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I D E A

EVALUATION OF POLISH DEVELOPMENT AID

PROVIDED VIA THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND IN 2012-2015

IN SELECTED COUNTRIES OF AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Final Report

on Evaluation Research

COMPONENT II - Palestine



Warsaw, December 2016

Cover page photos:

- One of the project participants who has set up pigeon breeding, Idna, District of Hebron, District of Bethlehem, West Bank
(2016, photo by Klara Sołtan- Kościelecka)
- Cooperative members sewing on machines (purchased for the project) at the cooperative in Idna
(2016, photo by Klara Sołtan-Kościelecka)
- Workshops run by the YMCA, Beit Sahour, District of Bethlehem, West Bank
(2016, photo by Klara Sołtan-Kościelecka)
- The oldest member of the cooperative in Beit Fourik
(2016, photo by Klara Sołtan-Kościelecka)

Evaluation of Polish Development Aid Provided via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2015 in Selected Countries of Africa and the Middle East (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Palestine)

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ABSTRACT

The objective of Component II of the evaluation study, whose results are presented in this report, was to evaluate the effectiveness, sustainability, utility and relevance of Polish development aid (PDA) provided to Palestine in 2012-2015 and to make recommendations based on the results. The main elements of the evaluation were field studies (interviews, questionnaires, ethnographic research) conducted in Palestine. Desk research, case studies, benchmarking, panels of experts and SWOT analysis were the additional methods used.

The research shows that the PDA projects implemented in Palestine have achieved the assumed impact. The projects and their impact are positively assessed by the beneficiaries and project participants. However, their impact is limited to the local community. As a rule project sustainability, especially of infrastructural projects, is maintained because initiatives are adjusted to the beneficiaries' needs. The key success factor is cooperation with a trusted local partner. However, the complicated political situation hinders both project implementation and sustainability. In view of this, measures have to be flexible and crisis management has to be implemented. Polish development organizations that implement projects in Palestine are highly motivated, flexible, and familiar with the local situation and prepared to take risks. The Polish diplomatic mission in Ramallah operates competently because its representatives act professionally and are well informed about the local context and the political situation.

However, Polish development cooperation in Palestine faces serious problems. First of all, the outlays for cooperation are very low, particularly as compared to other donors. Consequently, the impact of the aid is not significant. Another problem is the lack of synergy with other PDA projects and other donors' projects. It is necessary to link more closely foreign policy objectives and economic policy objectives mainly by promoting cooperation with Polish entrepreneurs on the local market. The process of monitoring and evaluating development aid in Palestine is not systematic and is not based on a comprehensive project impact assessment model. In the actual institutional structure, the MFA and the diplomatic mission in Ramallah play both strategic and implementing roles in PDA. Due to their many duties and insufficient resources, these institutions are not able to focus on strategic programming, monitoring and evaluating of the aid.

The key strategic recommendation following the research is to delegate PDA tasks implemented by the MFA to an external institution, public or private. Also, the Polish diplomatic mission should focus on strategic tasks in the area of development cooperation. Additionally, a systemic change requires higher PDA outlays. As for recommendations referring to systemic efficiency, it is mainly suggested that a smaller number of projects but with higher budgets and in a selected areas should be implemented (aid specializing). Furthermore, the support for the projects in the area of entrepreneurship should be increased. In order to increase synergy, it is important to develop project complementarity with regard to other donors and introduce mechanisms verifying the synergy impact. As for monitoring and evaluation, it is advisable to make changes in organizing follow-up visits, realized by the MFA and the project impact evaluation (long-term results). In turn, with reference to the project implementation, it is recommended to review the procedures so as to search for possible improvements to commence initiatives in a given budgetary year faster, to take account of the conflict impact at the implementation through a model of risk management designed by applicants and to take into greater consideration factors increasing sustainability while preparing and evaluating the projects. In respect of information and promotion initiatives, it is suggested that project promoters should focus on presenting the project impact and that media (including social media) should be more widely used for promoting PDA by the MFA.

I. OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH CONCEPT

The study *Evaluation of Polish Development Aid Provided through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2015 in Selected Countries of Africa and the Middle East (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Palestine)*; ref. no. BDG.741.010.2016 was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the “MFA”) to evaluate Polish Development Aid (the “PDA”). **IDEA of Development Foundation** was selected as the research contractor in an open tender. The study was carried out between 22 June and 21 December 2016.

The immediate research objective was to analyse the efficiency, utility, sustainability and relevance of aid provided out of special-purpose reserve funds allocated to development cooperation.

The other research objectives were as follows:

- to identify the main factors affecting the efficiency of projects developed as part of Polish development aid and to define future development directions of Polish aid initiatives with a view to increasing their efficiency,
- to make conclusions and recommendations about annual plans based on multiannual plan assumptions for Polish aid and Poland’s contribution to joint UE programming.

In addition, the study could also have a positive impact on the quality of public policies in Poland, including its foreign policy.

The research consisted of two components. This part of the report evaluated the development and impact of component II, specifically the Polish development aid initiatives implemented through the MFA of the Republic of Poland in 2012-2015 in one country of the Middle East financed out of special-purpose reserve funds of the state budget administered by the MFA allocated to development cooperation. The country is Palestine.

1.1. STRUCTURING WORKSHOPS

Structuring workshops were held on 15 July 2016 at the MFA headquarters as a follow-up to a methodological report. Six representatives of the MFA and four evaluators representing the Contractor took part in the workshops. Their purpose was to reconstruct the logic of the 2012-2015 Polish development aid programme in selected countries separately for research components I and II. The workshop results are presented in Chapter 2.1 of the report. During the workshops their participants selected the most significant issues brought up at the first meeting with the Contracting Authority. It resulted in the reconstruction and more precise identification of the Contracting Authority’s information needs.

1.2. DESK RESEARCH

Desk research was conducted at stage II of the research and it included: an analysis of documents, an analysis of data and media materials as well as an analysis of products made as a result of project implementation.

As for the analysis of documents, project applications, reports on project implementation and reports on monitoring carried out by MFA employees were analysed in detail. As a result, record cards of all projects were made and then analysed by qualitative and quantitative methods using research questions. The record cards were also useful for identifying the projects that underwent a detailed analysis at the stage of field studies.

The analysis of documents also included the following national and international planning documents of strategic and operational character:

- 2012-2015 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme
- 2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme
- Annual Polish Development Cooperation Plans (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)
- Call for proposals regulations and guidelines for 2012-2015
- Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals

At the same time the data required for benchmarking were analysed (see part 1.4.2. of this chapter).

The analysis of data and media materials covered all of the implemented projects. The analysis included an assessment of Internet domains in Poland and abroad concerning all the realised projects, mostly the domains of project promoters and their partners. The analysis of media data included an assessment of the available media material such as press articles, radio broadcasts, TV news and information found on social networking sites to see how they impacted Polish aid in terms of its image.

The analysis of the products made as a result of the development of each project was conducted in the form of desk research (of applications and reports), Internet domains in Poland and abroad and during field studies (interviews done in Poland and abroad).

1.3. FIELD STUDIES

Field studies were conducted both in Poland and during evaluation visits to Palestine and African countries. When field studies (research stage III) were being prepared, lists of projects along with lists of replacement projects and proposals of case studies were drafted on the basis of project record cards, upon prior agreement with the Contracting Authority. Twenty-nine projects were selected for an in-depth analysis during the field studies (and 15 projects as a reserve), out of which 8 projects that were implemented in the Palestine. The list of the projects which ultimately underwent an in-depth analysis is found in Appendix 1. The project sample is representative of project types (according to the implementing entity) and the development priority. The analysed sample includes both projects implemented by the Representation of the Republic of Poland in the Palestine and the administration (the Department of International Cooperation and European Funds of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) as well as Polish non-governmental organizations. All the selected projects represented all the three development priorities realised as part of PDA in Palestine, which are:

- education,

- water and sanitation management,
- small and medium-sized enterprises as well as creating new jobs.

The field studies conducted at research stage IV included:

- individual in-depth interviews,
- surveys on project beneficiaries (participants)- questionnaire studies,
- ethnographic research,
- telephone in-depth interviews for benchmarking.

Evaluation visits to Palestine were conducted by a two-person research team in 7-27 August 2016.

1.3.1. INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS – IDIS

As part of the study, IDIs were carried out with people representing various categories of respondents. Among them there were the diplomatic mission coordinator, NGO coordinators, and representatives of partner organizations and/or implementers of project initiatives, beneficiaries, and MFA project supervisors. The selection of respondents was intentional and resulted from a qualitative approach to individual interviews.

1.3.2. QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Questionnaire studies on project participants were conducted using the PAPI (pencil and paper interview) technique which involves carrying out the research directly with the respondent (face-to-face). Due to the fact that it was necessary to engage an interpreter for conducting part of the studies, the questionnaires were translated into local languages, including Arabic. As a result of the field study, 29 questionnaires were successfully collected, of which 7 were filled in by beneficiaries in Palestine and 22 were sent by e-mail. Despite the fact that the method turned out to be effective as compared to other methods (i.e. CAWI or CATI), some difficulties arose while conducting the questionnaire study in Palestine and they resulted from:

- the specificity of participants of project initiatives (some project initiatives concerned people unable to take part in the study, e.g. orphanage children with a considerable level of mental disability),
- difficult access to the participants of project initiatives, because of territorial dispersion of the participants (the Bedouin in villages) and their immobility (disabled people) as well as the unwillingness of the participants of project initiatives to take part in the study or the fact that some people have moved out of Palestine.

1.3.3. ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

Ethnographic research was conducted in the places where projects were implemented. It involved making descriptions of local community, its conduct, institutions, beliefs and material products. The information sources were structured observations, photo documentation, and – in some cases – ethnographic interviews which permitted an insight into the cultural and social context of the researched projects for better understanding. Thanks to the ethnographic research it was possible to make notes that were then used to prepare case studies.

1.4. CASE STUDIES AND BENCHMARKING

1.4.1. CASE STUDIES

The following research techniques were used to prepare the case studies:

- detailed desk research (e.g. project documentation/reports on project implementation),
- ethnographic research (non-participatory structured observation along with photo documentation, free focused ethnographic interview),
- individual interviews done at home and abroad.

Within the research five case studies were conducted in Palestine, two of which were in-depth. It is worth mentioning that two projects were included in one case study because they were implemented by the same partner organization year by year. In view of this, the case studies have been presented for six instead of five analysed projects. At the stage of the methodological report it was assumed that in-depth case studies would present the best practices for the researched projects which should set a good example for other project implementers. It was assumed in the description of the case studies that quotations would not be marked by the types of respondents as it would lead to their identification and a violation of their anonymity. Projects selected for the case studies were marked in Appendix 1 (* and ** if the study was in-depth).

1.4.2 BENCHMARKING

In connection with searching for new solutions that could be applied to the Polish development aid model, benchmarking in this study was focused on identifying good, innovative practices in four selected developed countries that provided development assistance to Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Palestine in 2012-2015 and which could be applied to Polish development aid.

Following an initial analysis and discussion with the Contracting Authority, it was decided to exclude international organizations from benchmarking since comparing them to state-provided development aid has proved to be difficult.

For the purposes of benchmarking (identifying good practices), the selection of countries was made on the basis of the following non-exclusive criteria:

- a DAC member, including at least one country from Central Europe in order to closely examine countries with more experience as well as countries such as Poland that have less potential and less experience in development aid,
- a key donor for a given beneficiary. The criterion is defined by the volume of aid provided to a country and is considered in two aspects:
 - the donor is one of the 10 biggest donors for a given beneficiary,
 - or the beneficiary is one of the biggest aid recipients from a given donor (the country criterion),
- the existence or absence of a separate agency dealing with development aid. Differentiating the analysed countries with regard to this criterion leads to identifying good practices for both organisational solutions,
- developing monitoring solutions. First of all, this criterion follows from the agreed benchmarking scope which involves solutions adopted in this regard. Secondly, monitoring is a key element of quality assurance and leads to improvement and so countries/organizations with a lot of experience in this regard should be selected,

- other substantive links to the subject matter of the study.

The following donors for particular beneficiaries were selected for benchmarking on the basis of (1) an initial analysis of development aid for Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania and Palestine (Gaza and the West Bank), (2) an initial analysis of donors that provide development aid for these countries, (3) consultations with the Contracting Authority, and (4) and the above criteria:

Table 1. Details on donor selection for benchmarking in analysed countries

	Beneficiary	Donor and justification of selecting the donor for benchmarking
1.	Ethiopia	Czech Republic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 29th biggest donor for Ethiopia (USD 3.3 mln), - Ethiopia is the 5th biggest beneficiary of bilateral aid within ODA provided by the Czech Republic, - CzDA agency, - limited information on monitoring, - Central European country, like Poland, - DAC member since 2013, like Poland.
2.	Kenya	Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9th biggest donor of bilateral aid for Kenya (USD 117.0 mln), - Kenya is the 6th biggest beneficiary of bilateral aid within ODA provided by Germany, - GIZ agency, - monitoring system is being developed on the impact basis; it includes statistical data collected by/concerning beneficiaries, - PPP.de programme – tightening cooperation between public and private sectors.
3.	Tanzania	Denmark <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3rd biggest donor of bilateral aid in Tanzania, - Tanzania is the biggest beneficiary of bilateral aid within ODA provided by Denmark, - no agency – the Denmark Development Cooperation (DANIDA) works within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, - monitoring system based on impact and objectives; it considers expected results defined by the beneficiary.
4.	Palestine(Gaza and the West Bank)	Great Britain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4th biggest donor of bilateral aid for Palestine (USD 123.3 mln), - Palestine is 22nd biggest beneficiary of bilateral aid within ODA provided by Great Britain, - no agency – Department for International Development works within the government, - monitoring- strategy and monitoring system are based on impact, bureaucratic obstacles are being reduced.

Source: Authors' own analysis

The scope of benchmarking was determined on the basis of the subject matter of research and the Contracting Authority's information needs and took into account mainly the following aspects:

- cooperation with other donors/organizations,
- cooperation with NGOs,
- cooperation with entrepreneurs from the donor's country,
- concentration vs. dispersion of development aid,
- volunteering in development aid,
- development aid monitoring.

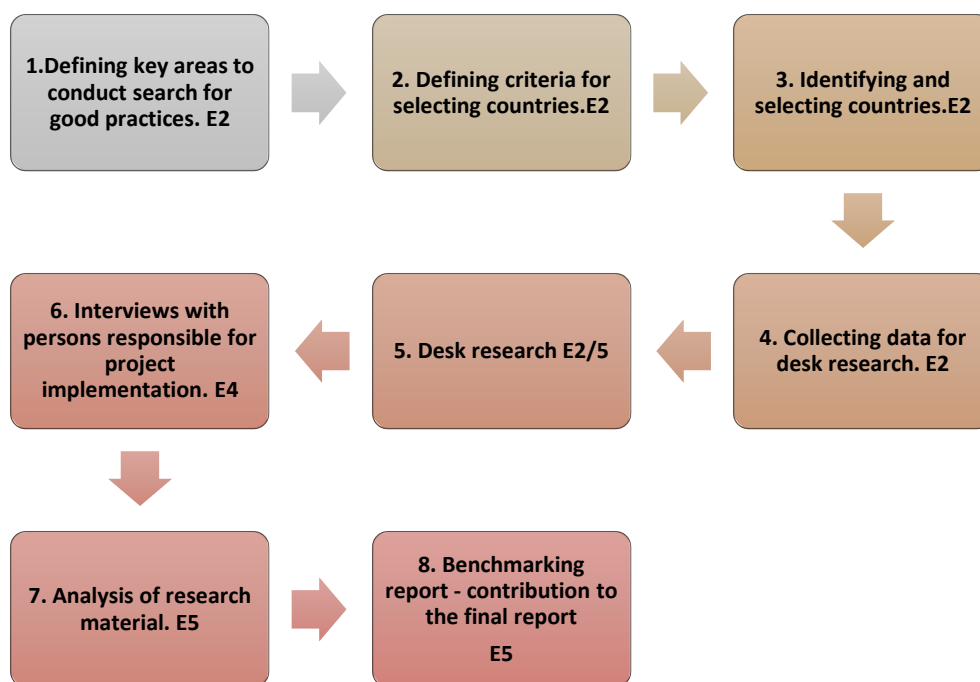
The following two research techniques were mostly used for benchmarking:

- desk research which essentially includes :

- reports on development aid provided by selected developed countries, including documentation with regard to the mission, the strategy of taken initiatives, aid areas, institutional conditions, aid impact reports,
- development aid websites,
- statistical data on the provided aid (including financial data),
- OECD/DAC (Development Assistance Committee) data and reports,
- individual telephone or online interviews with people in charge of implementing projects in selected countries.

The study divided benchmarking into eight key stages presented below. The diagram also highlights the research stage at which subsequent benchmarking stages were developed. A summary of the benchmarking report is found in Appendix 2.

Diagram 1. Benchmarking stages



Source: Authors' own analysis

1.5. PANELS OF EXPERTS AND SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT/TOWS analysis was conducted and 2 panels of experts were organized which summarized the results of the analyses of initiatives taken within components I and II (one for each component) at stage six of the research. The panels were made up of experts in development policy and development cooperation designated by the Department for Development Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as DDC) within the MFA.

The diagram below summarizes the research process.

Diagram 1. Research process



Source: Authors’ own analysis

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS - ANSWERS TO EVALUATION QUESTIONS

2.1. RECONSTRUCTION OF INTERVENTION LOGIC

Polish development aid provided to Palestine and East Africa in 2012-2015 was intended to achieve the objectives set out in Polish and international strategic documents. The Millennium Development Goals approved by the UN in 2000, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) as well as the European Consensus on Development (2005) provide the global framework for development policy implementation in Poland. In its national development aid policy, Poland has committed itself to supporting the least development countries in line with the Millennium Development Goals.

Polish Foreign Policy Priorities 2012-2015 announced in March 2012 is the key strategic document at the national level. The document refers to development cooperation, the promotion of democracy and human rights as one of the directions of foreign policy. It also stresses that support for democratization and for transformation in selected countries (the Council of Ministers (CM) 2012) are the main areas where development aid is implemented.

The 2012-2015 Multiannual Programme of Development Aid responds to domestic and international commitments by defining the objectives and priorities of Polish aid for the four-year period. The two cross-section policy areas selected in the programme are: democracy and human rights as well as systemic transformation. As for the support area priorities, they were identified as those countries in East Africa, Asia and the Middle East which represent a high level of poverty or face great transformation challenges (MFA 2012c). Priority aid recipient countries were selected on the basis of Poland's international commitments to provide support to the least developed countries¹. Other factors such as continuity of support, transport accessibility, the capacity of non-governmental organizations for taking development initiatives, economic interests, culture and language, the presence of Polish diplomatic missions were taken into account in the decision.

Development aid priorities were defined for calls for proposals for Polish development aid projects. The priorities for Palestine in 2012-2015 were as follows:

- education ,
- water and sanitation management,
- small and medium-sized enterprises and creating new jobs.

The system of programming of development aid is supplemented by annual development cooperation plans (MFA 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) which set out the forms and areas where assistance is provided to countries covered by development aid and the amount of funding committed to particular countries. The annual plans set out in greater detail the Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation for 2012-2015 and form the basis for the Polish Development Aid call for proposals, the Polish Aid Volunteering Programme and for financing projects selected by diplomatic missions and implemented through the Small Grants System (hereinafter the "SGS"). In the call for proposals procedure, projects are selected on the basis of the following criteria: relevance (weigh 45%), efficiency and effectiveness (weigh 45%) and cooperation with the MFA (10%). In assessing the

¹ i.e. Least Developed Countries and Other Low Income Countries according to the list made by DAC OECD

projects submitted in the calls for proposals, especially under the Polish Development Aid call for proposals, great emphasis is placed on project cohesion and logic, on the one hand, and on partnership issues (i.e. preparing a project in cooperation with a partner on the basis of an analysis of needs) as well as project sustainability, on the other.

Due to the fact that no measurable results of aid initiatives were set in the Multiannual Programme of Development Aid (2012-2015), the logic of intervention is partially based on project logic. By following the overall rules provided for in the policy and call for proposals documents, the projects create impact by undertaking development initiatives. During this period, in this approach aid impact depends on the initiative of implementers. Therefore it is difficult to speak about the possible strategic orientation of this process towards meeting pre-defined measurable results. There is also the risk of the aid system becoming somewhat self-steering or inert. In view of this, it is not possible to foresee the kind of impact aid can make. This also makes monitoring as well as the evaluation of the 2012-2015 programme impact more difficult.

The reconstructed intervention logic in 2012-2015 for Palestine is presented in Diagram 3.

