

Enhancing implementation of the SDGs and effectiveness of EU aid by supporting joint planning of development cooperation among EU development partners



An assignment under FWC SIEA 2018-Lot 3 (Human Rights, Democracy and Peace), NIRAS provided a Technical Assistance Facility to support DG DEVCO, the EU Delegations and Member State embassies in integrating Agenda 2030 into Joint Programming efforts



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In the context of development cooperation, the EU works with partner countries via Joint Programming (JP), a flexible and tailored process that encourages local ownership by aligning cooperation resources with the development plans of the partner country. In recent years, the EU and Member States have committed to work better together to implement the 2030 Agenda in external relations and mainstream the SDGs across all the different phases of JP, namely, joint analysis, monitoring and results frameworks, as well as implementation.

With 12 experts on board, NIRAS began work on a Framework Contract (FWC) assignment under Lot 3 (Human Rights, Democracy and Peace), which ran from January 2019 to October 2020. The overall objective of the contract was to better support implementation of the SDGs in EU partner countries by improving the effectiveness of and the coordination and engagement in development cooperation and external action. As part of a Technical Assistance Facility, NIRAS experts worked on two levels.

On the country level, the aim was to improve the capacity and operational knowledge of EU Delegations (EUD) and Member States embassies on JP and the SDGs. Taking a demand-driven approach, direct support was provided to EUDs (through missions and home-based work). In addition, services were targeted at improving joint EU-partner country policy dialogue on the SDGs. At the headquarter level, NIRAS strengthened capacities and documented knowledge on JP and the SDGs, and raised awareness of how JP contributes to the SDGs globally.

Throughout the contract, several deliverables were achieved.

Country-level support

The team launched a stock-taking exercise to see the extent to which JP has been implemented in partner countries, providing insights on the key issues and challenges in taking JP forward. Another review was conducted on how different elements of JP (e.g., monitoring, reporting and evaluation systems) might have been adapted to the SDGs and highlighted innovative approaches. Opportunities for complementarities

52 of 120

countries have joint programming roadmaps

between JP and the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Roadmap Facility - which sets out a process for how to engage CSOs - were also identified to facilitate enhanced democratic ownership of the JP process and help dialogue with civil society so that it becomes a continuous and constructive mechanism.

JP support missions were conducted to assist EUDs in promoting and leading JP processes at the country level. An SDG dimension was incorporated into these missions as a study on "EU Joint Programming Contributions to the SDGs" was delivered at the end of the contract. A follow-up from an earlier analysis, this second study focused on: (i) assessing how the SDGs have been integrated into EU external aid policies and guidance documents at HQ level and documenting good practices from EU Member States experiences; and (ii) identifying measures to further improve EU

Client

European Commission, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development

Location

Global

Contract value

€970,342

TA value

€770,790

Duration

January 2019-July 2020



The Global Learning Event facilitated learning and sharing on “Working Better Together” approaches. The aim is to increase the joint EU and Member States impact, voice and visibility at country level.

Group photo from Global Learning Event, Uganda, November 2019: Colleagues from the DEVCO and EEAS Joint Programming teams and Civil Society Unit; EU Delegations; Member State capitals, their embassies and development agencies (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom) and Norway actively participated. The European Investment Bank and DG ECHO (Humanitarian Office) also participated from their regional office in Nairobi.



contributions to SDG progress at the country level, including to emphasise entry points that ensure added value of EU and Member State support. SDG country fiches, providing a snapshot of how the EU is supporting SDG implementation in partner countries, were developed and can be found on the Capacity4-Development web portal.

Communications

The team developed visual identities depicting the aid profile in 120 countries. A communications strategy was developed to increase the visibility of JP to better communicate its goals and objectives, create a positive attitude about JP, and communicate inter-

Headquarters level

Materials for JP training were reviewed and revised and trainings took place. The 2030 Agenda was integrated into policy dialogue training that, for example, advocates using the SDGs as an opportunity to address difficult political dialogue issues. The team also developed training content on the SDGs for incorporation into either: (i) relatively few slides for use in a training that is not SDG-specific or (ii) an elaborated set of modules to be used in a dedicated SDG training course. The 2018 version of the JP Guidance was revised to make it more concise, balance theory and practice, and make it relevant to both development and non-development practitioners.

23 partner countries

attended the Global JP Learning Event in Uganda on 19-21 November 2019 to share experiences and ideas on the effective implementation of JP at country level.

nally. The communications strategy aimed at strengthening the communication capacity of EUD staff to communicate clear and consistent messages, implementing the visibility of the “Working Better Together” agenda. The strategy later incorporated the communicative concept “Team Europe”, which was created to support partner countries’ sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

Publicly suitable material is available on the Capacity4Dev platform, including the JP Tracker with roadmaps, joint strategies, monitoring reports, and brochures. The team also drafted stories on joint planning and implementation (e.g., Cambodia, Ethiopia and Togo).



The team also crafted several short studies on JP and the SDGs. These include an analysis on engaging other like-minded development donors in JP and another on creating a Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and JP. Other studies that were conducted explore working better together at the regional level; further reflection on the use of Joint Results Frameworks; the potential for engagement with European Development Finance Institutions; and how to promote engagement with the European private sector.