Final Evaluation of the Programme Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova (04/2018 to 05/2021) – BACID II

May 2021

Period of evaluation
February- May 2021
Evaluation Consultants
Mr. Tomislav Novovic, Senior Evaluation Expert- Team Leader-
Ms. Olivera Komar, Senior Evaluation Expert- Team member

Table of contents

List of abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
BACID II	Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova- second phase
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EC	European Commission
EPI	e-participation index
EQ	Evaluation Questions
EU	European Union
FE	Final Evaluation
FET	Final Evaluation Team
HDI	Human Development Index
KDZ	Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LGA	Local Government Associations
NALAS	Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe
OG	Overall Goal
OECD	Organization for European Cooperation and Development
ÖStB	Österreichischen Städtebund
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
PAR	Public Administration Reform
QM	Quality Management
ReSPA	The Regional School for Public Administration
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEE	South-East Europe

Executive summary

The Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova- second phase (BACID II programme, 2018-2021) has been supported by the Austrian Development Cooperation and implemented by the Österreichischen Städtebund (ÖStB) together with the KDZ-Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (KDZ) and partners in the region, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS).

The Programme strives to ensure that the public administrations and other sectors in the Region capacitated for implementation of the European principles of good governance." On a more operational level, the Programme is organized around three pillars/outputs I) BACID FUND; ii) DANUBE GOVERNANCE FORUM and iii) LOGON 2020+.

The programme's target groups are public servants and officials (approx. 600), civil society organisations (CSOs), science and businesses (at least 25), 9 local government associations (LGAs) and 2 regional networks as local project partners: The Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS).

Methodological Approach: the evaluation had two-fold objective: to assess the continued relevance of the programme and identify possible gaps in the theory of change and provide evidence that will contribute to decision making on possible further engagement in this area., covering the period from April 1 2018 until 15 May 2021.

The FE followed a theory-based and utilization-focused methodology and reflected the essentials of the contribution analysis (CA) intending to establish credible causal claims about Programme's interventions, their results and created changes. The final evaluation team focused on five key evaluation criteria – relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The TOR included a total of 13 evaluation questions (EQ) that the FET used to prepare the evaluation matrix. The FET report answered these questions using specific, objectively verifiable indicators (OVI).

Data collection methods: The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach to enable gathering of qualitative and quantitative information through a well-balanced combination of desk research and interviews with key informants, at various level of analysis.

The scope, complexity, and the period covered by the evaluation required an analytical approach deriving from ADA evaluation practices, OECD DAC evaluation guidelines and international experience. The evaluation analyzed primary and secondary data through causality model, identifying challenges or obstacles that affected the progress under outcomes. The FE benefited from triangulation of the collected information and other evidences at different stages of the process.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The final evaluation has presented the following findings under seven evaluation questions, citing the sources for each of these findings.

EQ1: To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the participating countries, NALAS and ReSPA as project partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?

The BACID II fully aligns with governance priorities related to public administration reform, development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions. In addition to the South-East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy's pillar Governance for Growth, the Programme, through capacity development of administrative structures, contributes to the progress under the Pillar 10 Institutional capacity building of the EU Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR). All the countries declared that the full membership into the European Union and strengthened regional cooperation and stability remain high on the development agenda and the Programme supported achievement of EU-focused public administration reform strategies in participating countries.

BACID II has accurately identified components and clearly established areas of intervention under these components: the partners stated that its tested services under three components need to continue addressing the root causes of challenges

EQ2 Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?

The challenging realities of the BACID II countries are improving through regional cooperation: the RCC recent report recognized that regional cooperation reduces tension and strengthens regional stability, as the crucial precondition for sustainable development.

The partners stated that regional cooperation brings added values through multiplication of the effects, recognizing that regional approach cannot substitute the bilateral support. Identifying positive cooperation practices ensured through the BACID II Fund and codifying knowledge generated through these initiatives created a solid learning basis, a mechanism for spreading know-how. At the same time, positive practices generated through the implementation of different BACID initiatives (for example, under the BACID fund) provided tested models and tools to respond to a particular problem or challenge effectively. Lessons learned during the implementation of these initiatives could also suggest how to adapt existing measures to ensure maximum benefits Establishment of pool of regional experts in different areas is another important aspect of regional cooperation.

EQ3 To what extent has the log-frame/theory been relevant and consistent and where, if at all, should it be revised and adapted?

The BACID II design process was consistent, based on a sound programming and formulation approach. The Programme identified problems using a bottom-up process of collaboration, and involved policy makers and main partners representatives. The project document included a robust "theory of change", as a credible and systemic problem analysis tool, facilitating formulation of its intervention logic and chain of results and its core elements (the goal -impact and outcomes).

Still, the evaluation team finds that the results framework does not adequately integrate gender considerations, as the matrix is void of gender sensitive indicators and minimally draws on the use of sex-disaggregated data. Furthermore, the BACID 2 team did not design data collection methods to systemically disaggregate information by gender and monitor the meaningful engagement of women across activities.

EQ4 To what extent contributed the programme to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?

BACID II has consistently responded to capacity development needs of the partners and stakeholders in the participating countries and is steadily strengthening national and local level capacity to improve institutional performance and delivery of (quality) services and implement governance-related reform priorities. Future progress and its sustainability, however, rests on the continued commitment and capacity of governance system and institutions.

EQ 5. What were the results on institutional level (local, regional and national)?

The BACID programme worked to upgrade and enhance services and establish sustainable capacities among the target organizations, primarily public administrations (including local governments) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, and Moldova. The institutions that benefited from the BACID fund were exposed to the practical know-how and Austrian experience to introduce and implement EU acquis requirements relevant to local authorities. For example, the cities of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Tirana (Albania) enhanced their "smart city development capacities"; namely, to use digital and ICT-based innovation for improving the efficiency of urban services and generating new economic opportunities.

The results of the BACID programme in the area of economic and social development had impact on performance municipalities, public enterprises and other organizatons. Some of the examples could be Municipality Kruje and Permet (Albania) have been capacitated to strategically plan tourism development and identify funding opportunities for larger-scale activities. The partners recognized Program support to systematize its practical experience and knowledge in form of guidelines, referring to the Rulebook on Performance Appraisal for the civil servants in the local government units in the Federation of BiH. This result contributes to sustainability of efforts and prolonged impact "as positive practices and experiences were consolidated and offered as how-to-do approaches"

EQ6. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results, including intended/unintended and out of sphere of control? To what extent was the response adequate and what could be improved?

BACID II team members had clearly defined roles and responsibilities; the team structure, communication lines and working relations (between the KDZ and AACT, and under appropriate components with the ReSPA and

NALAS) helped to build commitments and ownership, mitigating risks and solving problems. The partners recognized that "knowledgeable and experienced BACID II staff, and technical assistance to national institutions, have been helpful in establishing active working ties with these institutions. The KDZ maintained presence and facilitated partnerships in all participating countries based on "mutual trust and respect". Also, the KDZ's "substantive insight and tailor-made approach to public administration reform, based on recognized needs and identified challenges have been essential to ensure progress and achievement of results"

Still, the assessment of the "enabling environment for Programme implementation" shows that this environment remains characterized by limited progress in the public administration reform and EU accession agenda.

EQ7. To what extent have all programme stakeholders collaborated as foreseen in the project document, i.e. through membership in regional networks and how has this affected effectiveness?

The BACID II has been effective in strengthening regional networks (primarily, through the activities of NALAS and ReSPA). The partners and stakeholders recognized advantages of participating in regional networks, stating that BACID II has been active in promoting cooperation and collaboration among them. In practical terms, regional networks enabled the analysis of lessons, "minimizing the risks of repeat nonperforming activities".

Regional partnerships offered framework to work together on specific topics (rather than addressing the same limitations separately); coordinating involvement at a regional level facilitated opportunities for collaboration and contributed to a more effective codification of experience and knowledge.

EQ8: Have the BACID II work plans been implemented within the allocated time and budget, showing flexibility and responsiveness during implementation?

The evaluation team's desk review and primary data analysis indicates that BACID II has been implemented efficiently, exercising adaptive management. Partners stated that BACID II has demonstrated flexibility throughout implementation. Management mechanisms, including implementation modalities, organizational structure, and the role of each partner under BACID II components have facilitated Programme's ability to achieve planned results. Also, the timely implementation of activities and the availability of financial and human resources to implement these activities have contributed to delivery of results. The iimplementing partners appreciate the BACID II team's flexibility and limited bureaucracy. Partners indicated that BACID II has dealt with their requests in a timely manner, and the relationship with the Programme management has been based on mutual trust and respect.

The main factor that contributed to BACID II flexible and agile response during the implementation have been its work plans and the proactive role that management and technical staff played in responding to the changes, challenges, and emerging priorities under its components.

The financial and human resources for the implementation of BACID II have been well-planned and available, according to the work plans.

BACID II has established a regular and well-elaborated results-oriented reporting system.

EQ9. How many people in total have already benefited from the programme (immediate impact)? What exactly has already changed in the lives of women, men (immediate impact)?

The beneficiaries of the BACID grants component increased their capacities in the distinct but interrelated spheres of good governance, associated with institutional development, social and economic development and environmental protection. The impact at the individual level could be expected through the better-equipped individuals to provide high-quality services. The Programme followed a best-practice approach to capacity development, facilitating the direct transfer of know-how and using tested models from Austria. This approach ensured a more substantive impact on skills and genuinely contributed to developing capacities among the targeted groups.

At the broader level, the Programme's lasting effects could be expected among indirect beneficiaries, the population at large from municipalities and participating countries. However, considering that some of the initiated activities (through the BACID II Fund) are at the fundraising stage or serve as the basis for a full-fledged initiative, it is methodologically inappropriate to estimate the number of indirect beneficiaries.

EQ10. Which institution have already benefited from the project/programme and to which extend?

The FET finds that the Programme prepared and offered tested tools for institutional development and improvement of services. It also strengthened structures and cooperation mechanisms to promote public management system reforms, inter-municipal cooperation and regional development. For example, the Youth Scorecard in Albania provided the guidelines for the improvement of quality of municipality delivered youth-specific services, the excellency model for Social Entrepreneurship in Serbia, or the Rulebook on Performance Appraisal for the civil servants in the local government units in the Federation of BiH.

The BACID programme strengthened the network and cooperation between participating organizations.

EQ 11. What unintended (positive or negative) impact can be observed?

BACID II has produced significant yet unintended results in different areas of its intervention. Communication and cooperation established among the beneficiaries of the BACID Fund resulted in follow up partnerships and larger-scale development initiatives. The NALAS and ReSPA implemented BACID II components have contributed to strengthening communication among the network members, horizontal knowledge sharing and new reform initiatives (implemented out of the Programme's scope).

EQ12. Which elements of the programme design supported sustainability? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?

The BACID II programme has been generally effective in delivering results under its components, thus, facilitating the development of good governance and advancing public administration reform in the participating countries. The programme generated a vast amount of knowledge relevant to the improvement of public administration and establishment of good governance. This know-how is codified in the form of carefully designed formats and could be replicated and used by other stakeholders from the region.

The final evaluation team identified examples that the initial BACID II funded projects generated additional funding and follow-up larger scale support. The funding has been ensured through national sources and international development assistance (e.g., grants funding, investment and infrastructure loans). In Republika Srpska, under the activities related to sustainable transport SUSTRAI, municipalities Gradiska, Laktasi and Derventa are working on strategic plans for infrastructure improvement and development of sustainable transport. These three municipalities stated that the larger-scale investment should come from EU funds, also exploring opportunities for investment loans. The FET finds that the BACID II supported Zlatibor Waste Management Project resulted in a large-scale investment, financed through a joint funds, the IFI's loan, the Government of Serbia and municipalities.

The sustainability of the results achieved within the Danube Governance Hub component has been ensured through institutionalization and further strengthening of the Regional Quality Management Centre within the auspices of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA). Specifically, the ReSPA has established Quality Management as one of its core thematic areas while the Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC) has been designed to assist to implement activities under this area and support "public administrations in strengthening their capacities to implement Quality Management tools and systems as a prerequisite for better work performance and better public services[1].

The Logon 2020+ component has been effective for institutional development of NALAS, contributing to its "capacities as sound partner for delivery of services and participation in regional initiatives and different networks[2].

CONCLUSIONS

The final evaluation has summarized the following overall remarks on the BACID II:

- The Programme is highly successful in delivering planned results, even overachieving in some areas of intervention. This success is even more apparent when set against a complex and challenging environment and sensitive topics that the Programme was addressing, such as changes in the service delivery paradigm, institutional reform through quality management, fiscal decentralization.

- The overall BACID II intervention and objectives are fully in line with the regional and national development piroities and EU accession process for the participating countries.

---

[1] https://www.respaweb.eu/77/pages/10/about-rqmc

[2] KII_02, KII_01

- BACID II has been highly effective in addressing negative effects and limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing substantive support to the stakeholders in defining and implementing needs-based solutions

The following paragraphs provide the conclusions for each of the evaluation questions

Conclusion 1. BACID II aligned its intervention with regional and national strategic priorities to establishing quality services delivered by competent and transparent institutions. The Programme remains relevant and valid for the participating countries, NALAS and ReSPA. However, the Programme's efforts for the achievement of the SDG targets were less apparent.

Conclusion 2: The regional approach under the BACID II added value to partners countries and organizations, following positive cooperation practices (BACID II fund) and creating solid learning basis by codifying generated knowledge and facilitating know-how transfers.

Conclusion 3: BACID II has accurately identified components and clearly established areas of intervention under these components, and there is demand (from the partners and beneficiaries) for the services that the Programme tested to continue.

There is a need among the stakeholders to continue with the assistance available through BACID II as the Programme developed and tested models and packages, effectively producing visible and concrete results. BACID II has confirmed its validity to the needs of respective public institutions in the participating countries, and the focus of the follow up support needs to address root causes of challenges. The analysis indicates priorities should be capacity development, regional and inter-institutional cooperation for public administration reform and organizational development, and the improvement of delivery of services at all levels..

Conclusion 4: BACID II has been consistently responding to capacity development needs of the partners and stakeholders in the participating countries. The Programme has been generally effective in strengthening national and local level capacities to improve institutional performance and delivery of (quality) services and implement governance-related reform priorities

Conclusion 5: BACID II has been effective in achieving results at institutional level.

NALAS benefited from the BACID II assistance, enhancing its technical capacities in the core areas of functioning; its Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark became well-known and broadly used policy-making tool. The sustainability basis for NALAS have been enhanced through access to EU/ IPA funding and enhanced capacities for implementation of EU funds. Still, there is a need to continue working on strengthening the position of LGAs to participate in the EU accession and ensure resources directly for local governments.

The establishment of the Regional Quality Center (RQC) under the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) has been an important achievement, ensuring assistance with the CAF implementation in the region.

Conclusion 6: The sound programme management practices, and comprehensive monitoring systems, together with competent technical inputs, have been among the main factors that influenced achievement of results.

However, external developments such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its implications, and reforms that are at chronically slow pace, have been the main challenging for the achievement and continuation of results.

Conclusion 7: The BACID II has been effective in strengthening regional networks (primarily, through the activities of NALAS and ReSPA). The strong sense of its relative importance and advantages of participating in regional networks has been developed among the partners and stakeholders, with the BACID II role in facilitating cooperation and collaboration among them.

Conclusion 8. BACID II has been implemented efficiently, in line with the work plans, and demonstrated flexibility to stakeholders' needs. The Programme Team and KDZ management and technical assistance, contributed to an effective implementation and achievement of results.

Conclusion 9: BACID II ensured impact among the individuals that participated or directly benefited from its results or activities; thus, more than one thousand people directly benefited by increasing capacities in the areas of Programme intervention.

Conclusion 10: The Programme has been effective in improving the performance of the organizations directly involved in its implementation or targeted by its activities. BACID II has strengthened the capacities of the

NALAS and ReSPA in critical areas of work, especially to implement its core mandates and services. These results have created a solid basis to continuing support and further strengthen good governance in the region.

Conclusion 11: BACID II has produced significant yet unintended results in different areas of its intervention. Communication and cooperation established among the beneficiaries of the BACID Fund resulted in follow up partnerships and larger-scale development initiatives.

Conclusion 12. BACID II has been effective in responding to development needs in areas of intervention. The sustainability of the results achieved within the Danube Governance Hub component has been ensured through institutionalization and further strengthening of the Regional Quality Management Centre within the auspices of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA). The Logon 2020+ component has been effective for institutional development of NALAS, contributing to its capacities as sound partner for delivery of services and participation in regional initiatives and different networks. The actual sustainability of these results is conditioned with a likelihood that these capacities will remain available and will continue to be requested upon its completion. The fact that ReSPA and NALAS have ensured resources for continuation of these services are strong evidence to sustainability prospects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The final evaluation team recommends to continue assistance that was available under the BACID II, focusing on three interlinked components (BACID fund, Danube Governance Hub and Logon2020+). KDZ/ AACT with its partners (ReSPA and NALAS) should remain flexible and responsive to the needs and priorities for the region, with EU integrations and SDG achievement as the main references.

- Recommendation 1: The evaluation team recommends continuing with the BACID Fund prioritizing innovative initiatives with a clear social, economic and environmental impact and stronger links to the SDG framework.

  It is recommended to consider also activities that are addressing the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Recommendation 2: BACID should enhance efforts to contribute to the achievement of the SDG targets for the participating countries and exmplore opportunities to incorporate SDGs in the CAF methodology and in the follow up planning for institutional reforms.

- Recommendation 3: The evaluation team recommends continuing support to the NALAS, especially its technical capacities in the core areas of functioning.

  The FET recommends expanding the use of the Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark (including data from EU countries) as the policy-making tool. These efforts should include the analysis of the effects of the COVID 19- pandemic on local economic development.

- Recommendation 4: The final evaluation recommends continuing support to a Regional Quality Center (RQC) under the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA). The primary focus should be to expand the CAF implementation with the RQC technical support and knowledge dissemination.

  The BACID should continue mentoring support for CAF implementation, creating and capacitating a competent local expert node; its backbone should be already CAF-experienced professionals from the BACID II programme. The Programme should explore opportunities to pilot CAF in local level structures (e.g., local self-government units, educational institutions, etc.).

- Recommendation 5. In the next stage, BACID should define appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators to enable measuring of progress under components and capture changes and results attributable to BACID programme (attainment of higher-level objectives- outcomes and impact).

- Recommendation 6. In addition to including gender-sensitive indicators, BACID should consider options to better integrate gender priorities (beyond gender participation) in its activities and the overall implementation framework.

- Recommendation 7: Ensuring national ownership from the planning through application and implementation of approved projects (under the BACID II Fund) remains priority.

- Recommendation 8. BACID should continue implementing its systemic approach to capacity development, following needs assessments of the main stakeholders and partners.

1   Introduction

This document contains the final evaluation (FE) of the second phase of the Programme Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova (BACID II), carried out by the Final Evaluation Team according to the standards of evaluation. The principal references have been the Terms of Reference (ToR) for final evaluation of the Programme Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova (04/2018 to 03/2021) – BACID II and the ADA Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations.

The structure of this document is the following:

In the second chapter the authors provide the main information about the object of the evaluation – BACID II. This chapter is needed in order to provide context to the reader of the evaluation as well as to present the main outcome and outputs of the BACID II programme. Besides information about the programme itself, the target groups of this programme are identified as well.

