

Polish annual evaluation plan for development cooperation in 2015

Introduction

The objectives set out in the *Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2012-2015* guide the assessment of the effectiveness of the Polish development cooperation implementation process. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is tasked by the Development Cooperation Act of 16 September 2001 with conducting such an evaluation. During the evaluation process, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is complying with the norms and standards elaborated in the *DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation* (2010) and *DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance* (1991). The evaluation of Polish development cooperation adheres to the guidelines of the EuropeAid and the European External Action Service, which are submitted in *The Evaluation Policy for European Union Development Co-operation* document, and the evaluation is performed in accordance with the evaluation methodology developed by the Evaluation Unit of the European Commission. In addition, its activities are carried out in line with standards of the Polish Evaluation Society and the National Evaluation Unit.

Evaluation of programmes and projects, which are implemented as part of the development cooperation provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has been carried out since 2012. The process is external and ex post.

The Department of Development Cooperation prepares annual evaluation plans, which present the organization of the evaluation process and the main foreseen actions (range of research, resource allocation, activities scheduling). The document is accepted by the Undersecretary of State for Development. It is indicative in nature and can be modified and adapted to changing circumstances or needs.

Evaluation studies focus on completed annual tasks implemented as part of the development cooperation, especially on programs, projects or groups of projects. The assessment is aimed at initiatives conducted both abroad and within the country.

Results of the evaluation feed into the decision-making processes, especially into the programming and management of the Polish development cooperation in the short term (annual), but also in the medium term (preparation of the next multiannual program).

Implemented evaluation activities

In 2012, a programme with the SENSE training component and a group of projects to support the development of social institutions in Georgia were evaluated (ex-post).

In 2013, the evaluation process targeted initiatives implemented in 2010-2012 in the area of regional development, capacity building of public administration and local government in Ukraine and in the area of a global education of systemic nature in Poland, and referred also to the cross-cutting actions on human rights in the mentioned areas.

All adopted recommendations presented in the conclusions of the evaluations have been completed or are in progress of being implemented.

In 2014, the evaluation covered tasks performed in 2011, 2012 and 2013 which were linked to the objectives and principles of the Polish development cooperation as defined in the Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2012-2015. The subject of the analysis were initiatives supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs carried out as part of the scholarship program for Specialized Eastern Studies at the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw, projects to support the development of small and medium- sized enterprises in Georgia and Ukraine, as well as selected aspects of the implementation of the Belarusian Radio Racyja coproduction agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2013 .

Evaluation 2015

For 2015, the Department of Development Cooperation has planned an evaluation of activities implemented within the 2012, 2013 and 2014 development cooperation plans, which were based on the current Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme. As a result of the study, conclusions and recommendations for the planning process and the management of Polish development cooperation will be prepared. They will then be used under the next Multiannual Programme.

The analysis will cover selected activities of the Solidarity Fund PL, carried out as tasks commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs based on the Development Cooperation Act and co-financed by Polish development cooperation, under the “Support for Democracy” task. Analysis of programmes and projects implemented in the Eastern Partnership region through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the special budget reserve, dedicated to development cooperation, will continue to be carried out. This part of the study will include initiatives for Moldova, co-financed in the period 2012-2014.

1. Schedule

- December 2014 – approval of the Annual Evaluation Plan 2015
- From January - 2015 – development of a detailed evaluation concept
- From March 2015 – launch of a tender procedure
- From April 2015 – the evaluation process
- October 2015 – summary of the results and preparation for the process of implementing the recommendations

2. Evaluation actions

- 2.1.** Assessment of the implementation of selected activities in the area of development cooperation undertaken by the Solidarity Fund PL, financed with the special-purpose budget reserve.

Scope of the study

According to the Development Cooperation Act, tasks in the area of development cooperation can be commissioned to the Solidarity Fund PL.

Since 2012, the Fund has been implementing the “Support for Democracy” task, funded by the MFA. The initiative aims at supporting democracy in countries with specific political circumstances. This task is performed by organizing an open grant competition for initiatives suggested and implemented by applicants. The grant competition is announced once a year and offer small grants (of about 50 000 PLN) and big grants (of about 200 000 PLN). Since 2013, two-year

“module” projects have been additionally introduced. The Fund, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, directly carries out other activities as well.

