

EU member states operational development structures and systems

STUDY ON INCLUSIVENESS

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I. INTRODUCTION

Rationale

In recent years, the Practitioners Network (PN) has put the issue of inclusiveness as a priority, both inside the network and externally. Inclusiveness can (i) increase the representativeness of the PN, (ii) increase experience and knowledge and strengthened capacities to implement European solutions, and (iii) enhance a sense of European identity. The PN has taken various steps to reach out to EU member states that do not have development agencies and involving them in relevant activities. In accordance with its mandate to enable exchange of information and experiences among its members, the PN is also in the process of identifying needs and areas of interest for further peer exchange between European practitioners.

Against this background, the PN has commissioned a *study on EU Member States' operational development structures and systems* (study on inclusiveness) in order to thoroughly identify the current functioning, organisation and priorities of all member states in the field of development aid, and the possible ways to enhance cooperation and outreach.

The study was undertaken by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). It consists of

1. a mapping of the operational development structures and systems of all EU member states, and,
2. a needs assessment for peer exchange and knowledge sharing among interested European development practitioners.

The objective of the study is to contribute to strengthening knowledge, experience and best practice sharing, and/or other sharing modalities amongst EU Member States and their operational entities.

Methodological approach

In order to carry out the study, the team put in place a methodology based on the collection and analysis of data from publicly available sources and national documents, as well as written questionnaires and interviews with EU Member States' focal points. The focal points were often chosen among staff of State ministries (ministry of foreign affairs or development ministry) and/or development agencies based in headquarters. The analysis was carried out at Headquarters level and didn't entail any field mission or country case study.

There are inherent limitations to this exercise and the methodology employed. First, the study is based on publicly available sources and national documentation which differ greatly from one Member States to the next. Second, the study was conducted under a tight timeline, which limited the scope and possibility for repeated and in-depth interactions with resource persons. Third, the availability and responsiveness of Member States' focal points has generally been very positive, but for some Member this has proven more challenging. Moreover, the study relies on the assumption that respondents gave a reasonably representative overview of their Member State's / organisation's structures and systems and of the needs of their organisations. The data and information in the study is not exhaustive. Finally, the study represents a snapshot at one point in time that may rapidly go out of date, notably because of ongoing or future reforms in EU Member States and evolving needs of the organisations.

II. MAPPING OF EU MEMBER STATES OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

1. Approach and content of the mapping

The mapping of the existing situation of EU development structures is a key component of the study on inclusiveness. It was considered an indispensable first step in order to thoroughly identify the current functioning, organisation and priorities of all Member States in the field of development aid, and the possible ways to enhance cooperation and outreach.

The mapping presents and compares the key characteristics of EU Member States' operational development cooperation structures and systems. It looks in particular at the strategies and policy processes, institutional and operational structures, key actors and main instruments for development cooperation in all EU Member States.

The mapping is presented in the form of:

- **28 individual country fiches**¹, which provide a standard overview of the operational development structures and systems for each Member State.
- **a comparative analysis**² presented in the form of grids and tables highlighting at a glance the main commonalities and differences between the member states' operational structures.

The mapping provides a useful snapshot at a given moment in time. Given the rapidly changing nature of development and international cooperation, the diversity of situations in Member States, and ongoing or future institutional reforms in Member States, the information contained in the fiches is subject to change over time. The mapping should therefore be read with the caveat that the information it contains might become obsolete in a relatively short to medium term. In order to remain relevant, the mapping will need to be updated regularly.

2. Key findings of the mapping

The mapping revealed a considerable diversity in the types, scale and scope of development cooperation structures across EU Member States.

2.1. Two main types of organisational structures for ODA management

Overall, EU Member States can be grouped in 4 different categories, based on the OECD-DAC classification of operational structures for aid management³:

¹ The country fiches can be found in Volume 2 of this study.

² The comparative analysis tables are in excel sheets and in electronic format

³ OECD (2009), Managing Aid: Practices of DAC Member Countries, Better Aid, OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁴ This typology of needs and interest areas was presented and further elaborated during the 30 April feedback

² The comparative analysis tables are in excel sheets and in electronic format

³ OECD (2009), Managing Aid: Practices of DAC Member Countries, Better Aid, OECD Publishing, Paris.

	Development cooperation fully integrated within the MFA	Development cooperation directorate / agency has lead role within the MFA and is responsible for policy and implementation	Ministry with overall responsibility for policy and separate dedicated implementing or financing entity	Ministry other than MFA responsible for both policy and implementation
EU Member States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denmark 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bulgaria • Croatia • Cyprus • Estonia • Finland • Greece • Hungary • Ireland • Latvia • Malta • Poland • Slovenia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austria • Belgium • Czech Republic • France • Germany • Italy • Lithuania • Luxembourg • Netherlands • Portugal • Romania • Slovakia • Spain • Sweden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Kingdom

Twelve Member States have a development cooperation department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, usually in charge of the overall coordination of ODA and funding activities that are then implemented by other actors (multilateral organisations, NGOs, etc).

One Member State has development fully integrated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

2.2. Majority of Member States have dedicated operational entities in charge of funding or implementing development cooperation

Fifteen Member States (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) have one or more **dedicated operational entities** (development agencies or development finance institutions (DFIs)) in charge of funding and/or implementing development cooperation activities. There are however important differences in terms of mandate, size and capacities of these organisations.

Seven Member States (Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia) are considering **setting up a development agency or specialised entity** such as a development finance institution.

Member States with operational entities that have a public mandate to implement development cooperation:

1. Austria ([Austrian Development Agency](#))
2. Belgium ([Enabel](#))
3. Czech Republic ([Czech Aid](#))

4. France ([Agence Française de Développement](#), [Expertise France](#))
5. Germany ([GIZ](#))
6. Italy ([Italian agency for development cooperation](#))
7. Lithuania ([Central project Management Agency](#))
8. Luxembourg ([LuxDev](#))
9. Netherlands ([SNV](#))
10. Portugal ([Camões I.P.](#))
11. Romania ([RoAid](#))
12. Slovakia ([Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation](#))
13. Spain ([Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation](#), [Fundación Internacional Y Para Iberoamérica De Admón Y Políticas Públicas](#))
14. Sweden ([Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#) as the main development agency, but also [Folke Bernadotte Academy](#) and [Swedish Institute](#))
15. UK ([British Council](#), [Northern Ireland Cooperation Overseas](#))

Twelve Member States have a Development Finance Institution (DFI):

1. Austria ([Austrian Development Bank](#))
2. Belgium ([Belgian Investment Company for Developing Countries](#))
3. Denmark ([Investment Fund for Developing Countries](#))
4. Finland ([Finnfund](#))
5. France ([AFD](#) and [Proparco](#))
6. Germany ([KfW development bank](#) and [DEG](#))
7. Italy ([Cassa Depositi e Prestiti](#))
8. Netherlands ([FMO](#))
9. Portugal ([SOFID](#))
10. Spain ([COFIDES](#))
11. Sweden ([Swedfund](#))
12. UK ([CDC](#))

Seven Member States are considering to set up an agency and/or a development finance institution (or transforming an existing institution into a development bank).

1. Hungary (agency or other entity)
2. Croatia (agency and DFI)
3. Latvia (agency)
4. Poland (agency)
5. Estonia (agency)
6. Czech Republic (DFI)
7. Slovenia (DFI)

Table 1 State of play of EU Member States' operational development structures

Member States	Implementing entity or agency	DFI	Considering to set up an agency or DFI
Austria	x	x	
Belgium	x	x	

Bulgaria			
Croatia			x
Cyprus			
Czech Republic	x		x
Denmark		x	
Estonia			x
Finland		x	
France	x	x	
Germany	x	x	
Greece			
Hungary			x
Ireland			
Italy	x	x	
Latvia			x
Lithuania	x		
Luxembourg	x		
Malta			
Netherlands	x	x	
Poland			x

Portugal	x	x	
Romania	x		
Slovakia	x		
Slovenia			x
Spain	x	x	
Sweden	x	x	
UK	x	x	

2.3. Development cooperation priorities and modalities

Overall, operational structures have the **same strategic thematic and geographic priorities** as their supervisory body (usually the MFA). In some cases, these operational structures have formulated more specific and/or distinct priorities (see comparative analysis tables).

The mapping also reveals a diverse set of **financial and non-financial instruments** used by Member States, ranging from grants, loans to technical assistance. Beyond financial modalities, several Member States have also developed considerable expertise in non-financial means of implementation, provision of public sector expertise and knowledge-sharing, including through twinning, TAIEX and triangular cooperation.

- Scholarships: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
- Twinning: Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, UK
- TAIEX: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, UK

Despite their diversity, Member States and their implementing organisations face similar challenges when it comes to implementing development cooperation. This appeared clearly in the needs assessment which identified key areas of interest as well as opportunities for peer exchange among European practitioners.

III. NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEER EXCHANGE

1. Approach and structure of the needs assessment

The needs assessment is an integral part and one key deliverable of the wider study on inclusiveness. It builds on and should be read in conjunction with the mapping of Member States' operational development structures and systems.

The needs assessment aims at identifying needs and areas of interest as well as potential opportunities for peer-to-peer exchange amongst European development practitioners. In doing so, it identifies topics and activities that a network like the PN and its members could put in place in terms of outreach and inclusiveness.

This needs assessment consolidates and compiles the input provided by the Member States themselves in three instances between March and May 2019:

1. in the **written questionnaires** sent to all Member States' focal points, which included six questions on areas of interest for peer exchange (highlighting particular needs as well as potential supply of expertise), of which 23 were returned completed;
2. through the semi-structured **interviews** carried out orally with 22 Member States' focal points, which also included several questions on the needs and interests as well as on the experience of engagement in peer-to-peer exchange activities;
3. during the **feedback meeting** organised on 30 April 2019 in Brussels with over 40 participants from eighteen EU Member States' Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) and development agencies, which provided an opportunity to validate the initial findings and to prioritise the needs and to identify some opportunities for peer exchange and collaboration.

The evidence presented does not pretend to offer an exhaustive list of topics or modalities for peer exchange nor does it constitute an official appraisal of the needs of Member States and/or of their operational entities. Rather, it aims at presenting the range of issues in which there is a high level and recurrent interest for further peer exchange, as expressed by the representatives of EU Member States / operational entities consulted at a given moment in time.

While Member States have very different structures and follow different approaches in implementing development cooperation, PN members and non-members have raised similar issues although their specific needs usually differ. A vast majority of them expressed an interest in peer exchange and collaboration aimed at: *learning from each other* and *working better together*.

Learning from each other refers mainly to the sharing of experience, knowledge & expertise on issues and topics relating to sectoral and geographical approaches, as well as national development cooperation systems and structures of Member States.

Working better together refers to the need to enhance collaboration and further explore joint cooperation activities with peer organisations, as well as to engage in EU funded projects.

