

# Chapter 6: Results management and accountability of Czech development co-operation

## Results-based management system

Indicator: A results-based management system is in place to assess performance on the basis of development priorities, objectives and systems of partner countries or territories

**Having in place a more comprehensive results-based management system would help the Czech Republic to ensure that it is getting the most out of investments, to learn from and improve the quality of programmes, and to communicate the results of its development co-operation efforts to Parliament and the public. The forthcoming medium-term development co-operation strategy and the next generation of country strategy programmes, together with the 2030 Agenda, can help set the results framework. Building a results culture and strengthening internal capacity will be critical in making the move towards managing for development results, as agreed in Busan.**

### The Czech Republic needs a systematic approach to managing for results

The Czech Republic is aware of the importance of managing for development results in order to be sure it is getting the most out of its investments, to take evidence-based decisions and for communication and accountability to taxpayers and partners. Good foundations are in place for building a comprehensive system of managing for results that links results at various levels: project, programme and overall strategy. The sound and evolving project cycle methodology, for example, introduced results in project identification and monitoring. The Czech Republic also uses evaluation findings to improve project and programme management.

While the Agency is making progress with managing for results at the project level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in co-ordination with the Council for Development Cooperation, needs, in particular, to clarify measurable results that the Czech Republic wants to achieve at the strategic level. It has an opportunity to do this with the next medium-term development co-operation strategy and in the new country strategy programmes that will be prepared in the next couples of year. By linking its results frameworks with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Czech Republic will also be better placed to show how its development co-operation is contributing to Agenda 2030 at the strategic level and to development results and mutual accountability in partner countries or territories.

Like in other Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries, institutionalising and building a culture of managing for results for strengthened accountability and informed decision making is a challenge. Awareness-raising, training and other incentives can help advance this agenda. This is a work-in-progress in the Czech Republic: it is starting to build awareness of how to manage for results and technical capacity for measuring results, for example, in setting baselines, and output and outcome indicators. By engaging with the OECD DAC results community, it can share and learn from members' experience and good practice in managing for results.

**The Agency is starting to shift from financial and activity control to measuring progress against outputs and outcomes**

While the co-operation strategies for programme countries do not include specific goals or results indicators, the Agency has taken important first steps in managing for development results at the project level. All new projects must include a logical framework, and the Agency has prepared two pilot sector programmes that include results to be achieved – drawing from partners’ strategies – and measurable indicators. Where available, the Agency uses existing results indicators set out by partner countries or territories, which is good practice.

The Agency monitors its bilateral projects and programmes by analysing implementing partners’ reports and through monitoring missions carried out twice a year by embassies or Agency experts. Monitoring practices are still largely about control, although they are gradually paying more attention to results. The introduction of logframes has helped to reconstruct baselines for measuring project outcomes and the new forms for individual project monitoring are more focused on results. Information from monitoring missions and reports is used to adjust programme and project management processes when needed.

**There is no specific approach to monitoring results in fragile states**

The Czech Republic’s development co-operation policy is not focused on fragility even if it delivers aid in countries that are considered to be fragile (Chapter 5). In light of this, it does not have a specific approach to monitoring the conflict sensitivity of its programmes and projects in these contexts. As fragile contexts are volatile, monitoring the effect of the overall programme on the drivers of conflicts or crises, along with measurable deliverables, could enhance results in these contexts.

## Evaluation system

**Indicator: The evaluation system is in line with the DAC evaluation principles**

**The Czech Republic has made good progress in institutionalising evaluation in its development co-operation system. It has a dedicated Evaluation Unit, an annual plan and a specific budget. Staffing of the unit is limited, however. Next steps for strengthening evaluation include formulating a policy and ensuring the independence of evaluations from development policy and programming, in line with DAC principles and guidelines.**

**The Czech Republic is institutionalising evaluation; a dedicated policy would strengthen it**

Since 2012, the Division of Humanitarian Assistance and Evaluation within the Department of Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance has been responsible for evaluation. The unit in charge of evaluation has a single staff member responsible for all evaluation procedures together with other duties. This means that the evaluation manager can manage a few (3 – 6) strategic evaluations in a given year.<sup>1</sup>

The project cycle methodology (MFA, 2011) describes the purpose and procedure of evaluating projects and programmes; the role and responsibilities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of the department in charge of evaluation; the role of other actors; the procedures for appointing a reference group for evaluation within the Council for Development Cooperation and for selecting evaluators, evaluation missions and for producing final reports. While this is useful, it is not framed by an explicit evaluation policy in line with DAC evaluation principles. The system would benefit from a policy that sets out the institutional arrangements for ensuring the independence of the evaluation unit and that defines the overall strategic purpose of evaluation, including in relation to the overall strategy and system itself.