In the third chapter of this document the purpose and the objective of the evaluation are outlined. In this chapter the users of the evaluation are clearly identified. The fourth chapter presents the design and the approach of the evaluation. First it explains the methodology that was applied and presents the BACID II evaluation matrix. The matrix includes 13 evaluation questions designed to address the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the results produced by the programme. The complete matrix is added to the annex of the report. This chapter also includes information about how data was collected and analysed. Finally, it addresses the question of limitations and risks as well as the strategies applied to mitigate those.

The results are presented in the chapter five of the report. This chapter follows the structure of 13 main evaluation questions and provides responses of the evaluation team with the data to support those. Finally, sixth and seventh chapter include conclusions and recommendations drawn from the results of the evaluation.

List of interviewed people, list of analysed documents, full BACID II evaluation matrix, evaluation interview guides and online questionnaire are provided in annexes 1-4.

2   Description of the BACID II

The Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova - second phase (BACID II 2018-2021)[3] has been implemented by the Österreichischen Städtebund (ÖStB) together with the KDZ-Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (KDZ) and partners in the region, the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS) in the period. The Austrian Development Cooperation ensured financial support to the Programme.

The BACID II programme aims at having impact on overall socio-economic development of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova through effective delivery of public services supported by regional cooperation. Following the EU perspective of the region, the programme supports the implementation of the South-East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy and its dimension Governance for Growth through capacity building of national and local public administration as well as partnership with other sectors for implementation of the European principles of good governance including gender and other cross-cutting issues.

The BACID II outcome is "public administrations and other sectors in the Region capacitated for implementation of the European principles of good governance." On a more operational level, the Programme is organized around three pillars/outputs:

Output 1 - BACID FUND: Actors in the Region gained practical know-how in good governance and community services

Actors in the Region have gained practical know-how in good governance and community services by implementing 25-30 know-how transfer actions from Austria to target countries

---

[3] The BACID II programme is the second phase of the Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova - second phase (BACID II programme) that was implemented in the period December 2014 until January 2018 by the Österreichischen Städtebund (ÖStB) together with the KDZ-Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (KDZ).

Output 2 - DANUBE GOVERNANCE FORUM: Public administrations in the Region improved implementation of good governance principles as pre-condition for European Integration

Under this output, public administrations in the Region have improved the implementation of good governance principles through quality management by both the establishment of a Quality Management Center in the Region and by using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as quality management tool for public administration. In addition, 3 fora of public administration and different sectors from the Region has led to improved exchange and cooperation.

Output 3 - LOGON 2020+: Local governments in the Region positioned as viable partner in European Integration

This output strived to improve local governments position as viable partners in European Integration through NALAS' support in better service provision through Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark, better access to EU-funds and participation in regional initiatives and EU local government networks

Target groups

The programme's target groups are public servants and officials (approx. 600), civil society organisations (CSOs), science and businesses (at least 25), 9 local government associations (LGAs) and 2 regional networks as local project partners: The Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS). Around 1500 people in total have been directly involved. On the other side, all public institutions and local governments in the region, their decision-makers and employees, have been beneficiaries of the programme through dissemination of results through local partners.

3   Purpose and objective of the final evaluation

The ToR defined specific purpose of the final evaluation of the BACID II programme "to contribute to the accountability towards the donor and programme stakeholders"; at the same time, the evaluation will elaborate lessons learnt and prepare recommendations for possible further actions in the field.

The evaluation had two-fold objective: to assess the continued relevance of the programme and identify possible gaps in the theory of change and provide evidence that will contribute to decision making on possible further engagement in this area.

The evaluation covered the period from April 1 2018 until 15 May 2021. All three outputs (pillars) of the programme and all implementation countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia and the Republic of Moldova) have been included in the scope of the evaluation.

The primary users of the evaluation's findings and recommendations are: ÖStB, KDZ, ReSPA, NALAS as well as the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). The intended use is to provide planning of development cooperation in the whole Danube Region and in the fields covered by the programme, i.e., modernization of public administrations at both national and local level and European integration.

4   Evaluation Design and Approach

4.1   Methodological Approach

The FE followed a theory-based and utilization-focused methodology[4] and reflected the essentials of the contribution analysis (CA)[5] intending to establish credible causal claims about Programme's interventions, their results and created changes[6]. The CA has been chosen as a viable approach, considering that the BACID

---

[4] More details on methodology have been provided in the approved Inception report

[5] Line Dybdal, Steffen Bohni Nielsen, Sebastian Lemire (Ramboll Management Consulting and Aarhus, Denmark): "Contribution Analysis Applied: Reflections on Scope and Methodology", The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation Vol. 25 No. 2 Pages 29–57 ISSN 0834-1516

[6] John Mayne: „Contribution analysis: Coming of age?" from Evaluation, 2012, Sage Publication, DOI: 10.1177/1356389012451663.

II outcomes[7] (defined as "intended changes in development conditions in the participating countries") have been set at the level that required joint work of many partners, credible attribution to the BACID II may be challenging or in some cases impossible to establish[8].

The final evaluation team (FET) used the three-dimension framework for evaluability assessment[9], to measure the extent to which this Program, its implementation framework and achieved results could be analysed and assessed in a reliable and credible manner. The *"in-principle" evaluability analysis* was carried out to identify whether it is possible to evaluate BACID II as designed- the FET used the framework set by the Terms of Reference, while assessing the BACID II theory of change, including clarity, coherence, feasibility and relevance. The *"in practice" evaluability analysis included* availability of documents and relevant data, together with the capacities of the project team and other stakeholders to provide required information.

These information set the solid base for the desk review that together with key informant interviews served to collect critical information and capture different perspectives about the Programme and its implementation. The evaluation triangulated collected data to validate findings and identify points of convergence and divergence.

4.2   BACID II evaluation matrix

The final evaluation team focused on five key evaluation criteria – relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. The intention was to provide credible, practical, evidence-based information to enable the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations, and lessons into the decision-making processes of the BACID II partners and key stakeholders to assess the potential of the next phase of the programme.

The TOR included a total of 13 evaluation questions (EQ) that the FET used to prepare the evaluation matrix.

Evaluation Questions	Relevance	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Impact	Sustainability	Cross-cutting
EQ 1: To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and the Republic of Moldova, NALAS and ReSPA as project partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?	X					X
EQ 2 Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?	X		X			X
EQ 3: To what extent has the log-frame/theory been relevant and consistent and where, if at all, should it be revised and adapted?	X		X			X
EQ 4 To what extent contributed the programme to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?		X				X
EQ 5 What were the results on institutional level (local, regional and national)?		X				X

Also, where a paucity of data necessitates a quick assessment of a contribution, this should be carried out using appropriate evaluation methodologies that identify contributions at the outcome level and ascertain the plausibility of causal relationships between activities and outcomes.

[7] Outcomes are medium-term development results created through the delivery of outputs and the contributions of various partners and non-partners. They normally relate to changes in institutional performance or behavior among individuals or groups. Ref also to "Outcome-level evaluation- a companion guide to the handbook on planning monitoring and evaluating for development results for programme units and evaluators", UNDP, 'Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results', p.56. 2011

[8] The Terms of Reference also recognized this challenge for the final evaluation.

[9] The detailed evaluability assessment has been provided in the Inception report (Annex 6 to this report)

Evaluation Question						
EQ 6 What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results (outputs and outcomes), including intended/unintended and out of sphere of control? To what extent was the response adequate and what could be improved?	X					X
EQ 7 To what extent have all programme stakeholders collaborated as foreseen in the project document, i.e. through membership in regional networks and how has this affected effectiveness?	X	X				X
EQ 8. Has the work plan been implemented within the allocated time and budget? If not, what issues occurred and why?		X				X
EQ 9. How many women, men and people in total have already benefited from the programme (immediate impact)? What exactly has already changed in the lives of women, men (immediate impact)?			X			X
EQ 10. Which institutions have already benefitted from the project/programme and to which extend?		X	X			X
EQ 11. What unintended (positive or negative) impact can be observed?		X	X			X
EQ 12. Which elements of the programme design supported sustainability? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?					X	X
EQ 13. What are the key learnings in terms of achieving sustainability and how can the prospects for sustainability be strengthened?		X	X		X	X

X- Directly related; X- Contributing

The FET report answered these questions using specific, objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) generated for each EQ to assess the current situation, delivery of outputs and progress towards the intended outcomes[10]- The FET has prepared detailed evaluation matrix, with evaluation questions, judgement criteria, indicators and evidences. (Annex 3).

The FET has considered gender, social inclusion and environment when developing the evaluation design and approach; these cross-cutting issues have been considered when answering the evaluation questions, and reflected in findings, conclusions and recommendations.

In correlation with the Evaluation Matrix, the FET has prepared interview guides with a specific question for each of the identified stakeholders' groups (Annex 4).

4.3 Data collection and analysis

The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach to enable gathering of qualitative and quantitative information through a well-balanced combination of desk research, on-line survey and interviews with key informants, at various level of analysis.

The evaluation was using desk research to analyse secondary information that were received or collected.

On-line and teleconference interviews during the field phase served to collect primary data and to validate findings and conclusions from the desk phase. The primary data collection process was organized between 22 March and 23 April 2021 and included consultations with 19 stakeholders (10 women and 9 men). The FET was using the interview guides, asking open-ended questions, that enabled to collect systemic and uniform data. The informal conversation complemented the process, enabling to ask questions emerging from the immediate context[11], offering also opportunities for a more in-depth discussion about specific points related

---

[10] The FET will also assess the accomplishment of the project goal (impact).

[11] This approach has prevented possible drawback from structured and closed interviews, such as stuck to the outlined topics and prevented to raise some critical issues

to the implementation of the BACID II and the results achieved. The tone of the discussion remained somewhat conversational and relaxed.

The final evaluation included online survey for the BACID II partners and beneficiaries to grasp about their familiarity with the Programme and its significance, achieved results and priorities for the future. The results of the survey additionally strengthened analytical basis. Selection of beneficiaries for the on-line survey followed a mix of multi-stage cluster sampling and systematic sampling methods. The first stage enabled to select beneficiaries participating in different clusters of activities, while the next stage facilitated a systematic selection of survey participants through a random start followed by the sampling interval. The data shows that 31 BACID II partners and beneficiaries[12] answered the EQ via online survey (and the surveyhas been shared with 57 stakeholders).. When it comes to their job description, 19 online respondents work in public administration, 7 in civil society and 2 in business (the others did not disclose their line of work). Most of the respondents claim that they are very or somewhat familiar with BACID II programme – 72.4%.

The scope, complexity, and the period covered by the evaluation required an analytical approach deriving from ADA evaluation policy[13], OECD DAC evaluation guidelines[14] and international experience. The evaluation analyzed primary and secondary data through causality model, identifying challenges or obstacles that affected the progress under outcomes. The evaluation matrix has been the main reference during the data analysis. The desk review findings served to respond to the key evaluation questions and sub-questions, using judgement criteria as the analytical lenses. The primary data have been analysed through the MAXQDA software: the coding system based on evaluation criteria and sub-questions and used to analyse interview transcripts.

The final evaluation team has been using professional on-line tools[15] to process responses from partners' survey; the analysis and conclusion derive directly from findings.

The FE benefited from triangulation of the collected information and other evidences at different stages of the process.

4.4 Limitations, Risks and Mitigation Measures

Together with the BACID team, the FET made efforts to minimize potential limitations during the evaluation process. The evaluation team had access to a large amount of information, organized adequately by the BACID II/ KDZ staff. The FE included a primary data collection phase designed to complement the document review and collect in-depth information about the status of BACID II outcomes, including different factors and challenges that impacted the Project. The final sample of key stakeholders for interviews has been agreed with the BACID II/ KDZ team while the involvement and importance of the stakeholders in the BACID II preparation and implementation has been the main determining criteria.

The BACID project team provided the main contact points and stakeholders for key informant interviews (KII). To avoid stakeholder selection bias, the FET also suggested subjects beyond the original list of stakeholders provided by the BACID II team. The evaluation team applied some scepticism to questioning and analysis, and triangulated key findings between different groups of stakeholders.

Key interview informants were selected from the group of people most familiar with the BACID II, serving as the basis to evaluate the project against its activities. At the same time, (most of) these stakeholders are interested in BACID II being seen as a success and/ or continuing. To avoid receiving only "success stories", the FET included questions and prompts in the evaluation matrix and KII instruments. The FET asked if and where BACID II activities did not go well and further investigated to explore lessons learned.

In some cases, the FET relied more on the KII's as the main references. Still, the FET used different informants (representatives from the public sector, development organizations, technical experts) to validate collected information and strengthen the evidence base. In some other cases, the data sources were not available or

---

[12] Out of these 31 additional respondents 2 were from Albania, 11 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2 from Kosovo, 1 from Moldova, 6 from Montenegro, 1 from North Macedonia and 2 from Serbia. The rest did not want to disclose their country of origin

[13] Evaluation policy of the Austrian development cooperation, August 2019, available at
https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Englisch/Evaluationpolicy.pdf

[14] http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf

[15] https://www.limesurvey.org/

could not be used to compare current status and performance with baseline data. Other requirements from the ToR have been considered during the assessment of the effectiveness.

Sustainability and impact are ex-post measures; thus, measuring these dimensions requires a period between two to five years after completing the Project. The FET mitigation approach was to anticipate or forecast sustainability and impact. The intention was to measure the extent to which the BACID's positive results are likely to continue after the end of the implementation cycle and if the longer-term influence on the development changes would have lasting nature.

The BACID II selected members of the evaluation team for their knowledge and experience working in the region. At the same time, this means they have existing professional and personal relationships with many key informants. To avoid familiarity bias, the BACID II staff has selected the key stakeholders' interview list for the most part. This approach mitigates selection bias by the evaluation team and acts against the potential the evaluation team chooses key informants with whom they are most familiar.

4.5   Quality assurance and ethical considerations

Generally, the FET maintained an awareness of the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations[16]. The evaluation followed ethical considerations in selecting interviewees, interacting with them, and respecting their personal and institutional rights. The FET sought informed verbal consent from stakeholders before asking any questions related to the BACID II evaluation. To obtain consent, the FET briefly explained the reasons and objectives of the evaluation and the scope of the questions asked during the interview. Stakeholders had the right to refuse or to withdraw at any time. The FET also ensured respondent privacy and confidentiality. Comments provided during discussions were aggregated to render impossible the identification of specific stakeholders.

The FET was fully independent, unaware of any conflicts of interest for this work. During the evaluation process, the FET followed the principles of impartiality, credibility, and accountability.

---

[16] https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf

5 Presentation of findings

The final evaluation has presented the following findings under seven evaluation questions, citing the sources for each of these findings.

> **EQ1: To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the participating countries[17], NALAS and ReSPA as project partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?**

The BACID II fully aligns with governance priorities related to public administration reform, development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions. All the countries declared that the full membership into the European Union and strengthened regional cooperation and stability remain high on the development agenda.

The BACID II focus and regional cooperation remains relevant for regional strategic priorities. The Programme aligns with South-East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy's principal objective "for prosperity, job creation and common European perspective." Specifically, it's Governance for Growth pillar recognized "public management and good governance as critical cross-cutting references". On more operational level, the BACID II planned and delivered its capacity development support in cooperation with the Regional School of Public Administration in the Western Balkans (ReSPA) and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS). Partnership with these two (regional) organizations, the co-coordinators of Dimension N Effective Public Services (under the Governance for Growth pillar), is additionally contributing to the achievement of the SEE 2020 objectives.

The Programme, through capacity development of administrative structures, contributes to the progress under the Pillar 10 Institutional capacity building of the EU Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR). Partnerships with Austrian institutions and stakeholders from the EU countries (within the Danube Region), as the underlying BACID's approach, set the basis for further joint actions. Simultaneously, the partnership building under BACID II aligns with another regional initiative, the Berlin Process: the priority topics under BACID II- good governance, quality management and fiscal decentralization are fundamental for successful EU integration and socio-economic development of the region.

At the level of participating countries, the Programme is relevant for the achievement of EU-focused public administration reform strategies objectives for participating countries. Despite differences, these strategies share common overarching objective to further enhance public administration institutions at all levels and create high-quality services for citizens and businesses. These achievements are perceived as prerequisites for economic stability and improved living standard of citizens.[18]

The recent EC progress reports under the enlargement framework (for candidate and pre-candidate countries) and neighborhood policy recognized that all countries continued to declare EU membership as their strategic goals, also recognizing the need for additional political focus and increase of human and institutional capacities for EU accession. In this context of EU integration, BACID II has been relevant for the implementation of the governance and public administration priorities from the Political criteria and rule of law chapters, also contributing to transparent and accountable institutions under the fight against corruption framework (Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights). It reflected the mitigation measures recommended through the European Commission (EC) screening reports[19], focusing to strengthen institutions their mandates (including a legal basis) to ensure capacities at all levels and cooperation and exchange of information between the stakeholders.[20] Besides, the Programme is also aligned with the priorities from the Chapter 22 Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments, as the EU's main tool for investing in sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The Programme is addressing the need to enhance administrative capacity and sound financial management for regional programming and projects' design and execution.

---

17 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia and the Republic of Moldova

18 For example, the PAR Strategy for Serbia for the period 2016-2020 and the follow up PAR Strategy Serbia 2021-2030 clearly outlined these objectives. Similarly, the PAR Strategy 2016-2020 for Moldova recognizes these objectives- more at https://cancelaria.gov.md/ro/apc/strategia-de-reforma-administratiei-publice-pentru-anii-2016-2020-proiect

19 https://www.mei.gov.rs/upload/documents/skrining/screening_report_chapter_10.pdf

20 More details are available at: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/

Figure 1: Online responses to the question about alignment of the BACID II with the governance related strategic priorities
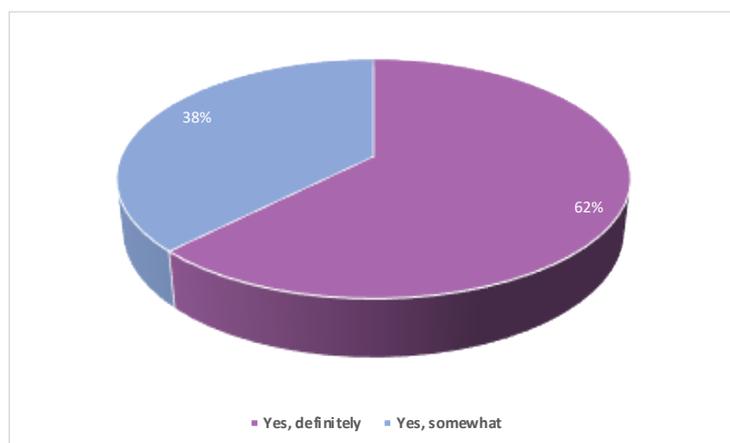
BACID II has accurately identified components and clearly established areas of intervention under these components: the partners stated that its tested services under three components need to continue addressing the root causes of challenges. The scope of BACID II is well defined, with adequately identified priorities and areas of intervention. The prevailing opinion among the stakeholders is that BACID should "continue with the assistance and its activities[21]"; stakeholders state that "models and packages have already been developed and tested, effectively producing visible and concrete results."[22] The interviewed partners, namely those holding senior level positions, and survey participants, recognized that "BACID II has confirmed its validity to the needs of respective public institutions in the participating countries," also proposing to "further fine-tune and focus support to address root causes of challenges."[23]

The participants in the online survey confirmed the relevance of BACID II and the need to continue with its activities, prioritizing capacity development, regional and inter-institutional cooperation for public administration reform and organizational development, and the improvement of delivery of services at all levels.[24]

Figure 2: Online responses to the question on the extent that the BACID II objectives are valid for participating countries
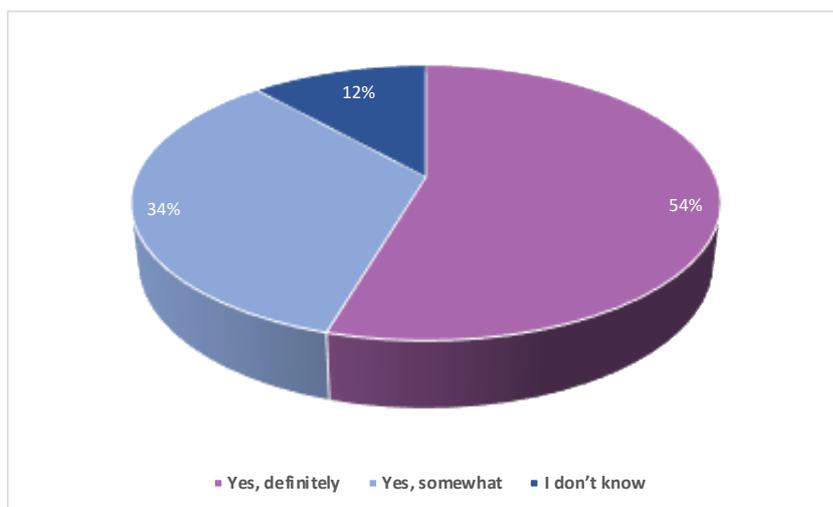
Interview participants suggested the following areas of proposed support, among others: capacity development or training, mentoring assistance aimed at improving service delivery, and continue developing specific guidebooks and other tools. While six people answered positively to the question regarding possible

---

21 KII notes

22 KII notes- project beneficiaries and partners

23 KII notes- partners

24 Results from the online survey, prepared and analyzed by the evaluation team.

expansion of the BACID II areas of intervention, when asked to elaborate further, only two provided suggestions in what direction. The two proposals were circular economy and integration of minorities.

