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Evaluation Synthesis 2020 – 2022

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List of Abbreviations

ATU Action against Terrorism Unit (OSCE)

BMSC Border Management Security College (OSCE)

CPC Conflict Prevention Centre (OSCE)

ES Executive Structures (of the OSCE)

ESCR Economic, social and cultural rights

ODIHR Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE)

OIO Office of Independent Oversight (OSCE)

OMiK OSCE Mission in Kosovo

OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PiA OSCE Presence in Albania

POiB OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek

pS Participating States

TNTD Transnational Threats Department (OSCE)

TOR Terms of Reference

VERLT Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism

WIGs Women's Initiative Groups



1. Introduction

This report synthesizes findings across all evaluations conducted by the OSCE in the period between July 2020 and March 2022. It aims to identify recurrent findings on the evaluation criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and sustainability, as well as crosscutting findings and lessons that are of relevance to the OSCE at large and that can inform organizational learning.

The report uses the [2021 OSCE Synthesis of Evaluations | OSCE](#) as a baseline, when appropriate and possible, which itself used the [2018 Meta Evaluation of Recurrent Findings in OIO Evaluations | OSCE](#) as a basis on which to compare developments in results on selected evaluation criteria. Both of these two exercises were commissioned by OIO.

The synthesis was conducted in parallel to a quality assessment of decentralized evaluations conducted between July 2020 and March 2022. The scope of this report includes both Independent Evaluations conducted by OIO and decentralized evaluations commissioned by other OSCE executive structures.

The questions guiding the synthesis review included:

- **What is the Organization's performance in the areas of select evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness and sustainability?**
- **What are the cross-cutting findings that can be drawn from the evaluations conducted?**
- **What lessons can be drawn from the synthesis of recommendations issued in the evaluation reports?**

This synthetic review was primarily desk-based, relying on qualitative analysis of the evaluation reports, and when necessary additional project documents for further information. Desk review was supported by ongoing simultaneous OIO exercises being carried out, with a mapping of the evaluation universe in the OSCE which identified evaluation coverage over the past seven years, as well as the quality assessment exercise already mentioned. First, all evaluations carried out in the period 2020-2022 were identified based on the mapping exercise. Next, evaluation reports were assessed using the analytical framework discussed above, evaluating performance based on select evaluation criteria while also identifying cross-cutting findings. Internal peer review was carried out by OIO evaluation staff.

There were several important limitations to the exercise. First, varying evaluation coverage of different thematic dimensions/areas of OSCE

work limited direct comparisons to the result from the prior synthesis conducted in 2020, thus reducing the coherence of a complete snapshot of the overall progress made in each of the OSCE's dimension.

Second, varying quality of evaluation reports was a recurring challenge to extracting credible findings, even when triangulated through additional project documents. The overall extractability of evidence from the written reports provided in at least half of the evaluations included in this dataset was low. When findings were repeated or pointed to recurrent issues, these were highlighted as crosscutting findings, regardless of whether a systematic use of evaluation criteria, assessment terminology, and rigorous methodology were evident. Four evaluations contained no discernible findings at all, and these were excluded from the set.

A third limitation is that the quality assessment of decentralized evaluation reports was finalized after the synthesis exercise. The quality assessment, which scored decentralized evaluation reports according to the standard UNEG quality assurance checklist, was conducted by a different evaluation team and partly overlapped with the synthesis. Although the quality assessment did not directly inform the outcome and findings of this report, it does show overlap in the

identification of reports of unsatisfactory quality and hence limited “usability” for the purposes of this synthesis exercise.

A fourth limitation is the lack of a results framework corresponding to the OSCE dimensions of work, i.e. intended results for each dimension of work which could serve as a long-term marker of progress. The majority of evaluations assess the relevance and results of individual projects or programmes, but often lack an assessment of the contribution to larger organizational goals. This limits not only possibilities for evaluation, but also provides challenges to synthesizing evaluation findings with regard to effectiveness.

A fifth and final limitation/note is the relative weight given to each evaluation report: some reports contributed more credible findings than others, as they were based on a larger, more reliable dataset and analysis. This is particularly the case for OIO evaluations which were cross-cutting, organization-wide (rather than for a particular project/field office/structure/institution). A good example of this is the strong presence of findings from the OIO Evaluation of Results-Based Management, which is echoed in many decentralized evaluation reports but contains a more detailed data set and analysis with specific, usable findings.

The remainder of this synthesis report is structured as follows: the second section introduces the portfolio of evaluations in the various dimensions of the organization, commissioned at both the decentralized level by Executive Structures and conducted at the centralized level by the OIO in the period July 2020 – March 2022. The third section presents findings for the selected evaluation criteria. The fourth section presents cross cutting findings that were synthesized from all reports. The fifth section presents a synthesis of recommendations issued in the evaluation reports.

2. Evaluation portfolio for the period

The OSCE has a comprehensive approach to security. It operates via the consensus of 57 participating States, and programmes carried out by Executive Structures and field offices. Evaluations covered all dimensions of the OSCE's work, including the politico-military dimension, the economic and environmental dimension, the human dimension and cross-dimensional issues of programmatic (e.g. Independent Evaluation of Counter-terrorism) and non-programmatic nature (e.g. Independent Evaluation of Results-Based Management).

The below table shows the number of evaluations by year and by dimension.

