# Summary of the Evaluation report

**Purpose of the evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the effects of the project **“Strengthening capacity of veterinary laboratories and veterinary inspection services for implementation of National Residue Monitoring Program (NRMP) in accordance with EU standards”** (or the Project), supported by the Czech Development Cooperation (CDC) in the sector of public administration and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Its key objective is to acquire independent, objectively substantiated and consistent findings, conclusions and recommendations applicable in decision-making of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Czech Development Agency on the focus and implementation methods of CDC in relevant sector in BiH in future. The evaluation will feed into the overall evaluation of the Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2010-2017. A secondary objective of this evaluation is a pilot application of a new methodology for evaluation of cross-cutting principles of CDC, elaborated by the Institute for Evaluations and Social Analyses, Ltd. with the support by program Omega of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic.

**Short description of evaluated interventions and context**

The project “Strengthening capacity of veterinary laboratories and veterinary inspection services for implementation of National Residue Monitoring Program (NRMP) in accordance with EU standards” was aimed at supporting the export of products of animal origin from BiH to EU markets. Within this scope the project focused on three key areas:

* Strengthening the capacities of three selected laboratories in residue monitoring analyses
* Strengthening the capacities of veterinary inspection services by the means of trainings for veterinary inspectors
* Support and facilitation of the process of NRMP implementation within the administrative structure of BiH

Identification of the Project was based on the need to align the system of residue monitoring in BiH with EU standards in order to enable the export of products of animal origin to European markets. This need became even more imminent with the entrance of Croatia, a significant trading partner, to the EU, when Croatia had to close its market to these products from BiH.

**Identification of the evaluation team**

The evaluation is implemented by HaskoningDHV Czech Republic, Ltd. The evaluation team consists of:

* Lukáš Maláč, key expert and project team leader
* Radim Gill, project supervisor, expert on project cycle management
* Lenka Žáková, expert in evaluation methodology
* Gabriela Bořilová, expert in the fields of food hygiene, technology and safety
* Alexandar Pljevaljcic, local expert, consultant

**Key findings and conclusions with respect to the evaluation assignment**

**Relevance** of the Project in the sector of public administration and civil society (overlapping into the sector of agriculture) is evaluated as high. The focus of the Project is in line with available strategic documents as well as with the focus of the Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic in BiH for 2010-2017. The Project is consistent with strategic goals in the fields of support to development of public administration capacities, approximation with EU standards as a part of the accession process, rural and agriculture development, etc.

Stakeholders involved in the evaluation also assess the Project as highly relevant in the context of NRMP implementation. This programme implementation represents one of the key pre-requisites to opening of EU markets to the export of products of animal origin from BiH.

The logical framework of the Project is sufficiently complex; the Project addresses all the issues relevant to the formulated objective of the residue monitoring system set-up.

The **efficiency** of the Project is also assessed as high. This assessment is based on the following factors: the Project primarily aimed at “soft” activities, i.e. support of institutions in the implementation of NRMP, training of employees of laboratories and veterinary inspection services and at sharing of know-how and good practices. These activities were not cost-demanding – they were based on the available equipment (especially in supported laboratories). In case that purchase of material equipment / instruments was realized within the Project, less costly approaches were adopted (such as second hand instruments, etc.), with respect to fulfilling the requirements on its functionality and applicability.

Cooperation with the project FARMA (Fostering Agricultural Markets Activity) proved as very efficient. The cooperation enabled saving significant finances as well as energy, which would have had to be invested into setting up of a local office. Instead, the implementer of the CDC project had access to support and capacities of the project FARMA, which facilitated the implementation of CDC project activities. This cooperation secured organization support, back office as well as other services (especially with respect to communication with target groups) for the implementer of the CDC project. It considerably reduced the administrative and organizational demands on his operation in the target country and enabled him to focus fully on the contents of the Project.

Some limitations to the efficiency of the implemented activities were observed in cases of duplicate methods implementation in the supported laboratories (however, these cases were rather rare). Moreover, in some cases the actual implementation of certain analytical methods is not efficient for a laboratory due to very small number of samples, which are planned to be tested within NRMP implementation and, at the same time, and no commercial demand of them.

The **effectiveness** of the Project is assessed as high as well. This statement is supported by the mere fact that the NRMP was approved by respective authorities of the EU in 2015 and that it is formulated and implemented on annual basis.

Project activities focused primarily on capacity building in laboratories and implementation of new analytical methods. In result, a considerable increase of the share of samples for residue monitoring analyzed in BiH laboratories is registered: whereas at the beginning of the project implementation only 8 % of the samples were analyzed in BiH, the share increased to 62 % of the total number of samples in 2015 (however, this share represents only 38.5 % of the budget on analyses – almost two thirds of the budget was paid to laboratories outside BiH). Moreover, a larger number of analytical methods was validated and accredited with the support of the Project than it was originally planned.

Regarding the capacity building of veterinary inspection services, the project activities were aimed at the training of trainers of veterinary inspectors. Majority of the inspectors who took part in evaluation survey claim that the quality of their work increased as a direct effect of the training.

