

**EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CENTRE OF EXPERTISE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT
REFORM**

**EVALUATION REPORT
FINAL**
Directorate of Internal Oversight
Evaluation Division
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This report was prepared by the Directorate of Internal Oversight, with the support of Strategicus Consulting, on the basis of terms of reference established after an exchange of views with the management of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform. The report reflects the views of the independent evaluators, which are not necessarily those of the Council of Europe or the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform. We would like to express our gratitude to the CoE and to the partners in Albania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and especially to all the persons interviewed during the conduct of this evaluation.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDLR	Steering Committee on Local and Regional Governance
CDDG	Steering Committee on Democracy and Governance
Centre	Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform
CoE	Council of Europe
Congress	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
DIO	Directorate of Internal Oversight
EU	European Union
ODGP	Office of the Director General for Programmes
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCF	Programme Cooperation Framework
PMM	Programme Management Manual
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. The 2016 Work Programme of the Directorate of Internal Oversight included an evaluation of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform (the Centre) at the request of the Centre. The evaluation focused on effectiveness, efficiency and impact, including Ordinary Budget and extra-budgetary activities of the Centre, with emphasis on the period 2014-2016.
- ii. Created in 2006, the Centre has operated in a rapidly evolving context of local government reforms: the transfer of competencies from the national to the local and/or regional levels has advanced in most member States, and decentralisation policies have captured increasing attention from international actors and donors. Beside the need to support national and local government administrations respectively, many member States have experienced more and more the necessity to organise the relationships between these levels of governance. The Centre's focus followed these trends and needs, and its offer of services has kept up its high relevance through progressive adjustments.
- iii. The Centre now supports the member States' decentralisation efforts at national, regional and local levels, with a combination of legislative advice and semi-standardised programme packages. It transfers the Council of Europe's standards and good practices through capacity building, advice and guidelines. This evolution responds to the beneficiaries' needs for positive experiences which pave the way for reforms in multi-level governance. The Centre is particularly well placed to provide this support, since its tools and methodologies reflect the experience of all member States in a consensual manner, which is well received by beneficiaries. The Centre's areas of interventions are sufficiently defined at policy level to avoid significant overlap with other entities such as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.
- iv. The Centre is recognized for the excellence of its cutting edge legislative advice. The legal provisions it advocates contribute to a conducive legal environment for the implementation of standards and good practices. The Centre also provides good quality capacity building, which the partners use to pioneer models in local administration reform. Its interventions are therefore effective in experimenting reproducible models of reform.
- v. However, the Centre's resources are too modest to ensure the systematic replication of such experiences. The Centre is not in a position to guarantee the full potential impact of its activities. This impact depends on the awareness and political will of national, local and international actors, particularly large donors. To secure the coordination and the commitment necessary for higher impact, the Centre needs to make its interventions more continuous, visible and predictable.
- vi. A more impact-oriented approach requires a clearer strategic vision, served by an inclusive strategic planning process. So far the Centre has efficiently developed itself as an emerging institution, securing sufficient recognition. With the multiplication of programmes under strict budgetary constraints, its entrepreneurial model has now reached its limits. The Centre needs to liberate capacity at senior and middle management level to prioritize and optimize the use of resources, analyse results and impact achieved, retain lessons learned, and secure more continuous donor support. Programme staff, with more autonomy, could in turn perform more inclusive programme design to further nurture local commitment.

2. EVALUATION APPROACH

2.1. Background

1. The Centre for Expertise for Local Government Reform (herein after “the Centre”) was established in 2006 as a result of the Action Plan adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (CoE) in Warsaw on 17 May 2005, which states: "Strengthening democracy, good governance and the rule of law in member States: (...) We decide, within the existing structures of the Organisation as a whole, to: (...) take the necessary steps, including through the establishment within the Secretariat of a centre of expertise on local government reform, to implement the Agenda for delivering good local and regional governance, adopted at the 14th session of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for local and regional government (Budapest, 24-25 February 2005), by promoting standards and good practices and by assisting member states with capacity-building at the local and regional level, in close cooperation with the Congress."
2. On its website, the Centre presents itself as "the Council of Europe operational arm in the field of multi-level governance, supporting central, regional and local authorities to improve their institutions, regulations, capacity and action."
3. The Centre operates two key sets of activity:
 - a) Legislative assistance, which supports the decentralization efforts of national-level authorities in line with the European Charter of Local Self-Government¹ and the standards developed by the Steering Committee on Democracy and Governance² (CDDG);
 - b) Capacity-building tools and programmes which technically support local and regional self-governance bodies as well as other actors of local self-government.
4. These activities and programmes use a set of “toolkits” developed throughout the years on the following topics: fiscal decentralization, best practice in Local Government, city-to-city cooperation, citizen participation at the local level, cross-border co-operation, European Label of Governance Excellence, inter-municipal co-operation, local finance benchmarking, local government capacity building, human resources management, leadership, public ethics, strategic municipal planning and performance management at local level, as well as capacity building of local government associations.
5. These activities are implemented mostly at the request of national, regional or local authorities. They are funded by the Ordinary Budget (22%) and by voluntary contributions (78%). The overall Ordinary Budget spent in 2016 by the Centre amount approximately to 639 000 Euros, including operations and human resource costs. The overall extra-budgetary resources spent in 2016 amount roughly to 2 264 000 Euros, including operations and human resources. The overall envelope spent by the Centre in 2016 is approximately 2 903 000 Euros.³
6. The Centre is operated by the Good Governance Division in the Democratic Institutions and Governance Department of the Council of Europe’s Directorate General of Democracy. Under the supervision of the Head of Department, the Centre comprises of six Strasbourg-based staff members, and maintains a roster of international experts on local government reform.

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/122>.

² http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/CDDG/default_en.asp.

³ The figures outlined in this paragraph are as of 29 November 2016. With end-of-year payments, they are expected to increase marginally to include operational expenditures for December.

7. The work of the Centre is based on the CoE standards for local governance, including the European Charter on Local Self Governance, and the relevant recommendations of the Committee of Ministers. Therefore, the Centre cooperates closely with the CDDG, and with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (hereinafter the Congress). It reports annually to its Advisory Board, composed of a member of the CDDG, the President of the Chamber of Local Authorities of the Congress, the Director of the Democratic Governance Directorate within the Directorate General of Democracy, and the Secretary General of the Congress. In addition, continuous technical-level coordination takes place between the programmes implemented by the Centre and the Congress respectively. The Centre further cooperates on an ad hoc basis with other entities of the Council of Europe, such as the Venice Commission as regards legislative assistance.

2.2. Evaluation Scope and Purpose

8. The evaluation assesses the programmes and legislative assistance as regularly offered by the Centre in the framework of its core mission, sampling activities implemented between 2014 and 2016. However, this evaluation also takes into consideration the Centre’s operations since its creation in 2006, as interviews and document review cover the evolution of the Centre since its creation.

9. The evaluation takes stock of achievements and lessons learned in the delivery of the programmes and legislative assistance of the Centre, for the purpose of informing future planning, programming and implementation by the Centre. In doing so, the evaluation has taken into account the existing and potential synergies and complementarities with the programmes implemented by the Congress and other entities.

10. The evaluation serves the following objectives:

- Objective 1: To contribute to the streamlining of the Centre’s activities in view of its core and evolving mission and complementarity with the Congress;
- Objective 2: To identify the opportunities for optimization of the effectiveness and efficiency of the programmes and activities offered by the Centre;
- Objective 3: To identify some examples for positive effects of the Centre’s activities and programmes at the level of local administrations in member States.

11. The evaluation criteria are relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. The table below presents the evaluation questions:

Relevance	To what extent are the existing programmes, tools and activities of the Centre relevant to its core and evolving mission?
	To what extent are the existing programmes, tools and activities of the Centre relevant to the needs of its beneficiaries?
Efficiency	To what extent does the Centre achieve synergy and complementarity with the programmes, tools and activities relative to local governance implemented by other entities of the CoE?
	To what extent has the Centre used its resources in an efficient way?

Effectiveness	To what extent do the tools, programmes and activities of the Centre fulfil their stated objectives?
Impact	What have been examples of the institutional impact that the Centre of Expertise has had at the level of local administrations in member States?

2.3. Evaluation Methodology

12. The evaluation team was composed of two Evaluators from the Directorate of Internal Oversight (DIO), and two consultants from a consulting firm recruited externally. The evaluation took place in three phases:

Scoping and inception

13. The evaluation team finalized the Terms of Reference of the evaluation based on comments received from the Centre, and taking into account the considerations of the Congress. The evaluation team mapped the existing data and stakeholders, sampled the stakeholders to be consulted and data to be analysed, and determined the most effective data collection and analysis methods.

Data collection

14. During this phase, the evaluation team collected the necessary data based on methodology outlined in the inception report. Data collection included the following:

- a) Collection and review of documents produced by the Centre (including toolkits, programme documents, annual reports, website, budget documents);
- b) Collection and review of common programme documents of the Congress, as well as its website and annual reports;
- c) Analysis of the Centre's budget, financial reports and work plans;
- d) Semi-structured interviews with a sample of stakeholders among CoE staff and experts, as well as CDDG members in Strasbourg;
- e) Field missions to and semi-structured interviews with a sample of stakeholders in Albania, Moldova and Ukraine;
- f) Semi-structured interviews per Skype/phone with a sample of experts and beneficiaries in other countries (Croatia, Italy, Malta, Norway, Poland Serbia, Spain, United Kingdom) ; and
- g) Survey among CDDG members.