The aim of the evaluation is to analyze the implementation of selected tasks commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Solidarity Fund PL, taking into consideration the role and mission of the Fund, as well as the needs of communities, to which the initiatives are addressed, at the same time respecting national and international context and standards of the leading international institutions which finance pro-democratic actions (annex 1). The evaluation will also look at how the Fund supports the implementation of the MFA programme strategy in the area of development cooperation as stipulated in the *Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2012-2015*, and the guiding principles of the *Multiannual development cooperation programme 2016-2020*.

The evaluation will focus on efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of the Funds’ actions, funded with the special-purpose budget reserve and implemented in selected countries, and in particular on explaining the impact they had on the implementation of Polish development cooperation tasks. The evaluation will cover selected initiatives implemented between 2012 and 2014.

Justification of the evaluation

The role of Solidarity Fund PL in the Polish system of development cooperation is defined by the Development Cooperation Act. The regulations allow the minister responsible for foreign affairs to delegate tasks to the Fund, to be implemented in countries with specific political circumstances. Eastern Partnership countries and countries meeting the requirements defined in art. 10 (3) of the aforementioned act are the main areas of the Fund’s activity. The Fund’s actions are financed by the special budget reserve, dedicated to development cooperation, which is administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the analyzed period, the Minister of Foreign Affairs commissioned the Fund to carry out tasks supporting democratization processes, with special focus on building democratic competences of young opinion-building environments, supporting systemic transformation leaders and on activities of civil society organizations. In this context, the leading project of the Fund is the “Support for Democracy” task, under which the Fund has conducted, *inter alia*, a grant competition for democratization projects not covered by the priorities of the “Polish Aid 2012”, “Polish Aid 2013” and “Polish Aid 2014” competitions. The projects were implemented by Polish NGOs in cooperation with local partners, mainly in Eastern Partnership countries. The Fund also performs its own tasks, in consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.2. Assessment of the impact of the projects implemented within Development Cooperation Plans in 2012, 2013 and 2014 on the situation in Moldova

Scope of the study

Evaluation 2015 will include assistance given to Moldova within Polish Development Cooperation in 2012, 2013 and 2014 (annex 2). The study focuses on actions implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its external partners. In the period 2012-2014, the support to Moldova as part of the Polish Aid competition was provided within the following priorities: 1) Public security and border management; 2) Regional development and building capacity of public administration and local government decentralization; 3) Agriculture and rural development. The aim of the analysis

is to assess the efficiency, effectiveness, utility, sustainability and relevance of the aid given to Moldova under Polish Development Cooperation programmes in 2012-2014.

Justification of the evaluation

The Republic of Moldova is the poorest country in Europe (ranked 114th in the HDI in 2013), highly dependent on external assistance. From the beginning of the Polish Aid functioning, it has been among the priority countries.

In the period 2004-2014, over 200 Polish-Moldovan projects were implemented, of which one fourth (over 80 initiatives) in 2012-2014. In 2009, the Republic of Moldova is participating in the Eastern Partnership initiative – since 2013 about 60% of resources at the disposal of the MFA have been given to support this region as part of activities carried out by the MFA and its external partners. In 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Polish MFA and the Moldovan Ministry of Development and Building was signed. As a result, Information Centre for Local Authorities in the office of Agency of Regional Development in Ialoveni, Moldova, has been opened and equipped.

Under the Multiannual Programme, development cooperation and expert actions are mainly focused on reinforcing systemic transformation, which aim at bringing the EU and Eastern Partnership countries closer and, as a consequence, contributing to sustainable development of the latter. Initiatives, financed within the Polish Development Cooperation, are supposed to allow Moldovan authorities and society to make use of Polish experience and knowledge about reforms, as well as mechanisms of managing the process of systemic transformation.

3. Implementation method

External evaluation

4. Total cost planned

300 000 PLN

5. Actions contributing to evaluation capacity building

Apart from conducting evaluation studies in 2015, actions contributing to building evaluation capacity will also be undertaken.

The Department of Development Cooperation will share knowledge and information on the evaluation of development cooperation, mainly by preparing and publishing materials about evaluation actions (results of, course and programming of the studies), including information about the process of implementing recommendations. The Department of Development Cooperation will also develop a dedicated evaluation tab on the www.polskapomoc.gov.pl website. There are also plans to prepare an overall summary of the conclusions from the evaluation of annual plans, implementing the guiding principles of the first Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme.

Annexes:

1. List of actions for the Evaluation 2015 – Solidarity Fund PL
2. List of projects for the Evaluation 2015 - Moldova