

Evaluation of four projects of the Czech Republic development cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sector “Government and Civil Society Services” - Summary

Purpose of the evaluation

The main purpose of the evaluation, commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is to obtain an independent evaluation of four foreign development cooperation projects of the Czech Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter referred to as BaH) aimed at the transmission of European standards and standards in the technical and commercial fields (metrology, construction), and one project in the agriculture sector. The emphasis of evaluation is on impacts and sustainability, given that the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation will be highly relevant for the further identification and implementation of projects in the thematic area of the Czech Development Strategy focused on Good Governance in the program period 2018-2023.

Brief description of the interventions evaluated and their context

The target country of the project was Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the priority program country of the Czech development cooperation. Bosnia and Herzegovina has long been struggling with a post-conflict transformation. In February 2016, the country applied for admission to the EU, but progress on integration is slow. The Czech Republic's development activities in BaH were governed by the Development Cooperation Program in BaH in 2011-2017. This program document focused on the Czech development cooperation in removing obstacles in the direction of BaH to the EU. On this path, the following priority sectors have been defined: agriculture; environmental protection; water supply and sanitation; government and civil society; energy and health. An important added value of the Czech Republic in implementing the FTA is its "experience with transformation processes and integration into the EU".

The following projects were evaluated:

Project title	Years	Amount spent by CDA (in CZK)	Sector	Brief description
1/ Support of application of free movement of goods principles and increasing safety of products placed on the market in Bosnia and Herzegovina	2012 – 2013 (extended 2014)	5.92 mil.	State administration and civil society	Increased capacity of selected testing laboratories, training of representatives of the state administration and testing laboratory experts in the application of new procedures in the testing laboratories, support for the implementation of new testing procedures at all levels of the state administration.
2/ Support of capacities of the Institute for Standardization of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of implementation of EUROCODES	2014 – 2017 (extended 2018)	9.16 mil.	State administration and civil society	Support of the Institute for Standardization of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Institute for Implementation, Translation, Preparation and Preparation of National Policy Annexes for the design of building structures - EUROCODES.
3/ Expansion of capacity of the Metrology Institute of	2014 - 2016	17.33 mil.	State administration and civil	Support of laboratories capable of performing metrological measurements in the given field and

Bosnia and Herzegovina			society	with given parameters, including adequate training of operators, implementation of the international interlaboratory comparison
4/ Institutional support for control and certification of plant material	2013 – 2016 (extended 2018)	10.07 mil.	Agriculture	Establishment of a system of official control and certification of plant material and its use to improve access to the EU market.

The defined objective of projects in selected sectors was to strengthen the capacity of public administration institutions in BaH and thereby support the country's preparation for EU accession, with a view to improving market conditions, including increasing trade and consumer protection in the country. The subject of the support was human resources, technical and organizational background of institutions and procedural and legislative changes in selected sectors. The projects were implemented by Czech institutions in cooperation with local partner organizations. Target groups were mostly institutions themselves, but other target groups also benefited from project interventions.

Identification of the evaluation team

The evaluation was prepared by the evaluation team of EvetData, z. s.

The members of the evaluation team are: **Eva Kubickova** - Chief Assessor, **Selma Porobić** – Assessor, **Lenka Divoká** – Methodologist, **Jan Říkovský** – Evaluator, **Milan Aujesky** - technical expert - metrology, standardization, **Samir Dolarević** - local technical expert – construction, **Ismeta Ćorić** - Local Technical Expert - Plant Material.

The most important findings and conclusions

Relevance differs from **low to high** by project. Overall, the relevance of the Czech Development Cooperation was assessed as high, to which has contributed to the high level of involvement of target groups in identifying needs and the objectives of supported projects (except for project 1). Relevance of project activities is rather high and in most cases corresponds to defined goals. Projects 2 and 4 did not fully reflect the need for political support / policy-making for full or timely achievement of the project goals.