Figure 3: Online responses to question on the need to expand the areas of intervention of the BACID II? (N=12)
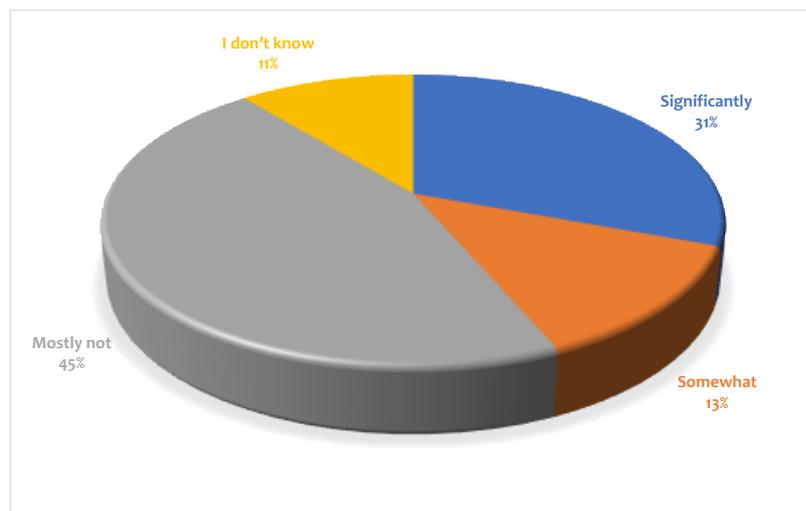
The broad area of capacity development included proposals for "organization of priority training programs and workshops to improve good governance related capacities for holding the government accountable at the local and national level" and "further strengthen the capacity of employees to implement quality systems and continue with active involvement in specialized units, prosecutors, and judges in the areas of anti-corruption." Survey participants recognized mentoring support and exchange of experience as important capacity development tools that should be used for further reform efforts and EU accession process.[25] Improvement of the delivery of services, especially at the local level, should continue, with advancement of e-government opportunities, simplification of procedures, and more citizens-oriented processes.

EQ2 Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?

The challenging realities of the BACID II countries are improving through regional cooperation: the RCC[26] recent report recognized that regional cooperation reduces tension and strengthens regional stability, as the crucial precondition for sustainable development. The report highlights various benefits of regional cooperation; namely, knowledge exchange, scientific and cultural connections resulting in, among others, improved governance efforts, enhanced competitiveness of relatively small national economies and the increased attractiveness of the Region as a whole as an investment destination.

The final evaluation team used a sound framework to contextualize and determine added values of the BACID II. The analysis has been determined by the strategic and policy priorities of the participating countries in light of EU accession requirements and (nationalized) SDG targets. It also included analysis of public administration reform characteristics, including possibilities and potentials that some of these priorities could be addressed at regional level. Thematic priorities of the BACID II have been the reference for considering added values.

The partners stated that regional cooperation brings added values through multiplication of the effects[27], recognizing that regional approach cannot substitute the bilateral support. The established cooperation ties, under the BACID II Fund or more "profiled and strengthened"[28] partnerships under the NALAS framework for example, have been especially useful in "ensuring tailor-made assistance that filled the gap between the predefined targeted interventions (such as EU pre-accession assistance or EU neighborhood policy) and emerging needs of the beneficiaries. The implemented regional approach under BACID II has created "peer pressure", generating motivation that strongly pushes counties that are left behind. The politically utilitarian

---

25 Results from the online survey

26 An all-inclusive regional institution, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), which replaced the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, was established and functioning. The economic crisis that hit the Region did not cause political destabilization- there are different

27 KII_02

28 KII_01

statements concerning the countries' leadership in certain areas[29] could be backed up or dismiss using reginal comparative perspective. The partners from the Ministry of Finance in Albania, for example, re-launched fiscal decentralization policy, following the analysis based on Statistical Brief - Local Government Finance Indicators in South-East Europe. The country position on some of the key indicators has been unfavorable, and the policy makers reacted promptly to address these challenges[30].

Identifying positive cooperation practices ensured through the BACID II Fund and codifying knowledge generated through these initiatives created a solid learning basis, a mechanism for spreading know-how. The learning experience is inherently linked with the enhanced abilities of the partners to "work at new scales and in new types of networks", while addressing common problems and issues in the specific area of work. For example, under the framework of the Decentralization Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark, the second edition of the Statistical Brief: Local Government Finance Indicators in South East Europe has been released (NALAS), providing quick insight about local finance status and development in the Region and enabling policy–makers and analysts with timely, accurate, relevant, reliable and comparable data on local government finance in the region.

At the same time, positive practices generated through the implementation of different BACID initiatives (for example, under the BACID fund) provided tested models and tools to respond to a particular problem or challenge effectively. Lessons learned during the implementation of these initiatives could also suggest how to adapt existing measures to ensure maximum benefits

The partners recognized that BACID II contributed to finding solutions to identified challenges through exchange of experience and knowledge (with the Austrian partners). The FET finds various types of exchange of knowledge and experience that occurred within the framework of BACID II Fund. The partners recognized that "applied methods, good practice, specific approaches through experts' assistance, were the primary "objects" in this exchange"[31.]

The importance of partnerships that the Program promoted and strengthened through the BACID fund could not be overemphasized. Most of the projects developed partnership among organizations working in the same areas; direct interaction with experienced sector professionals proved to be highly effective learning method[32]. However, there were some limitations. The number of beneficiaries/ partners engaged through the BACID II Fund was limited - one beneficiary from the participating countries and one from Austria. The rational was the size of grants, and also efficiency of project management and lower implementation risks.

Establishment of pool of regional experts in different areas is another important aspect of regional cooperation. The areas such as digitalization and e-governance, implementation of CAF, smart city concept and sustainable transport among other showed that availability of regional experts could solve the lack of country-level expertise.[33]

The partners have in general positive opinion about the synergies and complementarity between the BACID II and the reform priorities in their respective countries. All participants indicated correspondence between the BACID II with the strategic priorities of their respective organizations. For example, relevant ministries and other public institutions recognized that CAF contributed to their strategic goals and institutional reform needs, and local self-governments recognized BACID II support through NALAS to fiscal decentralization reform[34].

> **EQ3 To what extent has the log-frame/theory been relevant and consistent and where, if at all, should it be revised and adapted?**

The BACID II design process was consistent, based on a sound programming and formulation approach.[35] The Programme identified problems using a bottom-up process of collaboration, and involved policy makers

---

29 The frequently used syntagma in the daily political discourse is "we are the leaders in the region"

30 KII_01

31 KII

32 KII

33 KII_01, KII_02, KII_14

34 KII national partners

35 KII notes- project team and partners

and main partners representatives[36]. The project document included a robust "theory of change", as a credible and systemic problem analysis tool, facilitating formulation of its intervention logic and chain of results[37] and its core elements (the goal -impact and outcomes).

The BACID II -impact level goal from the approved program document have been defined as "Socio-economic development of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova through development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels (SDG 16.6) supported by regional cooperation and joint European integration". This is a long-term objective that could be obtained through aggregated contribution of different interventions in this area including the BACID II. The impact statement also affirms one of the pillars for the achievement of SDGs: namely, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are essential to achieving the SDGs[38]. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal services and protection of human rights, based on effective rule of law and good governance at all levels and on transparent, effective and accountable institutions[39].

The FET analyzed adopted indicators from the logical framework matrix. At the impact level, two proposed indicators, (I1 Increased government effectiveness index as measured by the World Bank and I2 Level of citizens' satisfaction with public services[40]) could adequately measure *"effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels", but the reference to regional cooperation and joint European integration have not been included and measured.*

Also, these indicators could not reflect on *"socio-economic development of the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova".* The FET finds that additional indicators could be beneficial to better reflect, such as for example, Human Development Index (HDI)[41] to reflect on socio-economic progress in the targeted countries, and the World Economic Forum – The Global Competitiveness Index with focus on First Pillar, Institutions: Public Sector's Performance.

The BACID II outcome has been as formulated as "public administrations and other sectors in the Region capacitated for implementation of the European principles of good governance". The FET finds that outcome clearly reflects "intended changes in development conditions resulting from the joint work of the BACID II, and key stakeholders ", confirming that the implementation of European principles of good governance at the level of public administration and other bodies, lead to the overall socio-economic progress and attainment of SDG targets. Thus, considering the 2030 Agenda as the main reference and its provisions that connect transparent and accountable institutions with socio-economic development, the FET finds that progress towards the BACID II impact is inherently linked to its outcome.

The FET finds BACID II outcome indicators[42] from the log-frame could be more appropriate to capture output-level changes and progress. However, these indicators could not capture if and to what extent "public administration and other sectors have been capacitated". For example, OI-1. Number of direct beneficiaries participating in the BACID II Fund, is not relevant to reflect on capacities of public administrations and other sectors to implement European principles of good governance. Furthermore, the targeted number of beneficiaries of 600 remains insignificant in the Regional context. Indicators measuring number of services that regional QM center provides, or number of public organizations implementing CAF could reflect on "capacities of public administration and other sectors". However, indicators o number of beneficiaries of the BACID II Fund or number of institutions involved in the Danube Governance Hub activities remain less relevant.

---

36 KII_01 KII notes, national partners

37 OECD DAC definition: "Chain of results is the causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback"

38 Interactive dialogue 5- Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions; more details available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/8161Interactive%20Dialogue%205%20-%20Institutions%20and%20Governance.pdf

39 Transforming our World : The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para 35., https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

40 Measured through: i) Transparency of public services; b) Treatment of citizens in public sector; c) Time required for obtaining public services; d) Time required for getting information in public sector and e) Price of public services, as per the RCC Balkan Barometer

41 . The HDI is a statistic composite index of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators, which are used to rank countries into four tiers of human development.

42 Indicators from the Logical Framework Matrix: OI-1. Number of direct beneficiaries participating in the BACID II Fund; OI-2. Number of services provided by Regional QM Center; OI-3. Number of public organisations implementing CAF in the region; OI-4. Number of institutions involved in the Danube Governance Hub activities and OI-5. Number of new projects approved by NALAS and its members (through EU applications developed and partnership with regional initiatives and EU partners

The FET finds that additional, quantitative and qualitative indicators would be beneficial to measure for example capacities of public institutions, or perception of the achievement of European principles of good governance (e.g., participation, delivery of services, etc.).

Still, more appropriate for measuring the progress under outcome could have been if these indicators are combined (and analyzed) together with the EU Progress Reports as the reference on the partners' capacities for EU accession for the participating countries. Also, some additional indicators could enable more appropriate measuring of progress under outcome. For example, accessibility of public services (SIGMA OECD indicator) measuring the extent to which the access to public services is promoted in policy formulation and implementation[43] or UN E-Participation Index, measuring use of online services to facilitate provision of information by governments to citizens ("e-information sharing"), interaction with stakeholders ("e-consultation"), and engagement in decision-making processes ("e-decision making").

The FET finds links between Programme outcome and three outputs, (Output 1 BACID II Fund- Actors in the Region gained practical know- how in good governance and community services; Output 2- Danube Governance Forum- Public administrations in the Region improved implementation of good governance principles as pre and Output 2- LOGON 2020+: Local governments in the Region positioned as viable partner in European Integration). The FET finds that outputs are rooted in the European principles of Good Governance[44] assisting public authorities in improving governance (such as under Outputs 2 and 3) and enhancing service delivery to citizens (such as under the Output 1)

The FET finds that indicators at the outcome level have been in partially relevant to measure the progress towards the outcome. Indicators measuring number of services that regional QM center provides, or number of public organizations implementing CAF could reflect on "capacities of public administration and other sectors". However, indicators o number of beneficiaries of the BACID II Fund or number of institutions involved in the Danube Governance Hub activities remain less relevant. The FET finds that additional, quantitative and qualitative indicators would be beneficial to measure for example capacities of public institutions, or perception of the achievement of European principles of good governance (e.g., participation, delivery of services, etc.). At the same time, the FET finds that the indicators at the level of three outputs are adequate to measure achievement

However, the evaluation team found that BACID II has given less attention to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, although in the center of good governance is to ensure women to gain full access to their civic, social and economic rights.[45]

The evaluation team finds that the results framework does not adequately integrate gender considerations: the matrix is void of gender sensitive indicators and minimally draws on the use of sex-disaggregated data. Furthermore, the BACID 2 team did not design data collection methods to systemically disaggregate information by gender and monitor the meaningful engagement of women across activities.

For example, under the capacity development components, the focus has been only on gender participation (e.g., number of women participating in capacity development events). Although the opportunity existed to identify perceptions, understanding, and challenges to the achievement of gender equality in the broader public administration/ institutional reforms framework (for example, through post-training evaluation questionnaires or through surveys on government's effectiveness to deliver services), feedback questionnaires did not include options to receive gender-sensitive information, as there were no gender-specific questions.[46] BACID II still needs to work on and measure "lasting changes in the power and choices of women over their own lives, while tackling the root causes of inequality."[47]

Figure 4: Online responses to the question on gender mainstreaming in BACID II

---

43 It evaluates whether this policy framework leads to measurably easier access for citizens, measures citizens' perceptions of accessibility to public services and tests the actual accessibility of government websites. Dimensions covered are territorial access, access for people with disabilities and access to digital services.

44 https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/12-principles#{%2225565951%22:[2]}

45 The references could be: OECD Better Governance for Gender Equality; the OECD Policy Implementation Toolkit on Gender in Governance (2017- ON GOING) http://www.oecd.org/gov/women-government-and-policy-making.htm. Also, interesting articles available from 4th European Conference on Politics and Gender, held June 11-13, 2015 in Uppsala, Sweden, for example, "Linking Gender Equality and Good Governance: The Importance of Political Representation"

46 The analysis of the Results Matrix

47 https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-5-gender-equality.html
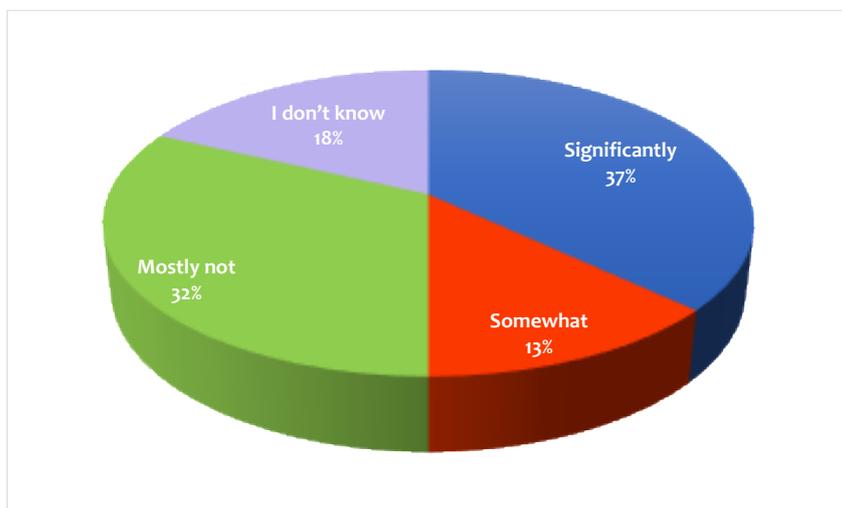
Source: Tailor made on-line survey

When asked to provide examples, most online and offline interviewees mentioned that the Programme "included equal number of male and female participants". Some mentioned having trainings on gender equality as a part of their projects. Other than that, there were no other examples of more sustainable approach to gender mainstreaming.

EQ4 To what extent contributed the programme to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?

BACID II (under all its components) has consistently responded to capacity development needs of the partners and stakeholders in the participating countries and is steadily strengthening national and local level capacity to improve institutional performance and delivery of (quality) services and implement governance-related reform priorities. Future progress and its sustainability, however, rests on the continued commitment and capacity of governance system and institutions.

The Programme has provided capacity development assistance to employees and stakeholders involved in different governance processes at national (e.g., Danube Governance Hub) and local (Logon 2000+) levels [48] Of the surveyed partners who participated in BACID's intervention, all stated they benefited from this assistance.[49]

They recognized that BACID II under the Danube Governance Hub, has provided "timely, effective and highly demanded" technical assistance: under the component II, it included support for the implementation of CAF self-assessment in selected public sector organizations in the Western Balkans. This support at the central level included Ministry of Energy and Mining of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Public Administration of Montenegro, Ministry of Justice of BiH, Ministry of Information Society and Administration of North Macedonia and governmental entities (such as, for example, the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania, the Civil Service Agency in BiH and the Civil Service Agency, Republic Srpska and the Good Governance Directorate-General of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self Government of Serbia). Also, capacity development included other public institutions (Statistical Office of the Republika Srpska; Bureau of Metrology Montenegro).[50] Besides the initial CAF training, the BACID II assisted with self-assessment and preparation of follow-up reports. KIIs with the stakeholders suggest that assistance available through BACID II has been instrumental in providing demanded technical assistance to these institutions to establish capacities and systems to deliver core services.[51] Still, the sustainability of progress relies on the continued genuine commitment of management teams to implement reforms and quality management systems.

---

[48] A total of 81 percent of the participants in the survey participated in the trainings that BACID II organized.

[49] According to the results of the online survey, 93 percent of the participants stated they benefited from the capacity development support from BACID II

[50] More details are available in the BACID II Activity and Progress reports.

[51] KII_15, KII_07, KII_06.

