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Evaluation of Polish development cooperation: 2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme at mid-point of its implementation

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of a mid-term evaluation of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme. The conclusions presented here were formulated on the basis of an analysis of strategic and operational documents of Polish aid, interviews with representatives of institutions involved in the implementation of Polish development cooperation, positions developed during workshops, as well as comparative analyses of solutions for multiannual programming applied by other countries.

The thematic priorities identified in the 2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme (MDCP) are consistent with the goals set out in the Development Cooperation Act of 16 September 2011¹. The Programme's scope covers development assistance, humanitarian aid and global education. Programmes, initiatives and actions that were approved for implementation correspond to specific priorities.

Underspecified strategic objectives and desired outcomes with respect to specific objectives is the greatest weakness of the Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme (MDCP). The MDCP set out Polish development cooperation objectives in terms of planned activities instead of identifying the actual outcomes of such activities. In many places, the MDCP resembles operational plans rather than a strategic paper. The part dealing with priorities set for aid recipient countries, which constitutes the largest section of 2016-2020 MDCP, is too detailed. However, the document's weaknesses do not substantially affect the implementation of the planned activities - the Polish development aid projects address the existing needs and are effective in achieving their objectives, as evidenced by the earlier evaluation studies that focused on specific aid components.

Due to the changing environment, the document needs to be adapted to the existing international conditions while at the same time the aid forms and instruments applied need to generate more impact. Therefore, based on the research and analyses performed, the following recommendations were made.

The strategy should clearly define the outcomes that should be achieved thanks to development cooperation, that are based on the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations. The selection of goals should correspond to areas where Poland has an advantage over other donor countries. Furthermore, it needs to be determined in which countries these advantages may be used to the fullest extent, and what kind of aid should be offered. Polish aid should be addressed to a limited number of countries in which our country enjoys a comparative advantage over other countries that provide development aid. The relatively low amount that Poland allocates to development aid is an argument in favour of concentrating funds on just a few countries. Linking it to the SDGs could imply that the next strategic document will cover the years 2021-2030.

In the context of the dynamics of the surrounding world and Polish foreign policy challenges, it is necessary to apply adequate development instruments to the new strategy. Both international institutions and highly developed countries are moving away from some of the earlier forms of support.

¹ Journal of Laws No. 234, item 1386.

It is also recommended that Polish aid new, more effective financial instruments be used more widely, specifically to gradually replace tied loans with new instruments, such as blending or loan guarantees. It would also be worthwhile to actively engage in activities implemented under the External Investment Plan (EIP) which are financed from the European Fund for Sustainable Development.

It also seems necessary to make the document more intelligible, specifically by better defining the expected outcomes of development activities and by presenting them using comprehensible language. It is also recommended to enhance the promotion of development aid both in Poland and abroad. Promotional activities carried out using such tools as the polskapomoc.gov.pl portal, Twitter, YouTube or radio programmes are worth continuing. The message should draw more attention to the source of financing (Polish aid). Opinion-makers (journalists, academics) should also become more involved in the communication process. Information about PDC and its impacts should also be provided through global education activities. It should be remembered that the messages and communication channels should be selected to match the target groups (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, other ministries, recipients from outside the public administration). To better illustrate the benefits gained by PCD recipients, human stories about concrete persons whose lives have been transformed should be used to communicate information about the attained outcomes.



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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
DDC	Department of Development Cooperation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
UN	United Nations
EP	Eastern Partnership
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
PDC	Polish Development Cooperation
SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals
ToR	Terms of Reference
EU	European Union
MDCP	Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme

1. Introduction

The present report summarizes the results of research and analyses of the 2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme (MDCP). It contains four chapters and an executive summary of the key study results. The first chapter is an introduction with a brief outline of the concept behind the evaluation study (along with a description of the aim of the study and the evaluation criteria applied). The next chapter contains a concise presentation of the study results. The chapter's structure corresponds to key research questions taken from the ToR. The results of a SWOT analysis, conducted after the research material was analysed, are presented next. A table shows the Polish development cooperation's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats that were identified during the evaluation process. The last part of the report contains a table with conclusions and recommendations, i.e. a synthetic summary of the studies and analyses performed, along with recommended implementing methods. The recommendation table was completed and discussed during an expert panel. In addition to key recommendations presented in the recommendation table, operational-level recommendations were indicated in the text. Furthermore, the report contains a description of case studies, coherence matrices, results of benchmarking against other countries' development cooperation strategies, and a list of indicators that may be used to monitor progress in accomplishing specific objectives. Questionnaire surveys which may be used to monitor the individual projects have been proposed in a separate document.

1.1 Aim of the study

The study aimed to draw up recommendations how to:

- improve Polish development cooperation's efficiency and relevance,
- support the programming of the next post-2020 multiannual perspective,
- strengthen Poland's positive image of a country that actively participates in actions leading to sustainable development worldwide; a valuable partner with stable development prospects, and support the decision-making processes with respect to development cooperation.

1.2 Evaluation criteria

The main evaluation criteria adopted by the evaluators were as follows:



Relevance

understood as the ability to address actual needs or key problems of the recipients, identified, for instance, in the main strategic or programme outcomes)



Efficiency

understood as an economic justification of the funds spent on development cooperation (have the financial and human resources, as well as the time devoted, been channeled to support undertakings that are capable of generating the highest possible value added offering long-term development opportunities, i.e. whether the most advantageous option was chosen)



Effectiveness

understood as the ability to achieve planned objectives, showing the extent to which assumptions were implemented (to what extent the objectives of the programme were implemented)



Innovation

understood as the ability to adapt activities undertaken in the 2016-2020 MDCP to the changing environment (responding to the changing domestic and international situation).

2. Results of the study

This chapter provides answers to the main research questions.

Research question No. 1. Does the 2016-2020 MDCP meet the requirements of a strategic document and if so, in what aspects? Does it go to the operational level, and if so, in what aspects?

In the opinion of the evaluator, the 2016-2020 MDCP meets the requirements applicable to a strategic document to a limited extent. In particular, attention needs to be paid to the following key issues:

First, the 2016-2020 MDCP document fails to clearly identify the owner of the strategy (other than the Government of the Republic of Poland, which is a general notion). It does not identify the entity that is in charge of its implementation (at the operational level). Second, the document lacks a key, clear and unequivocal strategic objective that would be determined with key stakeholders (especially domestic ones) in mind. The objectives set in chapter III.1 *The main goals of Polish development cooperation* are too specific, as they define the action areas, not the outcomes to be achieved by implementing development cooperation projects. In other words, the document says *what* will be done, but fails to specify *why* it will be done.

There are several elements that a classic strategic document should contain. A diagnosis (or a synthesis thereof, defining the problem areas identified or areas for improvement) is one of them. The next key elements are the mission, the vision and the strategic objective. Operational objectives are attached to the strategic goal which are then translated into specific actions that need to be taken. Such actions may be defined in operational documents, e.g. action plans or programmes. Usually, strategic documents contain performance indicators (reflecting the extent to which the objectives have been implemented), and the basic rules of the implementation system (including monitoring and evaluation)²³.

The 2016-2020 MDCP document lacks this classic structure. It would not be considered a fault in itself, had the structure of the document been more orderly. It lacks clearly separated parts focusing on a

² J.M. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for public and non-profit organisations. A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organisational Achievement*, Wiley & Sons, 2018..

³ Dziemianowicz W., Szmigiel-Rawska K., Nowicka P., Dąbrowska A. *Strategic planning. Guide for employees of public administration*. Ministry of Regional Development. Warsaw, 2012.

diagnosis (including previous actions⁴ and the external environment, inspection and monitoring, risks, etc.)⁵ The chapters titled *Principles of Development Cooperation* and *Forms of Development Cooperation* are important, but they lose their significance after reading repeated descriptions of priorities implemented in specific countries. It is worth considering a review of the principles to be followed (e.g. a definition of the principle of effectiveness would more justified, if objectives and their indicators had been clearly defined).

Many broad thematic areas were defined in the priorities, alongside with a number of geographical priorities and cross-cutting issues. The document fails to identify their mutual relations. Humanitarian aid and global education which are close in form to certain thematic priorities were described in separate parts of the document.

In many instances, the document goes down to the operational level. Excessively detailed descriptions of the activities are presented in different parts of the document as well⁶. The part devoted to priorities set for the individual countries, which constitutes the bulkiest section of the 2016-2020 MDCP, is very detailed. Moreover, diagnosis presented in those fragments is mixed up with the description of actions, which is not in line with the standard applied to strategic documents. The proportions should be different in a strategic document – this section is disproportionately long as compared to other parts of the document.⁷

A section devoted to the success measures (and as mentioned earlier to the evaluation and monitoring of the implementing process) is a key element of any strategic document. The MDCP fails to sufficiently address those issues (other than by making general statements that the strategy will be evaluated). The lack of clearly defined objectives and outcomes of the operational objectives makes it practically impossible to monitor the outcomes in any other way than by checking whether the specific amounts were spent and that the planned activities were performed.

It is also worth mentioning that the document is not specific enough in identifying the stakeholders. Some of them are identified implicitly as addressees or partners of specific actions. Lack of any reference to the Polish society as the ultimate stakeholder of all public tasks is particularly striking.

Research question No. 2. Which objectives of the 2016-2020 MDCP are implemented in the most/least effective/efficient manner, where and why?

As mentioned above, the objectives of Polish development cooperation were set out in the MDCP in the context of activities instead of the desired outcomes. In order to assess how effectively the objectives have been implemented, they should be defined in concrete and unequivocal terms leaving no room for free interpretation. Objectives such as:

4 The document refers, for instance, to the strong points that are not backed by an earlier diagnosis.
 5 The description of the external environment is not presented in a separate part of the document, and is mixed with the description of activities (e.g. chapter II.1).
 6 E.g. on page 9, in the description of priorities titled “Tasks consistent with the thematic priority Democracy, Human Rights and Good Governance, will be commissioned, inter alia, out to the Solidarity Fund PL”.
 7 W. Dziemianowicz, K. Szmigiel-Rawska, P. Nowicka, A. Dąbrowska, op. cit.

- supporting sustainable social and economic development of the developing countries and their societies,
- undertaking actions aimed at reducing poverty,
- improving the health of the population,
- raising the level of education and professional qualifications of the society,
- supporting democratization processes and reforms of the State,
- expanding Polish citizens’ knowledge about global interdependencies between the developed and developing worlds,

clearly show the directions of activities to be undertaken, but not precisely enough to enable their assessment in terms of how effectively they are being implemented.

The period covered by this study, i.e. 3 years into the implementation of the 2016-2018 MDCP, is too short to allow for a responsible argumentation and evaluation which of the aforementioned objectives were implemented most effectively. This is mainly because these are global objectives that can be attained over a period of many years and not through annual projects. It also needs to be mentioned that various entities involved in the implementation of PDA projects, refer not to MDCP goals (from the stage of applying for co-financing), but to priorities in specific countries which their projects should implement.

However, it is worth noting that projects implemented as part of PDA through different call for proposals paths – in the years 2016-2018 there were almost 500⁸ projects – were intended to achieve all the aforementioned objectives, and their scope covered all the areas identified by the objectives. The objectives were pursued in specific countries, on a wider or a narrower scale, which stems more from the nature of the problems experienced there, rather than from the manner in which the PDA project implementers operate. For instance, actions aimed at reducing poverty, improving the health of the population, as well as raising the level of education and vocational skills of the population are more widespread in African countries than in the Eastern Partnership countries, where focus is placed on initiatives whose aim is to support democratization processes and reforms of the State, build modern State institutions, promote human rights and support the civil society. This does not mean, of course, that objectives are unequivocally distributed according to specific development policy regions – although the goals of democratization, building modern state institutions are not superior, effective actions are taken for this purpose. For instance, very efficient projects to build a system of firefighting services and an emergency system in Kenya clearly contribute to the development of modern State institutions. Hence one might argue that all the MDCP goals were in some way reflected in the initiatives undertaken over the past 3 years (2016-2018).

Both fostering and hampering factors are at play when general PDC goals are being implemented and they either facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of PDC objectives in the long run. The most important factors are listed below.

⁸ 2016: 173 projects, 2017: 162 projects, 2018: 137 projects;

Table 1 Factors impacting the implementation of MDCP

Factors fostering the achievement of goals	Factors hindering the achievement of goals
High level of involvement of all cooperating parties - partners from developing countries and Polish organisations implementing the actions / programmes.	Fragmentation of development projects - a large number of small projects implemented over a short time making it difficult to achieve the synergy effect and to introduce systemic change.
Accurate identification of the problem.	Small budgets for development projects that prevent them from being implemented with outlays and remunerations adequate for the PDC goals.
Adhering to the rule of partnership in cooperation, thanks to which know-how leading to further growth remains in the countries where development activities are carried out.	Social or political barriers - changes in the political and social situation in the course of implementing actions.
Performance of tasks based on the participation model that helps to match the intervention to the local context and needs.	Many priorities and supported countries leading to a dispersion of the small funds available for PDA. Implementers can rarely focus on one area and became professionals in it.
Extensive experience of the implementers, both in a given country and in a given area.	Ineffective promotion of programme activities.
Cultural, historic, as well as social and political similarities, for instance, with the Eastern Partnership countries and other post-Soviet states (other than the priority countries).	Lack of a multiannual financial perspective.
Application of adequate methods - inter alia based on practical knowledge, hands-on experience of practitioners.	Staff changes among project implementers and programme coordinators.
Implementation of large, multiannual programmes.	Lack of reliance upon and failure to support PDC with other foreign funding, insufficient cooperation between project implementers and other donors.
Coordination of activities undertaken within a given area by various institutions - other domestic and local institutions, grant providers, etc.	Lack of institutional capabilities of the majority of Polish NGOs and the resulting lack of ability to apply for external funding, i.e. from the EU or the UN.
Participation of representatives of local authorities in the activities undertaken, signing agreements and memorandums, declaring political will to implement certain solutions.	
Activities carried out concurrently with different institutions at different levels: local, regional, national,	

Factors fostering the achievement of goals	Factors hindering the achievement of goals
and social.	