TABLE 1. OSCE EVALUATIONS FROM THIRD QUARTER 2020 – SECOND QUARTER 2022

Dimension	2020	2021	2022	Total
Cross Dimensional	0	5	2	6
Economic & Environmental Dimension	0	3	1	4
Human Dimension	4	8	0	12
Politico-military dimension	3	6	3	12
Grand Total	7	20	5	35

Of the total of 35 evaluations, 32 were decentralized evaluation reports commissioned by Executive Structures and three were Independent Evaluations from the OIO. All Independent Evaluations are considered cross-cutting, of which there are three.¹

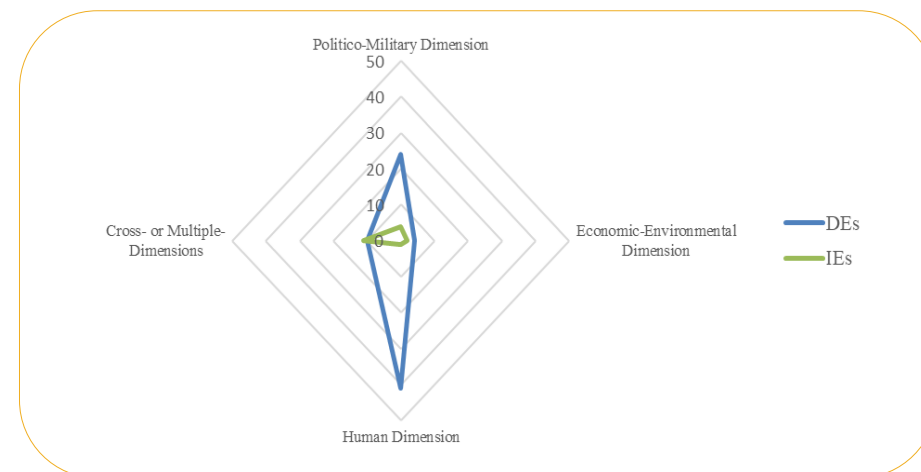
¹ The OIO evaluation on Results-Based Management was ongoing during the prior synthesis, but only completed in 2021. Therefore some, but not all data from that evaluation was included in the prior synthesis.

Politico-Military Dimension	Economic & Environmental Dimension	Human Dimension	Cross-Dimensional Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Prevention & Resolution • Arms Control & Non-Proliferation • Reform & Co-operation in the Security Sector • Policing • Border Management • Transnational Threats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Governance • Environment • Economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections • Democratization • Human Rights & Fundamental Freedoms • Tolerance & Non-Discrimination • Roma & Sinti Issues • Freedom of the Media • Inclusive/Integrated Education • Dialogue Towards Political, Cultural & Social Cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmatic Issues • Non-Programmatic Issues

Of the 32 decentralized evaluations reviewed, only 28 were used to develop findings for the current evaluation synthesis exercise. Four decentralized evaluations were of insufficient quality, meaning that no credible evidence base was presented for the findings, and these were not used as a data source. In total, the data used for this synthesis comes from 28 decentralized evaluation reports and 3 central evaluation reports from 2020-2022, in the period following the previous synthesis exercise (for an overview see Annex 2).

² The quality of decentralized evaluation reports was assessed using 48 criteria from the “UNEG Quality Checklist for Evaluation Reports” as well as six criteria related to the evaluation Terms of Reference. The scoring ranged from 4 (highest) to 1 (lowest).

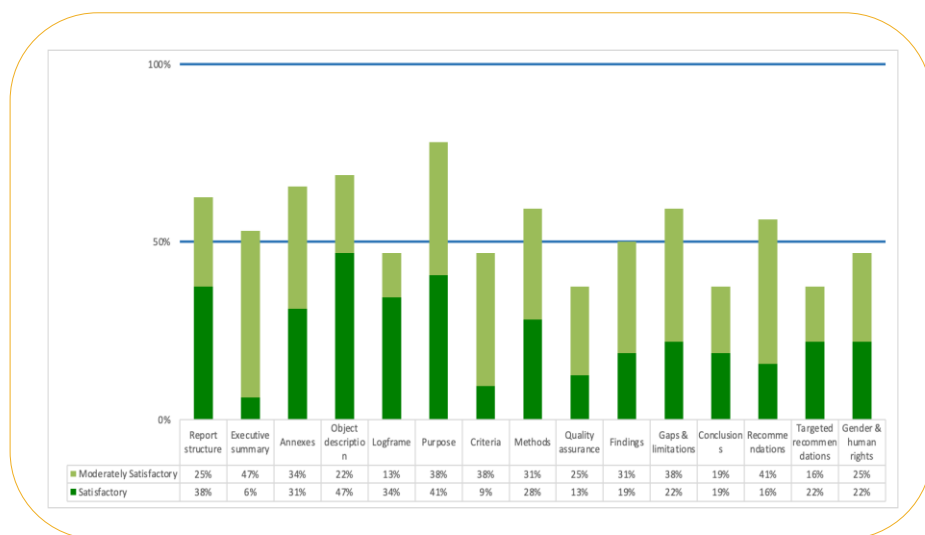
Figure 1. Coverage of all Dimensions of Security by OSCE Evaluations 2015 – Q1 2022



The quality assessment conducted in parallel with this synthesis demonstrates that the overall quality of the decentralized evaluation reports varied widely.² Half of the decentralized evaluation reports were scored at satisfactory or moderately satisfactory level (above 2.5), while the other half were scored at the moderately unsatisfactory and unsatisfactory level. The quality of the evaluation sections within the decentralized evaluation reports often varied as well. Some reports exhibited a very strong ‘Background’ and ‘Evaluation Methods’ sections,

while others had strong 'Findings' and 'Conclusions' sections. The below figure illustrates the scoring of the 32 reports on 15 key quality criteria for evaluation reports.