15. Field visits were performed in three countries (Albania, Moldova and Ukraine), to illustrate with fresh information and accurate data the activities of the Centre of Expertise, and to establish a solid and common understanding of the changing national context and therefore accurately assess the relevance of the Centre's programs.

16. The evaluation team performed a total number of 108 interviews (including scoping and data collection interviews in Strasbourg with the Centre's staff and CDDG members, and by phone/Skype). Out of these, 27 took place in Ukraine, 26 in Moldova, and 32 in Albania. 25 respondents answered the CDDG members' survey, out of which 5 from Central Europe, 3 from Eastern Europe, 5 from Northern Europe, 6 from Southern Europe, and 6 from Western Europe.

17. The evaluation team also reviewed a significant number of documents, including programme descriptions, country action plans, (final and interim) narrative and financial reports, programme budgets, project contracts, annual reports, peer reports, draft/final evaluation reports, toolkits.

Data analysis and report drafting:

18. The evaluation used a gender-sensitive methodology: a nearly equal number of men and women were interviewed by the evaluation team, and the evaluation team looked for standard differences in answers based on gender. In the case of the Centre's beneficiaries, the proportion between men and women is also balanced. However, there are significant variations in two countries (Moldova, where 70% of the interviewees were men, and Albania, where 60% of the interviewees were women). The evaluators did not observe significant gender variations in perceptions of the Centre's performance.

19. A quantitative analysis was not used because not all interviewees had the same proximity and knowledge of the Centre - meaning that they provided very different types of answers, and the interview guidelines had to take this into account by adjusting the questions. Therefore, the answers were not always strictly comparable, preventing the use of quantitative analysis. Instead, the team used qualitative methods.⁴ The evaluation team compared the results of analysis stemming from all sources of data in order to verify the findings.

2.4. Difficulties and limitations of the evaluation

20. The limitations of this evaluation mainly relate to effectiveness and impact criteria. While some beneficiaries interviewed during field visits gave concrete examples of the Centre's achievements, others made general comments relating to features of the Centre's operations without providing sufficient evidence to demonstrate results and impact, or they presented a larger picture of their personal or institutional achievements without indicating the specific intervention of the Centre.

21. Demonstrating causality and why an intervention has succeeded (or failed) is not easy even if sufficient information is available about design and context, because other factors external to the intervention itself (such as economic conditions, or the intervention of other actors) condition the situation of the project partners both before and after the intervention. For instance, the delivery of capacity building programs for local and regional governments - within different countries - depends upon whether a national framework for decentralization exists, and upon the incentives to national level politicians, bureaucrats and service providers to transfer competencies and resources. It is also contingent upon the quality of public administration systems and political will to enhance performance, improve efficiency, and overall implement reforms. Similarly, from the final beneficiaries' point of view, citizens may be disillusioned with their political leaders, not fully aware of their rights and entitlements and believe that their participation will make no difference to the quality of local governance. Therefore, local governance-related intervention results depend on the context as much as on the design of interventions, which makes it difficult to attribute with certainty the outcomes to the sole intervention.

⁴ These include reconstitution of the theory of change, outcome mapping (tracing changes in behaviours through the narrative of interlocutors), SWOT analysis, and identification of recurring opinions expressed by interlocutors, respondents and reports in correlation with the respondents' relation to the programme. Data analysis consisted mainly in identifying, coding, and categorizing patterns or themes found in the collected data.

22. In addition, the Centre’s interventions vary over time, as well as from one country to another, within a country, or even from one region / locality to another, which means they are not easily comparable. Wide context variations exist between the countries and locations. For instance, differences in the level of education and awareness of citizens, or in the degree of social and economic inequalities, are difficult to integrate in the overall assessment.

23. Other limitations were addressed by the evaluation team in the following ways:

Limitations identified in the ToR	Mitigating measures
Unavailability of key stakeholders	Key stakeholders who are not available for in-person individual interviews or consultation meetings were contacted by phone / Skype.
Lack of existing and/or disaggregated data	Selection of appropriate research instruments and clearly delineated instructions for their correct use.
Absence of strategic plan of the Centre with specific objectives	Reconstruction of the Centre’s theory of change.

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Relevance of the Centre's existing programmes, tools and activities

To what extent are the existing programmes, tools and activities of the Centre relevant to its core and evolving mission?

Finding 1: The tools and methods of the Centre mirror the evolution of its mandate.

24. The mission originally assigned to the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform in 2006 was "to implement the Agenda for delivering good local and regional governance (...) by promoting standards and good practices and by assisting member States with capacity-building at the local and regional level".⁵ Therefore, the Centre's mission focused initially on delivery of support at the local and regional levels. Now the Centre operates increasingly at national level by supporting decentralization policies, advising on relevant national legislation, and working on multi-level governance. In this, the Centre follows a general trend in local self-governance reform efforts by the member States, but also by other international actors and donors. This trend is further reflected in the evolution of the relevant Council of Europe Steering Committee, which has evolved from European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) to European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG) currently focusing on all levels of democratic governance.

25. In parallel with this evolution, the Centre has gradually diversified its assistance, with growing importance attached to decentralization policies, and on the legislation on Local Self-Governance and decentralization. This is a logical development, because most member States have increasingly devolved competencies from the national to the local level. Therefore, the relationship between the national and local levels needs to be organised: the Centre has moved on from local-level to multi-level governance. In conjunction, there is an increasing demand to foster citizen participation at local level, and cooperation among local level entities. Several interlocutors, including beneficiaries and donors, pointed out that, in some countries such as Ukraine and Albania, the Centre's involvement over the past ten years has helped prepare the local public administration for receiving new competencies and performing their evolving tasks. This distinguishes the Centre as a pioneer among international actors: while competencies have been devolved from the national towards the local level, the bulk of international efforts have historically concentrated on national public administration reform, while attention to the local level has increased only recently.

26. The Centre's tools and methods reflect this evolution towards new public management ('Public Ethics', Strategic Municipal Planning and Performance Management at Local Level') and multi-level governance (legislative assistance, territorial amalgamation).⁶ They also reflect a more citizen-oriented approach ('Citizen Participation'), more decentralized cooperation ('City-to-City Cooperation', 'Cross-Border Co-operation'). Following the logic of multi-level governance, these tools promote local public administration reform, but also indirectly support general public administration reform at country level.

⁵ Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 2005).

⁶ Territorial amalgamation is the merging of several municipalities, or other local self-governance units of the same level, following new decentralization policy and territorial legislation at national level. The objective of such reform is to reduce the overall number of municipalities or self-governance units, and increase the average size of the municipalities or local self-governance unit, for purposes of economies of scale and generally better local governance. (OECD Territorial Reviews: Ukraine 2013, page 17).

27. There have been some discussions within the Centre's management and during the scoping phase of the evaluation on expanding the focus of the Centre towards national public administration reform. Such evolution would require an incomparably higher amount of project funding, which in turn would demand a steep increase in core human resources to manage such projects. With the current Ordinary Budget resources, given the current positioning of the Centre as offering cutting-edge expertise to its partners in multi-level governance, and seeing that national public administration reform is a field occupied by better-funded international actors, such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), this would not be realistic. It is therefore positive that the Centre has maintained its strategic focus on multi-level governance, without expanding its scope to national public administration reform.

Finding 2: The general focus and tools of the Centre are relevant to the international trends in local government reforms in the member States.

28. Most interlocutors (both programme partners and beneficiaries of Ordinary Budget activities) considered the Centre's existing toolkits as highly relevant to their evolving needs. The survey of the CDDG members leads to similar results: the majority of the participants to the survey consider that the activities, tools and programmes of the Centre are 'very relevant' and 'relevant' (18 out of 20). Open-ended questions further show high trust in the relevance of the Centre's assistance. Where project documents present beneficiary feedback, it confirms this finding. There are several reasons for this:

- a) All activities were essentially geared towards the implementation of standards (especially the Charter and the Twelve European Principles of Good Democratic Governance⁷);
- b) All activities and tools were perceived as representative of cutting-edge expertise and standards of the CoE;
- c) The tools channel diverse experience from a large number of member States which have both contributed to their elaboration and implemented them. Counterparts often considered it a unique asset of the Centre that such experience includes EU countries (particularly Western Europe);
- d) The tools are developed and updated by aggregating high level expertise, and lessons learned from projects implemented in the field. This enables the identification of emerging issues, and consequent adaptation of the tools. In this regard, the experts interviewed considered the Centre's summer schools as particularly useful;
- e) The Centre, as an institution of the CoE, is considered as neutral in terms of internal politics of the countries visited, which is highly valued in sometimes very polarized political context. It is also considered politically neutral because it does not represent the position or interests of a particular country, but consensual positions of all member States on local government.

29. In developing and offering its tools to the member States, the Centre therefore greatly benefits from the intergovernmental character of the CoE: the standards it promotes represent the experience of them, and have been endorsed by the member States. This feature, as highlighted by several interviewees representing different categories of respondents, as well as survey respondents, increases the credibility of the tools, and the appetite of the member States for their application, especially as compared to models proposed by other international actors, which tend

⁷ http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Strategy_Innovation/12principles_en.asp.

to represent the experience of one or a few countries. This was noted frequently by local and central government officials, but also by other international actors, during field visits, and confirmed by a review of the Centre's toolkits.

