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on the Ex Post Evaluation of the European Integration Fund 2011-2013 and 2007-2010

Accompanying the document

Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

Ex post evaluation reports for the period 2011 to 2013 of actions co-financed by the four Funds under the framework programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'

{COM(2018) 456 final} - {SWD(2018) 334 final} - {SWD(2018) 335 final} - {SWD(2018) 336 final}

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Staff Working Document reports on the results and impacts of actions co-financed by the European fund for the integration of third-country nationals (EIF) under the 2011-2013 annual programmes implemented by the 26 participating EU Member States[1] (MS) and the 2010-2013 Community Actions.[2] The actions co-financed by the EIF during the relevant period were assessed in light of their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence and complementarity with other EU financial instruments, and the added value of intervening at EU level.

The results of this evaluation fed into the mid-term review of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) national programmes, which took place between 2017 and 2018, and the interim evaluation of the AMIF carried out in 2017-2018. The results of the mid-term review of the national programmes allow the European Commission to take decisions on the allocation of additional funding, and agree with Member States on changes in their priorities according to changes in EU and national policies for the remaining implementation period (2018-2020). The results of the interim evaluation of AMIF contributed to shaping the future policies under the responsibility of DG HOME. The results of both processes are beneficial to the preparation of the new funding instruments in the framework of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE INITIATIVE

The EIF is one of the four EU funding instruments established in 2007 as part of the Framework Programme on Solidarity and Migration Flows[3], known as SOLID Funds. The EIF was designed to contribute to the basis for a common migration and integration policy

[1] AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK (all the MSs at the time, with the exception of Denmark).

[2] The previous funding period (2007-2010) has already been examined in previous evaluations. See COM (2011)847 final, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions on the results achieved and on qualitative and quantitative aspects of implementation of the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007-2009, European Commission, 5 December 2011.

[3] COM (2005) 123 final, Communication establishing a framework programme on Solidarity and the Management of Migration Flows for the period 2007-2013, European Commission, 6 April 2005.

and to promote synergies and coordination of national integration policies implemented by Member States (principle of subsidiarity).

The general objective of the Fund was to support the efforts made by the Member States in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into European societies. To achieve its general objective, the EIF was designed to pursue four specific objectives:

1. Facilitation of the development and implementation of **admission procedures** relevant to and supportive of the integration process of third-country nationals;
2. Development and implementation of the **integration process of newly-arrived** third-country nationals in Member States;
3. Increase of the **capacity of Member States** to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of third-country nationals;
4. **Exchange of information, best practices and cooperation in and between Member States** in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and measures for the integration of third-country nationals.

The EIF was designed in 2005-2006 and its specific objectives were formulated as broad as possible to cater for changing conditions. Subsequently, to foster a more targeted implementation of the policy priorities the Commission adopted the Strategic Guidelines of EIF[4], which established a framework for the intervention of the Fund around four priorities.

According to these priorities, Member States were to determine the most effective distribution of financial resources according to national needs in terms of integration. Moreover, when preparing their draft multi-annual programmes, Member States were required to target at least three of the four priorities (with priorities 1 and 2 being mandatory) through the use of available resources.

The four priorities of the fund were broadly aligned with the above specific objectives**:**

[4] Commission Decision C(2007)3926.

Priority 1: Implementation of actions designed to put the "Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union"[5] into practice (feeding into objectives 1 and 2).

Priority 2: Development of indicators and evaluation methodologies to assess progress, adjust policies and measures, and to facilitate co-ordination of comparative learning (feeding into objectives 3 and 4).

Priority 3: Policy capacity building, co-ordination and intercultural competence building in the Member States across the different levels and departments of government (feeding into objectives 2 and 3).

Priority 4: Exchange of experience, good practice and information on integration between the Member States (feeding into objective 4).

The evaluation found the design of the Fund complex, with priorities falling under more than one specific objective. This is a common feature of the SOLID funds, as shown also by the results of the ex post evaluation of the three other funds (European Refugee Fund[6], External

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5 The Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council of 19 November 2004 adopted the Common Basic Principles (CBPs) for immigrant integration policy in the European Union (COM(2005)0389 FINAL). These eleven principles underline the importance of a holistic approach to integration. Principle 1: 'Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States'; Principle 2: 'Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union'; Principle 3: 'Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible'. Principle 4: 'Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration'; Principle 5: 'Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society'; Principle 6: 'Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration'; principle 7: 'Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens'; Principle 8: 'The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law' ; principle 9: 'The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration'; principle 10: 'Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.'; Principle 11: 'Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.'

6 Decision No 573/2007/EC of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'.

Borders Fund[7] and European Return Fund[8]). However, when preparing the current funding instrument, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund[9] (AMIF), the Commission took stock of the experience with the SOLID funds and designed the AMIF around a general objective to which contributed to four specific objectives.

The EIF was implemented through two types of actions:

- National programmes: under the principle of shared management, Member States implemented the Fund through national annual programmes on the basis of multiannual programming which reflected their specific needs. The annual national programmes set out the measures to be implemented in the Member States and specified their purpose, scope, beneficiaries, expected results and budget.

- Community Actions: at the Commission's initiative, up to 4% of the EIF resources were made available to finance transnational actions or actions of interest to the EU as a whole. These actions were implemented by NGOs, international organisations or public bodies of the Member States. Priorities and themes for projects were set out in the European Commission's annual work programmes. Calls for proposals were published and potential beneficiaries could apply and submit their proposals.

An overview of the financial performance of the EIF is provided in Section 5 Implementation state of play.

[7] Decision No 574/2007/EC of 23 May 2007 establishing the External Borders Fund for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'.

[8] Decision No 575/2007/EC of 23 May 2007 establishing the European Return Fund for the period 2008 to 2013 as part of the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'.

[9] Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation assessed the EIF against the mandatory evaluation criteria laid down in the Commission's *Better Regulation Guidelines* (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability, coherence and EU added value). In addition, sustainability and complementarity of the co-financed actions were also assessed. To do so, 16 evaluation questions were set out in the terms of reference of the evaluation study and related directly to the Fund's objectives; they are listed in Annex 4 and their detailed analysis is provided in Section 6.

4 METHOD

An ex post evaluation study of the Fund was carried out between April 2016 and December 2016 by a consulting firm specialised in evaluation.

The methodology combined desk research and qualitative and quantitative analysis. The methodology required a systemic synthesis of the evidence regarding the implementation of the Fund. Information was derived mainly from the 26[10] national evaluation reports and the annual work programmes of the Member States. The annual work programmes set out the operational objectives for each year and the national evaluation reports provided information on outputs, results and impacts of the Fund. All the information contained in the 26 evaluation reports was first assessed to check its completeness, comparability, quality and reliability. Shortcomings were found in four national reports, where gaps, inconsistencies and unclear statements were identified. Data included in the evaluation reports were crosschecked against other sources of information and follow-ups undertaken with the responsible authorities in Member States. The quantitative data was crosschecked with other sources, including annual programmes closure reports, to ensure consistency. The desk research included also relevant official statistics (i.e. the OECD and European Commission's Immigrant Integration Indicators[11] and MIPEX[12])[13].

[10] The geographical scope comprises all EU Member States except Denmark and Croatia (26 Member States): Croatia was not a member of the EU at the time and Denmark did not participate in the implementation of the Fund.

[11] Available on Eurostat and the publication "Integration Indicators 2015: Settling in", published by the OECD in July 2015, based on joint research by the OECD and the European Commission (DG HOME).

Further information was obtained from more than 100 in-depth interviews with EU-level stakeholders (national Responsible authorities, beneficiaries, EU officials and case study respondents), eight case studies[14] and a public consultation. A detailed analysis of the stakeholder consultation is provided in Annex 2.

Data on Community Actions funded by the EIF over the period 2011-2013 was collected and analysed through a combination of desk research and targeted data collection. In addition, Commission officials who coordinated/administered the Community Actions were interviewed and a phone survey was undertaken in relation to a sample of projects funded under the EIF 2011-2013 (35 beneficiaries, 20 project managers and four national Responsible authorities).

4.1 LIMITATIONS

Assessing the coherence and complementarity of the Community Actions with National Actions as well as the effectiveness of projects proved to be difficult, due mainly to the fact that the Responsible Authorities did not have a substantial awareness of Community Actions as they were often not systematically informed by the beneficiary organisations of projects implemented in this way. This also posed difficulties when assessing the survey carried out on the Community Actions. To partly overcome this difficulty, the evaluation experts have analysed additional documentation on project activities, outputs and results provided by the Commission.

Another difficulty was that the original design of the Fund did not foresee the obligation for the Member States to set a baseline, nor did it include EU targets linked to operational objectives. This made it difficult to measure the results of the EIF. To assess the effectiveness of the Fund, the evaluators relied mainly on programme targets set by national authorities and interviews with Member States. The lack of quantitative data has also limited the evaluation of the efficiency criteria. Furthermore, Member States and beneficiaries did not monitor what

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12 The Migration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a unique tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States as well as some third countries; please refer to www.mipex.eu.

13 The changes in these OECD/EU and MIPEX indicators cannot be linked to the Fund, so these data cannot be used to assess the effectiveness of the Fund. However, they are relevant as they provide an overview of factors surrounding the implementation of the Fund. For this reason, these data were used to assess the relevance of the Fund and in the context of the case studies.

14 BE, FR, DE, IT, LV, PL, ES and SE.

happened to TCNs after they received support from the EIF, so it is very difficult to quantify the extent to which the Fund contributed to the integration of TCNs. These issues are further discussed in section 6.3 (Efficiency). Additional information on the methodology is provided in Annex 3.

5 IMPLEMENTATION STATE OF PLAY

The European fund for the integration of third country nationals was launched in 2007 and implemented in two cycles: 2007-2010 and 2011-2013. The initial budget of the Fund was EUR 825 million, out of which EUR 467 million for the period 2011-2013 were distributed as follows:

- National programmes (shared management): EUR 447 million[15],
- Community actions (direct management): EUR 20 million[16].

Implementation through shared management

The absorption rate[17] varied over time and from a Member State to another. Globally, the average absorption rate of EIF 2011-2013 equals 77%, with the highest performance in 2013, when it reached 83%. Programmed EU financing rose progressively from 2007-2013 by at least 12% *per annum*, most notably from 2008-2009 (26%) and from 2011-2012 (25%).

The implementation of the actions under national programmes ran until the end of 2015[18] and for this reason 15 national programmes out of 78 were not closed yet when the evaluation study was completed at the end of 2016. Implementation statistics presented in this document are based on an updated extraction of data from ABAC/SFC[19] dated 31/12/2016.

15 For the period 2007-2010 the provision for national programmes was equal to EUR 326 million.
16 For the period 2007-2010 the provision for community actions was equal to EUR 18 million.
17 The absorption rate represents the ratio of actually paid funds over total allocation.
18 In practice, Member States were given until June 2016 to finish implementing actions under the EIF.
19 SFC is an online monitoring tool managed by the Commission and used for certain funding programmes, where Member States can upload implementation reports and financial information. ABAC is the Commission's accrual based online accounting system.

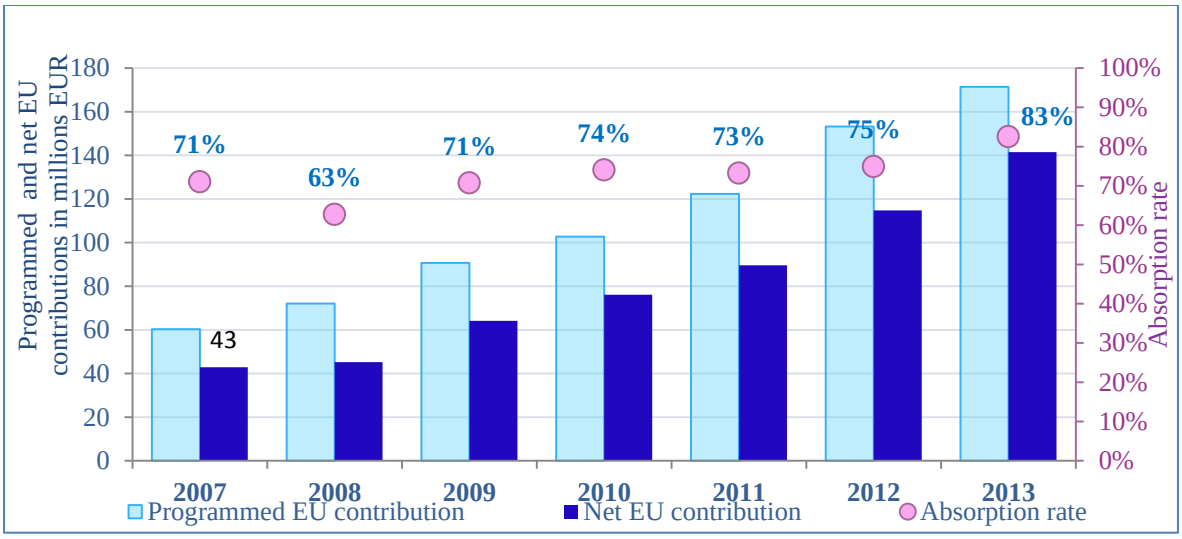

Figure 1: Programmed and net EU contributions and absorption rates by year, EIF Shared Management, 2007-2013. Source: European Commission (ABAC) at 31.12.2016

As highlighted in figure 2, programmed and utilised EU financing was highest in Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany and France. These five countries accounted for 51% of the total programmed and 72% of the total final EU contributions.

