

This final evaluation report presents the findings of an independent evaluation of the „Sustainable towns and cities contributing to development“ project, implemented as part of official development assistance of the Government of the Czech Republic. The project was implemented in 2016 and 2017 under a grant scheme managed by the Czech Development Agency. Mrs. Lenka Brown, Mr. Jan Naplava, Mrs. Miroslava Drahotova and Mr. Tom Vrtek were part of the evaluation team from Haskoning DHV who carried out the evaluation.

The project was implemented under an „in-country“ grant scheme, meaning that the project’s geographical scope was the Czech Republic. The thematic scope of the project is awareness raising; the goal of the project was to raise the municipal authorities’ and the public’s awareness of international development cooperation activities (including the Sustainable development Goals) and increase their support of them. Information campaigns and events for the public, officials and elected representatives of municipalities were used as the tools to reach this goal.

The project produced the following outputs: 13 events targeting the public, 4 information sessions for elected representatives, 3 information campaigns in Prague and 2 other cities and a set of audiovisual materials designed to present the concepts of Sustainable development goals, international development cooperation and decentralized development cooperation to the target audience. The project was implemented by two NGOs – Charita Česká republika (Caritas Czech Republic) and Svaz měst a obcí (Union of cities and towns). The total expenditure of the project was 1 299 492 CZK.

The evaluation was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) with the goal of obtaining independent, objective information, conclusions and recommendations regarding the project. The results of this evaluation shall be used in the decision-making of MoFA and the Czech Development Agency (CZDA) regarding the design of similar awareness-raising projects and the involvement of municipalities in official development cooperation activities of the Czech Government. The involvement of municipalities should take into account the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals as well as the official International Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic for 2018-2030. An important goal of MoFA for this evaluation was to obtain an independent assessment of the effectiveness and impact of awareness-raising and media-related activities carried out in this project.

The evaluation consisted of research to answer the evaluation questions outlined in the Terms of Reference which were each linked to the OECD-DAC criteria, i.e. Relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The team analyzed information obtained from the project documentation, other publicly available sources and interviews with key stakeholders. As this was a project evaluation focusing only on 1 project, the findings cannot be generalized to the entirety of awareness-raising projects or a programme with this scope. Nevertheless, the findings meant to help understand the key aspects of the different awareness-raising activities in this project.

Summary of main findings:

The terms of reference for this evaluation outlined a set of 10 evaluation questions, each linked to an OECD-DAC criteria¹⁸, which were answered in this research. The below summary and the report is written in sections specifying which criteria was being assessed using which questions (i.e. answers to evaluation question 1 and 2 for relevance, answers to question 3 and 4 for efficiency, etc.).

Relevance: rather high

- 1) *To what extent is the project relevant to the Goals of the Czech International Development Cooperation Strategy and to the goals of individual stakeholders?*
- 2) *What are the pre-conditions for a relevant cooperation among stakeholders from the public, non-profit and private sectors?*

The relevance of this project to the goals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was assessed against the strategic document “Koncepce zahraniční rozvojové spolupráce pro roky 2010-2017” (“The 2010-2017 international development cooperation plan”) and the project content was found to be contributing to 2 of its points. The project goals are also relevant in terms of the target group (elected officials and municipal officers), however, the priorities of elected officials turned out to be different than those of the project. The project activities were only in part relevant to the needs of the target audience (general public) because most of the activities were in the end aimed at elementary, middle school and high school students. Based on these findings, the relevance of the project was found to be **rather high**. We did not incorporate the second question into this rating as it is an additional aspect that the client wanted to explore. We identified the following pre-conditions for different stakeholders in order for them to cooperate in a conducive way to fulfill the project goals: the non-profit sector provided organizational skills and know-how regarding the presentation of Sustainable development goals, the private sector stakeholders belonged to the local communities where activities took place and operated using a business model aligned with the SDGs and they provided material inputs for the implementation of project activities. The public sector had to be well connected in the community in their geographic areas to ensure participation of the local population and the municipal offices usually employed a person whose daily work responsibilities overlapped with the goal of raising the awareness of SDGs (their area of responsibility was largely their own “local” Agenda 21).