Source: Authors' own compilation

Research question no. 3. Which / why the priorities, programmes, initiatives and measures adopted for implementation under the 2016-2020 MDCP have contributed or contribute most effectively to achieving the overarching objectives of Polish development cooperation set out in the Development Cooperation Act?

The Development Cooperation Act defines in a general way its objectives as:

- promoting and supporting the development of democracy and civil society, including the development of parliamentarism, the principles of good governance and respect for human rights,
- supporting their sustainable socio-economic development, undertaking actions aimed at reducing poverty and improving the health of the population and raising the level of education and professional qualifications of the population,
- providing assistance, care and protection to people who have suffered as a result of armed conflicts, natural disasters or other humanitarian crises caused by nature or by man,
- educational activities to raise awareness and understanding of global problems and interdependencies between states, hereinafter referred to as "global education."

The thematic priorities set out in the 2016-2020 MDCP are undoubtedly in line with the overriding objectives set out in the Development Cooperation Act. The Programme covers development assistance, humanitarian aid and global education whose scope corresponds to the Act's overall objectives. Also the programmes, initiatives and actions adopted for implementation under the MDCP correspond to the priorities set out in the Programme. Like it was already indicated in the answer to the previous research question⁹, the substantive scope of the projects is corresponding to the objectives set in the Programme. However, the method of defining objectives for the Polish aid (numerous, broad and defined at the general level) and the lack of defining the measure of their achievement (indicators, outcomes) does not allow to talk about the effectiveness of cooperation carried out under the Programme. It results from the fact that the goals formulated by the actions and not by the outcomes are the reason that even the smallest projects or actions will support and contribute to achieving the objectives assigned to the thematic priorities of the 2016-2020 MDCP. In turn, these thematic priorities correspond to the superior objectives set out in the Development Cooperation Act. More about the results-based approach and recommendations for future programming are included in the further part of the report.

The way the objectives of the 2016-2020 MDCP are worded does not enable to measure effectiveness¹⁰. According to its definition, effectiveness is understood as the extent to which objectives defined at the programming stage were attained. The lack of a proper methodological description of objectives makes it impossible to measure the effectiveness of priorities, programmes, initiatives or actions.

⁹ Research question no. 2 Which objectives of 2016-2020 MDCP are implemented in the most/least effective/efficient manner, where and why?

¹⁰ It should be noted that efficiency can be determined at the project level.

Research question No. 4. Are the objectives, priorities, forms and instruments of PDC, as defined in the 2016-2020 MDCP, coherent (and if so, to what degree) 1) with one another? 2) with the potential of partners cooperating with the MFA as far as the implementation of the 2016-2020 MDCP goes? 3) with actions financed with the use of funds provided by other government agencies providing development cooperation? What measures should be taken to improve the extent of such coherence?

In the opinion of the evaluators, the 2016-2020 MDCP objectives and priorities are coherent and complement each other within the scope of support provided by Poland to its partner states and to other countries receiving aid. Activities taken in the framework of the *Human capital* priority are the most coherent. Thanks to the broadly defined scope of support provided, projects implemented in the framework of this priority contribute to the achievement of all PDC goals (this applies, to the greatest extent, to supporting sustainable social and economic growth of developing countries and their societies, improving the health of the population, increasing the level of education and supporting civil society). Projects implemented in the framework of *Good Governance*, as well as *Democracy and Human Rights*, also fit the majority of goals that are primarily related to the promotion of human rights and supporting civil society. It is worth highlighting that each priority specified in the programme contributes - to a greater or lesser extent - to the achievement of at least three goals. All the priorities are coherent with the most general goal of all - i.e. supporting sustainable social and economic development of developing countries and their societies. A matrix showing coherence between PDC goals and thematic priorities is presented in Appendix 2.

As regards the goals, thematic priorities, and forms and instruments of support, the greatest degree of coherence is observed between the financing of activities carried out by entities participating in the implementation of development aid (in the form of funds transferred for development and humanitarian aid) and the strategic goals and priorities. It is this type of activity that is aligned, to the greatest extent, with the provisions of the 2016-2020 MDCP. As regards the amounts contributed to international organisations, institutions, programmes and funds under the framework of multilateral cooperation, as well as contributions to the general EU budget and the EDF, it is difficult to assess their coherence with Polish priorities, because in most cases the Polish side has not received precise information about the objectives it had financed. The support offered may be directed to the areas desired by Poland if it participates in determining development-oriented goals of those organisations, and if it takes part in an international debate (e.g. in the framework of the EU or the UN). Such approach ensures that Poland gains promotion and support for its economic and political priorities. In the case of the small grants system, the application process and the allocation of funds are not as restricted. However, the projects implemented usually support goals related to the following priorities: *Human Capital* (education, access to healthcare, eradication of poverty), *Environmental Protection* (small infrastructural projects) or *Agriculture and Rural Development*. Tasks implemented through the Solidarity Fund PL are dedicated primarily to two thematic priorities (*Good Governance* and *Democracy and Human Rights*), pursuing goals related to supporting democratization processes and reforms of the state, establishment of modern state institutions, promotion of human rights and support for civil society. Loans extended to the partner countries, as well as scholarship programmes showed the smallest coherence with the thematic objectives and priorities of the 2016-2020 MDCP. As far as loans

are concerned, the 2016-2020 MDCP assumed that this type of support will be offered primarily to the priority countries. Political and diplomatic relations remained a decisive factor in determining the recipients of aid, which has caused a dilution of this form of assistance - loans were also offered to countries that are not considered of priority importance, e.g. to Angola and Cambodia. A matrix showing coherence between aid offered and PDC thematic priorities is presented in Appendix 2.

More specific targeting of development-oriented activities (mainly loans and scholarships), with the circle of beneficiaries reduced to the priority countries, and with the activities focusing on the thematic priorities, is an attempt to increase the level of coherence between the efforts undertaken with the use of the individual forms and instruments, and follows, inter alia, from the recommendations formulated during the first review of the Polish development cooperation system performed by DAC-OECD (2017). Such limitations aim, on the one hand, to reduce the dilution of aid offered, and, on the other, to enhance the visibility of Polish aid in the priority countries (it is worth noting that countries from outside the six geographical areas of the highest priority, such as Turkey, Syria or Angola, were among the largest beneficiaries of bilateral aid in previous years). In an answer to the recommendation, MFA stressed the need to extend loans, in the first place, to the priority countries, and to base the procedure of awarding such loans on clear evaluation criteria like an analysis of development-oriented needs of the borrower, and on the development objective adopted. In order to increase the degree of coherence between the geographic priorities of PDC and the countries receiving aid in the form of scholarships, the MFA consolidated its scholarship programmes financed out of a special-purpose reserve, and is defining the geographical reach of such scholarships, as well as the remaining conditions of their implementation, in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the National Agency for Academic Exchange.

PDC goals and priorities pursued using bilateral, trilateral and multilateral cooperation instruments are, in the majority of cases, coherent with the potential of MFA's partners implementing the tasks set out in the 2016-2020 MDCP. Qualitative research conducted as part of the present evaluation study has shown that no major barriers exist that would prevent the tasks identified in the Multiannual Programme from being implemented. A formal requirement stating that one entity may only submit three applications in a specific call for proposal is an element that prevents entities applying for a grant to fully take advantage of its capabilities. For organisations with considerable human resources and organisational capabilities, such a restriction prevents them from fully tapping into their potential - these entities could successfully implement more projects, but are unable to do so due to the existing formal requirements. Reservations about coherence between strategic decisions and the potential of partners exist in the case of a planned outcome of the *Good Governance* priority implemented in Georgia with respect to market supervision institutions and support for the development and stability of the financial market. It was the intention of the Programme's authors to consider involving the Polish Financial Supervision Authority in this activity on account of the Authority's operations which predestine it to implement projects of this type. The Authority did not apply for DCP funds in recent years and so projects implementing this outcome have not been carried out. This example shows that strategic documents should not be based on the ability of just one entity to implement them, because this creates a risk that the activities will not be performed if this particular entity expresses no interest in or is not capable of implementing the projects.

Non-governmental organisations are an interesting case. On one hand, they prove effective when it

comes to implementing small-scale development aid projects because of their in-depth knowledge of needs, cooperation with local actors and willingness to achieve long-lasting, positive outcomes at the place where aid is offered. On the other hand, they are not capable of becoming involved in the implementation of international projects, due to their limited financial and staff capabilities. These organisations are often unable to compete with foreign entities as well, as these have, at their disposal, a much broader knowledge and many years of experience in applying for and implementing international projects, and rely on contacts that facilitate the acquisition of useful information and skills in the application process. Therefore, it is necessary for the MFA to provide support in implementing the provisions of the 2016-2020 MDCP that refer to activities that build the potential of NGOs and to organise training and consulting services for entities participating in the administration of development aid.

Actions financed with funds provided by other governmental authorities engaged in providing development cooperation should be assessed as coherent with PDC goals and activities. Such authorities include mainly ministries representing sectors directly related to the main directions of Polish aid: the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. A project implemented by the Ministry of Investment and Economic Development in 2017 which provided assistance to the Moldavian administration in implementing the 2016-2020 National Moldavian Regional Development Strategy, focusing on municipal and urban development policies, may serve as a good example of coherence of the activities undertaken. The project is a continuation of earlier cooperation dating back to 2016 and earlier under which the Moldavian Ministry of Regional Development and Construction was assisted in drawing up the 2016-2020 Moldavian National Strategy for Regional Development. Despite the fact that projects pursued by the individual ministries are, in the majority of cases, coherent with the PDC's strategic assumptions, the research conducted shows that a need exists to tighten cooperation by ensuring a regular exchange of information on the activities conducted and planned, and by increasing involvement of the ministries in the process of both consulting and implementing the new multiannual programme. These actions will contribute to increasing the level of coherence between the individual forms and instruments of support relied upon while offering development aid. The leading role of a coordinator of the entire process should be continued to be played by the Minister of Foreign Affairs pursuant to the Act.

One way of increasing the overall coherence of PDC activities would be to organise meetings for stakeholders interested in development cooperation in a partner country at which they could receive information about current Polish aid projects and updated their knowledge about the changing needs of local communities. Meetings of this type would significantly boost the coherence of activities undertaken by exchanging information between stakeholders from a priority country. As shown by the in-depth interviews conducted, entities involved in development cooperation (including NGOs, ministries, academic institutions, local governments, businesses) usually lack knowledge about activities undertaken by other institutions and organisations related to Polish development aid.



Research question No. 5. What fosters / hinders the synergy of Polish aid projects implemented under the 2016-2020 MDCP the most?

The complementary nature and synergy of Polish development cooperation programme is regularly taken into consideration in reflecting on its overall efficiency. This issue was raised in all PDC evaluations which led to a number of recommendations, but not much has changed in this area over the years. Although the implementers of Polish development aid, NGO activists, representatives of various ministries: the MFA, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Education, etc., employees of diplomatic missions, governmental and local government institutions all agree that their activities need to be complementary and that the synergy effect needs to be achieved, the issue continues to be one of the biggest PDC challenges.

The MDCP document contains a number of provisions on the cooperation between various entities creating and/or implementing Polish development policy: *Cohesion of development policy is an important tool relied upon to boost the effectiveness and sustainability of development cooperation outcomes and contributes to the achievement of development goals.* However, instruments ensuring such cohesion are lacking at the operational level. The MDCP makes a direct reference to the synergy effect in its chapter dedicated to global education (page 34¹¹): *“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of the Environment and other public institutions conducting or supporting global education-related efforts shall seek to coordinate their activities and to take advantage of the synergy effect between them.”* A similar situation applies to Annual Plans - the plans for 2017 and 2018 provide for the requirement of synergy, but only in relation to the Volunteering Program, stating that it needs to complement other forms of the PDC¹².