The methodology to calculate the amount of funds to be attributed to each Member State was set in the legal base: EUR 500,000 per annum for Member States which would accede to the European Union during the period from 2007 to 2013 and the remainder of the available annual resources broken down between the Member States as follows:

(a) 40 % in proportion to the average of the total number of legally residing third-country nationals in Member States over the previous three years; and

(b) 60% in proportion to the number of third-country nationals who have obtained an authorisation issued by a Member State to reside on its territory over the previous three years.

The allocation mechanism based on statistics of the three previous years aimed to ensure a distribution of resources proportionate to the inflows registered by the Member States and thus the need to provide integration support to the target groups of EIF. However, the allocation system didn't always reflect Member States' short term evolving needs. This lack of flexibility of the Fund (common to all SOLID Funds) was mitigated by the Emergency

Measures mechanism and by the possibility for the Member States to modify their NPs at any time and to reallocate Funds in the area which required a more important financial support.

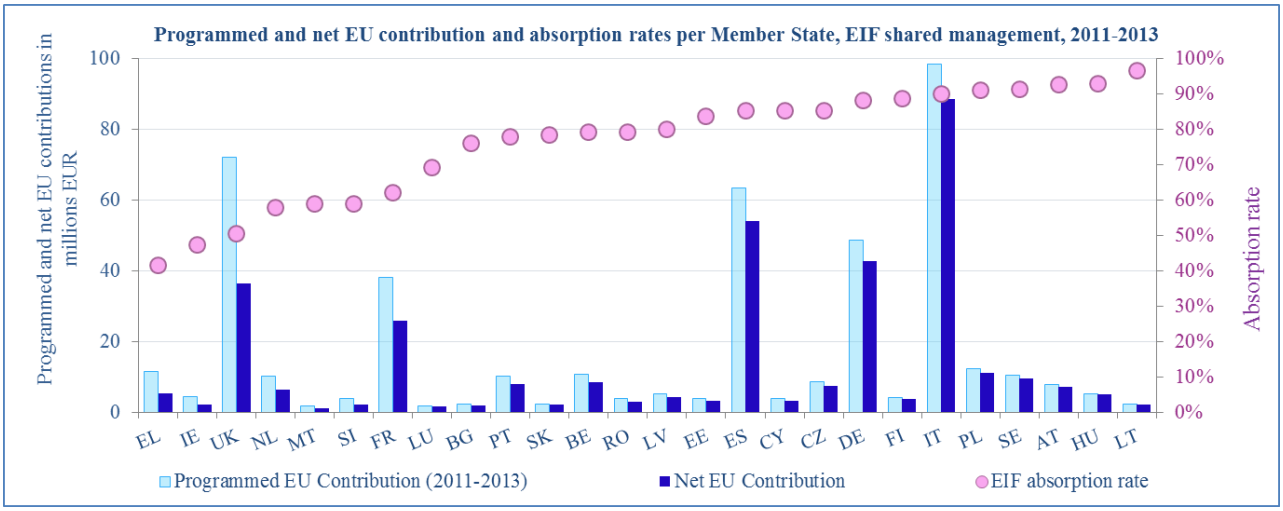

Figure 2: Programmed and net EU contributions and absorption rates by participating country, EIF, 2011-2013. Source: ABAC

Implementation through direct management

A total amount of EUR 20.8 million was allocated for Community Actions for 2011-2013 to finance cooperation between Member States, corresponding to 4% of the EIF. Despite the very small budget, 35 projects were awarded a contribution (9 in 2011; 15 in 2012 and 11 in 2013). They received grants ranging between EUR 400,000 and EUR 1 million, with a maximum rate of co-financing set in the annual work programmes at 90% of the eligible costs. The absorption rate varied between 47% and 100%, averaging 90% in 2011, 78% in 2012 and 92% in 2013.

Beneficiaries

NGOs and research organisations were the main beneficiaries. Dissemination of results, development of new tools, research and awareness-raising were the predominant subjects of the projects. Italian organisations proved to be very active (26 organisations) along with organisations from Spain (19), Germany (16), Belgium and the UK (14 each). Italy also dominated among leading beneficiaries, heading up to 12 of the 35 projects.

6 ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

6.1 Relevance

EQ13 and 14: *To what extent did the EIF's objectives correspond to needs related to the integration of TCNs into the European societies? To what extent did the objectives of the actions under the EIF correspond to the needs in the field of integration of TCNs?*

Main conclusion: The evaluation showed that the EIF was broad enough to cater for the various types of needs identified by the Member States, and proved flexible enough to adapt to changing needs. However, the restrictive definition of the target group was felt as a limitation by some Member States, whilst others pointed at the lack of interest of local administrations and NGOs as an obstacle to the achievement of better results.

Overall, the EIF responded to needs in the area of integration and the evaluation showed a high level of alignment between needs and actual results/impacts. The large majority of stakeholders agreed that the objectives of the Annual National Programmes and of the Annual work programmes were relevant to the needs not only at the time of their formulation, but also during the implementation of the Fund, as the objectives were formulated in a way that allowed some adaptation of the response to changing circumstances in Member States. For instance, in Spain, the RA revised the Annual National Programme to be able to support TCNs in precarious situations due to loss of employment (and consequent risk of losing their resident status) because of the economic crisis.

However, some issues were identified:

1. The need to increase the availability of integration services and measures to cater for the necessities of a growing target group;
2. The need to target more specifically some vulnerable groups, in particular women and children;

3. For some Member States[20], the need to define better the target group of the Fund, given that projects for asylum seekers and persons benefiting from refugee and subsidiary protection status who do not fall within the Commission's definition of third country nationals were not eligible under the EIF.

The last point refers to a twofold issue: support for integration may be needed also for second- and third-generation migrants (already citizens of the destination country), and according to some Member States it should not be limited to "newly arrived". Furthermore, the restrictive interpretation of "newly arrived" by some Responsible authorities was perceived as an obstacle by beneficiary organisations.

Nine Member States[21] identified an issue in the lack of interest in contributing to the Fund's activities of certain stakeholders and target groups (i.e. local level policy makers, NGOs and TCNs), but could not explain the reasons. 65% of the project managers of Community actions reported in reply to a survey that their projects corresponded to the identified needs to some extent. However, the evaluation did not find evidence of a structured exchange between the Commission and national authorities on Community Actions, so it was not possible to evaluate the extent to which Community Action projects also corresponded to the needs at national level.

6.2 Effectiveness

To assess the effectiveness of the Fund, the evaluation looked at the extent to which the EIF 2011-2013 actions contributed to the achievement of the general objective of the Fund, which was to support the Member States in their efforts to enable TCNs to fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies. Member States and beneficiaries did not monitor what happened to TCNs after they have received support from the EIF, so it is very difficult to quantify the extent to which the Fund contributed to the integration of TCNs. Effectiveness is measured in terms of an overall increase in TCNs supported by the Fund rather than as a percentage of TCNs supported out of a total number of TCNs.

[20] CY, EE, FI, LU and MT.
[21] DE, EE, EL, ES, HU, LT, MT, RO, and UK.

Instrumental to the achievement of the general objective was the progress towards the four specific objectives set in the legal base and illustrated in Section 2. The analysis of the effectiveness of the Fund is presented per specific objective, each of them dealt with by specific evaluation questions, as shown below:

Objective A - Facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to and supportive of the integration process of TCNs: evaluation questions 2 and 3.

Objective B - Development and implementation of the integration process of newly arrived TCNs in Member States: evaluation questions 4 and 7.

Objective C - Increasing of the capacity of Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs: evaluation questions 5 and 8.

Objective D - Exchange of information, best practices and cooperation in and between Member States in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and measures for the integration of TCNs: evaluation questions 6, 9, 10 and 11.

The evaluation question 1 provides a global assessment of the effectiveness of the Fund.

EQ1: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the achievement of the objectives defined in Articles 2 and 3 of Decision No 2007/435/EC and to the priorities defined by the Strategic Guidelines (2007)3926 of 21/08/2007)?*

Main conclusion: Overall, the EIF achieved progress towards its objectives, though to varying degrees. The Fund enhanced the direct support to the integration of TCNs and made an important contribution to the integration process in the majority of EU Member States. It led to increased and improved offer of services and increased attendance by TCNs. It was effective in putting the Common Basic Principles on Integration into action, but it achieved only partially the objective of enhancing cooperation between Member States.

The evaluation concluded that the EIF was effective in the development and implementation of the integration process of newly-arrived TCNs (specific objective 2), and in increasing the capacity of Member States to develop, monitor, implement and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs (specific objective 3).

Overall, Member States implemented 7 279 projects with EIF support, reaching more than 2.5 million TCNs in various ways. This included 463 990 TCNs belonging to specific target groups and at least 3 081 minors. In addition to TCNs, end recipients of the Fund were also staff working with TCNs, staff in relevant services of other Member States and members of the public. Member States implementing the largest number of projects were Italy (883 736), Spain (533 028), Poland (228 612), Germany (114 215), France (94 234) and Czech Republic (64 579). The implementation of the EIF through activities targeting directly the end recipients proved to be more efficient than expected. For example, 11 Member States planned pre-departure measures to benefit 99 799 TCNs in 53 projects. All projects except one went ahead and reached 108 837 end recipients altogether.

Objective A - Facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to and supportive of the integration process of TCNs

EQ3: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to and supportive of the integration process of TCNs?*

Main conclusion: Both National and Community Actions had limited impact on the facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to and supportive of the integration process of TCNs. This is due to the fact that only a few Member States considered this as a priority, as reflected in their annual programmes, and the focus was more on increasing knowledge of admission procedures than directly on their improvement. However, the projects carried out under this objective generated some regulatory changes.

Projects aiming to develop and improve admission procedures or pre-departure measures quasi-achieved or over-achieved their pre-defined targets in terms of the number of projects carried out (98%) and TCNs targeted by pre-departure measures (109% with over 9 000 more TCNs reached than planned). However, the degree of achievement varied between Member

States: Germany, Hungary and the UK over-achieved their objectives in terms of number of TCNs, whilst the Netherlands under-achieved them.

The projects carried out under this objective generated some regulatory changes (legal amendments): for instance, changes to the regulation of admission procedures were undertaken in 10 Member States[22]. Changes to the organisation of admission procedures were undertaken too[23], namely changes in the institutional set-up for immigration policy[24] or the establishment of one-stop agency (Citizenship and Migration Affairs)[25]. However, only five Member States[26] out of 24 considered that the EIF strongly contributed to the development or improvement of national admission procedures supportive of the integration process, and three Member States[27] considered this to have a medium impact. 12 Member States[28] indicated that the impact for them was weak and three of them[29] indicated that the EIF had not contributed to the improvement of the national admission procedures. The evaluation concluded that national actions supported by the EIF contributed to the facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures only in those Member States where such procedures were established as priorities.

This trend was confirmed also at EU level, as the Commission did not include the admission procedures in the annual work programmes of the Community Actions 2011-2013, in light of respect to the principle of subsidiarity.

EQ2: *To what extent did the EIF actions contribute to the integration of newly arrived TCNs?*

Main conclusion: The evaluation showed that the EIF National and Community Actions contributed significantly to the integration of newly-arrived TCNs, especially through the improvement of access to services, employment and education in the host society. The evaluation concluded that this area was the primary focus of EIF.

22 AT, EL, ES, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, SE and SK.
23 EL, FI, LV, IE, MT and the UK.
24 FI and the UK.
25 LV.
26 CY, ES, PL, SI and LU.
27 CZ, IT and HU.
28 AT, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, LT, LV, MT, SE, SK and the UK.
29 DE, RO and EE.