Based on the feedback and input provided by the Member States' focal points, this report identifies six main areas of interest and topics for possible peer exchange among practitioners, classified as follows:

Box 1 Typology of needs⁴

The first category of needs and interests relates to **learning from each other**, notably on the following issues:

- 1) thematic and geographic areas of interest, as a way to prepare possible joint interventions
- 2) institutional set-up and functioning of operational entities
- 3) internal project and operations management
- 4) financing instruments and implementing modalities

The second category relates to needs and interests with a view to **working better together**, notably through:

- 5) joint development cooperation activities in the field
- 6) involvement in EU development cooperation processes and EU financing instruments.

These two categories are not watertight and there are inevitably certain overlaps between them. For instance, peer exchange on some issues are relevant both in terms of learning from each other and working better together. The assumption is that *learning from each other* will help Member States set up or adjust their respective national institutional and operational structures and systems, and that this will then also help them and their agencies to explore opportunities to *work better together*.

Section 2 of the report focuses on the various areas of interest put forward by the Member States where there was an expressed need for peer exchange to **learn from each other** in order to strengthen or upgrade their own development systems and structures. Section 3 focuses on the needs and opportunities to **work better together** and engage more in joint collaboration. Section 4 looks at various types of **activities for peer exchange** that could be carried out or promoted by the Practitioners Network, and by other relevant actors (such as the Member States' institutions bilaterally, or by the EU institutions). We conclude by making a number of **critical observations** on the need to prioritise needs and assess realistically the incentives and available resources for engaging in peer exchange, which will also determine the extent to which the needs expressed could realistically be addressed.

2. Learning from each other

The study reveals a strong interest in learning from each other and sharing knowledge and experience on a number of issues ranging from thematic and geographic areas of intervention to the internal structures and systems for development and international cooperation. Peer exchange and collaboration on all these issues could allow Member States to strengthen or upgrade their own development systems and structures.

Respondents have put forward a number of **thematic and geographic areas** (2.1) of interest for peer exchange as a way to prepare possible joint interventions. There is also a widespread interest to better understand the diversity of the **institutional set-up and functioning of operational entities** (2.2), **internal project and operations management** (2.3), as well as **implementing modalities and instruments** (2.4).

2.1. Thematic and geographic areas of interest for peer exchange

Many respondents, both from PN members and non-members, mentioned thematic issues and/or geographical areas in which their organisations are keen to gain knowledge, or in which they have developed an expertise that they are willing to share with others.

⁴ This typology of needs and interest areas was presented and further elaborated during the 30 April feedback meeting.

Below are the lists of sectors and regions in which there is either an expressed interest to gain or a willingness to share knowledge and expertise. On this basis, opportunities for peer exchange can be sought by matching supply and demand of expertise.

The single most cited thematic issue, mentioned by PN members and non-members, is **private sector engagement**. This was followed by **gender equality, education & employment, democracy, governance & rule of law**, and other themes. Other issues might appear in the future.

Table 2 Main sectors of interest for peer exchange

Sectors	Number of mentions	Member States having explicitly stated their willingness to share expertise⁵	Member States for which this is a priority sector in their development policy⁶
Private sector engagement	<i>mentioned by 16 Member States</i> PN members: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain Non-members: Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Malta, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia	PN members: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, United Kingdom Non-members: Latvia, Slovenia	PN members: Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal Non-members: Latvia, Poland
Fragility and crisis management, LRRD, peace and security	<i>mentioned by 12 Member States</i> PN members: Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden Non-members: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Romania	PN members: Belgium, France, Luxembourg, UK Non-members: Poland, Romania	PN members: Austria, Denmark, France, Portugal, Sweden, UK Non-members: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Romania
Gender equality, mainstreaming, sexual and reproductive health and	<i>mentioned by 7 Member States</i> PN members: Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg,	PN members: Belgium, Sweden, United Kingdom	PN members: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain,

⁵ The Member States mentioned in this column are those which have explicitly stated (in the questionnaire and/or in the interview) that they are willing to share expertise in certain sectors. Other Member States might also be willing but have not explicitly stated it. Likewise, other sectors and issues might appear in the future.

⁶ This column refers to the priority sectors specifically identified in the development strategies of EU Member States. For the sake of consistency, these sectors refer only to the governmental strategies and policies.

rights (SRHR)	Sweden, Slovakia, United Kingdom Non-members: Poland		Sweden Non-members: Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Slovenia
Education, vocational education and training (VET), employment	<i>mentioned by 7 Member States</i> PN members: Belgium, Germany, Portugal Non-members: Cyprus, Malta, Latvia, Poland	PN members: Belgium, Portugal, United Kingdom Non-members: Cyprus, Malta, Latvia, Poland	PN members: Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Non-members: Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia
Rule of law, democracy, governance, human rights	<i>mentioned by 6 Member States</i> PN members: France, Sweden, United Kingdom Non-members: Estonia, Latvia, Poland	PN members: Belgium, France, Sweden Non-members: Estonia, Latvia, Poland	PN members: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden Non-members: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania
Health	<i>mentioned by 4 Member States</i> PN members: Belgium, Luxembourg, United Kingdom Non-members: Poland	PN members: Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal	PN members: Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom Non-members: Cyprus, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Malta
Digitalisation, e-governance	<i>mentioned by 4 Member States</i> PN members: Austria, Belgium, Germany Non-members: Estonia	PN members: Belgium, Germany Non-members: Estonia	PN members: Belgium
Climate change	<i>Mentioned by 3 Member</i>	PN members: Belgium	PN members: Austria,

	<p><i>States</i></p> <p>PN members: Italy, Luxembourg</p> <p>Non-members: Poland</p>		<p>Germany, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden</p> <p>Non-members: Estonia, Ireland, Malta, Poland, Slovenia</p>
Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	<p><i>mentioned by 3 Member States</i></p> <p>PN members: Belgium</p> <p>Non-members: Hungary, Poland</p>	<p>PN members: Belgium</p> <p>Non-members: Hungary</p>	<p>PN members: Austria, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain</p> <p>Non-members: Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Poland</p>
Agriculture and rural development	<p><i>mentioned by 2 Member States</i></p> <p>PN members: Belgium</p> <p>Non-members: Latvia</p>	<p>PN members: Belgium</p> <p>Non-members: Latvia</p>	<p>PN members: Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia</p> <p>Non-members: Croatia, Hungary, Poland</p>
Energy	<p><i>mentioned by 2 Member States</i></p> <p>PN members: Belgium</p> <p>Non-members: Romania</p>	<p>PN members: Belgium</p> <p>Non-members: Romania</p>	<p>PN members: Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal</p> <p>Non-members: Finland, Poland</p>

Table 3 Regions of interest for peer exchange⁷

Geographically, there is a particular interest expressed by several members and non-members of the PN to share knowledge and expertise on **Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans**.

Regions	Number of mentions	Member States willing to share expertise	Member States for which this is a priority region in their development policy⁸
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⁷ These are the regions mentioned specifically by respondents as part of the needs assessment, as areas where there is either an expressed need to gain or a willingness to share knowledge and expertise. While other regions (e.g. Sahel, Latin America) were not mentioned explicitly, this does not necessarily mean that there aren't any Member States/agencies interested to learn or willing to share their knowledge and experience of other regions.

⁸ This column refers to the priority regions specifically identified in the development strategies of EU Member States. For the sake of consistency, these refer only to the governmental strategies and policies.

Eastern Europe and Western Balkans	<i>mentioned by 6 Member States</i> PN members: Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovakia Non-members: Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia	PN members: Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovakia Non-members: Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia	PN members: Austria, Lithuania, Slovakia Non-members: Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovenia
South Caucasus			PN members: Austria
Black Sea region			Non-members: Bulgaria, Romania
Central Asia	<i>mentioned by 3 Member States</i> PN members: Czech Republic Non-members: Estonia, Latvia	PN member: Czech Republic Non-member: Latvia	Non-members: Finland, Latvia, Romania
South/East Asia			Members: Portugal, UK Non-members: Finland, Hungary, Poland, Romania
Sub-Saharan Africa	<i>mentioned by 2 Member States</i> PN members: Slovakia Non-members: Estonia	PN member: Slovakia	PN members: Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, UK Non-members: Finland, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia
Middle East/North Africa	<i>mentioned by 1 Member States</i> Non-member: Cyprus	Non-member: Cyprus	PN members: Italy, Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, UK Non-members: Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Malta,

			Poland, Romania, Slovenia
Latin America & Caribbean			PN members: Spain, UK Non-members: Romania

2.2. Institutional set-up and functioning of operational entities

Close to half of the respondents, representing PN members and non-members, have explicitly expressed their interest to learn from each other and to **better understand their respective institutional set-up and the functioning of their operational entities**. Member States with all types of structures and systems are interested in such exchange, albeit from different perspectives and with different objectives.

Respondents from Member States without implementing agencies or distinct operational organisations are mostly interested to learn about the **options and best practices to set up an agency** and/or a development finance institution. In particular, they want to better understand other Member States' experience and the various options and processes that can be followed to that end, as well as the pros and cons of setting up an agency. An interesting point was also that lessons learned also include mistakes and failures which can be just as useful as best practices.

Respondents from Member States with development agencies or DFIs have expressed an interest to learn about the different **business models and resourcing** of implementing organisations (i.e. public funding, private funding, own resources, delegated cooperation and subcontracting), as well as the **reform processes** that are taking place in other countries. They have also expressed an interest in exchanging best practices on working methods, complementarities and **synergies between implementing agencies and DFIs**.

The modalities of cooperation between the **operational entities and their supervisory ministries** is also an area of common interest for peer exchange (raised by PN members and non-members: Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia), including the clarification of the relationship and strengthening of the link between **political and operational level** (communication channels, and internal modalities of cooperation).

Learning about how other Member States are managing the **relationship between HQ and field offices** was also mentioned by several respondents, and the role of diplomatic representations in partner countries. Several respondents, especially from smaller Member States, stressed their interest to enhance **field presence** and to engage in countries/regions where they have no diplomatic presence.

A number of respondents, from PN members and non-members, have also expressed an interest to learn from other organisations that have undergone the process about the necessary reforms to **pass the EU pillar assessment or adapt to new requirements**. These include in particular the implications in terms of rules for procurement, financial transparency, due diligence, etc.

The functioning and human resource management of operational entities was also mentioned as a possible area for peer exchange, with some respondents pointing to the need to learn from each other

about recruitment of qualified staff, performance evaluation, training & capacity-building, as well as how to mobilise and promote public sector expertise.

Box 2 Possible issues for peer exchange on institutional set-up and on the functioning of operational entities

Institutional set-up

- > Setting up agency and/or development finance institution
- > Business models & resourcing
- > Passing or adapting to the pillar assessment
- > Enhancing field presence

Functioning of operational entities

- > Relationship and division of labour between MFA/line ministries and agencies
- > Synergies between aid agencies and DFIs
- > Human resources management
- > Mobilisation and promotion of public sector expertise

2.3. Internal project and operations management

Almost three-quarters of the respondents, representing equally PN members and non-members, have expressed an interest in learning from each other on **how to manage the different stages of the project cycle, as well as the overall operations** within their respective operational entities.