Synergy continues to be a weak point of Polish development cooperation, which is also confirmed by OECD recommendations presented in its report reviewing Polish development cooperation:

- *Poland should make greater effort to bring various parts of the aid system together and draw on technical capacity throughout the system.*
- *In order to pursue a policy that is coherent with the aspirations of developing countries, Poland should clarify the roles, obligations and institutional mechanisms, so that its policy becomes coherent with the development goals.*
- *By striving to increase transparency, predictability, ownership and direction of aid, Poland should shape its aid provision methods and should foster aid-related partnership. The Ministry*

¹¹ The page numbers given throughout the report refer to the electronic version of the 2016-2020 MDCP available at www.polskapomoc.gov.pl

¹² [2018] *“Activities of volunteers should be related to the projects implemented by Polish diplomatic missions, and also to projects of partners, implemented with the use of funding provided under development aid calls for proposals. The activities of volunteers will ensure a synergy effect between, as well as coherence between and continuity of development-oriented, publicly funded projects”.* [2017] *“Starting from 2018, MFA shall aim to ensure a closer relationship between volunteer programmes and projects implemented by Poland’s diplomatic missions under the “Small Grants System”, and projects of Polish NGOs relying on subsidies obtained in development aid s. The changes planned aim to ensure a higher degree of synergy between development efforts financed publicly, with the use of funds appropriated by MFA, and will ensure that such efforts are complementary and continuous. Conclusions from the evaluation study concerned with the Polish development cooperation, as conducted in 2016, will be taken into consideration as well.”*

of Foreign Affairs should communicate its aid vision, strategy and criteria for changing how aid is provided in order to enable partners implementing development aid, such as non-governmental organisations, to work in a different manner.

- *Poland should build a result-oriented work culture¹³.*

The problem of lack of synergy affects countries or thematic areas of Polish development cooperation in similar ways. Activities carried out in African countries, in the Eastern Partnership countries of PDC or global education initiatives face similar challenges arising from manner in which the entire PDC system is designed, and from the habits of project implementers.

The basic level of synergy is achieved thanks to the widespread application of the principle of partnership (*ownership /empowerment*) and thanks to the high level of involvement of the partners (both Polish and foreign). Cooperation based on partnership, lasting, in some cases, several years and often taking place within the same region, yields synergy - ability to offer additional activities that are based on previous experience, relevant matching of the method of intervention to the local context and needs translates into stronger impacts of the intervention (like in the case of the Edukator association and preschool education in Georgia). Multiannual governmental campaigns supported by various government and non-government institutions, but coordinated in close cooperation with a ministry or another supervisory authority are other examples of cooperation that yields synergy (for instance activities supporting the fire services in Ukraine).

With the exception of single positive examples, projects implemented under PDC are not very well integrated with each other - institutions operating in a given area are not aware of each other's activities. This applies both to communication between NGOs, between organisations and government institutions, and often also between ministries, or even departments within ministries. Individual projects and initiatives are not always coordinated, even if they address the same theme, the same country or region. Synergy is considerably boosted by combining various types of activities and planning them in a manner that helps to mutually strengthen them. Intergovernmental campaigns may be combined, for instance, with calls for proposals, small projects carried out by diplomatic missions. Projects implemented as a result of calls for proposals may be combined with volunteer projects. Synergy between projects based on volunteers and call for proposals projects, and in some cases with small projects as well, is specifically observed in African countries, where these forms intertwine providing continuity.

Synergies are considerably hindered by the low level of knowledge among entities implementing the projects about other institutions dealing with the same problem area (both as part of PDC and among local partners and donors). The rather limited cooperation with other donors is a negative factor as well. Although relations between Polish entities and other donors are usually good, both sides seldom cooperate. The Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova is a positive exception. It is run in cooperation with other donors. The model of cooperation based on complementarity – for instance, a

¹³ Authors' translation - The DAC main findings and recommendations. In: OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Poland 2017

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-poland-2017/the-dac-s-main-findings-and-recommendations_9789264268869-5-en#page1

Polish entity carries out activities that are part of other donors' larger projects and programmes – is not very well developed. Yet it should be remembered that the above drawbacks can be the result of the system design – short-time projects force their implementers to focus on carrying them out, rather than on coordinating them with other activities undertaken within the same problem area.

Table 2. Factors fostering and hindering the synergy effect

Factors fostering the synergy effect:	Factors hindering the synergy effect:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time sequence of projects - projects implemented directly or shortly after one another lead to sharing of experience between projects undertaken in a time sequence. • Targeting activities at specific regions - projects are implemented in the same or in neighbouring regions, which means that they influence one another. • Continuity of cooperation with the same local partners boosts efficiency of activities undertaken. • Coordination of multilateral cooperation at intergovernmental level by a ministry (for instance, the activities of firefighting services in Ukraine). • Signing a government agreement containing a declaration of willingness to implement changes. • Cooperation with other donors and complementing their activities - Poland as an active substantive partner. • Local partners are very familiar with their area (also with other actors' and donors' actions). • Cooperation with other partners and donors - participation in the meetings of sector-specific groups. • Partial coherence of PDC activities , cooperation between different entities: NGOs, government agencies , local governments, business, etc. • Complementary nature of infrastructural and soft projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor or non-existent knowledge about activities undertaken by other entities active in the same area in a specific country (both under PDC and locally, within the framework of a given thematic area). • Rivalry between Polish organisations, discouraging cooperation. • Activities conducted within a short time frame, which means that focus is on operational issues and no time is left to establish cooperation with outside entities. • Lack of effective coordination between various projects implemented within the same support area. • Lack of relationships and cooperation with other donor organisations. • The manner in which project applications are structured does not motivate the entities offering support to plan cooperation with other donors or entities active within a given area. As a result synergies - if present at all - are often accidental, are not though through and planned for while designing the project activities. • Lack of or insufficient cooperation between diplomatic missions - lack of integration and information. Similar activities are conducted by missions in other countries. In many cases they cooperate with different entities. • Insufficient or ineffective coordination of efforts at the central level - in some cases organisations operating within a given area and holding talks with representatives of local governments are not aware that parallel intergovernmental meetings and negotiations dealing with the same issue are taking place. • Lack of measures to start financing projects whose efficiency has been demonstrated. Supporting innovations sometimes leads to absurd situations where initiatives considered to be effective are not continued, and their outcomes are credited to another donor (like in

Factors fostering the synergy effect:	Factors hindering the synergy effect:
	<p>the case of participatory budgeting in Ukraine).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skills to promote development cooperation at the national and international levels, as well as at the level of specific programmes or projects.

Source: Authors' own compilation.

Due to the complex nature of factors that affect the synergies between individual PDC projects, it is difficult to unequivocally conclude which initiatives show the greatest or the smallest synergies. Undoubtedly, synergies exist when cooperation at the government level is accompanied by local activities of social character (Ukraine - firefighting services, Georgia – the system of family orphanages, pre-school care, etc.). The area where synergy is most easily achieved is good governance, which combines the knowledge and experience of different communities, implemented through actions at various levels. On the other hand, synergies are least visible in cooperation between Polish entrepreneurs that implement PDC goals.

In order to achieve the effect of synergy between individual PDC activities, it is necessary to adopt a systemic approach to this issue in documents of strategic nature, i.e. the multiannual programme and annual programmes. Annual programmes should provide for instruments that encourage cooperation between individual entities implementing PDC projects and that foster synergies between them (between calls for proposals, bilateral cooperation, volunteer programmes, projects implemented by Poland's diplomatic missions, activities of the Solidarity Fund PL, etc.). It is also worth introducing an obligation to evidence the synergy effect in the project application, and synergy verification mechanisms, e.g. after completion of the project, in the final report.



Communication is a vital factor fostering synergy, therefore it is recommended to facilitate the flow of information about the activities undertaken in relation to various PDC instruments (mostly by exchanging information between entities operating within a specific country). The promotion of PDC activities, projects and programmes that have been successful is of key importance as well, as these may be treated as good practices and models to be followed. The complementary nature of various types of PDC efforts needs to be supported - e.g. projects based on calls for proposals and volunteer programmes, projects of diplomatic missions, bilateral cooperation projects, etc. This type of cooperation is necessary in order to create coherent aid concepts. It is also worth encouraging efforts that complement the activities of other donors, including the financing of larger scale activities of the donor. It is also recommended to undertake activities that coordinate PDC efforts in specific countries (by a coordinating institution especially created for this purpose. In the case of the Eastern Partnership countries such a role could be played by representation offices of the Solidarity Fund PL or by diplomatic missions) for the purpose of promoting synergies. Such activities should offer both knowledge-based and organisational support to project implementers (by building a cooperation network, or by analysing specific areas). Their efforts should promote networking, for instance, by organising periodic meetings of entities operating within a given area. They should aim to integrate the beneficiaries in the course of implementing projects, to facilitate the flow of information about the activities undertaken at various levels, including by improving access to information about ongoing

projects. Practices of representative offices of Japan and the US may serve as role models here, as they meet, on a regular basis, with the implementers (both originating from their countries and coming from countries to which aid is offered), also after the projects have been completed.

Research question No. 6. To what extent are the PDC objectives and priorities defined in the 2016-2020 MDCP coherent with partner countries' development strategies? How can such coherence be reinforced?

One of the basic activities carried out as part of the selection process of thematic priorities for the 2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme was an analysis of the needs of the partner countries, as expressed in their strategic documents and reform plans. Coherence between aid offered and strategic objectives was one of the main criteria for making the final selection of areas of support to be offered to specific priority countries. Additionally, while working on the assumptions of the document, consultations were held with representatives of the partner countries, during which discussions on the requirement for a given type of support in a given country were held. Analysis of the potential of local organisations, including NGOs, and of their ability to fully utilize the support offered with regard to the priority areas, was conducted as well. However, the conducted interviews have shown that the consultations were not thorough enough - in many cases the meetings were only attended by representatives of embassies and the largest NGOs. In light of the above, a need exists to consult the process of identifying the thematic priorities for the individual states, in the next programming perspective, with a much broader circle of stakeholders (representatives of partner countries - central and local government, international organisations, other donor countries operating within a given state, Polish and local NGOs, financial institutions, experts, entrepreneurs and other institutions involved or potentially interested in development cooperation).

The goals and priorities of Polish development cooperation specified in the 2016-2020 MDCP cover a wide range of activities, offering a considerable amount of room to freely adapt the planned activities to the provisions of the Program. The *Human Capital* priority may serve as an example here, as the activities proposed thereunder cover support at all levels of education, including civil education, healthcare and social integration of persons at risk of exclusion. Priorities that are defined in such a general manner offer, on the one hand, the ability to flexibly adjust the activities undertaken to a defined priority, but on the other hand, do not channel support to specific areas, which leads to "dilution" of Polish aid.

Analysis of the strategic documents of the partner countries, performed as part of the evaluation process, indicates that the goals and priorities provided for in the document are coherent with the goals expressed in the partner countries' development strategies. This stems, on the one hand, from the analysis of the strategic documents conducted while selecting the thematic priorities, and on the other hand, such coherence is fostered by the rather general nature of the strategic priorities of the individual countries. With the exception of a few countries, such as Georgia, which in its 2020 Social and Economic Development Strategy identified only three main development priorities, the majority of partner countries formulate their strategic objectives in such a manner that they relate to practically all spheres of public life: from reduction of poverty, environmental protection, to improved quality of healthcare. Therefore, it is not difficult at all to align undertaken efforts with the needs of those

countries. These documents have little value for identifying directions of development aid. In order to find out about the specific needs of a given country, it is necessary to hold broad public consultations with the country's authorities and local partners.

Coherence between goals and thematic priorities on the one hand, and the partner countries' development strategies on the other, is also noticed by the respondents taking part in in-depth interviews conducted within the framework of the present evaluation study. The respondents have stressed that Polish development aid projects not only fulfil current needs, but are also often complementary with specific activities conducted or planned by the government of a specific country. Tanzania may serve as a good example here, as the organisations with which the beneficiary cooperated as part of a vocational course programme later organised vocational training on their own in cooperation with the Tanzanian authorities. The respondents have also pointed out that it is worth supporting, rather than taking over the tasks of the governments of partner countries. Therefore, activities that stem from the existing plans should be proposed, which increases their effectiveness and creates synergies.

In order to ensure that the coherence between the thematic priorities and the strategic objectives of the partner countries is retained, it is necessary to continuously monitor the situation and to react to the appearance of new strategic documents and to the changing environment (political, organisational, social and economic). Amendment of the 2016-2020 MDCP is a good example of such an approach, as it allows to add migration issues to the areas covered by PDC, and enables including Lebanon in the group of priority countries. The changes taking place in the partner countries (as far as the strategic objectives are concerned) should be monitored by a coordinator or a group of development aid coordinators (a hub, a process guardian) operating in each of the partner countries and dealing with collecting information and networking of PDC-related cooperation in a given country, or by a representative or representatives of diplomatic missions.



While working on a new MDCP it is also important to repeat the procedure that preceded the drafting of the 2016-2020 MDCP consisting in analysing the goals and thematic priorities and in assigning them to the individual strategic objectives of the partner countries. In the case of Moldova, attention should be also paid to coherence with the assumptions of the newly adopted European Joint Development Cooperation Strategy (Joint Programming Document) for the Republic of Moldova. The said document sets out the directions of aid required by Moldova as a partner country which are part of the aid offered under development cooperation with other European states. It is also necessary to hold a broad consultation process involving the authorities of a given priority country, as well as the stakeholders engaged in development cooperation, as this will lead to identifying concrete needs around which it is worthwhile to build support for a specific country.



Research question No. 7. To what extent does the structure of the document reflect the results-based approach of the PDC? What modifications could strengthen such an approach?

RBM (result-based management) is a management strategy in which all entities directly or indirectly contributing to the achievement of a set of objectives ensure that their processes, products and services facilitate the achievement of the required outcomes (products, higher level outcomes and objectives or impact). The actors, in turn, rely on information and evidence concerning actual

outcomes in order to communicate about taking decisions concerning designing, acquiring resources and implementing programmes and activities, as well as rely on such inputs to define their liability and in their reporting-related activities¹⁴.