The actions aiming to facilitate the integration process of newly arrived TCNs included the provision of general and practical information, social and legal guidance and counselling[30], civic orientation[31] and language proficiency[32]. These are known as "introductory programmes", and the majority of the Member States [33] acknowledged the strong impact of the EIF on the development and improvement of the quality of these programmes.

In general, Member States implementing at least one of the above types of action exceeded their targets, as they reached a higher number of TCNs than originally planned.

Ten Member States[34] identified the projects providing language courses as being particularly important, because they allowed newly arrived TCNs to access and understand other important information, which is crucial to understand essential introductory information about the receiving society[35].

Projects implemented through Community Actions[36] focused mainly on labour integration and perception/intercultural relations, so TCNs' access to services, employment and education in the host society was facilitated and their knowledge of the receiving society improved.

Objective B - Development and implementation of the integration process of newly arrived TCNs in Member States

EQ4: *To what extent did the EIF actions contribute to the development and implementation of the integration process of newly arrived TCNs in Member States?*

Main conclusion: Overall, a majority of Member States (18) considered that the EIF has had a strong impact on the development and implementation of the integration process of TCNs,

30 Activities which provide TCNs with assistance to understand and function within the receiving society were implemented in 12 MSs, namely AT, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, PL, RO, SI, ES, SE and the UK..

31 Activities which provide TCNs with knowledge of culture, history, institutions of receiving Member States, as well as rights and obligations were implemented in 22 MSs : AT, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, LU, NL, PL, RO, SI, ES, SE and the UK.

32 Activities which provided opportunities for TCNs to learn the host language or improve their language skills, such as language courses, tandems or materials implemented in 22 MSs: AT, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, MT, NL, PL, RO, SI, ES, SE and the UK.

33 CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, LU, PL, RO, SE, SK, SI and the UK.

34 CY, CZ, DE, EE, HU, IT, PL, RO, LV and the UK.

35 SK, RO and IT.

36 27 out of 31 Community Action projects, implemented in the period 2011-2013, and 30 out of 38 projects implemented in period 2007-2010.

as it allowed the national authorities to develop new skills in public and private organisations dealing with TCNs, thus enhancing the capacity to respond to diverse and increasing needs. At output level, the targets set in national programmes were often overachieved in terms of TCNs reached by the services.

Three types of actions contributed to the development and implementation of the integration process of newly arrived TCNs. All of them highly over-achieved the targeted number of TCNs and staff involved.

First, public and private services were developed in several Member States[37] and included a wide range of activities aimed at adjusting or developing existing services. The rate of staff involved increased to 136%, hence more than 25,000 additional staff members were involved, as compared to the targets set in the national programmes.

Second, several platforms were organised for TCNs[38], offering them the possibility to provide feedback and/or proposing developments to the integration process. Although only 56% of the planned projects were achieved, the participation rate reached 111% (39 562 TCNs were targeted and 44 149 TCNs were actually consulted via the platforms).

Finally, actions on intercultural *and* inter-religious dialogue were implemented to enhance and facilitate dialogue between host society and TCNs, through inter-cultural and inter-religious themes.[39] In terms of achievement, the average is below the target with 199 projects completed out of 329 planned. However, the rate of TCNs reached is 106%.

The case studies confirmed that the EIF helped beneficiary organisations testing innovative initiatives, also through the establishment of networks of specialised organisations.

The results evaluated as very significant by the Member States include the improved access of TCNs to public and private goods and services in the Member States[40] (training courses for TCNs, access to health services and accommodation). Another important result achieved is the improved access to information regarding the **access of TCNs to public and private goods and services** (in nine Member States[41]). Furthermore, the majority of Member States[42]

37 AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IT, LV, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, ES, SE and the UK.
38 In 12 Member States, such as BG, CZ, EE, FI, DE, HU, IT, LV, PL, RO, SE and the UK.
39 This category of activities was implemented in the following Member States: AT, FI, FR, DE, EL, IT, LV, LU, MT, NL, PL, RO, SI, ES and SE.
40 CY, DE, EL, FR, IT, LV, LT, MT, PT, RO and SK.
41 CY, DE, HU, IE, IT, LV, LT, MT and PT.
42 CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LV, LU, PL, RO, SE, SK, SI and the UK.

recognised the strong impact that the EIF had on the development and improvement of the quality of the introductory programmes.

However, an obstacle to the implementation of the integration process of TCNs was the fact that without a common definition of "newly arrived" TCNs in the legislation, Member States interpreted the target group very differently. The Commission clarified that there was no intention to limit the target group, but some Member States applied a limited definition (i.e. by applying the residency criterion, newly arrived TCNs are all those who have not legally resided in the hosting country for more than three years). As a consequence, some Member States targeted only newly-arrived TCNs, rather than second or third generation TCNs needing integration support.

As regards Community Actions for the period 2011-2013, the majority of project managers and local beneficiaries confirmed that the projects contributed to the development (65%, 17 out of 26 sampled projects) and/or implementation (62%, 16 out of 26 projects) of the process of integrating newly arrived TCNs to a great and/or certain extent. Slightly less than half of the project managers interviewed (46%) also reported influencing Member States' integration processes to a certain extent. The tangible contribution of projects focusing on research-oriented topics to the development and/or implementation of integration policies was very difficult to assess. However, research was considered by several stakeholders as a starting point to facilitate dialogue between policy makers in complementary areas and to improve integration policies.

EQ7: *To what extent did the EIF actions contribute to implementation of actions designed to put the "Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union" into practice?*

Main conclusion: -24 Member States focused on the implementation of activities which prepared TCNs for labour market participation through training courses, information services and assistance to become better acquainted with the host society. Through the implementation of 615 projects, Member States reached nearly 1 million TCNs during the implementation period.

Since the common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union[43] cover all four priorities of the EIF, and hence are reflected in all the evaluation questions under the effectiveness theme , the assessment of this evaluation question draws on the findings from several other questions (in particular EQs 2, 4, 5 and 8). Notwithstanding the categories of actions covered under the other EQs mentioned above, the Common Basic Principles are translated into practice by five additional key categories of actions:

1) Other forms of education, preliminary actions to facilitate access to the labour market, participation in employment, economic life and self-sufficiency: activities which prepare TCNs for labour market participation through trainings, courses, information, and assistance with understanding the host society labour market. The achievement rate for this category of action was high, at 113% for projects (meaning 615 compared to 542 planned) and 101% for TCNs involved (in total 90 013 TCNs were involved compared to 88 949).
2) Health care: activities which help improve access to healthcare for TCNs, for example through information on rights or host society's healthcare system, counselling, or interpretation for the purpose of healthcare. At EU level, 14 Member States had an achievement rate of 126%, meaning that 36 additional projects were implemented compared to the number planned. However, this did not deliver a high achievement rate for the involvement of TCNs, which was 93%, meaning that 6 691 fewer TCNs were involved than planned.
3) Assistance in housing and means of subsistence: activities which support TCNs in accessing housing and means of subsistence. At EU level, there was a moderate achievement rate of 84% for the number of projects, and a good achievement rate of 96% for the involvement of TCNs.
4) Actions to promote meaningful contact and dialogue with the receiving society, involvement of the media: Activities which support TCNs and host society in meeting each other, raising awareness of TCNs in host society and other measures to enhance the interactions between TCNs and host society. At EU level, not all operations planned to support this were carried out, but the achievement rate was acceptable at 92% (98 fewer operations implemented than planned), and the achievement rates for

[43] Further details on the Common Basic Principles are provided in section 2.

TCNs involved was 101%, meaning/implying that nearly half a million TCNs took part in such operations.

5) Actions targeted at vulnerable groups: activities which target groups such as children, youth, women, the elderly, illiterate or disabled, for example by tailoring the activities to their needs. At the EU level, there was a very good achievement rate of 103% for the number of operations, with 33 additional operations implemented compared to those planned. For the TCNs involved, the achievement rate was lower, at 87%, meaning that 35,000 fewer TCNs were involved than planned.

On the impact level, out of 26 MS, 11 reported that the contribution received from the EIF was 'strong' in terms of improving TCN's access to public and private goods and services, and enhance diversity management. Six MS indicated the level of contribution as medium. Influencing factors which prevented Member States from achieving strong contributions from the EIF in this respect were: despite significant contributions made to the provision of services for TCNs, the provision of goods was very limited or not addressed by projects at all and while some EIF projects made some strong contributions, in reality they made only a medium level contribution to already strong national governments' efforts in the area of integration. Only 3 Member States reported a weak contribution, mainly due to the low amount of EU funding compared to the national investment in this area.

Objective C - Increasing of the capacity of Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs (evaluation questions 5 and 8)

EQ5: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to increasing the capacity of Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs?*

EQ8: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the development of indicators and evaluation methodologies to assess progress, adjust policies and measures and to facilitate co-ordination of comparative learning?*

Main conclusion: The EIF made a significant contribution to the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation policies and measures for the integration of TCNs in the majority of Member States.

12 Member States[44] assessed the impact of EIF in this area as strong, because it fostered the set-up and/or the adaptation of integration strategies, thus improving the effectiveness of national integration measures and policies. 8 Member States considered the impact as medium[45]and only two[46] of them as weak. This is mainly due to the fact that these MSs did not invest EIF funds in this area.

21 Member States implemented 328 projects to improve data collection and analysis, which facilitated the development of indicators and monitoring/evaluation methodologies for their integration policies. The number of projects targeted was surpassed in all Member States, except in Cyprus and Finland. In 12 Member States[47] these projects contributed to the development of new and increasingly evidence-based integration strategies, presented in official documents and/or reports.

In addition, Community Action projects proved to be complementary to the efforts made by the Member States through their projects at national level, as they targeted mainly national stakeholders and aimed to strengthen their capacity to develop, monitor, implement and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs. 11 out of 20 Community Actions

[44] BG, CY, CZ, DE, EL, FR, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI and SK.
[45] AT, EE, FI, HU, IE, IT, LV and RO.
[46] BE and the UK.
[47] AT, BG, CY, CZ, IT, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK.

2011-2013 analysed in this evaluation focused on this area. They included research, design and delivery of seminars, workshops and training courses, awareness-raising campaigns and development of indicators. Examples of indicators developed include the measuring of public and community attitudes, behaviours and beliefs, and the measuring of well-being in the thematic areas of recreation, work/education, public space and order, family, peers, media and culture. When discussing the impacts of the projects concerned with project managers, responses were overall positive. Most projects of both periods were reported to have contributed to a great or certain extent to increasing the capacity of Member States. Examples include seminars or other activities to inform and exchange best practices among public authorities. Some project managers were neutral and only a very small number of them reported limited or no contribution. In relation to these projects, similarly for both periods, project managers referred to the weak link between the Community Actions' activities and national policies. Furthermore, project managers were often unaware of whether their results and recommendations were transformed into the development of implementation of national capacities or national policies.

Objective D - Exchange of information, best practices and cooperation in and between Member States in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and measures for the integration of TCNs (evaluation questions 6, 9 and 10)**.**

EQ6: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the exchange of information, best practices and cooperation in and between Member States in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation policies and measures for the integration of TCNs?*
EQ9: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to policy capacity building, co-ordination and intercultural competence building in the Member States across the different levels and departments of government?*
EQ10: *To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the exchange of experience, good practice and information on integration between the Member States?*

Main conclusion: The EIF made an important contribution to the exchange of information, best practices and cooperation within Member States in developing and implementing monitoring and evaluation policies and measures for the integration of TCNs through the

National Actions. Conversely, the Community Actions contributed to this objective to a limited extent as the awareness regarding the Community Actions was limited. Overall, the EIF contributed to policy capacity building, co-ordination and intercultural competence building in the Member States across the different levels and departments of government, but had only a limited impact on the exchange of experience, good practice and information on integration among Member States.

Based on the analysis of the national evaluation reports, it appears that Member States implemented three times more projects aiming to exchange information internally than those promoting exchange with other Member States. This is reflected also in the number of Member States having reported projects in this area:

- 18 Member States[48] reported projects aimed at the exchange of information between various actors at national level, be they centralised or decentralised bodies,
- only 12 Member States[49] reported projects on exchange of information and best practices with other Member States.

This is explained by the ease of dialogue and exchange amongst organisations and public bodies within the same Member State, as they operate under common administrative and legal frameworks, and can count on existing cooperation and exchange mechanisms (local networks of institutions, NGOs).