30. An important number of interviewees explained that, in order to enable the domestic actors to more systematically implement the standards, they need a tool that would:

- a) Compile and update good practices and experiences in implementing the standards into a repository of knowledge;
- b) Propose steps for training providers in the countries (such as public administration academies) to develop their own applied research methodology and function (such as a research unit, which would use the Centre's repository of knowledge and conduct research on good practices in local government domestically).

3.2. Relevance to the needs of beneficiaries

To what extent are the existing programmes, tools and activities of the Centre relevant to the needs of its beneficiaries?

Finding 3: The Centre ensures relevance to the needs of the member States by involving its stakeholders in identifying issues and planning the subject of interventions.

31. Document review shows that the Centre's tools and methodologies are inspired from new public management techniques, and based on the CoE standards. At the same time, its programmes and specific activities are tailored and adapted in order to implement country-specific projects. The Centre typically identifies countries' needs and selects the tools in partnership with - or upon the demand of - stakeholders in the member States (from central, local and regional levels). This approach has ensured alignment with the respective countries' priorities and reform plans. The ensuing activities, in particular capacity building, are developed in co-operation with local, national and international stakeholders, and aim to respond to the needs of local authorities. The level of adaptation of tools to local circumstances is considered sufficient to high by almost all interviewees. Programme documents also display an effort to both combine several tools, and adjust their implementation, in order to match local circumstances.

Good practice example: incremental steps in implementing the tools

Several survey and interview respondents, especially from Western and Southern Europe, presented an existing practice of incremental steps in the implementation of the tools, which they hope to see formalized: beneficiaries often pick up a tool from the first step or further, depending on their level of implementation of standards prior the Centre's intervention. According to them, this practice, if formalized, would effectively update the tools based on the Centre's rich experience.

32. Tailoring is done both with extra-budgetary programmes, and with smaller Ordinary Budget-funded activities. The former is usually designed within a national action plan which rests on the results of the Congress' monitoring of the Charter, in complement of much larger interventions by other international actors. The latter often respond to targeted needs of the member States which are not met by any other international actor, often in EU member countries where there is

no or little donor assistance⁸. Ordinary Budget activities can also be a means to engage with the member States, and prepare for future extra-budgetary projects. Both appear to be a good way to address unmet needs of the member States.

33. The Centre's correspondence with national priorities is usually ensured by constant dialogue with local stakeholders, as well as through coordination with the Congress, whose monitoring of the implementation of the Charter brings valuable information to project planning. This approach ensures the Centre's activities are relevant to a specific country's needs (or region, as in the case of Ukraine), both at policy and operational levels. In some instances, such as Albania's territorial reform agenda and Ukraine's challenging amalgamation process, the Centre has also responded well to changing circumstances within complex political contexts, while implementing an intervention: this shows the ability of the Centre, despite modest human resources, to closely monitor the environment in the member States, and to respond to the demand of the local actors.

Good practice example: tailoring interventions in Albania

The example of Albania is illustrative: this country, which interviewees consider to be very politically polarized, and where corruption issues are high on the reform agenda,⁹ has developed in 2012-2014 a nation-wide project to reform its civil service, in the same time implementing territorial reorganisation. Although the reform has recorded progress with legal and institutional frameworks, law implementation and functioning of institutions are hindered by political intervention. Local experts working on behalf of the Centre mentioned the excellent timing for involvement in the process, as assistance was offered (and available) to municipalities and central government.

The Centre assessed training needs, performed an inventory of the workforce profile, and assessed the needs and perspectives of the mayors and councils. Furthermore, the competences and overall professional profile of the involved experts (local and international), combined with additional international expertise and resources, along with pressure exerted by the donor community, resulted in less political intervention and better conformity with standards.

34. This approach, which focuses on understanding the needs of local governance actors in the member States, whilst preparing the ground for long-term reform is certainly a good practice in the context of international efforts to assist local government reforms in different countries. Most interlocutors pointed to the particular responsiveness of the Centre, as compared to other international partners. This was especially emphasized as concerns Ordinary Budget-funded activities such as legislative assistance in Ukraine, but also concerning most extra-budgetary programmes, for example human resource development at the request of the Ministry of Regional Development. Another example is the Centre's support to local government in Găgăuzia, Moldova, which interviewees say no other international actor has provided.

Finding 4: While partners consider the Centre's tools as highly relevant, their commitment could be increased by a more participatory approach to detailed programming of activities.

⁸ This was the case in Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Spain, or the UK.

⁹ Transparency International, Corruption Perceptions Index, page 7 of report:

<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015#downloads>.

35. The toolkits used by the Centre are highly appreciated and reported as highly relevant by most interviewed beneficiaries. 'Modern and Effective Human Resources Management', 'Public Ethics Benchmark', 'Strategic Municipal Planning and Performance Management at Local Level', 'Inter-Municipal Cooperation', were the most commonly quoted by interlocutors as delivering quick and tangible results.

Good practice example: use of Ordinary Budget funds for flexible intervention

The implementation of Public Ethics Benchmarking and Local Finance Benchmarking was judged particularly successful in the Basque Country, Spain. A key success factor identified by the interviewees was the synergy of these tools which support each other, but also the ability of the Centre to implement this Ordinary Budget-funded activity in a flexible way. The most positive aspect described was the continuous learning curve allowed by long-term cooperation, which has enabled the beneficiaries to test methods, adapt their ways of working, and continue adapting the codes of conduct which resulted from the activity. This continuous process was seen as a good way to combine the implementation of standards, and the adaptation to the local reality.

36. Other tools, although limited in terms of immediate results, are important as they open communication channels with beneficiaries and partners (e.g. 'Best Practice in Local Government' in Moldova) or may have a higher impact if leveraged by a local partner, such as the 'Leadership Academy', which is dependent on national training institutions. 'Best Practice in Local Government' and 'Peer Review' have been identified as powerful instruments to promote networking and changes in attitudes (for instance in Ukraine, Albania, Moldova).

37. Information from the CoE programme managers points out, however, that once the initial selection of tools is completed, the Centre does not always pay sufficient attention to the details of programme and activity design. Needs assessments and fact finding were not systematically conducted before designing new programmes. The Centre did not fully engage all relevant local partners in the design phase of some extra-budgetary programmes. Locally, this at times led to resistance to change. For instance, in Ukraine, an online consultation platform for local elected officials with monthly surveys in each municipality was rejected by local partners.

38. Bearing in mind that the interventions of the Centre aim to change the behaviour and working patterns of its partners, an inclusive programme design appears indispensable to the relevance of specific activities, and more generally to the success of the intervention. Interviews in the field pointed to the need to involve more systematically the local civil servants and elected officials into the design of the programmes, through evidence-based needs assessments, and in conjunction with the respective country's legislative agenda.

Finding 5: The Centre needs a strategic vision and plan in order to achieve a balance between its mission, member States' demands and donors' agendas.

39. The Centre has responded positively to most requests for support to local government reforms. However, this demand-driven approach at times resulted in an ad-hoc rather than a strategic approach. In other words, the Centre has not always been sufficiently pro-active, mainly because it lacked a longer-term strategic plan (which should have been drawn up in consultation with the local stakeholders). In addition, as the Centre's core resources are very modest, it relies on donor input for any sizeable operation. This compounds the Centre's tendency to react to other stakeholders' expectations rather than to plan strategically to trigger such demand.

40. Until recently, this situation was justified by the Centre's key priority: to establish itself as an institution of the CoE, and establish its reputation. Such priority has justified an entrepreneurial and pragmatic approach: the institution has seized opportunities more than it has invested into its strengths. It has dealt with existential issues such as its staffing, funding and recognition, without addressing its internal weaknesses. At this stage of its institutional development however, the Centre is perfectly capable of becoming pro-active, and refocusing its priorities beyond institutional development. The Centre needs to build upon its strengths and correct certain weaknesses, in order to promote more effectively its agenda with its partners and counterparts.

41. The main asset of the Centre is its acknowledged expertise, highly valued by the large majority of those interviewed, including experts, local and central authorities, donors, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representatives, and CDDG members. The Centre should capitalize on its valued expertise and on its excellent connections with decision-makers, civil servants and NGOs, and become more influential in the countries where it intends to make a difference. This means the Centre should prioritize its action both thematically and geographically, in order to make better-informed decisions about the use of resources, and reduce the dispersion of its activities.

42. In order to prioritize better, the Centre needs to operate a qualitative change: from the accumulation of experience and expertise, the Centre should move towards a knowledge-based offer of services. Through the implementation of its activities, and thanks to its access to the CDDG, the Centre is in a unique position to collect good practices from all member States. However, there is no mechanism in place to systematically list good practices and lessons learnt in local government reform, analyse them, and make them visible. As noted above, there is a demand in the field for a user-friendly repository of knowledge, following a pattern of applied research. To respond to this need, the Centre needs to capitalize on its experience in the implementation of tools, which it is particularly well placed to do. This knowledge repository could be designed in partnership with national or regional public administration training institutions. It should become the foundation for prioritization and proactive presentation of high added-value programmes to both member States and donors, as a part of a strategic planning effort.

3.3. Efficiency through synergy and complementarity with other entities of the CoE

To what extent does the Centre achieve synergy and complementarity with the programmes, tools and activities relative to local governance implemented by other entities of the CoE?

