to longer-term trends)	Swiss companies have reduced operations and cooperation (compared to longer-term trends)	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
EQ8. How many new partnerships have been created between Swiss stakeholders and actors from the 'new' member states? How many follow-up activities have resulted from these new partnerships? Do these partnerships continue to function?					
JC 8.1: New partnerships in the partner states have been created for Swiss stakeholders arising from the SC	A majority of programs/projects involve new partnerships with Swiss stakeholders	A clear minority of programs/projects involve 'new' partnerships with Swiss stakeholders	Few of the programs/projects involve 'new' partnerships with Swiss stakeholders	Very few programs/projects involve 'new' partnerships with Swiss stakeholders	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 8.2: Follow-up activities have resulted due to the SC-support and/or the partnerships continue	A majority of partnerships with Swiss stakeholders result in follow-up/extension and/or are maintained at the operational level	A clear minority of partnerships with Swiss stakeholders result in follow-up/extension and/or are maintained at the operational level	A small minority of the partnerships with Swiss stakeholders result in follow-up/extension and/or are maintained at the operational level	Very few of the partnerships with Swiss stakeholders result in follow-up/extension and/or are maintained at the operational level	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ9. To what extent are the information and communication efforts of the Swiss Contribution efficient? How well do public relation activities of the Swiss Contribution and their projects and programs contribute to the visibility of Switzerland in the 'new' EU member states?					
JC 9.1: The visibility and publicity rules are clear and the information and communication strategy and activities in place is adequate	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 9.2: The communication activities of the SC promote awareness in the partner states of Switzerland's contribution to reduce socio-economic disparities and thereby to the visibility of Switzerland	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
EQ10. To what extent does the Swiss Contribution enhance goodwill towards Switzerland and thus contribute to improved quality of bilateral relations with the EU?					
JC 10.1: The services/products (benefits) delivered via the SC appropriately correspond to the needs and expectations of the partner states (thereby enhancing goodwill)	Significantly enhanced positive goodwill towards Switzerland is identifiable in the partner states	Enhanced positive goodwill towards Switzerland is identifiable in the partner states	Limited enhanced positive goodwill towards Switzerland is identifiable in the partner states	Goodwill towards Switzerland is identifiably negatively impacted in the partner states	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EFFICIENCY					
EQ11. How efficient is the portfolio management (e.g. organizational set-up, financial and human resources, transversal themes if relevant) and what are its contributions to an optimal achievement of results (at outcome and output level)?					
JC 11.1: Management systems and operations have efficiently deployed and transformed program/project resources into achieved results as planned, in a timely and result-oriented manner	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ12. To what extent does the Swiss Contribution implement defined strategic principles and strategic approaches, instruments, thematic priority areas and geographic focus in reference of the related Federal Council Dispatch?					
JC 12.1: The SC suitably reflects defined strategic principles and strategic approaches, instruments, thematic priority areas and geographic focus	Fully aligned with relevant goals as reflected in the Federal Council Dispatches on the SC	Largely aligned with goals as reflected in the Federal Council Dispatches on the SC	Occasionally aligned with goals as reflected in the Federal Council Dispatches on the SC	Programs/projects ignore or run counter to goals as reflected in the Federal Council Dispatches on the SC	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ13. To what extent is the Swiss Contribution implemented according to plan and time?					
JC 13.1: Programs/projects are implemented	All program/project activities and results	Majority of program/project activities and	Few of the program/project activities and	Very few program/project activities and	Evaluation makes no

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
according to plan and time	delivered to plan and on time (or better)	results delivered to plan and on time	results delivered to plan and on time	results delivered to plan and on time	mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 13.2: Management responded to internal/external factors in a timely and result-oriented manner	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ14. Which implementation instruments (and their respective implementing agencies) prove to be particularly effective?					
JC 14.1: The implementation instruments successfully deliver the intended program/project results under budget and/or ahead of time and/or significantly beyond target within the available budget and time	The instruments and modalities ensure highest competence and outstanding performance, the program/project benefits outweigh their costs	The instruments and modalities ensure high competence and good performance, the program/project benefits merit their costs	The instruments and modalities lack competence and adequate performance, the program/project benefits do not merit their costs	The instruments and modalities are not suitable to ensure competence and performance, the program/project accrue few benefits for considerable costs	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ15. How efficient is the process management of the monitoring system, in order to provide evidence based data/information for accounting of results (reporting) and steering of the Swiss Contribution (at the level of the program and the partner states)?					
JC 15.1: The SC monitoring and reporting systems and steering mechanisms are adequate and effectively used for the efficient implementation of actions and for reporting on results	The management, monitoring and steering of programs/ projects ensures a highly efficient use of the resources	The management, monitoring and steering of programs/ projects ensures the efficient use of the resources	The management, monitoring and steering of programs/projects is weak or hardly exists	The management, monitoring and steering of programs/projects is absent or inadequate	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
EQ16. How efficient is the execution of the Swiss Contribution in terms of operational implementation, procedures, coordination and controlling, and evaluation? To what extent does the "Swiss" approach differ from the "Norwegian" approach?					