Ensuring successful implementation of the decentralization policies (under the public administration reform framework) remains particular challenge in the Western Balkans and Moldova. The public authorities are showing limited commitment to required structural reforms, while coordination of horizontal and vertical policies pertinent to decentralization remain weak. The lack of country and sector specific indicators under the decentralization framework and absence of regular monitoring and reporting mechanisms have limited decentralization progress. Considering these needs, the partners recognized important fiscal decentralization capacity gains, through BACID II LOGON 2000+ component, designed instruments and tools and follow-up assistance to facilitate intergovernmental dialogue for evidence-based (sectoral) policies. The main deliverables under this component have been the RDO - Regional Decentralization Observatory[52] and the NALAS Fiscal Decentralization indicators in South-East Europe Report to measure the process of decentralization[53]. Some examples could be that the Ministry of Finance and Economy in Albania used these indicators to develop country-specific benchmark for improving the financing of local governments in Albania. Also, the associations of local authorities in Albania, Montenegro and Moldova have used the Report as part of their official intergovernmental consultations with the respective national governments demanding the improvement of their intergovernmental finance systems and the implementation of fiscal decentralization reforms based on regional best practices[54].

Figure 5: Online responses to the question: In your opinion, has the project contributed to the capacity development of the project beneficiaries?

■ Yes, definitely   ■ Yes, somewhat
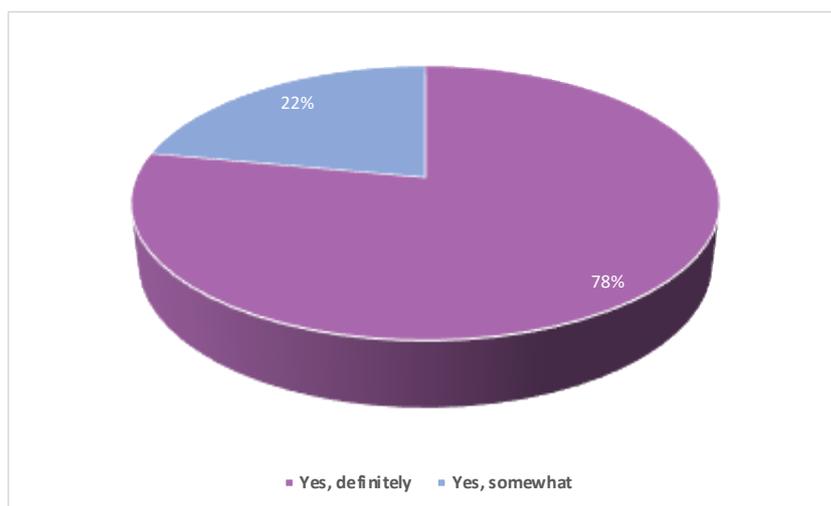
Report has also been used by the OECD and UCLG for the development of their Observatory and Report on Subnational Government Finance and Investment; the World Bank Urban Partnership Program for their Urbanization Review in the Western Balkans and academic researchers enquiring on Bulgarian municipalities capacity to invest.

According to the partners, capacity development/ training programs were well-established, while the BACID's capacity development approach (especially under the Component II and III) has been balanced, focusing on strategic priorities and mandates of participants and their organizations. The partners evaluated positively experts who designed and conducted capacity development programmes under Program outcomes. They stated that "the trainings were delivered by eager, qualified and adequate experts who effectively tailored the courses according to their needs."[55] From the partners' perspective "the use of EU experiences including lessons learned and best practices was a strong contribution to capacity development process"[56].

The survey participant recognized the practical knowledge and skills improvement enabled through the Danube Governance Hub component, through the involvement in the QM activities. The participant and other representatives of the participating institutions received theoretical basis and then practically implemented

---

[52] KII_02 and other key informant interviews

[53] KII_01, KII_08

[54] KII_01, KII_02, KII_11 and also BACID II Activity Reports

[55] KII notes- national partners and RPP progress reports

56 KII notes

CAF standard in institutions with support, guidance and mentoring of KDZ, recognizing that they have received up to date information on new developments in QM area. These efforts has enabled the participants and participating institutions to adopt QM (with emphasis on CAF) as a regular practice in civil service and an increasing number of institutions is applying for implementation"[57].

Besides development of technical capacities, BACID remained a valuable partner in supporting NALAS (under the LOGON 2000+ component) to ensure its sustainability and delivery of core services, exploring and accessing EU funding opportunities[58]. Some of the examples could be assistance to the NALAS during the implementation of the LoGov- Local Government and the Changing Urban-Rural Interplay[59]. The final evaluation finds that BACID's assistance has been important to ensure that NALAS participates in the project "EU for municipalities". The NALAS[60] recognized "strong Programme comparative advantages", stating that LOGON has been "an important and credible support for the development of technical capacities, especially related to fiscal decentralization". The KDZ has been trusted and well-perceived partner, with comparative advantage is its technical capacities and profound understanding of the organization-specific constraints and development needs, as well as its proven focus on the needs and priorities of NALAS-members.[61] In addition, "KDZ through BACID II and previous interventions that supported NALAS and broader, transparent and accountable local governance, demonstrated strong abilities to establish and maintain effective partnerships based on responsiveness, and mutual respect."[62]

> **EQ 5. What were the results on institutional level (local, regional and national)?**

The BACID programme under all its components worked to upgrade and enhance services and establish sustainable capacities among the target organizations, primarily public administrations (including local governments) from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, and Moldova.

The institutions that benefited from the Component I- BACID fund were exposed to the practical know-how and Austrian experience to introduce and implement EU acquis requirements relevant to local authorities. The desk review and the findings from the interviews with beneficiaries indicate that BACID II responded to the institutional development demands by mentoring and sharing practical experience, enabling them to build structures and cooperation and promote the process of democratization and socio-economic development. The grant beneficiaries reported a better understanding of the opportunities/ benefits from networking and cooperation among the cities in the Region for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth[63].

The cities of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Tirana (Albania) enhanced their "smart city development capacities[64]"; namely, to use digital and ICT-based innovation for improving the efficiency of urban services and generating new economic opportunities. The Programme enabled local professionals to grasp and integrate "smart city" international experiences and standards in the local public policies. The partners stated they benefited from best-practices and hands-on experiences to "address the real needs on governance and innovation management; digitization and digital agenda; communication, participation and social inclusion and sustainability"[65].

The results of the BACID programme in the area of economic and social development had impact on performance municipalities, public enterprises and other organizatons. Some of the examples could be Municipality Kruje and Permet (Albania) have been capacitated to strategically plan tourism development and identify funding opportunities for larger-scale activities. The employees from the Lezha municipality (Albania) stated that the BACID programme provided technical support enabling them to establish new practices for

---

[57] Results of the on-line survey

[58] KII notes- national partners

[59]

[60] KII_02 and other national partners

[61] KII notes- national partners

[62] Notes from KII_02, KII_03, KII_07 and KII_08

[63] KII_13- ref to the Priority Area 10 „Institutional Capacity and Cooperation" of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) was quoted as the primary reference.

[64] Smart Cities and Inclusive Growth- Building on the outcomes of the 1st OECD Roundtable on Smart Cities and Inclusive Growth; OECD 2020, available at : https://www.oecd.org/cfe/cities/OECD_Policy_Paper_Smart_Cities_and_Inclusive_Growth.pdf

[65] BACID Workshop Smart Sarajevo 2030- Imagining Sarajevo of the Future Vision Framework Working Paper - September 2019

revitalizing vacant spaces in the city[66] and explore interdisciplinary actions to remove the inefficiency of unused spaces.

The partners recognized Program support to systematize its practical experience and knowledge in form of guidelines, referring to the Rulebook on Performance Appraisal for the civil servants in the local government units in the Federation of BiH. This result contributes to sustainability of efforts and prolonged impact "as positive practices and experiences were consolidated and offered as how-to-do approaches[67]"

The FET finds the reported improvement of practices and capacities in land management and taxation at the local level could be associated with the results of the same component of the BACID programme: representatives of the association of local authorities from Serbia, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities stated that some of the municipalities in the Republic of Serbia are using the BACID II programme know-how and technical assistance to analyze and improve links between land development, land-tax policy, and real estate taxes.

Another aspect of achievements at the institutional level could be through under the Logon 2000+; namely this Component has ensured and delivered support that strengthened network and cooperation between organizations participating in the Programme. The association of the local authorities and the local authorities from participating countries enhanced capacities to identify needs and priorities that would improve functioning and delivery of services (in line with the EU norms). Also, the representatives of associations of local authorities stated that BACID II programme further emphasized the importance of the NALAS - Network of Local Authorities of South-East Europe, "as a unique regional platform for cooperation and exchange of experiences between municipal professionals and decision-makers from the region"[68].

The FET finds that the Regional School of Public Administration also benefited from the BACID II Danube Governance Hub component, "through intensified efforts to act as Regional Centre for Quality in Public Sector[69]". The focus is on increasing the quality of public service delivery and implementing the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) including all organizational aspects of Quality Management. In this context, the partners recognized that the Programme generated important experience within the Region through the pilot CAF initiatives in the region.

> **EQ6. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results, including intended/unintended and out of sphere of control? To what extent was the response adequate and what could be improved?**

The final evaluation analysed main factors that influenced success of the Programme[70], analysing if the Programme had clearly defined objectives and directions and competent project team members with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The review reflected on the quality of communication and consultation with stakeholders and compliance with the planned budget, time frame and performance criteria.

The assessment of the BACID II intervention logic (under the EQ3) indicated that the Programme has well-established hierarchy of objectives, setting the direction for the implementation strategy. The BACID II document (approved proposal) included a brief overview of the situation and key challenges that served to prepare the risk analysis matrix (part 4.6) and mitigation strategy to counterbalance both, the external (e.g., raising regional tensions and diminishing support to EU integrations among the participating countries and changing EU policy for new members) and internal risks (e.g., sustainability challenges under the BACID grants, issues with promotion of diversity, loss of developed capacities due to high turn-over of trained staff from

---

[66] KII national partners

[67] Expert Feedback to the "Rules on Assessment of the Work of State Officers in State Services of the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina", https://www.bacid.eu/images/3/3c/Expert_Feedback_BACID_3.pdf

[68] KII_12

[69] KII_06

[70] The final evaluation team expanded the "golden triangle approach" that stated "programme success was referred to as reaching the objectives and the planned results in compliance with predetermined conditions of time, cost and performance". This model was combined with the set of nine themes to describe success factors; namely: cooperation and communication, timing, identifying/ agreeing objectives, stakeholder satisfaction, acceptance and use of final products, cost/ budget aspects, competencies of the project manager, strategic benefits of the project and top management support.

More details available at Davis, K. (2014). Different stakeholder groups and their perceptions of project success, International Journal of Project Management 32, 189–201. Also, important reference could be Turner, J.R., Müller, R. (2005). The project manager's leadership style as a success factor on projects: a review, Project Management Journal 36 (2), 49–61

participating institutions). The BACID II team monitored and reported on risks[71], maintaining regular communication with the partners, and working to ensure commitments at different levels through engagement with government partners and beneficiaries.

BACID II team members had clearly defined roles and responsibilities; the team structure, communication lines and working relations (between the KDZ and AACT, and under appropriate components with the ReSPA and NALAS) helped to build commitments and ownership, mitigating risks and solving problems. The partners recognized that "knowledgeable and experienced BACID II staff, and technical assistance to national institutions, have been helpful in establishing active working ties with these institutions. The KDZ maintained presence and facilitated partnerships in all participating countries based on "mutual trust and respect". Also, the KDZ's "substantive insight and tailor-made approach to public administration reform, based on recognized needs and identified challenges have been essential to ensure progress and achievement of results[72]"

Still, the assessment of the "enabling environment for Programme implementation" shows that this environment remains characterized by limited progress in the public administration reform and EU accession agenda. Namely, all participating countries remained moderately prepared for the EU membership, while the reform of public administration is achieving limited progress. The countries are facing some of the systemic difficulties, including the weakening of institutions, and the executive branch's interference with institutional mandates, which compromise the institutions' fragile independence.[73] There is an emphasis on the need to strengthen the capacities of national (governance) institutions (relevant ministries and independent and regulatory bodies), but also local self-governments. The importance of local level structures for EU accession is recognized[74], but their capacities remained weak and responsibilities are assigned at local level without proper analysis of the capacity and human/financial resources. The cooperation with civil society for their more active role in the reform efforts and decision-making processes is not based on genuine partnership and mutual understanding of development priorities.

> **EQ7. To what extent have all programme stakeholders collaborated as foreseen in the project document, i.e. through membership in regional networks and how has this affected effectiveness?**

The BACID II has been effective in strengthening regional networks (primarily, through the activities under the Danube Governance Hub and LOGON 2000+ components, that involved the ReSPA and NALAS). The partners and stakeholders recognized advantages of participating in regional networks, stating that BACID II has been active in promoting cooperation and collaboration among them. In practical terms, regional networks enabled the analysis of lessons, "minimizing the risks of repeat nonperforming activities".

The main benefit for enhancing involvement in networks is that regional partnerships (through the Components II-, involving ReSPA and the Component III, involving NALAS) created "a critical mass of expertise, knowledge, resources and relationships[75]". The partners affiliated to the ReSPA recognized that the Danube Governance Hun component ensured that different organizations ha been an opportunity to ensure active participation in the specific areas of interest[76]- e.g., fiscal decentralization or implementation of the CAF-from the design of common approach to implement recommendations for improvements[77].They perceive regional networks as an "additional opportunity to understand gaps in expertise and therefore work regionally to offer opportunities for learning and development for the organizations and professionals".

Regional partnerships offered framework to work together on specific topics (rather than addressing the same limitations separately); coordinating involvement at a regional level facilitated opportunities for collaboration and contributed to a more effective codification of experience and knowledge.

Practically, BACID II enabled professionals from public administration bodies (Component II) or representatives from local governments associations (Component III) to network at a regional level; hence,

---

[71] KII notes and the analysis of the Activity and Progress reports

[72] KII notes- national partners. KII_01, KII_02, KII_13

[73] **For example,** https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/albania_report_2020.pdf, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/north_macedonia_report_2020.pdf and https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/nations-transit/2020 and all other countries.

[74] http://europa.rs/fabrizi-local-self-governments-play-a-key-role-in-the-eu-accession-process/?lang=en

[75] KII_01, KII_13, KII_02

[76] KII_02

[77] KII_06

ensuring benefits from enhanced knowledge and technical resource. The partners recognized that regional networks brought together people with different skill sets, enabling (network) members to learn new concepts and ways of working, as access to each other's materials, knowledge and experience including lessons learned, could help implementing tested models (thus, prevent incorrect practices and loss of time). The members of NALAS recognized that the network enabled access to fiscal decentralization expertise, relevant to the realities of the participating countries, that LOGON 2000+ component enabled. Another example could be through the BACID II Fund (Component I): regional partnership provided means for solving particular problems (as indicated in the BACID II call for proposals), simultaneously raising awareness about the concerns, activities and results of partners from Austria.

According to the partners, regional networks could also create a unified regional approach that can contribute powerfully to national policy and consultation processes. Implementation of CAF in pilot institutions under the Danube Governance Hub component, for example, has been supported through the BACID experts. At the same time, regional collaboration through the ReSPA has been extended by capacity development events and conferences, again drawing in a broader network of expertise. The participants stated that "when a network member identify specific issues to address, all member organizations can benefit", as ReSPA was using expertise and connections of multiple sources, producing knowledge products for all members[78].

Finally, regional networking has been valuable for building relationships and awareness of different organizations' activities. As well as sharing ideas, this has instilled "a healthy sense of competition and an improvement in the delivery of core functions". Benefits for the individual members are learning and acquiring new ideas, solutions, approaches, resources, research, and materials; regional networking enabled a connection with peers and a source of shared learning and development, positively boosting morale and motivation.

> **EQ8: Have the BACID II work plans been implemented within the allocated time and budget, showing flexibility and responsiveness during implementation?**

The evaluation team's desk review and primary data analysis indicates that BACID II has been implemented efficiently, exercising adaptive management. Partners stated that BACID II has demonstrated flexibility throughout implementation.[79] Management mechanisms, including implementation modalities, organizational structure, and the role of each partner under BACID II components have facilitated Programme's ability to achieve planned results.[80] Also, the timely implementation of activities and the availability of financial and human resources to implement these activities have contributed to delivery of results. The iimplementing partners appreciate the BACID II team's flexibility and limited bureaucracy.[81] Partners indicated that BACID II has dealt with their requests in a timely manner, and the relationship with the Programme management has been based on mutual trust and respect.[82]

The main factor that contributed to BACID II flexible and agile response during the implementation have been its work plans and the proactive role that management and technical staff played in responding to the changes, challenges, and emerging priorities under its components. BACID work plans included results-oriented annual plans (and more detailed quarterly plans), providing a sound basis for scheduling, resource allocation, budget control, and attainment of objectives. The evaluation team found that the work plan development process has been participatory, through the joint work of the BACID II team, together with partners (KDZ/ AACT, ReSPA and NALAS). The partners stated that the BACID II work plan also served to coordinate activities, especially highlighting its importance as a tool for coordinating efforts related to capacity development and training.[83] The work plans included sufficient degree of flexibility to ensure timely and successful implementation[84] and together with the Programme's mitigation strategy focused on delivering technical level activities, ensured that strategic support (for example, through the BACID II Fund, or the

---

[78] KII_011, KII_07

[79] KII_02, and other KIIs with national partners

[80] KII notes KII_01.

[81] KII notes

[82] KII notes

[83] KII notes with the national stakeholders

[84] Notes from KII_01

assistance around NALAS) responded to the partner's priorities and identified needs.[85.] These management tools, combined with the established partnerships with the main stakeholders, created an efficient implementation process.

The partners also highlighted that BACID II responsiveness and flexibility during implementation is attributed to its "proactive and swift decision making based on needs of participants".[86] They highlighted different examples of BACID's responsiveness and flexibility. Under the Logon component, NALAS as the implementing partner, responded to varying capacity levels and commitments of its members. Practically, NALAS adjusted its capacity development approach, codifying knowledge and experience and transposing it into a user-friendly document, the Local Government Finance Indicators in South East Europe. This statistical brief provides "policy–makers and analysts with timely, accurate, relevant, reliable and comparable data on local government finance in South–East Europe".[87]

Also, the BACID II approach to assess the effectiveness of the capacity development programs (including trainings) enabled "institutionalizing" flexibility. Practically, the Programme responded to the comments and reactions from participants/ trainees and adjusted its delivery approach to address needs.[88] In addition, BACID responded to the COVID-19 pandemic effectively, adjusting its training programs to an e-learning format. Within a short period of time, workshop facilitators/ presenters, trainers and instructional designers reconfigured in-person classroom training programs for online learning.[89] Implementing partners appreciated BACID II's level of flexibility and limited bureaucracy.[90] Partners have indicated that they generally have good relations with BACD II (KDZ, ReSPA and NALAS as ithe implementing partnes). BACID responded to requests from partners in a timely manner and cultivated relationships based on mutual trust and respect.[91]

Despite flexibility and implementation of alternative options (e.g., on-line workshops and conferences; on-line consultations, among other), the COVID-19 pandemic affected BACID 2 implementation plans. The BACID 2 team requested three-month non-cost extension, from 31 March until 31 July 2021[92].

The financial and human resources for the implementation of BACID II have been well-planned and available, according to the work plans. At the operational level, the Programme established a team with the Programme Manager (PM) from KDZ as its head. The PM's prime responsibility has been to plan efficiently and deliver results, including to ensure that deliverables are of a high quality, and delivered within the approved work plan and budget. The management system assigned responsibilities for two components to ReSPA and NALAS. The BACID II, through the PM/ KDZ, facilitates constant communication and information exchange regarding strategic priorities with the partners and authorities at the national and local level.