Efficiency of projects is **quite high**. The cost-effectiveness of projects is high in terms of investment and results. Unplanned outputs (digitization of hydrometeorological data, support for plant cultivation) were also achieved within the planned implementation costs. The efficiency of projects in terms of realized activities and achieved outputs and objectives is evaluated as relatively high to high.

Examples of good practice were identified in (1) effective communication of Czech experts with local partner organizations based on personal approach, consideration of local ways of communication and understanding of the political context of institutional functioning, (2) high degree of support and flexibility of Czech experts to overcome operational and organizational problems implementation of interventions, (3) access of Czech implementers towards achievable/real changes at lower system levels rather than changes at the level of national legislation for which (yet uncertain) political support is, (4) practically oriented training and field training.

Effectiveness varies from **quite low to high** by project. The effectiveness of the project in relation to the objectives achieved differs from the relatively low (project 1) to the very high (projects 3 and 4) and is mainly related to the accuracy of the objectives set in the logical frameworks of the projects. The effectiveness of intervention in meeting the needs of target groups (supported by staff and institutions) was high. Employees who were trained and supported by experts from Czech

implementers were very satisfied with the acquired knowledge and skills and with subsequent methodological support. In addition, supported institutions have positively evaluated the equipment provided and the created organizational facilities to improve the quality of services in their area of competence (except for two laboratories under Project 1). Project interventions have significantly increased the capacity of the institutions supported (IMBiH, BAS, PHPA) and other cooperating entities (hydrometeorological stations, inspectorates, plant material producers) and the quality of their services.

Project impacts also differ from **low to high**. Although some projects did not achieve the planned objectives, the overall impacts are assessed as high in view of the significant increase in the capacities of important public administration institutions, the consequent increase in public administration efficiency and a measurable shift in the institutional and market preparation of BaH for EU accession in the context of a long-lasting, complicated and fragmented system of public administration and political system in BaH. Overall, the impacts of project interventions are assessed as high taking into account the available sources of information within a short timeframe from the end of the projects and taking into account the likely development of the benefits of projects in the supported areas of the sectors. In the case of Project 1, impacts are assessed as low, because the project results have little effect on the reduction of barriers to exports.

Project interventions also had some impacts on groups outside the direct target group - IMBiH customers, end users of IMBiH clients (eg. gas stations), hydrometeorological plants, students, who worked on data processing to create interactive maps, TC members producers and purchasers of plant propagating material.

Sustainability is quite high. Sustainability is assessed as high for projects 2, 3 and 4, in which project outputs and outputs are actively used by target groups (staff, supported by institutions). For project 1, the sustainability of the results is rather high for IMK RS/IUGERS and Tehnoinspekt laboratories, and low for the remaining two laboratories. The projects had a **quite high impact on some cross-cutting criteria (good governance, the environment, gender equality)** and **quite low on the principle of human rights**.

Sectoral Findings

The goals of the projects focused on capacity building of selected institutions with the potential to influence the system within selected sectors. These institutions were not necessarily at the highest level of public administration (policy-making). In many cases, therefore, it was about capacity building "from below". This approach was considered to be beneficial in improving public administration in post-conflict societies. This increases the likelihood of success for initiatives in the area of policy-making / sustainability.

The focus of projects is assessed as successful based on a combination of several factors: (1) the identification of institutions in BaH that had some existing capacity but required very specific support from experts, (2) at the same time these institutions play a very important role in the public administration infrastructure and in the preparation for the EU accession (3) the selection of Czech implementers with a significant capacity of experts and experience in development / cooperation with BaH, (4) the sharing of a certain historical and cultural tradition.

