

Evaluation of the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021

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Abbreviations / acronyms

CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CoE	Council of Europe
Congress	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG I	Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law, Council of Europe
DG II	Directorate General Democracy, Council of Europe
EU	European Union
FNCT	Fédération Nationale des Communes Tunisiennes
FNVT	Fédération Nationale des Villes Tunisiennes
GiZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GRECO	Group of States against Corruption
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
HAICA	Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle
HELP	Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
IIPD	Instance Indépendante de Protection des Données
INLUCC	Instance nationale de lutte contre la corruption
INLTP	Instance nationale de lutte contre la traite des personnes
INPT	Instance nationale de prévention de la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants
IPAPD	Instance de Prospective et d'Accompagnement du Processus de la Décentralisation
MFFPA	Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et des Personnes Âgées
NP	Neighbourhood Partnership
ODGP	Office of the Directorate General of Programmes
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency

TN	Tunisia
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

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1. Executive summary

This summary briefly presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

- I. The Council of Europe (CoE) acting through the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) contracted the firm Blomeyer & Sanz on 20 February 2021 to conduct the independent evaluation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 (NP).
- II. According to the Terms of Reference (ToR) the objectives of the evaluation comprised a summative (focus on assessing outcomes) and a formative dimension (lessons learnt and recommendations for the future NP with Tunisia for the period 2022-2025).
- III. The evaluation was conducted on the basis of a mostly qualitative question-based evaluation design, focusing on the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, added value and sustainability. Data collection focused on four specific projects that were selected for in-depth evaluation, with data collection involving desk research and semi-structured interviews with partners, donors and CoE representatives in Strasbourg and Tunis.

1.1. Findings

Relevance and design of the NP

- IV. The NP is well aligned with Tunisian needs and priorities. NP support clearly speaks to relevant existing policy, strategy and normative frameworks in Tunisia. Needs were also justified by processes of ongoing institutional and / or legal change.
- V. CoE projects are fully in line with objectives of the CoE's policy towards neighbouring regions, namely assisting legislative activity, implementing the normative framework and strengthening the institutional framework. The CoE has adopted a 'holistic' approach to project design, generally addressing the three main objectives of the CoE's policy towards neighbouring regions in parallel. Stakeholders also validated the alignment between the projects and relevant donor policies and priorities in Tunisia.
- VI. Project implementation evidenced a strong degree of integration of the human rights-based approach and its four principles of 'Participation & Inclusion', 'Equality & Non-Discrimination', 'Accountability', 'Transparency & Access to Information'. At the same time, our assessment of partner feedback suggested room for further strengthening the partners' understanding of the concept of the human rights-based approach.

- VII. There have been strong efforts to involve civil society organisations (CSOs) in project implementation as partners, beneficiaries of project activities, and / or in the delivery of project activities.

Coherence

- VIII. NP projects have demonstrated a strong degree of internal coordination and coherence, with NP projects benefiting from other CoE interventions, but also NP projects feeding into other projects. Projects covering different thematic areas would benefit from internal exchanges between project teams on horizontal aspects such as the human rights-based approach or gender mainstreaming.
- IX. Similarly, the NP projects benefited from strong external coherence, with the CoE and donors such as the EU ensuring coordination between 'related' interventions, supported by the EU, international and / or national donors and implementing agencies. However, there appears to be room for further strengthening the role of the partners in terms of assuming a more leading role on coordination.

Effectiveness

- X. Partners, CoE representatives and donors fully validated the achievement of immediate outcomes in line with the theory of change, that is the NP contributed to changes in capacities. Important immediate outcomes included an increased level of confidence of partners in terms of cooperating with an 'external' actor, in this case the CoE; enhanced levels of awareness of partners in the thematic areas covered by the NP. Changes in levels of understanding / knowledge are a further immediate outcome of the NP projects.
- XI. In line with the expectations formulated by the theory of change, the NP has also made a strong contribution to first medium-term outcomes. First, looking at NP contributions to the expected outcome of 'Legislation aligned', there have been substantial efforts to assist partners on enhancing the existing normative framework. However, by the time of this evaluation, capacities of relevant stakeholders remained constrained, and these efforts have not yet seen the full adoption / entry into force of new norms. The findings on the outcome 'Legislation aligned' clearly speak to the need for adequate timeframes for cooperation. In terms of the outcome 'Legislation implemented', understood in the wider sense of giving concrete shape to normative frameworks, partners provided a wealth of feedback on first outcomes. The NP has also made a strong contribution to the outcome 'Institutions strengthened'. Partners noted the enhanced visibility of institutions involved in cooperation with the CoE; institutions have strengthened their operational capacities as an outcome of engagement with the NP. Finally, in terms of NP contributions to the outcome 'Channels of cooperation consolidated', partners continued to engage with the CoE on Conventions and monitoring mechanisms, e.g. Tunisia ratified the Lanzarote Convention, thus becoming the first non-member State to ratify this convention. However, this outcome is not observed across all Conventions that can be related to

support under the NP. Moreover, the NP has strengthened levels of engagement in regional cooperation.

- XII. When discussing the effectiveness of the NP projects, stakeholders pointed to a series of factors supporting effectiveness, This included the expertise of the CoE; the existence of established 'tools', such as HELP, and the 'contextualisation' of the tools to fit Tunisian requirements; the CoE's participatory approach to cooperation; strong coordination with the EU Delegation in Tunis; 'ownership' of NP support by the Tunisian partners; the existence of a wider framework for cooperation in the form of the NP; the strong relationships with partners, often established in the context of earlier NPs (2012-2014 and 2015-2017), implying knowledge of each other's working methods and trust; systematic attention to communication and visibility; and the presence of the CoE in Tunisia, via the CoE Office in Tunis.
- XIII. Turning to the main factors that have constrained the effectiveness of the NP, these include political 'volatility' such as changes in political leadership within the partner institutions and partner resource constraints.
- XIV. The CoE project teams have systematically promoted gender balance in all project activities, and this was not limited to projects with a primary target on women beneficiaries. However, partner feedback suggested room for further enhancing awareness of the need to ensure contributions to gender equality in all project activities.
- XV. Turning to gender mainstreaming of project activities and outputs, again, evidence of gender mainstreaming were identified for most projects. However, partners provided somewhat more limited feedback on questions on gender mainstreaming.

Added value

- XVI. There is strong evidence of the CoE' added value. This added value is taking different dimensions, including the institution's capability of mobilising experience / expertise from its 47 member States; the 'strategic triangle of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation', with partner feedback suggesting good knowledge of Tunisia's engagement with different CoE conventions / partial agreements and 'institutionalised' arrangements for the sharing of expertise, and this knowledge acting as an anchor for cooperation; the involvement of relevant CoE institutions, thus mobilising political and / or technical support; and CoE 'tools' and channels of communication.

Sustainability

- XVII. The assessment of sustainability was constrained by the fact that projects were still underway by the time of the evaluation. To some extent, sustainability is supported by project activities designed with a view to sustainability. For some projects sustainability is supported by partner participation in CoE institutionalised arrangements. However, there was limited evidence of sustainability being supported

by partners allocating resources to sustain / develop existing outputs / outcomes or having 'exit strategies' in place, and partners generally referred to needs for additional support in the framework of future NP projects.

1.2. Conclusions and recommendations

- XVIII. The NP 2018-2021 has performed strongly against the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and added value, and to a lesser extent on the criterion of sustainability. This strong performance is testimony to the substantial experience of the CoE in conducting cooperation activities in challenging political contexts and with comparatively modest resources. Moreover, the NP 2018-2021 clearly benefited from the experience accumulated over earlier iterations of the NP (2012-2014 and 2015-2017).
- XIX. The main recommendations include a further finetuning of project design and corresponding resource allocations; maximising efficiency by strengthening the CoE Office in Tunis; strengthening the understanding of partners of the concept of the human rights-based approach; further strengthening the role of the partner institutions in terms of assuming a more leading role on coordination; strengthening communication and visibility, via a more systematic use of popular social media; further enhancing partner awareness of the need to ensure contributions to gender equality in all project activities and gender mainstreaming; systematically including project activities focusing on 'exit strategies' to cooperation.

2. Introduction

1. This section introduces the evaluation report by briefly commenting on the evaluation scope and objectives and intended audience (Section 2.1), the methodology (2.2), constraints experienced in the course of the evaluation (2.3) and the structure of this report (2.4).

2.1. Evaluation scope and objectives

2. The Council of Europe (CoE) acting through the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) contracted the firm Blomeyer & Sanz on 20 February 2021 to conduct the independent evaluation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 (NP). The intended audience of this evaluation comprises the Council of Europe, the Tunisian partners and the donors.
3. The NP aims *'to support the underway democratic reforms in Tunisia, in particular to ensure that Council of Europe standards are taken into account in its legislation, and to bring its institutions and practice further into line with European standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy'* (NP, page 9). The NP builds on earlier cooperation such as the NPs for the periods 2012-2014 and 2015-2017 (and earlier cooperation dating back to the late 1980s), and is set in the wider context of the CoE's policy towards neighbouring regions (2011) and its main objectives of assisting legislative activity, implementing the normative framework and strengthening the institutional framework. In the context of Tunisia, cooperation with the CoE mainly speaks to the country's normative and institutional reform efforts following the creation of a series of independent bodies (2011) and the country's reformed Constitution (2014).
4. This is framed in the wider framework of cooperation between the CoE and Tunisia, aiming *'to assist Tunisia in the process of democratic changes underway by helping the country to tackle challenges related to human rights, the rule of law and democracy'* (NP, page 6). The 'intended' budget of the NP amounted to EUR 14,182,918. At the stage of the publication of the NP, European Union (EU) funding (with CoE co-funding) amounted to EUR 8,059,185, whilst EUR 6,123,733 remained 'unfunded'. 65% of the intended budget was allocated to 'rule of law', 21% to human rights, and 14% to democracy. The NP covers 22 areas of cooperation as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Cooperation activities as presented in the NP

	Cooperation activity
Human Rights	Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
	Prevention of torture
	Support for the Human Rights Authority
	Equality and human dignity
	Children’s rights
	European Social Charter
Rule of law	Independence and efficiency of justice
	European Commission for Democracy Through Law
	Common standards and policies
	Promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism
	Personal data protection
	Action against trafficking in human beings
	Action against corruption, money-laundering and terrorism
	Action against cybercrime
	Action against the counterfeiting of medical products
	Action against the abuse and illegal trafficking of drugs
Democracy	Parliamentary Assembly
	Local and regional democracy
	Support for the Tunisian School of Politics
	Mediterranean University on Youth and Global Citizenship
	No Hate Speech Movement
	Network of Intercultural Cities

5. The Terms of Reference (ToR, see Annex 1) for this assignment designed the evaluation with a dual summative and formative perspective, referring to the following overall evaluation objectives:

- to assess the outcomes achieved by the projects implemented in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership, and identify to what extent they have helped Tunisia to move towards necessary reforms in line with the Council of Europe’s standards and to advance on its democratic reforms;
- to provide a picture on the way the Council of Europe has implemented the projects (working/implementation methods) in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership, as well as on the obstacles faced, if any;
- to learn lessons from the way in which the Council of Europe managed the implementation of the projects in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership;

- to provide recommendations for the development of the upcoming Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership 2022-2025 to be based on lessons learnt and best practices;
- to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restriction measures on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership and the progress towards the achievement of its outcomes;
- to assess the degree to which gender has been mainstreamed through the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership;
- to assess the degree to which a human rights-based approach has been integrated in the Neighbourhood Partnership implementation.