BACID II established a monitoring system and a team responsible for data-collection and analysis. This monitoring system served as the reference during reporting. The BACID II set the performance monitoring framework, with indicators at each level of the intervention logic, agreed data collection protocols and instruments. The evaluation team finds that the adopted indicators and the overall monitoring system served to facilitate tracking of performance under all components and overall progress, despite some weaknesses (elaborated under the previous parts of this report).

BACID II has established a regular and well-elaborated results-oriented reporting system. Concerning reporting frequency, BACID II prepares regular and detailed Annual Activity Reports and Progress Reports that complement each other, providing a substantive presentation of implemented activities, and presenting plans for the next period. The final evaluation team finds strong focus on reporting of results with references to the indicators[93].

---

85 The main references remained EU accession process and the achievement of SDGs- also, notes from KII_ 01, project progress reports reflected on these changes and reconfirmed the approach.

86 The training program was modified to online delivery during the COVID19 pandemic. Following protection measures, BACID II prepared online programs for all subjects planned during the last quarters of the project. Delivering online training programs is associated with numerous challenges, from the availability of quality internet connections to ensuring active participation. Still, the participants have been active, expressing positive opinions about the approach, and have received trainings.

87 BACID II Progress Reports and KII_01

88 KII_07, KII_15 and KII with representatives of LSGs. The results of the survey also indicated appropriateness.

89 KII notes- KII_01, KII_07, KII_15

90 KIIs notes

91 KIIs notes

92 KII BACID 2 team and also BACID 2 documentation and request for extension.

93 Based on Activity Reports for 2018, 2019 and 2020 and Progress Reports

The FET observed BACID II impact among the individuals that participated or directly benefited from its results or activities. In the absence of a comprehensive and well-established methodology to assess the impact on beneficiaries (absence of baselines, and the system to analyse exact number of direct and in-direct end-users), the FET estimated these figures using desk review- by analysing the BACID II scope and validating these initial assumptions through primary data. Specifically, the FET analysed projects that BACID II Fund supported and reviewed activities and results at the individual level under other components. Based on these, primary and secondary sources and evidences, the FET estimates that more than one thousand people directly benefited by increasing capacities in the Programme areas.

The beneficiaries of the BACID grants component stated that interaction with the Austrian partners increased their capacities in the distinct but interrelated spheres of good governance, associated with institutional development[94], social and economic development and environmental protection[95]. The FET provided a detailed analysis of the capacity development approach under the BACID II components. Specifically, the beneficiaries recognized that BACID II facilitated the direct transfer of know-how and using tested models from Austria[96], primarily referring to the BACID II Fund. This approach, according to the partners, had an impact on on skills and genuinely contributed to developing capacities stating that "learning by doing with experienced and highly qualified professionals enabled learning and development of capacities" in the most effective way[97].

The impact at the individual level could be expected through more skilled individuals from participating institutions to provide better-quality services. For example, the LOGON 2000+ component has been working with the employees from the associations of local authorities (members of the NALAS) on strengthening core services- such as capacities for engaging in the dialogue with the authorities on fiscal decentralization policies[98]. The partners recognized BACID's role for the establishment of competent nodes and networks of technical experts dealing with the substantive issues of the associations of local authorities' interests. Similarly, the partners recognized BACID's "critical contribution to ensuring understanding of the EU funding opportunities" and increasing abilities to approach these resources[99]. LOGON 2000+ component support to NALAS as a regional network facilitated horizontal knowledge sharing and the establishment of competent groups of technical experts dealing with the substantive issues of the interest of associations of local authorities.

Similarly, the FET finds evidence that the Component II of the Programme had impact on the abilities of civil servants who participated in various capacity development events (workshops, training, mentoring) to understand institutional reform approaches and implement quality management[100]. They reported understanding of the CAF as the tool for institutional reform, also recognizing they have gained knowledge of institutional/ public administration reform requirements[101].

At the broader level, the Programme's lasting effects could be expected among indirect beneficiaries, the population at large from municipalities and participating countries. However, considering that some of the initiated activities (through the BACID II Fund) are at the fundraising stage or serve as the basis for a full-fledged initiative, it is methodologically inappropriate to estimate the number of indirect beneficiaries. For example, the BACID II supported the analysis of the role of transfer stations in regional waste management in the Zlatibor region; a total of thirty-seven representatives from the Regional Development Agency "Zlatibor" and public utility companies from the Region participated in the event. However, the plan for the transfer station concept that the BACID II supported could enlarge the coverage of the Duboko waste management system to additional municipalities. Besides the existing users (municipalities from the Zlatibor district), other

---

[94] KII_04, KII_05, KII_14

[95] KII_013, KII_01

[96] Results of the on-line survey and KII notes

[97] KII national partners

[98] KII_02, KII_06 also, other national experts

[99] KII_013

[100] KII, national partners and institutions that participated in the CAF-related activities and also benefited from the technical support under the ReSPA framework.

[101] KII, national partners

municipalities could be Nova Varos, Priboj, Prijepolje and Sjenica, with a total of hundred fifty thousand new users. In this context, the BACID II support has been the initial input, and the next steps will depend on the decision of the Republic of Serbia for strategic investments.

The BACID II programme worked to improve the performance of the organizations directly involved in its implementation or targeted by its activities. Besides, the Programme contributed to institutional development of indirect beneficiaries, such as local governments (including local public utility companies) and local government associations, civil society organizations (including universities and think tanks) and other public institutions from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, and Moldova. The upgraded capacities and enhanced services among these organizations lead to more transparent and accountable governance, setting the basis for the EU integration and progress towards the SDG targets.

The FET finds that the Programme prepared and offered tested tools for institutional development and improvement of services[102]. For example, the Youth Scorecard in Albania provided the guidelines for the improvement of quality of municipality delivered youth-specific services, the excellency model for Social Entrepreneurship in Serbia, or the Rulebook on Performance Appraisal for the civil servants in the local government units in the Federation of BiH. The BACID II also developed practical guidelines and a set of know-how and recommendations to improve the application of EU models for smart cities (including revision of legislation for energy efficiency measures at the local level).

The Programme's effects at the institutional level could be through strengthened structures and cooperation mechanisms to promote public management system reforms, inter-municipal cooperation and regional development. Organizations, such as regional development agencies; municipalities and municipal enterprises and non-governmental organizations (e.g., think-tanks, universities, etc.) have been sensitized on the topics within the scope of work of regional and local governments, emerging from the Priority Area 10 „Institutional Capacity and Cooperation" of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR).

The BACID programme strengthened the network and cooperation between participating organizations. The impact is that the local authorities and their associations from participating countries enhanced capacities to identify needs and priorities that would improve functioning and delivery of services (in line with the EU norms). Also, the BACID programme further emphasized the importance of the NALAS - Network of Local Authorities of South-East Europe, as a unique regional platform for cooperation and exchange of experiences between municipal professionals and decision-makers from the region.

BACID II has produced significant yet unintended results in different areas of its intervention. Communication and cooperation established among the beneficiaries of the BACID Fund resulted in follow up partnerships and larger-scale development initiatives. The NALAS and ReSPA implemented BACID II components have contributed to strengthening communication among the network members, horizontal knowledge sharing and new reform initiatives (implemented out of the Programme's scope).

The FET analyzed primary and secondary data, finding some critical unintended results:

Delivery of capacity development programs addressed knowledge gaps and enhanced competencies and skills among the beneficiaries and participants. These capacity development programs **also supported the exchange of experience and knowledge sharing among the participants,** helping employees connect and unify their understanding and application of procedures. The partners with expertise in implementing CAF in their respective public organizations stated that sharing experiences and direct interaction with peers enabled them to resolve issues and bypass common challenges.

Similarly, **BACID II has helped NALAS establish effective, although informal, communication with some local self-governments.** During BACID events, the NALAS team participated as key speakers and presenters. The local self-government representatives from municipalities (hence, could be considered as NALAS indirect members) approached the NALAS technical staff to support analysing and implementing activities deriving

---

[102] KII_02

from the policy guidebooks. According to NALAS representatives, this communication channel has enabled these local self-governments to resolve some of the critical service delivery-related findings (e.g., municipal finances, municipal infrastructure, etc.) and recommendations and improve their management processes.

BACID II enabled stakeholders to become exposed to successful international practices and models tested in Austria. Besides contributing to the improvement of professional capacities, these events created additional positive attitudes. They enhanced participating institutions' commitment and readiness to implement systems, ranging from improved delivery of services, solving issues and problems to expanding planning and programming in the specific areas of interest.

The BACID II has been active in advising and advocating for institutional reforms, transparency and accountability at different levels by applying a CAF methodology (as the backbone of a comprehensive quality management system). The active role of the BACID II partners in implementing activities and building partnerships generated additional readiness and willingness among participating institutions (and members of the networks) to consider the existing quality systems and implementation of the CAF. Partners recognized that the Danube Governance Hub (as the regional Quality Management Centre within the Regional School of Public Administration) provided resources "to introduce and implement CAF as the European QM tool for public sector". Besides, the partners recognized that "introducing quality management system will lead to improved delivery of services" for citizens' benefits. The example could be from Albania and the implementation of the CAF in the Agency for the Delivery of Integrated Services Albania (ADISA)[103]. The role of the ADISA is a transformation of public services delivery in Albania through improved access (e.g., front offices- reception counters for citizens and one-stop-shops as integrated public service centres) and quality of services. According to the partners, this assistance will create a favorable environment to satisfy citizens and businesses needs and respond to their demands; furthermore, this could lead to a more engaged society[104].

The implementation of the Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark in Albania has generated some unintended results. In close cooperation with the Albanian Association of Local Authorities, UNDP expanded this framework, defining the decentralization benchmark for Albania, respecting the rules of the observatory[105]. The partners stated that "the (decentralization) indicators are now used in the municipalities to assess changes, for example, related to local democracy (under the framework of UNDP's implemented integrated support to decentralization[106])

The effects of small grants under the BACID II Fund ranges among the intended benefits. Simultaneously, unintended results achieved during the implementation (even though it has partly been affected by COVID-19) could be considered positive. For example, the support for sharing best practices on sustainable urban mobility to Bosnia and Herzegovina enabled participating municipalities to develop a larger-scale urban mobility programme encompassing municipal urban mobility scenarios. The partners expect this newly launched larger initiative to introduce more sustainable, safer, and accessible urban mobility practices. Using Vienna's experience, Lezhe municipality (Albania) assessed dormant potentials of vacancy and defined a follow-up intervention to optimize and use vacant spaces[107]. The unexpected result has been through collaborating with other cities[108] (for example, Shengjin and Shenkoll), that participated in the workshop (together with Lezhe) and initiated assessment of dormant potentials of vacancy in their areas[109].

The FET already noted (EQ8) the need for a three- month non-cost extension (until end of July 2021); this has been an intended effect of external developments and required to ensure that all activities are completed to sufficient quality.

EQ12. Which elements of the programme design supported sustainability? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?

---

[103] KII_06 and also BACID II Activity Report 3

[104] KII_06

[105] KII_01

[106] https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/ALB/00050816_62935%20Integrated%20Support%20ot%20Decentralization%20Prodoc.pdf

[107] KII_013 – also, https://www.bacid.eu/Inclusive_Cities_for_Local_Communities:_Revitalizing_the_vacant_spaces_in_Lezha

[108] KII_013

[109] KII_013 and other key informants

The BACID II programme has been generally effective in delivering results under its components, thus, facilitating the development of good governance and advancing public administration reform in the participating countries.

The programme generated a vast amount of knowledge relevant to the improvement of public administration and establishment of good governance. This know-how is codified in the form of carefully designed formats and could be replicated and used by other stakeholders from the region.

The capacities that were enhanced through partnerships, direct interaction and knowledge sharing will remain within organizations (and the respective countries), further supporting EU integration process and regional cooperation efforts. The BACID II Fund was successful in building partnerships and structures for promotion of the good governance (strong institutions and partnerships), social and economic development and environmental protection. All these efforts have generated results that have moved EU agenda forward and contributed to the progress towards the SDG targets for participating countries[110].

The BACID II Fund was instrumental in providing support to small actions of exchange of knowledge between Austrian entities and partners involved in different activities under the public administration framework to the countries of the Danube Region and Western Balkans. The underlying principles of the programme were to strengthen capacities of the beneficiaries to introduce and implement EU acquis relevant to sub-national governments. The logic of the Fund was to provide initial, seed funding thus, create the basis for larger-scale development initiatives. Therefore, the evaluation assessed the sustainability looking at the results of the awarded projects (rather than at the BACID fund itself) and analysing if and to what extent these projects served for follow-up initiatives or generated skills and knowledge for replication and continuation of services.

The final evaluation team identified examples that the initial BACID II funded projects generated additional funding and follow-up larger scale support. The funding has been ensured through national sources and international development assistance (e.g., grants funding, investment and infrastructure loans)

In Republika Srpska, under the activities related to sustainable transport SUSTRAI, municipalities Gradiska, Laktasi and Derventa are working on strategic plans for infrastructure improvement and development of sustainable transport. These three municipalities stated that the larger- scale investment should come from EU funds, also exploring opportunities for investment loans[111]. Similarly, the stakeholders from the Lezha municipality started building on the BACID II basis, working on the establishment of a local agency to deal with vacant space. In parallel, they stated activities on identifying and assessing vacant public spaces and buildings. Concerning funding for revitalization of these spaces, the authorities indicated opportunities for co-financing through EU grants and possible public-private partnership options[112]. The authorities from the predominantly rural Kruja region emphasised the "critical inputs from the BACID II technical support in framing the plan for tourism development of this region"; hence, priority projects have been identified, while the local stakeholder admitted their efforts to expand available public funds for financing of tourism investment priorities[113] (according to the partners, some of the potential sources of funding could be EU cross-border cooperation funding and other EU grants).

The FET finds that the BACID II supported Zlatibor Waste Management Project resulted in a large-scale investment, financed through a joint funds, the IFI's loan, the Government of Serbia and municipalities[114]. The BACID fund enabled Regional Development Agency Zlatibor to carry out the actual waste management situation in the region, and proposing the Transfer Station concept considering Duboko as main hub for Waste management in the Region[115]

The results on public procurement sector strengthening in Moldova have, according to the partners "a significant impact on the overall anti-corruption framework[116], by removing legal constraints and implementing

---

[110] The progress on SDGs could be assessed via Sustainable Development Report 2020- the SGDs and COVID-19 including indexes and dashboard data. More details available at:
https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2020/2020_sustainable_development_report_g20.pdf

[111] KII_05 and also web-sources from three municipalities.

[112] http://www.lezha.gov.al/web/Dosje_ne_proces_206_1.php#.YIo5HmYzbqs

[113] KII_19, The name and the importance of the city are closely related to the Albanian national hero, Skanderbeg and the Skanderbeg Museum is situated inside the castle walls built in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D.

[114] The Regional Waste Management Site- Duboko; more details available at https://duboko.rs/projekat-duboko/

[115] More details on https://duboko.rs/projekat-duboko/transfer-stanice/

[116] KII_12

technical improvements" in the implementation of eProcurement system in the country[117]. The partners stated that BACID II enabled experts' inputs for the analysis that identified legal constraints and technical deficiencies that prevent full implementation and functionalities of the MTender system. The national authorities in Moldova continued with the follow-up activities to remove technical barriers "thus increase contracting authorities' and economic operators' user-friendliness and trust in the system"; the main sources have been ensured through the national public budget.

The sustainability of the results achieved within the Danube Governance Hub component has been ensured through institutionalization and further strengthening of the Regional Quality Management Centre within the auspices of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA)[118]. Specifically, the ReSPA has established Quality Management as one of its core thematic areas[119] while the Regional Quality Management Centre (RQMC) has been designed to assist to implement activities under this area and support "public administrations in strengthening their capacities to implement Quality Management tools and systems as a prerequisite for better work performance and better public services[120]. The ReSPA management stated that "RQMC focuses on CAF implementation as the most relevant quality management tool in public administration", recognizing direct contribution of the BACID II and KDZ in adopting and adjusting CAF methodology"; hence, ensuring the CAF institutionalisation in the Western Balkans[121].

The ReSPA management stated that resources for continuation of RQMC services have been ensured as part of the regular ReSPA annual funds. Furthermore, the ReSPA is dedicated to ensure that "RQMC become the entity that assesses CAF implementation and creates data basis with CAF good practices, working also on certification of the "Effective CAF User" Label for the public administration institutions that have raised quality management standards[122]" The ultimate goal is to gradually improve service delivery to citizens and businesses by successfully applying Quality Management Tools (primarily CAF) within the Western Balkans public administrations and, in that manner, to contribute faster public administrations' reforms.

The Logon 2020+ component has been effective for institutional development of NALAS, contributing to its "capacities as sound partner for delivery of services and participation in regional initiatives and different networks[123].

The BACID's idea under this component has been to leave a legacy of an operational system and know-how to support fiscal decentralization policies and practices (through Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark) and ensure more transparent budgeting. The FET finds that sustainability of these results has been considered thoroughly and sound sustainability approach followed. Namely, the NALAS management recognized the Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark as one of its core service[124], clearly highlighting impact on fiscal decentralization policies within the region[125]. Technical support that has been assigned to NALAS- expert on fiscal decentralization and expert on EU funding opportunities- has been recognized as highly important for the future development of NALAS portfolio of services. Therefore, the NALAS management through the decision of the NALAS board, is working to ensure "funds to engage these highly competent personal on a constant basis"[126]

---

[117] https://mtender.gov.md/en

[118] https://www.respaweb.eu/81/pages/62/quality-management

[119] Other priority

[120] https://www.respaweb.eu/77/pages/10/about-rqmc

[121] KII_06 and https://www.respaweb.eu/81/pages/62/quality-management

[122] KII_06, other key informants interviews; ReSPA Strategic Plan

[123] KII_02, KII_01

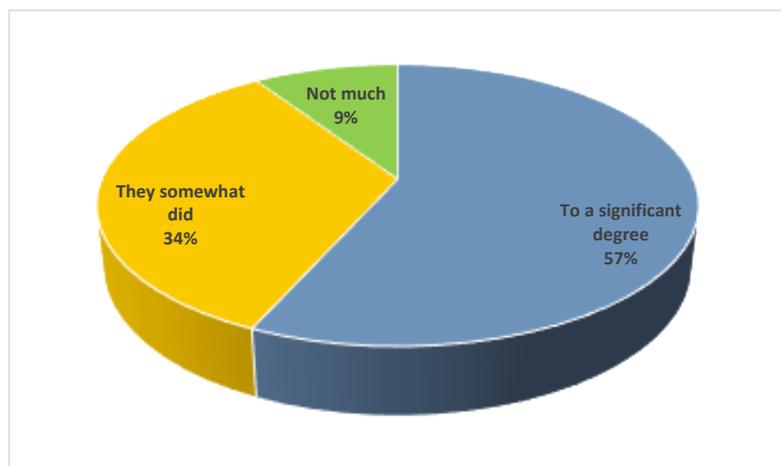[124] http://www.nalas.eu/knowledge-center/Task-Forces/Fiscal-Decentralization

[125] KII_02, Also, NALAS 2018-2022 Strategy – available at http://nalas.eu/Home/Download/Strategy_2022

[126] KII_02

Figure 6: Online responses to the question if achieved results will last after the end of the project they participated in

NALAS, with support from the BACID 2, has established its new platform, NALAS Observatory[127], that provides access to timely, accurate, reliable and comparable indicators and information on local governance. The NALAS management stated that they will continue with these NALAS Observatory, presenting plans for its

When asked to provide examples of sustainability of the achieved results, the online survey participants said: "Beneficiaries will continue to use gained know-how and learned leasons will be used in design and development of new strategic documents" and "As a result of support, QM is part of job description of two job positions in the Civil Service Agency, it is a part of CSA strategic plan, and we constantly have institutions applying for CAF, year after year. Now, we also have trained EFACs as a step forward in this area." Another online participant outlined other long-term sustainable effects of the programme: "Since working mostly on spreading the CAF in the civil service, the essence of these activities is raising awareness and delivering trainings on CAF so that we get as many institutions applying for CAF implementation, which is delivered as a next step of cooperation with institutions. When we started working on CAF with KDZ, through BACID II support, we had no institutions implementing CAF and people were not aware of this QM tool. Now, there is a strong awareness on this issue, and we estimate that close to 15% of institutions in the Republic of Srpska Civil Service will have CAF implemented (or will be in the process of implementation) by the end of 2021."

