



European  
Commission



# Evaluation of the EU Support to Research and Innovation for Development in Partner Countries (2007-2013)

Executive Summary  
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## Executive Summary

### Highlights

This evaluation examined the support the European Commission's DG for Development and International Cooperation (DEVCO) provided to Research and Innovation (R&I) in partner countries during the last EU budget period (2007-2013).

During these years DEVCO did not have an explicit policy document to support R&I and yet the study identified programmes worth over EUR 1 billion that included some aspect of R&I work. The evaluation looked at four specific sectors and found that within these sectors there was considerable interest in R&I and that such elements were often included in support programmes under each one.

#### Policy basis

The EU's policy for support to R&I at the international level is set by two Commission Communications from 2008 (588) and 2012 (497). These refer to R&I supporting the EU's external policies by contributing to sustainable development and tackling global challenges.

Moreover DEVCO was active in supporting R&I at different geographic levels (global, regional and national) and with multiple actors, including not just governments and research communities, but also the private sector and civil society. This support also produced results which impacted positively on development processes particularly at the local and sector levels, but very little effort was made to capitalise on research results and make them known and available to wider audiences.

Support to R&I was therefore a major theme of DEVCO work, yet one that is hidden, not recognised and poorly understood. Given the importance of scientific knowledge and technology for economic development and the rapid pace of change and innovation, this high level of funding is not surprising but what is striking is its low profile. A new departure is to be found in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy signed in December 2007, which identifies support to R&I as a cross-cutting tool and one of eight pillars of co-operation.

The evaluation concluded that while DG DEVCO had achieved a lot with its support to R&I at the sector level, the lack of an overall strategy or explicit overall commitment to support R&I undermined the overall impact of its work in this important area for development.

### Background to the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation were to provide an overall judgment on the extent to which the EU development co-operation policy has adopted a strategic approach to support R&I and whether the approach was appropriate to enhance capacity to reach development objectives.

The conclusions were expected to specifically address areas of particular interest, namely: capacity building; the transfer of research results into social or economic process; the appropriateness of instruments and modalities and the approaches used (country versus regional support, through sector programmes or through direct support to R&I).

The scope of the evaluation was set in terms of sectors, instruments and time.

#### Two key parameters for the evaluation

The evaluation's scope was limited to:

##### Four thematic sectors:

1. Food Security, Nutrition and Agriculture (FSNA);
2. Health;
3. Environment and Climate Change (EnvCC);
4. Science, Information Society and Space (SISS).

##### Three instruments used by DEVCO:

- a. The European Development Fund (EDF);
- b. The Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) incl. both geographic and thematic lines;
- c. The European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

The DG for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) also implements activities supporting R&I in developing countries. However, RTD's work was not included in the scope of the evaluation. Yet, it is considered from a contextual point of view, and analysed from a complementarity perspective.

Finally, the evaluation was limited in time to the years 2007-2013, which corresponds to the last EU multi-annual budget period and to that of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF. This is also the period of DG RTD's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP7).

## The methodology of the evaluation

The methodology used was based on the guidelines of the DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit. It consisted of four standard phases: Inception Phase, Desk Phase, Field Phase and Synthesis Phase, the latter including a dissemination seminar.

The evaluation moved systematically through several stages. First, in order to have a clear understanding and overview of the object of evaluation, an inventory and typology of DG DEVCO support to R&I was produced. Based on this the team built the methodological framework. A key tool was the identification and agreement with the Reference Group on six evaluation questions, with judgement criteria and indicators around which the exercise was organised.

On the basis of this framework, data collection took place in two steps: (i) document review and interviews in Europe during the Desk Phase, and (ii) country visits in the Field Phase. A survey questionnaire was also sent to a wider sample of EU Delegations

The field visits were conducted in ten countries<sup>1</sup>, selected across the different regions where the EU works so as to cover emerging economies through to poorer ones. The main objectives of these visits were to fill remaining data gaps and validate or revise the preliminary findings formulated in the desk work. Data was collected by sector and analysed up to the level of judgements for each of the four sectors. Thereafter, synthesis judgements and single responses to the evaluation questions were formulated across sectors combined.

The final Synthesis Phase was devoted to constructing answers to the evaluation questions and formulating conclusions and recommendations on the basis of the evidence.

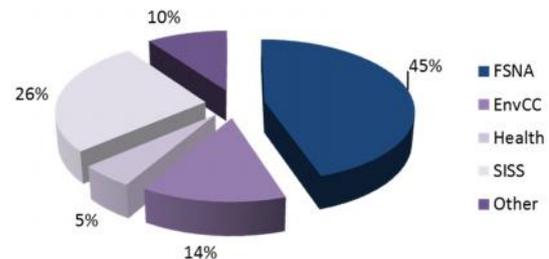
## What did DEVCO fund?