Figure 2. Percent of DE reports with a (moderately) satisfactory score by key quality criteria



often not possible to verify the quality of findings in-depth, this synthesis should be read with this disclaimer.

The quality assessment indicates a need for improving the quality of decentralized evaluations to produce robust evidence for accountability and learning. As this synthesis is largely based on the findings presented in the decentralized evaluation reports, and it was



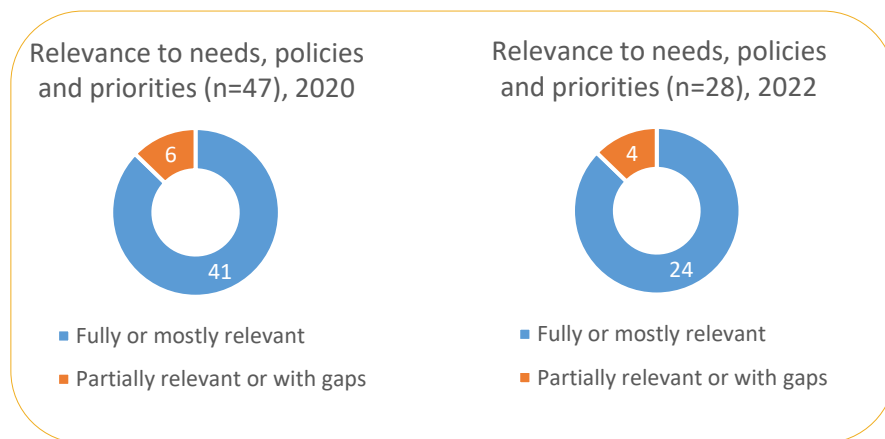
3. OSCE performance against select evaluation criteria

3.1 RELEVANCE

✓ **Finding 1:** Most OSCE interventions continued to be relevant to both OSCE priorities and needs of participating States (pS).

The majority of evaluations found OSCE interventions to be relevant to national priorities and needs, while also in line with the OSCE priorities and major areas of work in the three dimensions (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Relevance



Nearly a third of the evaluations specifically reported that the OSCE projects supported EU accession processes by bringing their national and state practices in line with European Union norms and standards. An example includes the evaluation of support to water management in Dniester ([GEF Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin](#)).

OSCE field offices are recorded as best understanding stakeholder's specific needs. National ownership of activities was mentioned in the majority of evaluations as a strength (in over ten evaluations). Only one evaluation noted a lack of buy-in from national partners (the evaluation of Parliamentary Support in Albania). Three evaluations reported that Secretariat-based support and interventions could be somewhat too theoretical rather than practical in terms of implementation and feasibility. In four evaluations, the shortcoming noted was a need for a capacity needs assessment to be conducted to ensure more impactful activities.

The 2020 synthesis also reported that the majority of evaluations confirmed that the interventions evaluated were relevant to stakeholder needs and policies. The gaps highlighted by the 2020 synthesis for the 7 evaluations that scored as only partially relevant were: lack of full alignment with national priorities, lack of strategic

focus on country needs, and whether all activities within projects were relevant. The current synthesis did not note similar gaps, except for the lack of strategic focus, which will be discussed further below.

✓ **Finding 2:** The OSCE is valued for being adaptable and flexible, especially in comparison to other international and national organizations, while a lack of clarity on its role and strategic focus is pointed out as a relative weakness

The OSCE primarily engages in relevant, timely support for stakeholders and government partners. The Organization's relative lack of bureaucratic formalities to provide support, compared to national and international organizations and structures, allows it a level of flexibility that has been praised by partners of most executive structures. The lack of a highly centralized organizational structure likely supports this comparative advantage of the OSCE, making it a go-to partner despite having limited financial resources. An example of a well-adapted, relevant and localized project included support to the Ministry of Education and Sciences in Ukraine ([Evaluation of HCNM Support to MoESU MLE Pilot 2021](#)).

The other side of the coin of being flexible and adaptable is the critique that the OSCE lacks a clear role and strategic focus. The precise role

and responsibility of the OSCE is not always clear for stakeholders, a finding that was mentioned in several evaluation reports. This can be exacerbated by changing mandates of individual missions, the lack of clear objectives at the organizational level, and the varying types of support in diverse thematic areas that the OSCE provides. This, combined with an unreliable stream of financial resources, makes it sometimes hard to know what the OSCE can offer at any given point, and precisely what is its role on the ground – at times it is an executing agency, service provider, advisor, facilitator, etc. This was highlighted in two evaluation reports ([Evaluation of HCNM Support to MoESU MLE Pilot 2021](#); [External Evaluation of the project "The OSCE Support to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda"](#)).

The OSCE struggles to get buy-in for politically sensitive topics; the Secretariat and certain Executive Structures can be seen as oscillating between being too external (i.e. not having a needs-based programme) or otherwise overly cautious (i.e. not responding to actual and identified needs in order to avoid politically-sensitive, potentially gridlocking situations for pS). In particular, a point mentioned during the evaluation of support to Armenian parliamentarians as well as during the mediation support evaluation was that the OSCE could do more in terms of facilitating dialogue and mediation within high conflict

situations. Further, mediation and dialogue should be carried out as part of a comprehensive strategy at various levels – individual, organizational and political. Otherwise, there will be limited visible change and impact in even the short term.

✓ **Finding 3:** The OSCE fills gaps in the security sector ecosystem through its holistic approach to security, bringing together a wide array of stakeholders and providing both technical support and soft skills.