Judgement Criteria	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Highly Unsatisfactory	Not demonstrated
JC 16.1: Overall, the day-to-day management and implementation etc. (at SC program, SC partner state program/project levels) has been suitable for achieving the results	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 16.2: The overall efficiency of the “Swiss” approach does not negatively differ compared to the “Norwegian” approach	The approach chosen is optimal to achieve the intended results of the SC on all levels	The approach chosen is adequate to achieve the intended results of the SC on all levels	There would be alternative, more efficient approaches to achieve the intended SC results on all levels	The approach is not suitable to achieve the intended results of the SC on all levels	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
SUSTAINABILITY					
EQ17. Which actions have been taken at country level (by the partner state) to enhance the sustainability of the Swiss Contribution?					
JC 17.1: Results (outputs, outcomes, benefits) will continue after program/project closure (i.e. after 2017)	It is very likely that outputs and outcomes will be maintained/last and further grow/develop	It is likely that outputs and outcomes will last beyond the intervention	Little likelihood that outputs and outcomes will last beyond the intervention	Unlikely that outputs and outcomes will last beyond the intervention	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 17.2: Partner institutions’ and stakeholders’ capacities have been strengthened to sustain the results	Strong capacities have been built; partners will operate and will grow/further improve their capacity without support	Reliable capacities have been built; partners will continue to operate without support	Little capacities have been built; partners require external support to operate	Local capacities are still too weak to implement activities without external support	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria
JC 17.3: Financial sustainability has been achieved	Results can be replicated without further financial support	Results will be likely maintained without further financial support	To be maintained, results will require continued external financial support	Even with additional external financial support, results will not be maintained	Evaluation makes no mention of or cannot assess status of criteria

Annex 11: List of Key Documentation and Sources of Information

Source	Title	Date/Year
Horizontal Program Documents		
Swiss Federal Council and the Council of the EU	Memorandum of Understanding (on the Swiss Contribution to the Enlarged EU)	27/02/2006
Swiss Federal Council	Federal Council Dispatch concerning the Federal Act on Cooperation with the Eastern European States	31/03/2004
	Federal Council Dispatch on the contribution of Switzerland to the mitigation of social and economic disparities in the enlarged European Union	15/12/2006 (the 'EU-10') 05/06/2009 (BG and RO)
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)	The Swiss Enlargement Contribution: Annual Report	Covering years 2008-2014
	The Swiss Enlargement Contribution: Interim report for the end of the EU 10 commitment period	September 2012
	The Swiss Enlargement Contribution: Interim report for the end of the commitment period in Bulgaria and Romania	January 2015
	Management Report Erweiterungsbeitrag	Covering years 2008-2014
	Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by the partner country Reporting, Monitoring and Controlling to be performed by Switzerland	23/04/2008
	Monitoring and Evaluation Concept for the Swiss Contribution	2012
Swiss Federal Audit Office	Der Schweizer Erweiterungsbeitrag: Erlaubt die Aufgabenteilung mit den EU-Partnerländern eine effiziente Umsetzung?	20/03/2015
Partner State Program Documents		
Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the partner state	Framework Agreement concerning the implementation of the Swiss – (partner state) cooperation program to reduce economic and social disparities within the enlarged European Union	20/12/2007 (the 'EU-10') 07/09/2009 (BG and RO)
National Coordination Unit (NCU) of the partner state	Annual Report on the implementation of the Swiss – (partner state) cooperation program	Covering years 2008-2014 (the 'EU-10') 2011-2014 (BG and RO)
SDC/SECO and the NCU of the partner state	Minutes of the Annual Meeting: Swiss – (partner state) cooperation program	Held years 2009-2015 ('EU-10') 2012-2015 (BG and RO)
Project Specific Documents – Hungary		
Euroventures IV venture capital fund		
SECO	Credit Request	07/03/2010
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	21/03/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2013

Source	Title	Date/Year
	Project Interim Report (no. 6)	June 2014
Development of bionic and genetic tools to help the visually impaired		
SDC	Decision Note	21/06/2010
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	15/10/2010
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2010-2011
	Project Interim Report (no. 3)	April 2013
Public health focused model program for organizing primary care services		
SDC	Decision Note	08/03/2012
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	12/07/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 2)	June 2013
	Midterm Review	November 2014
Change of main lines for drinking water – micro-regions of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County		
SECO	Checklist Project Assessment (Project Outline)	2009
SECO	Decision Note	01/06/2010
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	10/11/2010
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2013
	Project Interim Report (no. 9)	March 2014
Development of the Hungarian air quality network and laboratory background		
SECO	Checklist Project Assessment (Project Outline)	2009
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	20/01/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2013
Multi-level community policing network for the cooperation based crime prevention		
SDC	Decision Note	15/03/2012
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	02/07/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 4)	October 2013
SDC	Midterm Review	27/02/2015
Protection with mobile dams in flooded areas		
SDC	Decision Note	02/05/2012
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	10/07/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 3)	September 2013
Twinning and Partnership Block Grant		
SDC	Decision Note	22/07/2010
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	15/12/2010
Intermediate Body	Annual Project Report	2011-2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 5, no. 6)	March 2013, March 2014
Project Specific Documents – Latvia		
Micro-lending program		
SECO	Credit Request	Not dated