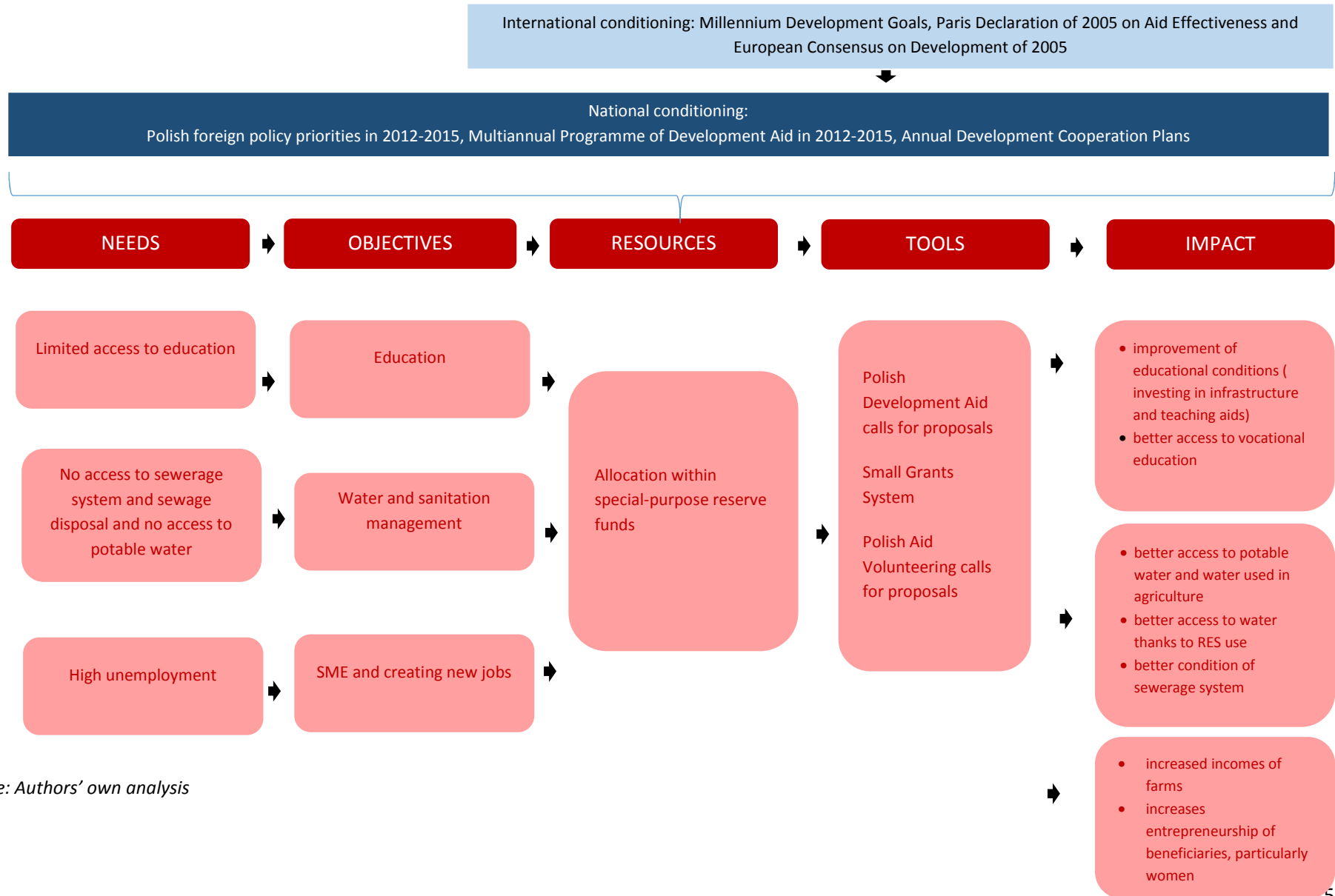
The Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation (2016-2020) was drawn up to respond to new challenges visible in development aid which are primarily associated with migrations. Development priorities are therefore targeted at fighting the causes of migrations: poverty, unemployment, climate change, demographic changes and the ensuing difficult position of young people. The Programme is also a continuation of an earlier approach to implementing development initiatives. It also reflects the international conditions related to the commitment to achieve the Sustainable Developments Goals agreed on at the UN in 2015. The new period of programming development aid (2016-2020) has seen an increased geographical concentration. In the case of Africa, the number of countries covered by aid was limited to four countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Senegal. Also, the support scope for particular countries has been changed. The new priorities for Palestine include:

- human capital
- agriculture and development of rural areas,
- entrepreneurship and private sector.

In the new programming period, emphasis was put on such policy areas as entrepreneurship and vocational education. Environmental protection still remains a significant support policy area because of the existing threats associated with climate change. Changes of policy priorities have not led to higher policy concentration. This is due to the need to take account of the capacity of non-governmental organizations to implement projects in new areas and to leave them room so that they could gradually reorient their specialization towards new directions of aid. A novelty in the programme is defining the impact within policy priorities so as to better target the aid. The impact is described in more detail in the annual development cooperation plans. In the case of call for proposals procedures, limits were introduced with respect to the minimum grant amount that project implementers can apply for. This measure is connected with the MFA's aim to develop projects of greater scope and development impact.

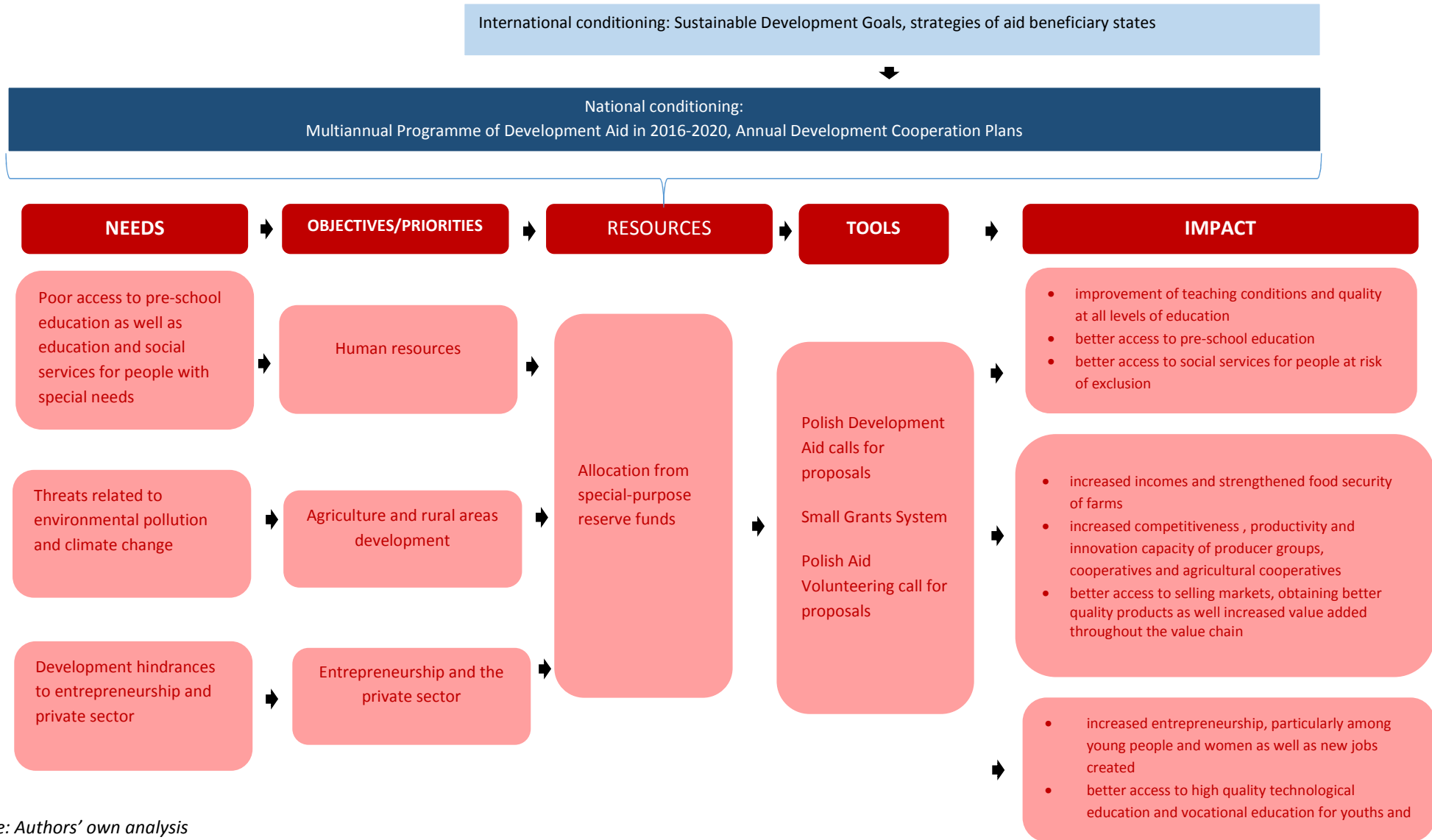
The reconstructed intervention logic in 2016-2016 for Palestine is presented in Diagram 4.

Diagram 3. Intervention logic over 2012-2015- Palestine



Source: Authors' own analysis

Diagram 4. Intervention logic over 2016-2020 – Palestine



Source: Authors' own analysis

2.2. IMPACT

Research questions:

To what extent/which initiatives or projects have had a particularly positive impact on implementing plans, programmes, development strategies or other documents of similar significance (adopted in particular aid recipient countries and in Poland) as well as on developing the Millennium Development Goals (which ones to the greatest degree?)

Has synergy occurred between Polish projects/initiatives in a given area or for a given group of stakeholders? (In what aspects?)

To what extent/which aid initiatives have generated benefits associated with the “soft power” of diplomacy? How to strengthen the correlation between Polish development cooperation and the objectives of Polish foreign and economic policy?

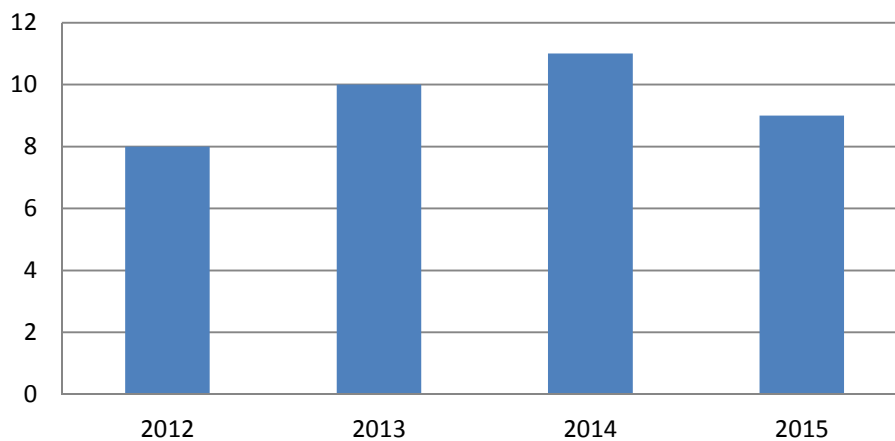
2.2.1. PROJECT STRUCTURE AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT (INCLUDING SYNERGY AND CONCENTRATION)

2.2.1.1. Project structure

Over 2012-2015 38 projects were implemented in Palestine using Polish Development Aid funds, including:

- 8 projects in 2012,
- 10 projects in 2013,
- 11 projects in 2014,
- 9 projects in 2015.

Chart 1. Projects implemented in Palestine in 2012-2015



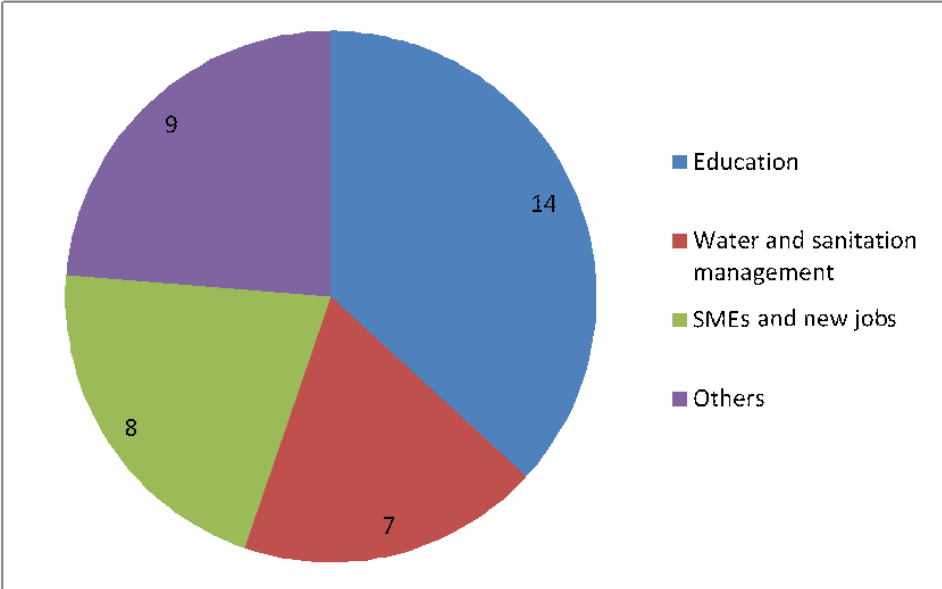
Source: Authors' own analysis

The priorities of Polish development aid for Palestine in that period were as follows:

- education,
- water and sanitation management,
- small and medium-sized enterprises as well as creating new jobs.

Most of the projects were implemented in the Education priority (14 projects). However, the projects were diverse ranging from projects for children implemented at schools or orphanages to vocational training, including those for women and the disabled. Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that projects regarding other policy areas include, as a rule, an educational element as well, e.g. a training course on running a business or maintaining purchased or modernized infrastructure. As for the policy areas, water and sanitation management and small and medium-sized enterprises as well as creating new jobs, a similar number of projects was implemented (7 and 8 respectively). Also, nine projects were implemented in policy areas other than those mentioned in the programming documents as priorities. The others category comprises both projects which involve monitoring projects in progress and projects related to health care and tourism.

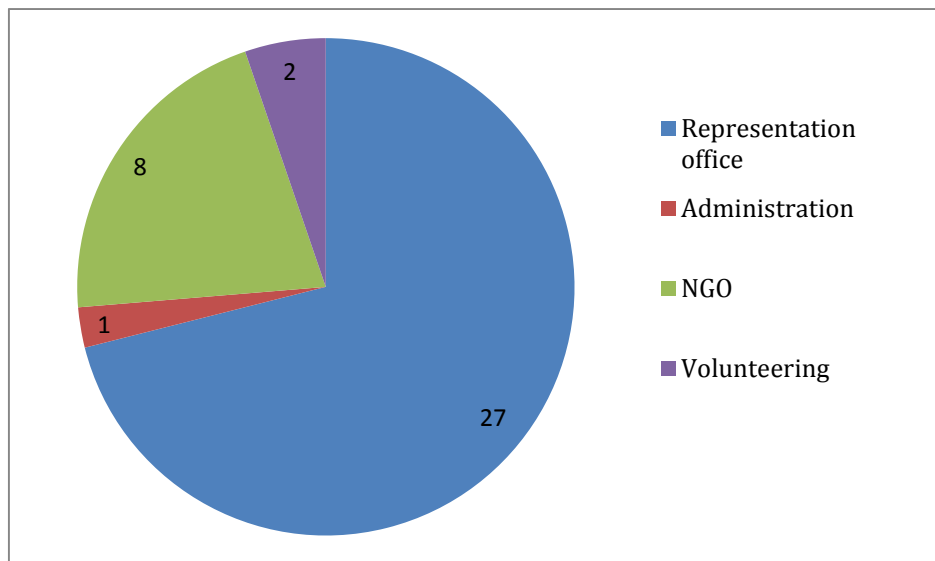
Chart 2. Project distribution in terms of priority areas in 2012-2015



Source: Authors' own analysis

The projects were implemented by various entities, yet projects implemented by a Polish diplomatic mission, i.e. the Representation Office of the Republic of Poland in Ramallah strongly prevailed. They accounted for over 70% of the projects implemented in Palestine in 2012-2015 (27 out of 38). 21% of the projects were implemented by non-governmental organizations (8 projects), 5% as part of volunteering and nearly 4% by the administration (2 and 1 respectively). In the case of education and others, projects implemented by the Representation Office definitely prevailed. The proportions between the projects of the Representation Office and non-governmental organizations were much more levelled out when it came to the water and sanitation management projects and the small and medium-sized enterprises and creating new jobs projects (4:3 and 4:4 respectively).

Chart 3. Project distribution in terms of project selection procedure



Source: Authors' own analysis

2.2.1.2. Project impact

Typically, the actual impact of projects in terms of products obtained in 2012-2015 is:

- repairs and improvements of existing facilities (e.g. school classrooms, playgrounds, water cisterns, sewage networks),
- constructing new facilities (e.g. greenhouses, water systems),
- infrastructure purchase (e.g. computers, hospital beds, planting stock and farm animals),
- creating or broadening an offer in terms of services or production (e.g. introducing IT profile at schools, new methods of agricultural production, opening new selling channels),
- impact on human resources (e.g. employment or self-employment as a result of gaining new skills or infrastructure, higher income from e.g. a surplus of agricultural products),
- 'soft' training impact (e.g. gaining new knowledge and skills, forming attitudes).

Frequently, it was possible to observe simultaneously a number of effects of various kinds in one project (e.g. infrastructure repair and new knowledge gained by beneficiaries thanks to training, an infrastructure purchase and an increase in a beneficiary's income).

In most cases the project impact did not differ significantly from the assumptions. In some projects there were some variations (both positive and negative ones), but they were always justified by:

- 1) external causes, e.g.:
 - fewer computers and fewer female pupils enrolled for IT courses due to national regulations on organizing such courses (project 631/2015),
 - cancellation of some trainings due to bad weather and extended olive harvesting, which caused poor attendance (project 617/2014),
- 2) causes related to efficient and flexible project management, e.g.:
 - changes in allocation of some funds shifted from purchasing games to mobile roofing after the games were purchased by a partner from other funds (project 653/2014),

- repairs of 5, not 4 water cisterns as a result of good management of the available funds (project 977/2013).

Development projects are intended mainly to contribute to achieving strategic goals set by an international community, donors and states that receive the aid. However, it is good to remember that the projects also contribute to a change in the living standard of direct aid beneficiaries (immediate impact). Polish aid projects seem to achieve these objectives as indicated by the surveyed beneficiaries. Significantly enough, the impact should be assessed in two aspects: first, as the effects of e.g. higher incomes or permanent access to clean water, and second as a positive influence on the beneficiary's mental approach, their self-confidence and interpersonal skills. The beneficiaries pointed out those parallel aspects, e.g. participation in the project has resulted in higher incomes and has boosted their self-confidence in social relations. It should be assessed positively as an additional project impact.

'Higher income, self-confidence, recognition on the market close to home' [questionnaire_14]

'The project helped me to choose the right path and showed me how to get on with people privately and at work. It also showed me how to cope with my problems' [questionnaire_3]

Moreover, beneficiaries have also noticed that the project had an impact on the situation of other people (indirect impact). These are mostly the beneficiaries' families who, e.g. benefit from the income gained by a direct beneficiary but also whole local communities and other entities from the beneficiary's environment such as their customers. Respondents often pointed out that the project implementation has had a significant impact on the local community, e.g. by offering business cooperation, selling products at lower prices than those on the market or allocating some of the profits to meet the community's needs.

'The beneficiary thinks that the local community has gained much more from the project than he did. The idea is that we must help each other within the cooperative..... Even so the selling cooperative deliberately relinquished higher revenue because it believed that cooperation with other cooperatives instead of the private sector would generate long run benefits to the whole community, instead of just one entity. It (switching to cooperation with cooperatives) was an experimental initiative which the cooperative decided to try out.' [P_1_beneficiary_4]

On the other hand, some project participants pointed out that they are becoming leaders of their communities by, e.g. giving advice on where to look for support or how to set up their own business. Furthermore, if project participants succeeded, it might encourage others to follow in their footsteps.

However, it should be remembered that project beneficiaries are provided with infrastructure (e.g. irrigation systems or planting stock) and trainings, thanks to which they can obtain measurable effects. People who did not take part in a project will probably not obtain similar results so easily. In this respect the 'train the trainers' projects should be mentioned, thanks to which project participants pass on their knowledge or skills. Such an initiative is efficient in terms of both costs and logistics (lower inputs are needed such as trainers' remuneration, timing, renting rooms, etc.). Nevertheless, trainings for direct project participants prevail in Polish development aid projects. Only in project 648/2013 1260 people were explicitly indicated as being part of it because every participant shared his or her knowledge with at least 3 acquaintances or family members. It would thus be advisable to consider introducing such trainings on a larger scale. They would focus on carefully selected people who are highly esteemed in their communities. When it comes to indirect

project impact, psychological aspects should be mentioned, e.g. a change in the way working women - project participants are perceived in their environment.

People implementing projects were generally satisfied with the obtained impact. However, they drew attention to the limited funds that prevented them from operating on a larger scale. Even so it is necessary to point out that most of the indicators defined in the projects have been achieved, which means that a given project achieved its objectives. It remains an open question whether the obtained impact translates into achieving strategic goals of Polish development aid or whether it has only a local character.

'As for implementing the project in the MFA, it was optimal. So, I think there is nothing else that we could have done' [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

Hard impact is one type of impact of development projects, i.e. infrastructural and financial effects or measurable results such as the number of trainings. However, it is often combined with soft impact, which is new knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation. It seems that, as a rule, hard impact is the most invaluable impact for beneficiaries, but it is the soft impact that could largely contribute to greater project sustainability because beneficiaries learn other ways of acting that they could later use in future situations unrelated to a particular project. Moreover, soft impact frequently does not contribute to the development of an organization implementing the project because people who participated in a given training leave it (e.g. women after they get married). It does not mean, however, that there was no point in running the courses. As it is confirmed by our respondents, the gained knowledge and skills are later used in everyday life.

In this respect it is worth mentioning the out-of-project impact, unrelated closely to the assumed effects of a given project. This impact is not reflected in the indicators of project implementation but it is related to some additional effects which occurred while implementing the project or as a result of it. It might be difficult to plan or measure such effects but they have an influence on beneficiaries' attitudes and conduct in future situations unrelated to implementing a given project. A good example is the knowledge of management, which could be also useful in business different from that included in the project or getting a driving license thanks to an income increase.