Efficiency: rather low

- 3) *In what ways can use of funds in this project be deemed as efficient, based on the available information? How efficient was the project in terms of creating value for money?*
- 4) *What contributed to the efficiency and inefficiency of the projects in terms of its processes and contents?*

An awareness-raising event organized at the Zoo in Prague did not offer good value for money but more than a third of the funds was spent on this activity (out of 4 different types). Smaller events across the country offered better value for money. The cooperation of municipal officers from different parts of Prague contributed to the efficiency of the project, while the project’s logical framework, the reporting framework and the grant-award mechanism contributed were identified as inefficient.

Effectiveness: rather low

- 5) *To what extent were the planned outputs of the project achieved?*
- 6) *To what extent did collaboration among the public, private and non-profit sectors contribute to the effectiveness of the project?*

¹⁸ The scale used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech republic to assess the fulfillment of each of the OECD-DAC criteria is „high“, „rather high“, „rather low“, „low“, „not assessed“

- 7) *How effective were the awareness-raising events and campaigns in making the general public more interested in and supportive of international development cooperation activities and SGDs?*
- 8) *Is the overall exposure of international development cooperation activities of the Czech Republic sufficient? In what ways are they given publicity/promoted?*

The different types of outputs were all achieved (83 %), however, not all the information sessions for elected officials were in the end organized and were replaced with awareness-raising events for the general public instead. These cannot all be, however, considered as equal in their content and purpose. Cooperation among the private sector, public sector and the non-profit sector was effective in creating more attractive activities for the target population which would not have been possible had they not each provided specific inputs. Awareness-raising events and publicity campaigns were assessed separately due to their specificities. There is no empirical data proving the effectiveness of the awareness-raising activities of this project in raising people's awareness of the project topics, therefore, the different aspects of the events deemed by the team relevant for their effectiveness were evaluated (diversity and amount of participants, geographical distribution of the events and subsequent events organized by participants on their own initiative). The effectiveness of the events and the campaigns was **rather low**. Official development cooperation of the Czech Republic received exposure in one fourth of the project's outputs through presentations or screening of films about Czech development workers or projects financed by the Czech Development Agency. If all of the four questions are to be considered and given equal weight to assess the effectiveness of the projects, it's **rather high**.

Impact: rather low

- 9) *What was the impact of awareness-raising activities on stakeholders from the public sector who were involved in the project? What was the impact of media campaigns? Is there any evidence of this impact?*

The impact of the project was assessed using the answer to the above evaluation question. In 5 out of the 13 outputs in our sample, in which public officials or elected officials were involved (information sessions, awareness-raising activities and seminars), some impact was observed. This impact was documented in less than 50 % of all cases. The overall impact was thus **rather low**.

Sustainability: rather high or low depending on which aspects of the questions are considered

- 10) *What are the key aspects of the project contributing to its sustainability?*

If we take into account factors affecting sustainability at the level of the public sector (the extent to which the know-how of public officials is likely to be used in their work in the future) and the implementing organisation to define the sustainability of the project, it would be **rather high**, however sustainability of the part of the project focusing on the public is rather low if participants are not involved in some follow-up activities or use their awareness in some way (this could be proven in a very limited way within the scope of this research)

External Presentation (visibility)

One of the outputs, the media campaign in Prague („U-držme-se!“) was visible across subway stations in the city, in media and mentioned on the radio. This was a relatively high visibility when compared with other outputs. Reports about 3 out of the 13 awareness-raising events of the project were published in local newspapers.

Cross-cutting issues

Information about how cross-cutting issues were reflected or addressed in the project was not systematically recorded according to the INESAN methodology, hence only a general assessment

was done in this evaluation. The project shows elements of **good governance, dimension 1 „stakeholder engagement and participation** (according to the INSEAN methodology). There were two outputs of the project which exemplified this dimension.