Source	Title	Date/Year
SECO	Advocacy Note	09/11/2010
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	21/06/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012, 2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 5)	December 2013
Block Grant for the Swiss researchers activities in Latvia		
SDC	Entry Note (Project Outline)	24/06/2010
SDC	Decision Note	10/02/2011
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	2011
Intermediate Body	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 5, no.6)	December 2013, June 2014
Support for the development of youth initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions		
SDC	Decision Note	Not dated
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	30/05/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 5, no.7)	December 2013, December 2014
Investīciju Risinājumu Birojs	General information on the Swiss - Latvian Co-operation Program "Support for the Development of Youth Initiatives in Peripheral or Disadvantaged Regions" administrated by the Agency for International Programs for Youth – summary of assessment results	2013
	Evaluation of Swiss - Latvian cooperation programme "Support for Development of Youth Initiatives in Peripheral or Disadvantaged Regions", administered by Agency of International Programs for Youth, for 2011-2013 – conclusions and recommendations	Not dated
Modernization of courts in Latvia		
SDC	Decision Note	20/02/2009
SDC	Credit Application	31/03/2009
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	25/06/2009
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2009-2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 8)	June 2013
	Project Completion Report	December 2013
Block Grant for the NGO Fund		
SDC	Entry Note (Project Outline)	09/12/2008
SDC	Decision Note	09/07/2009
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	11/12/2009
Intermediate Body	Annual Project Report	2010-2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 6)	December 2012
	Project Completion Report	April 2013
deabaltika	Swiss-Latvian Cooperation Programme Grant Scheme "NGO Fund" 2009–2012 – Assessment Report	12/07/2013
Project Specific Documents – Poland		

Source	Title	Date/Year
Enhancement of regional competitiveness through corporate social responsibility measures		
SECO	Advocacy Note	08/06/2010
SECO	Credit Request	14/03/2011
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	04/08/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 6, no. 7)	June 2014, December 2014
Malopolska local product		
SDC	Decision Note	05/05/2011
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 9)	June 2014
KEK-CDC Consultants	Review of two Projects: Małopolska Local Product and The Carp Valley – The chance for the future	05/04/2015
Polish-Swiss research program		
SDC	Credit Application	28/09/2009
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	16/12/2009
SDC	Credit Application – phase II	14/11/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2013
	Project Interim Report (no. 17)	March 2014
Dr hab. Izabela Wagner	The Report on the Evaluation of the Polish-Swiss Research Program	Not dated
Preventing overweight and obesity as well as chronic diseases		
SDC	Decision Note	06/12/2010
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	15/06/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 9)	September 2013
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute	Contributions to Midterm Review	09/12/2013
A helping hand in a safe environment		
SDC	Decision Note	09/09/2011
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	21/12/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012-2013
	Project Interim Report (no. 9)	April 2014
Erika Placella	Midterm Report Health Objective 2 Poland KIK57 - KIK58 Assessment report	04/04/2014
Anna Kwaśniewska	Midterm Report summarizing the implementation of the programs under the thematic area "Health"	May 2014
Renewable energy sources in Mszana Dolna and in partner communities		
SECO	Advocacy Note	20/07/2010
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	16/02/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012-2013

Source	Title	Date/Year
	Project Interim Report (no. 7, no.8, no.9, no. 10)	December 2013, March 2014, June 2014, September 2014
Dismantling and safe storage of products containing asbestos from Malopolskie Voivodship		
SECO	Advocacy Note	19/07/2011
SECO	Request for Financing	16/04/2012
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	14/06/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012-2013
	Project Interim Report (no. 10)	December 2014
Pior Manczarski	Monitoring Visit Report	August 2013, June 2014
The Carpathians Unite		
SDC	Decision Note	15/08/2011
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	22/12/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012
	Project Interim Report (no. 9)	March 2014
SCO, NCU and IB	Midterm Review	May 2014
Preparation of customs service mobile groups		
SDC	Decision Note	21/07/2010
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	05/05/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2013
	Project Interim Report (no. 13)	September 2014
SDC	Midterm Review (draft)	16/05/2014
Partnership Fund		
SDC	Decision Note	15/10/2009
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	08/12/2010
Intermediate Body	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Report on the Midterm Review for the Block Grant	February 2015
Project Specific Documents – Slovakia		
Vocational Education and Training for the labor market		
SDC	Entry Note	Not dated
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	26/01/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 9)	January 2015
Sciex–NMS^{CH} (scientific exchange program / Scholarship Fund)		
SDC	Decision Note	03/03/2009
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	16/04/2009
Intermediate Body (CRUS)	Annual Project Report on Sciex–NMS ^{CH}	2009-2014
SDC	Midterm Review	April 2014
Community on its way to prosperity		
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	23/05/2012

Source	Title	Date/Year
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2013-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 7)	July 2014
Public sewerage and sewerage plant for the village Častá		
SECO	Credit Request	08/05/2012
SECO and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	12/06/2012
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2012-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 10)	January 2015
The enhancement of preparedness of the rescue forces of the Ministry of Interior		
SDC	Entry Proposal	17/09/2010
SDC	Decision Note	Not dated
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	02/08/2011
Executing Agency	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 6)	June 2014
NGO Block Grant and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation		
SDC	Entry Proposal	25/10/2010
SDC and NCU	Project Agreement (incl. Decision Letter, Final Project)	02/08/2011
Intermediate Body	Annual Project Report	2011-2014
	Project Interim Report (no. 6)	June 2014