Finding 6: There is no need to revise the existing division of labour between the Centre and the Congress

43. In 10 years, the Centre has progressively built its reputation as a specific CoE entity through positive, consistent assistance provided to a growing number of countries. Yet, in many cases, the interviewees chiefly perceived the Centre's activity as being part of the CoE's overall actions, without acknowledging it as a distinct unit with a definite mandate and mission. Some stakeholders such as beneficiaries (e.g. Ukraine and Moldova) and even donors (e.g. in Albania) do not make the distinction between the activities of the Congress and the Centre at local level. Others on the contrary, perceived the Centre as separate from the Congress, without being fully aware of their distinctive characteristics within the CoE. As long as the Congress and the Centre deliver consistent messages, these observations are not necessarily negative, as both institutions benefit from their identification with the CoE.

44. As pointed out by several interviewees, when the Centre of Expertise was created, the relationship with the Congress required extensive discussions in order to mature, as the distinction between the roles of the two institutions was not entirely clear. Both entities then agreed on a division of labour, mostly reflected in their stakeholders' structure: the Centre works with civil servants and central governments, the Congress works with elected officials and young politicians at local and regional levels. The Congress is also in a particular situation due to its nature as a political body. Therefore, its intervention techniques are different, using more peer to peer exchange, whereas the Centre's core competency is the provision of expertise.

45. In the field, this theoretical division of labour is blurred by the gradually increasing synergy in their activities, which are all based upon the implementation of the Charter. The Congress' monitoring reports and recommendations, as well as the post-monitoring dialogue, have expanded the reach of its cooperation activities. In post-monitoring dialogue the Congress works with national authorities and identifies implementation measures for the recommendations made during the monitoring process. This is the case for example in Ukraine, where the Congress and the Ukrainian Government signed a roadmap on implementation of the Congress' recommendations, and Armenia, where the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development and the Congress signed the roadmap for the implementation of Recommendation 351 (2014) on local democracy. The Centre uses the Congress's recommendations to design its programmes. The Congress uses some of the know-how and information of the Centre in the target countries. Jointly programmes featuring common staff and shared reporting, such as "Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance" under the Programmatic Cooperation Framework (PCF), also led to increased synergy. Some activities involve the same stakeholders. Capacity development of associations of local government units is an example, though Centre makes little use of this tool, which is rather made available for further use by the associations. The organisation of 'Peer Reviews' is another practice of both entities, albeit with different methodologies. The leadership academy of the Centre trains elected local officials including mayors, as do the Congress' leadership workshops. However they do not target the same communities, and seldom host the same participants. A few times, elected officials from amalgamated communities involved in the 'Leadership Academy' participated to the Congress' seminars, however the activities did not overlap since their end beneficiaries were different; also, such events are sporadic due to frequent rotation among municipal council members.

46. The evaluation team found no instance of overlaps or conflicting messages. The activities of the Congress and the Centre are rather complementary since both entities use different instruments - both Congress and Centre representatives agree on this issue. The existing division of labour, although less evident than it used to be, continues to be operational and acceptable.

Finding 7: Coordination and exchange of information between the Centre and the Congress could benefit from marginal adjustment.

47. This synergy does not necessarily lead to cooperation in the sense of joint operation. Where the entities implement two separate programmes, their staff exchange information more or less regularly, but there is no joint activity. Even common programmes, whether or not they share staff, have two separate lines of action and two different budgets. Their interaction qualifies as coordination rather than cooperation.

48. At strategic level, coordination between Congress and Centre is firstly embodied by the Advisory Board of the Centre, which includes the President of the Chamber of Local Authorities from the Congress, and the Secretary General of the Congress, alongside a member of the CDDG

and a senior manager from DG II. Technical cooperation is regular and relatively institutionalized, although it has reportedly been vulnerable to staff change.

49. In the field, the programme staff of the Centre and the Congress attend weekly exchanges of information between project managers, general field office meetings, and joint steering committee to ensure coherence and avoid overlaps. In addition, the staff carries out informal coordination of their own initiative, to varying degrees depending on interpersonal relations, the needs, and the time available. In this they are limited by demanding agendas. In Albania and Ukraine for instance, interaction between the two lines of action is limited, and the pace of implementation differs from one entity to another. In Moldova, coordination is more frequent.

50. This situation does not appear to require substantial changes. There is a rather clear delineation of focus and tasks, and the staff is capable of adjusting this delineation marginally where required, the evaluation team sees no need to change the division of labour, or artificially transform coordination into cooperation or joint activities.

51. Marginal adjustments could be made in the day to day operation of this coordination, but rather than a policy change, they require individual initiative:

- a) Sharing the same stakeholders, the two institutions could at times formulate their message jointly, consult more on the content and timing of advocacy, or communicate with common donors.
- b) In a few cases (PCF, Armenia, Albania), local programme staff is shared by both entities. The activity of one impacts the other's activity and programme staff is often caught between conflicting requests from HQ, or with very high variations of workload. Therefore, for these programmes, either more decision-making power should be delegated to the staff in the field, or activity planning needs to be better coordinated at central level.

52. Communication between field offices is facilitated by the programme team in Strasbourg, particularly during the preparation of events, but the staff expressed a need for more continuity. Communication between programme staff and the Office of the Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) is perceived as good by the staff. Good cooperation with the Venice Commission was also mentioned by Ukrainian interviewees, referring to the Centre's legislative advice provided on constitutional reform (opinion on State's oversight over amalgamated cities' provisions). Consultation with other bodies such as the GRECO is occasional.

3.4. Efficiency through use of Resources

To what extent has the Centre used its resources in an efficient way?

Finding 8: Overstretched human resources require a higher level of delegation in order to liberate strategic planning and analysis capacity.

53. The Centre has a good, motivated and knowledgeable core team,¹⁰ and a pool of external experts that was highly praised by the beneficiaries. Local teams were spontaneously described by interviewees as very supportive and competent. Experts, in particular international experts, are usually considered as competent and committed. As one expert put it, “*When you work for the*

¹⁰ The Centre's core team includes four persons, representing 3.5 full-time equivalents. In addition, the Centre receives support from a seconded official corresponding to 0.3 full-time equivalent. The Head of Department also dedicate limited working time to the oversight of the Centre.

Centre of Expertise, you really do it out of passion and dedication". However several interviewees and document review point to manifest understaffing in headquarters, as well as in some projects such as the PCF, compared to the volume and diversity of activities.

54. In 2016, the Centre is composed of a four-person core team financed by the Ordinary Budget, supported by 23 persons in headquarters and in the field, working varying amounts of time.¹¹ The core team implements Ordinary Budget-funded activities, but also plans, administers and oversees extra-budgetary programmes. The 23 persons financed by programmes are distributed as follows: one seconded official and six persons working on programmes from headquarters, and 16 persons working on programmes in the field. In 2016, 44% (approximately 282 000 Euros) of the total Ordinary Budget resources' spending (approximately 639 000 Euros) was dedicated to operational costs, while 56 % (approximately 357 000 Euros) of this spending financed human resources.¹² It should be noted that this is under the planned overall budget of the Centre for 2016, which was originally established at 294 000. 69 % (approximately 1 564 000 Euros) of the total extra-budgetary resources spent in 2016 (approximately 2 264 000 Euros) concerned operations, while human resources absorbed 31 % (approximately 700 000 Euros) of extra-budgetary spending for this year.¹³ Considering that the Centre's activities consist of advice, advocacy, capacity building and expertise, which typically involve little operational costs, the volume of services rendered to the member States compared to the budget and to the human resources is impressive. However, the Centre has opportunities to improve the efficiency and predictability of its operations. There were phases when the team was overwhelmed by logistics, as was reported in Ukraine and Albania. Some donors stated that the heavy administrative structure of the CoE is a weakness of the Centre, and this sometimes affects the project cycle management. The Centre is perceived by some of the stakeholders as increasingly formal, centralized, and less efficient than other international actors in the deployment of its operations.

Table 1: Approximate spending for 2016¹⁴

Type of expenditure	Ordinary Budget (approximate, in Euros)	Extra-budgetary (approximate, in Euros)	Total (approximate, in Euros)
Human Resources	357 000	700 000	1 057 000
Operations	282 000	1 564 000	1 846 000
Total	639 000	2 264 000	2 903 000

¹¹ Out of 23 persons, five work 30% to 50% for the Centre, while the rest of their time is dedicated to other projects or other duties. It should also be considered that six of these 23 persons have not worked for the Centre throughout the year, either because their project started during the course of the year, or because they are hired on a temporary contract with a statutory limit of nine months per year.

¹² All figures outlined in this paragraph are as of 29 November 2016. With end-of-year payments, the figures for operational costs are expected to increase marginally for the entire year 2016.

¹³ As all programmes are multi-year, and in the absence of overall January-to December annual planning for extra-budgetary resources, the evaluation team was not in a position to compare this result with the plan. Overall, implementation of activities seems to incur some delays during the first year of projects, in the absence of an inception period. The budget reports of past projects show a spending rate close to 100%, which is positive.

¹⁴ All figures outlined in this table are as of 29 November 2016. With end-of-year payments, the figures for operational costs are expected to increase marginally for the entire year 2016.