2.2. Methodology

6. The inception report for this evaluation presented details on the methodology, a mostly qualitative question-based evaluation,¹ focusing on the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability. Moreover, the added value of CoE support was reviewed. Section 3.3.1 presents the theory of change that guided the evaluation and Annex 4 presents the corresponding evaluation questions. Data collection focused on four specific projects that were selected for in-depth evaluation (see Table 2),² with data collection involving desk research (project descriptions and progress reports, see Annex 2) and semi-structured interviews with partners, donors and CoE representatives in Strasbourg and Tunis. The remaining projects were covered by a survey (see Annex 5 for the survey questions). A total of 28 consultations with partners, CoE representatives and donors were conducted between 6 April and 5 May 2021 (see Annex 3). Finally, this report addresses comments by the CoE on a draft version of the report.

¹ Stufflebeam, D. (2002) 'Evaluation models' in *New Directions for Evaluation*, 7-98

² The ToR suggest that the evaluation '*is based on a sampling of projects*' (ToR, page 4). The dataset used for the selection is the ODGP spreadsheet 'AP Morocco and Tunisia Management Table Board', shared with the evaluator on 9 March 2021 (and updated on 21 March 2021). This includes financial and implementation data for a total 'population' of 23 projects. The following criteria have been considered in the selection process: 'financial progress' measured in terms of funding spent ('Spent with adjusted LS') as percentage of funding available 'Secured budget envelop' and 'financial volume' measured in terms of funding available. Here the volume of funding is considered an indicator of the comparative importance attached to a project. Only projects with a budget over EUR 140,000 were considered. The projects were also reviewed against the following considerations: Coverage of the 'sectors' of human rights, democracy and the rule of law; Presence of different CoE Directorates / Entities (DG 1, DG 2, PACE, Congress); Interview feedback on themes considered to illustrate the cooperation particularly well; potential for comparison with projects funded under the NP with Morocco 2018-2021.

2.3. Limitations

7. The evaluation experienced a series of minor constraints. The collection of contact details of partner representatives proved more time consuming than expected. Moreover, whilst it was initially foreseen to conduct interviews throughout two weeks (12-23 April 2021), the limited availability of all stakeholders meant that the interviewing period had to be extended by an additional two weeks, thus shortening the time available for analysis and report drafting. Moreover, in more general terms, partner interviewees lacked experience with external independent evaluations. This manifested itself in some level of restraint in exploring possible 'weaknesses' of the NP and / or obstacles to implementation. Whilst remote interviewing proved largely successful, several interviewees demonstrated signs of 'fatigue' with online meetings, e.g., not responding or responding late to requests for interviews, joining a meeting late or simply not joining the meeting. The evaluator addressed these constraints by mobilising additional resources for interviews and flexible (re-) scheduling of meetings. Whilst putting additional pressure on the evaluator, the limitations did not affect the quality of the findings or analysis. Future evaluations might benefit from ensuring that all relevant project documentation and interviewee contact details are readily available from the start of the evaluation and from organising additional inception meetings, e.g., a joint introductory meeting with all CoE project teams. Finally, further limitations specifically affected the evaluation of effectiveness and sustainability. These include the stage of implementation of the NP (many projects still underway); the partners' often limited understanding of evaluation methodology / experience with evaluation; and the limited availability of systematic monitoring data on the NP projects. The three constraints are discussed in detail under section 3.3.1.

2.4. Report structure

8. The report is organised in three main sections, namely:
 - this Introduction (section 2), including detail on the evaluation scope and objectives, methodology and report structure;
 - the Findings (section 3), presenting findings per evaluation criterion, i.e., relevance, coherence, effectiveness, added value and sustainability;
 - the Conclusions, Lessons Learnt and Recommendations (section 4).

3. Findings

9. This section presents the evaluation findings. The presentation of findings is organised by evaluation criterion, i.e.:

- Relevance – or the extent to which the NP addressed needs (section 3.1);
- Coherence – looking at coordination of NP interventions with other relevant CoE interventions but also with support provided by other actors in Tunisia (3.2);
- Effectiveness – or the extent to which the NP triggered immediate and medium-term changes (3.3);
- Added value – reviewing potential ‘competitive advantages’ of the CoE providing support (3.4);
- and Sustainability – or the extent to which outputs and outcomes can be expected to last beyond the end of the projects (3.5).

3.1. Relevance

3.1.1. To what extent are the CoE’s projects in line with the needs and priorities of Tunisia?

10. The NP is well aligned with Tunisian needs and priorities. NP support clearly speaks to relevant existing policy, strategy and normative frameworks in Tunisia, indicated by partners being able to identify relevant documents to substantiate the demand-driven nature of support. For example, in the context of discussing the project ‘Combating violence against women, domestic violence and violence against children in Tunisia’ [referred to as *Violence against Women / Children* in the remaining text], partners referred to ‘Organic Law 58 on the elimination of violence against women’ (2017) and the ‘National Strategy on the Fight against Violence against Women’ (2016); for the project ‘Promoting local governance in Tunisia’ [*Local Governance*] partners referred to ‘Organic Law 29 on the code of local authorities’ (2018) and to the new statutes of the ‘Fédération Nationale des Communes Tunisiennes’ (FNCT) (2020); for ‘CyberSouth – Co-operation on cybercrime in the Southern Neighbourhood Region’ [*Cybersouth*] partners noted the ‘Stratégie nationale de transformation numérique’ (2019).

11. Needs were also justified by noting processes of ongoing institutional and / or legal change. For example, for the project *Cybersouth*, stakeholders referred to the ongoing development of the legal framework (law on combating cybercrime).

3.1.2. To what extent are the CoE's projects in line with the objectives of the Policy of the CoE towards neighbouring regions?

12. CoE projects are fully in line with objectives of the CoE's policy towards the neighbouring regions. Indeed, table 2 shows the alignment between the four projects reviewed in-depth and the main objectives of the CoE's policy towards neighbouring regions, namely assisting legislative activity, implementing the normative framework, and strengthening the institutional framework. The table shows that the CoE has adopted a 'holistic' approach to project design, generally addressing the three main objectives of the CoE's policy towards neighbouring regions in parallel. Stakeholder feedback validated this assessment. Stakeholders also validated the alignment between the projects and relevant donor policies and priorities in Tunisia. In the case of Norway, the full alignment is indicated by the long-standing tradition of supporting CoE cooperation and by the fact that funding is not tied to specific themes.

Table 2 – Alignment between CoE policy objectives and support under the NP

	Independent Instances³	Violence against Women / Children	Cybersouth	Local Governance
Specific objective of cooperation as formulated in the NP				
Assisting 'legislative activity': 'to continue the efforts made to facilitate the creation of a common legal area between Europe and Tunisia, encouraging the authorities to bring Tunisian legislation into line with European and international standards and to ratify Council of Europe conventions open to non-member States, with due regard for the procedures set out in the relevant conventions'	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implementing the rules: 'to provide support to the effective implementation of new legislation in accordance with European and other international standards'	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strengthening the institutional framework: 'to provide support to the setting-up and to the effective functioning of human rights institutions and new governance structures; paying particular attention to the independent bodies created by the Constitution of 2011'	✓	✓	✓	✓

³ Note that this project covers a series of thematic areas, with support targeting institutions dealing with elections, corruption, audiovisual communication, access to information, data protection, human rights training for legal professionals, trafficking and torture.

3.1.3. To what extent has a human rights-based approach been integrated in the projects' implementation?

13. The CoE approached the integration of the human rights-based approach in project implementation by ensuring respect of four principles, namely 'Participation & Inclusion', 'Equality & Non-Discrimination', 'Accountability', 'Transparency & Access to Information'.⁴
14. Project implementation evidenced a strong degree of integration of the human rights-based approach. For example, project implementation has adopted a strong participatory approach, involving relevant stakeholders in all stages of the design and delivery of activities. Section 3.1.4 provides further detail on the involvement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 discuss gender considerations. Partners and donors reflected positively on CoE transparency, including on the reporting of progress with project implementation. At the same time, reporting can be further strengthened by integrating reflections on outcomes.
15. Some partners demonstrated a good understanding of the concept of the human rights-based approach, for example, the 'Instance de Prospective et d'Accompagnement du Processus de la Décentralisation' (IPAPD) (*Local Governance*). At the same time, interviews with partners suggested room for further strengthening the partners' understanding of the concept of the human rights-based approach. Some partners struggled to answer interview questions on the human rights-based approach, often conflating the concept of the human rights-based approach with contributions to strengthening specific human rights as an outcome of project implementation.

3.1.4. To what extent have Civil Society Organisations been integrated in project implementation?

16. There have been strong efforts to involve CSOs in project implementation. This involved an increasingly systematic needs assessment focusing on CSOs, e.g., for the project 'Support project for the Independent Instances in Tunisia' [*Independent Instances*] separate meetings were conducted with CSOs working in the areas covered by the Independent Instances to identify needs and possibilities for involving CSOs. CSOs have been involved as project partners (*Violence against Women / Children, Local Governance*), as direct beneficiaries of project activities, e.g., for promoting the fight against corruption (*Independent Instances*), and / or in the delivery of project activities (*Local Governance, Violence against Women / Children*). CSO involvement has been mindful of avoiding possible 'tensions' between CSOs and government partners (*Independent Instances*). CSO actors have supported the work of the CoE by providing data, and by engaging in advocacy work to promote CoE standards. Finally, a review

⁴ See the 'Checklist for implementing projects' in Council of Europe (2020) Human Rights Approach, Practical Guide for Cooperation Projects

of project documentation (project proposals / descriptions and progress reports) confirmed the inclusion of CSO actors in all projects.

17. Some partners emphasised their existing commitment to involving CSOs, referring to the integration of CSOs in their institutional set-up, for example the 'Instance nationale de prévention de la torture et autres peines ou traitements cruels, inhumains ou dégradants' (INPT) (*Independent Instances*), or regular exchanges with CSOs in the context of project implementation or other activities (*Violence against Women / Children*). Other partners intended to support CSOs, e.g., the 'Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle' (HAICA) noted its commitment to support CSO actors affected by constraints to freedom of expression (*Independent Instances*). Similarly, the 'Instance nationale de lutte contre la corruption' (INLUCC) was planning to provide funding for CSO actors (*Independent Instances*).