Annex 12: List of Interviewees / Stakeholders Consulted

Date	Organization	Name	Position
Switzerland			
Swiss Confederation – Government			
10/04/2015	SECO – Swiss Enlargement Contribution / Cohesion Section	Hugo Bruggmann	Head of Section
10/04/2015	SECO – Economic Cooperation and Development	Ambassador Beatrice Maser-Mallor	Head of Corporate Domain
10/04/2015	SECO – Swiss Enlargement Contribution / Cohesion Section	Jovanka Ruoss	Program Officer
10/04/2015	Swiss Federal Audit Office – Evaluation Unit	Martin Koçi	Project Manager
10/04/2015	SDC – New EU-Member States Division	Ulrich Stürzinger	Head of Division
22/06/2015	SDC – Cooperation with Eastern Europe and CIS	Elisabeth von Capeller Adrian Maître	Head of Corporate Domain Deputy Head
22/06/2015 & 23/06/2015	SDC – New EU-Member States Division	Ulrich Stürzinger Markus Dürst Markus Eggenberger Ralph Friedländer	Head of Division Deputy Head Program Manager Program Manager
23/06/2015	SECO – Swiss Enlargement Contribution / Cohesion Section	Thomas Knecht Paula Wey Ralph Ammann	Program Officer Program Officer Program Officer
23/06/2015	SDC – Evaluation and Corporate Controlling Division	Hans Rudolf Felber Jean-Marc Clavel	Deputy Head Officer
	SECO – Quality and Resources Unit	Ueli Ramseier Iren Leibundgut	Head of Unit Deputy Head
14/08/2015	Swiss Embassies	Focus Group: Swiss Ambassadors to the SC partner states	11 Ambassadors
14/08/2015	SECO – Swiss Enlargement Contribution / Cohesion Section	Max Schnellmann Martin Scherer	Program Officer Program Officer
07/10/2015	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs – Directorate for European Affairs, Section for Economic and Financial Affairs	Fabian Mahnig Samuel Nuspliger	Section Head Advisor
07/10/2015	SDC – New EU-Member States Division	Ulrich Stürzinger	Head of Division
	SECO – Swiss Enlargement Contribution / Cohesion Section	Hugo Bruggmann	Head of Section
	SECO – Quality and Resources Unit	Ueli Ramseier	Head of Unit
Swiss stakeholder partners			
02/10/2015 (telephone)	EPFL	Olivier Küttel	
02/10/2015 (telephone)	Solidar Suisse	Zoltan Doka	

Date	Organization	Name	Position
05/10/2015	SVS/BirdLife Schweiz	Werner Müller Fritz Hirt	Director International Operations
05/10/2015	Economie Suisse	Sandra Ruckstuhl	Project Manager
06/10/2015 (telephone)	Swissmem – Die Schweizer Maschinen-, Elektro- und Metall- Industrie	Nicolas Stephan	
06/10/2015	Universität Miséricorde	Prof. Guido Vergauwen	Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities (Swiss IB: Sciex-NMS ^{CH})
07/10/2015	Caritas	Regula Hafner	Head of Department Asia/Europe
21/10/2015 (telephone)	VEBO – Verein zur Entwicklung der Bewährungshilfe in Osteuropa	Peter Gründler	
15/10/2015 (telephone)	Europa Institut, University of Basel	Prof Georg Kreis	Head
06/11/2015 (telephone)	Alliance Sud	Peter Niggli	Former Head of Alliance Sud, Journalist
Hungary			
SC – Program			
14/09/2015	SCO – Budapest	Max Schnellmann Katalin Bábosik Balázs Zám	Head of Office National Program Officer
14/09/2015	Prime Minister's Office – NCU	Kinga Bödő-Baksa Diana Lengyel Barbara Székely Cs. Nagy	
	SCO – Budapest	Max Schnellmann	
14/09/2015	IB: Széchenyi Programme Office	Péter Benkő Annamária Módi	
15/09/2015	Prime Minister's Office – NCU	Zsigmond Perényi Kinga Bödő-Baksa	Deputy State Secretary
15/09/2015	Paying Authority	Júlia Iván	
18/09/2015	Directorate General for Audit of European Funds	Balázs Dencsö	Director General
18/09/2015	SCO – Budapest	Max Schnellmann Katalin Bábosik	Head of Office National Program Officer
18/09/2015	Swiss Embassy to Hungary	Jean-François Paroz	Ambassador
24/09/2015	Prime Minister's Office – NCU	Kinga Bödő-Baksa Diana Lengyel Barbara Székely Cs. Nagy	
	SCO – Budapest	Max Schnellmann	
25/09/2015	Swiss Embassy to Hungary	Jean-François Paroz	Ambassador
Twinning and Partnership Block Grant			
14/09/2015	IB: Széchenyi Programme Office	Péter Benkő	
17/09/2015	Körmend	István Bebes	Mayor

Date	Organization	Name	Position
		Monika Körmendi-Szalay	
17/09/2015	Szentgotthárd		
17/09/2015	Ispánk	Bistey Andrea	
18/09/2015	Védegylet	Györgyi Újszászi	
21/09/2015	Tápiógyörgye	Varró István	Mayor
23/09/2015	National Federation of Workers' Councils	Gyorgy Lajtai	Economist Advisor
23/09/2015	Association of Lifelong Learning		
24/09/2015	IB: Széchenyi Programme Office	Péter Benkő Annamária Módi	
Multi-level community policing network			
15/09/2015	Police Office, Miskolc	Dr. Bogyay Ferenc Dr. Szabó Aladár	Chief Project Coordinator
15/09/2015	Police Office, Miskolc	Focus Group	8 community police officers
15/09/2015	Town Authority, Miskolc	Péter Pfliegler	Vice Mayor
15/09/2015	Stakeholder groups, Miskolc	Focus Group	10 representatives of local social services, legal services, etc.
17/09/2015	Police Office, Zalaegerszeg		2 community police officers
18/09/2015	Ministry of Interior	Judit Tóth	
18/09/2015	National Police Headquarters	Szabó Henrik Ágnes Németh	
Euroventures IV venture capital fund			
15/09/2015	IB: Hungarian Development Bank	Sandor Buda	Head of Consultancy
15/09/2015	EA: Euroventures venture capital fund	Peter Tanczos Thomas Howells Zoltan Toth	Director Director
15/09/2015	Ubichem Pharma, Manufacturing Kft	Jozsef Repasi	Managing Director
15/09/2015	Tresorit Kft	Gyorgy Szilagyi	Chief Product Officer
23/09/2015	Fürgefutár Kft	Colin Snead	CEO
23/09/2015	Omixon Biocomputing Kft	Tim Hague	CEO
23/09/2015	Sequence IQ HU Kft	Janos Matyas Lajos Papp	CTO DevOp
24/09/2015	IB: Hungarian Development Bank EA: Euroventures venture capital fund	Sandor Buda Peter Tanczos	Head of Consultancy Director
Drinking water supply in the settlements of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County			
15/09/2015	EA: Borsodvíz Zrt.	Attila Kiss +11 other persons	Chief Engineer Representatives of PIU, Works supplier consortium, FIDIC engineer and supervisor