55. In addition, interviews and documents reveal person-based decision-making processes and lack of clear guidance or institutional memory in the Centre's headquarters: decisions are taken centrally, and absences lead to delays in decision-making, because the staff lacks a strategic framework to refer to in their decision-making. These factors produce a situation in which the Centre's staff prioritize urgent matters (mostly activity-based) and issues related to the very existence of the Centre, especially fundraising, and the use of existing opportunities for activities. More rigorous administration and reporting, strategic planning, and clear guidance of priorities for strategic cooperation, would enable to safely give mid-level and junior staff a slightly higher decision-making power, while more senior staff would focus on more strategic decisions and investment into chosen cooperation partnerships with donors.

56. Under the current budgetary circumstances, the Centre can further correct this situation by continuing to increase the level of administrative delegation to local teams. In this respect, the local teams need to be able to make and implement decisions, conduct procurement¹⁵, engage in dialogue with donors through an extended / flexible institutional mandate, and - as long as they comply with the CoE's regulatory framework - take operational decisions and develop written local strategies for headquarters' review. The latter requires the creation of rigorous planning frameworks including meaningful indicators, baselines and targets, as well as an internal mechanism of regular monitoring and evaluation - including and involving all stakeholders, in order to learn from experience, and anticipate changes. The deployment of the Project Management Methodology by ODGP should, in the future, contribute to remedy this situation, and enable a higher level of decentralization and delegation of programme management-related decisions. This is expected to simplify daily business processes, and alleviate the workload in headquarters, liberating capacity for reporting, analysis and strategic planning.

Finding 9: Better analysis, reporting and strategic planning are required to make the most of modest core funding and donor-dependent programmes.

57. Given the small size of its Ordinary Budget expenditures (a total of approximately 639 000 Euros in 2016), the Centre itself can only finance small activities. Some examples of high-added value use of these funds have been collected during field visits: resources from the Ordinary Budget (although scarce), are used to develop new tools, take stock of experience (e.g. through summer schools), launch entry door projects, establish new partnerships and build upon their results. These small initiatives prove the capabilities of the Centre and contribute to further resource mobilization and fundraising without being "expensive".¹⁶

Good practice example: growth of a small "Best Practice Programme" in Moldova

In Moldova, the 'Best Practice' programme is highly visible and the municipalities' awareness is increasing steadily (the number of participating municipalities raised from 50 in 2013, to 56 in 2014, and to 71 in 2015.) Also, the quality and consistency of best practices increased. This small initiative has paved the way for the implementation of the PCF.

¹⁵ Project partners, local stakeholders and even local staff have agreed that the CoE's procurement regulations and procedures are lengthy, causing delays and adversely affecting the ability of the Centre to deliver swift results, especially when compared with those of other international actors.

¹⁶ All figures outlined in this paragraph are as of 29 November 2016. With end-of-year payments, the figures for operational costs are expected to increase marginally for the entire year 2016

58. However, such initiatives cannot suffice to meaningfully respond to the member States' demands: on the one hand, the Centre has to turn down many requests for assistance due to the limited ordinary Budget, and on the other hand the Centre's operations are donor-dependent. The structure of the Centre's budget is illustrative, as only 22% of its activities are funded by the Ordinary Budget – and this includes human resources, which in practice dedicate a significant proportion of their work to the supervision and administration of extra-budgetary projects. In order to switch from a developing to a fully developed institution, the Centre would benefit from additional funding for institutional capacity, research, knowledge management and planning. Open-ended voluntary contributions (not affected to a specific programme) might be a way to accelerate this transition, but it requires high donor confidence.

59. With over 78% of the Centre's budget originating from extra budgetary contributions, donor dependency often means lack of continuity: some interlocutors considered that *'the money precedes and leads the programmes, not the opposite'*. The timing of receipt of the grants and the relatively short lifespan of the projects are detrimental to the inception of projects. Needs assessment, consultations and planning of activities are usually not included in this inception period. However the staff is perfectly aware that it needs to be done. Some of this work is performed by the core staff of the Centre before or between projects, and it is facilitated by the existence of a set of semi-standardised tools which are adapted to the specific situation in the country. That considerably eases programme design. However, with modest core staffing, the bulk of this work rests on project staff, at the start of the projects. This often leads to delays in activity implementation and a flurry of events towards the end of the programmes, as illustrated by the progress and budget reports of the programmes. This situation does not contribute to project administration, or to coordination with other entities of the CoE. The Centre needs to document these challenges in its reporting, and use its past reports as well as the new Programme Management Manual (PMM) tool to encourage the donors to include an inception period in the projects.60. Budget planning is somewhat imprecise, particularly as concerns the Ordinary Budget. The operational budget for the Centre, separate from the CDDG's, is reportedly re-adjusted frequently. In practice, transfers of resources between the two main activities of the Programme and Budget document's line are reported as frequent, and the Centre's does not appear to produce a regular budget analysis of its own. Project reports as well as annual reports are very activity-based, narrative rather than analytical, and often repetitive. The Centre lacks a consistent way of monitoring and acknowledging achievements, measuring results and impact, as well as an analytical process which would identify lessons learned and success factors for the implementation of the tools. There is an impression that the staff of the Centre is focused on day-to-day activities, and lacks analytical, reporting and planning capacity. This factor compounds the Centre's tendency, pointed out above, to spread itself too thinly under difficult budgetary circumstances, with many interventions in a large number of countries. Some donors have also reported that more precise budget reporting and more analytical content reporting would go a long way to boost confidence.

3.5. Effectiveness and Impact

To what extent do the tools, programmes and activities of the Centre fulfil their stated objectives? What have been examples of the institutional impact that the Centre of Expertise has had at the level of local administrations in member States?

Finding 10: The Centre's interventions create positive experience to kick start reforms, which need to be sustained by other domestic and international actors.

61. The Centre is a highly entrepreneurial institution, which is future-oriented and strives to make the most of opportunities. This is very positive and has contributed to its good reputation among beneficiaries. The Centre implements its mission in alignment with the identified needs of the respective countries, as well as determined by government policy objectives for reforms. These reforms are mostly supported by other international actors i.e. the European Union, USAID, UNDP who have incomparably larger budgets and larger-scale operations on the ground: they historically invest a lot in national public administration reform, and over the past decade, they have become increasingly active to promote local government reform.¹⁷ Their programmes often target more than half of the larger cities, and a sizeable sample of smaller municipalities. Where they address the regional level, they also aim to make a difference in all regions. Finally, their programmes tend to channel considerable funding or equipment to both national and local levels of governance, which is clearly not within the activity portfolio of the Centre.

62. In contrast, the Centre of Expertise has a very modest budget and small size of operations, and cannot usually engage meaningfully into large-scale programmes targeting a high number of local government units. The Centre's tools usually target a few select municipalities in a country, betting on replication in other municipalities. This model does not enable to reach a critical size that would have direct impact beyond selected municipalities. To make a sizeable difference at the scale of a country, the Centre would need to deploy widely at the field level, which it is not equipped to do. To make the most of this situation, the Centre therefore conceives the tools as good practice pilots, which a number of local self-governance units' experiment, as pioneers.¹⁸ These programmes create positive experiences in limited areas of reform (thematic, geographic or institutional), which increase the partners' ownership and readiness for wider implementation: these positive experiences constitute entry points into larger reform initiatives. The impact of this approach does not depend directly on the programmes themselves, but on the readiness of various actors to carry on using the Centre's tools, and replicate these practices beyond the Centre's programmes. These actors include national authorities, elected officials, associations, progressive local communities - and other international actors with higher funding. The replication worked well in Albania and Serbia, where human resources management reforms piloted initially in a small number of municipalities were subsequently implemented in all municipalities.

Good practice example: coordination with other international actors for achieving multiplier effects in Ukraine

In Ukraine, the Government, supported by several international actors, is gradually reforming the territorial organisation of municipalities. A draft law developed with the Centre's legislative assistance is expected to result in obligatory mergers of municipalities (amalgamation), in order to increase their average size and reduce their overall number, with the aim to make decentralisation possible and increase local government efficiency and realise benefits from economies of scale. Until the law enters into force, municipalities have an option to voluntarily amalgamate. The Centre, with a combination of tools (in particular amalgamation, but also inter-municipal cooperation, good practice programme, leadership academy, performance management

¹⁷ For instance, the Decentralization Offering Better Results and Efficiency (DOBRE) programme, one of the programmes run by USAID in Ukraine on decentralisation, has a budget of USD 50 million for the period 2016-2021.

¹⁸ Exceptionally, the Centre managed to cover all LGUs in Albania by taking advantage of the on-going territorial reform which drastically reduced the number of municipalities (currently 12 regions, 65 municipalities and 309 communes).

and human resources management) has supported municipalities which volunteered to pioneer amalgamation.

Despite difficulties of coordination at the programme design phase, the Centre has successfully communicated with large donors including USAID and the EU Delegation, in order to establish synergies. For instance, a large USAID programme on territorial amalgamation is using the role models supported by the Centre.

63. In parallel, the Centre provides legislative reform assistance, which at the same time:
- a) Has a high impact compared to its cost, bearing in mind the high level of credibility enjoyed by this activity, and the potential implication of legislative changes;
 - b) Enables or encourages the replication of certain tools, by channelling the standards concerned into the legal framework.

Good practice example: synergy between legislative assistance and implementation of tools

A good example of mutual reinforcement between legislative assistance and a tool is territorial amalgamation in Ukraine. The Centre is supporting the Government and Parliament with advice and expertise, in the preparation of the future laws on territorial organisation, including municipal amalgamation. Meanwhile, the Centre is piloting the territorial amalgamation tool with several municipalities on a voluntary basis. The successes registered by these municipalities create good precedents which will facilitate the implementation of the future law country-wide, while legislative support makes the piloting of the tool particularly meaningful. This synergy between legislative assistance and implementation of a tool on the same topic is a good practice which should be reproduced in order to achieve high impact with limited resources.