3.2. Coherence

3.2.1. To what extent have the NP projects been internally co-ordinated and internal coherence assured?

18. NP projects have demonstrated a strong degree of internal coordination and coherence. Indeed, stakeholders have shared detail of how NP projects benefited from other CoE interventions, but also of how NP projects fed into other projects.
19. There are many examples of coherence between CoE projects in the same or in related thematic areas. For example, the project *Violence against Women / Children* benefited from more advanced experiences with referral mechanisms under work on trafficking (*Independent Instances*). Vice versa, since trafficking victims are often women and girls, this area of work benefited from experiences under *Violence against Women / Children*. The project *Local Governance* supported a CoE intervention on fighting corruption under the project *Independent Instances* by introducing a local government dimension. Moreover, *Independent Instances* cooperated with the Venice Commission and with Congress on corruption affecting local authorities. *Independent Instances* also cooperated with the Programme on Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP), by contextualising HELP course material on trafficking.
20. However, the CoE Office in Tunis also noted how projects covering different thematic areas could benefit from more systematic internal exchanges between project teams (including between different components of the same project such as *Independent Instances*). For example, this could focus on transversal aspects such as the human rights-based approach or gender mainstreaming.

3.2.2. To what extent have the NP projects been coordinated with other institutions and donors, and how do coordination efforts address duplication?

21. Just as with internal coherence, the NP projects benefited from strong external coherence, with the CoE and donors such as the EU (via the Delegation of the European Union to Tunisia) ensuring exchanges of information between 'related' interventions. Indeed, the CoE demonstrated strong awareness of 'related' interventions by other actors. This was achieved by mapping exercises at the outset of designing the projects (*Local Governance*); by organising / participating in thematic working groups; via Project Steering Committees; trilateral meetings involving the partner, CoE and EUD (*Independent Instances*); via bilateral meetings with other relevant actors (*Local Governance*). In this context, one donor noted its appreciation of exchanges with both CoE headquarters and the CoE Office in Tunis. Some donors such as the EU coordinate their interventions with the CoE 'by default' most notably in the thematic areas related to human rights.
22. Synergies were noted between interventions by a wide range of actors, including the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Dutch and Swedish local authority associations, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for *Local Governance*; UN Women for *Violence against Women / Children*, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on standards for prisoner rights for *Independent Instances*. However, to some extent coordination between donors / implementing partners was constrained by competition for funding, and this meant that rather than genuine coordination, actors limited themselves to more general exchanges of information. This was explained with the presence of a large number of donors / implementing partners in Tunisia.
23. Some partners demonstrated good awareness of projects implemented by other actors, noting their strong involvement in coordination and thus avoiding duplication. For example, the 'Ministère de la Femme, de la Famille et des Personnes Âgées' (MFFPA) noted monthly coordination meetings for projects implemented by the EU, different UN agencies (e.g., UN Women, UNESCO), and bilateral cooperation with Belgium, Denmark, Spain, and Sweden (*Violence against Women / Children*); similarly, HAICA demonstrated good knowledge of different interventions (*Independent Instances*); and so did the partners for *Local Governance*. INLUCC also addressed needs for coordination via donor meetings and attempts to establish an online platform for coordination. However, there appears to be room for further strengthening the role of the partner institutions in terms of assuming a more leading role on coordination. This need was indicated by the somewhat limited involvement of partners in thematic working groups, and some partners acknowledging a need to strengthen coordination, e.g., for *Cybersouth*. Further strengthening the role of partners in terms of leading coordination could focus on existing national coordination structures, for example, those set up by INLUCC and INPT (*Independent Instances*) and also by the MFFPA (*Violence against Women / Children*).

3.3. Effectiveness

3.3.1. Introducing the assessment of effectiveness

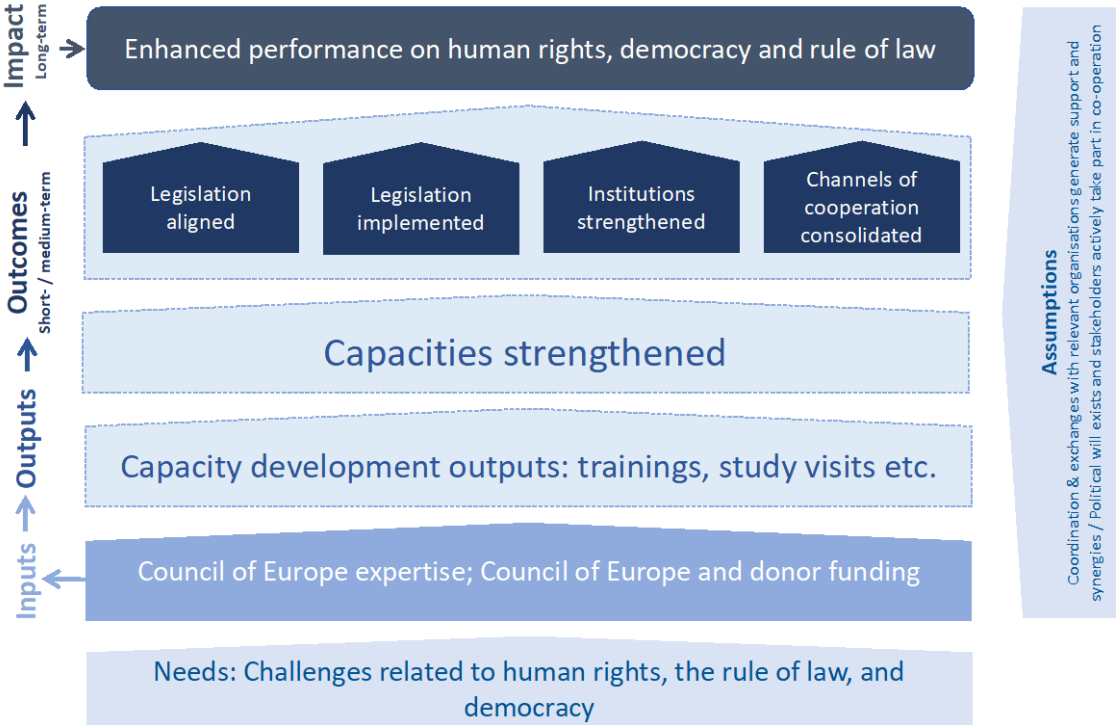
24. The evaluation criterion of effectiveness is interested in the achievement of outcomes, i.e., the extent to which objectives are being met. To set the context for the discussion of effectiveness, we briefly discuss the theory of change underlying this evaluation (as first presented in the inception report and validate by the evaluation).

25. Drawing on the review of the objectives for the wider cooperation with Tunisia and the more specific objectives for the NP with Tunisia, the following bullet points recount the theory of change for the NP.

- The CoE provides inputs in terms of expertise, and the CoE and different donors provide funding for projects.
- At the level of output, this allows for the generation of capacity development outputs such as training events, study visits etc.
- In the short-term, these outputs contribute to immediate outcomes, most notably, enhanced capacities among the partners. This can take the form of enhanced awareness, changes in attitude and / or understanding, or enhanced capability to perform a specific task.
- In the medium-term this generates a series of further, more profound outcomes, namely, enhanced legislation, legislation implemented, institutions strengthened, and channels of cooperation consolidated.
- Finally, in the long-term (impact), these outcomes will help the Tunisian partners to enhance their performance with regard to human rights, democracy and the rule of law as indicated by the citizens of Tunisia benefiting from an enhanced situation in the three sectors.

26. The following figure shows the theory of change.

Figure 1 Theory of change



27. Before presenting the findings on effectiveness, three caveats are worth noting:

- Stage of implementation of the NP: This evaluation is interested in the achievement of the NP’s outcomes. However, it is worth noting that this evaluation comes at a somewhat early stage in terms of assessing outcomes. In general terms, the outcomes of capacity development, and most notably medium-term outcomes, can only be assessed some time after the intervention has been completed. However, at the time of writing this report, much of the NP support was still ‘ongoing’. Indeed, most projects reviewed in-depth will only complete their activities towards the end of 2021, and spending as a percentage of available resources varied between 37% (*Violence against Women / Children*) and 59% (*Local Governance*). This framed the ability of stakeholders to reflect on achievements. Moreover, support was affected by COVID-19, with many activities delayed. This means that the full extent of immediate and medium-term effectiveness will only become visible in 2022.
- Understanding of evaluation methodology: At times, partners found it difficult to differentiate between activities / outputs and outcomes. Whilst to some extent this can be explained by the fact that some projects are not yet completed, partner feedback also suggested room for further strengthening partner understanding of the theory of change underlying the NP. In more general terms, partner interviewees lacked experience with external independent evaluations. This manifested itself in some level of restraint in exploring possible ‘weaknesses’ of the NP and / or obstacles to implementation.

- Availability of monitoring data: Finally, the assessment of effectiveness is also somewhat constrained by the absence of pre-defined quantified targets for the achievement of outcomes. The project documentation does not systematically quantify the intended outcomes of the different activities, e.g., to what extent (measured in numbers / percentages) will activities contribute to objectives. 'Standard' evaluation practice consists of comparing quantified targets for outputs and outcomes with the actual achievement. However, in the context of this evaluation a qualitative approach was adopted, taking the form of systematic stock taking of outcomes as reported by stakeholders, and validated via triangulation of feedback between different sources. In some cases, stakeholders provided interesting feedback that could not be validated on the basis of triangulation – this is noted in the text when references are made to a single source of feedback.
- Note however, that there are efforts to enhance monitoring of outcomes, with the CoE Office in Tunis having initiated discussions between staff members on methodological issues, e.g., differences between outputs and outcomes and designing logframes. Moreover, there will be efforts to systematically collect data on outcomes, for example, the project *Independent Instances* will organise interviews with 10 families of prisoners to understand the effectiveness of guidance material on prisoner rights. Finally, it is worth noting that there is no dedicated capacity for monitoring, evaluation and learning at the CoE Office in Tunis.

3.3.2. To what extent have the NP projects achieved their objectives?

28. Partners, CoE representatives and donors fully validated the achievement of immediate outcomes in line with the theory of change, that is the NP contributed to changes in capacities. Important immediate outcomes included:

- The NP brought about an increased level of confidence and openness of partners in terms of cooperating with an 'external' actor and asking for support, in this case the CoE (*Independent Instances*). This implied acknowledging deficiencies in the existing normative and institutional framework, for example, the project *Violence against Women / Children* saw the recognition by the MFFPA of deficiencies with regard to referral mechanisms for women victims of violence.
- The NP has also enhanced levels of awareness of partners in the thematic areas covered by the NP and brought about important changes in attitudes. This was reported for the project *Violence against Women / Children* in relation to awareness campaigns conducted by the project. For this project, enhanced levels of awareness were also indicated by a recent increase in the number of victims reporting cases of violence, and generally enhanced awareness regarding the Istanbul and Lanzarote Conventions (also indicated by Tunisia's request to accede to the Istanbul Convention). For *Independent Instances*, partners noted enhanced awareness amongst media and society in general in relation to the role of HAICA. *Independent Instances* also brought about changes in attitudes of prison management / staff

towards guidance for prisoners in the context of support for the INPT. Further to awareness raising activities, INLUCC reported increased awareness among the population, as indicated by an increase in the number of corruption cases notified (*Independent Instances*). Moreover, for the project *Local Governance*, partners reported enhanced awareness of local government principles. Finally, training on fake news for HAICA led to this instance starting its own reflections on addressing fake news (*Independent Instances*).