The activities implemented through the EIF national programmes focused mainly on the following areas:

- capacity building of responsible institutions/organisations[50]
- capacity building in public institutions providing services and goods to migrants[51]
- creation and/or improvement of structures for information exchange[52]
- development of indicators for monitoring results[53]

[48] 18 MSs: AT, BE, CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, LV, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO and SE.
[49] 12 MSs: CY, CZ, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, LV, MT, PL and SE.
[50] 9 MSs: BG, CY, CZ, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO and SK.
[51] 10 MSs: DE, EL, HU, IE, LV, LT, MT, PT, RO and SK.
[52] 9 MSs: CZ, EL, FI, FR, LT, LV, PL, RO and SK.
[53] 3 MSs: FI, FR and RO.

In terms of impacts, 12 Member States[54] out of 25 stated that the EIF strongly contributed to the improvement of mechanisms for exchange of information, best practices and cooperation on the integration of TCNs.

The Community Actions implemented during the period 2011-2013 contributed to the set-up of structured approaches to sharing information and best practices, such as networks or the organisation of regular meetings of public organisations and NGOs active in design and delivery of integration services. Through cooperation and exchanges, the projects supported by the Community Actions contributed to raising awareness of migration and integration policies, and to improving knowledge and understanding of a variety of stakeholders at regional and local level.However, it was shown that more far-reaching results such as expanding voting rights or political representation of TCNs could not be reached. National policy makers were most of the time unaware of projects supported by the Community Actions, as the cooperation activities took place mainly at the decentralised level.

6.3 Efficiency

EQ11: *To what extent were the effects of the EIF 2011-2013 actions achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of the financial and human resources deployed?*

Main conclusion: The assessment of the efficiency of the EIF actions has been limited by the lack of quantitative data and common indicators. The evaluation relied primarily on the stakeholders' assessment of the results achieved in terms of overheads and deployed human resources. The vast majority of Member States made a positive assessment of the cost at which EIF actions were achieved and provided suggestions to increase efficiency. They considered that the costs were proportional with the outputs of the projects and that it would not have been possible or would have been difficult to achieve the same results at a lower cost. Room for improvement was identified with regard to the speed of cash-flow between the Commission and the Member States and with the administrative burden that impacted the efficiency of the implementation of the Fund.

[54] 12 MSs: BG, CY, CZ, EL, FI, FR, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO and SK.

As the legal basis of the Fund did not require national Responsible Authorities to collect data suitable for the assessment of efficiency, the lack of quantitative data represented a limitation to the assessment of efficiency. However, qualitative information made available by the national authorities and the implementing bodies, in addition to the analysis included in the national evaluation reports, have been used as a basis for this part of the evaluation.

For 19 Member States[55] the resources allocated were sufficient to deliver the activities supported by the Fund. In some cases, an improvement in efficiency was recognised for the 2011-2013 period compared to the previous one (2007-2010). This can be explained by the increased familiarity with the procedures acquired over time by the bodies in charge of planning and implementing the Fund.

Overall, the majority of Member States considered the costs incurred to implement the Fund proportional to the projects' outputs. For example, the design of educational tools and the counselling activities were considered to be amongst the most cost-effective activities for two main reasons:

- the educational tools were disseminated to potential users outside the boundaries of the financed projects, thus ensuring a larger use of the outputs of the financed projects,
- the provision of counselling was seen as a service allowing TCNs to access other services.

Some Member States[56] tried to assess the costs incurred to implement the EIF against those of other EU funding instruments[57] or national funds. However, due to the differences in the target groups, for the majority of the Member States the comparison with other EU sources was not appropriate from a methodological standpoint.

Other Member States[58] reported factors/ mechanisms that increased the cost-effectiveness in the project's implementation. For instance, they considered that the use of the procurement procedure contributed to the efficiency of the process. Moreover, two Member States stated

[55] BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PT, RO, SI, SK and the UK.

[56] CY, ES, NL, PL, RO, LU and the UK.

[57] Comparisons were made mainly with the European Social Fund (ES, NL, PL and RO), the Cohesion Fund (CY), the European Refugee Fund and the Return Fund (LU, UK, ES). In comparison with the ERF (and RF), there were reported accounts that the costs were reasonable and comparable (LU), with two Member States even indicating that the costs were more moderate than under the ERF (ES, UK).

[58] HU, SK, IT, LU, MT, SI and NL.

that the cost-effectiveness of the projects was enhanced by the monitoring and audit procedures which allowed corrections in due course[59].

With regards to the degree of timely availability of EIF financial resources, according to 14 Member States[60] the resources were generally available on time; however, some delays in respecting the timing were reported by 11 Member States[61]. Hereunder some of the most frequently reported issues:

- Pre-financing period: several Member States were dissatisfied with the long pre-financing phase and/or reported delays in disbursement[62] and delays in advance payments[63]. Furthermore, in some cases the implementing organisations have been negatively impacted due to the long delays in payment of salaries. It has been suggested that this problem relates to the Responsible Authorities' own requirements and constraints.
- Administrative burden: some Member States stated that the administrative procedures reduced the efficient implementation of the projects[64]. In some cases, organisations did not have the experience required to deal efficiently with the legal and financial procedures associated with the use of public funds. Some Member States (FR and SE) said that the availability of resources was negatively affected by the heavy administrative constraints.

When requested to state if it would have been possible to achieve equal results at lower costs by improving the procedures, 14 Member States[65] reported that it would not have been possible and four Member States[66] argued that reducing the costs would have also reduced the volume and the quality of services (and hence the number of beneficiary TCNs).

Nine Member States [67] provided suggestions to increase efficiency:

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59 NL and PL.
60 BG, CY, CZ, DE, EE, ES, HU, IT, LT, MT, NL, PT, SI and the UK.
61 AT, EL, FI, FR, IT, LV, LU, PL, RO, SE and SK.
62 AT, DE, FI, FR, IT, LV, PL.
63 PL.
64 FR, PL, and SE.
65 BE, CY, CZ, DE, ES, HU, IE, LV, MT, NL, PL, RO, SK and the UK.
66 CZ, EL, PL and LU.
67 AT, EE, FI, FR, IT, LT, LU, SE and SK.

- Higher cost effectiveness could be achieved by putting more emphasis on the creation of synergies between projects with similar goals and their consolidation into larger multiannual projects[68].
- Cost efficiency could be achieved by paying more attention to personnel costs in project budgets (FI).
- Setting up more precise indicators would improve the calculation of unit costs (SK).
- Standard unit costs and ceiling amounts should be introduced at European level (IT).

On the implementation of projects supported by the Community Actions, more than half of the respondents found that administrative requirements related to project implementation were reasonable to a great or to a certain extent (59%, 20 out of 34 responses). Project managers stated that they understood the need for administrative procedures to ensure that the funds granted were spent as intended. Projects run by large organisations with previous experience in the use of EU funds managed to absorb more funds and did not find the administrative procedures as burdensome. However, an issue was raised on the time taken by the Commission to approve requests for changes in project plans: for instance, changes in smaller deliverables such as the planning of seminars will be obsolete if the answer is not received quickly. Some interviewees said that in their experience the Commission took up to two months to provide answers, which made the feedback of little or no use in some cases.

6.4 Sustainability

EQ12: *To what extent have the positive effects of the EIF 2011-2013 actions lasted after the interventions were terminated?*

Main conclusion: Although the positive effects of the EIF 2011-2013 actions lasted to a moderate degree after EIF funding for National Actions and Community Actions terminated, those effects were important, as tools and methodologies developed with EIF support remained available for use also in the framework of other initiatives. The evaluation showed that only a few projects targeting the delivery of services to TCNs were successful in seeking alternative funds once the support through EIF ceased. However, some of them could continue under the successor fund (AMIF).

[68] EE, FI, IT, and LU.

A significant number of Member States[69] reported that the effects of the 2011-2013 EIF actions lasted to a great extent after funding ended, whilst for some[70], the effects were less enduring, with the degree of sustainability varying from one project to another.

The most significant factors influencing sustainability were networking and cooperation between authorities and organisations[71]. When these actions were missing, the capacity of other actions to have a lasting impact remained limited. Furthermore, the nature of activities/projects implemented was also found to have contributed significantly to ensuring sustainability, for example language courses had an important impact on integration[72].

Factors impacting negatively on the sustainability included long pre-financing periods[73], the limited political commitment and support at national level[74] to continue activities previously financed by EIF, limited amount of financial resources to complement EIF[75], and the lack of project monitoring[76].

Concrete examples of sustainable actions and outputs of the EIF were the development of training materials and products which continued to benefit TCNs even after the intervention ended[77] and electronic platforms developed in the framework of EIF projects[78].

A majority of projects under the Community Actions created positive effects which lasted, although many were reduced in scope after the end of EIF's financial support.

Long-lasting effects include the use of monitoring and evaluation methods developed with EIF support, and the continued activity of networks developed under the EIF. The evaluation found that research projects, however, did not seem to generate sustainable effects, there being an apparent lack of political will to make use of the results.

Project managers suggested that the sustainability of projects could be improved by adopting a systematic approach to the dissemination of research results within and by the Commission and by adopting longer funding periods. This could allow needs assessments to take place at

69 BE, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, SI and the UK .
70 AT, EE, EL, MT, NL, PL, PT and RO.
71 AT, CZ, DE, EL, HU, IT, LT, SE and FR.
72 CY, CZ and DE.
73 AT, EE and RO.
74 EE, RO and SK.
75 The UK.
76 AT.
77 HU, LT, LV, RO, SE, LU and the UK.
78 MT and the UK.

the beginning of projects, along with better follow-up and evaluation of activities after project implementation.

The lack of a systematic approach to ensuring sustainability has been addressed under AMIF, where sustainability has been included in the criteria for the evaluation of project proposals leading to the award decision.

6.5 Complementarity and Coherence

EQ15: *To what extent were the EIF 2011-2013 actions coherent with and complementary to other actions related to integration of TCNs, financed by national resources of the Member States and other EU financial instruments?*

Main conclusion: Overall, the evaluation did not find evidence of overlaps between the fund and other EU funds or with the actions carried-out at national level. Actions implemented under the EIF have been deemed by the stakeholders as coherent with and complementary to other actions related to the integration of TCNs which had been financed uniquely at national level and by other EU financial instruments. However, the approach used to ensure coherence and complementarity between the Community Actions and national and other EU level actions and projects was not systematic.

The majority of Member States[79] reported that EIF-funded actions were coherent with and complementary to activities carried out at national level. Some national authorities[80] indicating that the EIF was actually one of the few sources of funding targeting the integration of migrants in their countries.

The evaluation found that efforts were undertaken at both national and EU level to mitigate risks of overlaps and to help ensure coherence and complementarity.

At EU (Commission) level, complementarity was ensured through coordination and dialogue between DG HOME and the other DGs (such as via inter-service consultation), participation in technical fora, and consultation at national level.

Member States indicated various measures put in place to ensure coherence and complementarity, for instance, coordination and cooperation between the authorities managing different funds[81], and coordination at the central level of different funding sources in order to avoid overlap and the risk of double-financing[82].

Nevertheless, the evaluation found that the differences in timelines of the relevant funds brought certain challenges with regards to checking and ensuring complementarity, especially

[79] AT, BE, CY, CZ, EE, DE, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, RO, SI, SK, SE, and the UK.
[80] FI, LT, PL and PT.
[81] E.g. ESF and EIF in EL, ES, HU, IT, SE and RO.
[82] AT, CY, CZ, DE, EE, EL, LU, LV, LT, MT and RO.

in relation to the programming of the funds. Several Member States[83] indicated that the fact that target groups and the focus of existing funding mechanisms were different facilitated avoiding overlaps.

Building synergies between the EIF and other EU instruments was often side-lined as it was not a legal requirement and beneficiaries were not permitted to combine different sources of EU funding. The EIF provided the basis for integration in the labour market, hence the fund contributed to some extent also to the achievement of the objectives of the European Social Fund (ESF). However, while the ESF focused on social inclusion through the integration in the labour market, the EIF's ultimate scope was not necessarily the integration in the labour market. Under the successor fund (AMIF) synergies are promoted through meetings with other DGs of the Commission and with the Responsible Authorities of the Member States.

The general lack of awareness of the Member States' responsible authorities also appears to have limited the coherence and complementarity. The evaluation study showed that most of the Responsible Authorities interviewed were not aware of the projects supported through Community Actions, and could not estimate the extent to which Community Actions have complemented national actions. Under the successor fund, the Commission should ensure that Responsible Authorities are regularly informed about the activities implemented under the Community Actions, to avoid overlaps and to enhance complementarities and synergies.

Overall, around 56% of the project managers interviewed found that the projects developed were linked to other national actions. The project managers whose projects developed links with national-level activities highlighted the international dimension brought by Community Actions. 62% of the project managers reported that there were no overlaps at all.