64. Legislative assistance was repeatedly identified by interviewees as the chief niche of expertise of the Centre, highly valued by peers and beneficiaries in all visited countries, and perceived to be at the cutting edge. Interviews point to possible ways to perfect it further, with more proximity between the legal experts and the national actors (both in the Government and Parliament). The Centre, having the unique expertise and ability to compare experiences from all its member States, increasingly flags risks and issues at the stage of preparation of legislation, not only following requests to draft laws or provide expert opinions. This trend is positive and should be enhanced, in order to increase the impact of legislative assistance.

Good practice example: holistic and consistent approach to interventions in Albania

The Centre's support to the implementation of the new law on civil servants in Albania provides an interesting sample of the Centre's capabilities. The expertise and constant assistance provided by the Centre have been highly praised by all beneficiaries. They described continuous advice provided by the Centre to the relevant institutions at national and local levels, in order to facilitate future cooperation. The capacity building, the support given to the human resource database for municipalities, and the assistance to the establishment of a helpdesk for citizens have empowered local government units to implement new legal provisions.

65. Against this background, the most successful interventions of the Centre combine:

- a) Pioneering the implementation of standards through the tools in showcase local self-government units;
- b) Steering important legislative reforms on decentralisation, on local-level public administration reform, and on the services devolved to local government;
- c) Advocating and advising policy orientations on decentralisation and local government.

Good practice example: continuous legislative assistance in Ukraine

The example of Ukraine, where, at the request of the Deputy Prime Minister, the CoE delegated a permanent staff member (formerly Head of the Centre) with the Government to work on a package of legislative reforms, is a good way to ensure continuity of legislative advice, but also advocacy increasing political will at national level. With sufficient donor commitment, this practice could be replicated in future programmes with the delegation of a project-funded expert on a permanent or at least regular basis throughout the life of the programme, in countries requiring intensive legislative assistance.

Finding 11: The Centre can increase its impact through better strategic planning and coordination with other stakeholders

66. The chances of success of this model rest upon political will, which the Centre is partly influencing, with significant margin for improvement:

- a) Political will at national level, which conditions the endorsement of good practices by decision makers, and the adoption of recommended legislative changes. The Centre does advocate for change and, as reported by other beneficiaries and international partners, sometimes contributes to overcoming difficulties in reform efforts, like in Ukraine, Albania or Malta. However, some interviewees pointed that, under the existing human resource constraints of the Centre, advocacy sometimes lacks continuity and regularity, or that it sometimes takes place too late in the national decision making processes. Clearer strategic priorities could help orient advocacy and increase its effectiveness.
- b) Political will and motivation at the local level, which conditions the appetite of other municipalities to re-use the tools piloted by programmes. Local level advocacy would require more resources than the Centre can count on. However, user-friendliness of the tools could go a long way to encourage replication. Several beneficiaries have stated that for easier replication certain new and complex tools such as “Inter-municipal cooperation” or “Cross-border cooperation” could be improved in terms of user-friendliness and direct access to domestic experts by the municipalities. Higher visibility of successful programmes could also encourage other municipalities to follow the early adopters. This requires more intensive programme monitoring, as well as more analytical reporting in order to identify, document, and communicate these successes.

67. The Centre’s model is also highly dependent on donors, whose role is paramount in encouraging the implementation of reforms and the use of the Centre’s tools and advocated principles. In this sense, the Centre sometimes operates as a 'door opener' followed by other, larger donors. Where this situation occurs, it is important that the Centre communicates and advocates early on with other donors in order to channel the standards and the tools into their intervention. This calls, once more, for stronger monitoring in order to identify such opportunities early on, and for strategic planning, in order to prioritize for each country the tools that are conducive to replication by other donors. The Centre further needs to demonstrate and analyse its

results country by country, and to secure recognition of its successful pilot activities, so that larger donors' programmes are encouraged to build on them and use the CoE tools and standards.

68. CoE stakeholders explained: “*the Centre does not usually engage in small-scale projects without expecting a national or at least regional impact*”. This constitutes a first step towards prioritization, but still falls short of strategic planning based on analysis. With ten-year experience, the Centre should use its wealth of knowledge and accumulated know-how to strengthen itself as an institution, within the CoE and among international local government promoters.

Finding 12: The Centre's gender mainstreaming is apparent but needs to be monitored

69. In the countries visited the evaluation team noted achievements in promoting gender issues in local governance. Some programmes clearly demonstrated that gender-sensitive empowerment was an end in itself, beyond mere gender balance in the participation to activities and events. However, it was difficult to directly attribute gender empowerment to the intervention of the Centre, probably because the Centre has not developed gender-sensitive monitoring and indicators. Despite active promotion of gender issues in local governance, the evaluation team could not observe a systematic effort to mainstream gender concerns into local governance.

Good practice examples: gender approaches in local self-government support

'Leadership Academy', 'Inter-Municipal Cooperation', 'Modern and Effective Human Resource Management' toolkits address gender mainstreaming. 'Public Ethics Benchmark' is pending updated to include gender issues.

Legislative advice in Ukraine included gender-specific recommendations. In addition, the Centre supported the creation of the women section of the Association of Village Councils and conducted a Leadership Academy programme for women elected representatives. 'Best Practices' in Moldova at equal competencies favours the least represented gender, in particular as regards applications for the establishment of community centres.

In calls for experts, a gender balance approach and knowledge of gender concepts was included, though it was not the main selection criterion.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusions

70. Over the past ten years the Centre has developed into an emerging institution within the CoE. In an entrepreneurial fashion, it has shown its ability to seize growth opportunities, to be flexible and build significant expertise. The activities conducted by the Centre enjoy a good reputation, which is both acquired through satisfactory experiences, and owing to the overall image of the CoE. Although its partners do not always identify the Centre as a distinct entity of the CoE, they express a good level of trust towards its tools and its staff.

71. The Centre's original mission, defined in the Action Plan adopted at the 2005 Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the CoE, was not formulated with a high level of precision, but focused mostly on "*capacity building at the local and regional level*". In implementing this mission, the Centre has mostly operated by responding to the demand of the member States and local and regional authorities. This demand has evolved with the trends in local self-government policies, and the Centre's effective mission mirrored this trend: from the provision of technical assistance to local government authorities, the Centre has moved on to the provision of assistance for multi-level governance at all levels of government. The aim is still to improve local governance along the lines of the Charter and the standards developed by the CDDG and other CoE entities - but the means now include the organisation of the complementary roles of the national, regional and local levels. In parallel, the Centre has multiplied its partners, to include, in addition to local government civil servants, national-level legislative and executive branches, locally elected officials, associations of local self-government units, and civil society. This state of affairs is logical and satisfactory, and the evaluation team saw no need to further expand the portfolio of the Centre towards national public administration reform.

72. In order to respond to these trends, and to integrate the evolution of the CoE soft standards in this area, the Centre has diversified its offer of services through a growing number of semi-standardized "tools". These packages of programmes and guidelines responding to the typical needs of member States and increasingly address multi-level governance and participatory approaches to local government. The Centre also increasingly offers legislative assistance in the field of decentralization and self-governance, which is particularly appreciated by all stakeholders and clearly constitute a niche of expertise of the Centre, especially where it is scaled up and provided consistently as is the case in Ukraine. The Centre's services overall are therefore relevant to the needs of the member States and the beneficiaries, although the programme design would benefit from more direct involvement of individual partners in order to increase their long-term commitment. The expertise of the Centre is highly regarded and enjoys high legitimacy, because it encapsulates the experience of all member States, operationalizes the Charter, and channels standards which are consensually developed through the CoE's inter-governmental activities.

73. In doing so, the Centre has obvious synergies with the Congress, which are defined at policy level by a division of labour. This situation is satisfactory, as long as operational-level coordination and exchange of information takes place, and marginal adjustments are made on a case-to-case basis, both at headquarters and in the field. Technical level improvements in the regularity and timing of such consultations, with focus on the planning process and delivery of a common message to stakeholders, should suffice to increase the benefits of this synergy.

74. In the implementation of its mission, the Centre generally meets the expectations of its partners, within well-understood limits. They are aware of the tight budgetary constraints of the Centre, and know the modest size of its programmes. The volume of the Centre's operations is

very limited especially in comparison with the large assistance programmes provided in parallel, in some countries, by other international actors. The beneficiaries of the Centre's activities therefore use the tools as avenues to experiment in implementing the standards, explore reform options, or validate assumptions on good practices rather than as instruments to roll out a reform agenda. The Centre's operations may be successful in the select locations where they are implemented, but they cannot produce measurable impact at the scale of member States. However, where there is political will, national decision-makers along with international actors supporting the bulk of reform efforts, do replicate these pilots on a large scale. In this sense, the Centre often acts as a door opener for larger reform efforts, and for country-wide deployment of good practices.

75. This approach appears as a valid positioning which can make the most of budgetary constraints and excellent assets in terms of expertise. However, there is a clear margin of improvement to perfect the user-friendliness of the most complex tools and make them more easily replicable. The Centre also needs to compile, update and manage its accumulated knowledge in order to realize its pioneering potential and respond to emerging needs. Finally, the Centre needs to ensure better monitoring, identification and visibility of its successes, and communicate them better to domestic partners and larger international actors in the countries.