The inventory exercise concluded that DG DEVCO committed a total of roughly

EUR 1.1 billion for support to projects with a Research and Innovation component in partner countries over the evaluation period (contracts signed between 2007 and 2013, or just before but with more than 50% of their disbursements in this period).

The distribution by sector (see figure below) shows that EUR 1.0 billion of the total contracted amount were earmarked for the four thematic sectors chosen for the evaluation. EUR 0.1 billion went to other sectors. Out of the four sectors FSNA received the largest share (EUR 0.5 billion) of total commitments. In addition, DG DEVCO financed an estimated EUR 0.3 billion of academic mobility grants at doctoral and post-doctoral levels and for academic staff.

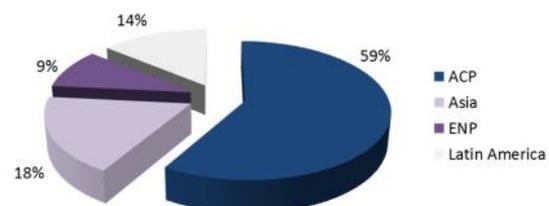
*Sector allocation of commitments (shares of total contracted amount)*



Source: CRIS, Particip analysis

In terms of geographic distribution, half of the funds went on regional level contracts and a third through country level contracts. The remaining 16% of funds were contracted to organisations with global reach. As shown in the figure below, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia received the largest shares of total commitments, through both regional and individual country contracts. South Africa and China led the ranking of funding by country.

*Shares of total commitments (regional plus individual country contracts) per region*



Source: CRIS, Particip analysis

The main funding instruments used were the geographical EDF and the thematic instrument

<sup>1</sup> Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Peru, South Africa, Tunisia, Ukraine and Vietnam.

DCI-Food. Each thematic sector used three to four major funding instruments. EU support was contracted through a range of different actors or channels, with international organisations, the private sector and universities at the top of the list for the thematic sectors.

### Overall assessment

The overall assessment is two-sided. On the one hand DG DEVCO support to R&I was certainly relevant, but the assessment against the other standard evaluation criteria is far more mixed. At one level, there were many individual projects and programmes with worthwhile R&I components that have benefitted from DG DEVCO support. On the other hand these efforts have not achieved a critical mass, nor a substantial overall result that might have left real improvements in the R&I institutional framework across partner countries.

Looking at the OECD DAC evaluation criteria in turn:

- J **Relevance** – DEVCO support to R&I is relevant in different ways at both policy and practical levels. The support is certainly relevant in terms of the achievement of EU development objectives and the MDGs. Innovation in particular is vital for resolving obstacles to sustainable development. For individual projects there was also strong relevance for project objectives. Equally, both the funding itself and the types of support provided were relevant to researchers in countries with minimal resources for research.
- J **Effectiveness** – the assessment of the effectiveness of DEVCO support to R&I is mixed. For individual projects, the support has been largely effective in producing results and achieving objectives or to get partner country researchers involved in international research work. Equally, the support to networks has proved an effective way of sharing knowledge. Overall, however, the support is largely ineffective and suffers from the lack of an overall strategy. Thus, capacity building efforts were not commensurate with the needs; mobility schemes did help individual capac-

ity building, but did not impact on institutional development; the modalities used have not always been practical for individual grantees and the wider dissemination of results has proved limited.

- J **Efficiency** – DG DEVCO support to R&I has often been efficient at the local level in individual projects but overall does not add up to a cost effective way to develop national R&I systems. The lack of an overall strategic approach has clearly undermined the DG DEVCO's ability to guide choices and focus action on the most efficient approaches. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to supporting national R&I or Science and Technology (S&T) strategies and the establishment of institutional frameworks for innovation that would have greatly increased the efficiency of R&I systems at the national level.
- J **Impact** – The impact of DG DEVCO support to R&I has been limited to specific aims. Impact can be seen at the local level in the way many individual R&I efforts fed results into local development processes. The overall impact has, however, been limited in achieving the type of objectives set out in the reconstructed intervention logic, such as: more innovative development solutions to development problems and global challenges, policy makers more attuned to using research results or R&I more adjusted to partner countries' needs.
- J **Sustainability** – DG DEVCO was not able to build sustainable solutions for its partners on funding R&I in the longer term beyond the term of the DG DEVCO funding. Thus, while the projects and programmes funded were useful, they often depended on continuing EU support. The project funding modality used in many cases was problematic for individual researchers or low capacity research organisations, from a sustainability point of view. In most partner countries, there was little or no institutional support for R&I, both in terms of institutional infrastructure and in terms of research funding, resulting in a heavy dependence on external resources.

## Main conclusions

The Conclusions are divided into four clusters relating to (1) policy, (2) operational approach, (3) complementarity with other EU services and (4) the results of research.