In the opinion of the evaluator, the 2016-2020 MDCP insufficiently corresponds to the key elements of the RBA/RBM. There are a few reasons for this: first, the current document fails to identify outright the vision behind the strategy. There are many goals, which are of a broad variety and are defined in a general manner. Such an approach means that the document fails to offer any hints about changes that can be seen as an achievement of the assumed goals.

The current definition of the goals is based on activities (supporting, undertaking, raising, aiding), rather than on making specific changes or reaching the required state (in the recipient country, in the target group, in Poland). This form suggests that it is the activity itself, and not its outcomes, that is more important. If the objective is described as “undertaking activities aiming at reducing poverty”, then any activity in this area means that the objective is “implemented”, regardless of whether poverty will actually be reduced as a result of such activities.



There is no evidence of specific outcomes defined at the strategic level in relation to the goals set. Outcomes are defined with the use of soft, imprecise terms (e.g. development of entrepreneurship in rural areas and small towns). With the very wide range of topics covered in 2016-2020 MDCP and the limited scope of resources available (in comparison to the scale of problems encountered), it is very difficult to define outcomes, i.e. changes that could be observed thanks to the intervention. It is recommended to replace the areas of impact (referred to as goals in the current documents) with references to measurable effects (e.g. undertaking actions aimed at reducing poverty -> reduction of poverty measured by the percentage of people living on less than in the area covered by the intervention). Such a change is a simple method for defining the measures of success. The frame presented on page 6 of the document titled “UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest”, where outcomes achieved in 2010-2015 as a result of British development aid are presented (e.g. ensuring access to financial services for 68.9 million people including 35.9 million women). The same applies to humanitarian aid (providing food to 13 million people, including 5.5 girls and women)¹⁵. Frame 2 on page 11, in turn, defines the specific outcomes that are to be achieved within a defined period of time, i.e. until 2020 we will save 1.4 million thanks to vaccinating 76 million people against lethal diseases¹⁶. Some of the undertakings listed in the document referred to above cannot be measured in such a clear manner, but most of them can be monitored and described with the use of zero-one indicators. It will be also important to define indicators for the soft activities, to describe the shift in behaviours, especially in the case of priorities such as Human Capital or Good Governance.

The lack of defined outcomes means that the actors, activities and the resources can be precisely attributed which leads to a lack of accountability. We suggest constructing a clear logical chain of

¹⁴ *Results-Based Management Handbook, UNDG, 2011*

¹⁵ UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest, HM Treasury, Department for International Development, 2015

¹⁶ The examples of the achievements of British development aid, as listed above, present the direct outcomes of the activities undertaken, which means that such achievements are defined by means of “products” rather than “outcomes”, with the said products understood as advantages and changes resulting from the outcomes obtained thanks to public intervention.

intervention to results (logical model of development cooperation).

The evaluation process was only outlined in the MDCP, and the structure of the document and its shortcomings presented above make it impossible to perform the evaluation based on objective criteria (other than funding and implementing specific activities). Even where such activities produce measurable impacts and these impacts are noticed by the evaluator, it is not possible to connect them with the desired status, which has not been defined. Evaluation and monitoring of activities should be performed in the context of what was supposed to be achieved¹⁷. The document fails to contain any references to the notion of continuous monitoring. The only paragraph devoted to this issue (p. 45 of the electronic version) fails to mention anything more than the general purposes of monitoring each of the programmes¹⁸.

The shortages caused by the lack of an evaluation and monitoring plan, and the lack of the ability to react during the project's implementation phase (and afterwards), as referred to above, are not significant. Actual corrections are limited to reaction to irregularities identified in spending funds, or the failure to earmark funding for the purposes it was originally intended.

Research question No. 8. Do all areas of activity provided for in 2016-2020 MDCP take into consideration, to a sufficient extent, the Sustainable Development Goals?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an element of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, a strategic documents adopted by the UN in September 2015¹⁹. The 17 SDGs include, inter alia, goals that are closely linked to Polish development cooperation - especially those related to education, good governance and the development of entrepreneurship. The goals are divided into a total of 169 targets. The achievement of SDGs is facilitated, inter alia, but development cooperation offered to developing countries by their developed counterparts. Striving to align the national policies (including development cooperation) with sustainable development goals is one of the main priorities of the Coherence for Development Policy.

The Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme refers, at selected places, to SDGs. It needs to be borne in mind, however, that the document was created when the 2030 Agenda had not yet been adopted. As far as the general assumptions go, Polish aid has been strongly referenced to the UN document: *“Development cooperation will be conducted in 2016-2020 in line with the new, global development agenda (...). The activities undertaken will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable*

¹⁷ For instance, an obligation has been assumed, in the Europa 2020 strategic document, to improve the employment rate among people who are 20-64 years old from the current share of 69% to at least 75% by the year 2020, to reduce the number of people finishing their education prematurely to 10% from the current 15%, and to increase the share of people aged 30-34 who are holders of a higher degree, from 31% to at least 40%, or to reduce the share of Europeans living under the national poverty threshold by 25%, by lifting 20 million people out of poverty.

¹⁸ A similar approach has been adopted in other development cooperation strategies. So, the Polish document is not an exception here.

¹⁹ The agenda sets out a vision related to the development of the world, and assumes that poverty will be eliminated, that all humans will be able to live with dignity and that peace will be ensured within a 15-year time frame.

Development Goals". Furthermore, alignment of the efforts undertaken by Poland with the global development strategy is one of the primary objectives of the MDCP.

When analysing the extent of cohesion between the MDCP and the SDGs, one needs to note that the 2030 Agenda objectives were defined very broadly, which means that they cover almost all activities that can potentially be undertaken within the framework of national development cooperation. Due to the complexity of the SDGs and the MDCP's generality, it cannot be stated that the Programme is not consistent with the goals of the 2030 Agenda. However, the main links between the two exist mainly on the level of general assumptions and objectives. The individual MDCP priorities have not been assigned to the specific SDGs. Therefore, the priorities of Polish aid are pursued somewhat independently from the Sustainable Development Goals. Multilateral aid is an instrument that can support the implementation of SDGs in a more direct manner. This applies, in particular, to contributions made to the UN and its agencies. One needs to bear in mind, however, that Poland's influence on the selection and method of implementing activities provided under such aid, is very limited.

Although - as mentioned above - the current MDCP could not be linked more strongly with the SDGs because of the period of time during which it was prepared, in the opinion of the evaluators, the future programme should link the strategic objectives of Polish aid more strongly with the SDGs. This is also in line with DAC OECD recommendations presented in a peer review report. Contribution to the achievement of the Goals should remain one of the key objectives of Polish aid, and Poland's participation in multilateral aid should be signalled clearly as well. As far as the latter is concerned, efforts should be made to involve Polish resources in activities that are more closely linked to supporting the implementation of SDGs identified in the MDCP those that are carried out in the priority countries of Polish aid. Although in the case of contributions to the EU such activities are restricted solely to participation in determining the directions in which the Community will be heading (as one of its 29 members), in the case of projects implemented by the individual UN agencies or organisations (e.g. UNICEF, UNESCO), the ability to influence the performance of specific projects is much greater.

Linking the future MDCP with selected SDGs should constitute the framework of the Program. Such an approach will enable to identify the main areas of Polish aid activities, thus allowing specific goals to be formulated. Each of the selected MDCP priorities should indicate 1 or 2 SDGs to which it relates. As far as this aspect goes, the evaluators assessed positively the strategic document drafted by the Czech Republic, where the links are resented in the following manner:

Table 3. Links between Czech aid priorities and SDGs²⁰

Priority	Related SDG
Good democratic government	16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
Sustainable management of natural resources	6. Clean water and sanitation



²⁰ Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018-2030, pp. 8-10

Priority	Related SDG
	13. Climate action
Economic transformation and growth	7. Clean and affordable energy 8. Economic growth and decent work
Agriculture and rural development	2. Zero hunger 15. Life on land
Inclusive social growth	2. Zero hunger 15. Life on land

Source: *Development Cooperation Strategy of the Czech Republic 2018-2030*.

Another document analysed during the benchmarking process concerning Danida (Danish development aid) also clearly states the Goals to which the main activities are related²¹, although in the opinion of the evaluators, the number of SDGs linked to each priority (from 5 to 12) is too high. The Czech document is much clearer.

Linking the priorities with SDGs will require some conceptual work at the programming stage of drafting the next MDCP. According to information obtained during the evaluation, the MFA's Department of Development Cooperation has carried out this type of work in relation to projects implemented under the current perspective. Too many SDGs that may be linked to the activities undertaken, specifically Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Partnership that may be linked to almost any activity, is an evident problem. This is due to the general nature of the SDGs. Therefore, it is recommended to attribute a maximum of two SDGs to any target, except for Goal 17.



It needs to be noted that the approach recommended above has one more advantage. A strong link between the priorities of Polish aid and SDGs will help to build an image of Poland as a reliable partner who is involved in global development efforts.

The optimum time frame of the future MDCOP was analysed during the evaluation in view of the presence of SDGs in MDCP. Two options were weighed: retaining the current 5-year time frame (2021-2025) or linking the programme's period to the 2030 Agenda (2021-2030). These two strategic documents drawn up by Denmark and the Czech Republic relate to a longer period of time, which is justified when the Programme is more closely linked with SDGs. Experts participating in the evaluation study have expressed different opinions on the matter and raised concerns about such a long period of time. In particular, threats stemming from the dynamically changing situation in the developing countries, and from the potentially hindered ability to react to such threats were pointed out. While fully recognising these concerns, it is recommended that the DDC management considers both options. In the opinion of the evaluators, setting the time frame of the next MDCP for 2021-2030 is a better

²¹ The World 2030. Denmark's strategy for development cooperation and humanitarian action, Figure 1, p.10

approach. A longer period of validity would require a more general Program, so that its activities could still be pursued in the dynamically changing international environment. It is possible that while opting for such a solution, it would be necessary to give up identifying in the MDCP specific priority countries (e.g. one may expect that Georgia will no longer be a developing country by 2030).

Research question No. 9. In what way/to what extent does the new instrument of flagship initiatives contribute to the achievement of PDC priority objectives? How can its impact be fostered?

At present, the following flagship initiatives are being implemented:

- the Eastern Partnership Public Administration Academy (EPPAA),
- the Information Centre for Local Authorities in Moldova (the Centre),
- scholarship programmes.

The initiatives listed above represent important instruments for implementing development policy. Judging by their merits, they are useful and adequate to the needs of the beneficiaries. Therefore, it is worth continuing them in the future. Two of them (the Centre and the EPPAA) were evaluated to identify their strong and weak points, and to propose recommendations (the EPPAA - evaluation in 2017, the Centre - evaluation in 2016). The third initiative was analysed only partially in terms of just one scholarship programme (Specialised Eastern Studies - evaluation in 2016) that is not directly mentioned in the Multiannual Program.

Although the initiatives are highly valued based on their merits, the mechanism of the flagship initiatives itself raises some doubts. It is so mainly because neither MDCP nor any other document states what exactly should be the role of flagship initiatives in PDC and what should be the criteria used to select concrete initiatives. Furthermore, both MFA employees and beneficiaries of Polish development cooperation do not have a clear notion of what flagship initiatives stand for. The people in charge of development cooperation lack the knowledge about the criteria based on which the flagship initiatives were selected, although the general impression is that introduction of such a category was supposed to underline the role of certain initiatives, and was meant to confirm their adequacy and prove that they need to be continued.

Even though the decision to include the definition of flagship initiatives was made based on consultations with social partners on the Programme, some of the crucial remarks made during the consultations were ignored. It is important insofar as these are matters that provide a basis for evaluating the efficiency of the entire mechanism and which include the following questions: *how are the flagship initiatives chosen, what is their goal, compared to other activities undertaken under PDC, how are they funded, will the specific initiatives receive greater support and will they be expanded?*²² Although the definition quoted above is included in the MDCP, the annual plans - even though they focus more on the operational level - do not contain such a definition.

Although initiatives identified as being of “flagship” importance generally contribute to the

²² A list of remarks and answers is available at: https://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Podsumowanie_konsultacji,_spolecznych_dot._projektu,Wieloletniego_programu_wspolpracy_rozwojowej_na_lata_2016-2020,2282.html

achievement of PDC's priority objectives, such a conclusion is relatively difficult to arrive at in the case of scholarships because their impact is not possible to measure without data about the future fate of students (more detailed information is presented in the Appendix, see Case study - Flagship initiatives). These objectives are pursued most directly by the Centre in Moldova, while the EPPAA, by educating public administration staff, influences the standards and the law in the Eastern Partnership countries.

The Flagship Initiatives instrument requires a thorough analysis, especially of how it should operate, what should be its role and how flagship initiatives should be selected and identified. Although the EPPA Academy and the Centre may play such a role, the scholarship programmes should be given some consideration. Their diversity, and the lack of the ability to analyse their impact and efficiency, make it difficult to evaluate the extent to which the initiative impacts the achievement of PDC goals. Scholarships represent a broad group of actions and their impacts are influenced by a large number of external factors (inter alia cultural aspects related to the country of origin of the scholarship holders, but also differences in the level of universities accepting students, etc.). One solution would be to name as flagship initiatives only those scholarship programmes that are funded by the MFA (currently other programmes are included as well). It would then be easier to evaluate their impact and efficiency, e.g. by following up on the careers of graduates.