There is a strong interest from many focal points to learn and share experiences on the various systems and mechanisms that are used for **project cycle management** (from project design to evaluation).

In particular, eight respondents from PN members (Austria, Belgium, Spain, France) and non-members (Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary) expressed an interest to learn and share experiences about **monitoring and evaluation** systems. Seven respondents (Estonia, Germany, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Portugal, Sweden) stressed their interest in learning how to **monitor the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), including through better **data collection and reporting** with a particular focus on the country level and the need to also reinforce capacities of partner countries in this endeavour. Other areas of interest for peer exchange include project monitoring at field level.

A number of other issues for peer exchange were put forward concerning the management of operations at the level of the organisation, such as exchanging good practices on **results-based management** approaches, **measuring and communicating impact**, as well as **data and knowledge management**.

Box 3 Possible issues for peer exchange on project management and operations management

Project management (linked to individual projects or programmes)

- > Internal Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) systems
- > SDG monitoring and data collection
- > Project monitoring in the field

Operations management (linked to more systemic issues within the organisation)

- > Data management, knowledge management
- > Results-based management (RBM) approaches
- > Measuring and communicating impact

2.4. Implementing modalities and instruments

Several respondents highlighted an interest to engage in peer learning and to share practical knowledge and experience on the various implementing modalities and instruments used by their Member States and/or operational entities. While some Member States/organisations have developed a wide toolbox to deliver their ODA and implement development cooperation, others still rely on a limited number of delivery and implementation mechanisms (essentially grants and technical assistance). There is a shared interest from most respondents to expand the toolbox of financial modalities (grants, loans, blending) as well as non-financial means of implementation.

Fifteen respondents, including PN members (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Spain, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Sweden) and non-members (Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Slovenia), expressed an interest in sharing on different funding modalities, including **innovative financing instruments**. Several respondents (France, Slovenia, Lithuania) also highlighted their interest in sharing their experience on **non-financial means of implementation** (such as twinning, scholarships, capacity building, triangular cooperation, etc.) and the provision of public sector expertise (e.g. TAIX).

Engaging in peer exchange on **private sector engagement** was mentioned as important by sixteen respondents (Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia). There is a widespread interest in learning about the different ways in which Member States / agencies **identify and engage strategically** with the private sector. In addition, many respondents expressed a strong interest to learn about the various ways to **leverage private investments** and funds through innovative financing instruments used by national DFIs such as loans, guarantees, blending, or through the EIP and EFSD.

Box 4 Possible issues for peer exchange on implementing modalities and private sector engagement

Implementing modalities

- > Innovative financing mechanisms
- > Non-financial means of implementation

Private sector engagement

- > Leveraging private investments and funds
- > Identifying private sector actors to engage with in partner countries

Learning from each other

- Key takeaways -

1. Promoting the sharing of expertise and best practices on thematic and geographic issues could help **designing thematic guidelines and common approaches** (e.g. gender mainstreaming, climate, private sector, migration, humanitarian-development-peace nexus, fragile countries...) with a view to creating synergies in the field.
2. There is a widespread interest from PN members and non-members alike to learn from each other and better understand their respective **institutional set-up** and the functioning of their operational entities. The idea is not to promote and apply a single 'ideal' model of institutional set-up for

operationalising development cooperation, but rather to share experiences and lessons learned on the various options for establishing, **managing and reforming** operational development structures and systems.

3. PN members and non-members also stressed their interest in engaging in peer learning on **Monitoring and Evaluation** systems. These are common challenges for ministries and implementing entities alike, including as part of joint reporting and joint results framework. A number of respondents also emphasised the importance of learning about monitoring results and collecting data.
4. There is an extensive interest in learning and sharing on different ways to **engage with the private sector** and to leverage private investments. Several respondents consider that the exchanges taking place in the Private Sector Working Group are useful and should be pursued and deepened, with a particular focus on tools to leverage private investments and identification of private sector actors in partner countries.
5. The needs assessment reveals a strong interest (including outside the PN) to promote peer exchange on **non-financial means of implementation**, notably twinning and the provision of public sector expertise. The availability of expertise on these matters outside the PN and the willingness to share experience expressed by several respondents from Member States that are not members of the PN should be further optimised, including by stronger outreach towards these countries.

In addition to learning from each with a view to better understanding one another's operational structures and systems and possibly reforming their own structures accordingly, Member States and implementing entities are also very keen to explore opportunities of working more and better together.

3. Working better together

Many Member States' respondents have expressed a strong interest in working more and better together as a matter of priority. Yet, enhancing joint activities between peer organisations and with the EU remains challenging for many Member States, big and small, due to a lack of capacity and information, a lack of field representation where EU joint programming takes place, heavy administrative procedures, the difficulty to identify partners, etc. The need to seek more **opportunities to carry out joint activities** and operational partnerships bilaterally outside of EU projects, as well as to enhance joint activities in the framework of EU instruments and processes was emphasised by PN members and non-members alike.

Overall, Member States with smaller ODA resources and limited operational capacities are keen to engage more with other Member States and in EU funded projects, including through **co-financing, joint funding**, calls for proposals, etc. Larger PN members which already have a wide range of expertise and good access to EU funded projects are interested to enhance the **complementarity** of their actions in joint activities, including better understanding and **simplifying procedures** and contracting modalities under delegated cooperation.

3.1. Carrying out joint activities and operational partnerships

Engaging in joint projects may be particularly challenging for some Member States/agencies that do not have a field presence in relevant partner countries or seek to increase their cooperation in new regions. A

major constraint for several smaller Member States is to get a foot in larger-scale projects. There is an interest to fund and/or implement projects together through various means.

First, the identification and **promotion of co-financing and joint funding/pooled funding opportunities** is seen as an effective way to bring Member States together and create synergies in the field. Several respondents, especially from non-members of the PN, stated that they would be interested to engage in peer exchange on such matters with a view to preparing joint bids and setting-up consortias to respond to larger-scale projects.

Second, working in **partnership with other peer organisations** (from Member States or other donors) is seen as a way to gain more experience and expertise as well as to expand their country presence (beyond priority countries). There are various examples of joint cooperation activities between Member States and/or agencies where two or more organisations (sometimes also involving non-EU donors) fund and/or implement projects together in partner countries for greater impact in certain sectors or partner countries of common interest. Examples of such collaboration include joint projects, co-financing and/or shared management of projects, pooled funding, delegated cooperation, etc. These usually stem from **bilateral exchanges or operational partnerships** between interested Member States and partner countries, on an *ad hoc* basis and outside of EU projects.

Several respondents suggested that joint cooperation activities among operational entities could be further encouraged through peer exchange focusing on the **simplification of certain operational and contractual issues**, such as the harmonisation and streamlining of procedures to facilitate contracting and transfer agreements, the mutual recognition of contracting modalities and operational systems, the promotion of standard contracts or common grant agreements, etc. The sharing and signing of memorandums of understanding between operational entities could be a way forward.

The PN could play a role in facilitating such exchanges and partnerships by bringing interested Member States or agencies together to discuss and agree on these issues.

Box 5 Possible issues for peer exchange on joint activities and operational partnerships between European operational entities

Joint activities

- > Exploring and promoting opportunities for joint funding
- > Preparing joint bids and setting-up consortias

Operational partnerships

- > Encouraging the mutual recognition of contracting modalities and pillar assessment
- > Promoting standard or model contracts, common grant agreements
- > Sharing and signing memorandums of understanding between operational entities

3.2. Working together in EU funded projects

PN members and non-members alike are keen to get more involved in EU funded projects and work more efficiently with the EU. Although they may be at different stages in their experience of **working under EU instruments and procedures** (e.g. some Member States / agencies are pillar assessed and have a Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA) with the Commission, others not), many are interested to further explore **opportunities to enhance their engagement with the EU**, including under the EIP and external financing instruments (e.g. NDICI).

Several respondents are calling for **more information and transparency** on opportunities to work in EU funded projects. The study reveals a strong demand from several Member States to **better understand EU financing and contracting procedures** related to EU instruments and to increase their involvement in delegated cooperation, including **pillar assessment requirements**. There is thus an interest for peer exchange and sharing of know-how on **implementing and managing EU funded projects**, as well as on negotiating and working under FFPA.

Many respondents reaffirmed their organisations' commitment to the aid and **development effectiveness** agenda and stressed their strong interest to actively engage in **EU joint processes**, notably **joint programming and joint implementation**. Yet, several respondents highlighted the need to have more information on opportunities and modalities to engage in those processes, as well as to better understand the potential gains and synergies of doing so. The need to clarify and **operationalise the concept** of joint implementation as well as to **identify concrete projects** was mentioned by some respondents. Complete and timely information and a leading coordination role by the Commission is considered crucial to this end.

While the Commission has the primary responsibility to provide all the necessary information on opportunities to engage in EU funded projects, as well as to clarify and unpack joint implementation (definition and modalities), the PN could also play a complementary role.

Box 6 Possible issues for peer exchange on participation on EU funded projects and joint processes

Participating in EU contracting modalities and funding instruments

- > Sharing information on opportunities to engage in EU funded projects
- > Sharing know-how in implementing and managing EU funded projects, including contractual modalities and pillar assessment procedure

Joint programming and joint implementation

- > Opportunities and possible synergies in engaging in joint programming
- > Joint implementation (definition, modalities, concrete projects)

Working better together

- Key takeaways -

6. There is a strong demand from PN members and non-members to explore and enhance their engagement in **joint cooperation activities**, both bilaterally outside of EU projects and in the framework of EU processes. There is notably a common interest to better understand how to engage in **EU joint programming and joint implementation**.
7. Overall, a broad distinction can be made between pillar assessed entities (or in the process of being pillar assessed) and those that are not. The former are mostly interested in better understanding and simplifying procedures and contracting modalities under delegated cooperation. The latter are interested to engage in a variety of joint activities (including co-financing, joint funding, applying to EU contracts) as a way to gain more experience and expertise as well as to expand their cooperation activities, often with a view to moving towards pillar assessment in the future.
8. While it is evident that there is widespread interest among both members and non-members in the PN in some way facilitating better cooperation with the Commission, it is also clear that an

agreement will have to be found with the Commission on what the scope and limits of this should be. The Commission has a continuing responsibility to provide clear public information on the opportunities it sees for collaboration and on its procedures and modalities. So the complementary role that the PN could play to provide further assistance to its members in this area needs to be based on an agreed division of labour that all parties understand and accept.

4. Activities for peer exchange among development practitioners

As presented above, the study has revealed a long list of needs and interests expressed by respondents. A network such as the PN is well placed to carry out or facilitate some peer exchange and collaboration activities, while other actors and fora⁹ might be better placed and equipped for other types of activities.

There is no 'one size fits all' type of activity, and the latter will fundamentally depend on what type of needs it seeks to address, as well as other factors such as the available resources (time, human, financial), the breadth of participants across Europe and related travel budgets, etc.