> **EQ13. What are the key learnings in terms of achieving sustainability and how can the prospects for sustainability be strengthened?**

The final evaluation team has identified several lessons that are affecting sustainability:

- The BACID II Fund enabled local authorities and communities to gain practical experience in preparing applications and playing through call for proposals and approaching different sources of funds. This experience and established capacities are especially important in the context of different EU funding opportunities under the accession framework. However, ensuring transition from the small-scale BACID II funds to more substantive EU options is challenging- some of the most successful BACID II funded projects have been designed as the initial initiative for larger-scale projects. Additional technical support available through the BACID II has been critical to this success.

- Providing focused expertise and policy advice on specific priorities, BACID II added value and contributed to building institutions, from ReSPA and NALAS to other beneficiaries. Besides, long-term support and established partnerships have been crucial to further advance positive institutional development.

  The key to success has been BACID II close and collaborative work with the partners institutions to achieve national ownership and, ultimately, sustainable change. Focusing on strengthening the technical capacity of the professionals within these institutions has been the right approach to improve

---

[127] https://nalas-observatory.eu/ -

the delivery of its functions. The commitment of senior management in these institutions remains critical to ensure that developed capacities are embedded in organizational structure and contribute to the broader good governance and reform agenda.

- Promoting national ownership is one of the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. National institutions at all levels, and also civil society and communities, should feel entitled to own and sustain results of development initiatives (such as those implemented through the BACID II). Ownership is the best strategy to guarantee that a development project succeeds and expands in the long run.

  However, experience shows that local authorities and communities could be driven by opportunities to ensure some funding. This approach could lead to approved and implemented initiatives not "locally owned", and the approved and implemented initiatives remain stand-alone actions without broader effects.

- The flexibility and responsiveness have been underlying strengths of the BACID II during the entire period of implementation, allowing to change some of the pre-established parameters (plans, activities, inputs). The Programme's responsiveness enabled timely and appropriate reaction to the partners' demands, being tools for ensuring progress under all components. The Programme avoided to be over-flexible/ over-responsive; this has prevented Programme to slip into ad-hoc reactions to partners' requests.

- BACID II Programme has effectively tested innovative approaches to delivering capacity development support (including workshops and training programs), benefiting from on-line and web-based opportunities. The Programme (working in close partnership with the ReSPA and NALAS and other stakeholders) proved that combining traditional development interventions with the tailored use of new technologies could contribute to more significant learning outcomes.

- The BACID II confirmed that problem analysis articulated through a theory of change should be the base for well-defined intervention logic. The critical lesson is that results-based management principles should be used to formulate a chain of results and the entire follow-up intervention. The problem analysis articulated through a theory of change should serve as the basis to define intervention logic and well-established chain of results. This "chain of results" facilitated definition of realistic targets and associated indicators that can be measured and easily monitored.

- The BACID II has been highly instrumental in creating "citizen-oriented delivery of services" culture, especially valuable in the current environment of the participating countries.

  The provisions from different laws could serve to support public service delivery. However, there are no explicit legal obligations that define and guide public services in the participating countries. The existing framework does not have a citizen-centric focus. In its absence, public authorities could use "internal lens" to design, implement, and monitor service provision – rather than putting citizens' participation, demands, and needs at their core. Therefore, planning and delivering public services reflecting users' experience can strengthen public administration impact on human development outcomes and the achievement of SDGs.

- As part of the EU accession process, all participating countries have developed their national strategic for reform of public administration. The experience confirms that successful public administration reform represents a substantial precondition for functional public services and economic growth. Therefore, to maximize effects and impact of the Programme, effective links with the PAR Strategies have been in the focus (giving priorities to institutional reform and improvement of services delivery capacities). This approach ensures stronger national ownership and increase sustainability prospects.

6   Conclusions

The final evaluation has summarized the following overall remarks on the BACID II:

- The Programme is highly successful in delivering planned results, even overachieving in some areas of intervention. This success is even more apparent when set against a complex and challenging environment and sensitive topics that the Programme was addressing, such as changes in the service delivery paradigm, institutional reform through quality management, fiscal decentralization.

- The overall BACID II intervention and objectives are fully in line with the regional and national development piroities and EU accession process for the participating countries.

- BACID II has been highly effective in addressing negative effects and limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing substantive support to the stakeholders in defining and implementing needs-based solutions

The following paragraphs provide the conclusions for each of the evaluation questions

Conclusion 1. BACID II aligned its intervention with regional and national strategic priorities to establishing quality services delivered by competent and transparent institutions. The Programme remains relevant and valid for the participating countries, NALAS and ReSPA. However, the Programme's efforts for the achievement of the SDG targets were less apparent.

BACID remained relevant during the entire period of implementation thus far (2018-2021) and has aligned itself with the needs of the Region and participating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Moldova). The responsiveness of the Programme (and implementing partners) to the changing environment in the Region and the needs of participating institutions have been and remained critical factors to its relevance.

Still, the developments within the Region and adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are creating the need for re-adjustments of the intervention and prioritizing areas that were less evident under the BACID II (e.g., socio-economic impacts and role of local authorities for example).

The BACID II fund has created added values, serving as the seed funding for larger-scale interventions. However, the maximum proscribed budget of 6,000 EUR has been obstacle for some initiatives. The lock-down and limiting travelling opportunities have saved some resources (especially logistics and operational costs); hence, enabling to prioritizing some strategic-level activities.

Conclusion 2: The regional approach under the BACID II added value to partners countries and organizations, following positive cooperation practices (BACID II fund) and creating solid learning basis by codifying generated knowledge and facilitating know-how transfers.

The Programme assisted with the establishment of pool of regional experts in different areas, such as implementation of CAF, smart city concept and sustainable transport, digitalization and e-governance, among other showed that availability of regional experts could solve the lack of country-level expertise[128].

Through its regional approach the Programme confirmed that regional cooperation reduces tension and strengthens regional stability, as the crucial precondition for the achievement of sustainable development goals. Thus, the Programme was instrumental in contributing to implementation the Regional Cooperation Council's (RCC) and other regional strategic priorities.

Conclusion 3: BACID II has accurately identified components and clearly established areas of intervention under these components, and there is demand (from the partners and beneficiaries) for the services that the Programme tested to continue.

There is a need among the stakeholders to continue with the assistance available through BACID II as the Programme developed and tested models and packages, effectively producing visible and concrete results. BACID II has confirmed its validity to the needs of respective public institutions in the participating countries, and the focus of the follow up support needs to address root causes of challenges. The analysis indicates priorities should be capacity development, regional and inter-institutional cooperation for public administration reform and organizational development, and the improvement of delivery of services at all

---

[128] KII_01, KII_02, KII_14

levels. The indicators have been generally relevant to measure progress in the areas of intervention; however; some important aspects (e.g., progress towards the SDGs, for example) have not been reflected and measured through these indicators. Also, use of gender-sensitive indicators and reflection of gender priorities limited.

Conclusion 4: BACID II has been consistently responding to capacity development needs of the partners and stakeholders in the participating countries. The Programme has been generally effective in strengthening national and local level capacities to improve institutional performance and delivery of (quality) services and implement governance-related reform priorities

The Programme followed well-established capacity development approach, balancing between strategic priorities and immediate needs of the partners and beneficiaries. The importance of capacity development and transfer of knowledge have been recognized as the priority for the future, combined with inter-institutional cooperation for public administration reform and organizational development, and the improvement of delivery of services at all levels.

Conclusion 5: BACID II has been effective in achieving results at institutional level.

NALAS benefited from the BACID II assistance, enhancing its technical capacities in the core areas of functioning; its Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark became well-known and broadly used policy-making tool. The sustainability basis for NALAS have been enhanced through access to EU/ IPA funding and enhanced capacities for implementation of EU funds. Still, there is a need to continue working on strengthening the position of LGAs to participate in the EU accession and ensure resources directly for local governments.

The establishment of the Regional Quality Center (RQC) under the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) has been an important achievement, ensuring assistance with the CAF implementation in the region. The ReSPA remains committed to continue its support to CAF implementations and strengthening its services in this area.

Conclusion 6: The sound programme management practices, and comprehensive monitoring systems, together with competent technical inputs, have been among the main factors that influenced achievement of results. The BACID II has well-established hierarchy of objectives that set the basis for the implementation strategy. The Programme Team members with technical capacities and defined roles and responsibilities established clear lines of communication and working relations. These management systems helped to build commitments and ownership, mitigating risks and solving problems.

However, external developments such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its implications, and reforms that are at chronically slow pace, have been the main challenging for the achievement and continuation of results.

Conclusion 7: The BACID II has been effective in strengthening regional networks (primarily, through the activities of NALAS and ReSPA). The strong sense of its relative importance and advantages of participating in regional networks has been developed among the partners and stakeholders, with the BACID II role in facilitating cooperation and collaboration among them.

Regional networks enabled the analysis of lessons, minimizing the risks of repeat nonperforming activities. Also, regional networks have been effective for codification of knowledge and exchange of experience among the partners, creating a unified regional approach that can contribute powerfully to national policy and consultation processes.

Conclusion 8. BACID II has been implemented efficiently, in line with the work plans, and demonstrated flexibility to stakeholders' needs. The Programme Team and KDZ management and technical assistance, contributed to an effective implementation and achievement of results.

The Programme established a clear system of work planning, to complete the activities on time, within the approved budget and standard of quality. The monitoring system has been solid, but improvements are required especially with adopting indicators to appropriately measure progress, and capture elements of the initiative.

The BACID II (and KDZ/ AACT) have been flexible and reliable partners, holding themselves accountable for the achievements of results. These elements, together with the strong partnership and technical capacities, have been critical factors that contributed to its effectiveness and flexible and responsive implementation.

Conclusion 9: BACID II ensured impact among the individuals that participated or directly benefited from its results or activities; thus, more than one thousand people directly benefited by increasing capacities in the areas of Programme intervention.

At the broader level, the Programme's lasting effects could be expected among indirect beneficiaries, the population at large from municipalities and participating countries. Still, the achievement of larger-scale results will depend on different external conditions, from the approval of design documents to fundraising and availability of resources.

Conclusion 10: The Programme has been effective in improving the performance of the organizations directly involved in its implementation or targeted by its activities.

The Programme has achieved concrete and visible results during this period of implementation, especially important being results related to enhancing management and technical capacities of the partners institutions, NALAS and ReSPA, but also other stakeholders. BACID II has strengthened the capacities of the NALAS and ReSPA in critical areas of work, especially to implement its core mandates and services. These results have created a solid basis to continuing support and further strengthen good governance in the region.

The Programme designed tools and provided support for institutional development of indirect beneficiaries, such as local governments (including local public utility companies) and local government associations, civil society organizations (including universities and think tanks) and other public institutions from participating countries.

Conclusion 11: BACID II has produced significant yet unintended results in different areas of its intervention. Communication and cooperation established among the beneficiaries of the BACID Fund resulted in follow up partnerships and larger-scale development initiatives.

The NALAS and ReSPA implemented BACID II components have contributed to strengthening communication among the network members, horizontal knowledge sharing and new reform initiatives (implemented out of the Programme's scope).

Another important example could be that the NALAS- implemented Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark in Albania has been customized in partnership between the Albanian Association of Local Authorities and UNDP to support and monitor comprehensive decentralization reform in the country.

Conclusion 12. BACID II has been effective in responding to development needs in areas of intervention.

BACID II has been steadily addressing capacity challenges and demands for improved functioning primarily of all partners under its components. The sustainability of the results achieved within the Danube Governance Hub component has been ensured through institutionalization and further strengthening of the Regional Quality Management Centre within the auspices of the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA). The Logon 2020+ component has been effective for institutional development of NALAS, contributing to its capacities as sound partner for delivery of services and participation in regional initiatives and different networks. The actual sustainability of these results is conditioned with a likelihood that these capacities will remain available and will continue to be requested upon its completion. The fact that ReSPA and NALAS have ensured resources for continuation of these services are strong evidence to sustainability prospects.

The sense of national ownership over the achievements under BACID II is due to effective partnerships and involvement of the national stakeholders in its design and implementation. The participatory approach for the design and implementation of the Programme has contributed to an enhanced sense of ownership, setting the ground for sustainability of results. The sustainability of some of the BACID II achievements would, however, require additional attention and further efforts. Several external factors pose risks on sustainability, such as the continued lack of overarching reform frameworks in participating counters, weakening of governance institutions. Possible economic decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic could prevent follow-up activities on the results of the BACID II Fund (e.g., larger investments, planning and implementation of priorities).

7 Recommendations

The final evaluation team recommends to continue assistance that was available under the BACID II, focusing on three interlinked components (BACID fund, Danube Governance Hub and Logon2020+).

KDZ/ AACT with its partners (ReSPA and NALAS) should remain flexible and responsive to the needs and priorities for the region, with EU integrations and SDG achievement as the main references.

Recommendation 1: The evaluation team recommends continuing with the BACID Fund prioritizing innovative initiatives with a clear social, economic and environmental impact and stronger links to the SDG framework.

It is recommended to consider also activities that are addressing the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Operationally, the partners should consider enlarging the maximal amount for project funding (from the current 6,000 EURO to 10-12,000 EURO) and examine opportunities for involving partners of the Danube Region (for example, other EU member states) committed to exchanging experiences and partnering with the Western Balkans and Moldova.

Environment as the topic should be more present especially in light of passing Green Deal. In that sense, projects aiming to create sustainable conditions for boosting the efficient resources by moving to a clean, circular economy or restore biodiversity and cut pollution should be in focus. Those could include in providing know how about installing environmental-friendly technologies, supporting innovation, especially in transport and energy sector or introducing global environmental standards.

Besides, the final evaluation team recommends facilitating horizontal knowledge sharing and exchange of experience among the BACID Fund beneficiaries/ grantees.

Conclusions 4, also relevant Conclusion 1, Conclusion 2 and Conclusion 3

Recommendation 2: BACID should enhance efforts to contribute to the achievement of the SDG targets for the participating countries.

The challenges for realizing sustainable development and building resilient communities are various. The impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic twined with the adverse effects of climate changes, rising inequalities, and declining education and health status are (some of) the critical issues for realizing sustainable development and building resilient communities. At the same time, this environment emphasized the importance of Agenda 2030 and the attainment of SDG targets.

The FET recommends that BACID strengthens Agenda 2030 and SDG-focused programming approach.

The BACID fund should be linked with the SDG goals and specific targets relevant to its support areas. For example, governance and public administration related intervention should be linked with the targets under SDG16 and SDG17, social and economic development initiatives with SDG7, SDG8, SDG9, SDG11, SDG12 as primary references; environmental impact projects with SDG13 but also SDG6 and SDG7. Also, BACID fund should support activities for the localization of SDGs and raising awareness on Agenda 2030.

The BACID needs to strengthen links between Agenda 2030, SDGs, and institutional reform efforts. The final evaluation team recommends exploring opportunities to incorporate SDGs in the CAF methodology and in the follow up planning for institutional reforms.

Conclusion 1, and also Conclusion 5 Conclusion 2, Conclusion 3, Conclusion 4

Recommendation 3: The evaluation team recommends continuing support to the NALAS, especially its technical capacities in the core areas of functioning.

The FET recommends expanding the use of the Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralization benchmark (including data from EU countries) as the policy-making tool. The NALAS should continue with the Fiscal Decentralisation Statistical Briefs. These efforts should include the analysis of the effects of the COVID 19- pandemic on local economic development and regional economic cooperation in the participating countries.

Under this component, BACID should support NALAS to strengthen its technical capacities and become more involved in digital transformation at the Local Government Level in South-East Europe. The initial step should be to analyze digital challenges and elaborate on potentials for SEE local governments to support the digitalization of local public services and in developing "smart cities".

Also, the BACID should continue its efforts in strengthening the position of LGAs from candidate countries in the EU Integration process and for increasing EU support for local government reform in the frames of the pre-accession support (IPA). Considering positive experience from Albania and other countries, the Programme should continue supporting NALAS and SEE LGs to get access to EU funding focusing on EU financial support for local governance.

Conclusion 5 and Conclusion 7. Other conclusions from 8 to 12 also relevant.

Recommendation 4: The final evaluation recommends continuing support to a Regional Quality Center (RQC) under the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA). The primary focus should be to expand the CAF implementation with the RQC technical support and knowledge dissemination.

The BACID II has been successful in assisting selected public (administration) institutions to implement CAF and proceed with reform activities. The FET recommends building on this experience and strengthening horizontal knowledge sharing and cooperation among these institutions (in the form of an informal network). There is a need to enhance the capacities of the CAF network members and put in place the system to collect and codify CAF-feedbacks, comments, and other knowledge products. In parallel, the Programme should facilitate communication and cooperation among the CAF network members from the Western Balkan with the European CAF-Network and European Institutions.

The BACID should continue mentoring support for CAF implementation, creating and capacitating a competent local expert node; its backbone should be already CAF-experienced professionals from the BACID II programme.

The Programme should explore opportunities to pilot CAF in local level structures (e.g., local self-government units, educational institutions, etc.).

Conclusion 5 and Conclusion 7. Other conclusions from 8 to 12 also relevant.

Recommendation 5. In the next stage, BACID should define appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators to enable measuring of progress under components and capture changes and results attributable to BACID programme (attainment of higher-level objectives- outcomes and impact).

The evaluation team also recommends including gender-sensitive indicators with a focus on "gender transformation[129]. Practically, this means to distinguish between indicators for programs using a gender transformative approach from those using more conventional gender accommodating approaches (which tend to focus on women's empowerment). Indicators related to programs focused on empowering women usually measure "increase in women's ability to achieve specific changes in their behaviour or access ,but do not necessarily change the social order that gives rise to women's disadvantage[130]". Therefore, the gender transformative indicators should measure changes in the social order, or the underlying factors that give rise to disparities among men and women[131].

The reporting system should move beyond stating what was done to what was achieved. The indicators should be set to better capture long-term results.

Conclusion 2, Conclusion 3, other conclusions (1 and 4 especially)

Recommendation 6. In addition to including gender-sensitive indicators, BACID should consider options to better integrate gender priorities (beyond gender participation) in its activities and the overall implementation framework.

Some of possible opinions to consider could be gender sensitive institutional development and public administration reform. The focus should be that gender mainstreaming is adopted as a strategy which is pursued as a systematic and planned process for organisational learning within an institution to achieve gender equality both internally and especially concerning working results and outcomes.