Development projects also bring knock-on effects. They could be described as situations in which one initiative triggers plenty of other ones. It is not about giving a fish but a fishing rod, as the old saying goes. The point is that it is necessary to create a kind of a vehicle which, if once started, will also work in the future (translating into the sustainability of project initiatives). It seems that projects of this kind are the most beneficial in terms of the efficiency of development aid as it is likely that the funds invested in the project will be returned thanks to the initiatives triggered by the project. A good example is a small cooperative which participated in a project and as a result it has become a more conscious organization inventing new ideas and finding new selling markets.

'(...) the project impact will not be visible immediately, but in the long term as initiatives taken by [partner organization's name] involve changing the way of thinking and the practices applied so far. Action focuses on building up a system, not on individual initiatives of beneficiaries (...). The direct impact on the beneficiaries' lives means a certain improvement of their material status, but that is not what the project is based on... A model of uniting farmers in cooperatives and then passing a product from cooperative to cooperative... The organization's approach is not oriented at each beneficiary individually but at a local community as a whole.' [P_1_partner_organisation_2]

'There are achievements if we see that a small stimulus yields big effects' [P_1_coordinator_1]

In this respect it is worth mentioning an improvement of the situation of underprivileged people such as women and the disabled. The project impact that is frequently mentioned is the changing position of women in their own families and the local community. Women start to earn money, which contributes to an increase in the family budget. It translates into a women's position in the family – seeing measurable benefits of women's work, their husbands start changing their mind about this work. There has also been a change in the local community's approach to women working or running their own business (among others in a cooperative) as women start being treated as equal partners, e.g. while making decisions on important local problems. Women who so far had not left their place now travel and meet other people. Thus, in practice the projects also have a positive impact on building up self-confidence in the female beneficiaries and belief in their own capacity. However, it is difficult to ascribe it solely to the impact of the researched projects. It is a multiannual process influenced also by initiatives taken by other donors, e.g. contacts with foreign tourists.

'I see the success of the project reflected in women's eyes when they are talking about it. Female beneficiaries' families have started thinking of working women in a different way. Family members see that women work and bring in money, which is appreciated. They see that women do not stay in the cooperative all day only to chat and that there is a real effect of their work (real income in the household)... In view of this, men also appreciate the project and they are satisfied with their working wives. This type of situation was not typical at the beginning- at first nobody believed in the project or the interviewee, but now everything has changed... Not only do men and local community accept the cooperative but now women are outright encouraged to actively participate in it.' [P_5_beneficiary_2]

The projects could also have feedback effects for a Polish partner. They mostly involves learning new things from foreign partners and while staying abroad.

On the other hand, not all stakeholders think that the projects really bring about the expected effects. It results from limited resources, especially financial ones, and from maladjustment of priorities to the situation in Palestine. For example, as one respondent noticed, the funds necessary for setting up a cooperative, which would really bring in an income for its members, were considerably higher than the financial resources provided by the MFA. If inputs are low, there is a considerable risk that the production will be used only for beneficiaries' own needs and it will not contribute to creating new jobs, which is a development objective. Critical comments were quite rare, however. People involved in implementing the projects or their beneficiaries could tend to highlight only the positive impact of their initiatives for different reasons. On the other hand, a kind of disappointment felt by some beneficiaries might result from their expectations of quick profits from their work, as it occurred in the case of the projects supporting local cooperatives. Yet, cooperative work, due to its specificity, does not bring in such profits. In Palestine the problems of that kind could be additionally increased by the difficult political situation, which influences the economic life and prospects of setting up their own business (e.g. roadblocks or border controls).

'The project has contributed to a change in cooperative members' situation only to a small extent, maybe it opened up some work prospects'. [questionnaire_8]

While assessing the impact of Polish development aid on achieving the Polish and international strategic objectives (including the Palestinian projects and the Millennium Development Goals), it is necessary to pay attention to low financial inputs, which Poland allocates for development aid in general (Poland occupies the 20th place on the list of the biggest donors in terms of the aid value and the 28th place in terms of outlays relative to the Gross National Product)². As the conducted research shows, the projects have had a positive impact on the situation of particular beneficiaries and local communities. However, their impact on achieving Polish and international strategic objectives is far from significant. Polish development aid for Palestine has been provided on a small scale due to the small funds allocated for the projects: Palestine is not on the list of the 10th biggest recipients of Polish aid³. Respondents implementing the projects in Palestine have also compared the scale of financial outlays for the Polish development aid projects to the outlays for projects of donors from other countries. This comparison is decidedly unfavourable for Poland due to both the low value of Polish development aid and the small outlays allocated to aid for Palestine.

'We were ashamed to even say how much we received from our government. Because those organizations received several hundred thousand. And the projects were worth as much as several million euros.' [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

Taking the low financial outlays into account, it will be difficult to increase the scale of the projects and thereby increase the level of advancement of strategic objectives. Moreover, due to the requirements related to the regulations on public finance (the budget year accounting for the basic period for project implementation), the projects are rather temporary, not permanent, which determines their effects. The necessity of implementing the projects within one year is a weakness of the system which impedes the project implementation. The selection mechanism and competition procedure often lead to completing the call for proposals after the deadline for commencing project initiatives. Hence, 2- or 3-year modular projects could solve the problem. The late project commencement, which consequently leads to shortening the time of its implementation might put achieving the anticipated effects at risk, especially if there are additional external problems, such as problems related to the national calendar (beneficiaries and local partners do not work during Ramadan, etc.), weather or political factors (e.g. riots, roadblocks). In view of this, one of the research recommendations is for the MFA to review the procedures to find possible improvements so that project initiatives could be commenced as early as possible in the new calendar year.

'There is no continuity of action. In fact, all the organizations there, which are engaged in project initiatives, operate on an ad hoc basis. There is a MFA project launched, so... if a call for proposals is announced, it is incorporated in the project and it is made very evident. And it does not include anything that concerns these organizations. Or they operate badly. They are very small organizations...; also as compared to other Palestinian organizations we are very small. Hence, ad hoc action, projects oriented at emergency initiatives in general. Once a project is completed, everyone disappears'. [P-4_8_project_implementer_1].

² OECD Development Co-operation Report <http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/development/development-co-operation-report-2016> dcr-2016-en#page244

³ *ibid*

2.2.1.3. Synergy and concentration

Polish development aid faces serious problems with obtaining proper synergy (complementarity) as well as impact concentration. Synergy seems not to be thought over carefully enough at the stage of project planning. As a result, synergy in development aid occurs, as it were, randomly and it is not intentional. Organizations developing aid projects are trying to cooperate on a daily basis with foreign development and humanitarian agencies operating in a given place in order to coordinate initiatives, however, it is not formalized. The cooperation involves e.g. participating in coordination meetings of associations including such organizations as e.g. the AIDA (Association of International Development Agencies).

On the other hand, Polish organizations operating in a given country do not possess necessary knowledge of other Polish aid projects implemented there, so it is difficult to start cooperation. It seems that in reality the projects are developed in parallel with each other, which could be caused by different features of particular projects (e.g. a different support area or target group) and different features of organizations themselves (e.g. Caritas is not a typical development organization in contrast with e.g. the PCIA).

One of the respondents pointed out that in view of limited funding, Poland is not a significant aid player in Palestine, but it could focus on a selected area. Such a specialization might allow obtaining better, long-lasting effects in a given area and contributing to building up a stronger position of Poland as for development aid. The projects developed in 2012-2015 concerned various areas and were targeted at various beneficiary groups. Also, the organizations implementing the projects were different. Therefore, it is difficult to talk about the specialization and concentration of the aid impact.

Selecting a key area in which Poland and Polish organizations possess the biggest capacity might be considered. It could be projects related to, e.g. cooperatives, an area where Poland has a long tradition. It would be also advisable to consider developing a smaller number of projects but developed in a selected specialized area with a higher budget. As one of the respondents said, small projects with small budgets (e.g. a purchase of a few farm animals) do not contribute to achieving development objectives.

'I think it is good to focus on particular areas. (...) Because with little funds we could be noticeable if we operate....., we will not be seen globally but we will be seen around this area in a given country... Concentration in one place to be noticed in the long term'. [P_1_ coordinator_1]

The operation scale must be much bigger when it comes to, e.g. setting up a modern farm and training employees on animal breeding and running a business. However, in this respect it would be necessary to provide a much higher budget than that for the 2012-2015 projects. Such an approach demands an extremely reliable analysis of Palestine's development needs and of capacities and specializations of Polish development agencies. If a smaller number of projects were developed, it could turn out that although possibly their impact is smaller in terms of figures, they can nevertheless better address the needs of the beneficiaries and ensure sustainability.

2.2.1.4. Cooperation with entrepreneurs

In the researched period cooperation with entrepreneurs was not a strength of Polish development projects. The low cooperation potential has different causes like the fact that development agencies do not have these competencies; Polish entrepreneurs are not interested in markets that are exotic to them, and the unprofitability of developing small-scale projects. Moreover, on the Palestinian

market there are local companies which are well-prepared to carry out tasks as part of the projects. There is also the problem that Polish entrepreneurs' expectations do not match the Palestinian market capacity. For example, in the case of project 648/2013 Polish business and Palestinian employees failed to establish relations. The Polish party demanded fully developed and experienced workers whereas the Palestinian students targeted by the project still were not at the required level of professional development. Initiatives related to business cooperation demand a lot of labour input and even so the impact is not always significant enough, like in the case of exporting Palestinian products made during the project to Poland. Nevertheless, Polish development projects have had an impact on a broadly defined private sector in Palestine, as manifested by the cooperation established between cooperatives and outside farmers, for instance.

The benchmarking results indicate that including enterprises in the process of project implementation is not a popular or key form of supporting cooperation with enterprises within development aid provided by other donors. State economic objectives are combined with foreign objectives mostly by giving national enterprises easier access to foreign markets. Examples of such initiatives are presented below.

Selected forms of supporting entrepreneurs – good practices within benchmarking

1. Tender procedures for development initiatives taken by private sector in accordance with the public procurement law.
2. Supporting private funds and investments of enterprises from donor states in developing countries by:
 - credits and investment consultancy,
 - feasibility studies,
 - dedicated funds (e.g. for agriculture or climate protection).
3. Promoting exports and imports with reference to the needs of the developing countries.
4. Promoting public-private partnership, including by:
 - government grants minimizing the financial risk,
 - support an initiative in a partner country at the stage of planning and implementing,
 - networking including state governments, local governments, chambers of commerce, local NGOs and private enterprises.
5. Soft instruments:
 - support for preparing projects, investments plans and training local suppliers,
 - trainings for managers who are to leave to a partner country,
 - trainings for the staff of business partners from partner countries,
 - innovative partnerships between companies and non-profit organizations,
 - consultancy on development aid and the local context,
 - information platforms on development aid targeted at enterprises,
 - sharing experience by non-governmental organizations,
 - guide books on public procurement,
 - conferences for suppliers.

For more information on the subject, see: report on benchmarking

In Polish conditions providing selected forms of support to enterprises entering foreign markets requires a close strategic cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Development.

2.2.2. IMAGE IMPACT

The research also contains an analysis of data and media materials related to each developed project, including Internet domains operating in Poland and abroad. The analysis clearly shows that the Polish aid projects implemented in Palestine in 2012-2015 are well-known to external recipients

only thanks to Internet websites which remain the main source of information about the implemented projects.

Thirty-nine projects were analysed, of which 26 were mentioned on Internet websites. All of them are microsites on official project promoters' websites. No separate websites dedicated solely to the project initiatives have been found. As for the other 13 analysed projects, no information has been found on the project promoters' websites, although three projects were mentioned in a report on the beneficiary's performance (PAH) and a subsequent project is mentioned by a partner on his website.

While analysing the contents of the project donors' and partners' websites, it is possible to find descriptions of the projects and information about the donor. As a rule, some details on the beneficiaries who were covered by the initiatives can also be found, as was the case with 24 projects. With the exception to 5 projects, the websites include a description of the project impact obtained, although in most cases such descriptions are extremely laconic.

For more than half of the projects present on-line it was also possible to find photo documentation albeit limited to just a single photo. The websites lack downloadable content, such as training materials, newsletters or brochures. The available material is, in fact, limited solely to the project descriptions.

The website identification with Polish Aid logos is far from satisfactory. Polish Aid logos appear only in the case of 4 projects, one of which is found on the project partner's website.

Project descriptions usually used typical reporting narratives. Only one contained opinions of the project participants⁴. As part of another project, a blog was created by a participant, which described in detail his stay in Palestine⁵. Some information on the blog was put on the Caritas website and the chrzescijanskie.info website⁶.

The websites lack information about future cooperation prospects, the sustainability of projects or their links to other Polish projects. There are generally no references to the partner's website – neither to foreign partners in the case of Polish promoters' websites nor to Polish promoters in the case of foreign partners. An exception to this rule is a mention about the Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM) found on the website of the ARIJ partner organization in the case of four projects referring to agricultural entrepreneurship.

The websites also contain some press releases concerning the projects. For example, the project of restoring the door in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem (project 672/2014) was described in the national press in an article that was positive in tone⁷. The Internet also contains two articles on the project: *Strengthening the Efficiency of Border Services of the Palestinian Authority with regard to Complex Security Control and Verification of Document Authenticity* (project No 484/2015) -both of them are neutral in tone⁸- as well as a note on the project: *Quality Improvement of Medical Services*

⁴ <http://www.caritas.pl/autonomia-palestynska-przerwac-bledne-kolo-ubostwa/> [access 15-09-2016]

⁵ <http://samolotemwswiat.blog.deon.pl/> [access 15-09-2016]

⁶ <http://www.chrzescijanskie.info/relacja-wolontariuszki-caritas-polska-z-autonomii-palestynskiej/> [access 15-09-2016]

⁷ <http://niedziela.pl/artykul/11437/Wklad-Polski-w-renowacje-Bazyliki> [access 15-09-2016]

⁸ <http://ketrzyn.wm.pl/303891>, Ketrzyn-spanikowal-przez-pogranicznikow.html#axzz4Jlv1iRhK [access 15-09-2016]

<http://www.nmketrzyn.pl/2015/10w-ketrzynie-szkola-sie-osoby-z-palestyny/> [access 19-09-2016]

*for Pregnant Women and Infants in the District of Bethlehem by Providing the Maternity Hospital with specialist Medical Equipment (project No 1179/2013)*⁹.

An analysis of the websites and media information shows that it is possible to increase the image impact by simple initiatives aimed at improving the contents presented on the websites. Information about the projects found on-line needs to be complemented by:

- information on a project financed within PDA funds which should be placed on the project donors' websites,
- placing downloadable project products such as training materials, newsletters, brochures on the websites,
- placing logos related to the projects financed with PDA funds on those websites which lack them,
- adding references to partners' websites along with information about the partner (if such websites exist),
- distributing information on the sustainability of project initiatives,
- presenting project beneficiaries and showing the project impact on the websites (in the form of figures, but also from the perspective of individual recipients).

The recommendation in this case is to draw up guidelines for project promoters that will include requirements for the content and ways of presenting it on the websites as well as good examples based on other donors' experience such as, e.g. USAID, DFID, etc. Organizing trainings for project promoters in this area could be also considered. It is also recommended to increase the scope of information about projects and their impact on the Polish Aid websites.

The research conducted on the projects in Palestine shows that the programme of Polish development aid is recognizable among their implementers. All our respondents representing local organizations in charge of the studied initiatives had knowledge of their financing by the Polish government. In the headquarters of the organizations either the Polish Aid logo was visible (like in the cooperative of women from Hebron in Idna) or a Polish donor was listed among the donors along with their foreign counterparts (ARIJ, YMCA). As for the recognition of PDA among local people such markings though are not as important as their visibility 'in the field' where the project was implemented. Appropriate signs were placed on the cisterns built in villages of the District of Hebron (project 113/2012) and on the water reservoir built for the orphanage run by nuns in Bethlehem (project 153/2013). The same is true of all women's cooperatives supported by the ARIJ. In all the visited cooperatives there were proper logos and descriptions placed on particular items of equipment purchased with PDA funds. The cooperative in Anabta had additionally a project calendar (Polish Aid and PCPM logos). To conclude, it should be said that the programme of Polish development aid is recognizable among the surveyed communities. However, this recognition is based on the familiarity of the project products rather than on the familiarity of other ventures financed with PDA or of the programme priorities. Only in one case our respondent was able to name another PDA project other than the one implemented by him. Nevertheless, it depends not so much on the marking itself as on the investment size. Bigger donors, e.g. the USA (USAID) are more visible and their performance is better known due to its scale. The very friendly attitude of Palestinians

⁹ <http://www.rynekzdrowia.pl/Po-godzinach/Pierwsza-Dama-przekazala-sprzet-medyczny-szpitalowi-w-Betlejem,135506,10.html> [access 15-09-2016]

towards Poles, the Polish state as well as to the projects implemented with Polish development aid, even if they were small, should be underlined. This 'brand' was built, on the one hand, by Polish non-governmental and church organizations operating in Palestine such as the PAH, PCPM or Caritas and the Polish diplomatic mission in Ramallah, on the other.

Photograph 1. Polish development aid logos in projects implemented in Palestine



The very intense activity of the Polish diplomatic mission it is worth mentioning here. At first it ran a newsletter and then a profile of the mission activity in Palestine on *Facebook*. It contains information on the projects implemented via the mission and the established cooperation along with photo documentation. It is essential to point out the engagement of the Polish diplomatic mission in promoting PDA by organizing events and frequent special meetings with various stakeholders. The activity of the mission is recognizable by local partner organizations and it goes far beyond the projects implemented by these organizations. The image success of PDA should therefore be ascribed to the Representation Office which should continue the initiatives it has implemented to date.

'The Representation Office is very active in sending us information about other projects, there is a group on Facebook, and they send gadgets, e.g. calendars in which they put photos of the projects.' [P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

'It is a promotion of the programme of Polish development aid. It is clear that the Representative Office is eager to share what they are doing here with Poland...[a partner organization] also knows about other projects organized with Polish development aid because this mission shares material of this kind with others on different occasions. Thus, the awareness of Polish development aid in local community is really great.' [P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

While assessing the image impact of Polish development aid, it is necessary to bear in mind the relatively small budget as compared to donors from other countries. Recognising this, the PDA initiatives should be assessed very positively, which is also pointed out by representatives of the local

partner organizations and people cooperating with them. They are in touch with various donors and they can compare them to the Polish counterpart.

'Polish development aid is recognizable in the region – naturally one has to be realistic and know that in this respect it cannot compete with big aid such as, e.g. Russian or American aid, but in view of the size of Poland and its GNP it is very effective, and therefore I would like to continue my cooperation(...). The Polish partner is an actor who has limited funds and even so listens to what Ramallah says'.
[P_5_coordinator_1]

Finally, the activity of the Polish MFA should be mentioned as well. Its representatives have paid follow-up visits to places where projects are implemented and these visits have been noted by local partners and Polish non-governmental organizations. However, the impact of the visits is mainly felt in terms of image improvement, which has its limitations (for more information, see: chapter 2.6. MONITORING).

Key conclusions:

- The projects have a positive impact on the situation of particular beneficiaries and local communities (local impact).
- Low financial outlays for PDA (also as compared to other donors) translate, however, into small impact on achieving Polish and international strategic objectives.
- The projects, despite achieving the expected indicators, are temporary rather than sustainable, which also affects the level of achieving strategic objectives.
- The projects, which are likely to be developed on the largest scale, could be initially identified as 'train the trainers' projects and those contributing to the knock-on effects involving creating a kind of vehicle, which, if once started, will be also working in the future.
- PDA faces serious problems with achieving proper synergy (complementarity) as well as impact concentration.
- Synergy is not thought over carefully at the stage of project planning and as a result it is achieved randomly, not intentionally.
- Organizations implementing the projects lack systemized knowledge of the projects implemented by other Polish entities in a given area, which makes cooperation more difficult.
- Polish development organizations cooperate with organizations from other countries; however, this cooperation is not formalized.
- Specific PDA projects are recognizable and positively perceived by surveyed groups, i.e. local organizations and beneficiaries. However, it does not translate into familiarity with other ventures financed with PDA or the strategic priorities adopted in the Programme.
- An analysis of the websites and media data shows that it is possible to increase the image impact by simple initiatives aimed at improving the contents presented on the websites.
- Cooperation with entrepreneurs is not a strength of Polish development aid. Initiatives related to business cooperation demand a lot of labour input, even so the impact is not always satisfactory.

Research recommendations:

- Increasing outlays for PDA is a necessary condition for a systemic change in implementing Polish development aid. It is additionally justified by the migration crisis. Putting this recommendation into effect might also fulfil Poland's commitment to increase PDA outlays. It is advisable to gradually increase the budget so as to facilitate gradual built up of the capacity of Polish non-governmental organizations with regard to the implementation of development aid.
- It is suggested that a smaller number of projects but with higher budgets should be implemented in selected specialist areas. As for PDA in Palestine, it is worth considering the concentration of funds in the area of entrepreneurship and the private sector in view of the promising project impact or in the area of human capital due to the fact that most PDA has been implemented with success in the area of education, which proves that there is extensive experience in supporting this sector. However, searching for a Polish specialization, and consequently concentration of initiatives in a selected area should take into account the capacity of Polish development organizations for implementing development projects in a specific area.