Date	Organization	Name	Position
16/09/2015	EA: Borsodvíz Zrt.	Attila Kiss	Chief Engineer
16/09/2015	Bodrogkisfaludért Association (local NGO group, Tokaj)		Director
16/09/2015	Municipality, Tokaj		Mayor
16/09/2015	Municipality, Bodrogkeresztúr	Ádám László	Mayor
16/09/2015	Municipality, Tarcsl		Mayor
Development of bionic and genetic tools to help the visually impaired			
16/09/2015	EA: Pázmány University	Dr. Peter Szolgay Kristof Karacs Akos Zarandy	Dean Associate Professor Professor
16/09/2015	Femtonics Kft.		
Protection with mobile dams in flooded areas			
16/09/2015	EA: National Directorate General for Disaster Prevention Management	Antal Csoka Imre Lenkey Toth Marton Peter Hartner	Colonel Director Head of Department for Budget Senior Desk Officers
18/09/2015	Project management team	János Matúz Tibor Hejj	Senior Consultant Managing Partner
24/09/2015	EA: National Directorate General for Disaster Prevention Management	János Matúz	Senior Consultant
Development of the Hungarian air quality network and laboratory background			
17/09/2015	Government Office for Fejér County, Dept. of Environment and Nature Protection	Dr. Zay Andrea +2 laboratory scientists	
17/09/2015	Municipality of Székesfehérvár		Environmental Officer
17/09/2015	Air Working Group (NGO)		NGO representatives
18/09/2015	EA: Ministry of Agriculture	Dr. Hunor Orbán	Deputy Head, Dept. of Environmental Protection
Public health focused model for organizing primary care services			
18/09/2015	EA: National Healthcare Service Center and National Health Development Institute	Csizmadia Istvan Szabo Szilvia Papp Magor Ianka Eva, Gronay Andrea, Szeleggi Zsolt, Barko Boglarka	Chief Executive Advisor and Head of International Projects NEFI NEFI MAPI
21/09/2015	Pilot GP teams, districts of Heves and Jászapáti		
22/09/2015	Pilot GP teams, district of Borsodnádásd-Arló		
24/09/2015	EA: National Healthcare Service Center and National Health Development Institute	Csizmadia Istvan Barko Boglarka	Chief Executive Advisor & Head of International Projects MAPI
Latvia			
SC – Program			
07/09/2015	SCO – Riga	Olita Berzina	Program Officer
07/09/2015	Ministry of Finance – NCU	Diana Bremsmite	

Date	Organization	Name	Position
		+ NCU staff	
10/09/2015	Civil Alliance – Latvia (SC Monitoring Committee)	Ms. R Pīpiķe	Civil society representative
10/09/2015	IB: Central Finance and Contracting Agency	Zita Zarina	Director
10/09/2015	SCO – Riga	Olita Berzina	Program Officer
11/09/2015	Swiss Embassy to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania	Markus N.P. Dutly	Ambassador
11/09/2015	Ministry of Finance – NCU SCO – Riga	Diana Bremsmite + NCU staff Inese Andersone	
Micro-lending program			
07/09/2015	Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Jānis Atslens	Expert
07/09/2015	Ministry of Economics	Edmunds Valantis Elina Dlohi	Director – EU Fund Implementation Dept. Senior Expert
08/09/2015	EA: Latvian Development Bank (“Altum”)	Juris Cerbulis Andrejs Buharins	Project Manager
09/09/2015	Local “Altum” branch, Jelgava municipality	Jurijs Strods Marite Lazdina	Deputy Chairman
09/09/2015	Micro-lending beneficiaries Jelgava region	Rolands Remerts Ramona Gozena	2 beneficiaries of micro-lending grants
Modernization of courts in Latvia			
08/09/2015	EA: Court Administration	Edvins Balsevics Agnija Karlsone	
08/09/2015	Riga City Latgale Suburb Court	Sandra Strence Iveta Krevica	Executive Chief Judge Chief Judge
08/09/2015	Riga Regional Court	Daiga Vilsone	Chief Judge
09/09/2015	Zemgale Regional Court	Inguna Preisa	Chief Judge
10/09/2015	EA: Court Administration; Riga City Vidzeme Suburb Court; Riga Regional Court; Riga District Court; State Forensic Science Bureau; Latvian Prison Administration	Focus Group	8 representatives of final beneficiary partner institutions
Block Grant for the NGO Fund			
08/09/2015	IB: Society Integration Foundation	Aija Bauere Ardis Dambis	Director
09/09/2015	Jelgava Association of Retired Persons	Marija Kolmeja	
09/09/2015	Jelgava primary school No 4	Agita Lundberga	Director
10/09/2015	Center Dardedze; Orphan’s association Children of Sun; Latvija SOS children village association; Latvijas mazpulki; Latvia Red Cross; For children of Latvia with movement hindrance; Avantis	Focus Group	7 representatives of final beneficiary NGO partner institutions
Block Grant for the Swiss researchers activities in Latvia			