The majority of the Community Actions analysed in the framework of the evaluation were coherent with and complementary to other projects and actions at EU level. Links were created, for instance, through the use of the Migrant Integration Policy Index which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States as well as some third countries . Also, cooperation was organised with other Community Actions and projects under the European Social Fund. More than two thirds of respondents pointed out that they developed links with other EU level projects and/or actions.

[83] AT, CZ, DE, EL, LV, MT, NL and PT.

6.6 EU Added value

EQ16: *What is the additional value resulting from the EIF 2011-2013 actions compared to what the Member States would be able to carry out through investments necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of integration of TCNs without the support of the EIF 2011-2013 actions?*

Main conclusion: Most Member States stated that to a large extent the EIF funds enabled the implementation of actions that otherwise could not have been funded from national resources because of their innovative approach and/or the limited national resources. Beneficiary organisations considered that the EU added value laid in particular in the setting-up of stronger networks at national and European level and the increase of the visibility of integration activities thanks to the EU support.

National evaluation reports and interviews with beneficiary organisations led to a positive assessment of the EU added value of the EIF as it allowed a number of Member States to test new approaches and methods to foster integration and, for countries facing the issue of integration of TCNs for the first time, it represented an opportunity to develop new services and tools. Furthermore, at EU level there was no other source of funding targeting the integration of TCNs beyond the support to enter the labour market.

Member States stated that to a large extent (22), or to some extent (3), the EIF funds enabled the implementation of actions that otherwise could not have been funded from national resources (scope effects). It was also underlined that the same coverage of actions and scope of the projects could not have been possible without the EIF funding, mainly due to budgetary constraints and limited national resources for funding actions concerning integration[84] also due to the economic and financial crisis[85].

Moreover, in order to illustrate the added value of the EIF, Member States gave several examples of projects and actions where the EIF had an added value in providing volume

[84] CY, CZ, EL, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL and RO.
[85] CY, EL, IT, NL, PT and the UK.

effects. For instance, in Spain and in France, the EIF enabled an increase in the scope of integration activities in terms of territorial scope and number of beneficiaries reached. The Czech Republic and Estonia stated that the EIF allowed for the expansion of integration actions and supported innovative activities.

In addition to financial resources, other benefits were brought about by the EIF. Implementing organisations developed their networks[86], improved their performance through professionalization[87], improved project management and quality of projects[88], development of skills[89], and gained overall knowledge and capacity in the area of integration[90].

A number of Member States (9) also mentioned the increased focus on vulnerable target groups, which include women, young people, children, and the elderly as a primary benefit. For example, Italy provided support services to facilitate attendance of women, unaccompanied minors and youth to training courses and literacy courses.

Projects supported by Community Actions were also considered as projects which could not have been implemented without the support of the EIF, due to a lack of alternative national funds.

According to the majority of the respondents, the EIF being a European fund, it produced further benefits, namely enhanced legitimacy of their organisation and activities, increased branding and visibility of the project and the organisations, access to wider networks and the possibility for cross-national inspiration and exchange.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Despite the small size of the financial contribution provided by EIF compared to other EU funding instruments such as the Cohesion Fund and the European Social Fund, the evaluation found that the Fund had a significant value added for the Member States. It allowed the implementation of projects that would not have been put into effect with national resources

86 BG, EL, HU, CY, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, SE and SK.
87 AT and the NL.
88 AT, BE, BG, EE, EL, FI, IE, IT, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, UK, ES and SI.
89 PL.
90 CY, EL, HU, IE, LV, PL, RO, SK, AT, BE, EL, LT and MT.

alone, and allowed existing projects to expand geographically and reach an increasing number of beneficiary third country nationals. Some national authorities could test new approaches and methods to foster integration, and for countries facing the issue of integration of TCNs for the first time, the EIF represented an opportunity to develop new services and tools. At EU level there was no other source of funding targeting directly the integration of third country nationals beyond support to enter the labour market. However, the interpretation of target group as "newly arrived" limited the use of the fund as Member States defined the target group in different ways. Improvements have been made under AMIF, since the definition of TCNs now includes beneficiaries of international protection, resettled or transferred persons and, in particular, vulnerable persons. However, to ensure consistency, a common definition should be provided in the next funding instruments.

The evaluation also demonstrated that the logical framework of EIF had not been well designed: the articulation between general objective and specific objectives, on the one hand, and between these and the priorities on the other hand, led to a complex intervention logic. Whilst the logical framework has been better defined in AMIF, under each specific objective there is still the possibility for the MSs to avoid investments in areas less "attractive". This should be addressed in the new generation of funds (next MFF-post 2020).

Another issue identified was the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, common to all Member States. The European Commission has addressed this for the 2014-2020 programming period by developing a common monitoring and evaluation framework and providing guidance on it to the national authorities. A network of national evaluation coordinators was set up in 2015 and since then, through technical meetings the Commission and its members discuss and exchange information on evaluation matters regularly. A specific evaluation module has been developed in an IT system used for the shared management (SFC), to promote consistency of the national evaluation reports.

The allocation system, designed on the basis of historic trends (previous three years), could not reflect Member States' short term evolving needs and may have hindered the flexibility of the Fund in this respect. However, some flexibility was ensured by the possibility for the Member States to modify their national programmes at any time and to reallocate Funds in the area which required a stronger financial support. Under the successor fund (AMIF), the

distribution key is still based on the 2011-2013 allocations for the EIF, as well as the Return Fund and European Refugee Fund but more flexibility is ensured by a much more important budget for emergency assistance. However, the allocation system should be more flexible in the future by distributing the available financial resources to long-term activities implemented by Member States and actions addressing urgent needs through the quick reaction mechanism of the emergency assistance managed by the European Commission.

Some Member States perceived the administrative burden of the implementation of the Fund as relatively high. The 2014-2020 programming period saw some improvements, as a single fund covers all migration matters (AMIF), Member States adopt multiannual programmes and the eligibility rules are aligned to the national ones. Member States have also been encouraged to use the simplified costs options.

Finally the evaluation found that Responsible Authorities did not have a substantial awareness of Community Actions as they were often not systematically informed by the beneficiary organisations of projects implemented in this way, which limited the coherence and complementarity of Community actions with national actions. It also found that the Fund only contributed to the improvement of admission procedures and to the cooperation between Member States to a limited extent.

The lessons learnt from the ex post evaluation of the implementation of EIF will feed the interim evaluation of AMIF. The interim evaluation will be completed in 2018 and is expected to have an impact on the implementation of AMIF in the remaining spending period (2019-2022).

ANNEX 1 - PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

Leading DG	DG HOME
Participating Units of DG HOME	A2 – Legal Affairs B1 – Legal Migration and Integration E1 – Union Actions E2 – National programmes for South and East Europe, evaluation, AMIF/ISF Committee E3 - National programmes for North and West Europe, budget, MFF, agencies
Participating DGs	Secretariat General, Service Juridique, REGIO, BUDGET, EMPL
Roadmap approval	October 2015
Agenda Planning	2016/HOME/080
External consulting firm specialised in evaluation	Contract signed in April 2016 with a consortium of companies: – Ramboll Management Consulting A/S (lead partner) – PwC EU Services EESV – Milieu Ltd
Number of steering group meetings	5
Last deliverable handed in	15 October 2016
Approval of the final report by Steering Group	28 October 2016

ANNEX 2 - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Overview

In order to inform the ex post evaluation of the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals (EIF) for 2011-2013, several stakeholders were consulted through public and targeted consultations conducted by the European Commission on the one hand and by the external evaluators on the other, in the framework of their contract with the Commission to provide a study on the ex post evaluation of the implementation of the EIF. This annex provides an overview of the consultation processes and the type of stakeholders consulted, and presents the results of these consultations. These results have been compiled and summarised from the responses received by the European Commission to its Public Consultation, and from the final ex post evaluation report of the EIF submitted by the external evaluators.

The public consultation conducted by the European Commission

Between 11 May 2016 and 11 August 2016, the European Commission held a public consultation on the EIF 2007-2010 and 2011-2013 in the form of an online questionnaire. The types of stakeholders invited to participate in this consultation were: individuals (experts, beneficiaries), local and national Member State authorities, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, social partners and civil society, academic institutions, international organisations, and EU Institutions and Agencies. The final number of respondents was small: 24 responses were received from 9 Member States (BE, PT, MT, CY, AT, LV, IE, FI, ES). Given this low response rate, contributions cannot be considered as being representative of the targeted stakeholders, but the results may provide additional insights nonetheless and will be presented below together with the findings of the other consultations. Another limitation is the fact that the information available on the identities of the participants is based on self-reported values which cannot be verified.

The consultations conducted by the external evaluators

After conducting initial, explorative interviews with DG HOME officials, the external evaluators conducted three types of targeted consultations with varied types of stakeholders and analysed 8 case studies. This section provides an overview of the consultation process that took place in this framework.

1. Interviews and a phone survey in relation to the Community actions: 5 Commission officials who coordinated or administered the Community actions were interviewed, along with 20 Project Managers and 4 Responsible Authorities (RAs).

2. EU-level interviews were carried out with a small sample of stakeholders regarding both national and Community actions, to assess the complementarity and coherence of the EIF with other EU funding instruments that have a potential impact on the integration of third country nationals (TNCs). Questions were also asked about the relevance and efficiency of the EIF. At DG HOME 6 officials were interviewed.

In addition, 4 European Social Fund (ESF) representatives, 1 Eurofound representative, and 2 European Parliament LIBE Committee members were contacted. None of these persons were available for interviewing however.

3. Case studies were carried out as part of the evaluation of EIF in 8 Member States: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Spain and Sweden. A total of 12 desk officers, 21 RAs or delegated authorities, and 59 beneficiaries were interviewed.

Results

The most relevant results of the consultations carried out by the European Commission and the independent experts are grouped in this section and presented according to the following evaluation criteria: relevance and utility, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence and complementarity, and EU added value.

Relevance

Regarding the relevance of the actions funded under the EIF, question 10 of the Commission's public consultation asked participants whether, in their opinion, the projects and activities supported or financed by the fund in their country of residence addressed the needs of the potential beneficiaries. The majority of participants found that the needs were addressed to some extent (14 Yes, 9 Yes but with some problems).

A few problems or difficulties encountered for the EIF 2010-2013 were also highlighted by respondents:

- small associations were said to have difficulty fulfilling all the requirements or "rules" of the projects;
- there was thought to be a lack of financial resources at times, for example, sometimes resources were insufficient in relation to the number of applicants or potential beneficiaries;
- limiting the eligibility for funding to TCNs was thought to exclude naturalized citizens of immigrant origin.

In line with the results of the public consultation, EU-level stakeholders interviewed by the external contractors as part of case studies generally assessed positively the relevance of the EIF, indicating that the EIF had responded to needs in the area of integration. However, 9 out of 26 Member States (DE, EE, EL, ES, HU, LT, MT, RO and UK) pointed to a lack of interest/engagement among local level policy-makers, NGOs and TCNs. The Member States generally did not provide firm assessments of why there was a lack of interest.
Problems highlighted regarding the relevance of the fund were the varying degree of relevance of the fund for given Member States, gaps in the covered needs, and the fact that the EIF focused largely on only one part of the population with integration needs, namely (newly arrived) TCNs.

Effectiveness

In the area of effectiveness, the two most relevant questions for the Commission's public consultation were questions 2 and 5. Question 2 asked participants whether the general

objective of the EIF (to support the efforts made by the Member States in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies) was achieved. Question 5 asked participants whether, based on their experience, the actions financed by the EIF in their country were consistent with the general and specific objectives of the fund. Regarding question 2, the majority of participants (20 answers) considered that the general objective of the fund was achieved. For question 5, most participants (21 answers) found that actions financed under the fund were consistent with the fund objectives.

Regarding the question of whether the objectives of the fund were achieved through the actions implemented, for the facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to the integration process of TCNs, the assessments made by Member States in their National Evaluation Reports (NERs) show that, considering the EU as a whole, the EIF only contributed to the improvement of admission procedures to a limited extent. However, the few Member States that implemented projects with this Specific Objective successfully reached the targeted results and impacts.
In relation to the development and implementation of the integration process of newly arrived TCNs in Member States, the EIF was thought to have a slightly stronger impact for 2011-2013 than in the previous funding period (according to the NERs). This was reported as being thanks to a series of measures, such as: the development and improvement of the quality of introductory programmes; concrete measures aimed to enhance the access of TCNs to public authorities and their ability to adjust to the host society; the improvement of TCNs' access to public and private goods and services.

