

FOLLOW-UP ON THE LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD INSTRUMENT (ENI 2014- mid-2016)

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up
Recommendation 1 a: The EU should consider developing further guidance on ENI assistance to reinforce coherence and promote a more balanced political/policy dialogue with partner countries. EU goals and ENI potential would gain from being better understood by partners, and thereby also contribute to enhanced ownership. a) EU exchanges with partner countries would be more effective if fully coherent at all levels (e.g. consistent messages from HQ, EUDs and EU representatives visiting partner countries). b) The support to partners' (national authorities and civil society) capacity to contribute to policy dialogue could be reinforced and increased in scope. It would encourage a broader ownership and enhance the visibility of the will of the EU to develop a special relationship (transparent, inclusive and aligned on national priorities). c) The level of resources available to CoTEs could be increased to fit their ToR. Sector (line DGs) or thematic guidance could be made available to NEAR staff and, beyond, to partner countries. Accordingly, on-line helpdesk or comparable support could be made accessible to EUD staff. Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, DG ECFIN	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR partially accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) There are already a lot of institutional mechanisms in place that ensure joint and consistent messaging among the different services of the Commission. Also, DG NEAR has already made a lot of efforts in allocating resources to CoTEs and other thematic cells. A recent review of terms of reference and staffing level by DG NEAR has concluded that the current set up was adequate given the constraints on the overall level of resources and that additional resources should be allocated first to emerging country priorities within the DG. The recently adopted guidelines for quality support of ENI and IPA II programmes already take into account the need to incorporate the horizontal themes into programming, specify the role of CoTEs and other actors. ii) actions to be undertaken DG NEAR to prepare a policy note on how to better support partners' capacity to policy dialogue.	Follow-up Comments (by who and by when)

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Recommendation 1b: The quest for complementarity between ENI and relevant thematic EFIs, MFA, and ECHO could be scaled-up to ensure actions mutually reinforce each other, comprehensively cover EU priorities, and reflect medium and long term planning horizons. a) Similarly to country level risk assessments – or within their framework – EFIs’ complementarity and operational synergies could be assessed regularly. The same could apply to DG ECFIN and ECHO, preferably jointly with the EFIs. b) If drafted annually and detailing concrete expected results, an internal joint action plan would enhance mutual reinforcement between EFIs. The plan could additionally be reported on in EAMRs and evaluated. Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, DG ECFIN	This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR partially accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) There are already a lot of institutional mechanism that ensure coordination and coherence among services of the Commission. ii) actions to be undertaken DG NEAR to request Delegations, in their annual management plans and EAMR to outline how the various EFIs will be mobilised. DG NEAR to work with ECFIN on improving coordination in designing, negotiating and implementing Macro financial and budget support interventions in the same countries. DG NEAR to further work with EEAS and specifically FPI on strengthening synergies between ENI and IcSP.	
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Recommendation 2:	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected	Follow-up
ENI should continue its focus on differentiation based on countries' needs and situation, but also by further differentiating the support provided to the EU's closest neighbours from assistance to other, more distant, parts of the world. a) One way could be to design more Neighbourhood specific assistance strategies, based on updated theories of change that fully take into account and link stabilisation, conflict prevention and long term development. b) This could be associated with strengthening scenario building/forecasting capacities, preferably in close cooperation with EU MS. Main implementation responsibility: EEAS and DG NEAR (for the programming stages)	This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR partly accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) Implementation of assistance on the basis of the principle of differentiation is at the heart of the 2015 revised ENP and is already put into practice. Also, there are themes that are common in all regions of EU interventions, such as fighting climate change, inclusiveness of economic and social development, support to fundamental values, etc....and they should not necessarily be discarded. In this sense, there are limits to how far differentiation can be pushed. The COM and the EEAS have also already developed a number of risk analysis tools that can inform the programming process, although they are not covering all countries on a systematic basis. ii) actions to be undertaken EC to work with the EEAS to develop the use of existing risk analysis and scenario building tools.	Comments (by who and by when)