Six evaluations noted that the OSCE has a unique ability to analyze soft and hard aspects of the security sector, and brings a holistic view to what is needed and how it can effectively support stakeholders at the national level. There are numerous examples of this, such as the Women’s Initiative Groups (WIGs). Stakeholders indicated that WIGs fill a gap where formal reporting is not common, related to domestic violence in particular, and is an effective strategy to tackle Gender Based Violence. WIGs have dedicated communities, with members providing important advisory and support services to victims of GBV, filling a gap in linkages between victims and state support by guiding beneficiaries through the available procedures and channels. The OSCE manages to fill these gaps as they provide support with limited

bureaucracy, as evidenced by WIGs and corroborated by stakeholders in at least three Executive Structures.

The Diversity Management Training Tool of the High Commissioner for National Minorities is another positive example of highly relevant, sought after work of the OSCE. The local context in this case in the Balkans region required a soft-approach to inclusion, and the approach of education and awareness building in schools was localized and relevant ([Evaluation of Diversity Management Training Tool 2021](#)).

Along the lines of the unique comprehensive approach, three evaluations further noted that the OSCE engages in innovative work. A ‘whole of society’ approach to security put forth by the OSCE is appreciated by partners in all Participating States as unique, innovative and highly relevant ([Independent Evaluation and Analysis of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo’s Engagement in Activities Related to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism \(VERLT\): Looking Back and Looking Forward](#)).

The technical quality of interventions was praised in six evaluations. The Project Office in Dushanbe for the Border Management Security College (BMSC) evaluation was among the six to report that the OSCE enacted a high quality project, based on best practices. Relevance was

increased in these cases through participatory methods of design and localized materials—in the case of the BMSC, localized curricula. Another example was the case of the ODIHR project Words in Action, which was reported as being based on best practices and delivering an effective, holistic package of support.

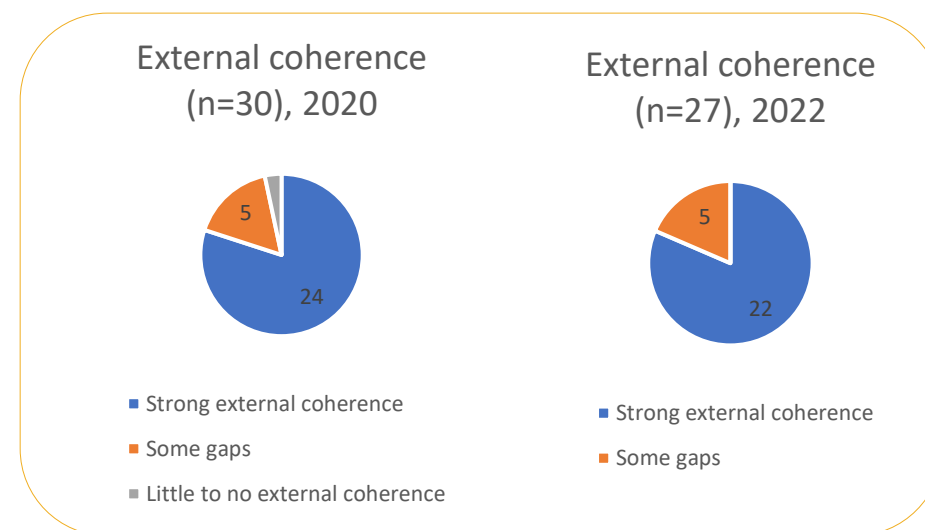
At least two evaluations ([OMiK Dialogue Academy for Young Women 2015-2020](#), and [External Evaluation of the project "The OSCE Support to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda"](#)) and multiple anecdotes from additional evaluation reports cite a high quality of facilitation training and even facilitation services. The neutrality of the OSCE, especially during tense political situations, fosters an inclusive atmosphere that brings a wide range of stakeholders to the table for discussions. These groups can span different sides of a conflict, different levels of political/social/economic capital, etc. If any improvement could be made, this would be related to the OSCE stepping outside the comfort zone and bringing together groups in high conflict areas.

3.2 COHERENCE

✓ **Finding 4:** While external coherence is assessed positive, internal coherence across OSCE executive structures remains an area for improvement

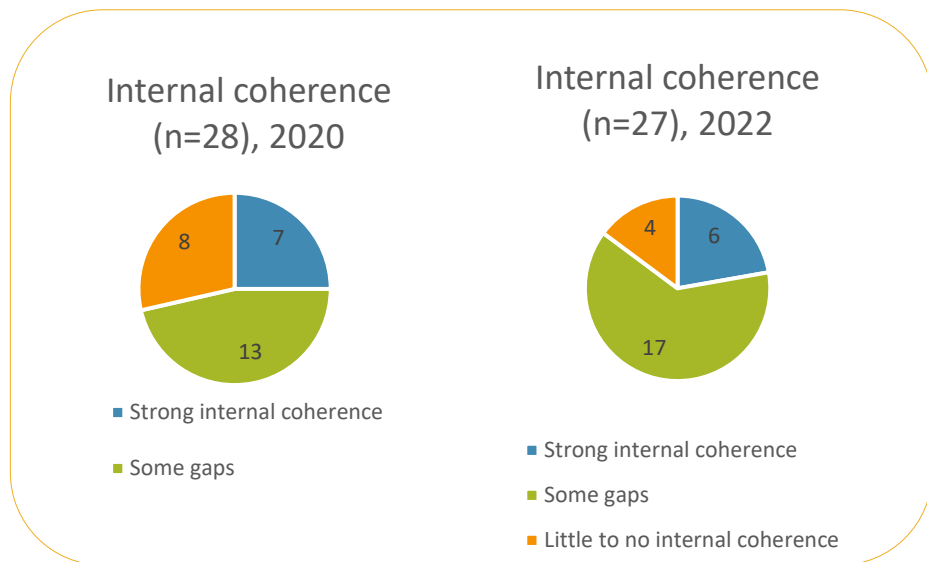
As in the previous synthesis, this synthesis found evidence of substantial efforts on donor coordination and supporting national coalitions/movements related to external coherence.