---

[129] According to the Interagency Gender Working Group (IGWG):Gender transformative approaches actively strive to examine, question, and change rigid gender norms and imbalance of power … Gender-transformative approaches encourage critical awareness among men and women of gender roles and norms; promote the position of women; challenge the distribution of resources and allocation of duties between men and women; and/or address the power relationships between women and others in the community. Reference to Rottach E, Schuler SR and Hardee K. 2009. Gender perspectives improve reproductive health outcomes: New evidence. Population Reference Bureau. http://www.igwg.org/igwg_media/genderperspectives.pdf

[130] Greene M and Levack A. 2010. Synchronizing gender strategies: A cooperative model for improving reproductive health and transforming gender relations. http://www.engenderhealth.org/files/pubs/gender/synchronizing_gender_strategies.pdf

[131] Ibidem, Greene M and Levack A. 2010. Synchronizing gender strategies

The strategic goal of the process should be to integrate gender equality into the regular rules, procedures and practices of an institution. A successful gender mainstreaming implementation could lead to the transformation of an institution, thus also impacting on the organisational culture.

Also, the results of achieved under the Component II- Danube Governance Hub and especially implementation of CAF could be finetuned to integrate gender mainstreaming practice.

Conclusion 2, Conclusion 3, other conclusions (1 and 4 especially)

Recommendation 7: Ensuring national ownership from the planning through application and implementation of approved projects (under the BACID II Fund) remains priority.

The final evaluation team recommends that BACID fund works to ensure that governments at national, regional and municipal levels link applications with their visions, strategies, and frameworks; thus, create favourable conditions to ensure ownership.

The applicants should consider sustainability from the design stage, using BACID fund support as seed funding for larger scale initiatives- there is a need to ensure transit from the small-scale BACID II funds to more substantive EU opportunities. The Programme needs to provide additional technical support through already experienced partners and national experts.

Conclusions 10, Conclusions 7, 8 and 9

Recommendation 8. BACID should continue implementing its systemic approach to capacity development, following needs assessments of the main stakeholders and partners.

Considering the current stage of the governance systems, structures, and capacities of partner institutions in in the region, BACID should consider a long-term, needs-based capacity development approach under all components. The evaluation team recommends that BACID design a comprehensive capacity assessment approach based on the Kirkpatrick model, assessing different and interconnected levels of learning: 1) participant satisfaction with the capacity development; 2) immediate change in individual knowledge and skills; 3) change in individual performance back in the workplace. There is a need to analyse change in the overall performance of the institution.

Conclusion 12, also highly relevant Conclusions 10, 11 and other conclusions.

Annex 1: List of interviewed people

1	Name/ Last name	*Country/ Region*	Institution	Mail address	Position/ relation with the BACID 2
1	Gentiana Ramadani	*Albania*	Center for European Integration and Development	ramadanigentiana@yahoo.com	Youth score card in Kamza municipality = A Guide for local election 2019, to improve the quality of services for youth (BACID Fund)
2	Davor Koncalovic	*Serbia*	Faculty of Engineering, University of Kragujevac	davor.koncalovic@kg.ac.rs	Networking for sustainable cities (BACID Fund)
3	Ognjenka Zrilic	Bosnia & Herzegovina	LIR Evolution	ognjenkaz@lir.ba	SUSTRAIN- SUSTainable urban tRansport best prActices sharing (BACID Fund)
4.	Slavisa Jelisic	Bosnia & Herzegovina	LIR Evolution	slavisaj@lir.ba	
4	Gerhard Sabathiel	Serbia	SA Consulting GmbH	g.sabathiel@s-a-consulting.com	Communal Waste Management in the Zlatibor Region (BACID Fund)
5	Michael Gansch	Albania	EuroVienna	Michael.Gansch@eurovienna.at	Sustainable Tourism Development in Albania, Kruja Region for historical and nature tourism (BACID Fund)
6	Bahanur Nasya	Kosovo	Wonderland - platform for European architecture	office@wonderland.cx	Community Developed Heritage (BACID Fund)
7	Sebastian Schäffer	Moldova	IDM	s.schaeffer@idm.at	Developing the rule of law and strengthening anti-corruption measures in the sector of public procurement in the Republic of Moldova (BACID Fund)
8	Ljiljana Uzelac	Serbia	Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government	ljiljana.uzelac@mduls.gov.rs	CAF implemented
9	Samra Ljuca	BiH	Civil Service Agency	samraljuca1976@gmail.com	CAF implemented
10	Tina Saric	Montenegro	ERISEE (Education Reform Initiative South East Europe)	tina.saric@erisee.org	CAF training
11	Barbara Zupanc	Slovenia	Ministry of Public Administration	Barbara.Zupanc1@gov.si	stakeholder

12	Maria Immaculada Perez-Rocha	Belgium	DG NEAR	Perez-Rocha.MARIA-INMACULADA@ec.europa.eu	stakeholder, policy officer, DG NEAR/European Commission, responsible for ReSPA
13	Boris Tonhauser	Belgium	PLATFORMA/CEMR	boris.tonhauser@ccre-cemr.org	stakeholder, director of Platforma/CEMR
14	Agron Haxhimali	Albania	Association of Albanian Municipalities	aam@albmail.com	LGA, NALAS member; EU-project "EU for Municipalities in Albania", submitted with BACID support
15	Miodrag Gluscevic	Serbia	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities	miodrag.gluscevic@skgo.org	Participation in the elaboration of the Regional Decentralization Observatory, supported by BACID
16	Vanja Starovlah	Montenegro	Union of Municipalities of Montenegro	vanja.starovlah@uom.co.me	Very familiar with BACID, i.e. recommended Darko Mrvaljevic as Regional EU expert for the BACID programme
17	Kelmend Zajazi	North Macedonia	NALAS	zajazi@nalas.eu	implementing partner, executive director
18	Michaela Flenner	Austria	ADA	michaela.flenner@ada.gv.at	ADA project officer for the BACID Programme, in a later stage of the evaluation (future BACID)
19	Ratka Sekulovic	Montenegro	ReSPA	r.sekulovic@respaweb.eu	ReSPA director, implementing partner
20	Thomas Prorok	Austria	KDZ	prorok@kdz.or.at	project manager BACID, deputy managing director KDZ
21	Alexandra Schantl	Austria	KDZ	schantl@kdz.or.at	BACID EU expert, WP Leader Pillar 3 and responsible for narrative reporting

Annex 2: List of analysed documents

List of documents analyzed

Project document:

BACID II - Building Administrative Capacities in the Danube Region and Western Balkans (2018-2021)

BACID II Logical Framework

Progress reports

Progress Report 1, Reporting period: 01/04/2018 – 31/03/2019

Annexes to the Progress Report 1

Progress Report 2, Reporting Period: 01/04/2019 – 31/03/2020

Annexes to the Progress Report 2

Activity reports

Activity Report 1- OEZA-Contract 8325-00/2018 (01/04/2018 – 30/09/2018)

Annexes to the Activity Report 1

Activity Report 2 -OEZA-Contract 8325-00/2018 (as at 30/09/2019)

Annexes to the Activity Report 2

Activity Report 3, As at September 30, 2020- Contract No. OEZA-Contract 8325-00/2018

Annexes to the Activity report Nr. 3

Other documents

EC Progress Reports for the Republic of Serbia, 2018, 2019, 2020

EC Progress Reports for Montenegro, 2018, 2019, 2020

EC Progress Reports for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018, 2019, 2020

EC Progress Reports for Albania, 2018, 2019, 2020

EC Progress Reports for Kosovo*, 2018, 2019, 2020

World Bank Partnership Strategy for the participating countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo*, North Macedonia and Moldova)- covering period 2017-2021

Worldwide Governance Indicators- World bank

Freedom House- Freedom in the World, 2018-2020 reports

Public Administration Reform Strategy for the Republic of Serbia, 2021-2025

Public Administration Reform Strategy, Montenegro 2020-2025

Public Administration Reform Strategy, Republic of Moldova, 2016-2020

Annex 3: BACID II Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Evidences and Data Sources
1. Relevance			
EQ1 To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the participating countries[132], NALAS and ReSPA as project partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?	The extent of relevance and validity of programme's objectives for the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova and partners (NALAS and ReSPA) priorities The extent of responsiveness of the BACID II to the needs of public servants	• Opinions of the stakeholders about the consistence of BACID II with the governance priorities and current needs of the Western Balkan countries and Moldova • Evidence that BACID II responded to the NALAS and ReSPA priorities • Evidence that BACID II Programme responded to the needs of public servants from participating countries	Key informant interviews On-line survey Desk review (BACID II and national reports)
EQ2 Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?	The extent to which regional approach added value for partner countries and organizations The existence of the need and willingness among the partners for regional cooperation	• Opinions confirming that regional approach added value for partner countries and organizations • Examples and evidences that regional approach created added value and benefits for the stakeholders	Key informant interviews On-line survey Desk review (BACID II and national reports)
EQ3 To what extent has the log-frame/theory been relevant and consistent and where, if at all, should it be revised and adapted?	The extent of relevance and consistency of the log-frame/theory of change The need to continue assistance/ or the need to revise the BACID II theory of change	• Evidences and opinions about the relevance and consistency of the log-frame / theory of change • Results of the analysis of the intervention logic and the theory of change	KIIs (BACID II team and validated through the interviews with partners) Desk review of the Theory of change
2. Effectiveness			
EQ4 To what extent contributed the programme to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?	The extent to which know-how transfer actions contributed to capacity development of stakeholders for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizen The existence of commitment among the stakeholders for EU integration	• Opinions of stakeholders about the relevance and effectiveness of knowledge transfer and improvement of capacities for EU integrations and community services • Examples of developed capacities of the stakeholders for EU integrations and delivery of services	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents

---

[132] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia and the Republic of Moldova

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Evidences and Data Sources
	The extent of stakeholders' ownership over the capacity development processes and achieved results of the BACID II The extent to which transfer of knowledge responded to capacity development needs of beneficiaries	• Examples of specific service areas that have improved with BACID II support • Perception of the stakeholders of their ownership over the achieved results and opinions about the relevance of capacity development support to their needs	
EQ 5. What were the results on institutional level (local, regional and national)?	The extent to which public administration in the Region have been capacitated to apply the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and support EU integration processes The extent to which the Quality Management Centre in the Region is able to deliver services and by using as quality management tool for public administration. The extent to which fora of public administration and different sectors from the Region has led to improved exchange and cooperation of public administration with all sectors of societies The extent to which local governments benefited through NALAS' Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark	• Evidence that public administration in the Region have been capacitated to apply the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and support EU integration processes • Examples of application of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) in the Region and opinions of the stakeholders about the effectiveness of the CAF in reforming public administration • Opinions of the stakeholders about the Quality Management Center's ability to deliver CAF services • Evidences and opinions about public administration and different sectors from the Region for a's contribution to improved exchange and cooperation • Evidences that local governments benefits and ownership of achieved results through the application of NALAS' Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents
EQ6. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results, including intended/unintended and out of sphere of control? To what extent was the response adequate and what could be improved?	Identification of the factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results Existence of risk management and risk mitigation measures for early identification of factors that are influencing processes The extent to which the BACID II response has been adequate to mitigate negative effects	• Examples (opinions and other evidence) of the factors influencing (supporting or preventing) the achievement of results • Opinions of the stakeholders of the factors that affected implementation of the BACID II • Evidence that the risk management system has been in place and examples of implemented risk mitigation measures to prevent negative effects	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents
EQ7. To what extent have all programme stakeholders collaborated as foreseen in the project document? , i.e. through membership in regional networks and how has this affected effectiveness?	The degree of local participation in regional initiatives and EU local government networks The extent to which regional partnerships contributed to effectiveness and achievement of results under the BACID II	• Examples of local participation in regional initiatives and EU local government networks that the BACID II facilitated • The statements related to ownership among the participants to take part and involve in the networks	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Evidences and Data Sources
		• Examples of commitment to regional approach • Opinions of local stakeholders about the contribution of networks and regional approached to the achievement of planned results and other priorities	
EQ8: Have the BACID II work plans been implemented within the allocated time and budget, showing flexibility and responsiveness during implementation?	The degree of timely implementation of the BACID II, in a logical sequence, and availability of inputs in a timely fashion The extent of utilization of management systems that facilitated efficient implementation of the BACID II The extent to which the BACID II effectively responded to factors influencing outputs and outcomes	• Evidences of timely implementation of activities (without delays)- analysis of planned vs implemented activities including utilization of inputs • Evidences and records on delays and changes in implementation of plans • Examples of use of management systems that facilitated efficient implementation of the Program • Evidence of results-oriented and quality monitoring system and examples of responses to influencing factors	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents
3. Impact			
EQ9: Has the BACID II contributed to changes in the lives of citizens (men, women, youth and also vulnerable groups) in the participating countries?	The extent to which BACID ensured benefits to people (men and women, youth and vulnerable groups) in the participating countries Evidences that changes occurred in lives of women and men in the targeted countries	• Evidence (including opinions of stakeholders) that people benefited from the BACI II- including number of women and men • Examples of changes that have occurred because of the assistance from BACID II	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents
EQ10: Which institutions have already benefitted from the project/programme and to which extend? What has changed for whom (immediate impact)?	The extent to which BACID II contributed to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens The extent to which institutions benefitted from the BACID II support	• Opinions of the stakeholders that BACID II contributed to capacity development in their areas of functioning (supporting EU accession process) • Examples of institutional changes and evidences of improvements at institutional level (local, regional and national) • Opinions of partners about improvements and changes at institutional level achieved with BACID II support	EU Progress reports for participating countries Documents and policies of partners/ participating countries
EQ 11: What unintended (positive or negative) impact can be observed?	Existence of unintended positive or negative impact identified at institutional and organizational levels	• Opinions and other evidence that impact existed at institutional and organizational levels • Examples of unintended positive or negative impact identified at institutional and organizational level	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents

Evaluation Question	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Evidences and Data Sources
4. Sustainability			
EQ 12: Which elements of the programme design supported sustainability? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?	The extent to which elements of the programme design supported sustainability Existence of factors within BACID II that influenced the achievement of sustainability	Opinions of the stakeholders regarding sustainability of the achieved results Evidences that elements of the BACID II supported sustainability Evidences that the BACID II and partners have ensured financial and operational sustainability of the achieved results	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents The budget of the countries in the Region EU Progress reports for participating countries Documents and policies of partners/ participating countries
EQ 13: What are the key learnings in terms of achieving sustainability and how can the prospects for sustainability be strengthened?	Identification of lessons learned for the achievement of sustainability including opportunities for improvements	Opinion about appropriateness and responsiveness of capacity development programs to stakeholders' needs Stakeholders opinion about ownership of results achieved during BACID II implementation	KIIs Desk review of the BACID II documents

Annex 4: Interview Guides

During the field phase, the Final Evaluation will use semi-structured interviews with the main questions provided in this interview guide; this will enable us to ask additional, more specific questions, in line with the Evaluation Matrix and the Terms of References.

The priority is given on-line interviews and the intention is to ensure a representative sample during the primary data collection phase. Also, other means such as on-line interviewing will also be considered.

BACID II Team

Relevance

- Has the BACID II been aligned with the governance related strategic priorities and challenges during the entire period of implementation? If not, what has changed in the (Programme) environment?

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and the Republic of Moldova, NALAS and ReSPA as Programme partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?

- Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?

- Have the external developments affected implementation of the BACID II: how flexible and responsive was the team and partners in addressing the COVID19 pandemic and its implications? Are there other examples of flexibility? Please provide some?

- From your perspective, is there a need to expand the areas of intervention of the BACID II If yes, what could be other priorities and issues that the Programme could address (complementing on-going activities)?

- To what extent has the Programme considered gender mainstreaming during its design and implementation? Please provide your opinion and some examples

Effectiveness

- Has the Programme contributed to improved capacities of public administration? Please provide examples.

- Have the public administrations in the Region been capacitated to apply the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and support EU integration processes? Please explain

- How do you see the role of the Quality Management Centre in the Region in delivering services and supporting use quality management tools for public administration?

- Has the BACID II been effective in creating fora of public administration and different sectors from the Region that improved exchange and cooperation of public administration with all sectors of societies?

- To what extent have local governments benefited through NALAS' Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark? Please explain

- Do you think that BACID II enabled local authorities to enhance access to EU-funds?

- The degree of local participation in regional initiatives and EU local government networks

- Have there been some unintended results achieved during the implementation of the Programme? Please provide some examples.

- Has the work plan been implemented within the allocated time and budget? Are there areas under which the Programme has been underperforming? What were the reasons?

- Has the BACID II Team reported deviations or delays from the approved work plans? What was the response from the Programme (and has this response been appropriate?)?

- Has the Team used management systems that facilitated efficient implementation of the Programme?

Sustainability

- Do you think that the established results will last after the end of the BACID II assistance?

- Has the BACID II contributed to sustainable polices and capacities of beneficiaries and partners in the areas of intervention (governance, EU accession)?

Impact

- To what extent has the BACID ensured benefits to people in the participating countries

- Have there been some changes identified in lives of women and men in the targeted countries? Has the BACID II considered needs of vulnerable groups and how?

- Has the BACID II contributed to institutional and organizational development of respective public administration institutions for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens

- To what extent have the institutions benefitted from the BACID II support

Partners- ReSPA

Relevance

- Has the BACID II been aligned with the governance related strategic priorities and challenges during the entire period of implementation? If not, what has changed in the (Programme) environment?

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and the Republic of Moldova?

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for ReSPA?

- Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations? Please explain from the perspective of ReSPA

- From your perspective, is there a need to expand the areas of intervention of the BACID II If yes, what could be other priorities and issues that the Programme could address (complementing on-going activities)?

- To what extent has the Programme considered gender mainstreaming during its design and implementation? Please provide your opinion and some examples

Effectiveness

- Has the Programme contributed to capacity development of public administration- To what extent have the actors in the Region gained practical know-how in good governance and community services?

- Have the public administrations in the Region been capacitated to apply the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and support EU integration processes? Please explain

- How do you see the role of the Quality Management Centre in the Region in delivering services and supporting use quality management tools for public administration?

- Has the BACID II been effective in creating fora of public administration and different sectors from the Region that improved exchange and cooperation of public administration with all sectors of societies?

- Have there been some unintended results achieved during the implementation of the Programme? Please provide some examples.

- Has the work plan been implemented within the allocated time and budget? Are there areas under which the Programme has been underperforming? What were the reasons?

Sustainability

- Do you think that the established results will last after the end of the BACID II assistance?

- Has the BACID II contributed to sustainable polices and capacities of beneficiaries and partners in the areas of intervention (governance, EU accession)?

Impact

- To what extent has the BACID ensured benefits to people in the participating countries

- Have there been some changes identified in lives of women and men in the targeted countries

- Has the BACID II contributed to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens

- To what extent have the institutions benefitted from the BACID II support

Partners- NALAS

Relevance

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and the Republic of Moldova, NALAS and ReSPA as Programme partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?

- To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for NALAS and its members? Could you please provide examples of these objectives?

- Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?

- Have the external developments affected implementation of the BACID II: how flexible and responsive was the team and partners in addressing the COVID19 pandemic and its implications?

- From your perspective, is there a need to expand the areas of intervention of the BACID II? If yes, what could be other priorities and issues that the Programme could address (complementing on-going activities)?

- To what extent has the Programme considered inclusion of vulnerable groups and gender mainstreaming during its design and implementation? Please provide your opinion and some examples

Effectiveness

- Has the Programme contributed to capacity development of public administration- To what extent have the actors in the Region gained practical know-how in good governance and community services?