- Changes in levels of understanding / knowledge are a further immediate outcome of the NP projects. Examples include: an improved understanding of requirements under the Istanbul and Lanzarote Conventions (*Violence against Women / Children*) and on trafficking issues – noting specifically HELP (*Violence against Women / Children*); enhanced understanding of the role of local authority associations (*Local Governance*); enhanced understanding of prisoner rights (by prisoners themselves, but also by the INPT) (*Independent Instances*); understanding of the concepts of illicit enrichment and corruption-proofing, themes that had not been addressed before the project (*Independent Instances*); understanding of normative frameworks and operational approaches to combat cybercrime (*Cybersouth*). A further important change relates to the partners' improved understanding of the mandate of the CoE and of the types of support the CoE can offer, and this implies a more effective approach to engaging with the CoE (*Independent Instances*).

29. Again, in line with the expectations formulated by the theory of change, the NP has made a strong contribution to first medium-term outcomes.

- First, looking at NP contributions to the expected outcome of 'Legislation aligned', there are first examples of actual changes in the legal framework. For example, *Local Governance* contributed to changes in legislation on elections, introducing provisions on early voting. However, whilst there have been substantial efforts to assist partners on enhancing the existing normative framework, in most cases, these efforts have not yet seen the actual adoption / entry into force of new norms. For example, the project *Independent Instances* supported the development of draft legislation on data protection, however, this remains to be adopted by Parliament. Indeed, the project *Independent Instances* dedicated substantial efforts to assessing the legal framework of the different Independent Instances, however, this has not yet been followed up by the Tunisian partners. Work on promoting the alignment of legislation in line with CoE standards needed to be mindful of the status of Tunisia as a non-member State, i.e., a 'diplomatic' approach is required in order to avoid negative reactions with stakeholders rejecting standards simply because there is no legal requirement for abiding by CoE standards. Finally, NP cooperation activities supported the process of accession to relevant CoE Conventions. For example, the invitation to Tunisia in April 2020 to accede to the

Istanbul Convention was credited to cooperation under the project *Violence against Women / Children*.⁵

- In terms of the outcome 'Legislation implemented', understood in the wider sense of giving concrete shape to normative frameworks, partners provided a wealth of feedback on first outcomes. For example, giving shape to the normative framework of 'Organic Law 58 on the elimination of violence against women' (2017), the project *Violence against Women / Children* contributed to giving shape to the 'Observatory on violence against women' (established by governmental decree in February 2020), and updated the national strategy on fighting violence against women. Similarly, *Cybersouth* saw the development of Standard Operating Principles on addressing cybercrime. *Independent Instances* saw a strengthening of the country's system of asset declarations by, for example, introducing methodologies for risk assessment for declarations of assets and interests. *Independent Instances* also contributed to the establishment of a new unit within INLUCC to focus specifically on conflicts of interest.
- The NP has also made a strong contribution to the outcome 'Institutions strengthened'. Partners noted the enhanced visibility of institutions involved in cooperation with the CoE. For example, for the project *Independent Instances*, the 'Instance nationale de lutte contre la traite des personnes' (INLTP) is now better known on the institutional landscape, both in Tunisia and in the wider region; support for INLTP has also brought about enhanced cooperation between national stakeholders, including law enforcement, education, health, CSOs, and this approach to cooperation might now be replicated for other Independent Instances; HAICA also reported other countries in the wider region asking for support from HAICA, and the institution is now a more recognised interlocutor for media houses in Tunisia and is receiving an increased number of requests from the general public; the 'Instance Indépendante de Protection des Données' (IIPD) noted that other countries in the wider region have started asking the IIPD for advice on data protection; further to awareness raising activities, the Ministry of Industry introduced the issue of corruption risks into its work programme. Turning to the project *Local Governance*, the FNCT has acquired enhanced operational capacities in terms of assessing needs and ensuring compliance with the normative framework on local authorities, and is now a more recognised interlocutor and government has consulted with the FNCT on new legislation; moreover, the 'Fédération Nationale des Villes Tunisiennes' (FNVT) has acquired stronger communication and advocacy capacities and stronger legitimacy further to enhancing its internal governance arrangements; overall, enhanced engagement of local authority stakeholders is indicated by the country acquiring the status of 'Partner for Local Democracy' (in 2019). For the project *Violence against Women / Children*, partners noted enhanced preparedness to ensure compliance with requirements under the Istanbul

⁵ See CM/Del/Dec(2020)1374/10.5b of 22 April 2020, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016809e2a17

Convention and enhanced cooperation / coordination between relevant stakeholders, including between the MFFPA and the Ministry of Interior and between government and CSO actors, e.g., in the context of preparing for accession to the Istanbul Convention.

- Finally, in terms of NP contributions to the outcome 'Channels of cooperation consolidated', partners continued to engage with the CoE on Conventions and 'instruments' such as the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO). Regarding GRECO, Tunisia reiterated interest in joining GRECO, however, with limited concrete progress (*Independent Instances*). Tunisia ratified the Lanzarote Convention, thus becoming the first non-member State to ratify this convention (entry into force in February 2020) (*Violence against Women / Children*). However, this outcome is not observed across all Conventions that can be related to support under the NP, e.g., there has been limited progress on the Budapest Convention (*Cybercrime*) and partners explained this with political changes and delays caused by COVID-19. Moreover, the NP has strengthened levels of engagement in international cooperation, e.g. INLUCC engaged in a project on beneficial ownership with the Joint Research Centre on Transnational Crime (Transcrime) at the University of the Sacred Heart of Milan (*Independent Instances*); similarly, the MFFPA noted increased levels of international cooperation (*Violence against Women / Children*); partners noted strengthened regional cooperation thanks to engagement with *Cybercrime*; and local authority representatives established contacts with peers in Europe (*Local Governance*).

3.3.3. Which factors have supported and hindered the effectiveness of the projects?

30. When discussing the effectiveness of the NP projects, stakeholders pointed to a series of factors supporting effectiveness:

- The most frequently noted factor was the expertise of the CoE, in many cases referring to legal expertise or specific expertise on themes such as violence against women or local governance.
- Related to the expertise of the CoE, the existence of established CoE 'tools' was noted as a further supporting factor. Particularly prominent among these tools is HELP. However, what rendered the tools so effective were CoE efforts of 'contextualising' the tools to fit Tunisian requirements, instead of simply transposing ready-made solutions for example of HELP course materials (*Violence against Women / Children*). These efforts of contextualisation also applied to the transfer of experiences from other countries. This compares with other actors relying on the transfer of existing and more rigid models allowing less scope for adaptation to the Tunisian context. Interestingly, a need for stronger contextualisation of capacity development was only noted by one partner for the regional project *Cybersouth*.

- A further feature associated with NP support and offered as an explanation for effectiveness relates to the CoE's participatory approach to cooperation, via Steering Committees for specific projects or direct bilateral communication between partners and the CoE. Partners consistently emphasised the transparent nature of communication with the CoE.
- Moreover, effectiveness benefited from good coordination with the EU Delegation in Tunisia, thus ensuring that donors and implementing partners spoke with one single voice in their engagement with partners.
- On the partners' side, 'ownership' of NP support by the Tunisian partners was a strong supporting factor. This was evidenced by political support, demands for support, and 'enthusiasm' displayed in engagement with the CoE, making the required resources available (e.g., *Local Governance*); and ensuring the participation of senior-level partner representatives in project events, for example the President of Tunisia participated in in the context of CoE contributions to International Women's Day on 8 March. In this context, effectiveness also benefited from project design integrating a 'political' and a technical component, e.g., for *Local Governance*.
- CoE representatives (but to a lesser extent partners) noted the existence of a wider framework for cooperation in the form of the NP as a factor motivating cooperation under specific projects, especially when considering that being a non-member State, the CoE Conventions can't act as a framework consolidating cooperation. In this context, partners voiced their appreciation of the term 'partnership' as this was found to imply dialogue between equal partners rather than a 'superior' partner imposing external models on Tunisia. For example, the Independent Instances all have a different legal basis, and drawing on its experience with similar institutions and their legal frameworks in the CoE member States, the CoE suggested ways forward on the basis of the Tunisian approaches, instead of insisting on a single harmonised model.
- Effectiveness has also benefited from strong relationships with partners, often established in the context of earlier NPs (2012-2014 and 2015-2017), but also earlier, implying knowledge of each other's working methods and trust. In this context, reference was also made to firm 'personal' connections between partners / beneficiaries and CoE representatives, often established in the context of previous NPs or other cooperation initiatives.
- Moreover, effectiveness has benefited from systematic attention to communication and visibility. This includes outputs directly targeting final beneficiaries, such as guidance material for prisoners (*Independent Instances*) or women victims of violence (*Violence against Women / Children*). Note that the project *Violence against Women / Children* made use of social media and national television to promote outputs in the context of the campaign 'Pour une Tunisie égalitaire'. *Independent Instances* promoted INLUCC's fight against corruption via support for

an online radio programme 'Radio Nazaha'. This is all the more noteworthy as the CoE Office in Tunis has only limited staff resources specifically dedicated to communication / visibility. A review of project documentation identified Facebook pages for all projects except *Cybersouth*; dedicated websites were identified for all projects except *Violence against Women / Children*, though the latter made use of the website of the CoE Office in Tunis, various social media and produced specific communication outputs. On the point of social media, there might be room for more systematically making use of popular social media beyond Facebook.

- Finally, partners consistently noted the CoE Office in Tunis as an important factor explaining effectiveness. In this context, partners emphasised the efficiency of cooperation / responsiveness and professionalism of CoE staff. The local presence was also seen as essential in terms of facilitating coordination / cooperation with other donors / implementing partners.

31. Turning to the factors that have constrained the effectiveness of the NP, these include:

- Cooperation was affected by political 'volatility', with many partners noting the nine different governments since 2011. For example, changes in political leadership within ministries relevant to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention delayed project activities (*Violence against Women / Children*). Frequent political changes also meant dealing with interim staff not able to take political decisions (*Local Governance*). The lack of political continuity also meant that there was limited progress with accession of Convention 108 (relevant legislation remains to be passed by Parliament), and the absence of a legal basis means that there are no resources for implementation. In this context it is worth re-iterating the fact that Tunisia is not a member State of the CoE, i.e., there is no general legally-binding commitment to adhering to CoE standards – however, this means that political decisions are required on standards to be adhered to, and these decision-making processes are often slow (there was more progress on the Istanbul and Lanzarote Conventions). There are also political tensions within the membership of some of the Independent Instances such as INPT which can delay progress (Independent Instances).
- Moreover, partners experienced resource constraints. This included staff shortages, limited local expertise, and limited operational independence, e.g., for the IIPD (*Independent Instances*); but also limited IT resources, as indicated by one partner suggesting that future support should include the provision of IT equipment (*Cybersouth*). Finally, *Local Governance* also noted constraints posed by slow processes in partner institutions.
- Two donors suggested a continuous reflection on the balance of capacities between CoE headquarters and the CoE Office in Tunis. At the same time, it was acknowledged that decentralisation had progressed when comparing with earlier NPs, and that project teams were small with fluid communication between team members in Tunis and Strasbourg. Moreover, CoE staff in Strasbourg argued for a

strong presence at CoE headquarters level to ensure horizontal coordination, e.g., with monitoring mechanisms such as the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) for *Violence against Women / Children*) and secretariats for the different CoE Conventions.