- In the new PDA perspective special attention should be paid mostly to supporting projects referring to entrepreneurship – small and medium-sized enterprises, self-employment, but also vocational consultancy, vocational trainings, etc. The present capacity should be the basis for such initiatives. Novel ideas related to e.g. establishing business relations between Palestinian and the Polish private sector should be preceded by a diagnosis of both countries' needs in this area. However, the projects supporting entrepreneurship development in Palestine should obviously include an aspect related to functioning on foreign markets (exports of goods, on-line selling, and cooperation with tour operators organizing trips to Palestine) due to increasingly difficult operation of Palestinian enterprises on the local selling markets.
- Taking into account the problem with implementing annual projects, which will grow when there will be a switch to bigger projects; it is recommended that the procedures should be reviewed to look for new improvements for commencing project initiatives as early as possible in a new calendar year. Ultimately, it is necessary to adopt a model of funding of multiannual projects, similarly to other programmes financed with national public funds (e.g. MFLSP and MCNH programmes).
- Aiming for better combining foreign policy objectives with economic policy objectives, it is necessary to consider other countries' experiences (analysed with benchmarking), which show that the support of enterprises in this respect mainly involves providing facilities for cooperation between foreign partners and Polish entrepreneurs. Such possible initiatives should be taken via or in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development.
- Information and promotion initiatives with regard to PDA should mostly concentrate on project impact: a change in the situation of specific persons and the local community. These results should be presented in a friendly way to the recipients. In order to promote Polish development aid among tax payers it is recommended to prepare guidelines for project promoters which should include requirements with reference to the contents and ways of presenting it on the websites as well as good examples based on other donors' experience such as, e.g. USAID, DFID, etc. Organizing trainings for project promoters in this area could be also considered. Also, it is recommended to increase the scope of information on the projects and their impact on Polish Aid websites. Extensive use of the media (including social media) by the MFA for information and promotion purposes should be considered.

2.3. SUSTAINABILITY

Research questions:

What Polish Aid products/initiatives/projects /types of projects have had the biggest/smallest impact on a sustainable improvement of the beneficiaries' situation and why?

(How) do beneficiaries continue or multiply initiatives started by the Polish development aid programme? (Which beneficiaries do it most often?)

How sustainable are projects implemented in a conflict situation and what factors contribute to ensuring project sustainability?

The questionnaire studies of project beneficiaries show that the vast majority of them, i.e. 27 respondents out of 29 continue on their own the initiatives started during the project. As for taking advantage of particular project products, asked if after the project completion the beneficiary uses the knowledge/equipment/materials gained during the project, 18 respondents gave an affirmative answer and stated that the products would still be used by them for a very long time, whereas 9 respondents declared using them for just some time.

As for the project types, infrastructural projects or infrastructural project elements have proven sustainable. The opinions of the beneficiaries and partner organizations presented during field studies confirm this fact.

"While the project for benefit of the cooperative was being implemented, a malfool treating machine, a cooker and other professional ware were purchased and handed over. The equipment is still in use."
[P_1_beneficiary_2]

"Most of these cisterns still exist. Bedouins are using them, schools are using them, the orphanage is using them, and so the greatest success is that the impact is long-lasting. It will last for years...."
[P_4_8project_implementer_1]

"The project impact is sustainable. The cistern and the water pumping system are used and maintained. They are not under threat of being damaged." [P_4_beneficiary_2]

Sometimes the infrastructural elements of the projects become more useful for the beneficiaries and they start having new functions which had not been thought of at the design stage. For example, one project involved refurbishing a kitchen so that women working in a local cooperative could stay at work all day and make meals for their children staying with them at work. The room became a place of meetings where potential customers were received, although this was not planned at the stage of designing the project. In fact, the occurrence is quite natural – the kitchen is the centre of social and family life not only in the houses in the Middle East.

'The kitchen has become a meeting place where social life is thriving. When external partners come to the cooperative to find out what kind of business is run, thankfully it is the place where they can be received (...). The beneficiaries are still using the purchased facilities. During the day the cooperative attracts other women in the neighbourhood. The women put it straightforward: 'this is our home away from home'. [P_5_beneficiary_2]

The "hard" impact also consists in the sustainability of businesses developed and started within the projects, which leads to continuity and often higher incomes and/or extension of the current business. It is confirmed by beneficiaries' answers to a PAPI open question about the forms in which the initiatives started in the project and then developed on their own have been continued. It is worth noting that the continuation of self-employment and running a business after the project is

completed is what determines its sense. Clearly, employment projects cannot be limited only to the year of their implementation. It is obvious that in Palestine such effects are difficult to be obtained due to the political and social situation.

'I am running the same business that I set up thanks to the project, it is pigeon breeding, and moreover I have started a new business, which is distributing gas cylinders for the households in my region' [questionnaire_4]

'The cooperatives are still offering their products and services as they have a bigger selling market for these products after relations with other cooperatives and various retail outlets have been established. They products and services are in a greater demand, so they are in a position to go on doing what was started within the project.' [questionnaire_11]

As for the so-called 'soft' project impact, it usually refers to the results of trainings and is reflected in the knowledge obtained by the beneficiaries, their skills and attitudes. If it has profiled scope, this knowledge is still used. It mainly refers to the trainings on using and maintaining the provided facilities (e.g. water reservoirs) as well as the trainings aimed at improving vocational skills (the job the beneficiary did before the project started).

'The project initiatives taken are continued simply because the cooperative exists, the machines purchased during the project are still used, and the women who learnt how to sew use these skills.' [P_5_beneficiary_1]

Other beneficiaries filling in the questionnaire expressed similar opinions. If the trainings provided for them were well tailored to their needs - professional ones or those related to everyday living – they still use the knowledge they gained. A project aimed at implementing market models for functioning cooperatives so that they would be more competitive (keeping the cooperative idea while also increasing competitiveness by implementing free market elements in the running of the cooperative) is a case in point. In other words, the impact of trainings could be sustainable and visible in the beneficiaries if the policy scope is fitted into the social and cultural context and if it resulted from actual needs. Then the knowledge and skills gained will be used in practice. Consequently, it will also be related to the process of changing attitudes (e.g. courage to attempt to operate on the free market, etc.).

"We still believe in the values associated with cooperation among cooperatives and we are developing a model to promote market-oriented solutions." [questionnaire_10]

Interestingly, the soft impact is sustainable not as much with regard to institutions e.g. in the project participant's work place, but beneficiaries find them significant on a personal level. Although the obtained knowledge and skills do not contribute to the development of a given organization, they add value used by the beneficiaries in the future albeit in a different context. The institutional beneficiaries notice the value attached by project participants to the initiatives even if they do not benefit from the impact themselves.

'More training for women creates more job opportunities. These trainings are important for the women personally, even if they are not for the cooperative. When women get married, they often leave the cooperative and move out, but the knowledge they gained during the project stays and gives them a universal chance to find a job anywhere they go ...' [P_5_beneficiary_2]

The above statement refers to the management trainings targeted at six female cooperative members. The aim of the trainings was obviously to support women, but the impact of the initiative

was to be the development of the cooperative development (acquired skills were later to be used at work in the cooperative). At present, however, only one young girl of all the trained ones is working in the cooperative, the others have left it (mostly because they got married). Therefore, when it comes to managing the cooperative, increasing its capacity thanks to leadership skills, abilities to delegate duties and promoting initiatives, etc., regrettably, it should be said that the trainings have failed. Their impact is seen, as the quoted statement confirms, in a different area which is the participants' everyday lives. Thus, it could be said that the impact goes much 'deeper' than it was expected at the stage of preparing the application. However, it should be pointed out that the effects are much more difficult to verify because they are related to a slow process of social changes rather than to an immediate effect according to zero-sum logic. While working out a future initiative aimed at supporting women with regard to skills not necessarily vocational but related to broadly defined management, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that a given project will often bring about a wider impact rather than specific effects.

One of the key factors determining impact sustainability is a matter of defining the objectives and the intervention scope in a way that will make funding support the business already run by beneficiaries before providing the funds.

'Within the project necessary facilities were purchased.... and they are still in use. The project could be treated as one of many significant points on the path of running the cooperative – it has been run for a long time (2003) and it has managed well'. [P_1_beneficiary_4]

The field studies and interviews with different stakeholders confirm that in view of the impact sustainability, the project should preferably provide part of the funding for the beneficiary's permanent business. The project support is then one of the many points on the development path of the organisation that receives funds and so it is treated as one of the elements of the process of implementing the beneficiary's development strategy.

'One could say that project initiatives are continued, but not because the project has contributed to it, but because they are part of the organisation's everyday statutory activities. It means that they had been already taken before the project implementation started and they are continued after the venture has come to an end'. [P_7_partner_organization_1]

'Yes, they are certainly being continued, particularly that..... they are cooperating all the time with.... [partner organization's name] and that [partner organization's name] does not operate only within the framework of the project, namely, there is a project so let's do it, but they kind of use the project to develop a specific strategy and they do not stop implementing it the moment it turns out that there is no project'. [P_1_project_implementer_1]

If a partner organization implements a project without a prior analysis of the beneficiaries' needs and if the project does not fit in with the development objective which the beneficiaries are aware of, then their commitment ends once the project is completed. The point is that the beneficiaries do not identify the project objectives with their own (personal or institutional) goals.

Therefore, the utility of the project impact is of great significance, which is the question of how significant a given project is from the ultimate beneficiary's point of view.

'It will last for years..... or even those Bedouins, they were very involved in the repair of the cisterns. They were aware of the fact that it was theirs. And they really... we were taking the cisterns with us on field inspectionsthey have been maintained and used; they are properly locked up and kept safe.

Well, it is very important for them to possess such cisterns, just to have them.'
[P_4_8_project_developer_1]

An additional factor behind the beneficiaries' decision to continue the initiatives launched during the project is whether they are able to discern at least the first project effects. If so, the beneficiaries are willing to make further investments (material and non-material) in this area already without the project support. Experiencing the project impact is a motivation for the beneficiaries. If the project initiatives are of sufficiently narrow scope and their profile is determined by the beneficiaries' ultimate needs and capacity, then it is possible to successfully obtain the impact which triggers the chain reaction entailing subsequent effects. Therefore, it is worth including in the projects plans of the short- and medium-term impact to be observed by beneficiaries.

'Interestingly, [organization's name] enabled them to lease the land within the project so as they could produce food from scratch (without having to buy semi-products). Currently funding is over, however, the women decided to continue the lease as they see the impact it has brought about'
[P_3_beneficiary_1]

'The initiatives are really continued – [beneficiary's name] is running a 'pigeon' business. Not only does he run it , but he also has expanded it so much that he is a significant pigeon supplier for the neighbouring breeders. Also, he has set up a new business involving providing gas cylinders for houses. It is the latter that has significantly improved [beneficiary's name] his economic status. However, such a business was possible thanks to the knowledge gained during the project trainings.'
[P_3_beneficiary_1]

In view of this, the problem that might arise while implementing development projects is overcoming the beneficiaries' specific mentality. It is about how to convince them that it takes time to obtain effects of some initiatives, particularly the effects which translate into the beneficiary's income. Project participants often expect immediate effects, which could make them discouraged or less motivated.

'(...) the cooperatives had their individual ways of thinking, which hindered competition on the market flooded with cheap Turkish and Chinese commodities. The point is cooperation and strategic thinking going beyond your own business (...)' [P_1_partner_organization_3]

'They also faced rotating staff, some people quit because of the lack of immediate profits.'
[P_beneficiary_1]

'(...) if you come with a new project, you have to be patient and cooperate with the local environment. You observe a widespread approach among the Palestinians: how much will you give us? And that was what we had to struggle with. We had to show them that we give them the means to earn money later. We want to teach them that it is better to give a fishing rod than a fish'. [P_1_partner_organization_3]

Therefore, in order to make the beneficiaries feel more like the owners of the project and take responsibility for its impact, some coordinators/partner organizations required the beneficiaries to make their own contribution, which has helped to make the development projects successful (even in the case of the products of humanitarian character).

'We assume one's own contribution to ventures that are started, an additional contribution is put up by beneficiaries' communities and families'.[P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

'They were required to put up their own contribution (i.e. small fees for project participation).The contribution ranges from 15 to 25%, sometimes when the beneficiaries are really poor they are exempted from making their own contribution.' [P_8_partner_organization_1]

'...if you can pay but you do not want to, it means that you won't fully participate in the project.'[P_8_partner_organization_1]

'Beneficiaries' own contribution was regarded as a success factor.....[the Polish non-government organization] earlier (2009) distributed water free of charge, which brought about more problems than benefits.'[P_8_project_implementer_1]

Another question determining the project sustainability is the approach of the partner organization which implements the project. It involves keeping constantly in touch with the beneficiary, which is related to motivating them and showing an interest after the intervention has been completed, as it is described above. If the partner organization regards the projects as an element of internal strategy which is continually developing, it is much easier because the contact with their beneficiaries is permanent. IDI interviewees point out that the key issue are sufficiently frequent and regular contacts with the participants after the projects are completed so as to monitor how the people provided with support manage after the project initiatives come to an end.

The initiatives taken during the project are continued. It can definitely be confirmed because after providing the service, i.e. aid for the disabled, [the organization's name] has never severed contact. Social workers who deal with new beneficiaries visit those that have completed their participation in the project when they visit the new beneficiaries. Such visits take place once a month.[P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

'No. In my opinion, strengthening the project impact involves active performance of the internal organization that initiates cooperation, their attitude..... towards their mission, they don't say that the project ends on.... and that's it, good bye (...). Of course a follow-up visit could give a boost (...), often it happens that the very arrival mobilises everybody to do certain things.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

Not only do partner organizations implementing the project, but also the Polish diplomatic mission, which regularly invites beneficiaries to different meetings, e.g. at Christmas, and distributes among them various promotional materials after the project ends, maintain contact with its ultimate beneficiaries. Acting in this way, the mission strengthens the image impact and contributes to increasing the project sustainability.

'The important thing is that they stay in touch with the Polish party (mailing)'
[P_6_beneficiary_1_2_3]

The impact sustainability of the development projects in Palestine depends very much on the political conflict with Israel. Obviously, the political situation affects the hard infrastructural impact, e.g. destroying or transferring the project infrastructure. This problem is particularly felt in zone C which is entirely controlled by Israel.

'A couple of years ago it was..., the problem of pulling down the cistern occurred. So, there was tension between Poland and Israel, and in general the engagement of the MFA on both sides. Because the cistern was repaired with Polish development funds (...). There (in zone C) though, to do anything, even to put a shovel into the ground, one must have plenty of permissions which are almost impossible to get and so on and so on.' [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

Economic initiatives are hindered by the administration controlled by Israel, the so-called security wall which is still under construction, roadblocks and numerous checkpoints as well as frequent road checks. It leads to delays in delivering products and services, and even to their destruction during transport or reloading. The conflict puts at risk the sustainability of such initiatives started or developed during the projects aimed at the development of entrepreneurship. It directly translates into an decrease in business income.

'All business here follows the conflict situation, if the situation is peaceful, the business is also good'
[P_5_beneficiary_1]

'(...) due to many checkpoints there are a lot of delays in delivering products (...) sometimes there is a requirement at checkpoints to reload the stuff. It means that one should take it from a lorry, carry it by hand through a checkpoint and then put it on another lorry. It costs money, time and physical effort and, above all, it ends up destroying part of the load, in most cases unintentionally, but the result is the same.' [P_1_beneficiary_4]

The venue of initiatives is particularly problematic because the tense political situation has caused serious marketing losses for the beneficiaries. An indirect cause of their decreasing incomes is the declining tourism in the regions especially exposed to conflict escalation.

'Fewer and fewer tourists due to the tense situation there caused by the presence of Jewish settlers. Fewer and fewer tourists means less and less income for the cooperative.'[P_5_beneficiary_1]

Interestingly enough, the impact of the political situation on the efficiency of local business is reflected in the beneficiaries' approach that involves developing and modifying their businesses so as to adequately respond to the conflict. They introduce changes in their business profile and innovations aimed at minimizing the conflict impact, e.g. they withdraw from stationary retail outlets in favour of on-line sales.

' There are few tourists in Hebron now, that's why this business should be kept away from this (conflict) and it should involve online shops. Therefore a professional website for such an online shop is being worked out at the moment. For the time being there is a serious 'pay pal' problem in Palestine, so the cooperative is forced to use it in agreement with the US partner.' [P_5_beneficiary_2]

Another way in which the beneficiaries adjust their business is to look for less problematic selling markets for their products.

'(...) free access to the market in Jerusalem would definitely increase the cooperative's profits. However, if such possibility doesn't exist, the cooperative from Bethany focuses on servicing the West Bank market.' [P_1_beneficiary_1]

It can thus be said that the conflict has affected the beneficiaries' business development, their flexibility, planning and crisis management and has led to business modifications/innovations that respond to the political situation.

Interestingly enough, the conflict has also contributed to strengthening the operational capacity of both Polish NGOs and partner organizations that implement an intervention in the field. The political situation forces the stakeholders to factor a potential conflict into the development plans of the organizations.

'Talks at the airport then a security check, talks with different guys after departure about what was done. We have also been improving these skills, so to say. But it only seems to me that what we have learned from this project is how to better organise our initiatives' [P_1_coordinator_1]

'No, my problems if they appear, they appear sometimes.... My role is also to imagine the whole sequence of events, adding a monthly delay that may be caused by, for example, the political situation.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

Partner organizations operating in Palestine are forced to develop crisis management and to have a 'plan B' if the conflict escalates. On the other hand, they develop procedures that the employees have to apply to crisis situations, e.g. at checkpoints.

'Generally, however, (...) the political and social situation we have to face up to has never kept us from running project initiatives. We cope with it, we consider it in our plans, we don't accept excuses. We always have a plan B. Thus, the key issue is crisis management, an ability to adapt (...). I won't put people at any risk but I have to keep deadlines.' [P_1_partner_organization_1]

'There is also the question of personal security of organization employees. I can recall a situation when two of my employees were in great danger. At a checkpoint, the soldiers started searching them. They were forced to get undressed in front of others so as to provoke the Palestinians to behave aggressively towards Israeli soldiers. It was then that I decided to develop standards of conduct for my all staff at checkpoints where Palestinians' lives are put at risk.' [P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

However, it is clear that the possibilities of adapting to the ongoing political conflict are limited. The implementation of project initiatives is under great threat of the continuously developing Jewish settlements, which has resulted in establishing extraterritorial enclaves deliberately demarcated in the way so as to take control over broader and broader regions inhabited by Palestinians and cut off natural transport connections between particular cities, towns and villages (e.g. Jerusalem-Bethlehem, Jerusalem-Bethany, Jericho-Ramallah, Bethlehem-Beit Jala, etc.). In view of this, it is necessary to be aware of the fact that the ongoing political conflict to some extent will always influence the implemented projects in an unpredictable way and that these risks have to be taken into account while planning project implementation (e.g. by ensuring greater flexibility of the implementation schedules).

Key conclusions:

- The sustainability of infrastructural projects has been definitely achieved: over time they gain in new functionalities that cannot be predicted at the time of designing the projects.
- The sustainability of entrepreneurship projects has also been achieved.
- Soft projects, if well profiled, have also brought sustainable impact yet frequently it is felt by beneficiaries personally rather than by an organization (e.g. having been trained, women take advantage of the gained skills also after they leave the cooperative). The soft impact is more difficult to verify as it refers to slow social changes rather than to the zero-sum effect.
- The project sustainability is positively influenced by the following factors: adjusting a project to the actual needs of the beneficiaries (e.g. funding a part of their business), requiring the beneficiaries to provide their own contribution, immediate first effects of the projects as a motivation and remaining in constant contact with the beneficiaries after completion of the project.
- The political conflict has influenced the development of projects in Palestine, which must be taken into consideration as early as at the stage of designing the project.
- The political conflict has had a negative impact mainly on the projects regarding infrastructure and entrepreneurship.
- Flexibility, crisis management and designing emergency plans are indispensable.
- The political conflict, however, has positively influenced the strengthening of the operational capacity of the Polish and Palestinian organizations which have implemented the projects as well as the beneficiaries' approach to business by teaching them flexibility and innovation.

Research recommendations:

- The application form should include a provision which would have to take into account political conflict impact while implementing the project. The point is that the applicant is to design a model of risk management by indicating at what implementation stages the conflict escalation might be particularly problematic and what possible variations of modifying project initiatives could be applied.
- It is recommended to consider introducing additional incentives at the stage of submitting applications for funds with regard to such projects in which the project promoter will demand from the ultimate beneficiaries (project beneficiaries) a financial contribution (15-25% is regarded as efficient) or a non-financial one (if the ultimate beneficiaries are in a difficult financial situation it could be, e.g. a contribution of work and time). The incentives should not too high so as not to exclude the possibility of obtaining funding for projects where own contribution is not justified.

2.4. PARTNERSHIP

Research questions:

(How) has the ownership principle been developed in Polish aid?

To what extent and in what forms have local partners in the support beneficiary countries been involved in project preparation and implementation? How has the development of empowerment contributed to both the support impact and the capacity of partner organizations from the support beneficiary countries?

One of the advantages of the studied projects implemented in Palestine is that the intervention logic was adjusted to the local context. The vast majority of ventures not only have taken account of the local communities' needs, but they responded to them in a relevant way. This has been confirmed by both talks with the beneficiaries and local partners that implemented the projects.

'The venture did take into account the customs prevailing in the local community. The project in no way interfered with the existing relations. It was developed while respecting family bonds, in accordance with the YMCA standards which runs an office in each of 11 districts of the West Bank and therefore is very well familiar with local traditions and the situation here. [P_3_beneficiary_1]

The same is true of the cooperation between Polish institutions or organizations and local partners.