Hence, various types of activities are suggested in this section. We distinguish between activities to be carried out:

- at the PN level (led by the PN members, but could also include non-members where relevant);
- bilaterally between two or more Member States / agencies;
- by and through the European Commission.

4.1. Activities for the Practitioners' Network

Given its role and mandate to enhance the coherence and exchange on operational matters within the EU donor community, the Practitioners' Network is well placed to undertake (and pursue) a number of activities with a view to promoting and facilitating peer learning and collaboration among its members, but also with non-members where relevant.

In particular, there is generally a high level of support to build on and further develop current activities (e.g. working groups and task forces on priority topics, workshops and seminars) to bring together European development practitioners.

PN members acknowledged that a lot is already carried out in the framework of the PN working groups, and generally expressed interest in pursuing the workstreams of the PN (e.g. private sector engagement, fragile and crisis situations, effective partnerships) and deepening operational discussions on specific matters (e.g. SDG monitoring). At the same time, some respondents have suggested that **PN activities should go deeper** in promoting and facilitating peer exchange and collaboration at different levels, with a clear **focus on EU and on operational matters**. In doing so, it is important that the PN maintains its added value to avoid overlaps or duplication with other discussion or peer reviews taking place in other fora (e.g. CODEV, OECD-DAC...).

As per its mandate, the PN places itself as a **convener and facilitator** to help further exchange of knowledge and experience among European development practitioners, **within and beyond the membership** of the PN. To this end, a number of activities could be considered to bring together Member

⁹ These could include fora such as the OECD-DAC for monitoring and peer exchange on aid systems and policies, EU Council working parties such as the CODEV for EU policy discussions, Commission and Member States' expert groups (e.g. on priority sectors, fragility, joint programming, etc), or online platforms such as Capacity4Dev or Learn4Dev.

States and operational entities, and to **facilitate peer exchange and networking** between and among the Member States and operational entities (such as sharing and diffusion of information, putting people and organisations in contact, developing online tools, opening certain activities and events to non-members).

A number of bilateral exchanges and study visits on institutional and operational issues are already taking place between Member States/agencies. In order to facilitate and further encourage such bilateral exchanges, the PN could play a convening role, organise learning events and workshops on particular operational aspects of interest to members and non-members (e.g. various business models, good practices on relations MFA-agency, internal reforms for passing pillar assessment, etc.) that could be open to all EU Member States, including non-members of the PN where relevant.

Furthermore, the PN can help European practitioners work better together as well as with the European Commission. The PN could for instance undertake further activities to **facilitate collaboration** among European practitioners and support them in exploring and developing **joint cooperation opportunities** on certain topics (e.g. through working groups and communities of practice, by setting up a database of European expertise that could be mobilised). The PN is also seen as a relevant representative of practitioners in its dialogue with the Commission. As such, it could further **engage with the Commission** on operational issues of common concern (e.g. joint implementation, Financial Framework Partnership Agreements, contractual modalities).

Table 4 Possible activities for the PN

Needs	Objective	Role of the PN	Activities/modalities
<i>Learning from each other</i>	Sharing practical knowledge and experience among development practitioners	<p>Convening EU Member States and operational structures</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Facilitating exchange and networking among European practitioners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Disseminate the mapping and country fiches prepared in the framework of this study > Set up a database/directory to help non-members of the PN identify interlocutors within the PN with a view to matching supply and demand of expertise > Develop online learning and networking tools (webinars, video-conferences) > Improve online communication on PN activities and facilitate access to documents for non-members > Organise joint learning events to which Member States' experts are invited to share their knowledge and experience on specific topics (e.g. setting up and managing operational entities, sectoral and/or geographic approaches, etc) > Organise networking activities to facilitate exchange between the EU and the PN, liaise with non-members as well as foster exchanges between agencies

			<p>> Organise tours and study visits (HQ and field), open door events</p> <p>> Open certain specific learning and networking events to non-members</p> <p>> Consider certain activities in other EU capitals to allow participation of staff from headquarters/agencies that are not present in Brussels</p>
<i>Working better together</i>	Promoting collaboration and joint activities among development practitioners	<p>Facilitating exchanges and partnerships between EU Member States and operational agencies</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Engaging with the Commission on operational issues of common concern</p>	<p>> Set up a database to facilitate the identification and mobilisation of European expertise in all Member States</p> <p>> Create working groups / communities of practice to harmonise and coordinate approaches on priority issues (thematic and geographic)</p> <p>> Share information & good practices on cooperation opportunities</p> <p>> Exchange of knowledge and experience on EU financial and contractual requirements</p>

Among the specific modalities proposed, **online tools and platforms** have a strong potential to make it easier for colleagues and agencies outside Brussels to take part in peer exchange.

As the Member States and agencies have different levels of knowledge of and experience with the Practitioners' Network, there is also a need to manage expectations regarding the issues raised above and the corresponding peer exchange activities that the PN can effectively and realistically follow-up.

Activities for peer exchange

- Key takeaways -

In considering peer exchange activities to be carried out or promoted by the PN, a number of key recommendations should be kept in mind.

9. First, the PN should keep the **focus on its core business** and added value, and not duplicate activities that are (or can be) undertaken by other actors (such as the EU or the OECD-DAC) and in other fora. The PN has a strong acknowledged comparative advantage on:
 - EU focus: implementation of EU development policy/joint EU development cooperation/operational and financial issues related to EU funding of development and international cooperation
 - Operational focus: joint working and collaboration opportunities (e.g. delegated cooperation, joint implementation)
10. Second, the PN is uniquely placed and should continue to bring together Member States on operational issues with a view to facilitating the **dialogue with EU institutions**. As pointed above,

many Member States are interested to find ways of working better together, including with the EU, but face similar challenges in doing so (in terms of access to information and understanding the complexity of EU procedures). When it comes to dialogue with the European Commission, the PN has more bargaining power than Member States taken individually. This is especially true in discussions aiming to simplify financial and administrative measures affecting all Member States' implementing agencies.

11. Third, the PN is seen by a majority of respondents as a useful platform for networking and peer exchange **at headquarters level**. Interestingly, the opportunity to relay or bring the PN at field level has not come out from the needs assessment (which was undertaken at HQ level). It may appear that networking and peer exchange often already take place at country level with a thematic focus, usually facilitated by other actors, such as EU delegations or individual Member States' embassies present in partner countries. Yet, another needs assessment carried out at country level could probably provide more insights.
12. Finally, there is a question of **resources** to enable the PN to provide services such as information provision, peer exchanges, mappings to facilitate matchmaking, etc. Doing this efficiently and proactively so that the services remain relevant and up-to-date could potentially cost a lot. Clear decisions on **priorities and levels of ambition** will therefore be essential at an early date.
13. Three **broad scenarios** could be envisaged for the PN depending on the level of additional resources available:
 - No new resources: limited scope of new activities for the PN, modalities of peer exchange and collaboration remain broadly as they are, members engage bilaterally with new interested parties;
 - Some additional resources: PN facilitating and convening role is boosted through the development of strong online communication tools and organisation of learning events (with possible support from the Commission);
 - Reinforced capacities: the PN takes a lead role in learning activities and in bringing actors together (e.g. through mapping or database of European expertise), as well as in carrying out proactive outreach and facilitating joint implementation.

In addition and in parallel with the PN, other actors and fora could also contribute to addressing the needs of European development practitioners.

4.2. Activities to be carried out by other actors

4.2.1. Bilateral collaboration and exchange among EU Member States and agencies

Several Member States and implementing organisations have already some experience in peer exchange with other European and non-European actors on issues of common interest and as part of the desire to 'learn from each other' and 'work better together', and are apparently willing to do more.

The peer exchange can take place at HQ level, between relevant ministry departments or organisations, or at field level in partner countries.

Examples of bilateral peer exchange between Member States' operational entities (either between MFA departments or at agency level) brought up by respondents included:

Modalities for bilateral peer exchange	Examples brought up by Member States' respondents
Study visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study tour from Enabel to GIZ in March 2018 to exchange with GIZ on experience regarding private sector programmes and instruments (Private sector development, Private for Development) - Since 2018, the Lithuanian agency CPMA, together with the MFA, is conducting study visits to EU implementing agencies (FIIAP, AECID, Sida) for the purpose of exchange of information on the activities, exploring areas for cooperation. - Poland also reported having benefited from bilateral visits to Ireland, Sweden and the Netherlands.
Exchange with other Member States's organisations on specific topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAIDC-ADA bilateral consultations on private sector engagement, humanitarian aid, framework agreements and gender in international development - SAIDC-Czech Aid bilateral consultations on private sector engagement - enhancement of Business Partnership Programme and public tenders set up - GIZ engaged in exchanges with Member States organisations, upon their request, and on different areas: setup of German development cooperation, delegated cooperation, organizational, contractual and financial issues, the PN, etc. Examples: exchange with Czech Aid in July 2018; exchange with RoAid in August 2018; exchange with AICS in September 2018; exchange with CPMA in February 2019 - Romania exchanged with the Netherlands on their development system and with Sweden on the relationship between the agency and the MFA (information-sharing, working methods, informal channels of communication) - AFD has developed strong relations with Agencies and DFIs from other Member States (Germany, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium...),

	<p>through the PN, and through bilateral interactions, be they institutional or operational interactions (including co-financing, staff exchange, drafting of joint position papers...).</p> <p>- During the preparation of Greece's Voluntary National Review (VNR) in the framework of the 2018 UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, as well as during the preparation of the National Plan for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Greece benefited from meetings with representatives of other EU MS MFAs which had already been through these processes. The purpose of the meetings were peer learning and exchange of expertise and respective experiences, through the wider sharing of successful policies/approaches and best practices.</p>
Field missions/experiences	- Luxembourg had many field experiences with EU Member States (Enabel, AFD etc.)
Support joint studies on structures in other Member States	GIZ supported a French study on "Seeking Agreement on Official Development Assistance" (2017) or Expertise France, stocktaking on other Member States (2018)

Other modalities that were mentioned by respondents include:

- Leadership level meetings with one partner organisation on different common areas of interest, incl. exchanges on ongoing joint implementation and EU agenda
- Consensus-building on framework conditions (i.e. EU financial regulation)
- Engaging in exchange with CODEV Council Working Group
- Tradition of dialogue between 3 Baltic states (e.g. political issues, EU, UN, bilateral cooperation)
- Open-door events
- Exchange, secondments
- TAIXEX – could possibly also be used to facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges between EU Member States on development policy issues.

They usually prove to be very efficient peer exchange modalities that **allow deeper engagement on a number of concrete institutional and operational issues**. The PN could also take a role in facilitating such bilateral collaboration and exchanges by putting people in touch with one another and build on good practices.

4.2.2. Activities led by EU institutions

A number of topics raised by Member States and agencies respondents called for a stronger information and coordination role to be carried out by the Commission. The latter has the mandate to help coordinate the EU and the Member States' development cooperation and is best placed to carry out activities aimed at bringing Member States together in the field through the EU delegations, and to provide all the necessary information on opportunities for joint activities under EU funded projects.