Figure 4. External Coherence



As in the 2020 synthesis baseline, internal coherence remains an area in need of improvement (e.g., coordination between the Secretariat and field offices).

Figure 5. Internal coherence



Further, the weaknesses in internal coherence identified by the 2020 synthesis (e.g., lack of horizontal/internal coherence across ES, personal or needs-based rather than systematic contact with the Secretariat) were echoed in the reports included in the current review.

While the decentralized structure of the OSCE enables it to be flexible and reactive to real-time stakeholder needs, the limited coherence

between different OSCE Executive Structures present a risk to a ‘whole of OSCE’ approach, and their joint planning and activities at the national level which have the potential to elevate the quality and holistic package of support and potentially enhance not only impact but sustainability as well (a positive case in point is the ATU/CUITP programme: [Reviewing Action against Terrorism Unit’s Countering the Use of Internet for Terrorist Purposes \(CUITP\) Programme \(2016-2021\)](#)). As of today, however, efforts to deliver results with a ‘whole of OSCE’ approach are limited.

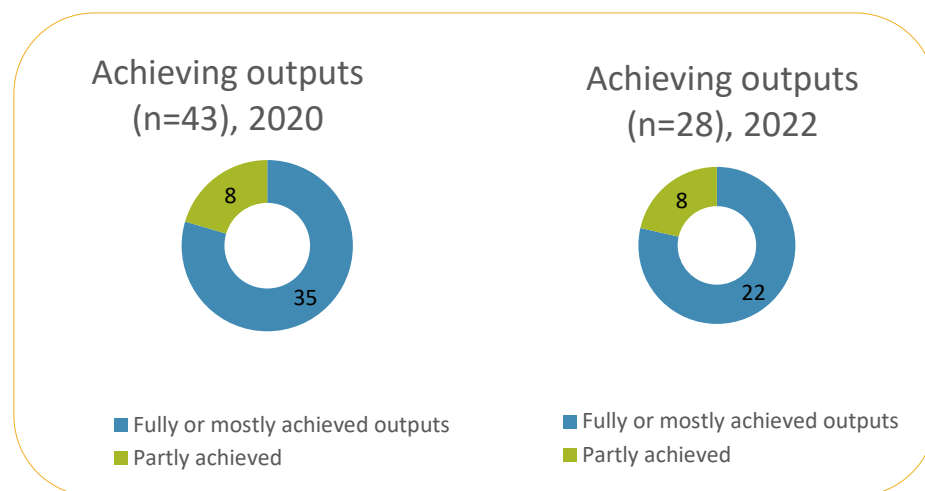
The evaluations also point towards a systematic lack of knowledge management in OSCE projects, where knowledge is not systematically shared across Executive Structures and field offices. Although some projects do make efforts to include industry best practices and any learning available, the evaluations point out a lack of production, accessibility and visibility of experiences and learning from field offices. Combined with high turnover of both OSCE officials and government officials in many participating States, this represents a continuous challenge of managing knowledge for increased organizational impact.

3.3 EFFECTIVENESS

✓ **Finding 5:** The OSCE in most situations delivers all planned project outputs and contributes to intermediate outcomes, but (contributions to) long-term outcomes are often not measured.

In the previous synthesis, nearly all evaluations reported projects had achieved intended outputs. This finding was echoed in the current synthesis, which found that only 6 out of 28 evaluations did not achieve all outputs, and many of the limitations were due to external circumstances.

Figure 6. Level of achievement of outputs



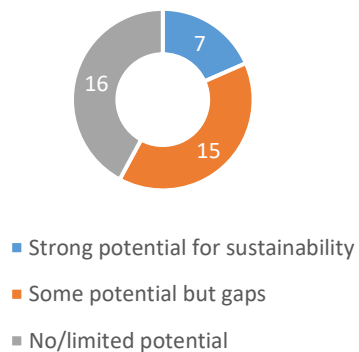
As highlighted in the 2020 synthesis, short term outputs and intermediate outcomes are almost always achieved. However, the medium- to long-term outcomes and impact are often not mentioned, or measured. There is significant confusion in the reports on what constitutes output, outcome and impact, and few indicators to provide guidance in this direction.

Intermediate outcomes reported in the evaluations fall into similar categories documented in the 2020 synthesis: (i) improved policy frameworks; (ii) enhanced institutional governance/practice; and (iii) enhanced political participation. There was a relatively equal distribution of these short-term outcomes across projects, with around 2-3 project evaluations reporting these outcomes per category.

Input and support to policy development was an output of at least four efforts evaluated, and a related intermediate outcome achieved by projects when policy modifications or adoptions are carried out, with as many as 13 decentralized evaluations reporting changes in policy. However, as was noted in the previous evaluation synthesis, the implementation of policy and the next-level change is not included. Reasons for this could be the short time frame of interventions or the evaluation, lack of results-based indicators to measure change, and/or a lack of focus on implementation and long-term change.