- Staff at the CoE Office in Tunis also noted a need to explore possibilities for further streamlining administrative processes at the CoE, at times still perceived as slow and complex, especially in comparison with other implementing partners, but also in comparison with other CoE country offices. It was felt that this risked denting the reputation of the CoE as a reliable implementing partner.
- One partner (INLUCC) noted that initial training was not fully aligned with the levels of qualification of trainees, however, the CoE addressed this by providing more focused follow-up training (*Independent Instances*).
- Finally, feedback on COVID-19 as a constraining factor was mixed. The general response to COVID-19 was the adoption of 'virtual' formats for most activities, or focusing more on the development of tools instead of presential activities (*Violence against Women / Children*). The CoE's response to the pandemic was considered fully adequate. Whilst COVID-19 affected all projects, introducing additional complexity and entailing delays (*Independent Instances*, *Cybersouth*, *Violence against Women / Children*), partners reacted in different ways. Some partners' initial response was to postpone all activities in the expectation of the pandemic not lasting more than a few months (*Cybersouth*). Other partners simply required some time to adapt themselves to the use of new technology (*Local Governance*). Some partners noted COVID-19 as a more serious obstacle to cooperation, and this was explained with activities not being suitable for virtual formats, for example, activities relating to the referral mechanisms for trafficking victims and dissemination of the guidance material for prisoners (*Independent Instances*); training activities on cybercrime (*Cybersouth*); involving CSOs in activities (*Local Governance*); simulation exercises for the referral mechanism for women victims of violence outside the capital (*Violence against Women / Children*). All partners noted that remote events did not allow for the same 'quality' of interaction, referring mostly to missing out on informal exchanges on the margins of capacity development, e.g., during coffee breaks. A possible good practice approach was reported for *Local Governance*, with the project supporting the FNVT with access to online communication platforms (Zoom and the Congress platform on responses to COVID-19).

3.3.4. In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality?

32. The CoE project teams have systematically promoted gender balance in all project activities, and this was not limited to projects with a primary target on women beneficiaries such as *Violence against Women / Children*. Indeed, a review of project documentation (project proposals / descriptions and annual progress reports) identified

clear references to gender equality in activities under all projects (e.g., by noting the participation of men and women in specific capacity development activities). In this way, the NP has also contributed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'.⁶ In some cases, the promotion of gender equality was facilitated by existing national provisions requiring gender balance (*Local Governance*).

33. However, our assessment of partner feedback suggested room for further enhancing awareness of the need to ensure contributions to gender equality in all project activities. Some partners appeared to find it difficult to respond to questions on gender equality. For example, partners answered somewhat evasively by simply noting that project activities addressed men and women in the same way.

3.3.5. In what way have the projects integrated gender issues during implementation?

34. Turning to gender mainstreaming of project activities and outputs, again, references to gender mainstreaming were identified in project documentation for all projects, except for *Cybersouth* (however, documentation for this project did refer to gender balance in project activities). Some of the CoE representatives pointed to the possibility of consulting with CoE-internal 'experts' on gender issues at the stage of designing the project, for example a gender expert reviewing the project logframe. However, there appears to be room for more systematically using this internal resource, though it is understood that this might be constrained by limited resources.

35. Some partner feedback suggested awareness of gender mainstreaming, for example the INLTP (*Independent Instances*), or MFFPA (*Violence against Women / Children*), or HAICA noting attention to strengthening media awareness of gender (*Independent Instances*). Other partners provided very limited feedback on questions on gender mainstreaming, at best referring to gender balance in terms of staff members, e.g., IIPD (*Independent Instances*), IPAPD (*Local Governance*), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Cybersouth*).

⁶ The projects *Violence against Women / Children* and *Independent Instances* (components on trafficking and torture) clearly focused on two of the targets of this SDG, namely, targets 5.1 'End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere' and 5.2 'Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation'.

3.4. Added value

3.4.1. To what extent has the CoE been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and CoE instruments during the implementation of the NP?

36. Section 3.2.1 on internal coherence has already discussed inter-linkages between projects. Beyond this, there is strong evidence of the CoE' added value. This added value is taking different dimensions:

- One of the most prominent features of CoE added value is the institution's capability of mobilising experience / expertise from its 47 member and six observer States. Partners benefited from and greatly appreciated exposure to approaches from a variety of countries, and as discussed in section 3.3.3, with the CoE ensuring contextualisation of different experiences.
- Regarding the 'strategic triangle of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation', and bearing in mind Tunisia's 'status' as a non-member State, partner feedback suggested good knowledge of Tunisia's engagement with different CoE Conventions / partial agreements and 'institutionalised' arrangements for the sharing of expertise, and this knowledge acted as an anchor for cooperation, e.g. for *Cybersouth*, with partners referring to the Budapest Convention; or for the Lanzarote Convention (*Violence against Women / Children*). Donors confirmed the added value of the strategic triangle.
- The political neutrality of the CoE was considered an added value, with stakeholders comparing the CoE's approach to that of some of the bilateral actors with strong political agendas, and the CoE being driven exclusively by the intention of promoting compliance with its standards.
- Along similar lines, the CoE added value by implicating relevant CoE institutions, thus mobilising political and / or technical support. For example, partners noted the added value of involving the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and allowing for exchanges between peers (*Local Governance*).
- CoE 'tools' were a further important feature of CoE added value, with stakeholders noting CoE 'ownership' of relevant tools such as materials on audiovisual communication (*Independent Instances*); the 'Partner for Local Democracy' status and the European Charter of Local Self-Government (*Local Governance*). The CoE is seen to have 'authored' these tools and is therefore best placed to deliver related capacity development. In this context, CoE tools play an important role at the stage of project design, e.g., in the area of corruption, at the outset of support for INLUCC the situation in Tunisia was analysed in line with GRECO standards (Independent Instances).

3.5. Sustainability

3.5.1. To what extent has the CoE contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms and to capacity development in Tunisia?

37. The assessment of sustainability was constrained by the fact that projects were still underway by the time of the evaluation.
38. To some extent, sustainability was supported by project activities designed with a view to sustainability. For example, supporting the fight against corruption, *Independent Instances* saw a cooperation with Tunisia's 'École Nationale d'Administration' to integrate training on anti-corruption in regular training curricula; similarly, the project is designing e-learning tools to promote the fight against corruption; and deploying training of trainers. *Local Governance* is working with the partners to develop a financial sustainability strategy.
39. In some cases, sustainability is taking the form of partners initiating or engaging in follow-up initiatives, for example the INLTP noted the planned establishment of a regional platform against trafficking and of a centre for the training of trainers covering the wider region; moreover, there are plans for transferring experiences with the establishment of the Tunisian referral mechanism to other countries (*Independent Instances*). Similarly, the MFFPA is planning follow-up training on violence against women, including replication of HELP training (*Violence against Women / Children*).
40. In some cases, sustainability is likely to benefit from strengthened institutional resources. For example, the sustainability of outputs and outcomes under the project *Local Governance* is likely to benefit from additional human resources at the FNCT, and the FNVT has established a new department for communication and advocacy. For *Cybersouth* there are plans to establish a dedicated contact point on cybercrime / Budapest Convention. *Independent Instances* also contributed to the establishment of a new unit within INLUCC to focus specifically on conflicts of interest. However, not all partners were in a position to confirm the allocation of own resources to sustain / develop existing outputs / outcomes or having 'exit strategies' in place (e.g., partners cooperating with *Cybersouth*, or the INLTP for *Independent Instances*). Section 3.3.3 has already noted resource constraints including frequent staff changes as a factor limiting effectiveness, and this also affects sustainability (*Cybersouth*, *Violence against Women / Children*). Partners generally referred to needs for additional support in the framework of future NP projects, e.g., for *Violence against Women / Children*.
41. Finally, sustainability finds itself strengthened by the engagement with CoE Conventions – this means a continuous commitment to enhancing normative / institutional frameworks with a view to accession or to 'maintain' compliance in the case of Conventions that Tunisia has already joined such as the Lanzarote Convention. Similarly, sustainability is supported by partner participation in CoE institutionalised arrangements, for example, the 'Partner for Local Democracy' status (*Local Governance*).

4. Conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations

42. This section presents a series of conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations (all recommendations address the CoE).

4.1. Conclusions

43. The NP 2018-2021 has performed strongly against the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness and added value, and to a lesser extent on the criterion of sustainability. This strong performance is testimony to the substantial experience of the CoE in conducting cooperation activities in challenging political contexts and with comparatively modest resources. Moreover, the NP 2018-2021 clearly benefited from the experience accumulated over earlier iterations of the NP (2012-2014 and 2015-2017).

4.2. Lessons learnt

44. Notwithstanding the strong performance of the NP, the experience with the implementation of the NP allows confirming a few lessons learnt, presented here in the order of the evaluation criteria:

- In terms of further supporting internal coherence and coordination between different CoE projects, the CoE Office in Tunis noted how projects covering different thematic areas benefited from **internal exchanges between project teams on transversal aspects** such as gender mainstreaming.
- Turning to external coherence, this benefited strongly from **systematic mapping exercises at the outset of designing the projects**, and involving consultations with partners and other implementing actors and donors.
- Effectiveness benefited strongly from efforts of '**contextualisation**', e.g., of established 'tools' such as HELP or experiences / approaches from other countries.

- Finally, regarding sustainability, this is likely to benefit from opportunities allowing **Tunisia to showcase its experiences in the wider region** by establishing platforms for dissemination / exchanges of experience and by transferring Tunisian experiences to countries such as Morocco.

4.3. Recommendations

45. **A further finetuning of project design and corresponding resource allocations** under the NP is recommended. The experience of the NP 2018-2021 suggests possible criteria to consider when designing specific projects, for example, only engaging in cooperation in areas where relevant institutions / normative frameworks are fully operational to allow for cooperation to take place; selecting the most 'sensitive' thematic areas, and / or areas that experience more important political volatility considering that the CoE has clearly demonstrated its 'competitive edge' to bring about change in these areas; focusing on areas where the country's 'accession' to existing CoE Conventions or cooperation structures is a clear prospect; and building on existing thematic expertise in the CoE Office in Tunis.
46. The CoE Office in Tunis was an important factor explaining effectiveness. Whilst there has been progress with decentralisation since earlier NPs, interviewees suggested that there were still issues with decision making by the CoE Office in Tunis. **Further decentralisation is likely to imply efficiency benefits.**
47. Interviews with partners suggested room for **further strengthening the understanding of partners of the concept of the human rights-based approach.** Partners often conflated the concept with contributions to strengthening specific human rights as an outcome of project implementation. A better understanding of the concept can be expected to generate stronger commitment to important horizontal considerations such as the involvement of CSOs, gender equality and mainstreaming etc.⁷
48. There appears to be room for **further strengthening the role of the partner institutions in terms of assuming a more leading role on coordination.** Capacity development on coordination could focus on existing structures such as those established by some of the Independent Instances.
49. Effectiveness benefited from systematic attention to communication and visibility, including project webpages, a presence on Facebook and other targeted communication activities such as video spots. For example, partners noted the strong visibility of the project *Violence against Women / Children* in the context of International Women's Day on 8 March. However, there might be room for a **more systematic use of popular**

⁷ See the 'Checklist for implementing projects' in Council of Europe (2020) Human Rights Approach, Practical Guide for Cooperation Projects. This refers to the principles of 'Participation & Inclusion', 'Equality & Non-Discrimination', 'Accountability', 'Transparency & Access to Information'.

social media beyond Facebook, particularly for projects targeting the citizens of Tunisia in a more direct way, e.g., *Violence against Women / Children*.