In drawing up the list of flagship initiatives, one should also take into consideration the funds involved and the duration or the periodic character of specific projects. It also needs to be considered whether flagship initiatives should be related to the PDC's priority countries (and whether at least one initiative should be related to one of the African countries).

Despite the limitations referred to above, according to the evaluators, the "flagship initiatives" instrument should be continued. In order to strengthen the impact that the flagship initiatives have on the achievement of PDC objectives, it is recommended that:



- the criteria to be met by such initiatives and the role of such initiatives be clearly defined;
- the system of support and promotion that will enhance the meaning and recognisability of those initiatives be planned for;
- promotion of the initiatives be strengthened - they need to be promoted in a more systemic fashion - in an attractive form and in several languages (also in English);
- consistence of the messages conveyed in PDC materials and on the PDC websites be ensured, so that the message conveyed may be strengthened by selecting several initiatives;
- synergies between the activities of various entities be ensured, in order to strengthen their effectiveness - it should be a common objective of various entities to make sure that their initiatives are considered to be "flagship";
- restricting using them only in PDC priority countries be considered;
- in the case of scholarship programmes - the career of graduates be followed up, in order to define the programmes' efficiency in achieving PDC objectives. It needs to be evaluated how much the scholarships contribute to the development of the human resources of developing countries, and how much they contribute to migration and result in an outflow of well-educated individuals from the developing countries;

- a continuous, in-depth evaluation of the flagship initiatives be carried out.

More information based on which the recommendations presented above have been formulated is presented in the Appendix (Case studies - Flagship Initiatives).

Research question No. 10. Are the priorities/sectors of Polish aid provided to the Eastern Partnership priority countries coherent? If so, to what extent? Is it justified, and if so, why, to formulate joint priorities for all Eastern Partnership countries?

While evaluating MDCP, it has been determined that the priorities of Polish development cooperation offered to Eastern Partnership countries, as defined in the MDCP, are coherent - they are similar as far as the general direction of the aid is concerned. Four priorities have been identified:

- ➔ Human Capital (Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine)
- ➔ Good Governance (Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine)
- ➔ Entrepreneurship and the Private Sector (Belarus, Ukraine)
- ➔ Agriculture and Rural Development (Moldova)

However, just analysing the priorities is not enough to assess their coherence, as each of them was divided into individual outcomes that *de facto* determine the scope of aid offered. Therefore, it is worth considering the notion of coherence on a more detailed level. The way outcomes are linked to priorities in MDCP is shown by individual countries in table 4. An analysis of the Programme's provisions leads to the conclusion that the structure of priorities and outcomes is only partly coherent. On the one hand, the priorities are - in terms of their meaning - similar (both for the individual countries and in the specific annual plans for each of the countries). On the other hand, however, certain lack of consistency can be seen in the outcomes.

In the case of the *Human Capital* priority, the very name of this area of Polish aid may raise doubts. The expected outcomes are more concerned with improving access to public services, which are not necessarily active in the field of improving human capital of the final recipients. Irrespective of the above, the level of coherence within this priority should be assessed as relatively high - one can clearly see that Polish aid offered in this area focuses primarily on people from excluded groups. An analysis of annual plans shows that these people include the disabled, residents of rural areas, children without custody care, victims of domestic violence and, in the case of Ukraine, also internally displaced persons. The expected outcomes are repeated in the case of every Eastern Partnership country in which this priority is implemented while maintaining some flexibility related to adapting the support to the specific needs of a given country. So, apart from the name of the priority, which is not very relevant, the priority itself is evaluated as coherent.

In the case of the *Good Governance* priority, one may clearly see a division into outcomes that are repeated in the individual countries, and those that are specific for Ukraine, where they seemed to be written down in more detail. Among the shared outcomes, the implementation of projects contributing to the growth of the potential of administration at all levels to implement reforms stemming from integration with the EU (except Belarus) seems to be the most significant. Activities of this kind are of key significance in the context of projects implemented by Polish central institutions

cooperating with the governments of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The outcomes for these countries were written down in less detail, indicating explicitly in which area the Polish administration will be undertaking efforts by getting involved in development of market oversight institutions, and will support the growth and stability of the financial market. In the opinion of the evaluators, this level is too detailed for the MDCP, and furthermore it bases outcomes on projects implemented *de facto* by just one Polish institution.

The coherence of this priority is reduced in the case of Moldova by the fact that the outcome is defined as “increasing access of micro and small enterprises to European markets,” which should be included, as a rule, in another priority dealing with supporting entrepreneurship (it was not taken into consideration in the case of Moldova, even though Poland implements many projects in this country). It seems that this outcome was assigned to *Good Governance* due to the need to account for Poland’s efforts in this area and the lack of a separate priority dealing with entrepreneurship.

The *Entrepreneurship and Private Sector* priority was included in the activities undertaken in Belarus and Ukraine. In the former, one of the outcomes was defined as “better access to high quality vocational education and training,” which generally corresponds to the *Human Capital* priority.

The coherence of Polish aid priorities in the Eastern Partnership countries is reduced by making *Agriculture and Rural Development* a separate priority in the case of Moldova. The outcomes assigned to this specific priority were included in the *Development of Entrepreneurship* priority in the case of other countries. The outcome of Development of Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas was attributed to the *Development of Entrepreneurship* priority in the case of Belarus. But in the case of Moldova, an almost identical outcome was attributed to *Agriculture and Rural Development*.

The annual plans are more operational than the MDCP, and their priorities may be described in more detail by attributing specific outcomes to them. If the priorities are defined in more detail in the following years, they should remain substantially consistent with the priorities identified for the previous years, e.g. a priority may be described in the following years as: *Better Access to Social Services for People from Groups Threatened by Exclusion* – and, depending on the country or the year, can be described in more detail – *including children, the elderly, including displaced persons, etc.*

Table 4. Assignment and formulation of priorities in MDCP

Thematic priorities and outcomes in the Eastern Partnership priority countries	BELARUS	GEORGIA	MOLDOVA	UKRAINE
1) Priority - Human Capital	X	X		X
• better access to social services for people from groups threatened by exclusion / for internally displaced persons	X	X		X
• better social integration of people from groups threatened by exclusion / for internally displaced persons	X	X		X
• better functioning of centres for people from groups threatened by exclusion	X			
2) Priority - Good Governance	X	X	X	X
• increased access of the society to reliable and unbiased information	X			X
• support of regional development	X			
• increased institutional capabilities of public administration authorities at central, regional and local levels regarding the implementation of key reforms stemming from the Association Agreement EU-Georgia / EU - Moldova / EU - Ukraine, (DCFTA8) and other reforms crucial to Georgia / Moldova / Ukraine, including those ensuring financial stability of the state		X	X	X
• development of market oversight institutions and support for development and stability of the financial market		X	X	X
• enhancing the capabilities of public administration authorities in preventing and reacting to natural and human-caused disasters		X		
• increased access of micro and small enterprises to European markets			X	
• increased reform-oriented involvement of the civil society				X
• strengthening local government reform				X
• preventing and counteracting corruption				X
• increasing capabilities related to preventing and mitigating risk, as well as reacting to extraordinary situations				X
3) Priority - Entrepreneurship and the Private Sector	X			X
• development of entrepreneurship in rural areas and small towns	X			

Thematic priorities and outcomes in the Eastern Partnership priority countries	BELARUS	GEORGIA	MOLDOVA	UKRAINE
• better access to high quality vocational education and training	X			X
• development of entrepreneurship (UA: among internally displaced persons)				X
• development of entrepreneurship with the use of innovative technologies				X
4) Priority - Agriculture and Rural Development			X	
• increased efficiency and competitiveness, as well as higher income of farming enterprises			X	
• increased access to proper infrastructure and services within the agricultural sector			X	
• increased share of non-farming profit of agricultural enterprises			X	



In considering how to formulate common priorities for the Eastern Partnership countries, it should be noted that only some of the needs of those countries as beneficiaries of aid are similar. These include, e.g. supporting agriculture and rural development, or activities supporting the broadly understood good governance. However, issues related to European integration, which are of key importance for the development of those countries, are not common for all of them, take the foreign policy of Belarus for example. Considering the above, the following recommendations are made:



1. identifying common priorities for the Eastern Partnership countries, clearly expressing each priority using results-oriented language;
2. attributing specific outcomes to individual countries in annual plans, accounting for local specificity and needs.

The priorities should be defined using outcomes at the level of annual plans. It is important to use consistent terminology. Identifying priorities - both general and detailed - should follow from an in-depth analysis of the situation and the challenges facing a country. Such analysis should consist of in-depth case studies – analyses based on the knowledge and experience of Polish institutions delivering PDC, and on field research carried out for this purpose in three countries – a local diagnosis.

Research question No. 11. Which MDCP provisions pertaining to humanitarian aid foster / hinder in the biggest way the implementation of effective and efficient humanitarian aid, and why?

One of the chapters of the 2016-2020 MDCP is dedicated to humanitarian aid. It contains a definition of this type of aid, makes a reference to Humanitarian Aid Best Practice Guidelines, provides a list of partner institutions and indicates the need to continue delivering aid to Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan.

Humanitarian aid activities are carried out according to different rules than development assistance. First of all, it is important that programming documents are sufficiently flexible to enable (or rather not to hinder) ad-hoc measures and responding to the needs surfacing in different parts of the world, and related to saving life and health during natural and human-caused disasters. This demand was addressed by the MDCP, which states that humanitarian aid is delivered “irrespective of the geographical priorities set out in the 2016-2020 Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme.” This provision and the fact that priority countries were not assigned enabled delivering humanitarian aid to Lebanon, Jordan, and South Sudan. Another measure that supports this demand is the lack of provision which appears in the case of development cooperation priority countries, namely: “Not more than 10% of the funds from the special-purpose reserve at the disposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be earmarked, each year, for bilateral development cooperation with countries other than priority countries.” MDCP leaves some room for discretion, which is a good solution in the opinion of the evaluators.

Directions of humanitarian aid activities are provided for in annual plans, which also leave some room for flexibility in responding to emerging needs. In the 2016-2018 Plans, efforts undertaken in Ukraine should be given priority on account of the war in the Donbas region, and in the Middle East and the related migration crisis caused by the civil war in Syria. It is worth noting that a separate call for



proposals was organised in 2017 dedicated to improving the living conditions of refugees in the Middle East that permitted to support two projects with a total amount of approximately PLN 3 million. Due to the fact that the directions of humanitarian aid are specified in more detail in the Annual Plans, it seems unnecessary to define its general directions in the MDCP. Therefore, it is recommended that this provision be eliminated from the future MDCP.

The ability to implement modular humanitarian aid projects is an important solution that was introduced in the current perspective. In the past, Polish aid suffered from a permanent fault that consisted in the fact that activities were planned for one year only, due to the fact that development aid is financed with the use of specific reserve funds.



This meant that the duration of individual projects was exceptionally short, especially when one takes into consideration time-consuming call for proposals procedures. Introduction of modular projects considerably changes this situation, although the solution in itself is of a provisional nature, and is not ideally suited for both the donors and for MFA.

Humanitarian aid, similarly to development aid, is offered mainly via projects selected through calls for proposals. Results of such calls for proposals indicate that the specific nature of the implementers is different from that of entities participating in development aid calls for proposals. In the case of humanitarian aid, projects are implemented by 6-8 organisations with extensive experience and large institutional potential to carry out such activities (compared with the majority of NGOs involved in development aid). This aspect is evaluated in a positive manner, as it facilitates the complementary nature of projects that are aligned, to a greater extent, with activities undertaken in a given area beforehand. Frequent implementation of projects also permits Polish organisations to continue receiving co-financing, to build on their experience and to establish relations with other entities. It is also worth noting that entities specialising in delivering humanitarian aid are the largest and the most recognized NGOs in the entire Polish aid system. Despite the fact that some organisations apply for foreign funds and join international projects (financed by the EU and the UN), this type of activity is assessed as insufficient (compared to entities from other countries). The scale of operation, even of Poland's largest organisations, is small, which means that even if they apply for ECHO (European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations) funding, whose share cannot exceed ¼ of the annual budget, they are not able to apply for funding needed to implement projects that could compete with initiatives of larger foreign organisations. Like in the case of development cooperation projects, it is referred to as one of the major shortcomings of Polish aid, and one of the areas that should receive support. Therefore, it is worth considering abandoning the call for proposals formula in the case of humanitarian aid and commissioning activities specified by the Department of Development Cooperation to implementers in the scope determined in relation to the needs of the countries benefitting from the aid and in connection with initiatives implemented by other countries or international organisations. From the point of view of legislation, such an approach is possible under Art. 10(2) of the Development Cooperation Act, which provides that *"for reasons of protecting human life or health, the minister competent for foreign affairs may commission the implementation of a development cooperation task without having to organise an open call for proposals, if such task involves the delivery of humanitarian aid."* Resorting to procedures other than calls for proposals to select entities that will implement humanitarian aid projects (e.g. the tender process whose procedures are simpler and which is easier to settle financially, or, in justified cases, direct contract award procedures) will help to build the potential of several organisations at the maximum which is needed to



boost the effectiveness of Polish aid.