'The Polish partner understood the local community's needs very well – it was aware of the fact that it is not only giving money for business, but also strengthening the capacity of the local women. One key to the success, in the speaker's opinion, was that the Polish partner understood very well the unstable situation in Hebron.' [P_3_beneficiary_1]

The above statement shows how important knowledge of the local context is for the implementation of aid ventures, especially in Palestine due to the existing political situation. Satisfying the basic needs of local community involves risks (the product and impact sustainability is not referred to here as it is described in another chapter of the report). Implementers themselves are also at risk, e.g. they are in danger of harassment and face obstacles in their daily operations. In such a situation even simple infrastructural initiatives aimed at even ad-hoc aid (e.g. facilitating access to water) have not only a social but also a political overtone.

Quite frequently, an attempt to develop ventures which suit the beneficiaries' needs is impeded by social and cultural matters. A good example is the southern part of Palestine, headed by Hebron and the nearby Idna. While implementing development initiatives in these Palestinian places, it is necessary to take into account their location, political and economic conditions as well as social and cultural relations, especially with regard to the woman's role in society. The implementers of such projects, both local organizations and the Polish partners or the Representation Office of the Republic of Poland in Ramallah have been aware of them. Moreover, implementing project initiatives might induce a conflict between the actual needs of individuals (i.e. work for women that also supplements the household budget) and cultural standards (clearly defining woman's work as a stain on a man's reputation).

'The project took account of the local community's needs in this meaning that it helped, by involving women in work, to increase the household budget. Getting women involved at least at the beginning long before the project development was initiated had been very difficult.' [P_5_coordinator_1]

The implementation of initiatives involving women is to some extent a question of overcoming resistance that results from the perception of the social roles adopted in Muslim countries. It is the

man who makes a living for his family whereas the woman takes care of it. Therefore, activity in this area demands the knowledge and understanding of local habits and respect for them. Otherwise much harm could be done despite good intentions.

It should be noted that the efficiency and sustainability of the projects implemented by the Polish diplomatic mission in Ramallah is influenced, to a large extent, by the in-depth knowledge which has been gained by the mission's employees with reference to real living in Palestine as well as by the involvement of the mission in the initiatives taken locally. Talks with local project implementers confirm that the mission's interest in the project's fate does not end when the project is completed. The project implementers are invited to different events where they can distribute information on both the completed project and their activity as a whole. Generally, the employees of the Representation Office of the Republic of Poland in Ramallah are local organizations-friendly, which is reflected in frequent contacts – in the mission office, where representatives of non-profit organizations can present their own project ideas and in 'the field' where the mission employees visit the project beneficiaries and implementers.

'The Polish Representation Office in Ramallah understands very well the cooperative needs, they were invited here, they saw the women at work, and they invited the cooperative members to Ramallah for a festival. They could see for themselves that the cooperative doesn't waste money – the machines, the kitchen and the nursery are in use.' [P_5_beneficiary_2]

One of the indicators of taking account of the beneficiaries' needs is the ownership rule. It includes, among others, state, regional and local strategies, development plans, etc. while planning and implementing development initiatives. Some project implementers who were interviewed pointed out that the strategic documents of Palestine or its particular regions are not referred to by their organizations while planning their initiatives. The governmental documents, in turn, are often criticized.

'(...) Such strategies concerning the development of the country as a whole or its regions are developed at the government level, but they are far from reality. It's worth mentioning the strategies created for the District of Bethlehem and Nablus as useless because they are imposed centrally and have little to do with the reality.' [P_1_partner_organization_2]

In most cases local project implementers, especially those who have been operating for a dozen or so years work out strategic documents for their organizations. Some of them are also familiar with such documents referring to Palestine and believe that the initiatives taken by them fit in with their provisions.

'We have our own three-year strategy, we are familiar with the three-year strategy for the West Bank and Gaza, and the projects fit these strategies.' [P_8_partner_organization_1]

'[partner organization's name] operates in accordance with their strategy which is developed for 4-5 years. The strategy is transparent and it is published on the Internet. We also invite other non-governmental organizations to cooperate.' [P_1_partner_organization_1]

The statement below by a representative of a Polish organization involved in implementing one of the researched projects testifies to the Palestinian partners' good familiarity with local needs. These words also reflect confidence in their practical knowledge and the documentation created on its basis. However, it was not possible to find out to what extent the projects have influenced the implementation of Palestinian strategic documents. As a rule, the projects are designed in

cooperation with local partners but the implementers have no knowledge whether the partner takes into account national or local strategies. The following answer was given to a question whether local strategies were taken into account when the project was designed:

'One would have to ask the partner because they have their own documents in Arabic and so on, but they conduct different analyses (...). For sure they have a whole research department which takes it into account. And it seems to me that they do use these analyses, I think that too much extent these are their own reports;' [P_1_coordinator_1]

A MFA representative asked what selection criteria were used in the decision to implement the two projects discussed during the interview, unhesitatingly reaffirmed the application of the ownership rule.

'The compatibility with the objectives described in the Plans of Development Cooperation for Palestine. The efficiency and the rationale of the designed initiatives, the project cohesion, the cost efficiency.' [P_4_8-MFA_1]

The conducted study leads to the conclusion that the impact of the projects implemented in Palestine is mainly determined by a reliable bottom-up diagnosis of the beneficiaries' needs done by the local partners. It is also a certain form of ownership which makes use of the knowledge and experience (also frequently included in the strategies) of the local organizations instead of referring to official documents. Thus, the MFA should take into account the key stakeholders' opinions in developing its programming documents because they are familiar with the local needs and realities. It mostly concerns the diplomatic mission in Ramallah.

'The strengths are that for a few years I have had the impression that it is the programme [PDC] that makes sense (...). It means, it is evident that the MFA has adopted a strategic approach to it, that the moment this project was approved, a MFA representative, the previous one in charge of it, enquired the partner thoroughly, in general these aid priorities are not made up, but they apparently - at least when it comes to the people I've dealt with- were reliably developed and they are sensible, I mean they combine what is needed with what could be done by Polish NGOs.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

'PDC prepares the support areas following consultations with the diplomatic mission [the Polish Representation Office in Ramallah]. At least in our case they checked the local needs.' [P_5_coordinator-3pl]

The ownership rule, whether it refers to local strategies or diagnoses provided locally by particular organizations, is inseparable from having confidence in reliable partners – local organizations.

'The project suited the local communities' needs. Since they were diagnoses by Palestinian local organizations. PAH participated in that diagnosis, however it didn't impose anything on them, showing respect for the partners' knowledge.' [P_8_project_implementer_1]

'We are there. We face these problems. We know what is going on there. We go to cluster meetings. We go to coordination meetings. We belong to, we were the AIDA member. It was an association of all humanitarian organizations, which operated pretty well in Palestine. They organized regular meetings and it is aimed at a kind of coordination of all initiatives and the avoidance of their repeating. That is also an important workload of the humanitarian sector to participate in the local life so as to know the local needs.' [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

Additionally, up to 2013 Palestine, as compared to other countries covered by the Development Cooperation Programme, was an exceptional region due to the fact that Polska Akcja Humanitarna

(the Polish Humanitarian Organization) PAH had their permanent mission there. All the speakers familiar with PAH confirmed that the organization plays an important role. They also admitted that its activity was based on reliable identification of the local needs.

'Starting any activity or, especially opening a permanent mission, is preceded by such a diagnosis, which is identifying needs. (...) I know accounts that Janka Ochojska along with other employees went there. There she met with many people and in response to the needs which were there we decided to open a permanent mission. Yet it was originally assumed due to our fundamental principles of neutrality that the mission's aim was to help the two sides of the conflict. Not only that, however, it turned out that Israel deals very well with these issues. Because it is a state, though. A very powerful state... Civilized and affluent. It can afford to provide psychological support to these people, children and..... So it looked as if there was no use getting involved there, whereas it is known that the Palestinian party has struggled with many more needs.' [P_4_8_project_developer_1]

In conclusion, it can be said that the ownership rule is a key to successful implementation of projects in Palestine. It is definitely much more important to depend on reliable diagnoses and strategies provided by the local organizations rather than on government documents whose utility is unfavourably assessed by different stakeholders.

The key rule for implementing aid projects is empowerment, which means involving local partners and aid recipients in the initiatives targeted at them or even involving them in preparing these initiatives. It translates into cooperation with local partners, using the capacity of local organizations, strengthening their capacity, strengthening the skills and branches well known in the society, taking advantage of the beneficiaries' capacity, supporting the local labour market.

The majority of the studied projects provide good examples of empowerment in practice. For instance, all the evaluated ventures aimed at supporting local entrepreneurship were based on local resources; they supported the existing cooperatives in their most important areas. The words quoted below reflect the significance and strengths of supporting the local tradition without imposing a ready-made vision so that it will lead to development.

'Do you know the idea of continuing tradition by the new generation? We are teaching them to do it. My mum used to say: If you have problems in your life, make use of your hands. We teach young girls how to take advantage of what we have been doing for generations. In the cooperative the young girls bring in ideas about product designs, changes in trends: in this way we combine tradition with modernity.' [P_5_beneficiary_1]

In this respect the local partners indicated how important for them was the opportunity of using Polish experiences which they considered to be worthy of being adopted in their environment.

'Polish aid has supported organizational skills of [partner organization's name] as well as knowledge transfer. To begin with, the visit to Poland provided patterns for agricultural production but also a model of gradual transformation towards a market-oriented model. As for the Polish party, [partner organization's name] has been strengthened in building the strategy for their organization, defining its objectives and implementation tools... Poland has come a long way from the centralist state governance to a free market economy. We'd like to learn how to shift the cooperative activity from socialist management to the private sector.' [P_1_partner_organization_2]

In other words, the implementer of the mentioned project was searching for models of developing countries which have succeeded and proven to last like the Swedish and Polish models. A project implementer's representative visited different cooperatives during his stay in Poland to see how

some solutions are applied in practice. The assumption is to implement such models in Palestine to the greatest extent possible given the available resources. The idea of such a wider use of the Polish model was just initiated in the project within which a Polish non-governmental organization inspired a local partner organization with a training course on cooperative values in the context of political and economic transformation.

The Polish project implementers often perceived their role as assistants in the venture and a party supporting local partners, mainly when it comes to project accounting, reporting and keeping deadlines.

'I often play the role of 'a slave driver'. [In Palestine] the approach to time isn't as bad as in Georgia, but still there are delays and everything is tomorrow, tomorrow. So, our role is.... But, for example, it isn't me that is to train or supervising training on planting whatsoever, because I'm not familiar with it. Hence, our role is more... a kind of co-developing the project, but more emphasis is put on the partner. Anyway, the partner (...) has a team of employees, and we see to it all going sensibly, of course we check spending, these things are obvious in coordination.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

What seems important is that local partners work with the beneficiaries by, e.g. helping them work out a marketing strategy and a business plan also after the project is completed. However, they still are aware of their role which is to support local cooperatives rather than take their place.

'That's why I 'm saying this to everybody that these cooperatives are sort of... included in the project and we support them all the time, although just a bit, especially we support them in view of watching their business plans.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

However, not all ventures provide good examples of relying on local resources and responding to local needs. The studied projects sample includes the weakest project entitled 'Increasing the Chances of Employment for Palestinian Youths by Establishing Relations with the Polish Private Sector'. In fact, it did use local resources (mostly an electronic platform run by the project implementer), but the expected impact did not occur, namely establishing business relations between Palestinian graduates seeking a job and Polish entrepreneurs. This case has proven that the empowerment rule, even though very important for the venture's success, could be insufficient, if there is a lack of both ownership and a baseline diagnosis. In this case the problem was the lack of a reliable diagnosis of the Polish entrepreneurs' needs.

All our interviewees admitted that a successful venture implementation demands a 'trusted' local partner and partner relations between the Polish project coordinator and a local organization. These factors determine, to a large extent, project impact and its sustainability.

'(...) Now whenever we meet each other in the lift, I'm asked by that boss visionary if I'm satisfied with this project. It is evident that we listen to each other and that is a plus in the process [which is a joint development of the project].' [P_1_coordinator_1]

'This is an advantage of cooperating with a partner, who acts positively. I've got a problem as when I'm thinking about extending, e.g. the mission; I just can't see other partners except for them. It could possibly to have a project with any other partner, but I'm so much 'in love' with this one that project polygamy is out of my interest.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

The most significant factor determining the project success and relating to the way local partner organizations are run is their experience. The most effective organizations have existed and worked in Palestine for many years and they have their own strategic documents and development plans.

"My assessment is very high. The partner that is [partner organization's name] is a very demanding partner, the partner who, as I said, really knows what they want to achieve and they won't take whatever comes their way, and this is what I really like." [P_1_project_implementer_1]

The fact that the organization has been operating in Palestine for a long time for its beneficiaries is a factor that protects it against the so-called grantosis. The most effective organizations do not pay much attention in their activity to the project logic, therefore they do not think of funding as a way to justify their existence, focusing instead on achieving their strategic statutory objectives. In such cases the participation of the organizations in PDA projects hardly ever leads to an increase in their operational capacity – the implemented project is only a point on the path leading to achieving the strategic goals that were set by the organization.

'Factors of success and failure in project development can also be defined; the key issue is participatory project preparation... Another thing is faithfulness to their own mission, it is.. so as not to be project-driven... [partner organization's name] refused to take a donation because they thought that the initiatives it was assigned to do did not match the targets of the organization. The organization has a strategic plan which it adjusts and updates every five years in a participatory way (focus meetings and consultations with beneficiaries, donors, staff, organizations, the government.'
[P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

'When applications for a donation are being prepared, you start behaving like a machine, but when you have a partner that is preparing the project with you from A to Z and monitoring your activity... it is like a marriage – you get into it and you don't look for an easy escape, it is cooperation for life... Sustainable development means sustainable relations with your partner.'
[P_1_partner_organization_2]

In this respect it is necessary to be careful about financing such project elements which in should ensure to a great extent the sustainability of a given institution, e.g. by financing current wages of its employees. At times institutional beneficiaries expect such support, which is a kind of an obstacle for focusing on the development impact.

'We can't sink money into the cooperative only to artificially sustain its existence. We can't constantly look for jobs for these women so as to be able to pay their wages.' [P_5_coordinator_1]

Effective local organizations are those stakeholders who realize that it is necessary to gradually become independent of external funding. Hence, the role of the Polish project promoter, which is to give a development impulse to partner organizations and beneficiaries so that the initiatives started during the project will be subsequently continued on their own.

'Its (organization) main mission is sustainability in Palestine... Sustainable development ... is also independence of external funds- grants, let alone possible donations from Israel.... So the organization wants Palestine to exist and to develop independently in a sustainable way, a Palestine independent of external donors, but also of Israel's generosity or restraint.' [P_1_partner_organization_1]

'As if our projects... we boast about them in this respect that there are many projects that help in something, that equip something, but in fact, what we mean is that we want the cooperatives, when left to themselves, to be able to operate on the market.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

'What has always been important to us is that we give an impulse for their development, it means we very much don't want them to lean on us, and hang around our neck.'

[P-1_coordinator-1]

Effective local partner organizations are also prepared to deal with conflict situations. In such organizations crisis management and risk management are well developed. They work out alternative action plans in the event of conflict escalation. They also elaborate and update guidelines and procedures which are obligatory for their staff in crisis situations.

In the case of less developed and 'younger' organizations, it is necessary to institutionalize them by setting up structures that ensure their sustainability and mechanisms of replacing their management.

'The most important thing is to concentrate members who have different skills, dividing tasks, reliable trainings and the right people in managerial positions (...)' [P_1_beneficiary_1]

'It's necessary to check their [partner organizations/institutional beneficiaries] capacity and so on (...)' [P_1_coordinator_1]

'(...) management and marketing – each cooperative should be able to elaborate their business plan, now we're working with them on it when the project is completed. After the workshops we asked them about their objectives, we conducted a SWOT analysis, we gave it to them and also a kind of homework which was to come up with objectives related to their strategy, operation and mission.' [P_1_partner_organization_3]

In light of the above it is necessary to take into consideration the criteria of assessing future projects – to what extent they should be determined by the applicant's experience in a given area and to what extent by the project idea as such (assuming that the application is submitted by a new organization). The implementation of particular projects should contribute mostly to changing the unfavourable situation of local people as well as to strengthening the institutional capacity of the project implementer.

Key conclusions:

- Ownership is a key to the success of implementing projects in Palestine, but more important that this is to act on the basis of reliable diagnoses of local organizations and strategies worked out by them rather than rely on governmental documents whose utility is assessed unfavourably by different stakeholders.
- Most studied projects are good examples of empowerment in practice.
- Successful implementation of a project depends on having a trusted and experienced local partner and partner like relations between a Polish project coordinator and the local organization.
- It is necessary to make local organizations become independent of external funding, hence the role of a Polish project promoter, which is to give a development impulse to the partner organizations and beneficiaries so that the initiatives started during the project will be subsequently continued on their own.

Research recommendations: No recommendations

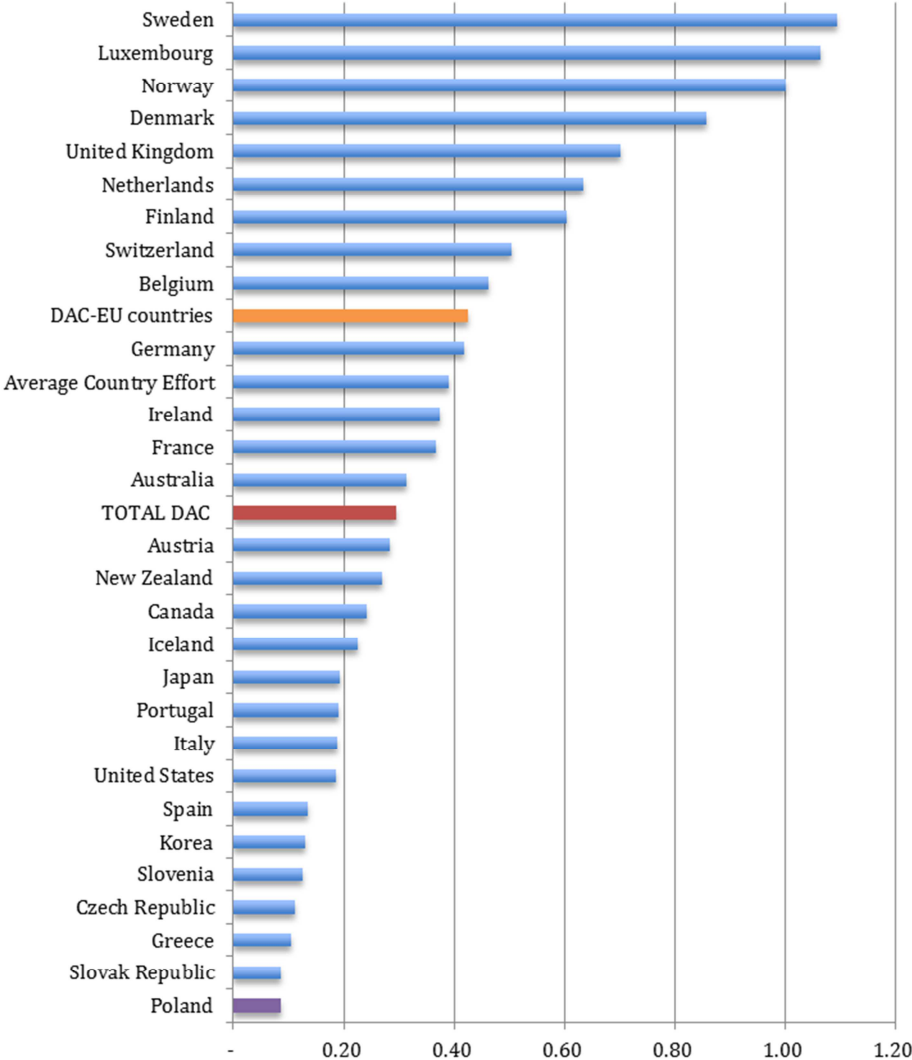
2.5. COMPARISON AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER DONORS

(In what aspects) have aid initiatives developed by Poland been distinguishable from or compatible with other donors’ initiatives? On what conditions/In what areas can cooperation with other donors increase the value added of Polish aid?

2.5.1. POLISH AID IN CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE

The main source of information on official Polish development aid (ODA) is the OECD, specifically the DAC agency. According to OECD data, of all the donor countries, Poland’s development assistance, next to Slovakia’s, represents the smallest percentage of its Gross National Income (GNI). In 2014, PDA amounted to 0.09% of GNI and 0.1% of GNI in 2015 (OECD, 2016). Poland has committed itself to increasing funding for development aid to 0.33% of its GNI as soon as the right financial and political conditions are in place and it intends to reach that level by 2030. (OECD, 2016a)

Chart 4. Official development aid relative to Gross National Product in 2014



Source: OECD statistics

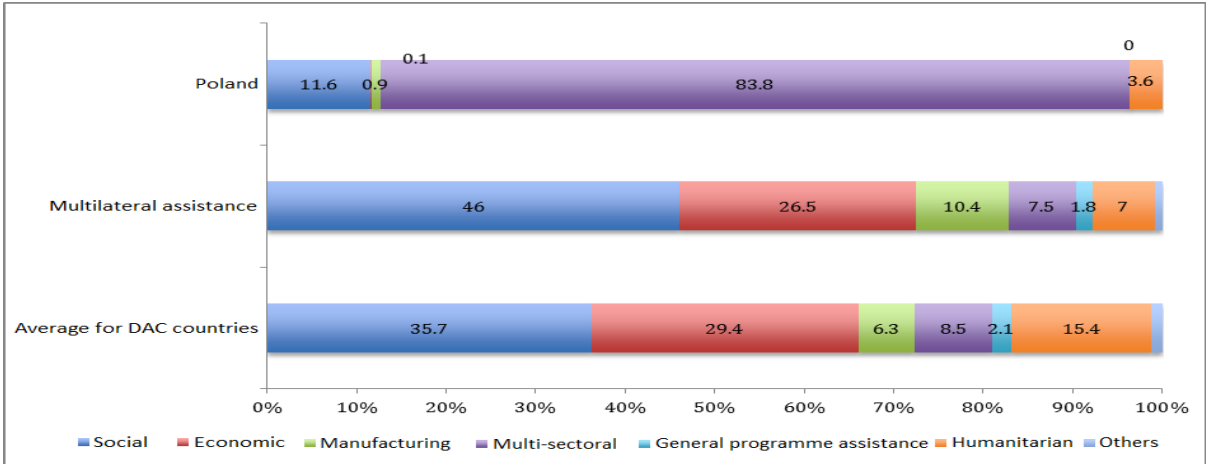
It is worth noting that the vast majority of Polish development aid is channelled through multilateral organizations. In 2014, 78% of ODA was provided to such organizations in the form of mandatory contributions, while the average for DAC countries is 28.3%. It shows that the scale of bilateral aid is actually very small and that Polish development aid mainly involves fulfilling international commitments (OECD, 2016a).