50. Partner feedback suggested room for **further enhancing awareness of the need to ensure contributions to gender equality in all project activities and gender mainstreaming**. Project design might also benefit from **making systematic use of CoE-internal gender expertise** (e.g., Gender Equality Division) at the stage of project design.

51. Not all partners were able to provide evidence of sustainability being supported by partners allocating resources to sustain and / or develop existing outputs and outcomes or having explicit 'exit strategies' in place. Whilst the CoE cannot address partner-internal resource constraints, partner awareness of the concept of sustainability can be strengthened by **systematically including project activities focusing on 'exit strategies' to cooperation**.

Annex 1 – Terms of reference

Annex 4 presents the terms of reference for this evaluation.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE –Evaluation of the Neighbourhood
Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021
Contracting Authority: Council of Europe**

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1. CONTEXT

The present terms of reference are for the purpose of an evaluation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021.

1.1 Background

At its 121st Session on 11 May 2011 in Istanbul, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe endorsed proposals of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe establishing a Council of Europe policy towards neighbouring regions covering the Southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia. This policy, which is demand-driven and country-specific, pursues the following three objectives:

- to facilitate democratic political transition in the countries concerned;
- to help promote good governance through the protection of human rights and the rule of law; and
- to reinforce and enlarge Council of Europe regional action in combating transborder and global threats.

In this framework, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Tunisia 2012-2014 in April 2012 laying down foundations of co-operation with the country. Political dialogue and technical co-operation were further consolidated within the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2015-2017. Following up to what has been achieved, the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 was approved by the Committee of Ministers at its 1311th session in March 2018.

The Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021 is a strategic programming instrument which creates a framework for enhanced political dialogue between the Council of Europe and the relevant Moroccan authorities and set out specific co-operation priorities in the areas of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

The Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018–2021 had a budget of €14.18 million at the time of adoption. The revised budget amounts to €15.19 million (following the submission of project proposals and projects extensions). The Neighbourhood Partnership received approximately €14.64 million as of 1st January 2021. The Neighbourhood Partnership received approximately €8.6 million. The main donors are the European Union and Norway, which support all Neighbourhood Partnerships. Other contributions enabling us to work in Tunisia have come from Monaco, Portugal, Turkey Spain, Liechtenstein, Cyprus, Malta, and the Aga Khan Development Network.

1.2 Objectives of the Neighbourhood Partnership

The goal of Neighbourhood is to support the democratic reforms underway in Tunisia, in particular to ensure that Council of Europe standards are taken into account in its legislation, and to bring its institutions and practice further into line with European standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

It includes the following sectors of co-operation:

- protecting and promoting human rights and dignity,
- guaranteeing social rights,

- ensuring justice,
- strengthening the rule of law,
- countering threats to the rule of law,
- strengthening democratic governance and fostering innovation, and
- promoting participation and diversity.

The Council of Europe technical assistance programmes form an integral part of the unique strategic triangle of standard-setting, monitoring and co-operation: the development of legally binding standards is linked to their monitoring by independent mechanisms and supplemented by technical co-operation to facilitate their implementation. The Organisation's actions are developed and implemented in areas where the Council of Europe has strong expertise and added value.

In the case of Tunisia, as a non-member State of the Council of Europe, monitoring mechanisms will not apply until this country becomes a contracting party to relevant conventions. In addition, the methodology of a number of monitoring mechanisms, such as that of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and of the Group of Experts of the Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), to which Tunisia has been invited to accede, has been used to assess the country's situation in key areas and to formulate recommendations in line with European legislation and practices. Other tools, such as those developed by the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) with regard to judicial systems, the quality of justice and judicial timeframes and training methodology and those developed under the European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP), have been disseminated and used in Tunisia.

1.3 Modalities of implementation

The Office of the Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) co-ordinates and reports on Council of Europe co-operation activities implemented within the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership by the Major Administrative Entities of the Council of Europe: PACE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (the Congress), the Council of Europe's Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law and the Directorate General of Democracy. The Council of Europe Office in Tunisia plays an active part in co-ordinating implementation of the projects and raising funds for their execution in the field.

In 2016, ODGP launched the new *Council of Europe Project Management Methodology*¹ which comprises a handbook, further guidance on a dedicated website, training and a tailor-made IT tool for the management of development co-operation. It has consolidated competencies and the Council of Europe's position as a significant actor in development co-operation.

2. SPECIFICATIONS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

2.1 Beneficiaries and stakeholders

The primary beneficiary of this evaluation is the Council of Europe (ODGP as well as Major Administrative Entities mentioned above) as the implementer of the Neighbourhood Partnership. The ultimate beneficiaries are the donors of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

2.2 Overall Objective of the evaluation

An evaluation of the Neighbourhood Partnership is foreseen, in order to provide the stakeholders of the Neighbourhood Partnership with an objective assessment of the results that have been achieved

¹ Council of Europe, *Project Management Methodology*, available at www.coe.int/en/web/project-management-methodology/home.

through the Organisation's support and partnerships with other key actors. In particular, the results will be used in the framework of the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership and for the preparation of the new Neighbourhood Partnership 2022-2025.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- to assess the outcomes achieved by the projects implemented in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership, and identify to what extent they have helped Tunisia to move towards necessary reforms in line with the Council of Europe's standards and to advance on its democratic reforms;
- to provide a picture on the way the Council of Europe has implemented the projects (working/implementation methods) in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership, as well as on the obstacles faced, if any;
- to learn lessons from the way in which the Council of Europe managed the implementation of the projects in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership;
- to provide recommendations for the development of the upcoming Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership 2022-2025 to be based on lessons learnt and best practices;
- to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related restriction measures on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership and the progress towards the achievement of its outcomes;
- to assess the degree to which gender has been mainstreamed through the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership;
- to assess the degree to which a human rights-based approach has been integrated in the Neighbourhood Partnership implementation.

2.3 Scope of the evaluation

In term of timeframe, the evaluation will focus on the action plan as a whole, but it will be based on a sampling of projects.

The evaluation questions² will be based on the six criteria endorsed by the OECD-DAC:³ relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, as well as the Council of Europe's added value.

Relevance: the extent to which an intervention's objectives are **pertinent** to needs, problems and issues to be addressed.

Added value of the Council of Europe's interventions: The criterion is closely related to the principle of subsidiarity and relates to the fact that an activity/operation financed/implemented through the Council of Europe should generate a particular benefit.

There are practical elements that illustrate possible aspects of the criterion:

- the Council of Europe has a particular capacity, for example link between standard setting, monitoring and technical assistance, in comparison with other international partners active in Tunisia;
- the Council of Europe prioritises a human rights approach at all levels and stages of its activities. Its acquis, including Council of Europe legal instruments, information and

² Definitions of the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria can be found at the following address: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluationofdevelopmentprogrammes/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC).

institutions, combined with the principles of equality, non-discrimination and balanced participation, brings further added value to Council of Europe activities.

The indicative list of the questions is provided below. The evaluation questions will be further refined during the inception phase. The Evaluator may suggest additional sub questions and should indicate success criteria, relevant indicators and the sources for the indicators/methodology for gathering necessary evidence. The sub questions break down the overall questions into more manageable issues, and allow for a structured and logical response to the higher level questions. The Evaluator is expected to elaborate the questions in the Evaluation Matrix (see appendix 1).

Indicative evaluation questions:

Relevance and Effectiveness

- To what extent are the Council of Europe's projects in line with the needs and priorities of Tunisia and with the objectives of the Policy of the Council of Europe towards neighbouring regions that is demand-driven? To what extent are the Council of Europe's projects closely linked to the core areas of work of the Council of Europe?
- To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership achieved their objectives? Which factors have supported and hindered the effectiveness of the projects?
- In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality (by mainstreaming gender)?
- To what extent a human rights-based approach has been integrated in the project implementation?
- To what extent Civil Society Organisations have been integrated in the project implementation?
- To what extent the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership has assisted Tunisia in its contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
- To what extent have the project teams in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership been able to adapt their working methods and approach to the context of the COVID-19 pandemic related restrictions?
- To which extent has the Council of Europe visibility been ensured in the Neighbourhood Partnership implementation; Were citizens, beneficiaries and domestic stakeholders and other target audiences sufficiently updated on the outcomes and benefits of the projects?

Coherence and Added Value

- To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership been internally co-ordinated and internal coherence assured?
- To what extent have the projects implemented in the framework of the Neighbourhood Partnership been coordinated with other institutions and donors, and how do coordination efforts address duplication?
- To what extent has the Council of Europe been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and Council of Europe instruments during the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership?

Efficiency

-
- To what extent are the costs proportionate to outputs and outcomes?

- To what extent did the fact that project was part of the Neighbourhood Partnership contribute to the achievement of project objectives?
- What was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic related restriction measures on the Neighbourhood Partnership implementation?
- To what extent has the Neighbourhood Partnership been able to adapt its actions to ensure the continuity and suitability of its activities in view of the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Impact and Sustainability

- To what extent has the Council of Europe contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms and to capacity development in Tunisia?
- Have the outcomes built on the results already achieved under the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities for Tunisia 2012-2014 and the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2015-2017?
- How could future Neighbourhood Partnerships better contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy?
- What lessons learnt can be drawn to devise the possible upcoming Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2022-2025?

Visibility

The evaluation process will be guided by the *Evaluation Policy⁴ and Evaluation Guidelines⁵* of the Council of Europe and other relevant instruments, such as the *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023⁶*.

2.4 Requested services, methodology and quality control

2.4.1 Requested services

The sampling methodology should either include a mix of activities (from each of the three co-operation sectors of the Neighbourhood Partnership) or focus on a specific sector to which important funding was allocated.

Based on the exchanges with the ODGP and in view of the documentation provided, the evaluators should propose a final list of sample projects in their methodology (between five and eight of the Neighbourhood Partnership projects) in the inception report.

Apart from comparing actual outcomes to initially planned ones, recommendations should be provided for the next programming cycle and the upcoming follow-up of the Neighbourhood Partnership.

