EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION SYNTHESIS 2020 – 2022

This report presents a synthesis of findings found within all evaluations carried out by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) from July 2020 to March 2022. It presents recurring findings on evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability), as well as crosscutting findings and lessons relevant to the organization based on an analysis of the recommendations and compares these where relevant to the previous synthesis conducted in 2020.

Main findings on evaluation criteria

The OSCE continues to provide relevant, welcome support for participating States in the areas of work that fall under the three dimensions of security. The OSCE is valued for its flexibility and adaptability, providing relevant support for stakeholders and government partners. It fills gaps in the security sector ecosystem through its holistic approach, bringing together a wide array of stakeholders and providing both technical support and soft skills.

Insights into the effectiveness of the OSCE's work remain limited. Most OSCE interventions delivered planned project outputs and contributed to intermediate outcomes, but (contributions to) long-term outcomes are often not measured. Achievements in national ownership and related potential for sustainability of OSCE work were noted, but predefined exit-strategies are often still lacking. While external coherence was assessed positively in most evaluations, internal coherence across OSCE executive structures (ES) remains an area for improvement.

CROSSCUTTING FINDINGS

Covid-19 did not significantly impact the Organization's ability to deliver project outputs, as most projects adapted to a hybrid format in line with standard working practices in the post-pandemic period. Gender mainstreaming – through increasing staff and sometimes stakeholder awareness of gender as an important aspect – has seen progress in the past two years, but more long-term change remains unmeasured. More generally, there is a lack of results-based management, including results monitoring and reporting. Finally, high turnover of staff in combination with limited knowledge management practices present risks for the OSCE's institutional memory.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM RECOMMENDATIONS

The most frequent recommendations included development of monitoring and evaluation, continuing ongoing work, and providing individual capacity building. The top-10 evaluation recommendations indicate the importance of investing in a 'whole of the OSCE' approach towards results through better strategic planning, better co-ordination of activities, and better monitoring and evaluation. To ensure evaluations are used for decision making, accountability and learning purposes, there is also a need to improve the quality of evaluations.