Date	Organization	Name	Position
08/09/2015	IB: State Education Development Agency	Alise Luse Liene Gailite	
09/09/2015	Ministry of Education	Gunta Arāja Evi Vika	Deputy State Secretary
09/09/2015	Latvia University of Agriculture (Jelgava University)	Focus Group	7 representatives of final beneficiary faculty partner institutions
10/09/2015	BA School of Business and Finance; Riga Technical University; RISEBA; TURĪBA University; Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences; Daugavpils University; Jāzeps Vītols Latvia Academy of Music	Focus Group	7 representatives of final beneficiary faculty partner institutions
Support for the development of Youth Initiatives in peripheral or disadvantaged regions			
08/09/2015	EA: Agency for International Programs for Youth	Daina Sproge Sanda Bruna	Director Deputy Director
08/09/2015	Gulbene Youth Centre	Valerija Oleksa	Youth worker
08/09/2015	Aluksne Youth centre	Eva Aizupe	Center Coordinator
08/09/2015	Aluksne municipality	Aivars Fomins	Deputy Chairman of Municipality Council
09/09/2015	Ministry of Education	Gunta Arāja Evi Vika Sanda Bruna	Deputy State Secretary
09/09/2015	Ozolnieki/Ane Youth Centre	Marina Formenko	
10/09/2015	Tukums Youth Centre	Dace Laukmane	
Poland			
SC – Program			
02/09/2015	Ministry of Infrastructure and Development – NCU	Przemyslaw Derwich Malgorzata Zalewska Ursula Demidziuk	Deputy Director Deputy Director Head of Programming Unit
02/09/2015	SCO – Warsaw	Roland Python Dominika Wieczorek Sylwia Słomiak Krzysztof Kaczmarek Aleksandra Chmielewska Piotr Plusa	Head of Office National Program Officer National Program Officer National Program Officer National Program Officer IT and Office Manager
04/09/2015	IB: Centrum Projectow Polska Cyfrowa (former Implementing Authority for European Programmes)	Katarzyna Suda-Puchacz Ewa Wnukowska Monika Muranowicz	Head of Department – Department of Swiss-Polish Cooperation Program
18/09/2015	IB: Ministry of Health	Izabella Ostaszewicz Agnieszka Ługowska Anna Cisz Anna Romańczyk	Head of Unit Senior Specialist Specialist Specialist
18/09/2015	Swiss Embassy to Poland	Andrej Motyl Martin X. Michelet	Ambassador Minister, Deputy Head of Mission
18/09/2015	Ministry of Infrastructure and	Przemyslaw Derwich	Deputy Director

Date	Organization	Name	Position
	Development – NCU	Malgorzata Zalewska Ursula Demidziuk	Deputy Director Head of Programming Unit
	SCO – Warsaw	Roland Phython	Head of Office
Enhancement of regional competitiveness – Corporate Social Responsibility measures			
03/09/2015 KIK 60	EA: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Malgorzata Bieniecka-Grygo	Deputy Director, Pilot Programmes Department
03/09/2015 KIK 60	IB: Ministry of Economy; Department for Support Instruments	Malgorzata Okulus Malgorzata Ziolkowska	Chief Expert
07/09/2015 KIK 60	EA: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	SME grant beneficiaries for CSR	2 beneficiary SMEs
08/09/2015 KIK 60	EA: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Focus Group	4 CSR consultants
08/09/2015 KIK 60	EA: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Zbigniew Gajewski	Deputy Director General of the Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan
08/09/2015 KIK 60	EA: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Monika Michalowska	CSR and sustainability consultant, Pomerania Development Agency Co
14/09/2015 KIK-60	DG ELPRO (CSR grantee SME)	Zdislaw Durlak	Chairman of the Board
14/09/2015 KIK 60	EVACO Sp. Z.o.o.(CSR grantee SME)	Aleksandra Scibich-Kopiec Sebastian Kopiec	Project Manager Head of training department
14/09/2015 KIK 60	Prakownia Stolarska (Carpentry – CSR grantee)	Piotr Wolkowski	Owner and Master
17.09.2015 KIK 60	EA: Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP)	Malgorzata Bieniecka-Grygo Malgorzata Jelinska	Deputy Director Chief Expert for Pilot Programmes Department
Polish-Swiss Research Program			
04/09/2015 PSRP	EA: Information Processing Institute (OPI)	Grazyna Murawska-Adamek Marcin Langa Lukasz Socha	Head of Department for Research Support Instruments Programme coordinator Deputy Director
08/09/2015 PSRP	National Centre for Nuclear Research	Dr Professor Tadeusz Batsch	Coordinator of project no 200
08/09/2015 PSRP	International Institute of Cell and Molecular Biology	PhD Professor Marta Miaczynska	Coordinator of project no 094
08/09/2015 PSRP	Warsaw University of Technology	Dr Professor Leon Gradon	Coordinator of project no 209
14/09/2015 PSRP	Jagiellonian University / Institute of Physics – Department of Physics of Nanostructures and Nanotechnology	Professor Marek Szymoński; Dr hab. Bartosz Such	Coordinator of project no 085
14/09/2015 PSRP	Institute of Botany of Polish Academy of Sciences	Dr hab Michal Ronikier	Coordinator of project no 161