Significant deficiency of the NRMP system as whole is the absence of an information system, which would secure communication links between various components of the system and ensure proper circulation of the documents. It would also decrease the current dependence of the system on activities of the individual responsible employees of SVO.

**Impacts** of the Project fulfilled the expectations. New methods for residue monitoring were implemented and accredited in the supported laboratories and the share of analyses performed in BiH laboratories has increased. The quality of performance of the veterinary inspectors has raised as well, which mirrors in the decrease of numbers of improperly gathered samples within NRMP requirements as well as outside NRMP implementation. The Project had a positive impact on food quality and safety as it raised the quality standards of production as well as the awareness of this issue among the final beneficiaries and general public.

The Project directly contributed to the EU markets opening to imports of milk and milk products from BiH in 2015.

**Sustainability** of the Project outcomes is rather high. Even though the Project had no explicit exit strategy the ownership of outcomes is fairly high – especially among supported laboratories and SVO. Laboratories have mastered the implemented methods and their employees are able to perform these analyses independently after the phase-out of the Project. The SVO performs its role of a guarantor of the processes of formulation, implementation and monitoring of NRMP and is highly motivated to carry on in this role without direct support of the Project (as the fulfillment of NRMP represents a key pre-requisite to the access of products of animal origin from BiH to EU markets).

The sustainability of the outcomes is weakened by the dependency of laboratories on the acquisition of public contract on performance of the analyses in a tender. Consequently, some of the implemented analytical methods are in fact not performed in the supported laboratories due to the fact, that a different laboratory (local or foreign) has won the contract. Another limitation to the ownership of the supported laboratories is the fact, that in some cases an “individual” rather than “institutional” ownership was achieved. In other words, the knowledge of implemented analytical methods and competence to perform them independently is associated with certain individuals and not the institution itself. This represents a serious risk to sustainability of these methods in the supported laboratories.

On the other hand, the ownership of project outcomes by the veterinary inspectorates is rather low. The inspectorates do not show an initiative to organize regular trainings for veterinary inspectors on their own in the field of sampling for NRMP, which would follow up the trainings provided by the Project in 2013.

Table: Summarization of conclusions

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| **Criteria** | Relevance | Efficiency | Effectiveness | Impacts | Sustainability |
| **Assessment** | High | High | High | Rather high | Rather high |

**Cross-cutting principles**

The Project registered positive effects, particularly in the field of good governance and application of democratic principles. A system of periodic (annual) monitoring / evaluation of NRMP implementation with the participation of all relevant subjects was introduced. Moreover, the communication and general awareness of residue monitoring was strengthened among final beneficiaries as well as (to a lesser extent) among general public. Last but not least, transparent processes of selection of laboratories for analyses were strengthened.

In the field of human rights, gender equality and environment no significant effects of the Project were identified. The ratio of women in trainings was generally the same or even higher than the general ratio of female employees of supported institutions. In environment, some minor positive as well as negative effects were identified, however, these are indirect and rather insignificant in their scope (e.g. indirect impact on particular contaminants affecting the environment due to their monitoring or, on the other hand, a minor increase in production of hazardous waste in supported laboratories).

**Important recommendations**

Based on these conclusions, following recommendations were identified:

**Process and system recommendations**

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| Recommendation | Main recipient | Importance level |
| To emphasise the stakeholders analysis and partnership with well-established institutions at the local level to support the implementation of the projects in local context, especially in the sector of public administration and building of institutions.  | CZDA, Implementer | 1 |
| Keep on building development with other donors and projects and implementation of multi-lateral projects with special emphasis on maximization of Czech FDC added value.  | CZDA | 1 |
| Put more stress on project monitoring, definition quantifiable monitoring indicators of outcomes and data collection (especially baseline data which are difficult to obtain retrospectively)  | CZDA | 3 |

**Sector recommendations**

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| Recommendation | Main recipient | Importance level |
| Support of National Reference Laboratories introduction processes. | CZDA | 2 |
| Support of information system introduction and systematization of processes and communication, decreasing dependence on individuals. | CZDA | 2 |
| Cooperating with partners (FARMA II, other EU donors), focus on overcoming other obstacles of normative, legislative or administrative character (together with associated deficits in stated administration and other subjects capacities) which disable the export of animal origin products to EU – especially in the area of identification and registration of fatstock etc.  | Embassy, CZDA | 1 |
| Develop activities supporting Bosnian sector strategies formulation – cooperating with other donors and stakeholders  | Embassy,CZDA | 3 |

**Project recommendation**

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| Recommendation | Main recipient | Importance level |
| Pay special attention to prevent duplicities in laboratories support, which decrease efficiency and sustainability of the outcomes.  | Implementer, local partner | 2 |
| Stress the economic analysis and analysis of sustainability of introduced methods in case of further support of laboratory capacities | Implementer | 2 |
| Expand accreditations in the cases of methods that do not cover completely matrixes required by the SVO in particular lots of the tender. | Implementer | 2 |