### The independence of evaluation from policy and programming could be reinforced

The Czech Republic supports the independence of individual evaluations by commissioning independent evaluators<sup>2</sup> and through the special role played by the Council for Development Cooperation and its Evaluation Working Group.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a reference group of experts<sup>4</sup> is appointed for each evaluation to control the quality of evaluation reports and ensure the relevance of findings. These arrangements support credibility in a resource constrained environment, however the reporting line for the evaluation function is such that there is a risk of conflict of interest between policy, programming and evaluation which could undermine its independence.<sup>5</sup> As the Czech Republic continues to institutionalise evaluation, it should review and identify how to guarantee the overall independence of the evaluation function.

### There is a dedicated evaluation budget and plan

Evaluations are financed through a dedicated budget that is earmarked in the Annual Plan for Development Cooperation (MFA, 2016). The evaluation plan is prepared annually by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Agency, and submitted to the Evaluation Working Group of the Council for Development Cooperation for discussion. The plan is then approved by the Council for Development Cooperation and published on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website. When deciding what to evaluate, the ministry tries to ensure adequate coverage of priority countries, territories and the main sectors, while also responding to specific learning needs.<sup>6</sup> Being clearer about why and when activities are to be evaluated, based on risk or "need-to-know", would help ensure limited resources are spent strategically.

### Involving aid beneficiaries in the evaluation process is challenging

The Czech Republic recognises that involving aid recipients in evaluations is a challenge, as for many DAC members. Some efforts have been made to make the evaluation process more inclusive by sharing terms of reference – published in Czech and English since 2015 – and final reports with the embassies. Embassies can respond and share reports with partners and local evaluation networks. Furthermore, according to the Czech authorities local stakeholders are engaged in evaluation design, local experts are part of the evaluation teams and evaluators are required to present the preliminary findings of each evaluation in the partner country or territory. A practical way of stepping up the involvement of stakeholders could be to invite them to become members of evaluation reference groups. This is common practice for other DAC members (OECD, forthcoming).

## Institutional learning

Indicator: Evaluations and appropriate knowledge management systems are used as management tools

**There is a strong culture of learning in Czech development co-operation. Reviews, monitoring and evaluations are key tools for improving the quality and management of development interventions. The MFA and the Agency could do more to consolidate the knowledge coming from different sources and networks and make it accessible to all staff involved in development at headquarters and in embassies.**

### The Czech Republic uses evaluation findings to improve its practices

The Czech Republic disseminates evaluation results in a systematic and transparent manner by presenting and discussing evaluation reports in seminars and by publishing them on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website.<sup>7</sup> Both the Czech Development Agency (CzDA) and the ministry respond to evaluation recommendations formally in a written management response. Recommendations are subsequently implemented through standard procedures and project management. This was confirmed in the audit by the

Supreme Audit Office (Supreme Audit Office, 2015).<sup>8</sup> Follow up of recommendations is ensured by the Evaluation Working Group under the Council for Development Cooperation, which monitors whether they have been implemented. The Czech Republic is learning from evaluation results and recommendations and adapting its policies and practices. It should continue in this spirit.

### Knowledge sharing occurs through informal channels

Knowledge sharing in the Czech system is facilitated by the small size of the community, as well as general good will and interest in learning from experience. Channels for sharing knowledge include:

- informal exchanges between MFA and Agency staff
- workshops organised to present evaluation findings and other reports
- meetings of the Council for Development Cooperation, to which non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, the Czech Evaluation Society and research institutions bring their own experience and knowledge
- participation in international networks such as the Practitioners Network for Development Co-operation and UNDP knowledge-sharing programme.

Nevertheless, the Czech Republic would benefit from a more centralised system for capturing, saving and disseminating knowledge and information that can be accessed by all relevant actors at headquarters and in the field. While informal knowledge sharing is useful and should be nurtured, it can become more difficult when staff numbers increase, it depends on the good will of individuals and it can be lost when staff move on.

The Agency has recently developed a new information tool which aims to become a library of all project information. It offers potential for spreading good practice. As it develops this tool it should be mindful that finding effective software/electronic solutions for sharing knowledge is still a challenge for many DAC members (OECD, forthcoming).

## Communication, accountability and development awareness

Indicator: The member communicates development results transparently and honestly

**The Czech Republic is committed to increasing transparency in line with its Busan commitment. To gain public and political support for its co-operation programme, it needs to communicate strategically and coherently about development policy and activities, focusing on achievements and challenges, and drawing on results. The MFA and the Agency can reinforce communication and the overall visibility of Czech co-operation by developing and delivering common messages and reinforcing partnerships with key stakeholders to raise awareness of development issues.**

### The Czech Republic is strongly committed to transparency

Since joining the DAC, the Czech Republic has improved the transparency of its development co-operation programme.<sup>9</sup> It provides high quality and timely statistical information to the DAC on its ODA. Nevertheless, the Aid Transparency Index “Publish What You Fund” rated Czech transparency as poor in 2014.<sup>10</sup> For technical reasons the Czech Republic is not yet publishing information according to the Busan Common Standard, but it is committed to implementing the standard for the electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information when the technical problems in its reporting system are resolved.