The little funding allocated by Poland to development aid means that the aid provided to Asian countries is also small, even though a substantial part of the Polish development funding is allocated to this region. In 2010-2014, 40% of the Polish development aid was provided there. It is more than the average for DAC countries (it amounted to 37%) and European institutions (18%). Few countries directed a bigger part of their aid to Asia than Poland. Among them there are Asian countries (Japan, Korea) and the countries traditionally connected with Asia (Australia), but also the Czech Republic, which provides the region with as much as 47% of their development aid. In turn, such countries as Great Britain, the United States or Germany assigned a similar part of their development aid to this region (about 40%). Even so that aid amounted to a small fraction of the overall aid directed there (nearly 0.1%) (OECD 2016).

It is difficult, however, to assess on the basis of the OECD documents which part of particular countries' aid reached the West Bank and Gaza¹⁰. It is commonly known that the region was the sixth biggest recipient of development aid for Asia and it was provided with 5% of this aid (on average over 2012-2014). The main recipients of development aid in that period were Afghanistan (13%), Vietnam (9%) and Syria (7%).

There is a clear difference between the structure of Polish development aid and the average structure of development aid of other countries or the aid offered by international organizations. Poland's distinctive feature is the predominance of multilateral aid. It means that most of the development aid that goes to Asia reaches its recipients via multilateral organizations. The DAC countries' average for this region is only 8.5% almost ten times less.

Chart 5. Official development aid for Asian countries according to sectors (2014)

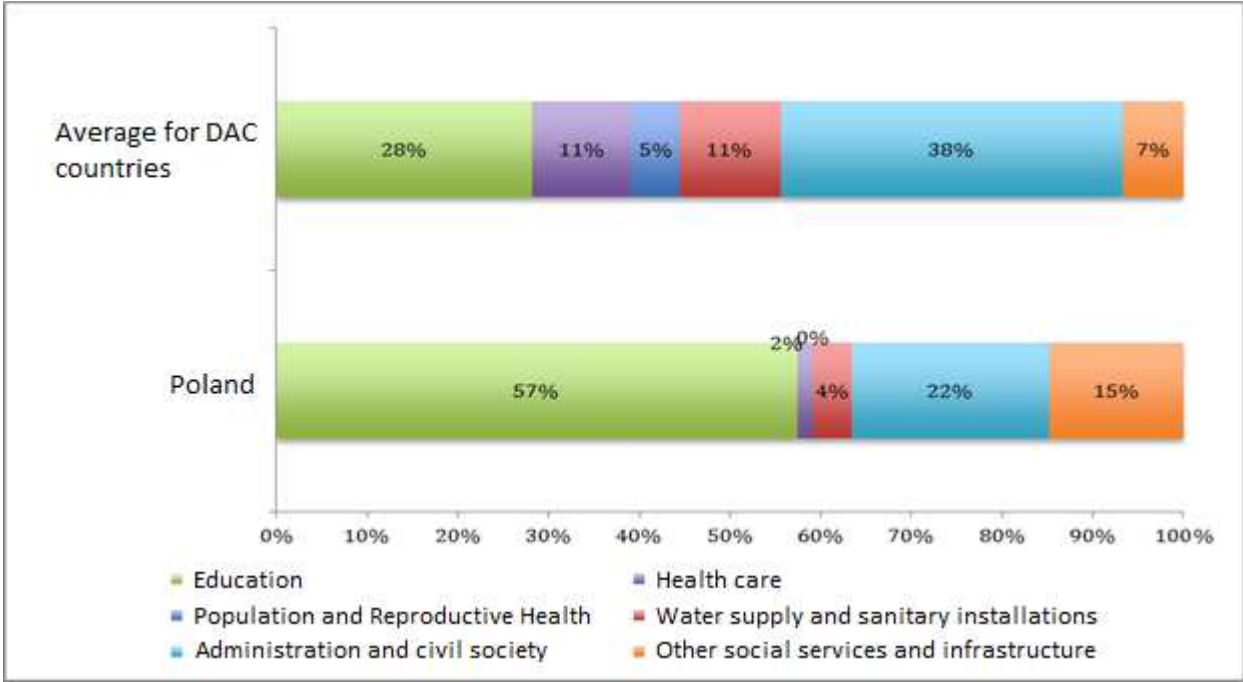


Source: OECD(2016)

¹⁰ OECD documents do not take into account Palestine but mention Gaza and the West Bank. Therefore information on this region will be used as tantamount to aid for Palestine.

The second important sector for Polish development aid is the social area within which a considerable part of the aid (57%) was allocated to education in 2014. It is definitely more than the average in DAC countries. Administration and the civil society represent another significant PDA area. The two areas are also priorities for other DAC, although a bigger part of the funding is allocated to administration and the civil society. In contrast, it could be stated that Polish development aid in this region is highly concentrated on education, whereas the second most important area is administration and the civil society.

Chart 6. Official development aid targeted at Asia in social sector according to policy area distribution (2014)



Source: OECD (2016)

2.5.2. COMPLEMENTARITY AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER DONORS. PDA DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The field studies show that there are several features distinguishing Polish development aid as compared to other donors’ initiatives. The basic discriminant is the very active engagement of the Polish side, specifically the Polish diplomatic mission, which makes the partner organizations and beneficiaries feel they are supported even after the project completion. In view of this, strengthening the PDA promotion is an important side-effect.

‘Generally, we have very positive experiences from the cooperation. We were very satisfied with their engagement; [a mission representative] had been familiar with detailed assumptions of the project before it started. And even after the implementation was completed, the Representation Office staff didn’t forget about it, but they conducted follow-up visits. Also people from the Polish MFA took part in such visits, which is very positive.’ [P_2-3_partner_organization_1]

A distinctive feature of the activity of the Polish diplomatic mission in PDA is its professionalism manifested in the ability of its employees to very effectively communicate with partner organizations, which means always staying ‘close’ to the stakeholders.

'Another matter is punctuality and reliability: they reply to emails in a short time, there have never been any delays in transferring funds for the project implementation (...) They stay very close to us. [P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

'In recent years as a coordinator I have had dealt with at least 7 different diplomatic missions, representatives of various countries. The Polish mission is effective not only because it provides grants, which are effective, but it is also effective in establishing contacts, organizing visits, because it is friendly and accessible to beneficiary institutions. I am never more than one phone call away from contacting a Polish representative. In the American mission you are lucky if you can have a half-hour meeting with anyone – a lower rank official. So, the Polish mission gets the highest marks when it comes to accessibility.' [P_5_coordinator_1]

Another distinctive feature of Polish development aid is its flexibility, especially as compared to other donors. In the respondents' opinion, flexibility regarded as an adequate response to the political context is very important. In Palestine, the situation is so changeable that actually the completion of all project initiatives and consequently the project success seem undoable unless the project initiatives can be modified. In this respect it, the process of learning PDA has been observed because flexibility develops over time as knowledge about the local context increases.

'They are flexible in a common-sense way (they demand that we notify them about possible changes but it doesn't involve a lot of red tape).' [p_2_3_partner_organization_1]

'Polish aid is distinguishable above all because of good comprehension of the local context, including the political conflict in the first place, which deserves true respect. On the other hand, the Polish side is very flexible and its initiatives are a relevant response to the political situation, the project objectives and assumptions are always achieved, but the path to such a development and the way of implementing particular initiatives are modified over time.' [P_1_partner_organization_1]

'Polish aid has seen improvement in its flexibility, which means that 4 or 5 years ago only budget lines could be decreased or increased by 10%. Now all the initiative could be changed. In other words, there is some flexibility, but there aren't so many formalities. It is about some flexibility because we know that in difficult countries the implementation process has its own rhythm, not necessarily the same one that was planned.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

In the beneficiaries' opinion, the above mentioned operational flexibility results from the fact that the Polish donor understands the beneficiaries' ultimate local needs and it targets its initiatives in such a way as to adapt them to a local context. It proves that the Polish side is eager to achieve the PDA strategic objectives, not only to be formally correct with regard to the project implementation, to smoothly implement and settle the projects. In other words, the Polish side does not focus on the formal correctness of the PDA process but on its strategic aspect. Therefore it feels co-responsible with the stakeholders for the project's success (which builds good relations with partners).

'The Polish donor isn't like other donors that look for the implementation problems and focus on their monitoring. The Polish party, getting a signal of a problem, is trying to solve it along with the implementer. The Polish party has been building sound relations with implementers.' [P_1_partner_organization_1]

'As it might seem to me that if I can say what makes a difference about, for example, comparable European development aid projects, those I am familiar with, for sure they are different in it that there is much greater flexibility as for these aid development projects, because in the case of the projects financed by the European Union the frames are so rigid that they just don't allow adjusting to actual

needs... I've got a feeling that as for development aid, this situation is a bit different, which means the flexibility with regard to these initiatives is much greater.' [P_1_project_implementer_1]

As it is proven by the conducted field studies, the Polish diplomatic mission in Ramallah actively cooperates with other EU countries at the strategic level. During regular meetings on development aid with representatives of other European Countries the Polish Representation office has the opportunity to find out what types of aid initiatives and in what sector they are taken by other donors. At such meetings, which are mainly of informative character, strategic plans of particular donors are discussed.

'Every 2 weeks all people in charge of development aid in a given European country, it means in these member countries, we have a meeting together, namely there is a delegation and member countries. We have meetings every two weeks on average and during them all development matters which are important for the Union and the member countries are discussed. These are different things. It is quite helpful because everybody tries to standardize everything. ... Between European countries..... we also have our bilateral meetings where, in fact, everybody knows who is doing what and how. It is all brought up, so more or less we know which country operates in which sectors and so on, that is what we know more or less.'[P_5_coordinator_3pl]

'Those EU meetings are, let's say at a higher level, I mean the strategy, who is doing what, they are sort of more informative. We are doing here, that much money went to this sector, in this place, in that place.... Those EU ones are more informative for planning and so on.' [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

Additionally, the project application forms include a section regarding the project complementarity in view of other donors. However, the analysis of applications confirms that applicants frequently do not design initiatives which are complementary to other donors' initiatives and this application box hardly ever contains information on other similar initiatives, but it does contain some details on the correspondence (formal consistency) of a given project with a defined strategy of Palestine or international strategies referring to, e.g. the *Palestinian Development Plan 2011-2013* or the UN Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal for Palestine. Nevertheless, there is no mechanism verifying the implementation of these assumptions, which is why it can be assumed that the mentioned application section is solely informative and is not linked to the implementation. The problem is that for MFA supervisors it is often the only reference to the project complementarity. Because of this, applicants should be forced to provide information on other donors' initiatives that are synergic with reference to Polish activity. In view of this, it would be a good idea to elaborate more detailed guidelines on the above mentioned forms and provide an effective verifying mechanism.

'Apart from the information declared in the application I have lack of knowledge of implementing complementary projects by other donors from both Poland and abroad.' [P_1_6_MFA_1]

There is, however, the other mechanism of cooperation at the implementation stage. It is meetings of the so-called sectoral groups i.e. the development aid stakeholders within a given development priority, e.g. education or water management and sanitation. The working groups are composed of representatives of donors, international organizations, national non-governmental organizations as well as local partner organizations/project implementers. These meetings involve discussing possible initiatives and solutions to arising problems.

'But there is another forum for something like this. There are some groups, more sectoral where there are more connected foreign organizations implementing projects in this sector and donors. Such working groups are more useful because they are, let's say, one forum where donors and implementing

organizations get together and, for example, they discuss it... Well, these working groups with donors and organizations meet more or less every three months. And then more issues can be brought up.' [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

The contacts between the Polish diplomatic mission and the AIDA (*Association of International Development Agencies*) are good. The Association is a forum of over 80 non-governmental organizations operating in the occupied territories of Palestine. The Association represents these organizations operating in Palestine in front of key institutions making political and strategic decisions and coordinates the transfer of knowledge and resources among member organizations. The Polish party takes advantage of the association counselling and shows a very positive approach to its functioning. The cooperation with the AIDA is also positively assessed by representatives of Polish non-governmental organizations which regard it as a mechanism ensuring the complementarity and synergy of the implemented initiatives.

'(...) or for example, it is the AIDA association. They are available for everybody. For example, lately I have contacted them to find out what it looks like when it comes to taxation. There was a sort of a new regulation introduced by the government on whether to impose a tax on foreign staff... Well, and it is also a gathering of organizations, they discuss things.' [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

Additionally, the diplomatic mission cooperates within development aid directly with non-governmental organizations as well as with representatives of other donor countries. Such cooperation brings in measurable effects for the participating entities. An example is the Polish-Czech cooperation. Due to impeded entry into Gaza, the Polish party has shared their experience, whereas the Czech party has provided technical support.

'(...) a few times we had just such meetings, I mean... I phone the Czechs to ask about something, how you are doing, how you are coping with this and that in that place. Or, for example, our project in Gaza last year, it was just the Polish-Czech one. It was just that the Czech Republic (...) That girl (...) comes and says that they want to do something in GAZA but they aren't quite sure what it could be as she was a rookie (...) So then we sat down together and talked about different possibilities(...) I put her through to one organization working in Gaza. They have their local partners at hand, we as a couple of donors are able to do more.' [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

As mentioned above, the information flow between the Polish party implementing development aid in Palestine and other donors and prospective collaborators should obtain a good assessment. However, in practice, the initiatives are hardly ever designed as complementary to other donor's activity. The beneficiaries and partner organizations implement projects financed by other donors because they search for them on their own and they are independent of the PDA projects whose scope and/or policy areas are similar. In this respect, the support from different sources is frequently punctual, which means that a given country supports the current development objectives of a beneficiary/partner organization. Most frequently a given partner organization cooperates with only few donors and it is also typical of the organizations with a great operational capacity, which have been operating for many years. It is not uncommon that Polish development aid is the only support source for a particular type of beneficiary operating in a given branch/sector even for a long time. The beneficiaries could possibly know about other donors in their region or branch, but they do not take initiatives at obtaining aid from other countries for their own objectives.

'I know that the project was implemented by the Polish government. This information was provided by the project implementer [partner organization's name]. However, I haven't heard of other projects implemented by other organizations.' {P_3_beneficiary_1}

'We are aware of the fact that the Polish government is financing other projects in Palestine, but we aren't able to give examples. We ourselves have implemented one project within Polish aid, the one we are talking about. We don't implement many projects from other donors, but there are some financed by Germany and Holland (targeted at women and children).' [P_6_beneficiary_1_2_3]

In this respect PDA could be improved. Taking into account the limited and relatively small PDA budget, it would be advisable to think about taking initiatives complementary to other donors' in two possible ways. One is implementing a narrow-scoped project which is a continuation of other donors' initiatives taken in a given area and targeted at a given group of beneficiaries. For example, the Czech Development Agency cooperates with other donors by implementing joint projects in which each donor is responsible for separated initiatives. Another possibility is the implementation of modular projects. In this respect it would be advisable to cooperate with bigger donors in long-term projects (implementation longer than 2 years) and implement one of the area modules within the project supervised by a bigger donor. The research has proven that developing modular projects on a large scale would be very beneficial in view of the limited capability of Poland. PDA projects could, to a large extent, cover the Polish contribution to large projects implemented by other donors.

'A positive thing is that it is already possible to have two-module or even three-module projects, it's superb, because it allows funding. For example, to apply for the EU projects one must have a financial contribution from another project.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

It seems that partial complementarity of the project initiatives financed from different sources results from the way the Polish diplomatic mission and Polish non-governmental organizations operate. The research shows that for the selection of policy support the most important factor is the type of beneficiary and not the support policy area as such. According to the logic of the mission, the beneficiaries selected are those that are at the highest risk of social exclusion, the ones within reach of only few donors.

"Usually as I say, well as for us, we are trying to select such places where generally there is nobody. Even if this [partner organization's name]... OK. Anyway [partner organization's name] seems to be everywhere, but they really select beneficiaries in the middle of nowhere. The journey is difficult and it's difficult to get there.... Even if five other donors are helping such Imca within the same project, the demand is so high that, as for this project, it makes no difference how many donors are helping because these people, there are so many of them that, for example, if we take care of 50 people, so for instance somebody else deals with other people." [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

Taking into account the very good cooperation of the Polish party with local partner organizations, excellent and respected knowledge of local specificities possessed by the Polish diplomatic mission and on the other hand the intensive information exchange between the Polish party and other donors (EU donors, strategic level, bilateral direct cooperation with other countries), it would be a good idea to make a better use of this capacity for implementing joint projects. Particularly, in view of the fact that the capacity of local partner organizations and beneficiaries for seeking support complementary to the Polish donor is rather poor and underdeveloped.

Key conclusions:

- The scale of bilateral aid is really small and Polish development aid mainly involves fulfilling international commitments.
- The Polish party, especially the Polish diplomatic mission, is very much engaged in implemented development initiatives, which makes partner organizations and beneficiaries feel the support even after the project completion.
- A distinctive feature of the activity of the Polish diplomatic mission as for PDA is professionalism reflected in very effective communication with partner organizations
- A distinctive feature of Polish development aid in Palestine is flexibility, especially as compared to other donors, which is as an adequate response to the political context.
- The Polish diplomatic mission in Ramallah actively cooperates with other EU countries at the strategic and operational levels within development aid, however it does not translate into designing initiatives that are complementary to other donors' initiatives.

Research recommendations:

- Taking into account a limited and relatively small PDA budget, the SPF projects, as a rule, should be complementary to other donors' initiatives. It can be conducted in two ways. One is implementing a narrow-scoped project which would be a complement to or an extension of other donors' initiatives taken in a given area and targeted at a given group of beneficiaries. Another possibility is joining the implementation of multiannual projects (longer than 2 years) initiated and supervised by a bigger donor. In view of this, Polish projects should be designed as complete closed tasks. Such tasks should have indicators ascribed to them (at least the product indicators). It will allow to plan and complete in a complex way a specific task which could be assessed with reference to obtaining the expected indicators, which consequently will secure the visibility of PDA impact.
- It is recommended to introduce mechanisms of verifying the synergy impact by elaborating more detailed guidelines on this section of the application form and take account of this section in substantive reports on the project implementation.

2.6 MONITORING

Research question:

How to strengthen the system of monitoring projects that were implemented as part of Polish development cooperation?

The system of monitoring and evaluating development aid is one of the key factors determining the quality of planned and implemented initiatives. It has a conclusive (reporting and accounting) function and above all a formative function specifically at the stage of programming pro-development interventions.

Monitoring and evaluation of development aid in Palestine has not been run systematically. Among others, it lacks a clear assignment of responsibility for such processes to particular entities.

“Besides in the (Polish) MFA there is no team conducting evaluations. Who will evaluate it later? You are talking about the projects, OK, well... But is there a department..... that comes and really conducts or let's say studies the impact or what has been achieved? No, there isn't.” [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

Limited financial resources and project duration represent a major obstacle to the process of monitoring and evaluation, according to the study results. The worrying fact is that the initiatives relating to monitoring and evaluation are only taken when the projects are being implemented. There is no systematic reflection on the effectiveness, efficiency, utility and relevance of projects following their completion because only the implementation parts are budgeted in.

‘(...) we (...) don't have an extra budget to check, for example, what is going on in the first half of next year, we can't use this money for something like this. Even before if some money was assigned to monitoring these projects, it was only during implementation of the project. It means, for example, if we (...) implement projects, let's say, from June to December (...). At the time we can spend a certain minimum amount on monitoring (...).’ [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

‘(...) money is only provided for the time of implementation in a given year (...) I just can't use any of those funds for the next year either for evaluation or for preparing, for example, an analysis of this or that sector, whether it is worthwhile or not.’ [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

The system of monitoring of development aid assumes, among others, follow-up visits to the places where projects are implemented whose effectiveness depends on the current political situation.

‘(...) the MFA has been in almost permanent contact with the entities implementing the projects. It is assumed in this system that at least 5% of the implemented projects should be inspected on-the-spot with one visit to a country usually once a year. The system takes into account security issues and therefore e.g., there was no monitoring in Palestine in 2015 because the political situation was not favourable (...).’ [P_1_6_MFA]

The process of monitoring and evaluating development aid in Palestine is supplemented by initiatives taken by Polish non-governmental organizations on their own. This activity shows their engagement in providing aid to beneficiaries and local partner organizations. Nevertheless, such initiatives, due to their limited scope and the lack of systemic solutions, do not guarantee the proper level of utility and functionality.