76. In order to achieve this within existing budgetary constraints and the existing staffing limits, the Centre needs to liberate capacity at middle management level. For the time being, this capacity is too occupied with day-to-day reviews of input and decision making, management of relationships with an enormous number of partners in many countries, and a tendency to take action on too many opportunities for activities without sufficient assessment of their potential impact or strategic importance. In other words, the Centre is spreading itself too thin both through the multiplicity of its activities and through of lengthy business processes. This is done at the expense of monitoring, analysing, reporting, prioritizing and strategic planning. These tendencies are characteristic of developing institutions. The Centre therefore needs to operate a qualitative leap to consolidate itself institutionally and reach its cruising performance.

77. The first step in this direction would be an inclusive strategic planning exercise using the experience of core and project staff as well as key experts, which would define the key priorities of the Centre over the next period. This process, coupled with the deployment of new and decentralized budget processes through the PMM, would enable more delegation to the programme staff in day to day decisions and implementation of directions. Increased efficiency would liberate analytical capacity, which would feed into knowledge management and programme planning. It would also complement the demand-driven approach of the Centre with pro-active and focused planning and fundraising. It would increase the Centre's ability to report both to its donors and to its governing body at a more strategic level, and would give at least marginally more leverage in donor relations.

4.2. Recommendations

79. The DIO recommends that:

1. The management of the Centre, with the participation of all staff and key experts and in consultation with other relevant entities of the CoE, conduct a strategic planning exercise

to define the vision, mission, long term objectives and priorities of the Centre as an institution.

2. The Centre and the Congress organise coordination meetings at least on a quarterly basis.
3. The Centre prepare outlines for possible future programmes in a select number of countries along the lines of strategic priorities.
4. The management of the Centre, in coordination with ODGP, encourages donors to make non-earmarked voluntary contributions in order to support Ordinary Budget-funded activities within the Centre's strategy, with particular emphasis on countries not covered by Action Plans and large programmes.
5. The Centre update its monitoring tools and its reporting formats, both for Ordinary Budget activities and for its programmes financed by extra budgetary resources, with an emphasis on analysis of results, impact and budget management.
6. The Centre increase the visibility of its tools and achievements, in particular through more active use of its website.
7. Increase delegation to programme staff for the timing of activities, organisation of events, and monitoring of activities.
8. Include an inception phase in the Centre's programmes, as much as donors allow with an emphasis on local consultation on the planning of activities.
9. Match the choice of tools implemented in each country with the topics of legislative assistance.
10. Consider the development of a web-based repository of lessons learned and practices from programmes.
11. Consider the development of a new tool supporting research on local self-government.

5. APPENDICES

5.1. List of documents

Council of Europe portal

- "Good governance" and sub-categories "European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG)", "Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform", "Eastern Partnership Programme": http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/EAP/default_en.asp
- "The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities": http://www.coe.int/t/Congress/default_en.asp
- European Charter of Local Self-Government: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168007a088>
- Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level: http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Strategy_Innovation/default_en.asp
- The 12 principles for good governance at local level, with tools for implementation: http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Strategy_Innovation/12principles_en.asp
- Action Plans and documents for cooperation, Interim and final reports - Albania, Armenia, Malta, Moldova, Ukraine: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/programmes/action-plans>
- The Governance Tools of the Council of Europe - Conference - Public Governance as the Foundation of European Integration - Presentation Gennadiy Kosyak: http://www.bacid.eu/images/4/46/Presentation_Gennadiy_Kosyak.pdf
- Interaction between the CDDG and other Council of Europe bodies: http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/CDDG/GraphCDDG_EN.pdf
- http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/CDDG/default_en.asp
- European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) policy and progress reports: <https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp>

Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform

- Annual activity reports (2007-2014): http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Centre_expertise/default_en.asp
- Annual Activity Report 2015
- Activities and perspectives for 2016
- Report of the Advisory Board meeting: [https://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Centre_Expertise/Advisory_Board/C/ELGR-AB\(2016\)6_en.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Centre_Expertise/Advisory_Board/C/ELGR-AB(2016)6_en.pdf)
- Toolkits: http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/WCD/Toolkits_en.asp
- Overview of programmes and activities
- Budget for 2016
- Budget for 2015

Projects, addenda, reports

Albania

- Strengthening Local Government Structures and Cooperation of Local Elected Representatives in Albania - Phase II
- Programmatic Co-operation Document 2015-2017
- Ministry on Local Issues web portal - <http://www.kryeministria.al/en>
- Council of Europe Office in Albania web site: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/tirana/home>

Armenia

- Support to consolidating Local Democracy in Armenia - Interim Report, Revised budget
- Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia web portal: <http://www.gov.am/en/structure/229/>
- Council of Europe Office in Armenia web site: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/yerevan>

Armenia / Azerbaijan / Georgia / Republic of Moldova / Ukraine / Belarus

- PCF (EU-CoE Programmatic Co-operation Framework in the Eastern Partnership Countries) Enhancing local democracy - Regional (Strengthening institutional frameworks for local governance) - Special Conditions, Description of the Action, three years' matrix, reports

Malta

- Cooperation in the framework of EEA and Norway Grants: Malta - Contract, Progress Report, Financial Report
- A Partnership for Creative Governance Council of Europe Progress Report January 2015 - February 2016
- <https://www.gov.mt/en/Pages/gov.mt%20homepage.aspx>
- Council of Europe Office in Malta web site

Moldova

- Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of the Republic of Moldova web portal - <http://www.mdrc.gov.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=214&id=3008&t=Informatii-publice/Functii-vacante/Ministry-of-Regio>
- Institute for Development and Social Initiatives - IDIS Viitorul web site: <http://www.viitorul.org/index.php?l=en>
- Council of Europe Office in Moldova web site: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/chisinau/home>

Serbia

- Programmatic document (including budget): Strengthening of the administrative capacities of Serbian local authorities through modern human resources management and professional training of employees

Ukraine

- Council of Europe - Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform - Ukraine Peer Review Team Report
- Technical Support to Public Sector Reforms in Ukraine 2011 - 2014 - Strengthening the Capacity of Local Authorities in Ukraine (funded by the Governments of Denmark and Switzerland) - Programme, Addendum and Final Report
- Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine
- Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine web portal: <http://www.minregion.gov.ua/>
- Council of Europe Office in Ukraine web site: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/home>

5.2. List of interviews

NO	DATE	NAME	POSITION	CITY / COUNTRY
1	15.09.2016	Alfonso Zardi	Head of Department, Democratic Institutions and Governance Department, Good Governance Division	Strasbourg, France
2	15.09.2016	Jutta Gutzkow	Head of the Division and Head of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform	Strasbourg, France
3	15.09.2016	Alina Tatarenko	Deputy Head of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform	Strasbourg, France
4	15.09.2016	Maria Ochoa-Llido	Executive Secretary, Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	Strasbourg, France
5	15.09.2016	Marité Moras	Head of the Co-operation Activities Unit Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	Strasbourg, France
6	15.09.2016	Aygen Becquart	Head of Evaluation Division, Directorate of Internal Oversight	Strasbourg, France
7	15.09.2016	Jutta Gutzkow	Head of the Division and Head of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform	Strasbourg, France
8	16.09.2016	Severina Spassova	Programme Coordinator of the Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform	Strasbourg, France
9	16.09.2016	Gennadiy Kosyak	Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform	Strasbourg, France
10	16.09.2016	Niall Sheerin	Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform	Strasbourg, France
11	16.09.2016	Guillaume Parent	Project Co-ordinator, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	Strasbourg, France
12	16.09.2016	Svetislav Paunovic	Project Co-ordinator, Co-operation Activities Unit, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities	Strasbourg, France
13	19.09.2016	Daniel Popescu	Special Adviser to the Government of Ukraine on decentralisation	Strasbourg, France
14	19.09.2016	Andriy Guk	Manager of the Programme “Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine”	Kyiv, Ukraine
15	19.09.2016	Olga Shevchuk	Manager of the Programme “Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine”	Kyiv, Ukraine
16	19.09.2016	Kateryna Sasina	Administrative assistant of the Programme “Decentralisation and Territorial Consolidation in Ukraine”	Kyiv, Ukraine
17	19.09.2016	Mårten Ehnberg	Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, Representative of the Secretary General in charge of the co-ordination of the co-operation programmes in Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
18	19.09.2016	Olena Lytvynenko	Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
19	20.09.2016	Dominik Papeenheim	Sector Manager - Regional and Local Development / Decentralisation of Governance, Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
20	20.09.2016	Serhiy Sharshov	Director of the Directorate on LSG and Territorial Organisation of Power, Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Municipal Economy of Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
21	20.09.2016	Angela Malyuha	Head of the Secretariat of the Parliamentary Committee on State Building, Regional Policy and Local Self-Government	Kyiv, Ukraine

