

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS BY CO-OPERATION PROJECTS: A META-EVALUATION

June 2026



INTRODUCTION

The meta-evaluation provides a comprehensive review of how co-operation projects contribute to the national

implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights.



WHY THIS EVALUATION? ...

This meta-evaluation sought to glean what additional information there is by looking collectively at a set of 85 evaluation reports, audit reports and results-oriented monitoring reports over a period of five years from 2019-2024 through the lens of national implementation of the Convention.

WHAT DID THE EVALUATION FIND?



Connection to the Convention

Little connection is made between co-operation projects, the European Convention of Human Rights, and its implementation at national level in the design and conceptualisation of projects.

This connection would strengthen project results and bring together different strands and stakeholders through an easily understood common objective.



Outcome focus

Prioritisation and holistic design of outcomes determine how much impact projects have collectively, and therefore the overall impact of the Organisation at national level.



Project monitoring

There is very **limited data in evaluation** reports on outcomes because measurement and data collection overall is weak.

Gender mainstreaming and human rights approach

The principal characteristics of a human rights approach are well embedded in project implementation but the approach itself is not sufficiently recognised or understood, either by project supervisors or often evaluators. **Gender mainstreaming reflects this lack of understanding because it is often superficial and limited to gender disaggregation of activity data.**

Alternative approaches to project implementation

Changes in project approaches occur almost exclusively when a crisis forces such change. There are **visible benefits from integrating alternative approaches**, and from more systematic efforts to do so rather than in reaction to crises.

LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICE



- > There is value in using national implementation of the Convention as the common overall goal for all co-operation activities, unites projects through a shared logic and objectives and communicates the bigger picture of Council of Europe projects and programmes.
- > Investing more substantially in the decentralisation of substantive and content-related functions – beyond the focus on mobility, skills, and competencies – could enhance the Organisation's capacity to support and co-operate effectively with member states, as highlighted in the External Audit recommendations.
- > The action plans and programme facilities demonstrated more effective gender mainstreaming than individual projects. This is likely because of the resources invested in gender mainstreaming at action plan and facility level, in the form of gender advisors.

REITERATED RECOMMENDATIONS



1. Project teams should aim for outcomes that mutually reinforce each other and project supervisors should further integrate Council of Europe Project Management Methodology (PMM) into their supervision and approvals processes. (High)
2. Project teams should enhance outcome-focused monitoring and project supervisors should support more extensive monitoring in line with PMM. (High)
3. Project teams and supervisors should strengthen and systematise gender mainstreaming and human rights approaches, making the objectives of gender mainstreaming and the human rights approach more explicit. (Medium)
4. Project teams and supervisors should strengthen co-ordination and communication about the link between co-operation projects and the national implementation of the Convention. (Medium)
5. Project teams and supervisors should explore opportunities for different implementation modalities to best suit particular stakeholders, periods and domestic/local circumstances. (Medium)



HOW WAS THIS EVALUATION CONDUCTED?



85
reports
analysed



Testing
AI for
data
analysis



Report scoring:
10 evaluation
questions
14 indicators



Quality
assessment
3-point scale



Analysis framework:
82 codes identified
4447 quotes coded



12
validation
interviews

FIND OUT MORE



Report: www.coe.int/evaluation