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Recommendation 3:	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected	Follow-up
By reinforcing their partners' capacity (both governments and CSOs) to contribute to policy dialogues, ENI could improve its ability to identify country priorities and, more importantly, population needs. a) Inclusive dialogue with civil society implies prior changes in the enabling environment in partner countries. ENI should continue to pave the way for this change in political and administrative culture by increasing time and resources for dialogue and designing dedicated programmes. b) Adjusting the timeline of consultations and the sharing of prior information, as required by the Regulation, would be instrumental to improve the analysis of needs extended to conflict sensitivity. Also see Recommendation 1a. Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR	This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) Consultation and support of civil society organisation in order to make them stronger actors in the policy dialogue with us and with the national authorities already represents a key element of EU support in the region. ii) actions to be undertaken Under the civil society facility, DG NEAR will consider calls for proposals or other means to support the capacity of CSOs in partner countries to participate in policy dialogue with the EU and the national authorities. DG NEAR will ensure that proper reporting in the context of the EAMR is prepared by EUD/O on consultation of CSO in the context of programming of financial assistance.	Comments (by who and by when)

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Recommendation 4:	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected	Follow-up
The incentive-based approach could be developed to reflect a set of financial incentives that goes further than the umbrella programmes and the ranges, with revised criteria for allocation (prioritising achievements in conflict prevention and stabilisation). Financial incentives foreseen under the ENI regulation could be more strongly and directly linked to the non-financial incentives to provide further and more sustainable momentum for reform. a) The amount available to the principle of ‘more for more’ would gain from being increased and likely also gain from targets and criteria being diversified. b) In this regard, the umbrella programmes’ allocation process – and the political dialogue around it – could become more transparent and depart from the sole focus on democracy and human rights (i.e. also considering sustainable stabilisation, resilience, crisis prevention). Main implementation responsibility: EEAS and DG NEAR	This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR rejects this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) In the context of the EU efforts at promoting deep and sustainable democracy (one of the objectives of the ENI), the incentive-based approach has been partly successful. Indeed, first of all, it is already the case that those partners most keen to establish a close relation with the EU are offered more developed incentives (e.g. DCFTA for three partners in the East and two in the South, access to EU programmes, visa facilitation or liberalisation agreements in place, etc...). Second, the existing mechanism has been effective in supporting partners that had committed to reforms, most notably Ukraine, Tunisia, Morocco and Georgia. Combined with other flexibility features, this has allowed for example to double the annual allocation to Tunisia at a critical moment to support the transition of the country and to substantially increase the support to Ukraine political and economic reforms after the invasion of Crimea and Eastern part of the country. Thirdly, the existing provisions of the incentives based approach (through the umbrella funds linked to democratic reforms and the ranges mechanism linked to a broader set of reforms) ensure that EU interests and values are proportionally taken into consideration in the allocation mechanism. Removing the links between the Umbrella funds and progress on democratic reforms would send a wrong signal about the importance to EU fundamental values. Increasing the amounts dedicated to the incentives based mechanism, as suggested by the evaluators, would reduce the amount allocated to the programmed bilateral programmes and hence the predictability of the EU support to reforms ii) actions to be undertaken	Comments (by who and by when)

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Recommendation 5 a: The legislative authority could consider increasing the allocation of funds to avoid the marginalisation of crisis prevention¹ and to increase flexibility to respond to crises in the Neighbourhood. All the while without compromising directly needed ENI long-term assistance for treating root causes of instability and conflicts. a) Flexibility of financial and other resource allocation (staff, procedures) is key for responding to and preventing crises. b) The overall envelope allocated to the Neighbourhood for the 2017-2020 period could be increased to adjust to the deepening of instability and the induced risks for EU vital interests; c) The possibility to pool resources between EFIs (ENI, IcSP and other thematic EFIs where relevant) according to short and medium term challenges could be facilitated. Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR, EEAS, and Legislative authority	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) As demonstrated by the evaluation, financial resources for the ENI had to be systematically reinforced since 2014 in the face of increasing needs in both the eastern and southern neighbourhood. The Commission has already introduced new flexibility elements as part of the MFF review, notably the idea of a 10% flexibility cushion. ii) actions to be undertaken DG NEAR to argue for increasing resources for the ENI and the continuation of a separate, dedicated external financing instrument for the Neighbourhood regions. DG NEAR to propose further simplification measures and flexibility features for the next ENI instrument.	Follow-up Comments (by who and by when)
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¹Unless the budget line 21 03 01 03 (Mediterranean countries – Confidence building, security and the prevention and settlement of conflicts) can be increased specifically.