- To what extent have local governments benefited through NALAS' Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark? Please explain

- Do you think that BACID II enabled local authorities to enhance access to EU-funds?

- Have there been some unintended results achieved during the implementation of the Programme? Please provide some examples.

Sustainability

- Do you think that the established results will last after the end of the BACID II assistance?

- Has the BACID II contributed to sustainable polices and capacities of beneficiaries and partners in the areas of intervention (governance, EU accession)?

Impact

- To what extent has the BACID ensured benefits to people in the participating countries

- Have there been some changes identified in lives of women and men in the targeted countries

- Has the BACID II contributed to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens

- To what extent have the institutions benefitted from the BACID II support

National Partners

Could you please introduce yourself, your institution and function and relationship with the Programme Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova?

Relevance

- Has the BACID II responded to the needs of your institution?

- Has the Programme been flexible and responsive to your needs? Are there other examples of flexibility? Could you provide some examples?

- From your perspective, is there a need to expand the areas of intervention of the Programme? If yes, what could be other priorities and issues that the Programme could address (complementing on-going activities)?

- How would you assess your partnership with the BACID II? Did it contribute to more effective delivery of results?

- Has the Programme affected gender equality under its outcomes and within the areas of focus?

Effectiveness

Depending on outputs/ areas of cooperation

Output 1:

- Have you been involved/ cooperated through the BACID II Fund?

- What were the main results that you have achieved? –

- To what extent have you gained gained practical know-how in good governance and community services with support from BACID II?

- Have you enhanced capacities in the specific area of intervention? Could you pls explain

- Have there been some unintended results achieved during the implementation of the Programme? Please provide some examples.

Output 2:

- Did you apply for assistance with the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)? Please explain

- Has your organization been capacitated to apply the CAF? Did it help with reform processes within your organization?

- Did you receive assistance from the Quality Management Centre during the CAF process?

- How do you see the role of the Quality Management Centre in the Region in delivering services and supporting use quality management tools for public administration?

- Has the BACID II been effective in creating fora of public administration and different sectors from the Region that improved exchange and cooperation of public administration with all sectors of societies?

- Have there been some unintended results achieved during the implementation of the Programme? Please provide some examples.

Output 3:

- To what extent have you benefited through NALAS' Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark? Please explain

- Do you think that BACID II enabled local authorities to enhance access to EU-funds?

- Have there been some unintended results achieved during the implementation of the Programme? Please provide some examples.

- Has the Programme contributed to capacity development of your organization?

Sustainability

- Do you think that the established results will last after the end of the BACID II assistance?

- Has the BACID II contributed to sustainable polices and capacities of beneficiaries and partners in the areas of intervention (governance, EU accession)?

Impact

- To what extent has the BACID ensured benefits to people in your country?

- Have there been some changes identified in lives of women and men in your country?

- Has the BACID II contributed to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?

Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

Could you please introduce yourself, your institution and function and relationship with the Programme Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova (BACID-II)?

Relevance

- Has the BACID II been aligned with the ADA priorities? Has the Programme responded to the needs of counties and national institutions in the Region?

- From your perspective, is there a need to expand the areas of intervention of the Programme? If yes, what could be other priorities and issues that the Programme could address (complementing on-going activities)?

- To what extent is the approach of the Programme consistent with the EU strategies of the country authorities?

- How would you assess partnerships established during the implementation of the BACID II Programme?

- Did the Programme affect gender equality under its outcomes and within the areas of focus?

Effectiveness

- From your perspective, how effective has the Programme been in delivering results? Could you please provide some examples of the most important achievements?

- To what extent has the Programme's work contributed to changes in the governance systems in participating countries? Please provide some examples like, changes in the legal framework, institutions, social and economic structure?

- Are there areas under which the Programme has been underperforming? What were the reasons?

- What is your opinion about ÖStB, KDZ and BACID Team in terms of efficiency in implementation of the Programme and delivering results? What were the main challenges, from the management point of view, during the implementation?

Sustainability

- Do you think that the established results will last after the end of the Programme?

- How effective was the Programme in coordinating activities with the governments and other development partners in the area of governance area? Has the Programme benefited from its partnerships to improve performance and enhance ownership of processes and results?

- Has the Programme responded to the national capacity development needs in the areas of intervention?

International development partners/ donors

- Could you please introduce yourself, your organization and your role in this organization?

- Are you familiar with the BACID II initiative- If yes, how is your work related to the areas of intervention of this Programme?

- Which specific governance priorities of the country and needs of people your organization is addressing?

- Do you think that BACID II has been appropriately focused on the governance areas? How would you assess your cooperation? How would you assess the capacities of the ÖStB/ KDZ/ ReSPA and NALAS to deliver results?

- Have there been any external factors that affected governance situation and EU accession for the region?

- From your perspective, what areas should be prioritized in the future in the area of governance and EU accession for the Region?

- Was there an effective nation-driven mechanism for donor coordination in place? If not, what other mechanisms for donor coordination were in place?

Annex 5: Online survey instrument

Intro: Dear madam/sir, we are contacting you as a person who was involved in implementation of the second phase of the BACID II programme which was implemented by the Österreichischen Städtebund (ÖStB) together with the KDZ-Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (KDZ) and supported by the Austrian Development Cooperation. The following questions aim at evaluating the overall impact and specific results of the said programme. Therefore, we would kindly ask you to answer the questions frankly and to the best of your knowledge. The survey is anonymous which means that the answers you give cannot be traced back to you. Thank you for your participation!

Distribution:

- public servants and officials (sampling frame[133] – 600 people targeted by the programme),
- civil society organisations (CSOs), science and businesses (sampling frame – 25 people targeted by the programme).

Introductory questions:

1. Which country do you work in? *filter question
   a. Albania
   b. Bosnia and Herzegovina
   c. Kosovo
   d. Moldova
   e. Montenegro
   f. North Macedonia
   g. Serbia

2. Which of the following could best describe your job description? *filter question
   a. Public servant or official
   b. Civil society organization
   c. Academy, university, science
   d. Business

3. How familiar are you with BACID II programme?
   a. Very familiar
   b. Somewhat familiar
   c. Somewhat unfamiliar
   d. Not familiar at all *end of interview

Relevance

4. From your perspective, do you think that BACID II programme had been aligned with the governance related strategic priorities and challenges?

   a. Yes, completely

   b. Yes, somewhat

   c. Mostly not

   d. Not at all

   e. I don't know

5. If not (c or d), can you please elaborate?

6. To what extent do you think are the objectives of the programme still valid for your country?

   a. Yes, completely

   b. Yes, somewhat

---

[133] The overall population of people that could answer the survey if they choose to. We expect much less responses.

      c.   Mostly not

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

7. From your perspective, do you think there's a need to expand the areas of intervention of the BACID II?

      a.   Yes, definitely

      b.   Yes, somewhat

      c.   Mostly not

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

8. If yes (a or b), what could be the other priorities and issues that the Programme could address (complementing on-going activities)?

9. In your experience to what extent has the Programme considered gender mainstreaming during its design and implementation?

      a.   Significantly
      b.   Somewhat
      c.   Mostly not
      d.   Not at all
      e.   I don't know

10. If yes (a or b), please provide some examples.

Effectiveness

11. In your opinion, has the Programme contributed to capacity development of public administration?

      a.   Yes, definitely

      b.   Yes, somewhat

      c.   Mostly not

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

12. If yes (a or b), can you please tell us why do you think so?

13. To what extent have the participants gained practical know-how in good governance and community services?

      a.   To a significant degree

      b.   They somewhat did

      c.   Not much

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

14. Can you please elaborate your answer?

Sustainability

15. Do you think that the established results will last after the end of the BACID II assistance?

      a.   To a significant degree

      b.   They somewhat did

      c.   Not much

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

16. Can you please elaborate on your answer?

Impact

17. To the best of your knowledge to what extent has the BACID ensured benefits to people in your country?

      a.   To a significant degree

      b.   They somewhat did

      c.   Not much

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

18. Can you please elaborate on your answer?

19. Has the BACID II contributed to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?

      a.   To a significant degree

      b.   They somewhat did

      c.   Not much

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

20. Can you please elaborate on your answer?

21. To what extent have the institution/organization you work with benefitted from the BACID II support?

      a.   To a significant degree

      b.   They somewhat did

      c.   Not much

      d.   Not at all

      e.   I don't know

22. Can you please elaborate on your answer?

Thank you for the participation! Your answers will be valuable for the overall evaluation of the programme.

Final Evaluation of the Programme Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova (04/2018 to 03/2021) – BACID II

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Annex 6: Terms of Reference- BACID II Final Evaluation

1 Context and Background

On behalf of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) the Österreichische Städtebund (ÖStB) together with the KDZ-Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (KDZ) carries out the **OEZA-Project 8325-00/2018 Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova.** For the project completion an external final evaluation is required. **This evaluation will apply the ADA Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations.**[1]

Project/Programme Title: Capacity Building in the Countries of the Western Balkan and the Republic of Moldova ("BACID II Programme")

Timeframe: April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2021

Project Budget: 1.060.000 Euro

Countries: Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) and Moldova

Project/Programme Number: OEZA-Contract: 8325-00/2018

The BACID II programme is the second phase of the BACID programme that was implemented in the period December 2014 until January 2018 by the Österreichischen Städtebund (ÖStB) together with the KDZ-Zentrum für Verwaltungsforschung (KDZ) and supported by the Austrian Development Cooperation.

The BACID II programme aims at having impact on overall socio-economic development of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia and Moldova through effective delivery of public services supported by regional cooperation. Following the EU perspective of the region, the programme supports the implementation of the South-East Europe (SEE) 2020 Strategy and its dimension *Governance for Growth* through capacity building of national and local public administration as well as partnership with other sectors for implementation of the European principles of good governance including gender and other cross- cutting issues.

The programme's target groups are public servants and officials (approx. 600), civil society organisations (CSOs), science and businesses (at least 25), 9 local government associations (LGAs) and 2 regional networks as local project partners: the Regional School for Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS). Around 1500 people in total will directly be involved. On the other side, all

---

public institutions and local governments in the region, their decision-makers and employees,

[1]

have been beneficiaries of the programme through dissemination of results through local partners.

- ❑ The programme supported already initiated efforts of different local, national and international stakeholders for the modernisation of public administration in the Region.[2]
- ❑ The programme activities have been carried out in Austria, the countries of the Western Balkan (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and in Moldova.
- ❑ The period of the programme implementation is 3 years, from April 01, 2018 to March 31, 2021.
- ❑ The programme budget is 1.060.000 Euro, out of which 957.500 Euro is funded by ADA and 102.500 Euro by the ÖStB.
- ❑ The programme is implemented by the ÖStB and KDZ together with ReSPA and NALAS as project partners in the Region.

To meet the overall objective the programme shall provide the following outcomes. Actors in the Region have gained practical know-how in good governance and community services by implementing 25-30 know-how transfer actions from Austria to target countries [Programme Pillar 1 – BACID Fund]. Public administrations in the Region have improved the implementation of good governance principles through quality management by both the establishment of a Quality Management Center in the Region and by using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) as quality management tool for public administration. In addition, 3 fora of public administration and different sectors from the Region has led to improved exchange and cooperation of public administration with all sectors of societies [Programme Pillar 2 – Danube Governance Hub].
Finally, local governments have been positioned as viable partners in European Integration through NALAS' support in better service provision through Decentralisation Observatory and Fiscal Decentralisation benchmark, better access to EU-funds and participation in regional initiatives and EU local government networks [Programme Pillar 3 – LOGON 2020+].

The updated **Logframe Matrix of the programme** is enclosed in the **Annex 1** of the ToR, while all information about the programme is available at www.bacid.eu [www.bacid.eu].

2   Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this evaluation of the BACID programme is to contribute to the accountability towards the donor and programme stakeholders, while at the same time lessons learnt will be elaborated and recommendations for possible further actions in the field be given.

The evaluation has the following main objectives:

1. to assess the continued relevance of the programme and identify possible gaps in the theory of change,

2. to provide evidence that will contribute to decision making on possible further engagement in this area.

It is envisaged that the key users of the evaluation's findings and recommendations are: ÖStB, KDZ, ReSPA, NALAS as well as the Austrian Development Agency. They will use it for further

---

[2] The term "Region" is used for the countries of the countries of the Western Balkan and Moldova.

planning of development cooperation in the whole Danube Region and in the fields covered by the programme, i.e. modernization of public administrations at both national and local level and European integration.

7.1   Scope

The evaluation shall cover the period from April 1 2018 until 31 March 2021. All three pillars of the programme as well as all implementation countries are included in the scope of the evaluation:

❏	Implementation of a grant scheme for small know-how transfer actions (BACID Fund) through 3 calls

❏	Support to the modernization of public administration through the establishment of a Regional QM Center, the use of CAF in 6 pilot organizations, the establishment of QM units and cooperation with local governments, CSOs, science and business at 3 Danube governance fora

❏	Support to local governments in the EU integration processes through tools and publications, support to NALAS Task Forces and lobbying at EU level.

The evaluation will take place as home-based engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic no fieldtrips are foreseen, and necessary meetings and data collection will be done by phone or online.

The crosscutting issues gender, social inclusion and environment need to be taken into consideration when developing the evaluation design and approach and when answering the evaluation questions and this reflected in findings, conclusions and recommendations.

3   Evaluation Questions

Relevance

1. To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid for the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North-Macedonia, Serbia) and the Republic of Moldova, NALAS and ReSPA as project partners in the Region and public servants as the main beneficiaries?
2. Is the regional approach of added value for partner countries and organizations?
3. To what extent has the log-frame/theory been relevant and consistent and where, if at all, should it be revised and adapted?

Effectiveness

4. To what extent contributed the programme to capacity development of public administration (at national, regional and local level) for European Integration processes and the improvement of services to citizens?
5. What were the results on institutional level (local, regional and national)?
6. What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the results (outputs and outcomes), including intended/unintended and out of sphere of control? To what extent was the response adequate and what could be improved?

7. To what extent have all programme stakeholders collaborated as foreseen in the project document, i.e. through membership in regional networks and how has this affected effectiveness?
8. Has the work plan been implemented within the allocated time and budget? If not, what issues occurred and why?

Impact

9. How many women, men and people in total have already benefited from the programme (immediate impact)? What exactly has already changed in the lives of women, men (immediate impact)?
10. Which institutions have already benefitted from the project/programme and to which extend? What has changed for whom (immediate impact)?
11. What unintended (positive or negative) impact can be observed?

Sustainability

12. Which elements of the programme design supported sustainability? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?
13. What are the key learnings in terms of achieving sustainability and how can the prospects for sustainability be strengthened?

4 Approach and Methods

This evaluation is expected to employ mixed methods, including analysis of documents, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews by phone or online, focus group discussions online, online-survey (if applicable), others.

Among others, the interviews shall be conducted with representatives of NALAS and ReSPA as the project partners in the Region and since they are also representing individual ministries and local governments from all target countries. Direct beneficiaries shall be involved in both focus group discussions and interviews. Additionally, an online survey with other relevant stakeholders identified by the Evaluator, shall be performed.

All data collected needs to be disaggregated by sex and country.

The Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations developed by the Austrian Development Agency need to be considered throughout the entire evaluation process:

https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Evaluierungs_Leitfaeden/Guidelines_for_Programme_and_Project_Evaluations_ADA_2020.pdf

5   Workplan

A total of 20 working days is currently estimated for this assignment. With the exception of the submission date, **the schedule is tentative** and will be finally agreed with the contractor in the contracting phase.

Action	Responsible	Date
Submission of bid (electronically)	Service provider	January 25,2021, 12:00 CET
Contract signed and documents provided	Contract signed between the client (KDZ) and the contractor (service provider)	calendar week 5
Kick-Off meeting	Meeting between client and contractor	calendar week 5
Desk Study	Contractor	calendar week 6
First interviews	Contractor	first 2 weeks after Kick-Off meeting (tentative)
Submission of draft inception report	Contractor	calendar week 7
Inclusion of comments in inception report	Contractor	calendar week 8
Submission of final inception report	Contractor	3 days after receipt of the feedback
Interviews, survey etc.	Contractor	calendar week 9-11
Submission of final draft report	Contractor	calendar week 11
Presentation of final draft report	Contractor	calendar week 11
Inclusion of feedback in final draft report	Contractor	calendar week 12
Submission of final evaluation report (hard copy and electronic copy) to client	Contractor	March 31, 2021

6   Evaluation Management Arrangements

The evaluation management will be done by KDZ with both the ÖStB and ADA involved in quality assurance according to the standards set by the ADA Guidelines for Project and Programme Evaluations.
[https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Evaluierungs_Leitfae den/Guidelines_for_Programme_and_Project_Evaluations_ADA_2020.pdf]

7 Requirements for the Evaluator(s)

A single evaluator or an evaluation team of two persons can apply for this assignment.

7.2 Key Qualifications of the single evaluator or the evaluation team should be:

- ❑ Relevant academic degree (master level) in political/social/economic studies or similar
- ❑ A minimum of three years' experience and expertise in the field/sector of public administration
- ❑ Team leader (if a team of two – otherwise this applies to single evaluator) has led at least three evaluations in the last five years ideally in the relevant field and solid expertise in evaluation design as well as methods, including online
- ❑ Team member has participated in at least three evaluations ideally in the relevant field
- ❑ Knowledge of the Western Balkans countries and Moldova with focus on topics such as public administration reforms, decentralisation, EU integration processes
- ❑ Experience in project cycle management
- ❑ Experience in preparing and analysing a theory of change
- ❑ Experience and expertise in evaluating cross-cutting issues
- ❑ Experience in social science methods
- ❑ Excellent oral and written English skills as well as oral proficiency in local language(s)
- ❑ Sound MS Office and IT skills

The service provider must not have been involved in the design, implementation or monitoring of this programme.

8 Deliverables

The service provider will submit the following reports:

- ❑ A draft and final inception report (10 pages without annexes),
- ❑ a draft and final evaluation report (about 25-30 pages without annexes), including a draft executive summary (2-3 pages)
- ❑ and the Results-Assessment Form
    [https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Evaluierung_ Templates/Annex9_Results_AssessmentForm_Template.xlsx]

All reports need to be written in English.

The inception and evaluation report, including the executive summary, need to be structured according to the ADA Guidelines for Programme and Project Evaluations (see Annex 5 and 6 in particular). The checklists included in the Guidelines will serve as basis for the approval of the deliverables.

[https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Evaluierung/Evaluierungs_Leitfae den/Guidelines_for_Programme_and_Project_Evaluations_ADA_2020.pdf]

9   Specifications for the Submission of Offers

A **maximum payment of 15,000 Euro** (fifteen thousand) **is planned for this evaluation.** All costs must be covered within the foreseen amount.

The offer needs to include:

- ❑   a technical offer: brief description of understanding of assignment, suggested evaluation design and approach, including sampling and methods, workplan and timeline, division of tasks (if team).
- ❑   a financial offer: including experts fees and other costs
- ❑   CV(s) and references for all team members/single evaluator

The weight given to the assessment of the technical offer is 70 percent and the financial offer 30 percent.

The offer needs to be submitted electronically in English language including the required documents until **Monday, January 25, 2021 12:00 CET** to schantl@kdz.or.at.

7.3   Questions to the ToR:

Alexandra Schantl, Tel. +43 1 8923492-37, Email: schantl@kdz.or.at

10   Annexes:

- ❑   Annex 1: BACID II Logframe Matrix

institut@kdz.or.at · www.kdz.or.at