Date	Organization	Name	Position
14/09/2015 PSRP	Jagiellonian University - Collegium Medicum	Professor Marek Sanak	Coordinator of project no 072
17.09.2015 PSRP	EA: Information Processing Institute (OPI)	Grazyna Murawska- Adamek Marcin Langa	Head of Department for Research Support Instruments Programme coordinator
Carpathians Unite			
04/09/2015 KIK 32	EA: UNEP-GRID Warsaw	Maria Andrzejewska Patrycja Adamska Zbigniew Niewiadomski	Director Project Coordinator International Cooperation
17.09.2015 KIK 32	EA: UNEP-GRID Warsaw	Maria Andrzejewska Patrycja Adamska	Director Project Coordinator
Preparation of Customs Service mobile groups			
07/09/2015 KIK 03	EA: Ministry of Finance, Customs Service	Marcin Kropisz	Customs Service Expert, Department of Foreign Assistance and Cooperation
07/09/2015 KIK 03	EA: Ministry of Finance, Customs Service	Focus Group	Customs Officers
Malopolska local product			
09/09/2015 KIK 09	EA: Environmental Partnership Foundation	Rafal Serafin Ewa Figorska Malgorzata Rudnicka	President Economic education centre Brand manager
11/09/2015 KIK 09	EA: Environmental Partnership Foundation	Natalia Adamska	Manager of the Carrot Bistro – Local Culinary Centre
11/09/2015 KIK 09	EA: Environmental Partnership Foundation	Jerzy Poznanski	Master Chef
11/09/2015 KIK 09	Małopolskie Voivodeship	Jan Grabski	Director of the Department of Agriculture
11/09/2015 KIK 09	Liszki Commune	Dagmara Pilis	Liszki Basket Initiative coordinator
11/09/2015 KIK 09	Partner: Four Elements Association	Renata Bukowska	President
11/09/2015 KIK 09	Temporary Kitchen Incubators in Świnna Poręba and Stronie	Maciej Szymanowski	Manager, Engineer
11/09/2015 KIK 09	Construction site of Kitchen Incubator in Stryzow	Focus Group	Specialists and representatives of the construction company
16/09/2015 KIK 09	EA: Environmental Partnership Foundation	Rafal Serafin Ewa Figorska Malgorzata Rudnicka	President Economic education centre Brand manager
Renewable energy sources in Mszana Dolna and in partner communities			
10/09/2015 KIK 50	Gmyna Mszana Dolna	Beata Paluszek	Mayor of Mszana Dolna
10/09/2015 KIK 50	Gmyna Mszana Dolna	Antony Rog	Manager of the project

Date	Organization	Name	Position
10/09/2015 KIK 50		Focus Group	Mayors of Partner Communities
10/09/2015 KIK 50		Focus Group	Local Activists Groups of Partner Communities
A helping hand in a safe environment			
14/09/2015	EA: Regional Centre for Social Policy in Krakow	Piotr Maurek Rafał Barański Artur Winiarski	Director Deputy Director
14/09/2015	DPS w Krakowie ul. Łanowa 41	Ryszard Jaworski Tadeusz Mardoń Anna Stefańska-Such	
14/09/2015	DPS w Krakowie, ul. Krakowska 55	Maria Gdula Argasińska Wiesława Żmuda Krystyna Figa	
14/09/2015	IPOW w Krakowie, ul. Naczelna	Bożena Kozera Jarosław Borkiewicz Małgorzata Biesiada	
15/09/2015	A Helping Hand in a Safe Environment project, Krakow	Focus Group	23 representatives of Social Welfare Houses and Emergency Care and Education Institutions
15/09/2015	A Helping Hand in a Safe Environment project, Krakow	Focus Group	22 nurses/trainees
Dismantling and safe storage of asbestos from Malopolskie Voivodship			
15/09/2015 KIK 71	Gmyna Szczucin	Andrzej Gorzkowicz	Major of Szczucin Township
15/09/2015 KIK 71	Gmyna Szczucin	Tomasz Prochazka Maciej Rzeszut	Project Coordinator Deputy Coordinator
15/09/2015 KIK 71			Representatives of the Community administration
15/09/2015 KIK 71			Representatives of the Community
15/09/2015 KIK 71			Representatives of the contractor company removing asbestos
15/09/2015 KIK 71			Representative of the company operating asbestos waste site
Preventing overweight and obesity as well as chronic diseases			
15/09/2015	National Food and Nutrition Institute	Prof Iwona Tarczyk Irena Gutowska Magdalena Siuba	Deputy Director of Scientific Research Project Controlling Food and Nutrition Specialist
15/09/2015	Krakow Specialist Hospital Pope John Paul II	Magdalena Tlalka Małgorzata Grudniewska Maria Przyborowska Sapek	Psychologist Nutritionist Nutritionist