Outcomes achieved by projects included also awareness-raising on important issues that may have otherwise gone unaddressed at the national level. This happened in at least four instances, with evaluations reporting that gains were made to draw social and political attention to the safety of journalists and ethnic inclusivity in educational systems in south-eastern Europe and central Asia.

Figure 7. Sustainability,



Another outcome, reported in three evaluations, was the thought leadership demonstrated with the ‘whole of society’ approach to security, cited through the innovativeness/novelty of the intended project outcomes and inclusive approach. This represents not only the added value of the OSCE, but the creation of cross-sectoral collaboration for holistic security and a core promise delivered in relation to the OSCE’s mandate.

Factors hindering effectiveness include high personnel turnover (highlighted in 8 reports), lack of results indicators (10 evaluations), need for strategies at the level of Executive Structures (overarching finding noted in two evaluations). Factors that enhanced successful

change were high quality technical design (9 evaluations), support for relevant national stakeholders to take ownership (4 evaluations) and thoughtful leadership to propel needed dialogue on issues not adequately addressed by other stakeholders (6 evaluations), including the protection of journalists, inclusivity in education, minority rights and protections, and holistic concepts of security.

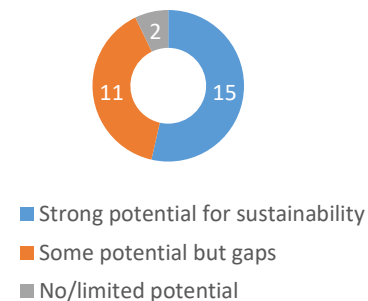
3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

✓ **Finding 6: Achievements in national ownership and related potential for sustainability of OSCE work, but predefined exit-strategies lacking.**

The evaluations reviewed for this synthesis show better performance in the area of sustainability as compared to the 2020 synthesis, which identified sustainability as an important challenge for OSCE projects.

Figure 8. Sustainability, 2022

Sustainability (n=28), 2022



All but two project evaluations (n=26) reported high levels of national ownership, and highlight important attitude, capacity and cultural shifts at the local level.

Effective collaboration with national partners, combined with capacity development efforts often led to cultural change, and the improved likelihood that, with sustainable financial structuring and design, activities could continue post project-closure ([Mid-term Evaluation of the Support to the Introduction and Implementation of Index for Inclusion in Schools; Impact Evaluation of Women Initiative Groups \(WIGS\) in Tackling Gender-Based and Domestic Violence in their Communities/ POiB's Programme](#)).

However, the challenge remains in terms of financial sustainability, which is systematically found lacking in OSCE projects. There is no exit plan reported in any evaluation that planned for, designed or implemented a financial strategy to ensure continuity. This was an important weakness that often undermined important progress made in sustainability.

³ The evaluation noted the following: “The ATU/CUITP is perceived to have excelled in staying on top of new issues and developments, helping broker engagement on sensitive challenges. While not necessarily credited with path-breaking analysis, ATU/CUITP is valued

Factors that improve sustainability include involving national stakeholders through the project lifecycle, ensuring relevant activities are undertaken, and leveraging the OSCE’s comparative advantage to deliver high-quality, cost-effective support in various security sector areas including training for national stakeholders, launching public dialogue on issues of sociopolitical relevance, and facilitating collaboration among diverse stakeholder groups. An example that combined all three of these is the ATU’s CUITP programme.³

The OSCE’s limited financial resources and politically changing environment mean that sustainability and reliability of support are not foregone conclusions. In addition, the OSCE sometimes is focusing too many resources (human, financial and temporal) on trainings, rather than other efforts that could lead towards sustainable peace and security. This is demonstrated through the fact that although trainings were categorized as of high technical quality and effectively carried out, many times they did not gather the momentum needed to effect long-term cultural/political change that could have been supported by a multi-level, targeted approach.

for quietly brokering multi-stakeholder dialogue, promoting lessons learned and avoiding duplication where possible. ATU/CUITP has the capacity to help trigger new debates, including on sensitive issues.”



4. Cross-cutting findings

- ✓ **Finding 7:** Covid-19 did not significantly impact the Organization's ability to deliver project outputs.

Most Executive Structures were able, to the extent possible especially in terms of access to hardware and software, to adapt to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic with limited effect on productivity and achievement of outputs. No project was unable to deliver solely due to the pandemic. Projects moving forward were expected to adapt to a hybrid format in line with standard working practices in the post-pandemic period, a key lesson learned from the OIO Covid Lessons Learned being: "The importance of continuously investing in connectivity and the digital literacy of the OSCE's staff cannot be over-estimated." Most projects managed to switch to the online model for trainings, although the long-term effectiveness of online capacity development exercises remains to be evaluated. This finding resonates with the findings from a review conducted by the OIO in [2021 'Learning from Working During the COVID-19 Pandemic' Review | OSCE](#).

One ongoing challenge that will be important for the OSCE as an organization to reflect upon will be the 'event' focused nature of the organization and the consequences of moving not only trainings but events online. Outcome indicators for in-person events remain elusive, and even more so for online and hybrid events.

- ✓ **Finding 8:** Improved performance in monitoring and evaluation, but efforts to systematize evaluation, outcome-based reporting and results-based management are limited.

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, the synthesis identifies important strides have been made. Progress reports and activity completion reports, status updates during Covid-19 and afterwards, all indicate a close management of activities and documenting of challenges and successes. However, evaluative aspects are often still lacking. Rather than a pure lack of external evaluation reporting, there is a lack of evaluative thinking from the onset. This is evidenced by little to no outcome indicators of projects – there is not a direct line between project outputs and outcomes, and projects do not regularly report on social changes to which their interventions may have a plausible contribution.