### Coherent communication is essential for public and political support

In a 2015 Special Eurobarometer Survey (EU, 2016), 78% of respondents in the Czech Republic said it was very important or fairly important to help people in developing countries – lower than the EU average of 89%. The Czech Republic is conscious of the importance of maintaining and reinforcing public support for development co-operation as a prerequisite for political backing for its co-operation programme.

Plans at the MFA and the Agency to develop more strategic and targeted communication about development co-operation respond to the need for better-informed public opinion and support. Communication capacity within the Agency has been reinforced, and it is preparing a new communication strategy. This is timely – with the MFA also preparing the new development co-operation strategy, there is an opportunity to develop a coherent narrative for Czech development co-operation. Good practice suggests that effective public engagement requires clear, coherent messages that go beyond isolated events, facts or statistics to communicate on long-term progress and effectiveness (OECD, 2013). The strategy could also identify a comprehensive, coherent and targeted approach to raising awareness of the entire Czech development co-operation system, thereby avoiding inconsistent messages and competition for visibility.

### The Czech Republic invests in global education

Global development education is an important priority for the Czech Republic.<sup>11</sup> Despite the solidarity that the Czechs show during humanitarian crises, the MFA considers public awareness of extreme poverty and of the importance of long-term development co-operation and a host of other related issues to be insufficient (MFA, 2010b).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education are responsible for the overall National Strategy for Global Development Education 2011-17<sup>12</sup> and the Agency manages a global education grant scheme for NGOs. The Czech Republic builds on the historical role that these organisations play in “offering a wide range of global education and awareness-building activities” within the country (MFA, 2010b).<sup>13</sup> Research institutes also play an important role in building understanding of specific development issues, especially policy coherence for development. The Czech Republic should continue to build on its good practice in global education, notably by partnering with civil society and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. By leveraging partnerships with these organisations it will broaden the reach and impact of global education (OECD, 2013).

### Notes

1. The evaluation plan for 2016 can be found at [www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign\\_relations/development\\_cooperation\\_and\\_humanitarian/bilateral\\_development\\_cooperation/evaluation/evaluations\\_of\\_czech\\_development\\_1.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/development_cooperation_and_humanitarian/bilateral_development_cooperation/evaluation/evaluations_of_czech_development_1.html).
2. Evaluations are commissioned through public procurement and the terms of reference are published on the MFA's website.
3. This working group, responsible for supervising the evaluation processes, discusses the annual evaluation plan and the terms of reference, and oversees the follow-up to the recommendations.
4. Reference groups are composed of volunteers from line ministries, NGOs, academics and representatives of the private sector. In addition, an independent expert on evaluation methodology from the Czech Evaluation Society participates in all reference groups (OECD, forthcoming).
5. External evaluators report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the evaluation manager reports to the head of the Division of Humanitarian Assistance and Evaluation, who is in charge of humanitarian policy and is deputy head of the Development Cooperation Department.
6. For instance, the CzDA asked to evaluate specific projects before writing its new sectoral strategy for Moldova.
7. Evaluation reports are mostly published in Czech with executive summaries in English. English summaries can be found at [www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign\\_relations/development\\_cooperation\\_and\\_humanitarian/bilateral\\_development\\_cooperation/evaluation/index.html](http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/development_cooperation_and_humanitarian/bilateral_development_cooperation/evaluation/index.html).
8. For instance, evaluation recommendations led the CzDA to prepare two pilot sector programmes, and to replicate a successful project carried out in Cambodia to Zambia. A recommendation from the meta-evaluation of the Czech evaluation system led to the terms of reference for evaluations to be improved to ensure more concrete and applicable recommendations.
9. All ODA information (including statistics; strategies; plans; budget; programmes and projects; and evaluations) is available on the MFA and CzDA websites.
10. More information available at: <http://ati.publishwhatyoufund.org/2014/donor/czech-republic/>.
11. There is also a dedicated working group that permanently reviews the implementation of the national Global Development Education Strategy.
12. The National Strategy for Global Development Education 2011-2015 has been extended to 2017. It aims to "provide all citizens of the Czech Republic with access to information on developing countries and global development and to inspire them to take an active role in tackling global issues as well as issues faced by the developing world" through inclusion of global development education principles and topics in lifelong learning and educational programmes across all levels of the Czech system of education (MFA, 2010b).
13. Including within the Czech Parliament.

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