Date	Organization	Name	Position
17/09/2015	National Food and Nutrition Institute	Magdalena Siuba-Strzelińska Dr Katarzyna Wolnicka Joanna Jaczewska-Schuetz Hanna Stolińska-Fiedorowicz Dr Katarzyna Stoś	Project Assistant
17/09/2015	Children's Memorial Health Institute	Dr Zbigniew Kułaga Beata Gurzkowska	
17/09/2015	Primary School in Łask	Jolanta Wilczyńska Agnieszka Prusisz	Director
17/09/2015	Brodnowski Hospital	Anna Koseska	
Partnership Fund			
16/09/2015	Krakow Convention Bureau, Municipality of Krakow	Małgorzata Przygórska-Skowron	Manager
16/09/2015	Association of Municipalities Polish Network of "Energie Cités"	Anna Jaskuła Iwona Korohoda	Executive Director Communication Officer
17/09/2015	IB: ECORYS Poland	Karolina Malińska Katarzyna Kaczyńska Violetta Korcuś	Consultant Consultant Consultant
18/09/2015	The Republic of Poland Employer Association	Mariusz Korzeb	Lawyer
Slovakia			
SC – Program			
21/09/2015	Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Ivan Ivančin Tatiana Bartošiová	Head of Unit
22/09/2015	Swiss Embassy to Slovakia		Ambassador
22/09/2015	SC Monitoring Committee	Mrs. Hudekova	Civil society representative
22/09/2015	Government Office of the Slovak Republic – Paying Authority	Daniel Hrubala	Head of Division – project support
23/09/2015	SCO – Bratislava	Martin Scherer Lajos Szabó	Head of Office National Program Officer
25/09/2015	Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU SCO – Bratislava	Ivan Ivančin Juraj Kovac Martin Scherer Lajos Szabó	Head of Unit Head of Office National Program Officer
Enhancement of the preparedness of the Rescue Forces of the Ministry of Interior			
21/09/2015	EA: Ministry of Interior	Denisa Valacsaiova	Head of International Programs/Cooperation Project Coordinator
22/09/2015	Police Forces Presidium – The Kynology and Hipology Dept. EA: Ministry of Interior Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Branislav Didák Denisa Valacsaiova Juraj Kovac	Director Project Coordinator

Date	Organization	Name	Position
23/09/2015	Presidium of the Fire and Rescue Corps EA: Ministry of Interior Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Ivan Ondrejčíčka Denisa Valacsaiova Juraj Kovac	Director – Planning and Conception Department Project Coordinator
23/09/2015	Control Chemical Laboratory of Civil Protection, Nitra Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Miloš Kosír Juraj Kovac	Chief
25/09/2015	EA: Ministry of Interior	Denisa Valacsaiova	Head of International Programs/Cooperation Project Coordinator
Sciex-NMS^{CH} (scientific exchange program / Scholarship Fund)			
21/09/2015	Slovak Academy of Sciences	Prof. Daniela Ježová	Member of the Presidium
21/09/2015	Coordination Body: Slovak Academic Information Agency	Michal Fedák Daniela Kirdová	Deputy Director Program Coordinator
25/09/2015	Sciex fellows / beneficiaries	Focus Group	5 junior scientific researchers / fellows
Vocational Education and Training for the labor market			
21/09/2015	State Institute for Vocational Education Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Zuzana Trenková Ján Rusňák Marcela Kulifajová Viera Žatkovičová Zuzana Grebečiová Antónia Ryšavá	Head of the Office of the Director Head of the Economic Department Chief project manager Project deputy Project coordinator
21/09/2015	Ministry of Education Science Research and Sport Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Anna Jurkovičová Antónia Ryšavá	Deputy
22/09/2015	SOŠ GaHS, Farského 9, Bratislava	Josef Horák Danica Daubnerová Gabriela Slaádečková	Director Deputy Director School Coordinator
25/09/2015	United School Prešov	Anton Muška Ivan Baran Mária Angelovičová	Director Deputy Director for Practical Training Teacher
NGO Block Grant and Partnership support of the Swiss-Slovak cooperation			
21/09/2015	Supreme Audit Office of the Slovak Republic	Mária Kysucká Zuzana Martincová	Director General IT Department
22/09/2015	Children's Fund of the Slovak Republic	Barbara Brichtová	Coordinator
22/09/2015	The Centre of Environmental and Ethical Education Živica	Ján Markoš Petra Ježeková	Coordinator Coordinator Assistant
22/09/2015	Daphne – Institute of Applied Ecology	Milan Janák Viera Lasáková	Project Manager Project Manager
23/09/2015	IB: Ekopolis Foundation	Peter Medved Štefan Jančo	Director Project Manager

Date	Organization	Name	Position
23/09/2015	OZ Pronatur Institute for Ecosystem Services and Geoinformatics	Zuzana Okániková	Project Manager
23/09/2015	Friend of the Earth - CEPA	Juraj Zamkovsky	Project Manager
23/09/2015	SK CH Tourism Development Association	Prof Peter Patúš Vanda Maráková	
24/09/2015	Centrum Liberta (former TIMI)	Renata Ferencsik Stefan Ferencsik	Director Deputy Director
24/09/2015	Birdlife Slovakia	Miroslav Demko	Director
25/09/2015	Relevant	Marek Ilenin	
Public sewerage and sewerage plant for the village Častá			
24/09/2015	Municipality, Častá	Márie Garajová	Mayor Assistant
24/09/2015	Government Office of the Slovak Republic – NCU	Ivan Ivančin	Head of Unit
Community on its way to prosperity			
24/09/2015	EA: ETP	Slávka Mačáková	Director
24/09/2015	Municipality, Veľká Ida	Julius Beluscsak	Mayor
24/09/2015	Community Centre, Veľká Ida	Jozka Janova	Assistant
24/09/2015	Municipality, Košice-Šaca	Daniel Dusan Petrik	Mayor
24/09/2015	Community Centre, Košice-Šaca	Irena Dubikova Lenka Kovacova	Coordinator Assistant
25/09/2015	Community Centre, Ostrovany	Renata Harkova	Coordinator
25/09/2015	Municipality, Ostrovany	Cyril Revák	Mayor

Imprint

Publisher:
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
3003 Bern
www.eda.admin.ch/sdc

Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and
Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO
3003 Bern
www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch

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This publication can be downloaded from the websites
www.seco-cooperation.ch
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Bern, March 2016