Through information sessions and trainings, the Commission could usefully respond to certain needs of European practitioners.

This is particularly true when it comes to:

- Keeping Member States informed in a timely manner on opportunities for joint activities under EU funded projects;
- Providing the necessary information on requirements for participating in EU instruments and procedures as well as for passing the pillar assessment;
- Mapping of actors and activities at country level, EU Member States presence in partner countries;
- Bringing EU Member States together (especially in the field) and taking a lead role in coordinating joint programming and joint implementation;
- Clarifying and unpacking joint implementation (definition and modalities);
- Showcasing good examples of joint implementation;
- Clarifying and communicating the role of EU delegations regarding its coordination role for joint implementation;
- Clarifying and unpacking the procedures for the Pillar Assessment

The Commission could also assess the opportunity to work more closely with the PN and **support (financially or in-kind) some of the PN activities.**

5. Concluding remarks

The needs assessment identifies four sets of key takeaways:

1. **Mapping** the needs and interests of agencies show that there is considerable demand for exchange and while there are some common threads it is also very diversified and is likely to change over time. Having a functional map that remains accurate over time will therefore be an expensive undertaking unless a tight focus can be agreed.
2. There is a strong interest in **learning from each other** and some bilateral activities are already taking place. The PN could well play a convening role to enhance this movement. There are also some specific areas that stand out, such as work with the private sector, that are obvious starting points to work with, and there is also interest in exchange on some less conventional areas of work such as twinning and sharing public sector expertise.
3. **Working better together** also commands strong support and the PN is seen as having a potentially valuable role to play in orchestrating this though a clear division of labour with the Commission would need to be agreed. There are some differences in needs between PN members and non-members in this area but these could be worked around providing the will is there.
4. **In deciding on what next** the PN can usefully remember its key assets are seen as its EU focus and its operational focus. Equally the PN has good potential as a broker between the EU member States and Institutions in its area of expertise. A third consideration is that while this exercise has been conducted at HQ level in Europe, some of the ideas that came up (e.g. some of the mapping) could well be more easily conducted in the field. Finally there is the question of what resources to invest in expanding the PN's remit and tackling inclusiveness. A first relatively modest step might be to invest in good online communication work.

Against this background, the study also points to the need to undergo a 'reality check' and consider the constraints in addressing the list of needs in practice.

1. A list of needs to prioritise

This study has revealed many areas of interest and identified possible peer exchange opportunities. This is not surprising as every entity has needs and is keen on the principle of learning and peer exchange. In itself, the interests raised by this needs assessment is a first positive finding for the PN. It opens a number of avenues to enhance outreach and inclusiveness through peer exchange activities. Yet, a widespread interest in peer exchange should not be seen to imply that there will be the same willingness and ability to get involved in practice. Realistically, neither the PN nor the PN members and non-members will be able to follow-up on all these ideas. So this list must be treated with caution and should be narrowed down, by selecting priority topics and deepening the analysis of needs in specific areas.

2. Incentives and resources to engage in peer exchange

It is important to assess realistically the commitment and incentives for collaboration and sharing in practice. First, are all Member States and agencies ready to commit and engage? It should be acknowledged that peer exchange requires resources (human, financial, time) and is not the core business of development agencies. So what are the incentives and available resources of Member States and operational entities to engage in such collaboration and peer exchange with others? Second, Member States and agencies on both the supply and demand ends for advice and peer exchange would need to see a return on the investment of time and resources, in an era in which bureaucracies are often under pressure to show quick results. Third, while the objective of 'inclusiveness' that is the red thread behind this study is laudable, there are also various disincentives at play. The fact remains that PN members and non-members are also competitors in a limited market, which may impact the level of interest in passing on hard-won expertise. Yet, incentives to collaborate do exist: the first and foremost is linked to aid effectiveness agenda to which all development cooperation operational entities are committed. This is also the driving force behind the inclusiveness agenda pursued by the PN, including in the context of operationalising EU joint implementation.

3. A question of image

Inclusiveness is an important value and principle that the PN and its members share which could possibly lead to a joint PN declaration on inclusiveness. There is also a question of image at play when it comes to implementing EU funded projects. The Commission cannot afford to give the impression that it favours some actors more than others, while agencies also generally prefer to have an image that is open and collaborative rather than exclusive. In particular, the inclusiveness agenda could also be linked to other political agendas such as joint work on the promotion of EU values through development cooperation activities or the focus on European preferences to implement EU-funded projects.

ANNEX 1 - Responses from Member States' focal points to the needs assessment questions

AUSTRIA

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview - reflecting ADA's views):

Areas/topics on which Austria would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies:

- Delegated Cooperation/ project implementation under indirect management
- Engagement with the Green Climate Fund
- Leave no one behind – Agenda 2030 with a focus on results, impact, M&E
- Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Risk Management
- Triple-Nexus Humanitarian Assistance - Development- Peace & Security
- Exchange on each other's funding modalities
- Private Sector Engagement (incl. on integrated market systems development, mobilising investments, forging partnerships)
- Digitalisation
- How to promote innovation
- Assuring the quality of project and programme evaluations (guidelines and practices)
- Learning from evaluations: instruments and structures
- Results-based management within bilateral development agencies

Most important in the short-term:

- Delegated Cooperation/ project implementation under indirect management
- Engagement with the Green Climate Fund
- Leave no one behind – Agenda 2030 with a focus on results, impact, M&E
- Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
- Risk Management
- Exchange on each other's funding modalities

Most important in the longer-term:

- Triple-Nexus Humanitarian Assistance - Development - Peace & Security
- Private Sector Engagement (incl. on integrated market systems development, mobilising investments, forging partnerships)
- Digitalisation
- How to promote innovation

Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange:

- Peer learning workshops
- Webinars (problem of time and resources associated to meetings in Brussels, especially for Austrian Development Agency (ADA) which does not have an office there → staff have to prioritise meetings when they travel there)
- Working papers / studies

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

- Learn4Dev
- Various OECD DAC Networks (INCAF, GenderNet, GovNet etc.) and communities (eg. Results community)

- Practitioners Network

Willing to share expertise on:

- Delegated Cooperation/ project implementation under indirect management
- Engagement with the Green Climate Fund
- Risk Management
- Exchange on each other's funding modalities
- Private Sector Engagement

Among the areas mentioned above, what you would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on?

- In practice, the challenge in the PN is how to ensure that these exchanges are grounded in the actual work, provide an added value (sometimes a bit too abstract and detached from the day-to-day work e.g. on working group on Private Sector Engagement)
- Huge added value of the PN on delegated cooperation, indirect management → How to develop these further
- Lot of potential in the PN, but challenge is to tap into it better
- There's already the OECD as a donor forum, with working groups and networks. → Not duplicate that, but find synergies. We could find a way to meet the PN on the side of OECD events in Paris. Caveat: OECD is not limited to EU donors and also not all EU Member States are part of the OECD DAC
- Identity of the PN should be **EU-focused** → joint, common EU development cooperation. Niche of the PN is to put into practice/implement EU development policy. If it goes beyond that, it duplicates what the OECD does.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term: strengthen coordination/leading role from the EU within Joint Implemented projects between EU-Member States agencies. The EU should take a stronger leadership and coordination role rather than leaving this to the agencies. Especially in the field, the EU does not sufficiently take on that role. The need to strengthen the role of coordination from the EU(D) when it comes to projects delegated to several EU Member States agencies (Joint implemented projects), either this takes the form of PAGODA-Co or different contracts between implementing agencies.

Useful in the short-term: Need for a working group on digital development under PN.

Most important in the longer-term: Contractual procedures should be (more) streamlined between agencies. The PN could facilitate this as it did to facilitate implementation of EUTF for Africa. The need for EU-Member States agencies to mutually recognise the pillar assessment audit. This will help EU-Member States agencies work together and ease the contracting modalities and negotiations in order to sign and implement grant agreements. This would give the possibility to use a common agreed "Grant agreement" between EU-Member States agencies (so that the implementing EU agency use its own rules and procedures within the framework of a grant from another EU-Member States agency).

Willing to share expertise on:

Enabel is willing to share its expertise on agriculture and rural development, digitization, water & sanitation, education-training & employment, environment and climate, gender, energy, governance-peace & migration, private sector development, health (this is already on-going). In addition, Enabel is willing to share experience concerning Evaluation and Capitalization processes (this would be a new area of peer exchange).

Enabel is furthermore willing to participate in study visits as it did last year (study tour from Enabel to GIZ, mid-March 2018 - Main objectives: exchange with GIZ on its experience regarding private sector programmes and instruments (Private sector development, Private for Development).

Focus for the PN: Mutual recognition between EM-MS agencies of the PA audit from the EU

BULGARIA

Needs assessment (based on the interview):

As a small country with little capacity and experience (and which was an aid recipient until recently), Bulgaria finds it useful to be part of EU efforts.

It is in favour of 'working better together', joint programming, joint implementation (based on its needs), partly because it thinks development goals can be better achieved this way. But it lacks the expertise and sees it as a 'learning exercise'.

Bulgaria would like to engage more with the EU institutions and the Member States. All Member States need to be involved in this; everyone can make a contribution (e.g. Bulgaria can help its neighbours like North Macedonia with its reform/transition experience).

Migration is a burning issue for Bulgaria.

The PN could organise workshops, seminars, but it should focus on practical things (as opposed to Council discussions which revolve around policy).

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

- **Challenges to Croatia's development cooperation**

1. Transition knowledge spread across ministries and experts → Need to collect and systematise it, have experts ready to be deployed
2. Platform for spreading this knowledge in countries, beyond embassies: channels of communication and outreach.
3. How to get memorandums of understanding? With which organisations? How to use and deploy experts effectively? How to implement development cooperation more broadly? Which cooperation channels to use? → Technical/practical issues.
4. Croatia needs to amend its legislation; it still has the mindset of a recipient. The infrastructure, the political background do not understand the benefits of providing development cooperation. → outreach inside and outside

- **Areas/topics on which Croatia would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies**

Cooperation and partnership in projects, modes of implementation, mobilization of national expertise, implementing partners, standard operating procedures, loans and guarantees, advice on how to systematically collect, mobilize and promote national expertise

- **Most important in the short-term:** standard operating procedures, mobilization of national expertise, cooperation and partnership in projects, participation in international calls
- **Most important in the longer-term:** modes of implementation, implementing partners, loans and guarantees, advice on how to systematically collect, mobilize and promote national expertise

- **Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange**

Exchange of experience and knowledge in practical issues related to planning, implementation, monitoring; hands-on experts; memorandums of understanding with particular country or through organisations; online tools (because resources are limited)

- **Willing to share expertise in:** conflict and post-conflict democratic transition
- **Limited experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures**
- **Focus for the PN:** Exchange and cooperation (notably on how to develop its niche despite its very small bilateral component and the lack of experience and capacities)

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Areas / topics on which Cyprus would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies

- In rapid response, particularly with respect to natural disasters
- In prevention, also in regard to natural disasters
- In projects entailing both relief, rehabilitation and development / capacity building
- Finance and investment (engage private sector more systematically in our involvement); Economic diplomacy of the EU

Most important in the short-term: humanitarian aid /technical assistance

Most important in the longer-term: development cooperation / building resilience

Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange?