Efficiency

Regarding the cost-effectiveness of national actions, a total of 19 Member States (BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PT, RO, SI, SK, UK) indicated that the resources allocated were sufficient for the delivery of the activities. In some cases, such as in the case of Poland, an improvement in efficiency was noted in contrast to the previous period (2007-2010), which was accounted for by the increased familiarity with the procedures of the parties involved. Some of the most frequently reported issues in this area included difficulties with pre-financing from national authorities, such as delays in disbursement and/or in advance payments (AT, DE, FI, IT, LV, PL), and administrative constraints, such as lack of administrative capacity (PL), reported excessive bureaucracy (FR, SE), a lack of timeliness for the availability of resources (EL), and unplanned expenses for beneficiaries (DE).
In relation to Community actions, in response to a survey carried out by the external evaluators, the vast majority of project managers found that the use of human (85%, 29 out of 34 responses) and financial (97%, 33 out of 34 responses) resources was reasonable some extent.

Sustainability

Regarding sustainability, the most relevant question in the Commission's public consultation was question 12, where participants were asked whether they considered that improved services and procedures (achieved also through the EIF) would continue without

EU financial support in their country. The majority of respondents considered that improved services and procedures would continue to some extent.

Overall, the results of the stakeholder consultations are in line with those of the public consultations. Regarding the National Actions, thirteen Member States assessed that the positive effects lasted to a large extent after the interventions were terminated, eight to some extent and four to a lesser extent, with the case studies supporting this varied picture. The managers of the Community Action projects surveyed judged that a little more than half of the projects continued in their former or a modified form once EU funding ceased, while for almost all projects, lasting positive effects were reported after termination of the projects.

Coherence and Complementarity

Regarding coherence and complementarity between national actions, the vast majority of Member States (AT, BE, CY, CZ, EE, DE, EL, ES, FR, HU, IE, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, RO, SI, SK, SE, UK) reported that the complementarity criteria for EIF funding were met. FI, LT, PL, PT indicated that the EIF was one of the few sources of funding supporting integration of migrants in their countries. All interviewed EU-level stakeholders also expressed a positive opinion of the extent to which the EIF national programmes complemented actions at the EU level. Member States in their NERs further confirmed the complementarity of EIF funding with other European funds, such as the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and PROGRESS (a financial instrument supporting the development and coordination of EU policy in the areas of Employment, Social inclusion and protection, Working conditions, Anti-discrimination, and Gender equality).
Challenges highlighted by DG HOME representatives in this area were: differences in the timeliness of relevant funds, particularly in relation to the programming of the funds in terms of annual and multiannual programmes (although this is reported to have been solved under the subsequent AMIF funds), and gaps in synergies.

EU Added Value

Regarding EU added value, the most relevant questions from the Commission's public consultations were questions 1 and 13. Question 1 asked participants whether they considered that the implementation of the EIF in their country had affected positively the work of the public administrations in the field of integration. Question 13 asked participants whether they considered that the contribution of the fund had been crucial to the implementation of EU policies regarding integration in their country. In response to question 1, over 50% of respondents considered that the implementation of the EIF in their country had affected positively the work of the public administrations in the field of integration "to a great extent". In response to question 13, the majority of respondents thought that the contributions of the fund made "a huge difference".

In their NERs, 22 Member States (AT, CY, CZ, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, UK) indicated that to a large extent the EIF fund enabled the implementation of actions that otherwise could not have been funded from

national resources. This is consistent with the results of the public consultation. The main reason why the majority of Member States stated that the same actions could not have been developed without EIF financing were budgetary constraints and limited national resources for funding actions concerning integration (CY, CZ, EL, FI, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, MT, NL, RO). Several Member States indicated that the economic and financial crisis had considerable adverse impacts on the availability of resources for actions for integration of TCNs (CY, EL, IT, NL, PT, UK).

ANNEX 3 – METHODOLOGY

STUDY CONDUCTED BY EXTERNAL EVALUATORS

The evaluation relied on a supporting study conducted by an external company. It was decided to rely on an external study so as to obtain a robust and impartial overview of the Fund. A number of elements ensured the high quality of the study:

- A regular and transparent dialogue took place between the European Commission sand the external evaluator;
- The terms of reference of the contract were clearly set out and respected;
- The Fund's management modes were clearly distinguished in the methodology;
- The evaluation applied a mixed-methods approach in order to address the evaluation questions more fully and to ensure all relevant stakeholders were consulted;
- All data sources were assessed for validity and presented data are clearly labelled.
- Triangulation analysis was elaborated.

Communication between the European Commission and the external company

The study's progress was followed by an Inter-service Steering Group (ISSG) comprised of officials from the SG, SJ, DG BUDG, DG REGIO, DG HOME (particularly Units A2, B1, E1, E2 and E3). Four meetings took place between the contractors and the ISSG and structured feedback (in both directions) was provided on a weekly basis throughout the duration of the contract. This two-way dialogue was enriched by the active participation in the ISSG of policy and implementation units and shadowed by horizontal units and the Secretariat General. The quality assessment of the overall process (external contractor's work and report) took place with the participation of the ISSG (attendance by B1, E1, E2 and E3; the other members were consulted by email).

Phases

The structuring feature of the external evaluation was the segmentation of the tasks into clearly defined phases which were closely observed by all parties. These phases had been determined in the Terms of Reference. Adherence to the Terms of Reference made the study itself more efficient and transparent.

Data sources and quality

The information analysed by the contractors through desk research can be grouped into two categories:

1. Documentation relating to implementation – legal acts; high-level contextual documents; programme documents (Annual work programmes) and addition evaluation documents (National evaluation reports for shared management and technical implementation reports for direct management);

2. Statistical data – this includes:
    - Official statistics from OECD, European Commission's Immigrant Integration indicators and MIPEX;

- Financial data extracted from ABAC for EIF and all SOLID Funds in order to present Programmed and Net EU contributions and absorption rates;
- Financial data extracted from SFC2007 to present the breakdowns by Priority and Specific Priority;
- Financial data extracted from SFC2007 to present Programmed and Net EU contributions and absorption rates for Annual Programmes;
- Financial data for direct management were provided by the European Commission. Figures presented are the sum of the cost claims minus the ineligible costs.

Open Public Consultation

Between 11th of May 2016 and the 11th of August 2016, the European Commission also held an Internet-based public consultation in the form of two online questionnaires - one for the 2007-2010 period and one for the 2011-2013 period. Contributions were particularly sought from: individuals (experts, beneficiaries), local and national Member State Authorities, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, social partners and civil society, academic institutions, international organisations, and EU Institutions and Agencies.

However, for the 2007-2010 period only 3 replies were received, which are too few to prepare an analysis of the data. For 2011-2013, there were 21 respondents from eight Member States (AT, CY, FI, IE, LV, MT, PT and ES). Contributions are therefore not representative of the targeted stakeholders. All stakeholders that participated in the EIF public consultation were representatives of public authorities, non-profit organisations or academic/research institutions.

After the closing of the public consultation, 21 answers covering eight different Member States had been received from public authorities, non-profit organizations and academic institutions. It must be noted that one-third (7 out of 21) of respondents were Portuguese public authorities. Therefore, the representativeness of the sample remains limited.

Analysis

Three different levels of analysis were undertaken by the external company:

1. Descriptive analysis, at two levels, to provide context and a basis for the development of other types of analysis:
    - EU level: Different official documentation, such as the Decision establishing the EIF, as well as interviews with DG HOME were analysed and used to describe the context of the EIF, such as the objectives it was aiming to achieve and the type of actions eligible for funding under the EIF.

    - Case studies: The analysis of the data collected relating to the national actions as part of the case studies (all programmatic documents, national evaluation reports and interview notes) was carried out and described according to the intervention logic elements, as well as all the evaluation criteria in the case study reports. The case studies were selected according to four fixed criteria to improve representativeness (Objectives, Priorities,

types of intervention); relevance (external borders and migratory pressure); solidarity (where investments exceed input) and coverage of the evaluation questions in the national evaluation reports.

2. Thematic analysis: For this analysis, N-vivo, a qualitative analysis tool, was used to encode and subsequently analyse the information from the national evaluation reports and relevant interviews (EU level and interviews with RAs). The encoding was done according to a Coding Framework which included all the different intervention logic elements, as well as all the evaluation criteria, and allowed for the creation of "sub-nodes" as further themes emerged from the analysis. Through the encoding, trends and themes emerged across the participating countries under the different evaluation criteria and EIF objectives and priorities. In addition, quantitative data collected was analysed, such as the context and effectiveness indicators from the final closure reports submitted by the Member States (as presented in the SFC 2007 database) and national evaluation reports. This quantitative analysis also allowed for key messages to emerge from the data (such as type of priority receiving the most funding).

3. Comparative analysis: Building on the descriptive and thematic analysis, a comparative analysis was undertaken, comparing the findings from different participating countries under each of the evaluation criteria. The comparative analysis allowed the study team to assess the extent to which the research findings were coherent. The case studies were also included in the analysis and used to illustrate certain findings.

4. Interviews: Over 100 interviews were organized by telephone and in person by the contractor to gather additional input from several stakeholder groups (European Institutions, EU Agencies, national responsible authorities and other stakeholders).

Assessing the impacts of the EIF

Evaluating the impacts of the ERF at national level is more complicated as it requires experiment conditions with a matched control where ERF was not utilised. In order to mitigate this, the study used information from the case studies and interviews, as well as the evaluators' own judgment.

ANNEX 4 - LIST OF EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Effectiveness

1. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the achievement of the objectives defined in the Articles 2 and 3 of Decision No 2007/435/EC and to the priorities defined by the Strategic guidelines (C(2007)3926 of 21/08/2007)?[91]

2. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the integration of newly arrived third-country nationals?

3. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to and supportive of the integration process of third-country nationals?

4. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to development and implementation of the integration process of newly-arrived third-country nationals in Member States?

5. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to increasing of the capacity of Member States to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of third-country nationals?

6. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to exchange of information, best practices and cooperation in and between Member States in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and measures for the integration of third-country nationals?

7. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to implementation of actions designed to put the 'Common Basic Principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union' into practice?

8. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to development of indicators and evaluation methodologies to assess progress, adjust policies and measures and to facilitate co-ordination of comparative learning?

9. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to policy capacity building, co-ordination and intercultural competence building in the Member States across the different levels and departments of government?

10. To what extent did the EIF 2011-2013 actions contribute to the exchange of experience, good practice and information on integration between the Member States?

Efficiency

11. To what extent were the effects of the EIF 2011-2013 actions achieved at a reasonable cost in terms of financial and human resources deployed?

[91] Some questions are based on the objectives of the legal basis, others are based on the priorities in the Strategic guidelines. For this reason the questions may partially overlap.

Sustainability

12. To what extent have the positive effects of the EIF 2011-2013 actions lasted after the interventions were terminated?

Relevance

13. To what extent the European Integration Fund objectives corresponded to needs related to the integration of third-country nationals into the European societies?

14. To what extent did the objectives of the actions under the European Integration Fund correspond to the needs in the field of integration of third-country nationals?

Coherence and complementarity

15. To what extent were the EIF 2011-2013 actions coherent with and complementary to other actions related to integration of third-country nationals, financed by national resources of the Member States and other EU financial instruments?

EU added value

16. What is the additional value resulting from the European Integration Fund 2011-2013 actions compared to what the Member States would be able to carry out through investments necessary for the implementation of the EU policies in the field of integration of third-country nationals without the support of the European Integration Fund 2011-2013 (or 2007-2010) actions?

ANNEX 5 - LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND COUNTRY CODES

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AP	Annual Programme
AWP	Annual Work Programme
EIF	European Integration Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ERF	European Refugee Fund
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
ITech	Information Technology
MS	Member State
NER	National Evaluation Report
RA	Responsible Authority
TCN	Third Country National

List of country codes

AT	Austria	BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria	CH	Switzerland
CY	Cyprus	CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany	DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia	EL	Greece
ES	Spain	FI	Finland
FR	France	HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary	IE	Ireland
IS	Iceland	IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania	LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia	MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands	NO	Norway
PL	Poland	PT	Portugal
RO	Romania	SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia	SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom		

ANNEX 6 - EX POST EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN FUND FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS (EIF) FOR THE PERIOD 2007-2010

1. Scope and purpose of the report

The European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals (EIF) was established by Council Decision 2007/435/EC for the period 2007-2013 and involved 26 Member States (MS), all EU MS[92] excluding Denmark. It is one of four Funds (SOLID Funds) set up under the General Programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows'[93]. The aim of this General Programme was to address the issue of a fair share of responsibilities between Member States concerning the financial burden arising from the introduction of an integrated management of the Union's external borders and from the implementation of common policies on asylum and immigration.