2.4.2 Methodology

The evaluation methodology will include a document review and semi-structured interviews with relevant Council of Europe staff in Strasbourg and Tunisia, as well as co-operation partners in Tunisia and selected donors (having contributed to the funding of the Neighbourhood Partnership). The interviews will be held in person to the extent possible if allowed by the sanitary situation and in line with precautionary measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Where the interviews in

⁴ Council of Europe, Evaluation Policy, *CM(2018)159 final*, available at <https://rm.coe.int/evaluation-policy-en-pdf/16809c7f91>

⁵ CoE Evaluation Guidelines

⁶ Council of Europe, *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023*, available at <https://rm.coe.int/prems-093618-gbr-gender-equality-strategy-2023-web-a5/16808b47e1>.

person are not possible, they will be replaced by online consultations. The consultant can also include anonymous questionnaires, case-studies or SurveyMonkeys.

The evaluation will rely on the information related to the projects implementation, available in the Project Management IT tool of the Council of Europe.

2.4.3 Risks and assumptions

Risks and assumptions cannot be listed exhaustively. It is assumed that services within both the Council of Europe and the implementing authorities of the beneficiaries accept the evaluation as an integral part of the project cycle management and are committed to providing the necessary information, and will subsequently act on recommendations and findings, as well as provide the follow-up information to the Council of Europe.

The following are additional relevant assumptions for the above evaluation:

- monitoring data is available on time and provide sufficient and adequate information;
- access to requested documentation and information on the projects is ensured by the Council of Europe and the project beneficiaries;
- the Council of Europe staff and implementing parties are regularly informed on objectives and methods of this evaluation, in order to ensure their full co-operation;
- measures taken by the authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allow for the evaluation to be conducted. In particular, participants of the evaluation, including staff of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and in Tunisia, as well as representatives of the relevant national stakeholders and international partners will be able to use the online meeting tools in case *in situ* visits are not possible due to travel restrictions.

In the event that one or several of the above assumptions prove to be lacking, the evaluators should immediately inform the Co-ordinator for the MENA region in the ODGP Programming Department. The evaluators will also report any limitations to the evaluation due to insufficient collaboration from key stakeholders.

2.5 Required outputs

The evaluator will prepare an inception report including evaluation methodology, proposed questions (i.e. Evaluation Matrix – see template available in appendix 1) and a proposed calendar.

A 20-25 pages draft and final version of the Final Reports (excluding annexes) on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia will be prepared. A tentative outline of the Reports should include the following:

- ✓ Introduction:
 - ✓ Description of the objectives of the evaluation;
 - ✓ Purpose of the evaluation;
 - ✓ Evaluation methodology;
 - ✓ Difficulties encountered during the evaluation.
- ✓ Findings:
 - ✓ Findings related to evaluation questions;
 - ✓ Additional relevant findings.
- ✓ Conclusions;
- ✓ Recommendations;
- ✓ Lessons learned;

- ✓ Annexes (including list of interviews/online consultations, questionnaires and documents reviewed, such as reports etc.).

3. EXPERT PROFILE

3.1 Profile and expertise required

One or two experts are requested for this assignment.

The consultant(s) should have the **following qualifications and competencies**:

- advanced university degree, preferably in evaluation, social sciences or a related field;
- minimum of 10 years of relevant professional experience in evaluation, project management, performance audit, monitoring, including at least five years on evaluation;
- advanced knowledge and experience in policies on human rights, the rule of law and democracy;
- excellent oral and writing skills in English and in French;
- knowledge on the countries of the Southern Mediterranean region;
- knowledge on mainstreaming gender in sectoral policies.

The following would be considered as assets:

- sufficient experience in and knowledge of the Council of Europe thematic areas of co-operation (human rights, democracy, rule of law)⁷ and Council of Europe working methods;
- knowledge of Arabic

The Contractor shall ensure that expert(s) is/are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting resources, IT equipment, software and tools needed to perform online activities must be available to enable expert(s) to concentrate on the core evaluation tasks.

3.2 Working language

The main working languages of the assignment are English and French.

3.3 Conflict of interest

The Contractor is responsible for carrying out an independent evaluation. Evaluator(s) must be strictly neutral and not have a conflict of interest. The expert(s) carrying out the evaluation shall have no involvement with the projects subject to this exercise. More specifically, the expert(s) must fulfil the following criterion:

- no previous involvement in programming and/or implementation of Council of Europe interventions which will be subjected to this evaluation.

The offers including one or more experts who are not meeting the above independence criteria will be rejected. The Contracting Authority requests the signed objectivity, confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration to be submitted at the time of submission of the proposal.

4. ORGANISATION, TIMETABLE AND BUDGET

4.1 Organisation

⁷ Council of Europe, *Programme and Budget 2018-2019*, available under <https://rm.coe.int/16807761cd>.

The contract will be managed by the ODGP Programming Department of the Council of Europe (the Co-ordinator for MENA region). The responsibilities of the Co-ordinator will include:

- providing the external evaluator with access to information;
- supporting and monitoring the work of the external evaluator;
- assessing the quality of the reports submitted by the external evaluator, while ensuring that the Contractor's independence is not compromised.

4.2 Visits and meetings

It is expected that the Evaluator pays two visits to Strasbourg, during which (s)he will inter alia participate in two meetings (a kick-off meeting and a meeting to present the draft final report).

For these meetings, PowerPoint presentation summarizing the key issues/findings will be prepared by the Contractor, as well as minutes of the meeting, to be agreed among the participants.

It is expected that the Contractor conducts one field visit to Tunisia.

Interviews will be carried out in-person (in Tunisia and Strasbourg), provided that the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic allows it. Alternatively, visits can be replaced by online or phone interviews and meetings.

4.3 Timetable and planning

The starting date is **25 February 2021**. The contract will start after both parties have signed it. The Inception report should be presented by **24 March 2021** and the final report should be delivered by **29 June 2021**.

The work plan and indicative timetable are envisaged, as indicated below.

4.3.1 Workplan

The evaluation will feature an inception phase in which the evaluator will collect initial data and prepare an inception report including evaluation methodology, proposed questions and a proposed calendar.

During the data collection phase, the evaluator will carry out data collection in Strasbourg and during the field visit to Tunisia, as well as through phone/videoconference interviews.

During the analysis and reporting phases, the evaluator will analyse the collected data and produce a draft final report not longer than 25 pages.

The Council of Europe will have two weeks to comment on the factual accuracy, the relationship between findings, conclusions and recommendations, as well as the relevance, usefulness and implementability of recommendations. The evaluator will then have two weeks to submit the final version of the evaluation report. The comments of the Council of Europe may be integrated into the final version of the reports or presented in the reports as differing views.

The deliverables will be written in English.

4.3.2 Indicative schedule

The estimated duration of the contract is from 25 February 2021 to 29 June 2021. The proposed schedule is as follows:

- 25 February 2021: start of the evaluation

- 26 February 2021 (tentative): intro visit to Strasbourg (2 days)/video-conference to interview staff in the Council of Europe Headquarters and with the Head of Council of Europe office in Tunisia;
- 24 March 2021: inception report including evaluation methodology, proposed questions and a proposed calendar is delivered. The Council of Europe feedback is provided within 7 working days after delivery of the report.
- 29 March 2021 – 25 April 2021: phone interviews/videoconference with Strasbourg staff/project teams, national stakeholders and international donors in Tunisia, including anonymous questionnaires or SurveyMonkeys (based on the methodology chosen by the Evaluator)
- 31 May 2021: presentation of the draft final report (1 day). The Council of Europe feedback is provided within 10 working days after delivery of the report.
- By 29 June 2021: the final report is delivered.

4.4 Location of assignment

The desk research will be performed at the Consultant's office. The field research will take place in Strasbourg and Tunisia or via phone/videoconferencing, depending on health risks related travel restrictions.

4.5 Budget

The budget of evaluation is EUR 25,000.00. The allocated evaluation budget will comprise consultancy fees, travel and subsistence for field interviews and data-gathering in Strasbourg (max two missions) and Tunisia (one mission). This budget also includes costs related to the IT equipment, software and tools which might be needed to perform online activities in case the COVID-19 restriction measures prevent meetings in person.

5. REPORTING

All the reports and expected outputs shall be produced in well-written excellent English, using the appropriate style and structuring the text in a clear and concise way. All draft reports will be submitted to the Co-ordinator for the MENA region in electronic form by e-mail and in a format compatible with MS Office software. The Council of Europe reserves the right to request the necessary additional revisions of the reports in order to reach an appropriate outcome and quality control requirements⁸.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

The Contractor will be paid on the basis of deliverables, as follows: one fourth upon reception of the final inception report and the three remaining fourth upon reception of the final report. The Contractor will be required to submit a financial report and invoices, according to the Council of Europe financial rules, for payment.

6.1. Items to foresee under 'Reimbursable'

In the event that the totals for a particular line in the budget will/could be impacted as a result of any circumstances not foreseen in these terms of reference (inter alia implementing modalities agreed with the Council of Europe), the Contractor must alert the Council of Europe Co-ordinator for the

⁸ Therefore, the final date for delivery of the report may be postponed. The draft report will also be subject to a quality check by the CoE Directorate of Internal Oversight

MENA region. In any case, should any modification be required to the budget agreed at contract signature, these will have to be properly justified and will be subject to the *ex-ante* written approval in line with the general conditions of the contract.

IMPORTANT REMARKS:

During all contacts with stakeholders, the consultant will clearly identify him/herself as independent consultant and not as an official representative of the Council of Europe.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the Council of Europe reserves the right to have the reports redrafted as many times as necessary, and that financial penalties will be applied if deadlines indicated for the submission of reports (drafts and final, in hard and electronic copy) are not strictly adhered to.

In addition, the contract can be discontinued whenever the quality of the deliverables is insufficient in light of these terms of reference and the quality assessment criteria presented in Annex II, and when the Contractors have not taken the necessary steps to remedy the insufficiencies.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Evaluation Matrix Template

Evaluation Criteria	Evaluation Question	Sub-Question	Measure(s) / Indicator(s)	Data Collection Instrument(s)	Data Source(s)	Data Analysis	Evaluator(s) Responsible

Appendix 2. Council of Europe Code of Conduct for Evaluation



Appendix 3. Quality Assurance Checklist for Evaluation Inception Report



Appendix 4. Quality Assurance Checklist for Evaluation Reports



Annex 2 – Documentation

Annex 2 presents the documentation consulted.

At the level of the **NP**:

- Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2018-2021
- Donors Report 2018
- Donors Report 2019
- Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2015-2017
- Neighbourhood Partnership with Tunisia 2012-2024
- 2012-2014 Progress Report
- 2012-2014 Final Report
- 2015-2017 Progress Report
- 2015-2017 Final Report

At the level of the **selected projects**:

- Independent Instances: Description of Activities, Progress Reports for 2019 and 2020
- Violence against Women / Children: Description of Activities, Progress Reports for 2019 and 2020
- Cybersouth: Description of Activities, Progress Reports for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20
- Local Governance: Description of Activities, Progress Reports for 2019 and 2020

Annex 3 - Consultations

Annex 3 lists the stakeholders consulted.

SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION / POSITION	DATE
BARON	Emmanuel	CoE TN	6 April 2021
BENZARTI	Hanen	Cheffe Service chargée de l'axe lutte contre les VFG, MFFPA	13 April 2021
MARCHENKOV	Dmitri	CoE SXB	13 April 2021
DUNGA	Edmond	CoE SXB	13 April 2021
TURKI	Donia	CoE TN	13 April 2021
HONKO	Mirka	CoE TN	13 April 2021
ESSELIN	Laura	CoE SXB	14 April 2021
SPIRIDON	Virgil	CoE SXB	14 April 2021
POUSSE	Wiem	Directrice executive, FNCT	15 April 2021
LAAJILI	Imen	Ministre plénipotentiaire, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de Tunisie	16 April 2021

SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION / POSITION	DATE
AYARI	Rabeb	Déléguée à la protection de l'Enfance (DPE) auprès du bureau du délégué général à la protection de l'enfance, MFFPA	16 April 2021
REMILI	Mehdi	CoE SXB	19 April 2021 and 21 April 2021
JACOBSEN TAKAHASHI	Julie	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway	19 April 2021
GADDES	Chawki	Président, IIPD	19 April 2021
GALHARDO	Anouchka	CoE SXB	20 April
BEY-BEN- MILED	Hela	CoE TN	21 April 2021
LAJMI	Nouri	Président, HAICA	21 April 2021
KHALIFA	Imene	CoE TN	22 April 2021
LAABIDI	Raoudha	Présidente, INLTP	26 April 2021
BOYER- DONNARD	Anne	CoE SXB	29 April 2021

SURNAME	NAME	ORGANISATION / POSITION	DATE
JUNCHER	Hanne	CoE SXB	29 April 2021
ASHWANDEN	Tom	EU Delegation	04 May 2021
JARRAY	Fethi	Président, INLT	04 May 2021
BOUSNINA	Mondher	Président, IPAPD	04 May 2021
BOUKHRIS	Imed	Président, INLUCC	05 May 2021
AJROUD	Fatma	Chief Executive International Cooperation Officer, INLUCC	05 May 2021
GMATI	Rim	Avocate et Conseillère juridique, INLUCC	05 May 2021

Annex 4 – Evaluation questions

Annex 4 presents the evaluation questions.

Table 3 – Evaluation questions

	Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
			Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
					Donors	CoE (SXB / TN)	MA (partners, CSOs)
Relevance and design of the NP	(1) To what extent are the CoE's projects in line with the needs and priorities of Tunisia?	Stakeholders identify Tunisian policy / strategy documents or other evidence that confirm the alignment between needs / priorities and the themes covered by the selected projects; Stakeholders confirm demand-driven nature of support				X	X
	(2) To what extent are the CoE's projects in line with the objectives of the Policy of the CoE towards neighbouring regions?	Mapping of projects against the objectives of the policy	X				
	(3) To what extent has a human rights-based approach been integrated in the projects' implementation?	Stakeholders identify elements of the human rights-based approach in project implementation (Participation & Inclusion, Equality & Non-Discrimination, Accountability, Transparency & Access to Information) ⁸				X	X

⁸ See the 'Checklist for implementing projects' in Council of Europe (2020) Human Rights Approach, Practical Guide for Cooperation Projects

	Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
			Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
					Donors	CoE (SXB / TN)	MA (partners, CSOs)
	(4) To what extent have CSOs been integrated in project implementation? ⁹	Stakeholders confirm that opportunities for CSO involvement in implementation have been acted on; CSOs suggest adequate involvement				X	X
Coherence	(5) To what extent have the NP projects been internally co-ordinated and internal coherence assured?	Stakeholders identify synergies between different CoE projects and other interventions				X	
	(6) To what extent have the NP projects been coordinated with other institutions and donors, and how do coordination efforts address duplication?	Stakeholders identify synergies between different projects or confirm the absence of duplication, and involvement of relevant other institutions and donors			X	X	X
Effectiveness	(7) To what extent have the NP projects achieved their objectives?	Outcome indicators collected by the projects; Stakeholders identifying immediate outcomes (enhanced capacities) and medium-term outcomes (focus on changes in legislation / normative framework, changes in terms of implementation of legislation, enhanced performance of institutions, strengthened channels of cooperation)	X	X	X	X	X

⁹ To some extent, this question is already covered by Evaluation Question 3 on the human rights-based approach. The principle of 'Participation & Inclusion' covers the involvement of CSOs

Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
		Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
				Donors	CoE (SXB / TN)	MA (partners, CSOs)
(8) Which factors have supported and hindered the effectiveness of the projects?	Stakeholders identifying facilitating and constraining factors (including COVID-19 – CoE response and beneficiary assessment thereof, a project being part of the NP, a project building on cooperation in 2012-2017, the CoE being present in TN, the project’s visibility and communication effort)?		X	X	X	X
(9) In what way have the projects contributed to gender equality?	Gender-mainstreamed outcome indicators collected by the projects	X	X	X	X	X
(10) In what way have the projects integrated gender issues during implementation?	Stakeholders identifying gender mainstreaming elements in outputs ¹⁰					

¹⁰ This will be assessed in line with Council of Europe (2018) Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Cooperation Projects

	Evaluation question	Approach / indicator	Method				
			Desk research	Survey	Interviews		
					Donors	CoE (SXB / TN)	MA (partners, CSOs)
Added value	(11) To what extent has the CoE been able to put its comparative advantage and expertise into action and create inter-linkages between projects and CoE instruments during the implementation of the NP?	Stakeholders identify 'categories' of added value, including (a) operationalisation of the dynamic triangle (i.e., synergies between standard setting, monitoring and cooperation), ¹¹ (b) status in some CoE bodies (e.g.) Partner for Democracy Status, (c) accession to CoE Conventions, (d) 'political neutrality' of the CoE, (e) expertise in the subject matter, (f) methodological approach (g) project linked to core area of work of the CoE, (h) in-country presence of the CoE, (i) understanding of country context via previous cooperation (2012-2017)			X	X	X
Sustainability	(12) To what extent has the CoE contributed to a sustainable implementation of reforms and to capacity development in Tunisia?	Stakeholders identify actions aiming at sustaining outcomes, such as integration of training into existing curricula, allocation of resources to maintain outcomes, establishment of new structures and networks, accession to conventions, observer status in CoE structures (e.g. CEPEJ, Partners for democracy and for local democracy status) etc.				X	X

¹¹ Please note that this evaluation question will be addressed in the specific context of Tunisia not being a member State of the CoE, i.e., there is more limited scope for operationalising all elements of the dynamic triangle, most notably standard setting and the corresponding monitoring. See however the documents 'Council of Europe Conventions signed by Tunisia' and 'List of Partial Agreements with the Participation of Tunisia'.

Annex 5 – Survey questions

Annex 3 lists the survey questions.

1. Résultats immédiats : dans quelle mesure le projet a-t-il conduit à un renforcement des capacités? Veuillez évaluer la contribution du projet aux suivants résultats immédiats de 1 (très limitée) à 5 (très forte).

- **Renforcement de la sensibilisation augmentée** (très limitée, limitée, je ne sais pas, forte, très forte)
- **Amélioration de la compréhension** (très limitée, limitée, je ne sais pas, forte, très forte)
- **Compétences techniques / professionnelles renforcées** (très limitées, limitées, ne sais pas, fortes, très fortes)
- **Texte:** veuillez utiliser cette zone de texte pour noter d'autres résultats immédiats

2. Résultats à moyen terme : dans quelle mesure le projet a-t-il abouti à des résultats à moyen terme? Veuillez noter la contribution du projet aux résultats suivants de 1 (très limité) à 5 (très fort).

- **Changements dans la législation/ jurisprudence/ cadre normatif** (très limités, limités, je ne sais pas, forts, très forts)
- **Un engagement plus fort avec les Conventions du Conseil de l'Europe** (très limité, limité, je ne sais pas, fort, très fort)
- **Changements de politiques / stratégies et similaires** (très limités, limités, je ne sais pas, forts, très forts)
- **Changements en termes de législation de mise en œuvre** (très limités, limités, je ne sais pas, forts, très forts)
- **Renforcement de la performance des institutions** (très limité, limité, je ne sais pas, fort, très fort)
- **Mise en place de nouvelles structures institutionnelles** (très limitée, limitée, je ne sais pas, forte, très forte)

- **Renforcement de la coopération entre les acteurs concernés dans le pays** (très limité, limité, je ne sais pas, fort, très fort)
- **Renforcement de la coopération régionale** (très limité, limité, je ne sais pas, fort, très fort)
- **Renforcement de la coopération internationale** (très limité, limité, je ne sais pas, fort, très fort)
- **Participation plus équilibrée des hommes et des femmes** (très limitée, limitée, ne sait pas, forte, très forte)
- **Renforcement des considérations de genre** (très limité, limité, je ne sais pas, fort, très fort)
- **Renforcement de la participation des organisations de la société civile** (très limitée, limitée, je ne sais pas, forte, très forte)
- **Texte:** veuillez utiliser cette zone de texte pour noter d'autres résultats à moyen terme

3. Qu'est-ce qui explique l'atteinte des résultats ? Veuillez évaluer votre accord avec les affirmations suivantes de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 5 (tout à fait d'accord).

- **Les réalisations sont expliquées par le fait que le projet fait partie de Partenariat de Voisinage** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, ne sais pas, d'accord, fortement d'accord)
- **Les réalisations s'expliquent par une coopération préalable avec le CdE (2012-2014 ou 2015-2017)** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Les réalisations s'expliquent par la présence du CdE dans le pays (bureaux à Rabat et Tunis)** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Les réalisations s'expliquent par l'engagement / composition du partenaire** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Les réalisations s'expliquent par l'expertise du CdE** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Les réalisations s'expliquent par la visibilité et les efforts de communications** (en désaccord, en désaccord, ne sais pas, d'accord, fortement d'accord)
- **Les réalisations sont expliquées par une réponse adéquate du CdE au COVID-19** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)

- **Texte:** veuillez utiliser cette zone de texte pour noter d'autres facteurs explicatifs

4. Quels **obstacles ont entravé l'atteinte des résultats** ? Veuillez évaluer votre accord avec les affirmations suivantes de 1 (pas du tout d'accord) à 5 (tout à fait d'accord).

- **Il y a eu des changements de personnel dans les institutions partenaires** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Il y a eu un manque de personnel dans les institutions partenaires** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Il y a eu une volonté politique limitée en ce qui concerne les résultats du projet** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **L'instabilité politique a limité les résultats du projet** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Il y a eu des changements de personnel au bureau du Conseil de l'Europe dans le pays** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Les procédures administratives du Conseil de l'Europe ont limité la réalisation des résultats** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Les restrictions du COVID-19 ont limité l'atteinte des résultats** (pas du tout d'accord, pas d'accord, je ne sais pas, d'accord, tout à fait d'accord)
- **Texte:** veuillez utiliser cette zone de texte pour noter d'autres obstacles

5. Avez-vous des **recommandations concernant le futur Partenariat de Voisinage** à partir de 2022?

- **Texte:** veuillez utiliser cette zone de texte pour noter vos recommandations