- Delegated cooperation
- Technical / vocational training
- Joint projects for children in education

Willing to share expertise on:

- Delegated cooperation
- Technical / vocational training
- Joint projects for children in education
- Experience in the Middle East
- Economic diplomacy (one of the priorities of the new minister)

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

In delegated cooperation concerning joint projects, such as in the Middle East

In humanitarian crises, such as delivery of aid in Asia, the Middle East and the Caribbean

Focus of the PN:

All of the above, mainly regarding joint activities in the field of DRR, Resilience and capacity building in the context of nexus related projects, most notably in the Middle East

Cyprus is willing to work more with the EU institutions and delegations (e.g. through training, capacity-building, infrastructure) and would like to see more interaction between the EU delegations and the Member States (especially when it comes to finance and investment).

The main challenges to Cyprus development cooperation at the moment are:

- Human resources, which don't allow for meaningful implementation of development policies
- The need to re-institutionalise CyprusAid to enable more systematic cooperation

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

- **Areas/topics on which the Czech Republic would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies**
 - Better understanding of EU/EC financial modalities (e.g. Indirect management / Delegated cooperation) and procedures (in particular: Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA) negotiations)
 - Relevant information concerning Joint Programming and Joint Implementation issues
 - Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank opening up → would benefit from the experience of other partners
- **Most important in the short-term:** sharing of knowledge and exchange of ideas (e.g. EU/EC related issues – financial and implementation modalities)
- **Most important in the longer-term:** Joint Implementation issues (the signature of a project takes a long time even after the pillar assessment – it is a long process, which is a challenge for small agencies which have limited staff and resources)
- **Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange:**
 - Indirect management / Delegated cooperation related issues
 - Joint Programming and Joint Implementations (exchange of best practices, sharing of knowledge)
- **Willing to share expertise on:**
 - Technical assistance (exchange of experts, peer to peer learning): great experience from the pre-accession period, has already been a success in the transition countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Georgia...)
 - Cooperation with the private sector (CzechAid [B2B programme](#))
 - UNDP: exchange of experts in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (for 15 years already)
- **Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:**
 - Principles of delegated cooperation – ADA, other donors within the PN platform
 - Setting conditions for delegated cooperation project in Moldova – GIZ
 - Development cooperation program for the private sector – ADA, other donors within the PN platform
- **Focus for the PN:**
 - Knowledge and Experience sharing platform; provide agencies (also those who are pillar assessed) with a methodology on how to use development cooperation (model contracts, framework agreements) and to deal with joint programming/joint implementation → Facilitation role for the PN
 - Be very practical and concrete. Tools, platforms are useful but we should avoid a proliferation of webtools. What is important is to work on the ground, focus on concrete projects.
 - Retaining its strong role in negotiations towards the EC (arising from the fact that it gathers many Member States agencies and thus has much more power than Member States alone) and push it to **simplify** financial and administrative measures affecting Member States agencies.

DENMARK

Needs assessment and areas of interest for peer exchange with other EU practitioners^[1]

1. In which areas / on what topics would you benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?
2. Among the areas mentioned above, what would be the most important for you:
 - In the short-term:
 - In the longer-term:
3. What kind of activities or modalities for peer exchange would you be interested in
4. In which areas would your Member State/organisation be interested and willing to share expertise?
5. What experience do you have in peer exchange with other European operational development structures?
6. What type of activities that would be useful for you would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on ?

[1] The Danish focal point was not in a position to provide responses to those questions.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term: pillar assessment, operational structure + systems, evaluation and impact, private sector involvement etc. Estonia is particularly interested to learn about the experience and best practices of other Member States (some exchange already took place with Lithuania and with Norway to better understand the functioning of their agencies).

Most important in the longer-term:

- Theory and practice of pillar assessment. Lessons learnt by assessed institutions.
- Better understanding of operational structures and internal systems of the Member States operational agencies/institutions.
- Better understanding of the EU instruments.
- Regional cooperation (Africa, Central Asia).
- Networking with other donors.
- To learn through best practices of the other donors. Build up new relationships.
- Evaluation and impact.
- Policy coherence for development.
- Involvement of the private sector in development cooperation

Willing to share expertise on: know-how on Eastern partnership countries, developing a database for gathering ODA statistics from other ministries, e-governance, ICT and digital development, cyber-issues (cyber security - DACable or not?)

Activities and modalities for peer exchange:

- Workshops
- Trainings
- Exchange of views
- Bilateral consultations

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures: tradition of dialogue between 3 Baltic states (e.g. political issues, EU, UN, bilateral cooperation).

What should PN focus on: As we are quite new to the topic, it is difficult for us to suggest any focus topics. Would like to understand how this organisation functions and what are the main activities and how we can use their knowledge and best practices in order to develop our own systems and structures (added value of being part of the PN).

Needs assessment and areas of interest for peer exchange with other EU practitioners

These questions in general fall to the KEO-10 (Development Cooperation Policy) in the MFA. Unfortunately, they are very busy at the moment and not able to answer these questions

1. In which areas / on what topics would you benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?

Exchanges for example on joint programming are relevant, also remembering the country level.

2. Among the areas mentioned above, what would be the most important for you:

- - In the short-term:
- - In the longer-term:

3. What kind of activities or modalities for peer exchange would you be interested in?

4. In which areas would your Member State/organisation be interested and willing to share expertise?

5. What experience do you have in peer exchange with other European operational development structures?

6. What type of activities that would be useful for you would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on ?

Finland is currently not a member of the Practitioner's network, but the PN should avoid overlapping work, and seek synergies on exchanges done in other fora (like the OECD peer review etc.).

Needs assessment and areas of interest for peer exchange with other EU practitioners

1) In which areas / on what topics would you benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?

Expertise France

- Facilitating joint-implementation;
- Contracting modes between agencies: cross-reliance on rules and procedures;
- Facilitating the deployment of European public experts;
- Business structures & models;
- Project cycle management;
- Monitoring & evaluation mechanisms;
- Knowledge management;
- Management of pool of experts;
- Elaboration of national partnership strategies and institutional environment;
- Development of regional project offices (including in fragile context).

AFD

- exchanges of views on institutional and organizational issues
- operational strategies (thematic and/or countries / regions)
- modalities of interventions (and possibility to rely on "trustful partners" procedures),
- perspectives on operational partnerships

2) Among the areas mentioned above, what would be the most important for you:

Expertise France: see above

AFD: domains of intervention will primarily be based on the requests made by the partners, with a particular attention given to what the PN will have identified in terms of needs of Member States with no Agency, or with newer Agencies. AFD could indeed share with interested Member States its experience as a development bank and as an agency.

3) What kind of activities or modalities for peer exchange would you be interested in?

Expertise France

- Knowledge sharing on technical assistance and support in third countries (for example: mapping, access to the reports on similar projects, coordination meetings)
- Capitalization and dissemination tools to have a better picture of what is done by other Member States agencies;
- Mechanisms for sharing operational needs for public expertise from other Member States administration;
- Exchange of best practices and methodologies for monitoring & evaluation.

AFD

Modalities could include : organization of study tours in France and at AFD, participation to workshops, field visits...

4) In which areas would your Member State/organisation be interested and willing to share expertise?

Expertise France

- Expertise France would be interested in reinforcing collaboration for the mobilization of public expertise from Member States;
- The agency has a specific setting on partnership with sectoral ministries and public agencies;

- In some sector (statistics for example), Expertise France developed an important network with other Member States administrations: this cooperation is important to mix and value European expertise.
- Solid experience built within the department of Stability, International Security and Peace in specific areas: fight against the financing of terrorism, transitional justice and local justice, SRSS, CBRN, cyber security and maritime safety.

AFD

AFD is open to look with great attention to the requests made by other Member States / Member States agencies / organizations, so as to reinforce mutual understanding, peer exchange, and collaboration, on the variety of institutional and operational issues in which the Agency is involved..

5) What experience do you have in peer exchange with other European operational development structures?

Expertise France

- With agencies: From PN / On projects / Bilaterally.
- With sectoral ministries or agencies from other Member States: Poland Finland Netherlands Portugal Sweden Luxemburg Denmark Romania Belgium Spain

AFD

AFD has developed strong relations with Agencies and DFIs from other Member States (Germany, Spain, Italy, United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium...), through the PN, and through bilateral interactions, be they institutional or operational interactions (including co-financing, staff exchange, drafting of joint position papers...).

6) What type of activities that would be useful for you would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on ?

Expertise France

- Knowledge management
- Capitalization and mapping of the Member States priority sectors;
- Monitoring & evaluation systems;
- Governance, strengthening of structures.

AFD

Beyond the mapping exercise currently undergoing, the PN could focus its activities on :

- reinforcing knowledge sharing and dissemination between its members and the institutions of Member States not involved in the network, through organization of meetings, as it is already the case, or capitalization but also
- exploring possibilities for further reliance or modalities to facilitate joint implementation;
- facilitating the organization of study tours / missions in Europe (the organization in itself remaining a task of the national entities themselves).

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term:

> GIZ:

- Engaging in debates and create synergies with development finance institutions to position technical cooperation as enabler and enhancer of investments; this would aim at seeking strategic alliances also for the preparation of proposals of blending and technical assistance, for example in the framework of the External Investment Plan.
- Exchange on innovative financial instruments, as well as working with the private sector, in development cooperation.
- Working in fragile and volatile contexts: evaluate whether and under which circumstances synergies with EC and other Member States organisations could benefit the management of big and often complex programmes, in particular in the area of migration, resilience, social integration.
- Exchanging with the EC and other partners on other areas of interest, such as:
 - Demography and climate change
 - Agenda 2030 and joint results framework
 - Creation of sustainable employment (not just from a private sector view, but also within the discussion of value chains, social safety, etc.)