Research question No. 12. How can the information-related functionality of the multiannual document be improved?

A document with a high degree of information-related functionality is, in other words, a document that satisfies the needs of its recipients and allows its readers to obtain all the information they require. Therefore, the first question that needs to be answered is to whom the document is addressed, and who its recipients are.

The document is to define, in the first place, the Polish strategy of activities. Hence, the main group of its recipients are persons in charge of implementing development aid. They include representatives of the relevant ministries, specifically the MFA. The group also includes persons in charge of implementing the projects and activities provided for in the programme, i.e. representatives of authorities of different levels, organisations, and representatives of foreign partners. Politicians and journalists represent another group of the document's recipients. Although it may seem that the majority of citizens are not interested in reading the document itself, one should take into consideration, while drawing it up, that it provides access to information, and should therefore remain clear and understandable also to a wider audience. The information it contains should be clear and transparent and understandable to the average reader.



Therefore, the fog index was calculated to verify the accessibility of the MDCP. The said index allows to work out the number of years of education that a reader of a given text should have in order to fully understand it. The index is based on the use of difficult words. In the case of the Polish language, words comprising 4 or more syllables are considered difficult. The value of the fog index for the 2016-2020 MDCP equals 18 years of education, meaning that it is understandable to doctoral students (leading to a PhD degree or specialising in the field covered by the text). So, it is written in a difficult language, even if one considers its main recipients and its rank. The number of words per sentence is another factor that hinders the understanding of the document. Longer sentences are more difficult to understand. The recommended number of words per sentence equals 10-14. If this number is exceeded, half of the readers lose the sense of the sentence, and if sentences are more than 20 words long, they become difficult to understand for the great majority of recipients. In the case of the 2016-2020 MDCP, the average number of words per sentence amounts to 23. Therefore, one of the ways to improve the document's information-related functionality should be to write shorter sentences, and wherever possible, avoid complicated and sophisticated words whose meaning is not commonly known.

The activities described above are purely "cosmetic" nature and should be implemented while drafting the final version of the document. Main effort should be applied to the structure and the contents of the document.

In the first place, the structure of the MDCP needs to be arranged in an orderly fashion. During interviews conducted for the purposes of this evaluation study, the drawing up of a new programme was considered that would be less operational and more strategic. This direction seems to be justified in terms of the information-related functionality of the document. It will enable the document to be structured in a way that will not contain





fragments what should not be included in a strategic paper. By adhering to this structure, it will be possible to eliminate fragments containing additional information, which does not always relate clearly to other parts of the document. The current structure of the Programme hinders the understanding of the mutual relations between and weights of the individual elements. The same level of importance (chapter headings) is assigned, e.g. to humanitarian aid, volunteer activity, bilateral cooperation and the private sector. Their mutual relations lack are not clear.

The content of the document should also be arranged in order with regard to its substance. It seems that the terminology used is now a big problem, also for those who are directly engaged in working on development aid. It is rather difficult to navigate different programmes, initiatives, activities, forms, instruments, priorities, areas and sectors. Wherever possible, the terminology used should be unified and the same or similar scope should be referred to by using consistent terms.



Research question No. 13. Has the implementation of the 2016-2020 MDCP made it possible to achieve synergy between the Polish Development Cooperation and the activities of Polish companies in partner countries (mobilizing private investments, job creation, increasing sustainability of development activities, etc.)? How can the MDCP help to achieve such outcomes in the future?

The involvement of the private sector in development cooperation, although clearly visible in Western and Northern Europe for many years, is still a relatively unknown topic in Poland. Meanwhile, among the world's largest aid donors, there is a conviction that developing cooperation with the private sector in the area of development aid and using market mechanisms and instruments promotes the effectiveness of actions and supports the emergence of synergy effects (synergy of various factors that bring a number of benefits exceeding the sum of individual, separately conducted activities).

Cooperation with the private sector carried out as part of Polish aid is primarily aimed at contributing to more durable and effective achievement of development goals, such as creating jobs, improving local conditions for entrepreneurship development, sustainable local development, social cohesion or improving the quality of life through increased access to education (including vocational education) or medical care. The appearance of economic benefits for a given company is an additional effect confirming the rightness of the solutions applied. By reasonable planning of investments and selecting appropriate tools, it is possible to achieve synergy of actions that are used by a wide range of beneficiaries (residents, public administration, the local private sector and Polish investors as well).

In the current multiannual perspective, the instruments for engaging the private sector to participate in development cooperation include:

1. Projects implemented by the Polish administration supporting reforms in partner countries;
2. Enterprises' involvement in partnerships with non-governmental organisations in grant competitions;
3. Government tied aid loans.

As far as projects implemented by Polish ministries are concerned, one of the objectives of support provided to public administration offices and business support institutions in partner countries of Polish aid is to create more favourable regulatory conditions for the development of entrepreneurship and the functioning of the private sector, including Polish companies operating in a given country. Achieving



this objective is accomplished by supporting socio-economic reforms, providing training, increasing the administrative capacity of the institution, expert consulting and cooperation in the creation of legal and organisational solutions. As part of such actions, Polish ministries and experts cooperating with them, using good experience and practices gained in Poland, support reforms carried out in partner countries.

A good example of this type of actions is the three-year modular project “Increased competitiveness of Ukrainian regions and the development of Polish-Ukrainian economic cooperation”²³ implemented by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Development (with the participation of the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development and the Central Statistical Office) in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of the Economy of Ukraine. The project is a continuation of activities carried out in 2016 and 2017, under which regional institutions for regional development and enterprise development were created in at least 4 regions, 10 missions in Ukraine were conducted with around 40 Polish experts, about 160 representatives of the Ukrainian administration were trained and a competition for Ukrainian start-ups as a platform for establishing contacts with Polish investment funds was organised. The aim of the current edition of the project is to support the implementation of development policy, including the policy of supporting entrepreneurship in Ukraine at the regional and central levels, and to stimulate economic cooperation between Poland and Ukraine. The project includes training and consulting services for public administration employees and companies as well as capital support for microenterprises and SMEs. The project aims to contribute to the launch of a central institution for the development of entrepreneurship in Ukraine and to raise the knowledge and skills of the administration staff involved in the implementation of regional development policy and the development of entrepreneurship. The synergy effect in this type of projects applies to creating conditions for the development of entrepreneurship. Establishing institutions supporting the setting up of new companies, improving the competences of officials involved in supporting private sector investment and providing capital support for entrepreneurs increases the opportunities for new business entities to enter the partner country market, also the Polish one. The precondition for synergy effects in this case is a good recognition of the partner country's needs, holding meetings of various stakeholders (representatives of the donor government and partner country, institutions supporting entrepreneurship development, experts and entrepreneurs, including Polish ones), as well as close cooperation with representatives of the government of the country partner.

Projects contributing to improvement of local conditions of entrepreneurship development are also implemented by non-governmental organisations with grants awarded under calls for proposals. The form of the project, which particularly involves the private sector in development actions, is a partnership of a non-governmental organisation and an entrepreneur. In such partnership, the private entity participates in the project costs and contributes to its implementation. Thus, blending is applied in this case, i.e. combining resources from the private sector and the aid sector. In addition to the main motivation of companies, which is the establishment of a business in the partner country in order to make a profit, another reason for the company's participation in the project is the desire to support development activities in the partner country. The cooperation of enterprises and development entities (non-governmental organisations) creates an opportunity to tap into the NGOs's potential in the form

²³ Project documentation provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



relations with the local community, knowledge about their needs and potential. Locally operating organisations can therefore prove to be an invaluable guide for entrepreneurs who want to expand their business. The condition remains, however, to reach an understanding, mutual trust and to develop partner-like relations.

The motivation for company's participation in the project is not only the willingness to support development actions in the partner country, but also the possibility of creating conditions for the start or continuation of already existing businesses in a given area. One of the more obvious directions of support in this case are investments in the development of the agricultural or production sector. Actions in these sectors create conditions for starting production, which stimulates the creation of jobs and improves the quality of life of the population, and, at the same time, gives the investor the opportunity to use the produced goods in their own activities, e.g. as semi-finished products. An example of the use of this type of partnership under the call for proposals for grants is the project "Development of the Cashew Processing Sector in the Mkuranga District" implemented in 2018 in Tanzania by the "Cultures of the World" Foundation²⁴. Its main beneficiary is the Association of Cashew Nut Processors from Kisiju. The project involves building a warehouse, production and office facilities and equipping them with peeling machines and steam boilers, which will enable the processing of cashews harvested by farmers and the sale of a semi-finished product directly to entrepreneurs, including Polish ones.

Local peanut processing will eliminate the presence of intermediary processors (usually Indian), thus contributing to the extension of the value chain of the processing of cashews in Tanzania which will also increase the incomes of the local population. According to the assumptions, the outcome of the activities will be at least 150 new jobs created for the local community. The project is implemented in partnership with local entrepreneurs who share business experience with the association, and are interested in buying nuts from local producers and exporting them (after obtaining the appropriate export certificates). The project, funded by Polish aid, also includes a study visit to Tanzania for representatives of two Polish companies interested in importing cashews. The synergy effects of the actions carried out should primarily be found in achieving a multiplier effect not only in the form of permanent jobs and income for members of the association and the local population, but also in promoting benefits for the business sector that helps to attract more investments in the processing of cashews in Tanzania, also made by Polish entrepreneurs. Partnership with a private company increases the sustainability of the project and also confirms that the business model used has good prospects and generates additional private investments.

Another type of activities that should be seen as opportunities for private sector involvement in the implementation of projects contributing to the achievement of development goals is vocational education. An investor interested in attracting employees in a given area creates the opportunity for the local community to gain the necessary qualifications as part of a development project. Profiling of trainings raising professional competencies needed within a given sector may be an incentive for the involvement of a private company that plans or implements activities in this sector, because it creates the possibility of employing skilled employees. Benefits from the synergy effect in the investment are

²⁴ www.polskapomoc.gov.pl



therefore mutual - by acquiring vocational education, residents are given the opportunity to work, and thus improve the quality of life, the investor and other employers in the local market acquire qualified employees and the opportunity to develop business.

Unfortunately, development projects implemented as a part of a partnership with the private sector are of an incidental nature - the use of blending is still a kind of novelty in Poland. Companies are reluctant to engage in development cooperation, they do not see potential business opportunities (and benefits) of carrying out business projects in partnership with non-governmental sector entities, or they are not able to take risks related to investing on new, unknown markets. This may be aggravated by difficulties related to obtaining financing for projects with an aid component, additionally often implemented in countries perceived by banks as very risky. It is therefore necessary to provide broad information on the feasibility of such projects and on the potential benefits they may bring. A condition of entrepreneurs' interest in this kind of activity is the conviction that the implementation of such projects may be profitable for the enterprise - creating conditions for the development of entrepreneurship in a given area may be the first step to establishing long-term economic cooperation. It is also worth supporting such initiatives by rewarding projects involving partnerships with the private sector in the form of additional points awarded during the evaluation of grant applications. However, in order to get additional points, the logic of such partnership must be accurately described and the company's gains from the success of the project in the future have to be shown so as to eliminate fake partnerships focused only on improving the image. It is important that the project contribute to the development of a partner country instead of just offering an image boost. It is also worth considering the possibility of organizing tenders for the implementation of aid projects. The tender procedure should be available to all business entities, including foreign ones, and proposals should be assessed not only on the basis of the price criterion, but also on specific requirements regarding compliance with the objectives of Polish development policy and development needs of the recipient country, partnerships with local entities, planned outcomes, ensuring the sustainability of the project or the planned synergy effects. The possibility of enterprises participating in development projects (as a partner or as the main contractor) should be included in the next MDCP.

The last available instruments for entrepreneurs within the framework of development cooperation are government tied loans granted to partner countries on preferential terms for which they can purchase goods and services from Polish enterprises. However, this form is considered to be expensive and as limiting competition. In line with the OECD DAC recommendations, efforts to reduce tied aid, classified as ODA, for LDCs and Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s should be pursued, as well as the required 90% grant contribution to aid for LDCs. Tied loans should be provided where there are no other support tools and you can see a lasting effect of this type of assistance and their allocation should be based on transparent criteria, including an analysis of development needs in the country receiving the loan, assumed outcomes for the development of local structures, anticipated multiplier effects, or the existence of the existing cooperation between Poland and the recipient country. The basic assumptions regarding loan appropriation, including tied loans, should be included in the new MDCP. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the support provided and to increase the synergy effects achieved, the aid provided should contribute to the implementation of clearly defined development objectives and be consistent with the thematic priorities defined for each of the priority countries.