Nearly every evaluation pointed to the challenges presented by the lack of results-based reporting, with an over-reliance on outputs and activity indicators for project success. Many times, evaluation reported stakeholder feedback that OSCE activities were “important first steps.” This output-focused implementation, with a general lack of results-based reporting and evaluation, leads to large discrepancies between the high level impact that the OSCE aims for and the lower-level outputs that are consistently being managed, and quite efficiently, on the ground.

No evaluation reported major efficiency challenges, and a value-for-money approach was the rule rather than the exception. The [PACEP evaluation](#), among many others, indicated an “output-focused implementation” and a lack of overall project goals or expected, sustained impact. In addition to numerous decentralized evaluations, the [OIO Independent Evaluation on Results-Based Management](#) points to this weakness as well. The current PBPR, while making important first steps for resource management and accountability, does not go far enough to support results-based management by developing indicators and related outcome measurement guidance to ensure field staff, units and institutions receive relevant measure long-term outcomes.

The evaluation of Results Based Management echoed at least ten evaluation reports’ concerns of lack of outcome indicators and results-based reporting that could go beyond accountability for outputs and contribute to organizational learning.

✓ **Finding 9: Strides have been made to mainstream more inclusive programmes for gender equality and diversity goals, but more long-term change remains unmeasured.**

While the 2020 synthesis reported that more work needed to be done in terms of gender mainstreaming, this synthesis exercise found that the majority of evaluations reported activities to mainstream gender equality considerations throughout the project cycle. Gender mainstreaming is another area that can be seen as a relative strength of the Organization ([“Support Freedom of the Media and the Safety of the Journalists”, MtSkopje](#)) . However, moving from participation to societal change for gender equity is still a concept that needs to be localized, owned and promoted at the decentralized level. Real change remains undocumented and is not measured. Moving from outputs to outcomes limits progress made in this crosscutting area.

✓ **Finding 10:** Given the external and internal challenges related to turnover, the OSCE faces an uphill battle of loss of institutional memory.

Turnover is a major challenge to the organization, both internally and externally. Project and programme success or failure often ends up reliant upon individual and personal competencies, rather than organizational structures that provide adaptability, accountability and other RBM techniques to plan for/mitigate project risks, as noted in the RBM evaluation. WIGs, for example, experienced rapid turnover and their relative success or failure was often tied to the entrepreneurial spirit of their individual group members.

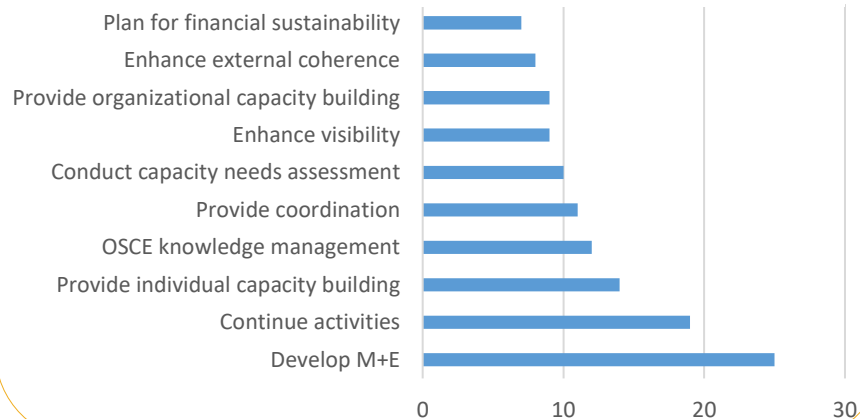


5. Lessons from recommendations

The decentralized and centralized evaluation reports provided a total of 249 recommendations. Consistent information on the management response and acceptance of individual recommendations was not systematically included in documentation, nor were all recommendations addressed to specific entities that would be responsible for their implementation and follow-up.

Below is a graph summarizing the top 10 categories of recommendations made in the report:

Figure 9. Top ten categories of recommendations



The most common recommendation pointed to an overall lack of indicators, monitoring procedures and consistency, and outcome-based reporting. The second most common recommendation referred to continuing ongoing work, followed by providing individual capacity building in the third place. Other recommendations that frequently appeared included conducting capacity needs assessments, improving knowledge management and coordination, enhancing visibility and providing organizational capacity building. Sustainability issues were primarily highlighted in the form of improved planning for a financial exit strategies, while enhancing external coherence referred mainly to expanding partnerships.

The top-10 recommendations indicate the importance of investing in a 'whole of OSCE' approach towards results through better strategic planning, increased coordination of activities, and better monitoring and evaluation. If evaluations are to be useful for decision making, accountability and learning, they need to be of good quality, something that cannot be taken for granted, as pointed out in this synthesis as well as in the quality assessment referenced. In addition, recommendations need to be addressed to specific entities, and should be accompanied by a recommendation implementation action plan that can be monitored.

Annex 1: Report Findings

Finding 1: Most OSCE interventions continued to be relevant to both OSCE priorities and needs of participating States (pS).

Finding 2: The OSCE is valued for being adaptable and flexible, especially in comparison to other international and national organizations, while a lack of clarity on its role and strategic focus is pointed out as a relative weakness.

Finding 3: The OSCE fills gaps in the security sector ecosystem through its holistic approach to security, bringing together a wide array of stakeholders and providing both technical support and soft skills.