Recommendations

	Recommendations with respect to process and system of interventions	Level	Area	Addressed to
1	The process of identifying needs should include not only direct beneficiaries but also other target groups. In BaH terms, it is possible	1	Needs identification	CzDA, Embassy

	to take into account the criteria of ethnic / entity "quotas" when choosing recipients, but not at the expense of other selection criteria.			
2	When formulating projects, conduct a thorough analysis of participants and local context of development activities, including taking into account the position of supported institutions on the market, or the positions and interests of other target groups. Tools can be, for example, UNDP Institutional and Context Analysis or IIED Stakeholder Power Analysis.	1	Formulation	CzDA, Embassy
3	In implementing interventions, be flexible in addressing emerging needs / problems in terms of timing, setting of partial outputs / goals. The success of projects also depends on effective communication - soft skills managers and implementation team experts. We recommend considering flexibility already at the level of the system of financing and project management by the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) – this can be done by the modification of risk management methodologies, having set key outputs, but greater flexibility at activities level, having budget reserve, etc. At the level of the legislative framework of development cooperation, allowing multi-annual projects for all financial mechanisms or the possibility of direct selection of an implementer in public procurement if the implementer has prior knowledge of the environment or specific specialization is necessary.	1	Implementation	Ministry, CzDA, implementers
4	Continue to support the transfer of the experience of the Czech institutions in preparation for accession to the EU and the transition to a democratic society, given the benefits for supported institutions in BaH. As part of the project formulation, focus on the transfer of the experience of Czech implementers with the building of institutional capacities in the context of supported institutions.	2	Formulation	Ministry, CzDA
5	For the sustainability of project results, it is advisable to invest in the promotion of success not only among the experts and stakeholders but to present results to the general public, as end consumers, whose protection and rights are strengthened by the project results (consumer quality culture).	2	Implementation	Embassy, CzDA, Implementers
6	In the case of support for expert bodies with a voluntary membership (such as Technical Commission), it is desirable to address the appropriate support of the work of this body, including the question of supporting experts. This support may not be provided by the Czech party, but this aspect needs to be taken into account.	2	Implementation	Embassy, CzDA, Implementers
7	Make use of the potential of cooperation between the academic sector and supported institutions, where, on the one hand, supported institutions can provide technical background and expertise to acquire the practical experience of university students (internships) and, on the other hand, to obtain manpower and future personnel resources. Especially at the project formulation stage, we recommend systematically focusing on this collaboration.	3	Formulation, implementation	Embassy, CzDA
8	At the project formulation stage, take into account the potential of lobbying institutions and political pressure to promote / sustain project results, or identify an alternative actor.	1	Formulation, implementation	Embassy, CzDA
9	Use the results of the final evaluation reports on the promotion of the Czech Development Cooperation, the supported institutions and the achievements in the sector (eg. follow-up workshops, press conferences, etc.).	2	Follow-up	Embassy, CzDA

	Recommendations with regards to project and sectoral	Level	Area	Addressed to
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	objectives			
10	When setting up intervention for the development of institutional capacity, pay attention to the complexity and the ratio of the supported areas (training, equipment, methodology, organizational background) tailored to the needs of the supported institution.	1	Needs identification, formulation	CzDA, implementers
11	For institutional capacity building in a post-conflict country/society focus on capacity building at lower levels of public administration and to change "bottom-up" legislation/policies.	1	Formulation	CzDA, implementers
12	The transfer of know-how is crucial in the development of institutional capacities and it is therefore necessary to maintain a practically oriented form of training activities and to anticipate the subsequent phase of support of trained experts, which should be passed on to the supported institution (as part of the exit strategy).	1	Implementation	Implementers
13	When setting goals, it is important to evaluate and build on the existing capacity of the institution and to encourage its development to the fullest extent possible, so that the partner organization is intensively involved in the implementation. We recommend using standardized methods to evaluate existing capacities of supported institutions (eg. UNDP Capacity Assessment Methodology).	2	Identification	CzDA, implementers
14	The Czech Development Cooperation in BaH should continue supporting the capacity of institutions in the priority area of sound democratic governance, given the overall success of the projects evaluated, and focus on building the infrastructure of control and surveillance mechanisms (an opportunity for project synergy).	1	Formulation	CzDA

Level of seriousness of recommendations: 1 – the most serious, 2 – serious, 3 – the least serious