The allocated EU contribution for 2007-2010 under the EIF was equal to EUR 325 872 000[94]. The EIF was designed, through different actions, to contribute to and to facilitate the **integration** of third-country nationals (TCNs), one of the primary concerns of the EU as it allows for greater social cohesion and sustainable economic growth. In the EU budget, actions aimed at the integration of TCNs could be financed through different EU instruments, the EIF being the only fund that specifically targeted TCNs. To ensure the consistency of the EU's response to the integration of TCNs, complementarity with these other instruments, mainly the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and the structural funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), was foreseen through a co-operation and co-ordination mechanism to this end.

The EIF was implemented through two different management modes:

National programmes: under the principle of shared management, Member States implemented the Fund through national annual programmes on the basis of multiannual programming which reflected their specific needs. The annual national programmes set out the measures to be implemented in the Member States and specified their purpose, scope, beneficiaries, expected results and budget. In total, the national programmes of the EIF funded 2986 projects for the period 2007-2010.[95]

Community Actions: under the principle of direct management, at the Commission's initiative, up to 4% of the EIF resources were made available to finance transnational actions

92 Croatia had not yet become a Member State of the EU at this moment.

93 Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament establishing a framework programme on solidarity and management of migration flows for the period 2007-2013, COM(2005) 123 final.

94 For the 2007 annual programme EUR 60 357 000 were allocated (of which EUR 4 543 000 for Community Actions); for 2008 EUR 72 075 000 (of which EUR 5 425 000 for Community Actions); for 2009 EUR 90 675 000 (of which EUR 6 825 000 for Community Actions) and for 2010 EUR 102 765 000 (of which EUR 7 735 000 for Community Actions).

95 The size and number of projects varied between Member States, with Spain funding 530 projects and Ireland funding 8, for example.

or actions of interest to the EU as a whole. These actions were implemented by NGOs, international organisations or public bodies of the Member States. Priorities and themes for projects were set out in the European Commission's annual work programmes. Calls for proposals were published and potential beneficiaries could apply and submit their proposals.

The EIF aimed to achieve four **Specific Objectives**, listed below, and the EIF contribution, could be increased[96] from 50% for standard actions to 75% for actions targeting at least one of five **Specific Priorities** (listed below). The Specific Objectives and Specific Priorities were established in the strategic guidelines adopted by the Commission in August 2007[97] and were developed from the **four Priorities** (listed below), which MS were to consider when elaborating their multi-annual programmes and annual programmes:

Priorities	**Specific Objectives**	**Specific Priorities**
Priority 1: Implementation of actions designed to put 'Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union' into practice (mandatory)	(a) Facilitation of the development and implementation of admission procedures relevant to and supportive of the integration process of TCNs	*Specific Priority 1*: Participation as a means of promoting the integration of TCNs in society – actions involving the participation of TCNs in the formulation and implementation of national policies and measures
Priority 2: Development of indicators and evaluation methodologies to assess progress, adjust policies and measures, and to facilitate coordination of comparative learning (mandatory)	(b) Development and implementation of the integration process of newly-arrive TCNs in MS	*Specific Priority 2*: Specific target groups – actions, including introduction programmes and activities, whose main objective is to address the specific needs of particular groups, such as women, youth and children, the elderly, illiterate persons and persons with disabilities
Priority 3: Policy capacity building, coordination and intercultural competence building in the MS across the different levels and departments of government	(c) Increase of the capacity of MS to develop, implement, monitory and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs	*Specific Priority 3*: Innovative introduction programmes and activities – actions developing innovative introduction programmes and activities, such as enabling TCNs to work and study at the same time, e.g. part-time courses, fast-track modules, distance or e-learning systems

[96] MS benefitting from the Cohesion Funds for the period 2007-2013 were allowed to have a 75% EU co-financing rate from the Fund.

[97] C(2007)3926 of 21/08/2007.

Priority 4: Exchange of experiences, good practices and information on integration between the MS	(d) Exchange of information, best practices and cooperation in and between MS in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies and measures for the integration of TCNs	*Specific Priority 4*: Intercultural dialogue – actions aimed at encouraging mutual interaction and exchange, such as developing intercultural dialogue in an effort to resolve any potential conflict caused by differences in cultural or religious practices, and thus to ensure the better integration of TCNs in the societies, values and ways of life of MS
		Specific priority 5: Involvement of the host society in the integration process – actions addressing effective ways of raising awareness and actively involving the host society in the integration process

The Decision establishing the EIF requires the Commission to produce an ex-post evaluation for the period 2007-2010 based on national evaluation reports on the results and impact of actions co-financed by the Fund[98]. This report will outline the findings of the evaluation of annual programmes as well as Community Actions for 2007-2010.

2. Findings

Overview of the Type of Actions Implemented

Under shared management the majority of projects were funded under Priority 1 (2466 projects) and the least number of projects under Priority 4 (44 projects or 9%). Most projects

[98] See COM (2011)847 final, Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions on the results achieved and on qualitative and quantitative aspects of implementation of the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007-2009, European Commission, 5 December 2011. See also European Commission (2011) *Synthesis of the National Evaluation Reports on Implementation of Actions Co-Financed by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals from 2007 to 2009 and Report at European Union Level*. Available online at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/financing/fundings/pdf/integration/synthesis_of_the_national_evaluation_reports.pdf

were funded under Specific Objective (b) *Development and implementation of the integration process of newly-arrived TCNs in MS* (1354 projects). The types of actions funded via the EIF varied between the 26 MS, with a strong link between the challenges noted by individual MS in their national programmes and the types of actions ultimately financed. The most-cited need – highlighted by 22 MS – was for greater civic orientation and provision of information to the host society on TCNs. Improvement of TCN language skills was also a priority, as cited by 20 MS. MS with little or no experience in the area of integration of TCNs often implemented projects which aimed to improve the availability of basic information and civic orientation. Those MS with more experience, on the other hand, were more likely than those with less experience to put actions in place which targeted difficulties faced by vulnerable groups.

Regarding Community Actions, during the period 2007-2010 38, Community Actions were financed, with 10 projects in 2007 and 2010, and 9 projects in 2008 and 2009. The focus of Community Actions on priorities changed significantly from one year to the next. In all years, the promotion and development of integration strategies for specific immigrant groups was covered (in total 15 projects). With the exception of 2009, the linkage between migration/admission and integration procedures was prioritised in all years (in total 9 projects).

Implementation of the EIF

10 MS[99] assessed the overall implementation of the EIF positively. This was based primarily on the effective and timely implementation of the projects and actions and the successful contribution of the EIF to the integration of TCNs. Cooperation between MS and between national and local authorities, meticulous planning before project implementation and support of beneficiaries by the Responsible Authority all contributed to the positive assessment made by these 10 MS. 11 MS[100] made a partly positive assessment of the Fund. These MS faced some challenges during implementation, such as lack of experience of those involved[101], underspending as a result of delays in approval of annual programmes by the Commission[102], a reported high administrative workload[103], and potential overlaps with European Refugee Fund (ERF) target groups[104].

5 MS[105] reported having encountered considerable difficulties with the implementation of the EIF, such as delays, and high administrative requirements. It is interesting to note that the

[99] BG, CZ, FR, EL, IE, IT, LV, LT, PL, UK.
[100] AT, CY, EE, FI, DE, HU, LU, RO, SK, SI, ES.
[101] EE, HU, LU, RO, SK, UK.
[102] EE, HU, LU, UK.
[103] SK, DE, HU.
[104] HU, LU.
[105] BE, MT, NL, PT, SE.

implementation of the 2009 annual programme was found to be more successful than the 2007 and 2008 programmes in Cyprus and Hungary, due to greater experience and more flexible requirements. Indeed, Implementation issues encountered in the first years were largely due to the novelty of the Fund and new eligibility rules at European Commission level, which meant that authorities in Member States were not yet fully acquainted with the fund's administrative requirements and implementation modalities. Although 19 MS[106] considered the fund effective, some recommendations for improvement were suggested, such as reducing the administrative workload, clarifying the definition of the target groups and increasing knowledge-sharing between MS.

17 MS highlighted areas where there was room for improvement, such as the need to enhance the capacity of the beneficiary (issues in this area possibly caused by a lack of experience), difficulties in accessing the target group, and challenges faced by the beneficiaries when trying to maintain their own resources after the start of a project, especially during a financial crisis.

EIF Implementation at Programme Level

Almost all of the MS[107] reported that both the 2007 and 2008 annual programmes were fully implemented, although several[108] had a budget implementation rate of less than 75%. In a few MS[109], the 2007 and 2008 annual programmes were implemented as planned and on schedule. In several MS[110] the implementation of annual programmes between 2007 and 2009 was significantly affected by delays and "teething problems", especially in the early stages of implementation. Different reasons for these delays were reported, such as internal relations and procedures within MS (adjustment and approval of national regulations and the establishment of internal documents)[111]; the need for MS to make more than one call for proposals following a lack of qualified proposals in the first call[112] or following programme revisions which changed the framework of the projects[113]; or late approval by the European Commission of multiannual or annual programmes[114]. There were additional issues relating to the administration and management of the programmes, mostly due to a lack of sufficient knowledge and experience among Responsible Authorities and beneficiaries[115]; a lack of or insufficient number of eligible project proposals[116]; and national regulations and policies[117].

106 AT, CZ, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IR, IT, LV, LT, LU, PL, PT, RO, SK, SL, ES, UK.
107 AT, BG, CY, EE, FR, DE, EL, IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, SK, ES, UK.
108 CY, LV, UK.
109 EE, EL, IT, LT, LV.
110 AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, FI, HU, LU, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK.
111 BG, SE.
112 HU, RO.
113 AT, DE.
114 CZ, LU, NL, PL, PT.
115 BG, CZ, FR, DE, HU, IE, NL, LV, PT, RO.
116 AT, BE, CY, EL, HU, LU, PL, RO.

Many MS were able to deal with the challenges faced, which mitigated any issues arising during the implementation of the 2009 annual programmes. However, in some cases problems worsened and began to have an impact on the projects implemented for 2009.

Some projects under the national programmes exceeded the expected outputs. In Romania, for example, in addition to the 100 participants expected to take part in language classes, and the 100 participants of cultural orientation, an extra 40 teachers received training in teaching adult TCNs. A project in Lithuania, aimed at raising awareness of integration via a television broadcast, was able to reach three million Lithuanians (3204% of the original target), which in turn increased awareness of and active participation in EIF activities. By contrast, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands reported that they did not expect the aims of the 2007 programmes to be achieved. Slovenia indicated that this would be the case for both the 2007 and 2008 programmes.

Over 2007-2010, a total of EUR 18.1 million was allocated to Community Actions. In 2007, the average budget implementation rate amounted to 95% while it decreased in 2008 to 94%, in 2009 to 92% and in 2010 to 90%. Compared to the 2011-2013 funding period, the budget implementation rate of Community Actions was overall higher (92% against 86% in the following period).

EIF Implementation at Project Level

The majority of projects were implemented under Priority 1, "Implementation of actions designed to put 'Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the European Union' into practice". Indeed, these Common Basic Principles were the backbone for integration so that a wide spectrum of projects fell within this Priority. The types of projects carried out under this priority included, for example: language-training for TCNs; dissemination of general and practical information and civic orientation; improvement of tolerance, awareness-raising and intercultural dialogue; capacity-building for the adaptation of public and private services to a multicultural society; the upgrading of reception services; preliminary actions to facilitate access to labour market, social counselling, two-way approaches, research on issues of third country nationals, analysis and evaluation of integration measures and processes.

Successful projects implemented under Priority 2 include a research project conducted in Poland investigating discrimination against TCNs. This project included a sociological survey involving 360 TCNs and 30 experts on integration and discrimination against foreigners in Poland, participation in the legislative process, and the organisation of seminars to disseminate the results of the research carried out. A project carried out in Slovakia focused on integrating TCNs children into the school system, with the provision of new teaching

[117] FR, LV, ES.

materials and topics of particular relevance to these children. A study was undertaken in Lithuania to improve knowledge of the needs of TCNs relating to entry into the labour market; the results of the study were then extensively taken up by social groups and institutions.

Under Priority 3, a successful project in Austria involved the collection of data on migration and integration. A website was set up to provide information and tools relating to integration of stakeholders, and to facilitate networking. In Cyprus, seminars were organised for teachers, which included training on intercultural education and teaching Greek as a foreign language. Teachers responded enthusiastically to these seminars, which provided essential information on the teaching and perception of TCN children. A successful project in Finland was aimed at raising awareness of the Thai community, which frequently escapes the reach of measures implemented by the authorities; this project was successful in highlighting issues relevant to the TCNs and in promoting cooperation between different groups.