### Cluster 1 – Policy and strategic focus

*These four conclusions relate to the successes and limitations of DEVCO's past strategy of support to R&I and on bringing out some of the positive experiences that could be useful elements for a future lesson learning.*

**Conclusion 1:** DG DEVCO's sectoral/pan-African approach to support R&I has been broadly effective within the parameters set for each sector and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. However, this approach limits DEVCO's ability to have an across-the-board impact on the use of R&I as a tool to foster development and economic transformation in a world characterised by increasingly rapid scientific and technological change.

**Conclusion 2:** The lack of a clear overall strategy for DEVCO support to R&I for development means the valuable role it plays is poorly understood and not recognised.

**Conclusion 3:** Many of the projects supported and reviewed do provide examples of good practice (see the series of text boxes in the report) that could be used to build a wider strategy for support for R&I.

**Conclusion 4:** There are also lessons to be learnt from some of the well chosen partnerships DEVCO embarked on to provide support at all the three geographic levels at which it worked – global, regional, national (e.g. respectively: CGIAR, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and the *Programme d'appui au système de recherche et innovation* (PASRI)).

### Cluster 2 – Operational approach

*The second cluster of three conclusions relates to how DEVCO had operationalised its approach to supporting R&I. They cover the type of interventions supported, the use of the different instruments and modalities and the capacity of DG DEVCO to manage this support.*

**Conclusion 5:** The overall logic to DG DEVCO's support to R&I is conceptually solid, but its elements (see text box below) have not always been deployed in a consistent fashion and have rather been used as a menu of elements to draw on.

The main elements of the DEVCO package of support to R&I regularly consisted off:

- a. Support to research networks (e.g. ASARECA);
- b. Capacity development at three levels (individual, institutional and infra-structural) (e.g. JAES/African Union Research Grants);
- c. Careful selection of suitable partners at all three geographic levels – global, regional and national;
- d. Policy dialogue on sector research priorities but also on general S&T policy (e.g. South Africa);
- e. Funding of actual research (e.g. JAES/African Union Research Grants);

**Conclusion 6:** DEVCO used its full range of instruments and modalities to fund R&I programmes yet with little apparent strategic thought on how these might affect the conduct of research. R&I often operates in longer cycles than are possible with DEVCO procedures and sustainability is therefore a serious issue. The more intensive use of budget support (e.g. case of South Africa) may need to be considered in appropriate cases.

**Conclusion 7:** DEVCO capacity dedicated to R&I, particularly in EU Delegations, has been inadequate for a sector so important for economic development. At headquarters capacity was limited though more adequate. Yet it was organised mostly on a sectoral basis, resulting in little central capacity to guide overall strategic thinking and implementation.

### Cluster 3 – Complementarity

*The third cluster related to DEVCO's collaboration with other Commission services and EU institutions. The question of complementarity with the international work of DG RTD was a key consideration for the evaluation. Policy coherence for development (PCD) was a second important issue.*

**Conclusion 8:** The division of labour between DGs DEVCO and RTD resulted in a loose *modus vivendi* which generally operates smoothly. More could have been done to improve understanding, coordinate and ultimately develop a joint strategic approach. In a few cases, where both DGs invested in capacity, particularly in

EU Delegations, a higher level of co-operation and more systematic outcomes were achieved.

**Conclusion 9:** PCD is clearly understood in both DGs DEVCO and RTD and steps have been taken regularly to promote PCD by the different EU actors involved in support to R&I. RTD officials in particular are well aware of the importance of PCD and make a concerted effort to address coherence issues including by engaging with DEVCO's PCD monitoring process.

#### **Cluster 4 - Results**

*The final set of conclusions relate to the results of the R&I supported by DEVCO. They provide an assessment of the degree of innovation and social uptake that was found and the efforts made to support capitalisation of results. The last conclusion is on the overall visibility of DEVCO's support to R&I.*

**Conclusion 10:** R&I efforts supported by DG DEVCO have contributed to development outcomes (e.g. the International Potato Centre (CIP)) but largely in an ad-hoc manner that did not promote systematic and sustainable progress neither on wider development processes nor on creating conducive conditions for R&I. The lack of a core policy commitment to R&I has weakened uptake and sustainability.

**Conclusion 11:** Innovation and societal uptake of R&I results from DEVCO support have been scarce due to inadequate national institutional frameworks for innovation. While recognising the importance of supporting learning and dissemination at the individual programme or even sector level, within the period examined DEVCO has rarely felt able to deploy support to national innovation systems (e.g. PASRI).

**Conclusion 12:** R&I results have not been capitalised on and inadequate support has been provided for the systematisation and dissemination of results (e.g. IssAndes). Research results are therefore by and large only used in the programmes where they have been developed or in the immediate networks of the researchers involved rather than shared further afield.