‘Yes. It is like that (...) every month we get a report from our partner, we ask for all the important data. Besides, we actively monitor the project; we are present there regularly on the ground. And, even if not

me, so somebody else from the project comes, for example, and visits these cooperatives. It means that we are keen on staying in direct contact with the beneficiaries.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

'It would be nice to have such funds so as to be able to make use... Or for some, such follow-up visits monitoring after the project completion. Because we may not have a follow-up project and on the basis of such a visit we can find out what its efficiency was and plan other activities related, for example, to a project submitted in a year's time.' [P_1_coordinator_1]

From the point of view of the efficiency of the monitoring and evaluation system, visits by Polish MFA representatives on the ground at the time when the projects are being implemented are of little use are. In-depth analyses and a reliable assessment of the project implementation impact are difficult to perform during such short visits and do not allow to formulate practical conclusions and recommendations.

"And is there any system? (...) There are some visits there (...) It adds nothing. (...) at some point there was a coordinator, sent by the MFA, who was there 3 years in a row and who travelled a little and understood the problem a bit. Yes, that person could really contribute to (...), and then (...) then we can forget it (...) But no, it doesn't influence the project at all. Well, maybe such a visit, if someone comes from Warsaw for three days, they can influence the project implementation (...) No, no substantive contribution, and they have never had any substantive observations to begin with. Those visits have never been followed by any substantive remarks. Never.' [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

"... someone comes and checks whether the cistern is being built (...). (One can) send some photos. The cistern is being built, the cistern stands... They come to see the implementation, and they should come to see the impact. So, instead of coming in November to see if the project is being implemented and spending money on that person's week-long visit, they should have spent (...) that money in April and then they should come after a few months and see what was left of the project, shouldn't they? On that rule. Concentrate on the impact rather than on the process itself." [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

In this situation one should consider strengthening their effectiveness by preparing collective annual reports on monitoring which would sum up the monitoring activities carried out during a year. The reports would provide the basis for discussing changes in the PDA system (channelling support for the next year, designing new calls for proposals or drawing conclusions for future action plans) and would help to maintain institutional memory given the frequent rotation of MFA staff. The reports could also include conclusions from the modified reports of project promoters (e.g. with reference to achieved indicators). They should be omitted if there is no in-depth discussion on the role of the visits and possible changes likely to be made in their organizations.

With reference to planning and implementing Polish development aid, a positive qualitative change can clearly be observed in strategic and operational programming. The *Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation in 2016-2020* drafted by the MFA includes elements of intervention logic as well as change theory, including particularly those referring to the expected impact of project implementation. Moreover, the *2016 Development Cooperation Plan* provides examples of indicators that could be used in the process of monitoring and evaluation. To monitor how these indicators are achieved it would be useful to supplement a substantive report prepared by the project promoter with information on the achieved level of product indicators compatible with the indicators defined in the Plan (as a simple Excel spreadsheet).

It is recommended that reliable project impact evaluation (long-term results) should be conducted systematically, especially with reference to large projects or a group of projects implemented in a

given area in the future. As for project impact assessment, the standard practice should be to conduct evaluation based on the counterfactual approach which is recommended for assessing the public intervention impact. It would allow for making use of the approach logic recommended for the ex-post assessment of the project impact and for roughly separating the impact of a given intervention. In order to achieve this it would be advisable for project promoters to use large modular projects. The results of such research could provide the basis for making decisions on the continuation of initiatives in a given area. In the event of a concentration of similar project initiatives by other project promoters in one policy area, it is suggested that such analyses should be conducted at a higher level by the MFA.

In the long-term perspective it is recommended to summarize the current programme evaluation conducted by the MFA and supplement it with the *ex post* evaluation of both the *Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation in 2012-2015* and the next *Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation in 2016-2020* (conducted in 2021 or 2022). The *ex post* evaluation should involve, among others, a meta-analysis of the evaluation research results conducted during the whole period of implementing the programme, that is to say a summary of the impact, observations, conclusions and recommendations that have been identified and drawn up in earlier evaluations.

The results of the evaluation research conducted in 2016-2020 ought to provide the basis for the process of programming interventions 2020+. In addition, it is suggested that the subsequent programme edition should undergo an *ex ante* evaluation conducted in the participatory model (i.e. designing the programme in cooperation with external evaluators/experts).

Due to the specificity of development aid which involves field studies carried out in countries outside Europe, characterized by a high level of political risk, a different culture and climate, a good suggestion for the future would be to extend the deadlines for conducting evaluation as well as the deadlines for preparing offers. Such solutions would contribute to a more detailed in-depth analysis of the project impact and reduce the risks related to organizing and conducting research. An international standard in such types of studies is also to provide an advance payment for covering the organization costs of the research. It could take on the form of partial payments (e.g. for preparing a methodology report). In practice, such a partial payment amounts to 15-20% of the contract value. If studies are carried out in more difficult conditions than this study (in the case of humanitarian projects), additional funds should be allocated to financing activities related to security (e.g. additional funds for bodyguards, etc.)

Key conclusions:

- The process of monitoring and evaluating development aid in Palestine has been conducted in an unstructured way; it lacks a clearly defined assignment of liability for the processes to particular entities, among others.
- Monitoring and evaluation initiatives are taken only during the venture implementation; there is a lack of such initiatives after their completion.
- The effectiveness of the visits to places where projects are implemented depends on the current political situation.
- Partner organizations conduct their own monitoring initiatives, which are not structured.
- Follow-up visits by an MFA representative are not useful enough because they are brief and do not allow to conduct an in-depth analysis and a reliable assessment of the project impact.

Research recommendations:

- In the long-term perspective, it is suggested to design the *ex post* evaluation of the *Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation in 2012-2015* and the next *Multiannual Programme of*

Development Cooperation in 2016-2020 (conducted in 2021 or 2022). Also, an ex-ante evaluation of the subsequent programme for the post-2020 period should be planned.

- In view of limited utility of the follow-up visit results, it is recommended to strengthen their effectiveness by preparing consolidated annual reports on monitoring which would summarize the results of monitoring initiatives taken over a given year. The visits should refer to a selected sample of projects, last longer and two people should take part in the visit (the four-eye principle) in order to make an in-depth analysis on the ground. It is worth considering whether the visits should concern the project implementation or the project impact (it determines the visit organization during or after the project completion). Therefore it is essential to define the visit function : a) if the visits are in the course of project implementation then they should be a monitoring element and have a formative capacity – it is important that some mechanisms should be created that guarantee making some modifications (on the basis of the visit conclusions) of implementing initiatives or b) if the visits are conducted after the completion of an envelope of projects, they could be an element of evaluation – they should be designed in the context of an evaluation plan which should be referred to while selecting the sample of projects for inspection. In the event that there is no in-depth discussion on the role of the visits and changes to be introduced to their organizations, the visits should be given up.
- A useful tool for monitoring the achievement of the indicators included in the programming documents for the years 2016-2020 would be to supplement the substantive report prepared by project promoters with information on the level of achieving the product indicators (compatible with the indicators defined in the annual Plan).
- In the case of evaluation, it is recommended that in the long-term perspective the reliable project impact evaluation (long-term results) should be conducted systematically, especially with reference to large projects or a group of projects implemented in a given area. As for the project impact assessment, the standard practice should be to conduct evaluation based on the counterfactual approach which is recommended for assessing the public intervention impact. It would allow making use of the approach logic recommended for the ex-post assessment of the project impact and approximately separate the impact of a given intervention. That kind of research could be conducted by project promoters within large modular projects (a diagnosis at the beginning of project implementation and initiative evaluation at the end of project implementation) while implementing homogenous projects in terms of the support type. Results of this kind of research could provide the basis for decisions on continuing support for a given project type. In the case of the concentration of similar project initiatives by other project promoters in one policy area, it is suggested that such analyses should be conducted at a higher level by the MFA. In this case the following way of conducting the evaluation could be considered: the MFA commissions the research for three years. In the first year the selection of the project/a group of projects is made, and then evaluators advise the project promoters how to match suitable groups, prepare tools, etc. Then in two years' time, research that yields concrete results is conducted.

2.7 CAPACITY OF POLISH ORGANIZATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

Research questions:

What kind of experience and capacity of Polish organizations and institutions is particularly necessary for/supportive to large development projects implemented in Africa/the Middle East together with: a) public administration of aid recipients (central and local), b) local/non-governmental partners in aid recipient countries, c) other donors?

As for the data collected, it is necessary to point out that the Polish diplomatic mission in Ramallah has very limited and rather small human resources.

'When it comes to the mission in Ramallah, it is that they have possibly so many projects of their own and they are so understaffed, this is one diplomatic mission that has only two people from Poland, it is definitely not enough for all the themes (...).' [P_1_coordinator_1]

Taking all this into consideration, the activity of the mission in the context of PDA should be assessed as exemplary. The mission is held in very high regard by the local partners in Palestine and by Polish non-governmental organizations. The first noticeable thing is the representatives' great involvement in the implementation of the participatory model of cooperation with the local organizations. They should be given credit for their professionalism stemming from a very good knowledge of the local context and political conditions.

The mission's activity is characterized by great flexibility, which is an adequate response to the political conflict.

'We cooperated closely with the mission and we really got on very well (...). And there was, and there still must be, at the Polish representative's a very nice girl (...), with the Polish representative, who is a permanent resident there (...) and she has been working in this office for years and she dealt with those projects because she is really familiar with this. And she is really very open. It was possible to discuss many things with her and she then reported them to the representative (...).' [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

As for the way the mission operates as part of the PDA, it is evident that projects are selected mostly by applying the criterion of assessing the capacity of the partner organization that will be responsible for the project implementation in Palestine. The rule is to continue cooperation with the partner organizations that "have proven themselves."

'Do the projects implemented within Polish development aid influence the capacity of the partners by whom they are being implemented? They do. But all the time there are some risks, because, for example, (...) a few organizations which are good, strong and powerful. Then I am sort of calm inside me that I know that the project will be done very well in the place where it's really needed and I don't have to worry about anything (...) But there are also such organizations where if I want to help them I know their capacity is low, but I think to myself that it will help them. Anyway, every time it is sort of fifty-fifty.' [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

Thus, the key element is selection of a partner organization with large operational capacity and extensive experience. This model should be considered as legitimate, especially in a country where the project impact is so strongly affected by the conflict (see: chapter 2.3. SUSTAINABILITY). It could be said more emphatically that the mission representatives realize that without partnership with strong local organizations, the project has little chance of success.

At the same time the operational logic is not to shut less developed organizations off from development projects. Therefore the mission recommends from time to time funding projects that

seem to have a high development potential although the prospective implementers lack sufficient operational capacity. It is necessary to strive for maintaining this operational model, which involves prioritizing organizations of high capacity but without “shutting yourself off” from cooperation with “young” organizations of lower capacity. This cooperation should be treated as a kind of experiment. Before an organization is recommended for cooperation it undergoes a thorough assessment, including an exchange of information with other donors.

(...) another application was submitted in the latest call for proposals. This time the project failed to get funds due to the fact that the Representation Office wanted “to give others a chance.”
[P_2_3_partner_organization_1]

Polish non-governmental organizations in turn are regarded as professional and well prepared for implementation of large development projects. These organizations have cooperated with each other in many other countries which needed development and humanitarian interventions. The Polish NGOs are prepared to cope with the ongoing conflict in Palestine.

‘In my opinion, the things are that for sure an ability to operate in difficult conditions, not every organization will take it on. The [non-governmental organization’s name] has its operational profile (...).’ [P_4_8_project_implemeter_1]

The Polish non-governmental organizations in Palestine have a capacity for implementing large development projects. In addition, it is worth mentioning that at the same time they are the entities which stand out from other Polish NGOs as for their size and experience. Also, they have well developed contacts with local partner organizations. They cooperate with each other and this close cooperation is not marked by rivalry, e.g. for funding.

“Would you be able to do bigger projects? Worth 3 million, for instance?”

- *Yes. We would with this partner. But generally, we would because we do, in Lebanon we are doing worth (...), from the IRF, we seem to be doing projects worth as much as 10 million zloty or so”*
[P_1_coordinator_1]

“PAH, the PCPM and Caritas have always been together. I don’t know how it is in Warsaw. The people who were on the ground have always cooperated. Now, as for Caritas and PCPM (...) all the time they are informing each other about what they are doing and so on. I don’t know anything about whether the head offices in Warsaw cooperate with each other, but when it comes to the people responsible for Palestine, they are in touch all the time; they know who arrives and when, they know about projects, so in this respect they manage quite well. They could open a joint office together, though. They could share the maintenance costs, that wouldn’t be so bad.” [P_5_coordinator_3p]

Furthermore, the Polish non-governmental organizations are very committed to putting their initiatives in effect and are very motivated. They also understand the local context very well and let local partner organizations operate on their own.

*“And what features of Polish organizations are useful for cooperation with the local partner? (...)
The ability to engage the partner meaning not imposing anything on them, but asking them what they want. The ability to give this partner a sort of their own path to fulfilment. It’s not about them being our soldiers, because then it is us that implement the project, it’s about them feeling that the project is theirs and that they can put their heart into it. Surely, the awareness of cultural differences, it means the way one speaks (...). Or that, for example, important matters aren’t fixed by emails but in face-to-face talks. Surely awareness of cultural differences or the way one should talk. Whether, for instance, important issues are not done by emails, but by talking. If you are not familiar with these cultural*

codes, they you can easily burn something there. The point is that you need to be consistent. (...).
[P_1_coordinator_1]

A barrier for the non-governmental organizations in Palestine is ad-hoc activity and the lack of their permanent presence in the field. Until recently the PAH had their permanent office in Palestine, which was perceived as one of their success factors.

“Ad-hoc activity. This is what I see as a minus, unfortunately... There is no continuity of action. Evidently, all the organizations which are there operate on an ad hoc, project basis...”
[P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

“First of all, it was the only NGO operating on the ground. The PCPM operates through a partner. The partner deals with everything, they come only as a satellite. Only now they began to consider opening an office. Caritas, on the same basis, through a satellite (...). This is an investment for them. They, as an organization, have to make a strategic decision, if they open an office in this place and it’s obvious that for the first months they must invest or, let’s say send someone (...).” [P_5_coordinator_3pl]

Another significant hindrance is that the activity of the organization is implicated in the political situation. The necessity of representing the beneficiaries’ interests and the risk of being unintentionally involved in a conflict discourage non-governmental organizations from implementing PDA projects.

“(...) it was also a controversial topic, even within the PAH itself, whether we should engage in such things as advocacy, ombudsmen work, especially in Palestine where, in fact, everything has a political dimension. So, after a long discussion, it was one of the factors that decided about killing the mission in the Palestinian National Authority.” [P_4_8_project_implementer_1]

To sum up, most Polish non-governmental organizations demonstrate a great capacity for implementing development projects. Their readiness to cooperate with each other and the lack of fear of taking risks, which means these organizations are ready to take responsibility for implementing projects that are particularly likely to fail on account of beneficiaries or places that are hard to reach are particularly noteworthy.

Key conclusions:

- The activity of the diplomatic mission in Ramallah is assessed as exemplary by the respondents, despite its very limited resources. Respondents draw attention to its professionalism resulting from a very good knowledge of the local context and political conditions, but also from an open and flexible approach to the partners and to implementing development projects.
- The project success depends mainly on the right selection of partners.
- The priority for the diplomatic mission is cooperation with experienced organizations with a high capacity; however, it also cooperates with less experienced organisations on an experimental basis, which seems to be the right approach.
- Polish organizations implementing projects in Palestine are well prepared for implementing large development projects. These are big and experienced organizations which have well-developed contacts and are recognisable in the Polish environment. They are distinguishable by their great commitment and motivation; they understand the local context well and they let partner organizations operate on their own. They are also willing to cooperate with other Polish NGOs and are ready to take the risk of working under difficult conditions.
- Barriers to the activity of these organizations are the ad hoc nature of activities and the lack of a permanent presence on the ground as well as the risk of being implicated in a political conflict.

Research recommendations:

- Ultimately the mission engaged in development cooperation should play a more strategic role in this area. Because of its capacity (knowledge and experience of employees) it should provide knowledge for the MFA’s DDC in the programming processes, selection of projects, their monitoring and evaluation. The mission’s role should be also building and providing access to a repository of

knowledge: strategic documents at the central, local and sectoral levels (e.g. information from partner organizations), research, analyses and studies. It is advisable to consider using part of SGS funds by the mission for outsourcing in-depth diagnoses of a given sector or a given area where there are no strategic documents or their utility is negligible and where there is no local and sectoral diagnosis made by local partner organizations. Its strategic role should also involve closer cooperation with other donors. As for the operational level, it is necessary to strengthen the role of the mission as a knowledge broker that integrates organizations operating in a given area by providing them with information on the implemented initiatives and potential opportunities for cooperation. The full-time position of development specialist should combine current implementation tasks with the development of the diplomatic mission's strategic function in PDA.

2.8 PDA OVERALL ASSESSMENT

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visible and sustainable direct impact of project implementation • cohesion of project assumptions and objectives with social, economic, political and cultural conditions in the region • easily established contacts and great accessibility of representatives of Polish organizations/institutions to the support beneficiaries and local partner organizations • professionalism of employees of the Polish diplomatic mission • broad experience of Polish non-governmental organizations gained during the implementation of development projects in other countries translated into Palestinian conditions • participatory operational model of Polish organizations/institutions • staying in permanent contact with the support beneficiaries also after the project is completed which allows to maintain the impact sustainability (long-term results) • flexible rules of project implementation (possible modifications of the ways in which project concepts are implemented) • “recognisability’ of Polish development aid at the local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited funding • “dispersion” of support • implementing projects with small budgets that do not allow to obtain broader and long-lasting intervention impact, including image impact at the national and regional levels • limited human resources of the Polish diplomatic mission • temporariness, the lack of a permanent presence of Polish organizations on the ground • lack of a visible synergy impact • promotion and information initiatives insufficiently focused on presenting the project impact • underdeveloped system of monitoring project implementation and evaluating project impact (long-term results) • underdeveloped cooperation with Polish companies as part of PDA resulting from the lack of visible benefits for Polish entrepreneurs, among others • poor PDA recognisability in Poland
CHANCES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enthusiasm, engagement and a high level of mobilization among local partner organizations and support beneficiaries • high awareness of benefits from pro-development initiatives among support beneficiaries • high level of creativity and innovation capacity as well as operational flexibility of the beneficiaries (skills developed in order to surmount barriers resulting from the political situation in the region) • possible cooperation of Polish organizations with other donors (countries and international organizations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural barriers between Poland and Palestine • risks related to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict • barriers to entrepreneurship related to the political-military conflict • poor PDA visibility as compared to other donors present in the region that have at their disposal much higher funds and operational capacity

The evaluation research conducted by the IDEA of Development Foundation over June-December 2016 has been aimed at the PDA analysis on the basis of the following criteria:

- efficiency,
- utility,
- sustainability,
- relevance.

In terms of **efficiency**, the implemented projects have had a positive impact on the situation of particular beneficiaries and local communities (local impact). However, it is difficult to discuss their significant impact on Polish and international strategic objectives. Polish development aid for Palestine is implemented on a small scale, which is due to the modest funding allocated to the projects both in absolute terms and in comparison to other donors. However, it should be stated that despite the limited financial and human resources, the diplomatic mission in Ramallah and Polish aid organizations have achieved the expected objectives of the projects financed as part of PDA.

The research confirms that both the so-called 'hard' ventures (involving infrastructural investments) and 'soft' projects (development of human capital) have showed the expected impact. According to a project analysis, projects that involve initiatives related to both infrastructure and training are often implemented. In practice this type of initiatives which assume complementary and a comprehensive approach to solving local problems yield the best results.

The main research recommendation is to increase the PDA budget in order to improve the impact of development initiatives on achieving strategic objectives and fulfilling international commitments. At present both the MFA's Department of Development Cooperation and the diplomatic missions are not in a position to take on more complex activities, specifically those relating to PDA monitoring, and promotion. Ultimately, it is worth considering a model in which the MFA plays a strategic role in programming support, monitoring impact and evaluation, whereas all the other implementation tasks (announcing calls for proposals, settlement of projects) become the responsibility of an entity selected through, e.g. public procurement.

As for **utility**, it should be stated that the researched projects responded to the local needs. The implemented ventures were part of the local organizations' strategy which was based on a reliable diagnosis as evidenced by the project impact. Most researched projects are also good examples of empowerment. The ventures were based on local resources, local capacity and took into account the political, economic and social reality of Palestine. It is necessary to bear in mind that in Palestine an attempt to implement ventures guided by the beneficiaries' needs relatively often faces difficulties related to social and cultural issues such as e.g. the woman's role in the society. However, it ought to be pointed out that the implementers of these projects, both local organizations and Polish partners or the Polish Consulate in Ramallah took this into account.

While assessing PDA in view of **sustainability**, it is necessary to distinguish between immediate impact and long-term impact. Impact, in other words a deeper, but requiring more time social change is the domain of 'soft' projects, whereas the immediate effects are typical of the 'hard' projects. It should be remembered, however, that the 'hard' impact is prone to being quickly destroyed due to the unstable political situation. Yet as far as the 'soft' impact is concerned, one condition seems to be extremely important, namely the projects must be adjusted to the existing reality and they must meet the real needs. Only then could they contribute to a real – although

unseen in the 'project lifespan' – social change. In order to maintain the impact sustainability in the politically complicated situation of Palestine it is also necessary to take into account the role of operational flexibility and risk management.