For CAs, most Community Action projects carried out in 2007-2010 related to furthering the capacity of Member States' stakeholders to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and measures for the integration of TCNs. Types of projects carried out related to research activities, preparing, conducting and follow-up of seminars, round-tables, conferences, workshops and training; awareness-raising activities; activities for establishing networks; the development of tools in the field of integration; and the development of indicators. Most project managers provided positive reports of the outcomes of projects. The success of projects was often linked to the use in the projects of outreach activities or dissemination methods.

3. Relevance

All MS except the Netherlands and Poland found that the EIF's programme priorities and actions were relevant to national needs and aims in this area, with particular relevance in some of the new MS[118] with increasing numbers of migrants from third countries.

In the Netherlands and Poland, programme priorities and actions were considered irrelevant to the national situation. In the Netherlands, the EIF budget represented a relatively small proportion compared to the national budged for integration; thus, it did not add a real value to national strategies. In Poland, it was observed during implementation that a wider range of actions would bring added value to national strategies. Hence, actions had to be reshaped and merged in order to address domestic needs. In addition 5 MS[119] highlighted problems relating to the definition of the target group. Migrants who did not correspond to the legal definition of

[118] BG, CY, CZ, MT.
[119] CY, EE, FI, LU, MT.

TCNs[120] were not eligible for funding, and the interpretation of 'newly-arrived' created problems for beneficiaries. There were also some issues regarding the EIF's relevance, specifically a lack of interest among some stakeholders and target groups, which was highlighted by 9 of 26 MS[121], although reasons for this lack of engagement were not generally expanded upon by respondents.

Regarding Community Actions implemented during the evaluation period, all project managers surveyed reported that their projects responded well to the needs of the Member State in question, and were able to adapt to shifting demands. 15 out of 20 respondents, however, reported that projects could adapt to at least some extent to changing needs between 2007 and 2010. DG HOME representatives also felt that the EIF had generally targeted all integration needs. It should be noted, however, that as none of the Responsible Authorities interviewed were well acquainted with Community Action projects, it is difficult to assess their relevance to national needs.

4. Effectiveness

19 MS reported that the EIF was effective due to successful project implementation and results which were in correspondence with the objectives. 7 MS[122] felt it was too early to provide a useful evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme. 12 MS[123] highlighted several significant outputs, including

- Cultural events and language courses for migrants, information campaigns and services for third-country nationals, and two-way dialogues between nationals of the Member State and third country nationals in order to facilitate integration and increase awareness
- Trainings and conferences, as well as cooperation of national and local authorities, in order to develop the skills of experts working in the field of integration and to exchange best practices
- Research projects, attitude surveys, and evaluation of services involved in integration.

For the Community actions implemented during the 2007-2010 evaluation period, 8 out of 20 project managers interviewed reported that their projects helped set the integration process in motion without any issues. The Community Actions implemented during this period brought about some important developments, particularly as regards improving knowledge and application of admissions procedures. Project managers also indicated that Community

120 Article 1(4) Council Decision of 25 June 2007 establishing the European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals for the period 2007 to 2013 as part of the General programme 'Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows', OJ L 168, 28.6.2007.

121 DE, EE, EL, ES, HU, LT, MT, RO, UK.

122 BE, BG, CY, EE, MT, NL, SE.

123 BG, FR, EL, HU, IT, LV, PT, RO, SK, SI, ES, UK.

Actions improved the ability of MS to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate measures relating to the integration of TCNs.

Feedback from project managers on the impact of the projects implemented was generally positive. They found the majority of projects to have improved the capabilities of MS in the area of integration to at least some extent; only a small number of project managers considered there to have been a limited contribution or no contribution at all. Although there is evidence that most of the Community Actions contributed to the integration of TCNs and to the improvement of integration procedures, they did not always address national needs in the individual MS, and so it was not always possible to use their results for the development or implementation of national integration policies. Policy makers at a national level were often unaware of Community Action projects - an issue highlighted by project managers when reporting on the limitations of Community Actions.

The evaluation indicated that the success of a project was directly attributable to the methods of dissemination employed, which included conferences, seminars and workshops. Project managers indicated that the impact of Community Actions could have been greater if there had been a standardised method of disseminating project results at EU level. Projects were able to raise awareness of issues relating to migration and integration, but it proved to be more difficult to achieve concrete political changes, such as improving political representation.

5. Efficiency

14 MS[124] found the efficiency of the EIF to be satisfactory and the projects to have been implemented at a reasonable cost. A lack of quantitative data for the fund's efficiency makes assessment difficult, however.

Finland, Malta and Portugal considered the programme's efficiency to be partly satisfactory as the EIF budget was felt to be too limited or the Member State was faced with other challenges during implementation. Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Italy and Sweden, found the efficiency of the EIF unsatisfactory as administration and management of the projects required more personnel and financial means than expected. Austria and Germany reported that it was difficult to assess the programme's efficiency and Ireland and the Netherlands did not provide any information on this issue.

For Community Actions, 85% of project managers interviewed (29/34 responses) found that the use of human resources was reasonable to at least some extent, whilst 97% (33/34 responses) found the same for financial resources. Several project managers indicated that more financial resources than expected were required over the implementation period. It should be noted that projects run by organisations with previous experience of similar projects

[124] BG, CZ, FR, EL, HU, LV, LT, LU, RO, SK, SI, ES, UK.

at EU level found the administrative demands of project implementation appropriate. A number of project managers also reported that requests for changes, including smaller changes – e.g. changes in smaller deliverables such as the planning of seminars - had a long response rate from the Commission. This meant that the suggested changes could be irrelevant once approved, or that the project was delayed, e.g. in the case of approving new staff.

6. Sustainability

It is difficult to establish to what extent the EIF had a lasting influence on TCNs as no follow-up was carried out with the individuals themselves. It is particularly difficult to determine the impact of projects which provided indirect services to TCNs, such as information campaigns.

With this limitation in mind, the evaluation found that a large proportion of MS assessed that the positive effects of the EIF lasted to a high extent after the interventions were terminated[125]; a number of MS assessed that the positive effects lasted to some extent, but varied from one project to another[126]. 4 MS indicated that the positive effects of the actions under the EIF programmes lasted to a low extent[127].

For projects under Community Actions, 55% of project managers (11 out of 20 respondents) reported that, for the 2007-2010 period, their projects continued without EU funding, whether in the same or in an adjusted form. Examples of sustained positive effects brought about by Community Actions include the continued use of monitoring and evaluation methods which were developed under the EIF projects, the continuation of created networks, and the dissemination of research project results, although some project managers were unaware of how research projects had been adopted at a political level or if there was any political will to employ the results at all. None of the interviewees reported using a systematic approach to ensure sustainability of projects. Commission officials also indicated that there was not a single, unified approach to ensuring project sustainability, but a variety of approaches depending on the type of project.

7. Coherence and Complementarity

For the evaluation period 2007-2010, all MS reported that the EIF was complementary to other funding, with some pointing out that the EIF was the only funding instrument targeting the integration of TCNs. As the majority of Responsible Authorities interviewed were unaware of the Community Actions which were implemented in their respective countries, it proved difficult to assess coherence and complementarity adequately.

[125] BE, CY, CZ, DE, ES, FR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, SI, UK.
[126] AT, EE, EL, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO.
[127] FI, IT, SE, SK.

73% of respondents for the period 2007-2010 (19 out of 26 respondents) reported that the projects implemented led to the development of links with other national-level actions, with Community Actions bringing an international dimension to those at national level. The survey also showed there were few overlaps with national actions during this period.

75% of respondents (15 out of 20) indicated that links had been developed between their projects and others at EU level. Project managers did, however, highlight a lack of Commission involvement – there was no overview provided of what was taking place in other Community Actions. 5 cases of overlap with other EU projects were highlighted for this period.

8. EU Added Value

All MS, with the exception of the Netherlands and Portugal[128], found that the fund brought added value which could not have been achieved through national funding alone. The most significant impacts could be identified in the implementation of projects targeting integration which would not have been put in place without EIF funding, the expansion and support of actions carried out by NGOs and local authorities, and the exchange of ideas between relevant stakeholders.

The main benefits cited for the period 2007-2010 at project level were the development of knowledge and skills, and the distribution of information and best practices. All of the 20 project managers who responded to the telephone survey for the 2007-2010 period reported that their projects could not have been carried out without EIF funding, attributing this to a lack of national funding directed at projects of this kind. Additional benefits highlighted by the respondents include greater legitimacy of their organisation and its activities, increased awareness of the project, and a better established national and international network. As a result, the projects were able to have a more profound impact than they would have had without EIF funding.

22 MSs also made a positive assessment of the benefits brought by the EIF to target groups. Examples provided were facilitated connections between target group persons and nationals[129]; an increased focus on vulnerable groups[130]; an increased awareness of services available to TCNs and rights[131]; enhancing the skills and knowledge of TCNs[132]; increased appeal of projects[133]; and allowing projects to cover a wider scope of integration activities[134].

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128 Portugal provided no information regarding this issue, and the Netherlands faced difficulties relating to the definition of target groups, the small contribution of the EIF, and the administrative burden.
129 CZ, FR, LU.
130 BE, DE, EL, ES, FI, FR, IT, SE, SI.
131 RO.
132 EE, ES, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE, SI, UK.
133 CY.

Similar results were found for Community Actions. Most respondents to the telephone survey of project managers except for one reported that there were few funds available at national level for cross-national projects and for projects of the size and innovative character of the Community Action projects. Additional benefits reported from the EIF were the increased legitimacy of the organisation and its activities; increased access to key stakeholders; stronger networks at national and international level; the possibility for cross-national inspiration and exchange; and the possibility to conduct projects and research in topics that may be politically sensitive to fund at national level.

9. Conclusion

The evaluation offers several conclusions regarding the various impacts of the EIF. Despite the financial contribution itself being relatively small compared to other European funds, it was found that the EIF had a significant impact on the added value brought to the projects by the fund. The EIF allowed the implementation of projects which would not have been put into effect with national resources alone and also allowed existing projects to be expanded geographically and to a greater number of beneficiaries. The secondary impacts were also significant, such as increased focus on vulnerable groups. The EIF had a particularly noticeable impact in MS with little experience of and limited funding for integration, reinforcing the position of integration on the political agenda.

It was found that the EIF was broad enough to allow specific needs relating to integration to be targeted at any one time, allowing the fund a significant degree of flexibility. Although synergies were addressed to a lesser extent than other priorities, a lack of overlaps indicates that projects funded via the EIF were generally coherent with other activities at national and EU level. However, as Responsible Authorities were generally unaware of Community Actions, it was difficult to ensure complementarity between projects.

The evaluation concluded that the actions implemented adhered well to the objectives of the EIF. Community Actions led to greater cooperation between different groups across the MS, although there were few exchanges between those implementing the projects and the respective national authorities.

There was found to be an issue with the definition of the target group, despite the Commission stating that there had been no intention to impose limits on it. Some MS interpreted 'newly-arrived' TCNs very precisely, whilst others understood it more loosely. This may have limited the EIF's effectiveness. In addition to this, it is not always clear how the results of projects were being taken up at a political level. Project results were not always communicated effectively and this had an impact on the attention which they received politically in the MS and within the Commission, thereby limiting the overall effectiveness of the fund.

[134] CY, CZ, EE, FI, PL.

As there was no requirement to collect data relating to costs, the assessment of the EIF's efficiency was significantly limited. For example, there was no data available to differentiate between administrative costs and the costs of the activities themselves, which meant that the assessment had to rely on stakeholders' own assessments. Some beneficiaries found that the administrative demands of the fund were high.

The Commission did not place a great deal of emphasis on sustainability during project selection, and it was found that only a limited number of projects were able to source alternative funding once the implementation period of the EIF had ended. The extent to which impacts endured varied between projects, as did the capacity to assess sustainability effectively. It is difficult to establish to what extent the EIF had a lasting influence on TCNs; no follow-up was carried out with the individuals themselves. It is particularly difficult to determine the impact of projects which provided indirect services to TCNs, such as information campaigns.

Over the course of the implementation period 2007-2010 a number of lessons were drawn. A number of MS[135] reported the administrative burden as a significant obstacle to the efficient implementation of national programmes. It was also felt that the EIF was too limiting when it came to making programme revisions and managing eligible and ineligible costs, which added to the administrative strain. A clarification of the target group was considered necessary by several MS[136].

[135] AT, CZ, DE, LT, LU, MT, NL, PL, SK, SE.
[136] AT, BE, FR, NL, SK, SE, HU, ES, UK.