In addition to developing and improving existing instruments involving the private sector in



development cooperation, it is necessary to introduce modern solutions enabling entrepreneurs to participate in projects, including international ones. In the short term, it is essential to encourage Polish companies to participate in EU instruments implemented by international financial institutions (e.g. EIB, EBRD or the World Bank). Contracts and orders may concern the supply of equipment and goods, performance of services (e.g. feasibility study of the project) or implementation of the entire investment. It transpired from the interviews conducted that Polish enterprises do not have much experience in applying for and implementing such projects, often they are also unaware of the existence of such instruments. Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness about the possibilities of applying for support and to inform about its potential benefits. The polskapomoc.gov.pl portal could provide the relevant information and thus support such activities. Currently, the website does not contain any content addressed to entrepreneurs. It is therefore advisable to create a separate tab dedicated to the private sector, which would include detailed information on instruments that entrepreneurs may use if they want to engage in development cooperation (including the already discussed partnership with non-governmental organisations and other entities implementing projects under the Polish aid and projects of international financial institutions). The tab should also contain information on where to look for tenders announced by different institutions, information on how to apply and on tender documentation, good practices (from Poland and from other countries) in the implementation of such projects, and links to current strategic documents published by priority countries. It is also very important to provide information about planned and implemented government administration projects (currently not all projects are described on the website) to show to potentially interested companies entering new markets in countries where actions are planned to improve the conditions of entrepreneurship development. It is also worth informing other ministries about the possibilities of engaging entrepreneurs in development activities and establishing closer cooperation with institutions responsible for economic promotion (the Polish Investment and Trade Agency, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego, the Industrial Development Agency). As part of such cooperation, it is worth organizing meetings and conferences addressed to entrepreneurs, during which information would be exchanged on the existing possibilities of engagement and completed projects would be shown. Many trade conferences and fairs can be used for this purpose. It is also worth considering reaching out to entrepreneurs through industry organisations or other entities associating entrepreneurs (e.g. employers' organisations).

As a part of the preparation of the next MDCP, it is also necessary to analyse the potential interest of Polish entrepreneurs in participating in Polish Development Cooperation, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Polish private sector and indicate specific thematic areas in the document where cooperation with entrepreneurs is likely to achieve the highest degree of effectiveness and synergy. The inclusion of representatives of entrepreneurs in the process of strategy planning should also be considered, especially at the stage when its objectives, thematic areas and countries are defined.

In the long-term perspective, Poland should strive to build competences in the management of EU development funds by creating a Polish development agency/ development bank and obtaining its accreditation with the European Commission, which would enable Poland to implement large EU projects in which entrepreneurs could also participate. The institution could also take over competences related to informing the private sector about the possibilities of engaging in PDC and, similarly to other European agencies, improving competences related to applying for foreign funds available as part of the EC's activities for broadly understood development cooperation. However, it



should be remembered that in order to create such an institution which is economically justified, it is necessary to significantly increase the Polish Development Cooperation budget in the following years (at least to the declared level of 0.33% of GNI).

Research question No. 14. To what extent are MDCP goals topical in light of the changing needs? To what extent should the political, social and economic changes taking place in the aid recipient countries impact the MDCP goals? In which countries and with regard to which aspects?

In order to provide an answer to this research question, one should start by stating that development cooperation activities undertaken must be coherent with the needs of the recipient countries. These in turn are subject to change because the dynamics of social and economic processes in the developing countries that receive aid is much higher than that of stable economies. The pace of change is particularly rapid in those countries where the democratization processes are still ongoing. It is important for the provisions of the multiannual programme to enable adjustments to the changing needs. The level of generality of MDCP provisions is rather high, which means that they enable flexible reactions to changes in the needs of recipient countries. These changes are taken into consideration in the Annual Plans that identify, in a more detailed and operationally-focused manner, the objectives of Polish aid in a specific year.

The evaluation shows that the strategic and operational documents on Polish aid, including the goals and outcomes set forth in the MDCP and the Annual Plans, respond to the needs of the recipient countries, also if political, social and economic changes take place. The support for Ukraine may be an example of a situation in which the Programme has enabled (or at least has not hindered) adjusting the *modus operandi*, as the needs of the country changed once the war in the Donbas region broke out in 2014. The said changes have been taken into consideration in the strategic documents, and are reflected in the projects currently implemented by the Polish side in that country. This applies, in particular, to the inclusion of humanitarian aid, as well as activities aimed at internally displaced persons. The MDCP has also proven to be flexible enough in the case of changes taking place in the Middle East, as it has enabled to provide support to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

On the other hand, the manner in which Polish aid is programmed makes it possible to withdraw from those countries that are no longer treated by Poland, for various reasons, as belonging to the group of priority countries. Such a situation took place when Armenia and Azerbaijan were struck off from the MDCP's list of priority countries, as they suspended, following political changes, their EU association processes.

It is important to note that the MDCP allows to put all humanitarian aid projects on the list of undertakings performed in the priority countries, but does not necessarily allow to proceed with development projects at locations where humanitarian aid was offered, if a given country is not on the list of priority countries. Such a situation recently occurred in Lebanon, where humanitarian aid projects addressed to Syrian refugees were implemented. Due to the long-term stay of the Syrian people in refugee camps, a need arose to commence strictly development-oriented projects, e.g. educational projects for children. However, due to the fact that neither Lebanon nor Syria are on the list of priority countries, projects of this type could not be implemented on a wider scale. At present, a need to enable the implementation of development project in Lebanon has been identified, by putting



that country on the list of MDCP priority countries.

Preparation of the next Programme should be preceded by an in-depth analysis of the current needs of priority countries, and, later by the creation of development scenarios for the 2012-2030 period. It has to be stressed now that countries receiving Polish aid differ in terms of their economic development and political situation. But among the many priorities that still continue to be of great importance, one should stress the development of human capital (soft projects), development of educational infrastructure (in particular in African countries and Palestine), development of entrepreneurship, as well as development of agriculture and rural areas. In Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, a considerable need still exists to support border patrol and rescue services. Furthermore, the need to support, in a comprehensive manner, specialised mountain rescue services is signalled in Georgia, where high-mountain tourism develops quickly in the Caucasus Mountains. Support in the creation of proper legislation is expected, and also in the creation of a proper system for the rescuers, in their training or in the supply of necessary equipment.

The needs that arise are addressed by increasing the emphasis on supporting sustainable economic development. It is assumed that the development of countries that are recipients of aid is stimulated, inter alia, by foreign investment and by the creation of jobs. Therefore, it is important for the Polish side to become involved in activities aiming to implement the External Investment Plan adopted by the EU and consisting in supporting enterprises ready to invest in the developing countries. But effective efforts undertaken in this particular area should not be limited to participating in EU's activities, as this will fail to ensure the achievement of the goals of Polish aid set for the priority countries. Therefore, it is worth relying on national funds that would support enterprises in investing in close alignment with the thematic and geographical priorities of Polish aid. Such an instrument may be implemented, for instance, by involving Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego or other PFR group institutions (e.g. the Foreign Expansion Fund). In the first place, the level of interest in investing in the priority countries should be diagnosed among Polish entrepreneurs.



Research question No. 15. To what extent does the monitoring system, in its current form, take into consideration the PCD implementation model adopted by the OECD? Does the system correspond to the needs of MDCP stakeholders?

In the opinion of the evaluator, the monitoring system and the strategy do take into consideration with respect to some of the aspects of the PCSD model, but fail to meet its requirements as a whole. One of the major shortcomings of the document is the fact that it lacks precisely defined goals, outcomes and metrics, which translates into a number of other drawbacks listed below.

1. Is a monitoring and reporting system in place?

The monitoring system outlined in the document is vestigial. According to the provisions of the document (page 45 of the electronic version), it focuses on analysing single projects and initiatives. Instead, it should be capable of monitoring the entire strategy (at the level of strategic and operational goals). The MDCP document fails to define precise financial frameworks. Therefore, the implementation process was evaluated on the basis of annual financing cycles.



2. Is evidence from official and other reliable and unbiased sources used?



The strategy does not identify the sources of information relied upon to assess progress, especially with regard to the SDGs. However, in the opinion of the evaluator, no reason exists to assume that sources will be relied upon that do not meet requirements concerning the validity of evidence used. We wish to stress that the strategy directly provides for external entities to perform the evaluation.³ *Is implementation properly communicated to the relevant authorities and the general public?*

The strategy precisely defines the tools and the objectives of information and promotional activities. It would be required, however, in the opinion of the evaluator, to define target groups other than the general public that was announced in the document.

4. Do the existing resources and capabilities enable the use of PCSD?

The strategy does not define resources (including financial resources) allocated to implement it. As a result, it is not possible to assess the extent to which those resources are adequate in the context of its goals. These shortcomings cannot be eliminated by short-term operational documents.

5. In what way is the strategy adjusted to information about negative effects or changes required obtained during implementation of the projects?

The strategy assumes that information from the evaluation of the individual initiatives, programmes, tasks or project groups will be relied upon and a mid-term evaluation to be done with respect to the strategy to enable certain reactions during the implementation process. However, due to the lack of well-defined strategic and operational objectives and the lack of a monitoring system at the strategy level, this only applies to certain areas, and the reactions may be largely arbitrary, since there is not enough data for an objective evaluation.

6. Have indicators measuring the progress in the implementation of the strategy been defined?

The document does not specify any indicators by means of which the progress of implementation would be measured. Indicators were provided in the annual action plans and at the project level, but they do not enable an evaluation of progress made in implementing the strategy as a whole.

7. Have cross-border and long-term impacts been taken into consideration? Do the priorities that have been set take these into consideration? Do the existing metrics enable to assess mutual dependencies between priorities/sectors?

The thematic priorities of the strategy have been set to correspond to Poland's areas of competence and are largely long-term. However, the same approach is not reflected in monitoring. It was also assumed that monitoring and evaluation will be performed, inter alia, for the purpose of evaluating how lasting the impacts are, which is only one of the aspects of a long-term impact. Cross-border impacts have not been taken into consideration to a considerable degree.

The MDCP does not explicitly identify its stakeholders, while their needs have been presented in a descriptive manner. The lack of a clear system of identifying and measuring outcomes limits in a major way the ability to assess the extent to which MDCP addresses the needs of the stakeholders and has contributed to fulfilling them. The needs were identified correctly, but their identification is not part of the monitoring system.



Additional research question No. 1. Activities of which type contribute, to the greatest extent, to strengthening Poland's positive image as a country that actively supports PDC partner countries in their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?

The main barrier to enhancing Poland's positive image as a country that actively supports PDC partner countries in their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals are the weak links between Poland's development cooperation and the to SDGs. We do not wish to say that Polish aid is not aligned with the Goals, but that the 2016-2020 MDCP has not been related to those goals to a sufficient extent. This results primarily from the sequence in which the documents were created - work on the MDCP began before work on the SDGs was concluded. Therefore, references to the Goals made in the Program are few and far in between. That is why additional work has to be performed on an on-going basis to ensure that communication about what has been done uses the language of Sustainable Development Goals (nomenclature, numbering).

Consequently, Poland's image as a country that actively implements SDGs is strengthened the most by activities underlining the message that Polish aid is aligned with the SDGs. These will include information, promotional and diplomatic undertakings identifying the links between MDCP's thematic priorities and the SDGs. Therefore, communication should be planned in a way that will strengthen the message stating that Poland's aid is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also recommended to continue and to further strengthen promotional activities undertaken by Poland as well as by entities implementing projects. Therefore, it is advisable to set out standards pertaining to the form and scope of presenting information.

Communication is also hindered by the fact that the thematic areas of Polish aid have been linked to 11 out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Undoubtedly, such a sheer number does not enhance the ability to communicate effectively. Furthermore, there are priorities linked to 4-5 SDGs. Such a dispersion also makes it more difficult to enhance Poland's positive image in this area because communication has to refer to a large number of Goals. The linking of a specific priority to (only) one SDG also poses a problem. It means that it is even difficult to provide information in reports.

Based on the analysis of projects implemented under the 2016-2020 MDCP, one may state that the majority of them referred to five Goals: quality education, decent work and economic growth, good health and well-being, reduced inequalities and peace, justice and strong institutions. These are the areas in which the positive image of Poland may be communicated in the most effective manner, due to the number of projects implemented therein. To a considerable extent, these activities also have big image potential due to the outcomes achieved. Poland has been building its position for a long time now and is visible in the Eastern Partnership countries. Thematic areas where Poland is a leader in providing aid (image-wise) need to be identified, for example emergency services, mountain rescuers, but mostly firefighters, where consistent support has made it possible to build a strong image of Poland.

Therefore, activities which make us the most visible should be stressed by linking information and promotional activities with the Sustainable Development Goals in order to strengthen Poland's image as a country that supports the achievement of the SDGs in partner countries.

Additional research question No. 2. Are the priorities/sectors of Polish aid provided to Global South



priority countries coherent? If so, to what extent? Is it justified, and if so, why, to formulate common priorities for all countries? Is the potential of the local entities cooperating with the MFA sufficient to multiply the effects of the MDCP? If so, to what extent? What measures should be undertaken in order to improve such coherence?

The priorities of Polish aid provided to the Global South priority countries are coherent, although different activities are envisaged under the same priority. For instance, in African countries, activities undertaken within the same priority aim to improve mothers' and children's access to better healthcare, and to improve the quality of education at all levels, while in Palestine they aim to increase access to pre-school education and to social services for people from social groups at risk of exclusion. In African countries, the directions of activities are coherent enough to justify formulating common priorities for African countries at the level of the strategic document. It is worth giving some more thought to Palestine and Myanmar, if the countries remain on the list of priority countries in the next period of programming Polish development aid.

