

**Council of Europe Secretariat**  
**Directorate of Internal Oversight**



**Evaluation (2011)4**

**27 June 2011**

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT ON THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE  
ACTION PLAN FOR UKRAINE 2008-2011**

**PHASE I: PREPARATION PROCESS**

**- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -**

1. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the preparation, design and reporting of the **Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2008-2011 (AP)** with a view to drawing lessons for future APs on Ukraine as well as APs or country programming documents to be prepared for other countries.
2. In carrying out this evaluation, the preparation and design of the CoE Action Plan for Ukraine were assessed against international good practices (EU, UN system, national development agencies) and widely accepted international principles, notably, the principles of the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**.
3. The Ukraine Action Plan preparation process, undertaken by the former Directorate of Strategic Planning, involved a **fine balancing act** between Ukrainian proposals, Council of Europe priorities, the results of the previous Action Plan and the capacity to mobilise funds and secure financing. Whilst the evaluation report touches upon all these aspects, it also highlights the elements missing from this approach, namely the harmonisation of donors' actions, managing for results and mutual accountability.

**The following aspects were considered as positive.**

4. Overall, the Action Plan preparation process scored well on establishing a **good level of dialogue with the Ukrainian authorities**, with dedicated co-operation structures allowing for discussion and agreement on AP priority areas. Almost all of Ukraine's proposals were integrated in the Action Plan with a few exceptions. The **representatives of the monitoring bodies were globally satisfied** with the integration of their results and recommendations into the projects.
5. **Overall, the level of financing of the Ukraine Action Plan was good.** This was thanks to the EU funds, which financed around 80% of the Action Plan. Specific voluntary contributions from member states, initially € 65,000, gradually increased to € 3.85 million. Despite the satisfactory level of financing secured for the AP in the second half of its duration, **there is still a need for quicker mobilisation of funds in the initial phase of an AP.** The CoE should seek to increase its capacity for resource mobilisation through:
  - Obtaining ODA (Official Development Assistance) qualification that would allow the organisation to receive un-earmarked funds and increase its visibility on the international scene.
  - Developing sector-wide co-operation approaches and concluding multi-annual agreements to finance sectors rather than individual projects.
  - Organising CoE donor conferences following the adoption of an AP.
  - Making better use of the information on donor profiles prepared by the Resource Mobilisation and Donor Relations Unit when preparing AP documents.
  - Improving the design and presentation of the AP document (see paragraph 9).

**The following areas were identified as needing further improvement.**

6. The donors' expectations were that, beyond fund-raising, the CoE would become more of an international player, actively seeking partnerships and entering into policy and sector-wide dialogue. The CoE could play a greater role in harmonisation of donors' actions, managing for results and mutual accountability, which are some of the key principles of the Paris Declaration.

It is recommended that the CoE commit itself to these principles and adjust its working methods accordingly. Furthermore, it is recommended that the CoE enquire about the possibility of **signing the Paris Declaration**.

7. **Civil society bodies were completely excluded from the AP preparation process**, although they were beneficiaries or partners in some of the individual projects. With a view to building inclusive partnerships, the CoE Head of Office should organise regular meetings so as to ensure that the views of civil society are heard and make its involvement in projects or in the assessment of their results more systematic.
8. Some operational MAEs expressed the wish to contribute to strategic discussions concerning the country, not just to the AP with individual projects. In order to fulfil these expectations, it is recommended that the **Senior Management Group (SMG)** put country-based discussions on its agenda. These could be enriched by organising discussions among line managers with a view to informing their hierarchy prior to SMG meetings.
9. The **design of the Action Plan as a results-based tool needs major improvement**. The Action Plan was conceived not as a single programming element with its own rationale, objectives and intervention logic, but as a compendium of projects, without any visible strategy establishing linkages between them. Objectives, expected results and performance indicators were not set for the Action Plan as such. The conception, design and presentation of the AP should follow a more results-based approach, and its structure should be more consistent with **international standards and practices**, thereby enhancing readability, evaluability and its potential for offering strategic guidance.
10. So as to add clarity and transparency to the preparation process and design a better quality document, **Country Programming Framework Guidelines** should be developed. These would clarify roles and responsibilities within the CoE and would include a checklist to ensure that a good quality document up to international standards is produced.
11. Evaluation also recommends that a **Quality Support Group (QSG)** be created. This would include DGDPA (including the Resource Mobilisation and Donor Relations Unit), the programme and budget department (DGA), the evaluation division (DIO), high-level managers from operational departments, the Directorate of Monitoring (DGHL), the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner and the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly. The QSG would ensure that APs are of good quality both contents-wise and technically.
12. In addition, the fact that the AP document was not results-based did not facilitate **producing results-based reports**. Progress reports mainly provided information at project level that was useful to the project managers, the EU, GR-DEM and the international community in Kyiv, but it **was not useful for taking strategic decisions** on the general orientation of the CoE technical assistance programmes in Ukraine.
13. Finally, the **visibility** of CoE working methods and interventions and **access to information** are areas that need further improvement. The reform of the External Presence provides good responses to these problems by more clearly defining the responsibilities of Heads of Office for awareness-raising, promotion and co-ordination activities. The report recommends other measures, such as revamping the DG-DPA website, improving CoE databases and enhancing

visibility in the capitals of member states and in Kyiv through greater involvement of Permanent Representations, the aim being to improve mutual information flow towards development agencies and embassies in Kyiv.