Finding 4: While external coherence is assessed positive, internal coherence across OSCE executive structures remains an area for improvement

Finding 5: The OSCE in most situations delivers all planned project outputs and contributes to intermediate outcomes, but (contributions to) long-term outcomes are often not measured.

Finding 6: Achievements in national ownership and related potential for sustainability of OSCE work, but predefined exit-strategies lacking.

Finding 7: Covid-19 did not significantly impact the Organization's ability to deliver project outputs.

Finding 8: Improved performance in monitoring and evaluation, but efforts to systematize evaluation, outcome-based reporting and results-based management are limited.

Finding 9: Strides have been made to mainstream more inclusive programmes for gender equality and diversity goals, but more long-term change remains unmeasured.

Finding 10: Given the external and internal challenges related to turnover, the OSCE faces an uphill battle of loss of institutional memory.

Annex 2: List of decentralized evaluation reports consulted

Title	Commissioned by	Year	Dimension
Central Asia Education Programme Phase III	HCNM	2021	HD
Ukraine Support Programme 2018-2020/ Evaluation of Diversity Management Training Tool 2021	HCNM	2021	HD
Supporting the Implementation of the State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration of Georgia 2016-2020/ External Evaluation	HCNM	2020	HD
Moldova Support Programme 2017-2019/ Assessment of 2017-2020 Action Plan for Implementation of the National Strategy for the Consolidation of Interethnic Relations	HCNM	2020	HD
Ukraine Support Programme 2018-2020/ Evaluation of HCNM Support to MoESU MLE Pilot 2021	HCNM	2021	HD
Evaluation of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina Education Project (2018 – 2020)	Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	2021	HD
Mid-term Evaluation of the Support to the Introduction and Implementation of Index for Inclusion in Schools	Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	2020	HD
Final Evaluation of the Project "Support to Transparent and Inclusive Development of New Media Strategy 2018-2021"	Mission to Serbia	2021	HD

Evaluation of the Project "Enhancing capacities of the Serbian police to fight corruption – Phase 2"	Mission to Serbia	2021	EED
External Evaluation of the OSCE Mission to Serbia's Engagement in the Support to Monitoring of National War Crimes Trials over the period 2013-2021	Mission to Serbia	2021	EED
Strengthening the Law Enforcement Capacity to Deal with TNTs, Organized Crime and Integrated Border Management - PDU/TNT Projects (2018-2021)	Mission to Skopje	2022	PMD
Support Freedom of the Media and the Safety of the Journalists	Mission to Skopje	2020	HD
Reduction of the Risk for Proliferation of Weapons and Ammunition in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia - SALW	Mission to Skopje	2021	PMD
Support to the Follow-up of Electoral Recommendations in the Western Balkans	ODIHR	2021	PMD
Mid-term Evaluation Enhancing Stakeholder Awareness and Resources for Hate Crime Victim Support (EStAR)	ODIHR	2021	HD
Turning Words into Action (WiA II)	ODIHR	2021	HD
Final Evaluation of the Support to Local Government in Kosovo 2017-2020	Mission in Kosovo	2021	PMD
Independent Evaluation and Analysis of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's Engagement in Activities Related to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT): Looking Back and Looking Forward	Mission in Kosovo	2020	PMD
Dialogue Academy for Young Women 2015-2020	Mission in Kosovo	2021	CD

ExB Project 3200363 - Establishing Ukrainian National Reference Centre to Identify Controlled and Toxic Chemicals; ExB Project 3200364 - Improving Ukraine's Regulatory System on Chemical Safety and Security; ExB Project 3200365 - Strengthening Controls over Cross-Boundary Movement of Controlled and Toxic Chemicals.	Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	2021	PMD
Support Good Governance in Local Communities as Part of the Decentralization Reform	Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	2022	EED
Evaluation of OSCE PiA + NDI's Umbrella Project "Support to Parliament and Civic Education Project (PACEP) - Phase I"	Presence in Albania (PiA)/ Donor (Switzerland)	2021	HD
Impact Evaluation of Women Initiative Groups (WIGS) in Tackling Gender-Based and Domestic Violence in their Communities/ POiB's Programme "Supporting the Kyrgyz Republic in further upholding economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR)"	Programme Office in Bishkek	2021	CD
Independent Evaluation of the OSCE's Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Dushanbe, Tajikistan for the "BMSC 2018-2021" Project	Programme Office in Dushanbe	2021	PMD
Interim Evaluation of Phase II of the OSCE Regional Project "Integrated Co-operation on Explosive Hazards Programme" ICEXH	Programme Office in Dushanbe	2020	PMD
Evaluation of Realising Police Reform in Kazakhstan Project 2018-2021	Programme Office in Nur-Sultan	2021	PMD
GEF Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Dniester River Basin	Secretariat, OCEEA/Economical Co-operation Unit	2021	EED

Reviewing Action against Terrorism Unit's Countering the Use of Internet for Terrorist Purposes (CUITP) Programme (2016-2021)	Secretariat, TNTD/Action against Terrorism Unit	2022	PMD
Evaluation of the 'Leaders Against Intolerance and Violent Extremism' (LIVE) Initiative	Secretariat, TNTD/Action against Terrorism Unit	2022	PMD
Evaluation of OSCE Mediation Support	Secretariat, CPC/Operations Service	2022	CD
Mid-term Evaluation of TNTD/ATU's Train-the-trainer and Training Courses on Countering Terrorist Financing	Secretariat, TNTD/Action against Terrorism Unit	2020	PMD
External Evaluation of the project "The OSCE Support to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda"	Secretariat, OSG/Gender Issues	2021	CD



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