**Conclusion 13:** DEVCO is not perceived as an agent for R&I for development, and little

effort has been made to create such an image for improved visibility. This would seem largely due to a lack of a clear policy commitment and framework to support R&I for development.

### **Main recommendations**

Corresponding to the organisation of the Conclusions into four clusters the same format is used for the Recommendations.

#### **Cluster 1 – Policy and strategic focus**

*The evaluation concluded that while DG DEVCO had achieved a lot with its support to R&I at sector level, it should be more explicit about its commitment to support R&I and develop a clear overall strategy for this work. Given the importance of R&I for economic transformation and the very real danger of developing countries being left behind by the rapid pace of technological change and innovation DEVCO should have a clear policy in this area.*

#### **Recommendation 1: Formulate a strategic approach to R&I with a focus on establishing institutional frameworks.**

DG DEVCO should formulate its own R&I for development policy within the overall EU policy on international co-operation in R&I and better implement a division of labour with DG RTD. This should be clearly set in the context of the overall contribution of R&I to sustainable development and the achievement of the new UN Global Goals.

#### **Recommendation 2: At national level, develop a strategy for R&I that adapts the support provided to the needs and level of development of partner countries**

DEVCO should develop a strategy for R&I that differentiates between partner countries at various stages of development and provides adapted support, based on the examples of positive experiences with supported projects reviewed in this evaluation.

#### **Cluster 2 – Operational approach**

*DEVCO's experience with funding R&I throws up a good many ideas and good practices that can be used to formulate a solid approach.*

**Recommendation 3: DG DEVCO support should continue to focus on seven principal elements.**

These include five common elements that emerge from much of DEVCO's support to R&I in the past and two elements that have not been so prominent, but experience shows are important: (i) Support to networks, (ii) capacity development, (iii) careful selection of partner institutions, (iv) policy dialogue, (v) actual funding of research for development, (vi) capitalisation of results and (vii) the establishment and strengthening of national innovation systems.

**Recommendation 4: Employ instruments and modalities suited to the needs of R&I.**

DG DEVCO should recognise that R&I needs to be built up over the longer term and should explicitly address sustainability issues. It should examine the mix of instruments and modalities it uses and review them to design approaches adapted to the long time frames in scientific research, in the research-to-uptake pipeline, and in R&I institution strengthening.

**Recommendation 5: Ensure adequate human resource capacities for support to R&I.**

DG DEVCO's commitment to R&I for development will mean little if there are no improvements in staff capacity. At Headquarters, greater involvement will require more resources. In the field, R&I capacity should also be strengthened if the EU wants to remain a relevant partner in this area.

**Cluster 3 – Complementarity**

*DG DEVCO is already collaborating with DG RTD but this could be taken further.*

**Recommendation 6: Consolidate and implement an explicit division of labour with DG RTD.**

DGs DEVCO and RTD should agree a clearer division of labour in their respective roles in international co-operation for R&I and ensure it is followed through at all levels. Cooperation should be stepped up on the design of framework programme calls so they meet developing country needs, on the coordination of staffing in EUDs and on the capitalisation of research results ideally using RTD's CORDIS database.

**Recommendation 7: Maintain the political and practical commitment to promoting Policy Coherence for Development.**

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) on R&I for development should continue to be a major concern for DG RTD and other EU services and institutions supporting R&I directly or indirectly. This is particularly important in the new context of the UN Global Goals and the value they attach to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development as a vital component of global partnership.

**Cluster 4 – Results**

*DEVCO should do more to capitalise on research results. Supporting interested partner countries to develop national S&T policies and establish national innovation systems is a key way to encouraging uptake and engagement between researchers and the private sector.*

**Recommendation 8: Take more deliberate and systematic steps to foster results.**

DG DEVCO should focus and coordinate its support to R&I more carefully so as to create critical mass within a national or regional context. A clear approach to support national and regional R&I frameworks and the establishment of national innovation systems will assist this focus. Support for R&I inside specific sectors should continue to play a role, but wherever possible this should be linked to the national and/or regional R&I policy context.

**Recommendation 9: Develop a clear strategy for the transfer of results.**

Specifically targeting the transfer and dissemination of results and ensuring they are systematically taken up by EU Delegations and project implementers is essential.

**Recommendation 10: Provide explicit support to the capitalisation of results.**

DG DEVCO should develop and implement a strategy for the systematisation or 'capitalisation' of results of R&I. This could be done in conjunction with DG RTD and would be built around the broader institutional development that DG DEVCO already supports (e.g. high-speed internet networks) and further support to institutional frameworks for innovation.

**Recommendation 11: Build a visibility strategy on a stated commitment to R&I.**

DG DEVCO should publically state the important role it sees for R&I in the achievement of EU development objectives and the UN Global Goals, as well as the role it sees itself as playing in promoting R&I for development. Such a clear statement will then also provide a foundation on which to build a communication and visibility strategy.