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Recommendation 5b: The EU could devise crisis prevention strategies targeted at the Neighbourhood as a specific dimension of the ENI and further develop existing operational synergies (tighter coordination, pooling of resources and procedures) with IcSP. a) In an unstable Neighbourhood, with EU vital interests at stake in any tense situation or crisis, conflict prevention would gain from being granted further priority. b) The share of non-programmed measures could be increased in ENI to enhance the EU's capacity to respond to crises and to prevent them. EU vital interests could supersede thematic conditionalities in times of crisis; c) Temporary project/mission structures similar to SGUA could be used to face crisis situations at country and regional levels, backed by special measures. This option should remain limited to major crises to avoid the proliferation of both Support Groups and Special Measures; d) Using tools such as political economy analyses during programming and conflict sensitivity assessments at all stages, ENI could strengthen its understanding and anticipation capacity of tense situations and conflicts. Conflict/risk analyses could be undertaken jointly by EEAS and NEAR to allow the ENI programmes to better capture the complexity of crisis prevention; e) Crisis prevention and institutional building for crisis management could be scaled-up among ENI programmes for the 2017-2020 period, channelling ENI inputs through own programmed/non-programmed measures and through the IcSP (or other new instruments to come on security and migration) when urgent actions are required. f) Actions aiming at support to cultural relations/cooperation across borders or the promotion of the independence and freedom of the media could indirectly improve respect for human rights, Rule of Law, good governance and stability in general. Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR partially accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) The Commission services do not consider that there is a need to set a specific component on crisis prevention under the ENI. The ENI provides already enough flexibility to ensure that actions can be targeted on crisis prevention. The benefits of creating dedicated structures with sector experts such as SGUA (which in the case of Ukraine is working very well) and its potential for possible replication needs to be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis. Rather, increasing flexibility and reallocation of financial resources should be pursued further, as well as further developing synergies with the instrument contributing to peace and stability which works on crisis prevention including in the neighbourhood region. Geopolitical analysis is also more of the competence of the EEAS than that of the Commission; the EEAS is already conducting a number of geopolitical and risk analysis assessments, but not on a systematic and regular basis. ii) actions to be undertaken DG NEAR will engage with the EEAS to get a better access to their geo-political and risk analysis assessments.	
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Recommendation 6:	i) Accepted/ Partially accepted/Rejected	Follow-up
Joint assessment and programming should continue to be rolled-out among partner countries for the 2017-2020 period. a) ENI should take into account the constraints of the MS and other stakeholders. Further awareness should be raised among all stakeholders about the influence they could exert during the programming process, hence the importance of their participation in a joint undertaking. b) Consultation processes with EU MS at HQ and at country-level should be further developed allowing for meaningful involvement of both parties. Here, EU leadership should be geared towards an enabling role rather than following own internal deadlines; c) Blending could be increased to allow for further financial leverage of EU support as a key contribution for achieving long-term development goals, notably private sector development; d) Communication materials should be drafted for EU MS agencies and IFIs implementing its programmes for policy dialogue and visibility of EU strategic intent. Main implementation responsibility: DG NEAR	This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission). DG NEAR partially accepts this recommendation. Comments (why accepted/rejected) Local coordination with EU Member States is already actively pursued by the Commission. There will be also an increase of blending operations through the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF), the External Investment Plan (EIP) and the Economic Resilience Initiative (for the southern neighbourhood). Joint Programming is already actively promoted by the EU and good experiences start materialising. Emphasis is now increasingly given to the proper implementation of the External Investment Plan as a way to enhance the business environment and the infrastructures at country level while leveraging additional resources. ii) actions to be undertaken DG NEAR will allocate additional resources to ensure the early start of implementation of the external investment plan which will leverage resources from the private sector. DG NEAR will further improve its strategic communication and visibility actions in the entire neighbourhood.	Comments (by who and by when)