Table 5. Priorities pursued in Global South priority countries

	Ethiopia	Kenya	Myanmar	Palestine	Senegal	Tanzania
Human Capital	x	x	x	x	x	x
Environmental Protection	x	x			x	x
Entrepreneurship and the Private Sector	x	x	x	x	x	x
Agriculture and Rural Development				x		

Source: Authors' own compilation, based on the 2016-2020 MDCP

It is worth pointing out that if the recommended approach is adopted while working on the subsequent document defining the framework for Polish development cooperation, the alignment with priorities of the countries for which development cooperation is targeted will be ensured almost automatically. It will be so because the recommended approach assumes that Poland's specialty areas will be mapped first, which will later be assigned to the specific Sustainable Development Goals. This knowledge will then enable to select the countries in which development cooperation is aligned with their development-related needs. Such an approach will ensure coherence of priorities.

Using the potential of local partners to multiply the impacts of the implemented projects is a more difficult task. According to the surveys conducted, projects implemented in the Global South countries are characterized by a high degree of uncertainty. Difficulties with their implementation are not linked solely to the weakness of the partners, however. On the contrary, evaluation of programmes completed in 2012-2015 in Eastern Africa and in the Middle East stress the professional attitude of the institutions and organisations involved. The number of projects implemented in the Global South countries is low, especially when compared to the number of projects implemented in the Eastern



Partnership countries (with Kenya and Palestine being the only exceptions here). A low number of institutions and organisations involved, and primarily an insignificant scale of Poland's financial support combined with the lack of multiannual funding programmes limit the potential to multiply impacts.



3.SWOT analysis



Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ The number of MDCP priority countries limited to 10. ⇒ Individual areas (Good Governance, Human Capital) based on well-defined national competencies gained through experience. ⇒ Detailed Annual Plans. ⇒ Well identified needs at the level of priorities. ⇒ Relatively large share of bilateral aid programmed jointly with partner countries. ⇒ Noticing the potential role of the private sector in the implementation of the MDCP (although to a limited extent). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Low transparency of MDCP objectives and intentions. ⇒ Outcomes not defined at the strategic level. ⇒ Provisions with a varying degree of generality, too detailed in some places for a strategic document. ⇒ Low scale of Polish aid (low ODA). ⇒ Low (hard to notice) impact of Polish aid on the situation in the supported area of the recipient country. ⇒ Low level of coordination between Polish projects and projects of other countries/organisations. ⇒ Lack of comprehensive and complementary character of projects (e.g. in the form of concurrent support for a specific reform and implementation of projects that result from such reform). Projects implemented locally are not consistent with projects implemented by government administration. ⇒ The same types of projects are supported under different thematic priorities - no logic. ⇒ Lack of a clear definition of the outcomes that the Polish state intends to achieve thanks to development aid (defined in relation to objectives, not activities). Lack of reference to other activities undertaken by Poland abroad. ⇒ Insufficient visibility of flagship projects. ⇒ Lack of criteria for selecting partner countries.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Cooperation with other donors while implementing larger, more complex projects and building the image of Poland as an active participant of joint international undertakings, building networks useful for achieving the country's wider goals in foreign and economic policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Unstable situation in the beneficiary countries, lack of well-established democratic structures in the beneficiary countries. ⇒ Strong competition from other countries. ⇒ Lack of NGOs's interest in implementing projects in some countries.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Areas in which Polish aid has become specialised and is perceived as an important component of cooperation.⇒ Donations obtained by Polish institutions from international institutions or other countries - twinning projects.⇒ Market niches - their use could give Poland more visibility. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">⇒ Small resources of diplomatic missions in some beneficiary countries (lack of positions devoted to development aid) or the lack of a mission.⇒ Small presence of Polish companies in partner countries, especially in Africa.⇒ Supporting the development of some sectors of the beneficiary countries could worsen the situation of Polish companies (e.g. supporting agriculture in neighbouring countries: Ukraine, Belarus).⇒ China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative could reduce demand for assistance in some target countries. |
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Source: Authors' own compilation



4 Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations presented in the table below are the result of studies and analyses performed.



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
1	<p>The MDCP has the characteristics of both an operational and strategic document. Its structure and scope need to be improved in order for it to fit into the assumptions of the strategic document.</p>	<p>The document setting out the strategy for action for developing countries should be a strategic document.</p> <p>The process of creating such documents is spread over time, therefore it is recommended to start work on a new strategy setting out the framework for Polish development cooperation as soon as possible. The process should start with specialised training on strategic planning designed for the team responsible for developing a strategy starting with an in-depth diagnosis of the situation to determine Poland's comparative advantages in relation to other donors. Finally, consultations with stakeholders of the strategy should be carried out.</p>	<p>The introduction of significant changes to the currently binding document 2016-2020 MDCP has no grounds because of the time remaining until its duration expires.</p> <p>A quick start of work on the next strategy will allow to carry out the necessary diagnosis to determine the strengths of Poland relating to potential areas of cooperation with the recipient countries. It will also allow consultations with stakeholders and include them in the work on setting goals and directions of activities.</p>	<p>The team responsible for developing the strategy should receive support for the preparation of strategic documents, including workshops on strategic planning, external consultations to develop a vision and strategic goals.</p> <p>It is necessary to conduct an in-depth diagnosis in order to map Polish strengths and to determine on this basis Poland's competitive advantages in development cooperation. This should be the basis for selecting SDGs (see recommendation No. 5).</p> <p>Conducting consultations with entities that can carry out development cooperation activities, including business organisations, should take place at the stage of developing support instruments. This will help to better adapt them to their needs.</p>	DCD MFA	Relevance



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
2	The MDCP document only theoretically covers the entire ODA, in practice it focuses on the part financed out of the special-purpose reserve.	It is recommended to cover the entire ODA in one strategic document. For this purpose, it is recommended to include institutions important for the implementation of the MDCP (or for the future strategy on development aid) in the process of its preparation, including through consultations.	The strategy on Polish development cooperation should cover the whole of ODA, which will ensure a more effective implementation of its objectives, better coordination, coherence and concentration of resources, which in turn will increase the efficiency of the implementation system and improve the visibility of Polish development aid.	Strengthening the role of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the field of development cooperation and in spending funds for this purpose. Introduction of the countersignature of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on all documents of other ministries regarding spending of funds qualified as ODA. Conducting consultations with ministries that will be involved in implementation of development cooperation (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Technology), which will ensure co-responsibility for implementation of the strategy's objectives and reduce focus on implementation of activities that do not fit in directly.	MFA in the part concerning consultations Programming Council for Development Cooperation in the part concerning strengthening the role of the Minister	Efficiency
3	The current MDCP insufficiently identifies	It is necessary to clearly indicate what outcomes are to	The definition of goals and outcomes, at strategic level is	Setting the strategic goal and operational goals.	DCD MFA	Effectiveness



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
	the goals and outcomes to be achieved through the implementation of development cooperation.	be achieved through development cooperation. It is also worth setting goals at the strategic level and indicators that will refer directly to the objectives set and the expected outcomes.	necessary for coherent, targeted actions to be taken. Without specifying them, it will not be possible to state if the goals have been achieved. Their determination impacts the activities and forms of support, enables the creation and implementation of a monitoring system (and its ongoing use). It also creates a wider scope for promotion, which should focus on providing information on the outcomes achieved (see recommendation 4).	Setting the expected outcomes. Assigning indicators to objectives and outcomes. Using SDG outcomes and indicators. Determining the indicators that meet the SMART criteria (at least: measurable and time-bound). Creating a logical model - a scheme that allows to describe the planned impact of actions and inputs, activities and mechanisms that are to lead to this impact.		
4	Polish development assistance is visible to a limited extent, visibility is ensured more at the local level than at the aid recipient country level.	It is recommended to strengthen the promotion of development cooperation both in Poland and abroad.	Due to the scale of Polish development cooperation, which is relatively small, the impacts remain visible at local level. This situation can be changed with wider promotion and the orientation of support that will serve to build a positive image of Poland. Promotion in the country is important to build understanding in the society why Polish development cooperation can bring mutual benefits - both	Follow-up on promotional activities in the country using such tools as the portal polskapomoc.gov.pl, Twitter, YouTube, radio broadcasts. The message should pay more attention to emphasizing the source of financing. In the communication process, opinion-making circles (journalists, scientists) should be more involved.	DCD MFA Office of the Press Spokesman Diplomatic missions	Efficiency



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
			for the recipient countries and for Poland.	<p>Communication in the field of global education should be an important way of communication.</p> <p>The message and the transmission channels should be adapted to the target group (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs itself, other ministries, recipients from outside the administration).</p> <p>Promotion using the language of the benefits and outcomes achieved. It is also worth using a description of the outcomes by showing examples of specific people whose lives have changed (human story).</p> <p>Better use of voluntary contributions to build a positive image of Poland - through cooperation with institutions whose activities coincide with the SDGs chosen by Poland and with which it is possible to build cooperation based on mutual benefits (there is a possibility to</p>		



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
				negotiate).		
5	The current MDCP does not explicitly refer to SDGs.	<p>It is worth considering choosing a limited number of SDGs and presenting them in a new strategic document. Their selection should be based on identified strengths of Poland's development cooperation, advantages and specialisations.</p> <p>As a result, linking it with the SDGs should harmonize the duration of the future MDCP with Agenda 2030.</p>	Choosing a limited number of SDGs will allow to focus activities in those areas where they can be most effective and visible. This is justified primarily by the limited funds that Poland can allocate to development aid.	<p>The choice of SDGs should be preceded by a well-conducted diagnosis of areas in which Poland has an advantage. It is only after choosing SDGs that it is worth considering countries where these advantages can be best used and what kind of assistance / cooperation should be offered. It is worth taking into account the presence of other donors and to channel Polish aid, if possible, to places where Poland can be in the forefront of donor countries in an area where the cooperation is carried out.</p> <p>Due to the need to concentrate funds, Polish development cooperation should reach a limited number of countries where Poland has a comparative advantage in relation to other donor countries.</p> <p>The next MDCP should cover</p>	DCD MFA	Effectiveness



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
				the 2021-2030 period.		
6	Instruments and forms of support under the MDCP require a better adaptation to the new ways of functioning of international institutions operating in the area of development cooperation.	The wider use of instruments and forms of support used by development institutions and other countries is recommended.	Both international institutions and more developed economies are moving away from forms of support such as bundled loans, replacing them with new financial instruments, which are more effective.	Introduction of new instruments based on best practices of other countries (e.g. blending, loan guarantees). Creation of trust funds for a number of selected MDBs (e.g. the World Bank) or joining funds created by other donors. Adjusting the form of support to the conditions existing in the recipient country.	DCD MFA DEC MFA Ministry of Finance BGK	Innovation
7	Polish entrepreneurs engage in Polish development cooperation only to a small extent, because they do not see the potential benefits of implementing projects and have limited knowledge about the possibilities of their implementation.	It is recommended to undertake information and promotion activities aimed at encouraging the private sector to get involved in the implementation of projects (including international projects) as part of development cooperation.	Currently, the official website dedicated to Polish development aid does not contain any information on the possibilities of entrepreneurs to engage in development cooperation. There is also no information and no networking events to encourage companies to engage in development activities in partner countries and no information about the potential benefits of such activities.	Creating a separate tab for the private sector on polskapomoc.gov.pl , containing tips on where to find information on the principles of entrepreneurs' inclusion in development projects, links to tenders announced by foreign institutions, rules for applying and a list of tender documentation. The tab should also indicate best practices (domestic and foreign)	DCD MFA DEC MFA	Effectiveness



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
				regarding the involvement of the private sector in development projects, as well as refer to the existing strategic documents of priority countries. It is also worth organising conferences and fairs, during which information would be exchanged on the existing possibilities of engagement and presentation of completed projects. Also, reaching out to entrepreneurs by industry organisations or other entities associating entrepreneurs (e.g. employers' organisations) should be considered.		
8	In past activities related to Polish aid, there are no measures that, on a larger scale, create conditions for decent work and thus influence the development of the economies of the	Actions should be taken to facilitate entrepreneurs' initiatives contributing to sustainable economic development in developing countries, including by creating high-quality jobs for qualified employees (based on a country's model).	The review of strategic documents of other countries (Czech Republic, Denmark) indicates that supporting entrepreneurs in creating jobs in developing countries is an important element of development cooperation contributing to sustainable	Activities related to the creation of jobs in the priority countries should be included in the stream of this type of activities carried out by the EU. In particular, active engagement in activities implemented under the External Investment Plan (EIP) financed from the European	MFA, Polish Development Fund Ministry of Investment and Economic Development	Effectiveness



No	Conclusions (and place in the report)	Recommendation	Grounds for the recommendation	Recommended implementation method	Addressee	Evaluation criterion
	recipient countries.	These activities can be linked to projects implemented in human capital development, aimed at increasing competences industries, specifically those that Polish entrepreneurs are willing to develop.	economic growth. Working together with entrepreneurs for the development of human capital and high-quality jobs in selected sectors will result in the availability of specialists in the local labour market that meet the needs of entrepreneurs.	Fund for Sustainable Development is recommended. A diagnosis should be made of the possibilities of Polish enterprises in terms of their interest in investments contributing to sustainable economic growth in developing countries. Regardless of the activities carried out under the EIP, Polish financial institutions (e.g. BGK or Foreign Expansion Fund) should be more strongly involved in achieving the objectives of Polish development cooperation.		

Source: Authors' own compilation.