Most important in the longer-term:

> GIZ:

- Exchange experience and lessons learned on working with non-traditional partners, such as private foundations and impact investors, in order to better understand their needs in view of intensifying cooperation with a European perspective.
- Building on and promoting the concept of transitional aid among EU stakeholders (notably ECHO and its partners), a structured learning from them on relevant experiences in the humanitarian-development nexus, would be beneficial.
- Sharing information regarding security actors in beneficiary countries to avoid reputational risks while implementing security related projects.
- Sharing implementation experiences in public administration reforms

Willing to share expertise on:

> GIZ:

- Engaging in private sector development, including within beneficiary countries, as well as with private investors contributing to sustainable development;
- Digitalisation for sustainable development (D4D)
- Value chains
- working with multilateral organizations: bringing together the best of both development channels

Activities and modalities for peer exchange:

> GIZ:

- Bilateral exchanges with partner organisations, for example through video conferences, on specific areas of interest for both parties;
- Coordinated meetings/exchanges on specific topics or geographical areas; e.g. Trust Funds (partially already happening in the framework of the PN);
- Use the PN as a privileged entry point for more exchange with the European Commission (both DG DEVCO and DG NEAR, but also ECHO, FPI, EEAS, as well as other line DGs) for

- sharing experiences and gather others;
- Show-casing and further enhancing joint implementation experiences
 - Exchange on joint project conceptualization of technical and financial assistance

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

> GIZ:

- Bilateral workshop exchanges / study visits with other Member States implementing partners (e.g. with Enabel in GIZ HQ, March 2018, on the specific topic of private sector development);
- Support Member States organization studies on structures in other Member States, e.g. French study on “Seeking Agreement on Official Development Assistance” (2017) or Expertise France, stocktaking on other Member States (2018).
- Engaging in exchanges with Member States organisations, upon their request, and on different areas: setup of German development cooperation, delegated cooperation, organizational, contractual and financial issues, the PN, etc. Examples: exchange with Czech Aid in July 2018; exchange with RoAid in August 2018; exchange with AICS in September 2018; exchange with CPMA (February 2019).
- Leadership level meetings with one partner organisation on different common areas of interest, incl. exchanges on ongoing joint implementation and EU agenda.
- Consensus-building on framework conditions (i.e. EU financial regulation)
- Engaging in exchange with CODEV Council Working Group.

PN to focus on:

> GIZ:

- Bringing the field experience to Brussels (and to the EU)

GREECE

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview)

Most important in the short-term:

- How to involve the private sector in the delivery of ODA and the trade-off between public and private finance.
- They also are interested to know more about experiences in getting EFSD guarantee.

Activities and modalities for peer exchange: Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, focus on results. This could be done through the organization of meetings and exchange of visits.

Activities for the Practitioners Network to focus on: Best practices of development cooperation, including modalities.

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures

- During the preparation of Greece's Voluntary National Review (VNR) in the framework of the 2018 UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, meetings were organized with representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of EU m-s and Mediterranean countries that have already conducted VNRs in the framework of the HLPFs of 2016 or 2017. The purpose of the meetings were peer learning and exchange of expertise and respective experiences, through the wider sharing of successful policies/approaches.

- During the preparation of the National Plan for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), meetings with representatives of EU countries which already have drafted their National Plans for the SDGs were organized for sharing of experience and know-how as regards the implementation of the National Plans (including the monitoring process) and policy coherence between national and international policies. These meetings offered the opportunity for the exchange of valuable insights on successful policies, best practices and approaches.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term:

- Identifying partners for joint projects among implementing agencies, IDC implementation bodies. This would include assistance in engaging with European Member State organizations on respective initiatives, such as the EU External Investment Plan (EIP), as well as sectoral focus based partnerships;
- Evaluation and monitoring systems, effective and result-based ODA management system, strengthening the project-management system

Most important in the longer-term:

- Involvement of the private sector in development cooperation including new approaches to increase impact of private sector engagement for development;
- Advice on alternatives and approaches in establishing a development aid agency (or other entity) which would be in a position to pass successfully the EU Pillar Assessment Report, and thus become an entity entrusted with implementation of the EU IDC budget under indirect management and also become active in the involvement of the private sector;
- Information, guidance and consultation with regard to the implementation of the EU External Investment Plan, on blended finance and other innovative finance for development instruments;
- Identification of (a) best practices in methodology to demonstrate the leverage effect options for Hungarian ODA contributions and (b) organizational/institutional changes, including undertaking of DG DEVCOs pillar assessment, needed to leverage further funds.

Willing to share expertise on: expertise in water management, irrigation, water purification sector. However, other IDC implementation entities would also need to be consulted, prior to finalizing the list of expertise-sharing areas.

Activities and modalities for peer exchange: It is often not the specific format (i.e. traditional tools, such as workshops, seminars, trainings, or 'learning from failure meetings') that matters, rather the professional level of implementation, attention to details (i.e. prior knowledge-need assessment, preparedness of moderator, ensuring interactivity etc.).

Experience suggests that besides the new knowledge and skills gained from working together on a specific project, exchange visits and mentoring, coaching relationships could also prove to be very useful.

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures: The Department has not had significant recent experience in this area.

IRELAND

Needs assessment and areas of interest for peer exchange with other EU practitioners^[1]:

1. In which areas / on what topics would you benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?
2. Among the areas mentioned above, what would be the most important for you?
 - In the short-term:
 - In the longer-term:
3. What kind of activities and modalities for peer exchange would you be interested in?
4. In which areas would your agency/organisation be interested and willing to share expertise?
5. What experience do you have in peer exchange with other European operational development structures?
6. What activities would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on?

[1] No responses provided by the Irish focal point.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term:

- Exchange visits (Headquarters and at country level).
- Joint studies and events

Useful in the short-term:

- EU Joint programming and Joint implementation (special focus on: JP and promotion of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, added value of JP process and on added value of joint monitoring and evaluation)
- Built and reinforce a system or culture for results based management
- Policy Coherence, National coordination among actors providing development cooperation
- EU Joint programming and Joint implementation
- New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States
- Private sector engagement
- Triangular Cooperation
- Climate Change

Most important in the longer-term:

- Thematic guidelines (ad es. Gender, Health, Disability, Environment Food security and agriculture, humanitarian and development nexus)
- Human resources (recruitment, training, performance evaluation)
- National coordination among actors providing development cooperation
- Gender mainstreaming

Willing to share expertise on:

Involvement of diaspora organizations on development cooperation activities.

What activities would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on?

- Relevance of joint implementation modalities and opportunities
- Strengthening mutual Knowledge on implementing delegated cooperation projects (EU indirect management)
- Strengthening mutual knowledge and exchange in order to collaborate more effectively in fragile contexts
- Private sector involvement
- Migration and Development -Trust Funds Madad and EUT: identification of joint added-value Member States working better together on the Migration topic at large).

LATVIA

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term: *experience of other small EU Member States' with regard to the development agency establishment/functions, etc.; experience on private sector involvement in development cooperation activities; knowing more about potential opportunities for synergies in the context of joint programming*

Most important in the longer-term: *n/a*

Willing to share expertise on: *activities in the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia countries (sectors: Education, Government and Civil Society, Business, Agriculture).*

Activities and modalities for peer exchange: *Meetings/ Seminars, etc.*

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:
No regular exchange with other Member States or experience in the PN on the above

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Areas / topics on which Lithuania would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies

MFA: as a priority task, we consider growing and strengthening Lithuanian development cooperation community (institutions, NGOs, business) through engagement in joint activities, funded by the state budget, jointly with private funds or by EU or other donors, thereby raising awareness of development cooperation in the society and creating a favorable environment for increasing ODA. In this regard, we see the benefits of participating in Joint Programming and EU financial instruments. Such involvement would also help to expand the geography of Lithuanian development cooperation (beyond priority countries) and contribute to the transfer of reform experience.

CPMA:

Management of EU funded projects implemented under the indirect management modality;
Working under the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA);

Most important for CPMA in the short-term:

1. Sharing the Lithuania's institutional experience and strengths accumulated while working in twinning projects (especially IPA, ENI regions);
2. Exchanging of lessons learned and other experience with other PN members (when implementing twinning, other projects);
3. Strengthening the cooperation with the PN members e.g. be in the consortiums of large scale programs, sharing various practices in contractual management in certain countries, other.

Most important for CPMA in the longer-term:

1. be present in other regions and countries as partners and/or implementers of EU funded programs/projects as currently the regions in which CPMA is present are IPA and ENI countries,
2. Increase number of contracts managed under the indirect management mode/modality,
3. Become a twinning competency center
4. Have longer programmes and financing adapted to needs, expand modalities (beyond grants)

Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange (CPMA):

Management of EU funded projects implemented under the indirect management modality;
Working under the Financial Framework Partnership Agreement (FFPA);
Future tendencies of the EU Development Cooperation, strategic sectoral planning, priorities for the regional coverage.

CPMA willing to share expertise on:

Administration and implementation of various EU and other Donors' funded programmes.

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

MFA: participation in EU expert groups and trainings, bilateral visits, participation in OECD DAC peer-review of Ireland.

CPMA:

Main CPMA activities: 1. Administration and implementation of various EU and other Donors' funded programmes. 2. Implementation under the indirect modality.

Since 2018, CPMA together with MFA is conducting study visits to the EU Implementing Agencies

(FIIAPP, AECID, SIDA) for the purpose of exchange of information on the activities, exploring areas for cooperation.

Focus for the Practitioners Network (CPMA):

Cooperation in implementation of various projects (under the indirect modality, Twinning) and other activities like exchange of experience.

Need for more practical trainings to discuss practical issues (PN as 'practitioners' could help for that)

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Areas / topics on which Luxembourg would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies:

- Knowledge management systems – Exchange/repository of good practices
- Private sector experiences + PPPs, private sector engagement, innovative partnerships for concrete development results
- M&E methodology and techniques including data management systems /measuring progress in relation to the SDGs, Leaving no one behind, effectiveness principles
- Performance based delivery approaches
- EU Joint programming and implementation
- Co-financing policies and practices
- Fragile states/Nexus (development-humanitarian) + triple nexus (Dev-Hum-Security)
- ICT for development
- Gender and environment/climate change

Most important in the short-term: Private sector engagement, PPPs, EU joint programming, data management and progress/performance management (in relation to the SDGs specifically), operational and financial issues related to the EU funding (EIP, new tools in the MFF)

Most important in the longer-term: Co-financing modalities, thematic areas (gender, climate, etc.), Joint implementation mechanisms, update of the development effectiveness agenda

Willing to share expertise on:

- Pooled funding, operational partnerships, common financing
- Local development in fragile contexts (based on its experience in the Sahel)

Activities and modalities for peer exchange:

- Bilateral meetings with peer agencies (in limited number), sharing of experiences and practices.
- Online communities of practice and networks.

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

- VET alliance, participation in a number of peer reviews, joint evaluations, joint implementation
- Exchange on all topics of the PN and participation in various working groups
- Experience sharing in/on delegated cooperation, pillar assessment, financing mechanisms, etc.
- Many field experiences with EU Member States – ENABEL, AFD, etc

Activities for the PN to focus on:

- PN has a clear comparative advantage on operational and financial issues related to EU funding instruments and mechanisms for development and external action.
- Federating EU aid implementing organisations
- Exchange of best practices
- Ad hoc subjects of common members' interests

Needs assessment and areas of interest for peer exchange with other EU practitioners

1. In which areas / on what topics would you benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?

Cooperation amongst Member States would be helpful, especially exchange of best practices between Member States with a similar set-up to Malta (i.e. limited staff and Representations on the ground).

2. Among the areas mentioned above, what would be the most important for you:

- In the short-term:

Areas of cooperation could be the: implementation on development projects, capacity building opportunities and the involvement of the private sector.

- In the longer-term:

The longer term. The ODA projects we co-finance must have a firm aspect of sustainability and resilience to be able to provide a ripple effect in the community in which it is implemented.