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22	20.09.2016	Olena Tomniuk	Head of the Development Centre, Association of Ukrainian Cities	Kyiv, Ukraine
23	20.09.2016	Margaryta Yurchenko	Director of the Centre on professional training and communication, Association of Ukrainian Cities	Kyiv, Ukraine
24	20.09.2016	Natalia Lazarenko	Coordinator of international cooperation, Association of Ukrainian Cities	Kyiv, Ukraine
25	20.09.2016	Serhiy Tsybytovskiy	Head of the Legal Division of the Secretariat of Ukrainian Association of Rayon and Oblast Councils	Kyiv, Ukraine
26	20.09.2016	Andriy Palyi	Head of the Communication and PR Division of the Secretariat of Ukrainian Association of Rayon and Oblast Councils	Kyiv, Ukraine
27	20.09.2016	Christian Disler	Senior Advisor, Swiss Cooperation Office Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
28	20.09.2016	Ilona Postemska	National Programme Officer, Swiss Cooperation Office Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
29	21.09.2016	Oleksandr Vrublevskiy	Expert of legal issues, NGO "Civil Society Institute"	Kyiv, Ukraine
30	21.09.2016	Oleg Vatamaniuk	Programme manager, NGO "Civil Society Institute"	Kyiv, Ukraine
31	21.09.2016	Valentyna Poltavets	Executive director NGO "Association of Small Towns of Ukraine"	Kyiv, Ukraine
32	21.09.2016	Ihor Abramiuk	Local Expert	Kyiv, Ukraine
33	21.09.2016	Liudmyla Pashko	Professor of the Department of Parliamentary and Political Management, National Academy of Public Administration	Kyiv, Ukraine
34	22.09.2016	Mykola Poyedynok	Deputy President - head of Executive Directorate, All-Ukrainian Association of Village and Settlement Councils	Kyiv, Ukraine
35	22.09.2016	Vadym Savchenko	Deputy Executive Directorate on PR and international relations, All-Ukrainian Association of Village and Settlement Councils	Kyiv, Ukraine
36	22.09.2016	Vasyl Kuibida	President of the National Academy of Public Administration under the President of Ukraine	Kyiv, Ukraine
37	22.09.2016	Volodymyr Diahiliev	Executive Director of the International Children's TV Festival "Dytiatko", organisational committee	Kharkiv, Ukraine
38	22.09.2016	Serhiy Chernov	President of the Ukrainian Association of Rayon and Oblast Councils, Chair of Kharkiv Regional Council	Kharkiv, Ukraine
39	22.09.2016	Diana Barinova	Coordinator of Kharkiv Regional reform support office (in 2015 director of the reform office)	Kharkiv, Ukraine
40	03.10.2016	Hartmut Rank	Rule of Law Adviser, OSCE	Chisinau, Moldova
41	03.10.2016	Irina Ionita	Former USAID project, Member of the Council of the Best Practice Programme	Chisinau, Moldova
42	03.10.2016	Jose-Luis Herrero	Head of CoE Office in Chisinau	Chisinau, Moldova
43	03.10.2016	Nicolae Buzu	Mayor of Peresecina	Peresecina, Moldova
44	03.10.2016	Ion Beschieru	Programme Manager	Chisinau, Moldova
45	03.10.2016	Sergiu Tatarov	Senior Project Officer (Centre)	Chisinau, Moldova
46	03.10.2016	Irina Popusoi	Project Assistant	Chisinau, Moldova
47	04.10.2016	Valentina Casian	Mayor of Strășeni	Strășeni, Moldova
48	04.10.2016	Feodosia Bunescu	Mayor of Bahrinești	Bahrinești, Moldova
49	04.10.2016	Silvia Turcanu	Mayor of Chișcăreni	Chișcăreni, Moldova

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50	05.10.2016	Stefan Vlas	MP, member of BPP Board	Chisinau, Moldova
51	05.10.2016	Viorel Furdui	Executive Director, CALM	Chisinau, Moldova
52	05.10.2016	Alexandru Osadci	Programme Manager, CALM	Chisinau, Moldova
53	05.10.2016	Sergiu Armasu	Mayor of Ialoveni	Ialoveni, Moldova
54	05.10.2016	Liubomir Chirlac	Deputy Director, IDIS Viitorul	Chisinau, Moldova
55	05.10.2016	Ana-Maria Veverita	Programme Manager, IDIS Viitorul	Chisinau, Moldova
56	05.10.2016	Iulian Rusu	Local Expert	Chisinau, Moldova
57	05.10.2016	Viorel Zabolotnic	Local Expert	Chisinau, Moldova
58	06.10.2016	Jordi Rodriguez-Ruiz	Program Manager, EU Delegation	Chisinau, Moldova
59	06.10.2016	Sergiu Tatarov	Senior Project Officer (Centre)	Chisinau, Moldova
60	06.10.2016	Valentin Guznac	Deputy Secretary General of the Government, State Chancellery	Chisinau, Moldova
61	06.10.2016	Violeta Frunze	Congress	Chisinau, Moldova
62	06.10.2016	Mihail Esir	Mayor, Congaz	Comrat, Moldova
63	06.10.2016	Olesia Tanasoglo	Vicepresident of the Executive Committee UTA Gagauzia	Comrat, Moldova
64	06.10.2016	Dmitrii Constantinov	Head of the Popular Assembly UTA Gagauzia	Comrat, Moldova
65	06.10.2016	Vitalii Derevenko	Deputy Head of division, Executive Committee	Comrat, Moldova
66	22.09.2016	Svitlana Grishenko	Congress representative Ukraine, field office	Kyiv, Ukraine
67	10.10.2016	Andrea Novakovic	City of Dubrovnik Development agency, Croatia	Dubrovnik, Croatia <i>Skype</i>
68	07.10.2016	Daniele Del Bianco	ISIG Director	Gorizia, Italy <i>Skype</i>
69	06.10.2016	Mar Zabala	Spain, Basque Country Association of Municipalities	Bilbao, Spain <i>Skype</i>
70	19.10.2016	Jon Barber	Expert, UK	United Kingdom <i>Skype</i>
71	07.10.2016	John Jackson	Expert, UK	United Kingdom <i>Skype</i>
72	21.10.2016	Cezary Trutowski	Expert, Poland	Warsaw, Poland <i>Skype</i>
73	21.10.2016	Milica Marković	Serbian Deputy Minister for Public Administration and Local Self-Government	Belgrade, Serbia <i>Skype</i>
74	19.05.2016	Greta-Ulland Billing	Senior International Adviser, Department for Local Government, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, Norway, CDDG	Strasbourg, France
75	18.05.2016	Paul Rowsell	Deputy Director, Governance Reform and Democracy Unit, Department for Communities and Local Government, UK Chair of the CDDG	Strasbourg, France
76	19.05.2016	Robert Tabone	Officer in Scale 4, Head EU & International Affairs, Department for Local Government, Ministry For Justice, Culture and Local Government, Malta, CDDG	Strasbourg, France
77	17.10.2016	Arben Qesku	Senior Project Officer	Tirana, Albania
78	17.10.2016	Ened Kercini	Director of IT and Innovation Directory at the Department of Public Administration (DoPA)	Tirana, Albania
79	17.10.2016	Olsi Dekovi	Acting Head of Office	Tirana, Albania
80	17.10.2016	Fatmir Demneri	Director of the Albanian School of Public Administration (ASPA)	Tirana, Albania
81	17.10.2016	Enkela Dudushi	Director of Institutional Development and Human Resources	Tirana, Albania

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82	17.10.2016	Edlira Muhedini	Local Project Officer	Tirana, Albania
83	17.10.2016	Enea Hoti	Advisor to the Minister of Local Issues	Tirana, Albania
84	17.10.2016	Florenca Korbi	Project Assistant	Tirana, Albania
85	18.10.2016	Keti Luarasi	Director General, Tirana, Albania Municipality	Tirana, Albania
86	18.10.2016	Fjoralba Aleksii	Specialist of HR, Tirana, Albania Municipality	Tirana, Albania
87	18.10.2016	Sofi Noti	Specialist of HR, Tirana, Albania Municipality	Tirana, Albania
88	18.10.2016	Milena Sauku	Specialist of HR, Tirana, Albania Municipality	Tirana, Albania
89	18.10.2016	Ermina Shehi	Director of Human Resources Management I Shijak Municipality	Shijak, Albania
90	18.10.2016	Ardita Peraj	Director of Human Resource Management in Shkodër Municipality	Shkodër, Albania
91	18.10.2016	Drita Zeneli	Director of Human Resources Department in Durres Municipality	Durres, Albania
92	19.10.2016	Laura Brinja	Director of Human Resources Department in Vlorë Municipality	Vlorë, Albania
93	19.10.2016	Evisa Mustafaj	Director of Human Resources Department in Roskovec Municipality	Roskovec, Albania
94	20.10.2016	Suad Barbullushi	IT expert of E-PAV	Tirana, Albania
95	20.10.2016	Artan Rroji	HRM Expert	Tirana, Albania
96	20.10.2016	Besard Buzi	Help desk at DoPA	Tirana, Albania
97	20.10.2016	Kidisa Male	Help desk at DoPA	Tirana, Albania
98	20.10.2016	Albana Dhimitri	Expert HRM and IMC	Tirana, Albania
99	20.10.2016	Alba Dakoli	Expert HRM and IMC	Tirana, Albania
100	20.10.2016	Debora Kern	Head of Governance Sector, Embassy of Switzerland	Tirana, Albania
101	20.10.2016	Elda Bagaviki	Program Manager, , Embassy of Switzerland	Tirana, Albania
102	21.10.2016	Agron Haxhimali	Executive Director, Association of Albanian Municipalities	Tirana, Albania
103	21.10.2016	Blerina Guga	Executive Director, Regional Association of Albania	Tirana, Albania