When it comes to **relevance**, it should be pointed out that the PDA priorities in 2012-2015, i.e. education, water and sanitation management, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises as well as creating new jobs were rightly selected. Initiatives in these areas should no doubt be continued. However, in the case of enterprises it would be advisable to pay more attention to using local capacity (which is not always based on agriculture but also on services as well) and contacting foreign markets. As for education - trainings, courses, and workshops - it is an element of the other two priorities and it should be regarded as such. Purely educational projects should be treated with caution because it would be difficult to interfere with the existing Palestinian system of education and the limited impact of the training modules themselves, which are disconnected from the broader perspective, e.g. the labour market or cultural reality. Development cooperation with the private sector has not been properly used so far. The first step should be to look for selling markets for Palestinian entrepreneurs and then establish stable relations with Polish business people. Also, at the strategic level, closer cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development is worth considering in providing incentives for Polish entrepreneurs entering the Palestinian market using PDA mechanisms.

Key conclusions:

- A model in which the MFA could play the strategic role while all other implementation tasks would be the responsibility of a selected entity would allow the MFA to focus on working out concepts and mechanisms for better combining the objectives of Polish development cooperation with overall foreign policy objectives.

Research recommendations:

- A solution at the strategic level would be to delegate PDA implementation tasks (e.g. project assessment, monitoring and settling) to external institution, public or private. In the case of public institutions the outsourcing should be in accordance with public procurement procedures. It would unburden the MFA from the task relating to preparing and running PDA calls for proposals as well as settling projects. It could result in shortening the process of assessing the projects. Additionally, it would allow the DDC to concentrate on strategic tasks. Such an approach would also provide for flexibility and reduce the risk related to setting up an additional public administration agency.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TABLE

No.	Conclusion	Strategic recommendations	Addressee
1.	Low PDA outlays contribute to implementing projects with small budgets, which negatively affects PDA efficiency, impedes cooperation with other donors, obtaining a real impact on the development of support countries and synergy impact and also creates obstacles to effectively implementing PDA (e.g. annual budgets, the lack of sufficient funding for promotion and monitoring).	Increasing PDA outlays is a necessary condition for a systemic change in PDA implementation. It is additionally justified by the migration crisis. Putting this recommendation into effect could at the same time fulfil Poland's commitment to increase PDA outlays to 0.33% of GNP. The budget should be increased gradually to allow Polish NGOs to gradually increase their capabilities to implement development initiatives. Putting this recommendation in practice is connected with the possibility to implement projects of a broader range (rec. no. 2), increasing the institutional capacity of the DDC and diplomatic missions (rec. No 4 and 5), including looking for synergy impact in cooperation with other donors (rec. no. 9) or strengthening monitoring and evaluation initiatives (rec. no. 7,11,12) (Chapter 2.2., p. 29)	Government/ MFA
2.	With limited funds, Poland is not a significant aid player in Palestine; however, it could increase its visibility by focusing on a selected area. Such a specialization might lead to a better long-term impact and contribute to building Poland's position with regard to development aid.	It is suggested that a smaller number of projects but with higher budgets should be implemented in selected specialist areas. As for PDA in Palestine, it is worth considering concentrating funds in the area of entrepreneurship and private sector in view of the promising project impact or in the area of human capital due to the fact that most PDA in the area of education has been successfully implemented, which shows that there is extensive experience in supporting this sector. However, searching for a Polish specialization, and consequently concentrating initiatives on a selected area should take into account the capacity of Polish development organizations for implementing development projects in a given area. (Chapter 2.2. p. 31)	MFA
3.	The past priorities (education, water and sanitation management, SME and creating new jobs) for PDA support were accurately defined	In a new PDA perspective special attention should be paid mainly to supporting entrepreneurship projects: small and medium-sized enterprises, self-employment, but also vocational consultancy, vocational trainings, etc. It should be based on the present capacity. Novel ideas related to e.g. establishing business relations between the Palestinian and Polish private sectors should be preceded by diagnosing both countries' needs in this area. However, the projects supporting entrepreneurship development in Palestine should obviously include an aspect dealing with operating on foreign markets (exports of goods, on-line selling, and cooperation with tour operators organizing trips to Palestine) due to increasingly difficult operation of Palestinian enterprises on the local selling markets. (Chapter 2.2., p.32)	MFA
4.	The institutional capacity of the Department of Development Cooperation (DDC) within the MFA should be strengthened and developed. The problem is the DDC's task overload and staff rotation limiting its institutional memory.	A solution at the strategic level would be to delegate PDA implementation tasks (e.g. project assessment, monitoring and settling) to external institution, public or private. In the case of the public institution the outsourcing should be in accordance with public procurement procedures. It would unburden the MFA with the task related to preparing and launching PDA calls for proposals as well as settling the projects. It could result in shortening the process of project evaluation. Additionally, it would allow DDC to concentrate on strategic tasks. Such an approach also leads to flexibility and	Government/ MFA

		reduces the risk related to setting up an additional public administration agency. (Chapter 2.8, p. 67)	
5.	The institutional capacity of the diplomatic mission for implementing development initiatives should be strengthened. The problem is the missions' task overload and its human resources shortages.	Diplomatic missions engaged in development cooperation should ultimately play a more strategic role. Because of their capacity (knowledge and experience of employees) they should provide knowledge to MFA's DDC in regard to the programming processes, project selection, monitoring and evaluation. The mission's role should also be to build and provide access to a repository of knowledge: strategic documents at the central, local and sectoral levels (e.g. information from partner organizations), research, analyses and studies. It is advisable to consider allowing the mission to use a part of SGS funds for outsourcing in-depth diagnoses of a given sector or a given area where there are no strategic documents or their utility is negligible and where there is no local and sectoral diagnosis done by local partner organizations. This strategic role should also entail closer cooperation with other donors. As for the operational level, it is necessary to strengthen the role of the mission as a knowledge broker that integrates organizations operating in a given area by providing them with information on the implemented initiatives and potential cooperation opportunities. The position of development specialist should allow combining the actual implementation tasks with the development of the mission's strategic function as part of PDA. (Chapter 2.7, p. 60)	Government/ MFA
6.	Cooperation with enterprises is a PDA weakness.	Seeking to better tie foreign policy objectives with economic policy objectives, it is necessary to consider other countries' experiences (analysed as part of benchmarking) which show that support of enterprises in this regard mostly involves facilitating cooperation between Polish entrepreneurs and foreign partners. Such initiatives should be taken via or in close cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development. (Chapter 2.2., p. 32)	MFA/MED
7.	In the long-term perspective, the effectiveness of evaluation could be strengthened so that it better serves PDA objectives	In the long-term perspective it is suggested to design an ex-post evaluation of the <i>Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation in 2012-2015</i> and the next <i>Multiannual Programme of Development Cooperation in 2016-2020</i> (conducted in 2021 or 2022). Also, an ex-ante evaluation of the subsequent programme for the post-2020 period should be planned. (Chapter 2.6., p. 60)	MFA

No.	Conclusion	Strategic recommendations	Addressee
8.	The synergy impact of the implemented projects is hardly noticeable	It is recommended to introduce mechanisms of verifying the synergy impact by drawing up more detailed guidelines on this section of the project application form and to take this section into account in substantive reports on the project implementation. (Chapter 2.5, p. 56)	MFA
9.	The research shows that the diplomatic mission has demonstrated a good understanding of the local context of project initiatives and cooperates very actively with partner and non-governmental organizations. However, this capacity does not translate into joint implementation of tasks with other donors, which is why the synergy impact of the implemented initiatives is not fully achieved. The reason for this, to a large extent, lies in nature of PDA in SGS - the budget and project duration, see: conclusions and recommendation no. 1	Taking into account a limited and relatively small PDA budget, the SGS projects, as a rule, should be complementary to other donors' initiatives. This can be done in two ways. One is by implementing a narrow-scoped project which would complement or broaden other donors' initiatives taken in an area and targeted at a group of beneficiaries. Another possibility is joining the implementation of multiannual projects. (longer than 2 years) initiated and supervised by a bigger donor. To this end, Polish projects should be designed as complete closed tasks. Such tasks should have indicators assigned to them (at least at the level of product indicators). It will allow comprehensively planning and completing a specific task that could be assessed with reference to attaining the expected indicators, which will guarantee the visibility of PDA impact as a result. (Chapter 2.5, p.56)	Diplomatic mission
10.	One-year project duration hinders the implementation of more complex and large projects	Addressing the problem of annual project implementation that will grow once bigger projects are implemented, it is recommended that the MFA should review the procedures so as to find possible improvements in order to commence project initiatives as early as possible in a new calendar year. The model used for other projects financed with national public funds (e.g. the MCiNH and MCNH programmes (Chapter 2.2., p.30) should ultimately be applied to financing multiannual projects.	MFA/NGOs
11.	Project monitoring conducted by the MFA needs to be strengthened, specifically as regards follow-up visits.	In view of the limited utility of the follow-up visit results, it is recommended to strengthen their effectiveness by preparing consolidated annual reports on monitoring which would summarize the results of monitoring initiatives taken during a year. The visits should involve a selected sample of projects, last longer and be carried out by two people (the four-eye principle) in order to make an in-depth analysis on the ground. It is worth considering whether the visits should concern project implementation or project impact (it determines the visit's organisation – during or after the project completion). Therefore it is essential to define the visit function : a) if the visits occur during project implementation then they should be a monitoring element and have a formative capacity – it is important that some mechanisms should be created that guarantee making some modifications (on the basis of the visit conclusions) to activities comprising project implementation or b) if the visits are conducted after the completion of an envelope of projects, they could be an evaluation element – they should be designed in the context of an evaluation plan to which reference should be made when taking a sample of projects that will be inspected. In the absence of an in-depth discussion on the role of the visits and on making changes in their organization, the visits should be given up. A useful tool for monitoring the achievement of the indicators included in the programming documents for the years 2016-2020 would be supplementing the substantive report drawn up by project promoters with information on the level of achievement of the product indicators (compatible with the indicators defined in the annual Plan).(Chapter 2.6, p. 60).	MFA

12.	A serious limitation for impact assessment is the lack of systematically conducted impact evaluation of individual projects	As for evaluation, it is recommended that reliable project impact evaluation (of long-term results) should be conducted systematically in the long-term perspective, especially in respect of large projects or a group of projects implemented in a given area. As for the project impact assessment, the standard practice should be to conduct evaluation based on the counterfactual approach which is recommended for assessing the public intervention impact. It would allow making use of the approach logic recommended for the ex-post assessment of the project impact and roughly separate the impact of a given intervention. This kind of research could be conducted by project promoters within large modular projects (a diagnosis at the beginning of project implementation and an evaluation of initiatives at the end of project implementation) while implementing homogenous projects in terms of support type. Results of this kind of research could become a basis for making decisions to continue support for a given type of projects. In the case of the concentration of similar project initiatives by other project promoters in one policy area, it is suggested that such analyses should be conducted at a higher level by the MFA. In this case the following way of conducting the evaluation could be considered: the MFA commissions research for three years. In the first year the selection of the project/ a group of projects is made, and then evaluators advise the project promoters how to match suitable groups, prepare tools, etc. Then in two years the research that brings specific results is conducted (Chapter 2.6, p.60).	MFA
13.	The impact of political conflict is uncontrollable. The conflict affects the implementation of projects, their effectiveness and sustainability. Effective partner organizations are able to manage risk and respond flexibly to unexpected and adverse situations	The application form should include a section that would account for the impact of political conflict on project implementation. The point is that the applicant is to design a model of risk management by indicating at which implementation stages the conflict escalation might be particularly problematic and what possible options for modifying project initiatives could be applied. (Chapter 2.3, p.40).	MFA/project promoters
14.	The research shows that one of the most important factors of impact sustainability is the requirement that beneficiaries make their own contribution to the implemented projects.	It is recommended to consider introducing additional incentives at the stage of submitting applications for funds with regard to such projects in which the Implementer will demand from the ultimate beneficiaries (project beneficiaries) a financial contribution (15-25% is regarded as efficient) or a non-financial contribution (if the ultimate beneficiaries are in a difficult financial situation it could be, e.g. contribution of work or time). The incentives should not be excessive so as not to exclude projects with regard to which the requirement of own contribution is not justified. (Chapter 2.3, p.40).	MFA/project promoters
15.	An analysis of the websites and media data shows that simple initiatives aimed at improving the contents presented on the websites can increase the image impact.	Information and promotion initiatives with regard to PDA should mainly focus on the project impact: a change in the situation of specified persons and local community. These effects should be presented in a form friendly to the recipients. In order to promote Polish development aid among tax payers it is recommended to prepare guidelines for project promoters which should include requirements with reference to the contents and ways of presenting it on the websites as well as good examples based on other donors' experience, such as, USAID, DFID, etc. Organizing trainings for project donors in this area could also be considered. It is also advisable to increase the scope of information on the projects and their impact on Polish Aid websites. Additionally, it is suggested that the MFA make a wider use of the different kinds of media (including social media) for promotion and information purposes. (Chapter 2.2, p.32)	MFA/project promoters

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V. APPENDICES

Appendix 1. List of projects selected for in-depth analysis from among the projects implemented in Palestine

Palestine					
1.	484/2015*	Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Border Service of Palestine with regard to Complex Security Control and Verification of Document Authenticity	2015	Administration	Department of International Cooperation and EU Funds within MIA
2.	670/2015*	Vocational Education Support for the Disabled on the West Bank	2015	Diplomatic mission	Polish Representation Office in Ramallah
3.	648/2014*	Vocational Education Support for the Disabled and Casualties on the West Bank	2014	Diplomatic mission	Polish Representation Office in Ramallah
4.	601/2014**	Strengthening a Social Position of Women via the Development of Administrative and Productive Capacity of Idna Cooperative in Hebron	2014	Diplomatic mission	Polish Representation Office in Ramallah
5.	648/2013	Increase in Employment of Palestinian Youth via Building Bonds with Polish Private Sector	2013	Diplomatic mission	Polish Representation Office in Ramallah
6.	305/2015**	Strengthening Entrepreneurial Capacity of Agricultural Cooperatives via Implementation of Effective Production and Marketing Model, Palestine	2015	NGO	Polish Center for International Aid Foundation
7.	113/2012*	Water Access Improvement via Reconstructing Farming Cisterns in the South of the Hebron District	2012	NGO	PHO
8.	153/2013	Improvement Sanitation Conditions in Educational Premises via Building Water Cisterns at Schools and Orphanage in the Districts of Hebron, Bethlehem and on the West Bank	2013	NGO	PHO

Appendix 2. Summary of benchmarking report

The benchmarking conducted by the research team has allowed to identify good innovative practices of other DAC member countries, particularly in the following areas:

1. Institutional system of development aid management
2. Development aid concentration
3. Synergy
4. Development aid monitoring
5. Supporting entrepreneurship
6. Cooperation with NGO sector
7. Volunteering

The identification of these good practices could be a starting point for a discussion on the possibility of implementing them in the Polish development aid system. The key conclusions referring to particular policy areas are discussed below.

1. Institutional system of development aid management

In some countries (the Czech Republic, Germany) the model of development aid management is different from that existing in Poland and it involves sharing tasks by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and special agencies. In such a model the MFA is in charge of strategic development aid management, including its programming and evaluation as well as cooperation with national and international institutions. The agency, by contrast, deals with technical implementation of development aid, i.e. organizing calls for proposals, signing and settling agreements and monitoring project implementation. This solution has a lot of advantages because it allows to clearly distinguish strategic competences from those relating to implementation and consequently frees the Ministry from the burden of technical activities. In the Czech Republic the division of competence and responsibility between the ministry and the agency is assessed very positively, despite some negligible difficulties as for example the lack of diplomatic status of the agency's employees.

Another interesting solution is an in-depth ongoing cooperation with other national institutions, e.g. with other ministries such as the ministry of trade, agriculture or defence (Germany, Great Britain). Thanks to it, development cooperation has become a real part of a country's foreign policy and at the same time it takes into account major national policy issues (e.g. supporting entrepreneurship). As a result, development aid policy has become part of the work of the whole government.

2. Development aid concentration

A progressing concentration process has been observed in all the countries under evaluation. Like in Poland, it mostly involves limiting the number of countries receiving development aid. Particular countries also select policy areas or sectors to which aid is directed. Sometimes other concentration instruments are also used such as the German *special initiatives*, which contribute to selecting priority subjects and appropriate tools and partners at a given time.

3. Synergy

Synergy is an important aspect of development aid in the researched countries (Germany, Denmark, and the Czech Republic). However, it is difficult to attain in practice because of the different needs and operational methods applied by individual donors. In the case of the Czech Republic synergy is reflected in implementing joint projects together with donors from other countries that involve each donor being responsible for implementing particular project initiatives. Also, while selecting aid sectors, the Czech administration pays attention to the synergy impact among them. In Germany, in turn, an increase in the number of embassy employees dealing with development aid allows to strengthen synergy between bilateral aid projects and projects developed by other organizations. As regards cooperation with other donors, a key matter for Germany is to identify as soon as possible the synergy of initiatives and to avoid mutually duplicating of initiatives. These efforts do not always yield the expected results. Some projects, by definition, are implemented by a chain of donors. Denmark has introduced trainings in international organizations as part of staff education, which allows to gain a broader perspective on aid development and also to identify opportunities for synergy and cooperation. While implementing projects in Tanzania, Denmark has been staying in close touch with other key donors, thanks to which it could achieve coordination and synergy of initiatives by developing joint programmes, among others. However, such cooperation and synergy of initiatives is difficult to accomplish in practice due to the strong pressure individual donors place on achieving indicators rather than a comprehensive change, which is a Danish priority.

4. Aid development monitoring

Compared to Poland, the system of monitoring development aid of the researched countries is very extensive particularly in Denmark and Great Britain. In these countries there are comprehensive systems of data collecting and impact monitoring, including those applied to projects and programmes. In Denmark, partner countries and implementing organizations are also involved in the process. Information on the project impact is the basis for managing cooperation with partners, which also includes the allocation of funds for subsequent projects. In Denmark, impact-based management has been gradually spreading to the level of partner countries, not only of particular projects. Great Britain, by contrast, has developed a very strong evaluation culture thanks in part to the fact that evaluation has been included in the work of the ministry and its parallel focus on good value for money and impact.

As for monitoring and evaluation, one needs to be aware of the fact that these instruments should be used adequately to the analytical needs and in situations in which the collected data could really be of significant use. Otherwise it will lead to excessive administrative overloads and an inflation of analyses. Moreover, it is necessary to focus on gaining knowledge useful in terms of improving performance and explaining success factors, not solely in terms of describing the actual impact.

5. Supporting entrepreneurship

In the researched countries supporting entrepreneurs and including them in development aid mainly consists of facilitating access to foreign markets for domestic enterprises markets. Another very important element of including entrepreneurs in aid initiatives is awarding public contracts for implementing development initiatives by the private sector. Various instruments are used to support domestic entrepreneurs: special funds, loans, promoting public-private partnerships, export support instruments accounting for the needs of the developing countries, support and counselling in preparing projects and investment plans, trainings, information platforms, guidebooks, etc.

6. Cooperation with the NGO sector

For the researched countries, developing cooperation with non-governmental organizations and strengthening their capacity is as important as supporting entrepreneurship. These organizations are responsible for a significant part of the implemented development tasks, so they should be in a position to do it in the best way possible. As mentioned before, unlike Poland, the researched countries possess mechanisms supporting the development of NGOs' capacity for implementing development aid initiatives. This can take on the form of grants for particular organizations to strengthen administrative and organisation structures, including those in the area of communication, raising funds or strengthening management skills, like in the Czech Republic. Another method is to financially support NGOs which apply for grants to international organizations, e.g. to the European Commission. In Denmark, the non-governmental sector is involved in the planning, programming and evaluation of development aid. It also has its representation in the grant committee in the MFA. Denmark also puts a lot of emphasis on supporting the institutional development of non-governmental organizations and their employees by providing technical help, counselling, staff education, which also includes Danish NGOs' partners in aid recipient countries. Detailed guidelines on applying for public funds and settling projects along with specimens and templates of the required documents have been prepared for those organizations. In Germany, there is a special agency supporting non-governmental organizations applying for public funds for development aid (Advice Centre for NGOs *bengo*). The support takes on the form of seminars or individual counselling. In addition, the agency helps to find appropriate programmes and sources of funding for their activity but also passes on contacts to prospective partners and experts. Nevertheless, DAC reports show that despite the operation of such a specialized agency, there is still a lot to be done when it comes to cooperation between the administration and the third sector.

An interesting option is the possibly of cooperating with a given organization through GIZ, when it assesses that the organization's experience and specific profile will visibly strengthen a project. As for small projects, Danish embassies have the possibility of selecting a specific partner without a call for proposal.

Importantly, not all non-governmental organizations have sufficient capacity for implementing development initiatives in partner countries. However, there are organizations that can successfully operate locally, e.g. by launching an awareness-raising campaign for development cooperation.

7. Volunteering

Only in one researched country (Germany) there are specially extended volunteering programmes, similar to the ones existing in Poland. In Germany, e.g. the costs of participating in projects implemented by non-governmental organizations are co-financed. The programme's objective is to involve them in development aid in a longer perspective. Volunteers are also a potential source for recruiting development aid staff in Germany and partner organizations. After returning from the mission, volunteers are obligated to share their experience, which is used among others for training new volunteers.

In the Czech Republic and Denmark volunteers can take part in projects implemented by non-governmental organizations. However, there are no special programmes in this area. Denmark pays attention to the need for maintaining a balance between the volunteers' participation and gainful employment of the skilled staff of non-governmental organizations.

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