3. What kind of activities or modalities for peer exchange would you be interested in?

Exchange of best practices.

4. In which areas would your Member State/organisation be interested and willing to share expertise?

Malta is focusing on providing capacity building opportunities such as training in fire fighting and banking. These courses are held in Malta and are fully covered for the participants. In 2018 we offered fire-fighting training to Ghanaian fire fighters and a banking course to Gambian Central Bank officers. Additionally we also provide a number of scholarships for Master of Arts degrees to recipients from various countries, offered by the University of Malta.

Therefore, the provision of capacity building to citizens of ODA-eligible countries can be shared by Malta in the future.

5. What experience do you have in peer exchange with other European operational development structures?

None so far.

6. What type of activities that would be useful for you would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on ?

NETHERLANDS

Needs assessment and areas of interest for peer exchange with other EU practitioners^[1]

- 1) In which areas / on what topics would you benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?
- 2) Among the areas mentioned above, what would be the most important for you:
 - In the short-term:
 - In the longer-term:
- 3) What kind of activities or modalities for peer exchange would you be interested in?
- 4) In which areas would your Member State/organisation be interested and willing to share expertise?
- 5) What experience do you have in peer exchange with other European operational development structures?
- 6) What type of activities that would be useful for you would you like the Practitioners Network to focus on ?

[1] No responses provided from Netherlands focal point

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in short-term: pros and cons of having a central development agency, result based management, private sector in development.

Most important in the long term: quality education, entrepreneurship and private sector, health/clean water, reduction of inequalities (disabled people); migrations, megacities and climate actions.

Kind of activities and modalities interested to have peer exchange:

- Result based management.
- Pros and cons of having a central development agency.
- Private sector in development.

Areas interested and willing to share expertise: Good governance, democracy and human rights, education, crisis management.

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures

- Our experts made peer reviews in Norway and Slovenia.
- We are the part of Learn4DEV platform.
- Also, we benefit from bilateral visits to Ireland, Sweden and to the Netherlands.
- In 2016 our development structures and mechanisms were verified by OECD 's peer review.

Activities for the PN to focus on: Middle income countries – which are the most important group of countries for the Polish development cooperation, public administration and private sector.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

> **CAMOES I.P.**

Most important in the short-term:

- Finding the adequate human resources to work in cooperation
- Internal monitoring system centred on results-based management
- Evaluation system with the adequate resources

Most important in the longer-term:

- Increase ODA
- Fit to purpose – the organization better respond to development cooperation challenges

Willing to share expertise on:

- Education and health
- Capacity development
- Legislative changes in terms of hiring development cooperation staff (e.g. Cooperation Agents)
- Methodology to measure the impact of private investment on SDGs
- Setting up and implementation of the Lusophone Compact with the African Portuguese-speaking countries

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

- The main prior experience in peer exchange has happened in the context of DAC's Peer Reviews.

Activities for the PN to focus on:

- Joint programming and joint implementation challenges
- Private sector involvement in development cooperation including blended finance

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term:

> **MFA:** we are interested in the following experiences of other MS:

- The practical modalities of cooperation/ “division of labour” between the MFA and the development agency in other MS, how to ensure good flow of communication;
- The modalities that other MFAs use to engage/liaise with their diplomatic missions in the development cooperation field;
- The modalities of cooperation between the department in charge with development cooperation in the MFA and the other geographic/thematic departments in the ministry (we are interested especially in the experiences of MS that have an MFA + development agency type of institutional structure).
- General internal setup in other MS with regard to development cooperation.
- Joint programming

> **RoAid:** a stronger cooperation with EU and other Member States implementing agencies is most useful with regard to:

- Joint efforts for development (specific projects with joint funding) for greater impact;
- Involvement of private sector;
- Know how in implementation of EU projects;
- Wider expertise on working procedures and ODA reporting

Most important in the longer-term:

More structural and long-term needs concerning RoAid: territorial offices (eg. in countries where there is no diplomatic mission), increased funding and a viable public-private partnership for development.

Willing to share expertise on:

interested in sharing its own transition experience and in capacity building of MFA/RoAid with regard to development cooperation.

> **RoAid:** interested in sharing expertise with regard to projects concerning the energy sector, peace and security, disaster risk reduction and management of emergency situations.

Activities and modalities for peer exchange: N/A

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

exchange with the Netherlands on their development system; exchange with Finland in the framework of the UE Council Trio Presidency; exchange with Sweden on relationship between agency and MFA (information-sharing, working methods, informal channels of communication, etc)

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Most important in the short-term:

SAIDC: Results based management; Project evaluation/ field monitoring

MFEA: How to apply to EU projects (setting up consortium, capacity building)

Most important in the longer-term: Private sector engagement; Humanitarian aid strategies; Gender in International Development; Migration and International Development; Better visibility and Public Relations strategies; Sustainability of development projects and exit strategies

Willing to share expertise on: Transformation processes (building on Slovakia's recent experience in building rule of law and state institutions, democratisation of society, implementation of reforms and building market environment, as well as integration into the EU and NATO); Regional expertise on post-communist countries, including the Western Balkans countries (Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania) and Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia); Regional expertise from the Sub-Saharan countries – Kenya (SAIDC's priority country) and South Sudan (humanitarian aid programme).

Prior experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

Austrian Development Agency (ADA) – bilateral consultations on private sector engagement, humanitarian aid, framework agreements and gender in international development; Czech Aid - bilateral consultations on private sector engagement – enhancement of Business Partnership Programme and public tenders set up

Activities and modalities for peer exchange: Consultations, workshops, traineeships, study visits etc. Interested to know what other modalities are available?

Activities for the PN to focus on: Inclusiveness of new members and emerging donors in joint project implementation. Once the SAIDC has the ISO 9001 and becomes Pillar Assessed, we will welcome the PN help in this regard – how to get involved in a systematic way.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

- **Areas / topics on which Slovenia would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies**

- Private sector and CSOs cooperation within external financial instruments (the future NDICI instrument)
- Blending of Slovenian ODA instruments with EU and other donors' financing
- More complex financing arrangements for mobilization of private funds
- Shared representation in the partner countries
- As a newer Member State, Slovenia is increasing its development assistance which presents challenge ahead and requires to learn from others to ensure best effectiveness.

- **Most important in the short-term:** access to information (from the network or peer learning – including on which Member States take part in which EU instruments and projects), learn from best practices, to be more involved in the programming and implementation procedure of projects. The exchange of expertise, good practices from the field and opportunities for synergies and networking with other stakeholders.

- **Most important in the longer-term:** to be actively involved in the process of implementation of joint projects (joint programming and joint implementation, pending establishment of relevant representations in the partners countries, perhaps concluding consortia). Exchange of information and experience in regions where Slovenia is not present in the field and cooperation with development agencies within Practitioners Network.

- **Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange:**

Networking events on specific topics, comparative surveys with illustration of best practices, concrete examples of co-operation on specific projects.

- **Willing to share expertise on:**

- NGO projects and piloting cooperation between NGOs and private sector
- Experience and strong know-how in the Western Balkans, share good practices
- Twinning experience

- **Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:**

Slovene development cooperation was subject to DAC Peer Review in 2017.

- **Focus for the PN:**

Strengthening good practices on involving the private sector in development cooperation (including, but not limited to the role of DFI), including in regions where the Slovenian private sector is not yet much present through development cooperation.

The MFA is interested in becoming an observer/member of the PN, but does it have to be pillar assessed?

SPAIN

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Areas/topics on which Spain would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies

- Monitoring
- Knowledge management
- Communication
- Financial Cooperation
- Cooperation with the Private sector

Activities and modalities for peer exchange:

Workshops, training seminars, field and HQ trips, improvement of communication tools and spaces like the PN website members area.

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

Among others with DEVCO and KfW. Regarding DEVCO, ENDS have been a long term and very much appreciated exchange modality.

SWEDEN

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received and the interview):

Areas/topics on which Sweden would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies

Continued exchange on education in emergencies (conversation has already started), monitoring of the SDGs/capacity building of partners for SDG-monitoring (first meeting scheduled for 24 April). Possibly also exchange on anti-corruption (both in terms of support to the fight against corruption in countries and in terms of actions to avoid corruption in the programmes we fund).

Most important among the areas mentioned above:

No strong opinion, but probably wise to first follow-through on what has already been initiated, and add additional topics at a later stage.

Activities and modalities for peer exchange:

- Meetings in the existing PN network/working groups.
- Invite people from HQ to come and make presentations

Sida willing to share expertise in:

- SRHR
- Gender equality (work stream for gender equality already exist – Sida and GIZ are co-leads)
- Anti-corruption.

Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:

Sida has a wide range of exchanges with European development partners, both at HQ and at field-level (through the Sida staff posted at our embassies).

Focus for the PN:

Education in emergencies, monitoring of the SDGs/capacity building of partners for SDG monitoring, anti-corruption, SRHR, gender equality

Sweden does not have significant needs, but is willing to adapt to the needs of smaller MS.

Needs assessment (based on the questionnaire received from DFID, NICO and inputs from BC):

- **Areas / topics in which you would benefit from stronger cooperation and peer exchange with the EU and other Member States' implementing agencies?**

DFID: Broadly: Delegated cooperation opportunities, partnering, joint programming, effective use of aid. Themes: Migration, peace and security and humanitarian

Most important in the short-term: All

Most important in the longer-term: All

BC: Joint implementation. Themes: education, gender, economic development/private sector, culture (development, creative economy), and monitoring and evaluation

NI-CO: Justice and Home Affairs, Health and Social Development, Governance, Regulatory Services

Most important in the short-term: NI-CO is interested in supporting all EU development focussed programmes

Most important in the longer-term: NI-CO is interested in expanding on recent proposals to expand the EC Twinning programme to S Asia, Central and S America

- **Interest in the following activities and modalities for peer exchange:**

DFID: Themes as mentioned above. In terms of modalities we would be most interested in delegated cooperation / transfer agreement peer exchange as well as joint programming progress.

BC: In terms of modalities we would be most interested in joint implementation progress. Could be done as a group and bilaterally.

NI-CO: As a government body, Institutional Twinning would be of greatest interest.

- **Areas in which your agency/organisation would be interested and willing to share expertise?**

DFID: Moving forwards we would be willing to share expertise on our modalities and on thematic areas we would be willing to share expertise on migration issues, peace and security, and humanitarian issues.

BC: education, gender, economic development/private sector, culture (development, creative economy), and monitoring and evaluation.

NI-CO: All areas of government

- **Experience in peer exchange with other European operational development structures:**

DFID: We have peer exchange at country level (DFID, EU Delegations and EU MS) as well as at HQ level through secondments and regular dialogue with DEVCO, EEAS, ECHO.

BC: At Brussels level, we have peer exchange within the PN.

NI-CO: N/A

- **Activities for the PN to focus on:**

DFID: Joint working and collaboration opportunities

NI-CO: Development policy and programming 2019/2020, Development of more programmes for PAGODA bodies and greater coordination and support for Institutional Twinning.